



CORVUS BELLI

INFINITY

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



MÖDIPHÜS™
ENTERTAINMENT

HAQQISLAM

FFFA™

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

The Haqqislamite movement found traction in a world riven by political turmoil and economic crises. Its greatest messenger, Farhad Khadivar, advocated a new ideology that wove together the many complex threads of the old into a New Islam. This philosophical and theological revision of long-standing interpretations, which shed intolerance and oppressive dogma in favour of humanism and a concept known as the Search for Knowledge, laid the foundations for a golden age of reforms and advancements that propelled a nation across the stars.

Since finding a home on Bourak, Haqqislam has experienced a rebirth of artistic and scientific pursuance that is the envy of their rivals. Gardeners refine terraforming techniques that have reshaped an arid world, doctors perform miracles with pioneering surgery, and biochemists cultivate new synthetic wonders with Silk. Though often considered one of the smallest of the G5 nations, Haqqislam remains unrivalled in several arenas.

A Silk monopoly and extensive trade routes have spawned a nation of traders that often draw the envy and ire of competitors, though the Sword of Allah stands ever ready to smite the enemies of the Word. With new insights into the New Islam and its proponents, this sourcebook will take you further into the Search for Knowledge than ever before!

- Details on Bourak and its diverse regions — Al Medinat, Funduq, Iran Zhat Al Amat, Gabqar, Norouz, and Alamut.
- Focused Lifepaths that allow players to tread the Search for Knowledge, including Akbar Doctors, Khawarij, and new Hassassin careers.
- Additional armour, equipment, and adversaries specific to Haqqislam, including the famed Akrep TAGs of the Maghariba Guard, and stats for the enigmatic Husam, Yasbir.
- New rules and campaign guidance for plundering the space lanes as a corsair in the employ of Haqqislam.

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Kar
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Huriyyah
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Khadijah



Alhazen Sea

Ibn Battuta
Ocean

Talawat

Medina

AL MEDINAT

Qorsaptar

Al Mish'iyah

Ad Qaliwara

Masudi
Strait

'Amal

TABBA

Saif

Dar El Funduq

Al-Biruni Sea

Qngüt

Bahiti
Island

Olabisı

Balışehir

Al Balkhı Ocean



BOURAK

ri
nd

Al-Idrisi Sea

Baniya Island

Ravansâr

Bahal

Parthalia Island

Nizari Route

Ibn Battuta Ocean

NOROUZ

IRAN ZHAT AL AMAT

GABQAR

Azar Desert

Hunza

Semetei

Maracanda

Silk Route

Khiva Kala

Kum-dag

The Tien Shan Range

Hakkâri

Tamerlane

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ALAMUT

FUNOUQ

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE	2
What's In This Book	2

CHAPTER 1

FACTION: HAQQISLAM	4
The Sword of Allah	4
The Hassassin Society	6
The Guilds	9

CHAPTER 2

BOURAK	13
Climate and Geography	13
Economy	15
Demographics and Culture	16
Religion	17
Life Balance	17
Al Medinat Caliphate	18
Huriyyah Archipelago	21
Taba	21
Funduq Sultanate	22
Gabqar Khanate	25
Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahnate	28
Islands	31
Nawal Island	32
Parthalia Island	33
Fareedat System	34

CHAPTER 3

CARAVANSERAI	37
History of The Caravanserai	37

CHAPTER 4

CORSAIRS	44
Privateering: The Reality	47
Pirate Havens	50
Historical Conflicts	51
The Privateer's Toolbox	53
Privateering With Purpose: Corsair Campaigns	54

CHAPTER 5

HAQQISLAM GEAR	63
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CHAPTER 6

HAQQISLAM CHARACTERS	76
Decision Four: Status	76
Decision Seven: Haqqislamite Adolescent Event	76
Decision Eight: Careers	79
LIVING HAQQISLAM	87
Bedrock	87
Sand & Soil	89

CHAPTER 7

ADVERSARIES	91
Philosophers, Hassassins, And Pirates	91
Super-Soldiers	94
Pirates and Mercenaries	96
NOTABLE PERSONALITIES OF HAQQISLAM	98
Tarik Mansuri	98
Leila Sharif	99
Nazarova Twins	100
Husam Yasbir	101
INDEX	110



INTRODUCTION

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

“It is not just in the Search, but also in the harbouring and fostering of Knowledge that we prosper. We seek, gather, and teach so that we can all take steps towards the same path.”

Saladin, O-12 Liaison Officer, addressing the Öberhaus, O-12's Senate, during an update on the Paradiso situation.

A path to fulfilment for those who follow it, an enigma to many who don't. Yet Haqqislam is also much more than an ideology. It is an interstellar nation, that nation's people, and their combined Search for Knowledge. Those who follow in the Prophet's footsteps never walk alone.

Reborn on Earth, re-centred on Bourak, and spread throughout the stars, Haqqislam has shed the confining dogma of its past aspects to become a philosophy that endorses the pursuit of artistic, philosophical, and scientific knowledge on both a personal and communal level. Haqqislam is the empowerment of the individual so that humanity can achieve greatness.

The term Haqqislam encompasses so much more, however, including the nation and its people. Renowned as a nation of traders, hawking is in the very marrow of their culture and embedded in the DNA of every Haqqislamite, the many mystical layers of the bargain bewildering to the outsider. A monopoly on the Silk trade and an entire network of caravanserai spread throughout the Human Sphere ensure that their mercantile might will not be challenged any time soon. If any power should dare to try, the Sword of Allah will teach them the error of their ways.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

More than just an expansion, this sourcebook aims to provide a “one-stop shop” for all things Haqqislam, including everything needed to create characters, run campaigns, or just immerse oneself completely in the ethos of a favoured faction.

CHAPTER 1 – FACTION: HAQQISLAM

An insightful delve into Haqqislam and its people. Tour the hot, dusty continents of Bourak and the raucous streets of its cities. Discover the many branches of the Haqqislam's military might – the Sword of Allah – uncover whispers of the feared Hassassins, and attempt to unravel the intricacies of the guilds.

Haqqislam's president, Hachib Aisha bint Osman, oversees the most powerful mercantile nation in the Human Sphere; a fact that largely stems from sole dominance of the Silk trade and the

establishment of the lucrative Silk Road. Learn how the interlocking parts of the Haqqislamite machinery help to maintain that dominance.

CHAPTER 2 – BOURAK

The only inhabited planet of the system that shares its name, Bourak is an arid, sometimes unwelcoming planet that is nevertheless both spiritual and physical home to Haqqislam.

Tamed somewhat across the decades thanks to the marvels of terraforming, Bourak has slowly been guided towards becoming a new vision of the garden of Al-Andalus of old. Extending outwards from the lush gardens of the more civilised tropics, travellers soon enter dusty savannahs and dry deserts that then give way to indomitable mountain ranges. Bourak is unfor- giving to the foolish, but bountiful to the faithful, as evidenced by its abundance of the miracle known as Silk.

Divided into a Caliphate, a Khanate, a Shahnate, and a Sultanate, each with their own form of governance and responsibilities, Bourak can often simmer with a level of intrigue that is proportional to the daytime temperatures of its deserts. Though all are welcome to visit the Prophet's Steed, outsiders are advised to step warily.

CHAPTER 3 – CARAVANSERAI

The road from Earth to Bourak was an arduous one for the Haqqislamites during their transit across the stars, though they did leave the keys to their ancestor's trade dominance in their wake. Waystations, trade bazaars, and neutral ports stationed at almost every wormhole transit point, Haqqislam's caravanserai are an important link in their mercantile chain. They also act as garrisons for the Qapu Khalqi, which serves to provide them with a very long reach.

CHAPTER 4 – CORSAIRS

Piracy is illegal in every system of the Human Sphere. Some say that providing a Letter of Marque to a corsair is nothing more than legitimising piracy. Irrespective of how they are perceived, corsairs provide an invaluable service to an overstretched fleet. Of course, the fact that they are also given a lengthy rein to conduct questionable operations is simply coincidence. Corsair captains will be able to conduct extended campaigns with the insights offered here.

“Why did I join the Khawarijs? And why should you? Because there are no truer embodiments of the Word and its people, in both words and deeds. I have outfought the best the Human Sphere and its alien invaders have to offer and cornered the logic of foreigners during their attempts to ridicule the Word. We are sworn to defend Haqqislam with body and mind, what greater responsibility could there be? I have heard you debate. Cast aside your doubts. I would not be here to bring you into the fold if I did not believe you were worthy.”

Tarik Mansuri, University of Talawat, settling the nerves of a potential Red Turban recruit.



CHAPTER 5 – GEAR

The advancements that Silk can offer in the biotechnical arena are second to none, though Haqqislam has also developed specialities in other arenas. New armour, weapons, and technological advancements presented here will offer every Haqqislamite an edge, whether through i-Kohl enhancements, Silk augmentations, or deadly poisons. Possessions serve as a distraction from the Search, but an invaluable tool when defending its teachings.

CHAPTER 6 – HAQQISLAMITE CHARACTERS

With a tenuous hold on their claim to the status as a Hyperpower, Haqqislam draws upon a diverse catalogue of vocations to ensure they maintain their grip. New social statuses, adolescent events, and career decisions will enable PCs to become truly one amongst the faithful. Operate a caravan, gain a coveted Red Turban, or join the mysterious Hassassins with the rules on offer in this chapter.

CHAPTER 7 – ADVERSARIES

The bustling city streets and lawless wilds of Bourak can hide many surprises for the unwary, as can the depths of Haqqislam's stellar reach. Philosophers and doctors unknowingly rub shoulders with Hassassins from multiple disciplines, all under the ever-watchful gaze of the Qapu Khalqi elite. Escaping into the blackness of space offers no solitude if the corsairs plying the space lanes there have any say.

A number of richly detailed NPCs help to round out the collection of adversaries, each with their own unique storylines and capabilities. From the Hassassin Muyib and Djanbazan, to the incisive journalist, Mikha'il Al-Tajar, there are a number of opportunities to introduce Haqqislam's unique ideology to any *Infinity* campaign.

CHAPTER 1
FACTION: HAQQISLAMGEAR:
HUNZAKUTS
AND TUAREGS

People from these backgrounds prefer solid, dependable, portable equipment over sophisticated tools. Easily maintained rifles, shotguns, and sniper rifles make up their main armament, backed up by simple antipersonnel mines. Hunzakuts often carry forward-observing equipment and deployable repeaters to extend the range of more sophisticated Haqqislamite troops. Tuaregs occasionally carry hacking devices and medical equipment, depending on their training.

THE SWORD
OF ALLAHSTRENGTH THROUGH
DIVERSITY

Haqqislam is a patchwork nation. Its diversity is a huge challenge for the Haqqislamite High Command, but also a source of great strength. From the Tuareg desert tribes to the educated elites of Medina, the Haqqislamite military can call on a huge array of skills, resources, and even raw numbers. The trick is melding it together into an efficient fighting force.

The task of building a unified fighting force falls to the Amirs, officers of the Sword of Allah. They receive some of the finest training in the Human Sphere at schools dedicated to military learning. The Hafzas of the Qapu Khalqi learn tactical flexibility and the art of command, whereas the Khawarij warrior-sages lead by example, exemplars of the faith dedicated as much to study as they are to war. The bedrock on which these Amirs build their armies is the Ghulam light infantry, the largest regular fighting force on Bourak.

PEOPLE OF THE DESERT
AND THE MOUNTAINS

Despite decades of terraforming, Bourak is still a harsh, untamed, and desolate world. In some cases, such as the mountains of Gabqar where the Hunza people live, this situation is intentional so that Silk can be cultivated in its natural habitat. Elsewhere,

such as the deserts of the Taba subcontinent, terraforming efforts have not made any significant impact. The Tuareg people call this unforgiving land their home, and it will be many generations before their way of life is changed by the grand project to transform the surface of Bourak.

These two peoples – the Hunza and the Tuareg – supply scouts to the Haqqislamite High Command. The Hunzakuts and Tuaregs earn their skills by surviving in deeply inhospitable territory, no regimented military academies or sophisticated education programs for them. They excel at reading terrain, infiltration and concealment, and guerilla tactics.

This isn't to say that the people of the desert and the mountains are without technical skills. On the contrary, the Tuaregs are known as fine doctors and assault hackers. The Hunzakuts do not typically bring technical skills to the battle, although they are equipped with simple, sturdy equipment to support their more sophisticated allies.

THE PROPHET'S MEDICINE

Haqqislam boasts the finest medical researchers in the Human Sphere, a resource which the Sword of Allah takes advantage of wherever possible. At the basic level, the medical training of Haqqislam's line troopers far exceeds that of other nations – a Ghulam doctor is always a welcome sight on the battlefield.

The elite field medics take this expertise to a new level, exemplified by the Janissary Akbar Doctors. The Janissary Regiment is made up of orphans and the donated children of non-Haqqislamites who are raised with absolute devotion to the faith, and the faith holds medical education as one of its highest ideals. Janissaries who choose to specialise in *Tebb Al-Nabi*, the Prophet's Medicine, perform the most complex surgeries even in the heat of battle.

Cutting-edge medical research also has an impact on the Sword of Allah. Considerable research budgets aim to create better soldiers. These modifications can be subtle, such as those that grant regenerative abilities to the Djanbazan Tactical Group. At the other extreme, programs such as the *Runihura* (Destructor) genetic enhancements grant the Khawarijs superhuman strength and agility.

KUM GANGS

Kum Motorized Troops are a truly unique addition to the Sword of Allah. Recruited from the lawless Kyrgyz people of the Gabqar Khanate, they roar into battle on their motorcycles with a bluster that seems completely at odds with the usual Haqqislamite discipline.

Criminal motorcycle gangs, the Kum take advantage of the harsh terrain in the Tien Shan Mountains to skim profits off the Silk trade. They operate illegal drug labs and counterfeiting operations, run guns, brawl and bluster, and race. Theirs is a macho and competitive sub-culture of heightened passions, deep loyalties and rivalries (until they aren't), and almost superhuman skills in the saddle.

The Sword of Allah recruits the best Kum bikers to join their armies, giving them a useful outlet for their aggression. The bikers go partly for bragging rights, partly out of loyalty to Haqqislam, and partly to keep the authorities from digging too deeply into their operations. It's an uneasy alliance.



QAPU KHALQI

The Qapu Khalqi are the armed forces of the Funduq Sultanate responsible for safeguarding Haqqislam's interstellar trade, and the all-important Silk Route. To perform this vital role, the Qapu Khalqi have fostered a distinct ability to successfully recruit and utilise mercenaries. Despite being a diverse and hybrid force, they still remain competent and steadfast.

Guarding the Silk maglev as it crosses the empty deserts of Bourak and the caravanserais at every major waypoint throughout the Human Sphere, the Qapu Khalqi is frequently under-resourced and under-staffed. For this reason, the Qapu Khalqi cultivates a very particular set of skills in its soldiers: independence, flexibility, creativity.

A Qapu Khalqi soldier is expected to defend Haqqislam's interests throughout the Human Sphere using whatever tools are to hand. In some cases, this is a regimen of cutting edge medical treatments, such as those that grant the Djanbazan Tactical Group its regenerative powers. In other cases, it's a wall of armour; the Azra'il Special Deterrence Group use their impressive bulk to intimidate would-be Silk thieves into abandoning their plans before they've begun.

Sometimes, the only tool at hand is money. The Funduq Sultanate is very wealthy and not afraid to use that wealth to recruit mercenaries to its cause. Some of these, such as the Kaplan Tactical Service,

THE DRUZE SOCIETY

The Druze Society is one of the largest criminal organisations in the Human Sphere, stretching to Earth where they oversee road-based traffic between Asia Minor and the East African Space Elevator. Most soldiers encounter the Druze Society's Shock Teams, paramilitary units with sophisticated equipment, often hired by the Qapu Khalqi.

The inner workings of the Druze Society are a mystery to the Human Sphere at large. Their influence is rapidly growing, stretching even to ownership of the newly-constructed Bayram Caravanserai, at the wormhole connecting Bourak to Concilium and Paradiso. Their goals, and even their organisational structure, are obscure, and that's exactly the way the Druze Society wants it.

are provided by Haqqislamite private interests. Others come from major mercenary companies such as the Druze Society or even independent operators. The most flamboyant of these independents are the Yuan-Yuan, rampaging pirates that often spearhead a Qapu Khalqi assault.

Perhaps the most surprising source of mercenaries for the Qapu Khalqi is the Nomads. Nominally a rival power, the interests of the star-faring Nomads and the defenders of Haqqislam's interstellar trade network often overlap. When this happens, Nomad troops are integrated smoothly into a Qapu Khalqi command. These Nomads typically come from *Corregidor* and include light infantry Alguaciles, heavy Mobile Brigada, and even TAGs.

ODALISQUES

The Qapu Khalqi's remit is protection of Haqqislamite trade throughout the Human Sphere, of the Silk Route, and of powerful Haqqislamites wherever they might travel. No one handles this last task – personal protection – better than the Odalisques.

Haqqislamite high society is as concerned with appearance as anywhere else in the Human Sphere. The wealthy and powerful like to surround themselves with the bright and the beautiful – men and women with the skills to make their masters look good. These people make up the modern Haqqislamite Neo-concubinage.

Life around the powerful is frequently dangerous. Assassination attempts, burglaries, and hostage-taking are surprisingly common. Some of the Concubines saw a business opportunity, remaking themselves not only as pleasing companions and conversationalists, but also deadly bodyguards. It's an attractive proposition – why fill your artfully-designed garden with thugs if you can instead fill it with charming men and women who *also* keep you safe?

These are the Odalisques. Highly trained in combat and entertainment, physically perfect, and discreet.



CORRUPTION IN THE QAPU KHALQI

There's a darker side to the Funduq Sultanate's wealth, corruption. It is endemic throughout government and commerce in the region and stretches even to the military. Wealth, and the right contacts, can buy you a command.

Fortunately, a combat position with the Qapu Khalqi can never grant you the same influence or power as a bureaucratic post, so it is rare for a fundamentally lazy or ineffectual officer to buy their way into a position of authority. In those rare cases where it does happen, word spreads fast. Such an officer can find it surprisingly difficult to muster a reasonable fighting force, particularly when it comes to recruiting mercenaries.

COORDINATING DIVERSITY

The sheer diversity of troops available to the Qapu Khalqi makes them very difficult to manage as a fighting force. The Balisehir Naval Academy, training ground for many Qapu Khalqi officers, targets its curriculum accordingly. Officer cadets hone their decision-making skills, their independent spirit, and their creative thinking.

This suite of skills is epitomised in the Hafza Unit. Named for the guardian angels in Islamic mythology who protect a believer from the influence of the devil, the Hafzas take personal responsibility for the lives of their soldiers. They are known for their leadership, their tactical flexibility, and their willingness to lead by example. They are so valuable that the Qapu Khalqi issues Hafzas with special holoprojector concealment technology to preserve them on the battlefield. Any Qapu Khalqi soldier calmly issuing orders could be a Hafza in disguise.

THE HASSASSIN SOCIETY

The Hassassins are an intelligence organisation unlike any other. A quasi-mystical order stretching across the stars, their goal is to preserve humanity's Search for Knowledge. Haqqislam exemplifies the search, and so the Hassassins strive to protect it, but their interests are not always aligned with the government of Bourak. To say they have a long leash is to imply that they are leashed at all; the mysterious Old Man of the Mountain is their only master.

OBJECTIVES

The Hassassins have one objective: to protect the Search for Knowledge. This guiding principle seems simple, but its implications are vast.

Anyone who opposes the Search for Knowledge is a target, reactionary or fanatical organisations in particular, but also anyone who seeks to hinder scientific or cultural advancement for political or economic purposes. The Hassassins are also implacable foes of existential threats. The most obvious is the Combined Army, but this stretches to scientific organisations pursuing research into weapons of mass destruction. (The Black Labs of the Nomad Praxis are frequent targets.)

Moreover, the Hassassins seek to stamp out attitudes and ideas that might block the scientific and cultural progress of the Human Sphere, often by assassinating advocates for these ideas. The Hassassins wield these deaths as a propaganda tool. Enemies of the Search for Knowledge should always live in fear.

Hassassins consider Haqqislam to be the shining light of the Search for Knowledge, its exemplar and its primary driver. They are all too aware, however, that day-to-day secular concerns can corrupt even the faithful. No Haqqislamite is immune to the attention of the Hassassins – not ordinary citizens, not scientists or researchers, not even the Hachib and the Council of Walī. The Hassassins see themselves as the conscience of the faithful and, whenever necessary, their judge.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Hassassins are a secretive society and a mystical sect. The bonds that unite them are unlike those formed in any other intelligence organisation. Hassassins everywhere are loyal to an ideal and are united by shared secrets, initiation into mysteries, and the belief that they alone are privy to the Universe's deepest truths.

When people think of Hassassins, they usually imagine silent assassins infiltrating military and political organisations to murder their assigned targets. Although such operatives exist, the Hassassin Fiday for example, they are not the entirety of the Hassassin Society.

There are Hassassin agents all over the Human Sphere, in every niche imaginable. They are analysts, software engineers, artists, scholars, personal assistants, security guards, writers, soldiers, pirates, and scientists. Frequently, they know only a handful of other Hassassins and sometimes none at all. But they all know the signs, the passphrases, symbols, and encryption keys that identify a fellow operative.

A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES

The Old Man of the Mountain maintains a direct line of communication with the Hachib, acting as a close advisor to the Haqqislamite president. This, along with the presence of Hassassins in the Sword of Allah and the Diwān al Jund, gives the organisation a veneer of legitimacy, however, the Hassassins are completely independent. They tolerate no government oversight, and their actions are only hazily understood in the halls of power.

Hassassins are hunted by rival intelligence operatives with a special vehemence. Partly this is borne out of distaste for their methods, but sometimes also professional jealousy, not to mention the appeal of finally discovering their secrets. To avoid this attention, Hassassins sometimes masquerade as operatives from other agencies, even when seconded to comparatively-open Bureau Noir operations. This additional layer of deception has destabilised more than one Bureau Noir team.

All authority ultimately flows from the Old Man of the Mountain, and his seal of approval is on every order. But, a Hassassin is guided by deeply-held principles. Though an order from the Old Man will always be followed to the letter, Hassassins do not hesitate to act alone if the need is clear.

MISSION BRIEFINGS

Other intelligence agencies typically rely on some sort of handler/agent arrangement, where agents build up a relationship with a particular commander or receive orders from a recognisable chain of command. The Hassassins are different. A mission for a Hassassin operative could be delivered by anyone, frequently using a dizzying network of dead drops both physical and quantronic. Sometimes a Hassassin will be approached by someone completely unexpected with a mission – a politician or soldier from a rival nation, or an ordinary civilian. If they know the correct passphrases, then a field operative has found themselves an unexpected ally.

The form of the briefing can also vary widely, from a fully-immersive quantronic environment to a note hand-written on archival-quality parchment. Reporting on progress often involves delivering messages to dead drops and waiting for some sort of response from whoever is guiding the operation.

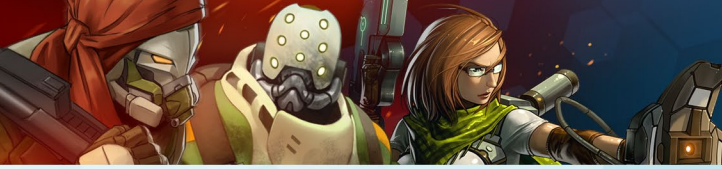
Delivering a briefing can even form part of a Hassassin's mission, effectively creating a chain: the first Hassassin receives orders to deliver an assignment to a second operative, who may in turn be charged with delivering a briefing to a third, and so on. Finding the appropriate person, a secure location, and the right time to deliver a message from the Old Man of the Mountain can be a huge and complex task.

"We cannot expect every scholar to make the right choice. Sometimes even the purest, most dedicated scientist is too close to their own research to realise the threat it poses, the potential dangers it might unleash. When this happens, we must choose for them. And we must make an example, to guide their colleagues back to the true Search for Knowledge."

– Hassassin Al-Awari. Subha, Hassassin general instruction master class, imparted at an indeterminate point in Iran Zhat Al Amat, Bourak

EXOTIC MISSION BRIEFINGS

Very occasionally, mission briefings are delivered in a truly unusual fashion. This has even included the use of Chisisi Arks, one of a kind security boxes, built out of luxurious hardwood, impossible to open without the appropriate instructions. Each Chisisi Ark is a unique work of art. On at least one occasion, a Hassassin spent five years learning how to open a Chisisi Ark. When she finally succeeded, she found orders within that showed a supernatural degree of prescience, given they'd been written half a decade earlier.



PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Rumours abound that the Old Man of the Mountain has developed a method for predicting the future. The exact nature of this secret system is a complete mystery desperately sought by every major player in the Human Sphere. The system — if real — allows the Old Man to process vast amounts of data and make specific predictions about real-world situations. The error margin and amount of forewarning the predictions provide are unknown. In the wildest imaginings of conspiracy theorists and intelligence operatives everywhere, this system grants more than short-range prescience, however, for it also provides the means to manipulate the Human Sphere on timescales much longer than a human lifespan.

THE RIGHT TOOLS

Although every Hassassin is trained to kill, not every operative is an assassin. There is no value in wasting the unique talents an agent might bring to the Society. Indeed, doing so runs counter to the core Hassassin mission. The degree of combat training each Hassassin receives therefore reflects their role. Of course, roles change, so training adapts — self-improvement ends only with death.

GHAZI MUTTAWIAH

Every Hassassin is ready to fight for their cause, should the need arise. This includes the scholars, the priests, and the civilians. Every operative receives enough training to operate basic combat tools — a chain rifle, a jammer, smoke grenades — and will not hesitate to use them if they are called upon to support another Hassassin. These troops, rudimentarily trained but absolutely committed, are known as Ghazi Muttawiah.

AGENTS

Describing the average Hassassin is an impossible task. They come from every walk of life imaginable but are united by a philosophy, shared secrets, training, and methods.

THE HASSASSIN PERSONALITY

The Search for Knowledge is the light that guides and spiritually nourishes a Hassassin. It is the most important thing in their lives.

Each Hassassin has a personal project, some aspect of the Search for Knowledge to which they dedicate themselves. This may be mastering techniques for infiltration and murder, but it could also be poetry, political science, medicine, teaching, or gardening. This project might be the reason they were recruited, or it could be incidental to the cause. What matters is that the Hassassin exemplifies humanity's quest for scientific, cultural, and artistic betterment.

These features distil self-assuredness and determination in Hassassin operatives. They are aware of their own capabilities, confident in their cause, united in a grand project. They are also surrounded and supported by a loyal network of other Hassassins, sharing in their great task.

RECRUITMENT

Two routes to recruitment are most common, either an invitation, or a personal quest. Hassassin operatives throughout the Human Sphere keep their eyes open for possible recruits. Indeed, for some Hassassins, recruitment is their personal mission. They excel at identifying the sorts of minds that might suit the cause.

The Hassassin Society is made of layers upon layers of mysteries and secrets — the lowest level operatives may not even realise that they have been tapped to work for the Old Man of the Mountain. As service continues, and loyalty, skill, and the right mindset are demonstrated, a recruit will find themselves inducted further and further into the Society's mysteries, until one day they learn that they are a Hassassin.

The personal quest is much rarer. Sometimes an individual — perhaps an intelligence operative from a rival power, or a fatally curious believer — will head into the deserts of Iran Zhat Al Amat, or the Moons of the Seven Imams, in search of the Hassassins. Most of these individuals are left to die in the hostile environment, or else killed. But a vanishing few, chosen for obscure reasons, are taken and inducted into the mysteries of the Hassassin Society.

TRAINING

Nobody washes out of Hassassin training. You either make it, or you disappear. The training regimen is brutal physically, mentally, and emotionally. Its real purpose is to instill a deep moral code, and an absolute devotion to the Search for Knowledge; nothing else is sufficient. This is not blind obedience, however — curiosity and exploration are actively encouraged, even though they occasionally get trainees killed.

Most of a Hassassin's training occurs one-on-one at the hands of individual mentors. Trainees will be passed from one mentor to the next, as their skills and development dictates. Each mentor — the mystics, Farzans, and assassins that make up the Hassassin Society — has their own methods, forcing trainees to adapt to constantly changing circumstances.

As well as practical lessons delivered in the HaqqMutazilite style, induction into the Hassassin Society also has a mystical side. Trainees will experience various ceremonies, meditations, and rituals (sometimes drug-assisted) all designed to put them on a path to inner spiritual discovery. These are the secrets of the Hassassins, leading eventually to mastery of the Six Subtleties, the psycho-spiritual organs that provide the most dedicated Hassassins with their preternatural skills.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Each Hassassin operative develops and constructs their own tools. This is true whatever the agent's area of expertise — custom quantronic hardware and hand-coded geists are just as common as one-of-a-kind poisons and hand-sculpted firearms. Two pieces of custom equipment are typically developed by every Hassassin, personal ciphers, and layered cover identities.

Every Hassassin is encouraged to choose their own personal ciphers — codes in which they can keep notes, make mission reports, and communicate with allies. The mathematically-minded develop their own. Less technically-inclined operatives choose from a vast library of personal ciphers kept on record by the Hassassins. The choice of personal cipher frequently reflects some aspect of the Hassassin's self-image. It might be something they find particularly poetic or beautiful, or it might have been used by an agent whose history they admire or wish to emulate, or any number of other reasons.

It is understood that there is no cipher that the Old Man of the Mountain cannot crack. Thus, no matter how obscure the code, all Hassassin communiqués and reports are open to the Hassassin hierarchy.

Hassassins also develop their own cover identities wherever possible. It is common to emulate the structure of the broader organisation by building layered identities. Just as the ETTVAK conceals the Hassassin Bahram, and the Bahram acts as a cover for the heart of the sect, so an individual Hassassin will frequently build multiple layers into their secret identities. They might masquerade as a member of the Haqqislamite Muhafiz, who is concealed as a PanOceanian agent of the Hexahedron, undercover as a low-level professor at a research University on Concilium Prime.

THE GUILDS

The Sword of Allah, Qapu Khalqi, and Hassassin Society all allow Haqqislam to project force throughout the Human Sphere. Arguably, though, the greatest source of Haqqislam's power is the Guilds. These mercantile organisations specialise in Haqqislam's three great technical strengths: terraforming via the Master Gardeners; advanced medicine via the Biohealth Corps; and the supply of Silk, crucial to humanity's system of immortality, via the Silk Lords.

MASTER GARDENERS

The Master Gardeners are responsible for Haqqislam's defining project, terraforming Bourak. Their task is generations long, requiring constant careful work. Artificially induced changes to climate, soil conditions, biospheres, even the composition of the air, all need to be monitored and minutely tweaked. The risk of catastrophic failure is always present – the disaster at Semetei Valley is never far

HISTORICAL OPERATIONS

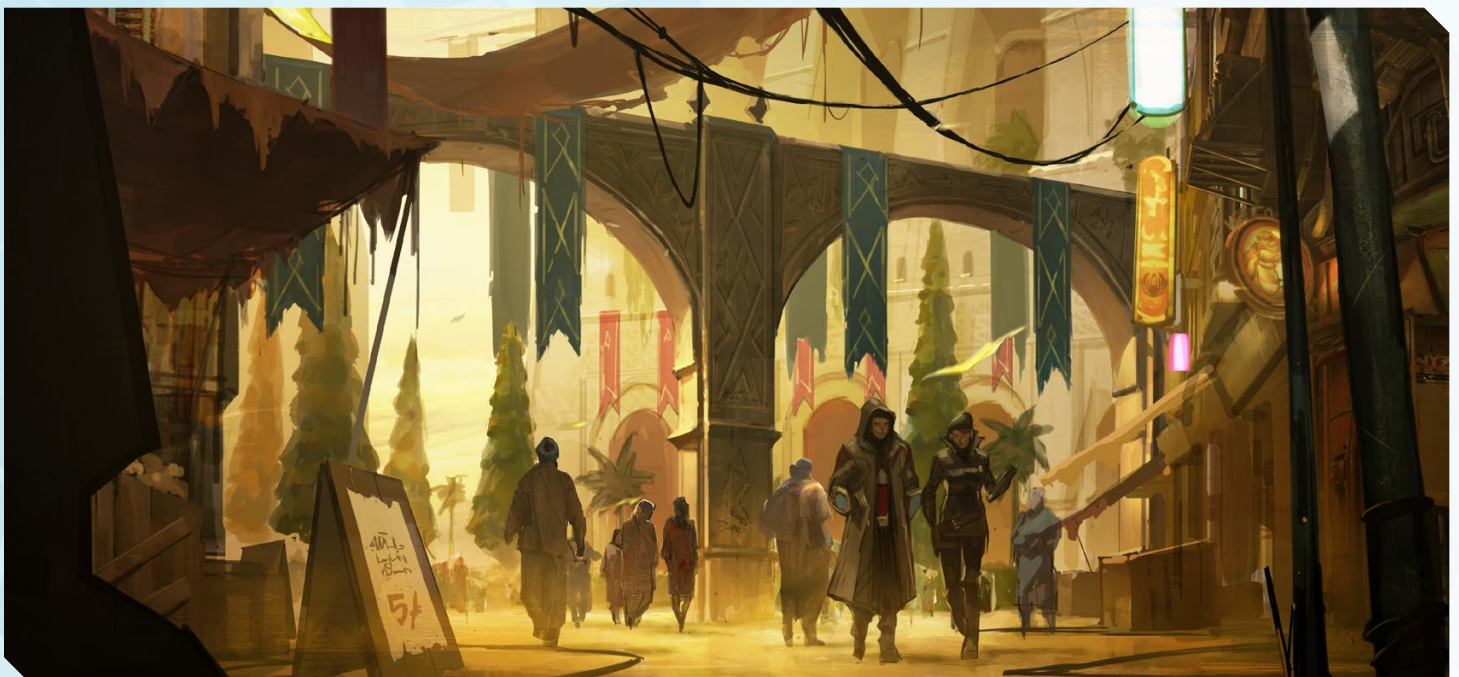
Equinox: The conflict between the techno-terrorist organisation Equinox and the Hassassin Govads is legendary. Covert tracking and elimination specialists operating in the early days of Haqqislam to target any threats to the new religion, the Govads identified a surge in activity from Equinox, whose goal was violent technological revolution throughout the Human Sphere. A clandestine war between the two organisations followed. The Govads succeeded at locating and exterminating dozens of active Equinox cells. However, in a deadly and well-resourced counter-strike, they were reduced to only one man: Dawud Al-Dafani.

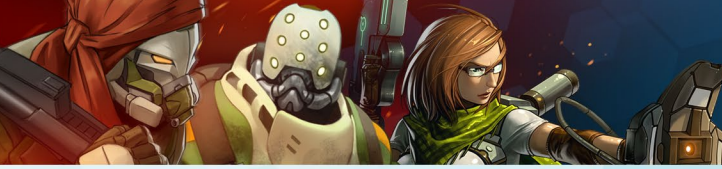
With the backing of the Old Man of the Mountain, Al-Dafani recruited and trained a new generation of Govads, hardened fighters happy to sacrifice themselves for the cause. They blazed their way across the Sphere, annihilating Equinox cells and finally putting a stop to their nefarious plans.

Hostile Takeovers: The Hassassins are the secret driving force behind Zero Day Capital, a venture capital firm dedicated to financing new technology start-ups throughout the Human Sphere. Their true purpose is to identify companies engaged in potentially destructive research, acquire and dismantle them, and redirect their researchers towards harmless goals.

Their most dramatic intervention involved the memetic research start-up Clear Hearts. The company's in-development software was designed to ease heartache – the end of a relationship, the passing of a loved one – using a carefully tailored memetic virus that dampened specific emotions. Hassassin operatives working for Zero Day concluded that this virus had the side-effect of deadening curiosity, and so targeted the company for destruction. Using a complex series of financial manoeuvres, social engineering, and one assassination, they drove the company out of business, discredited its founder, and split up its software development team across three planets.

The lead Clear Hearts engineer vanished. Rumour has it she was recruited by the Hassassins and is currently working on a weaponised version of the virus for use by the Society.





ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Master Gardeners are active participants in the Haqqislamite education system.

Children are taught about preserving water, maintaining small gardens, making effective use of waste, and contributing in a myriad of small ways.

Haqqislamites frequently carry these habits throughout their lives. It's quite common for Haqqislamites to maintain small gardens wherever they go, including into space.

from a Master Gardener's mind – but the rewards of success are immeasurable.

The Master Gardeners wield immense power on Bourak. They're intimately connected with government; the Hachib is personally advised by no less than three Gardeners. The continued success of the terraforming project is often considered emblematic of political success. Even small environmental failures or missteps have been known to end political careers.

On the other hand, the Master Gardeners are virtually powerless off Bourak. Sometimes they are hired to advise on local habitat recovery or other environmental projects, but the terraforming of Bourak always takes precedence.

HIERARCHY

The Terraforming Council is the peak government agency responsible for the terraforming project across Bourak. Based out of Iran Zhat Al Amat, they coordinate planet-wide operations. The Council consists of over a hundred scientists, policy experts, financiers, and other advisors. Ultimate authority falls to the twelve members of the Central Council, a diverse group with wildly varying areas of expertise. Three members of the Central Council advise the Hachib directly.

Beneath the Terraforming Council are the Gardener Guilds. Each is a nominally independent organisation, run along whatever lines its leaders choose. Some are family affairs, others operate more like independent research institutes, still others structure themselves as public or private corporations. Individual Gardener Guilds deal with specific projects: managing a tourist enclave, sculpting farmland, building terraforming towers, making climate modifications at specific locations across the planet, and any number of other components in the great endeavour.

Gardener Guilds win projects on tender from the Terraforming Council. Nepotism abounds – a Guild's success frequently hinges on who its leaders know, and how well they're able to grease the wheels. Nevertheless, the Terraforming Council maintains constant oversight, informed by an army of inspectors. It wouldn't do for the whole project to stumble because somebody's unqualified cousin botched a crucial project.

At the direction of the overall terraforming project, disagreements between individual Gardeners – which are generally scientific and theoretical more than anything else – are dealt with behind the closed doors of the Terraforming Council. Though often viciously fought, they almost never pass beyond this tight seal. More so than any of the other Haqqislamite Guilds, the Terraforming Council and the Master Gardeners present a united front to the world.

EXAMPLE MASTER GARDENERS

The Tahan Family: The T-Palaces – roving terraforming platforms the size of small towns (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 231) – never took hold across Bourak. Nevertheless, a few still exist, largely in Al Medinat. Perhaps the most famous, or infamous, if you're the Terraforming Council, is the small platform belonging to Mehmet Tahan and his extended family.

Mehmet's platform is officially rogue. It does not tender for projects via the Terraforming Council, instead roaming across the deserts and low-lying mountains of Bourak, providing environmental fixes wherever they're needed. The Tahan family see themselves as guardians of the poor, whose individual concerns fall far beneath the attention of the Terraforming Council. To the Terraforming Council, the Tahan Family are an uncontrolled variable in the entire project, a dangerous thorn that they haven't yet been able to remove.

Abigail Adid, Izil Ben M'Hidi, and Ziri: A close trio of Master Gardeners are on the Terraforming Council. Abigail Adid is a new member of the Central Council, vying for a position as advisor to the Hachib. Her two closest supporters are Izil Ben M'Hidi, a climate engineer, and Ziri, a marketing specialist. With their support, Adid's rise has been meteoric. She appears increasingly often in the media, frequently without the explicit approval of the rest of the Central Council.

Unbeknownst to anyone, including each other, Izil Ben M'Hidi and Ziri are both secret agents. Ziri is a Hassassin, whose mission is to manoeuvre Adid into the Hachib's confidences, to give the Hassassin Society an extra handle on the government and the terraforming project. Ben M'Hidi is an agent of the Yu Jing Yǎnjīng (*The Eyes*), with a similar goal – to engineer Adid into a position of authority, with connections in both the Master Gardeners and the office of the Hachib.

BIOHEALTH CORPS

The Biohealth Corps are the most academic of the Guilds on Bourak. By their very nature, they are heavily entwined with the universities and bimaristans, particularly in Al Medinat. Often, individual Biohealth Corps begin life as a group of researchers working in a publicly funded institution, who develop some new treatment or medicine and spin off a company to commercialise it.

The larger Biohealth Corps, such as Ma'an Azraq and Saygun Hill, are considered a haven for researchers. Employment at organisations such as these means freedom from the need to generate grant money and encouragement to explore whatever avenue of medical research is appealing. It's not without its pressures, though; Biohealth Corps exist to make money for their owners or shareholders, and eventually every research project is expected to contribute.

Nevertheless, many Biohealth Corps take the long view. Ground-breaking research takes time, and biomedical researchers need to be nurtured. This makes them extremely attractive to scientists from

across the Human Sphere. It's not at all uncommon for frustrated researchers from PanOceania or Yu Jing to emigrate to Bourak, so that they can take advantage of the generous opportunities.

HEALTH TOURISM

In addition to research and manufacturing facilities, the Biohealth Corps are heavily involved in running health spas and resorts across Bourak. They often do this work in tandem with the Master Gardeners, who help to create beautiful and therapeutic environments that can be marketed to people from all over the Human Sphere.

Not only is health tourism a huge money-spinner for Haqqislam, it also helps them project soft power throughout the Human Sphere. The people of rival nations – especially the wealthy, who can most easily afford the Circular travel – tend to look on Haqqislam more favourably when they have personal experience of its beautiful gardens and rejuvenating health treatments. The Government is well aware of this effect and works hard to encourage the smooth operation of the health tourism industry.

CORPORATE ESPIONAGE

The rosy picture of smiling health tourists and professionally fulfilled medical researchers inevitably hides a darker side. There is simply too much money involved for everyone to behave ethically. Corporate espionage and aggressive headhunting are rife. Rival Biohealth Corps are constantly sabotaging each other, and foreign powers find the Biohealth Corps a prime environment for poaching expertise. As one of the driving engines of the Bourakian economy and lacking the heavy protections of the Silk trade, they're also an excellent target for harming the interests of Haqqislam as a whole.

Most sizeable Biohealth Corps maintain a dedicated security staff, to protect both research and personnel. Wherever possible, the Corps try to convince governments, either regional or national, to take on the responsibility for these security jobs. Larger organisations are often projected by Ghulams seconded from the Sword of Allah, and there is always the chance that high-level executives or particularly valuable researchers count an Odalisque amongst their personal staff.

The Corps try to shield their researchers from this illicit activity, so that they can focus on their research. Nevertheless, the rumour mill runs at full speed. Discussions about the latest outlandish acts of espionage are common after-work gossip amongst Biohealth Corp workers. A rare few actively court the action, getting themselves involved in a world they see as exciting.

EXAMPLE BIOHEALTH CORPS

Echelon Technologies: This Biohealth Corp was recently spun out of the University of Medina in Al Medinat. Its lead researchers, Doctors Amina Nahhas and Caitlin Khan, are pioneering radical Silk-assisted brain surgery designed to eliminate the need for sleep. The research is so far largely theoretical, consisting of a truly vast suite of ALEPH-assisted simulations. It requires a complete rewiring of the brain so that tasks reserved for the left and right hemispheres are instead shared equally. This should allow the patient to rest one hemisphere of their brain at a time, much like the bottle-nosed dolphin.

The military applications for such surgery are clear, but the major remaining hurdle is ethical approval. Echelon have made three attempts to get approval for human trials, and each time they have been rejected. Their financiers are starting to get twitchy, and Dr Khan has begun to consider extra-legal methods for testing out her ideas.

Current Resort and Spa: A small, beautiful island floating off the coast of Ravansar houses the Current Resort and Spa. Catering almost exclusively to off-world trade, the tropical island is a paradise of exquisitely landscaped buildings hidden in a profusion of jungle. The island is entirely artificial, built by the Biohealth Corp Ava Industrial. It is also mobile. Although it tends to drift off the coast of Ravansar within easy reach of the Iran Zhat Al Amat capital and its attractions, it can be moved great distances at surprising speeds. Sometimes it is shifted at the request of a particularly powerful guest, or to follow some natural phenomenon such as an eclipse, or the migration of a pod of Bourakian Sea Serpents.

SILK LORDS

The Silk Lords are the mightiest of the Merchant Guilds. They are also the most corrupt, the most fractious, and the most closely watched – by the Hachib, the Hassassins, and every other major player in the Human Sphere. The success or failure of the Haqqislamite project, and maybe the entire Human Sphere, rests on their backs, for they control the production, export, and distribution of the most important drug in humanity's history.

The corrupting influence of the Silk Lords is felt most powerfully in the regional governments of Gabqar and Funduq; the former is the home of Silk production, and the latter is the site of the space elevator that connects the Silk trade to the Human Sphere. The regional governments and the Silk Lords are co-dependent, and so each works hard to control the other.

This push and pull has reached new heights since Kerim Bey became Sultan of Funduq and Lord of the Gate. Publicly, at least, he has made it his mission to break the power of the Silk Consortium. Whether his motives are pure or whether he is simply trying to replace Silk Lords who oppose him with those who are more amenable remains to be seen. Either way, it has made him many enemies. Kerim Bey never sleeps in the same place two nights in a row, and is constantly surrounded by a bodyguard of Djanbazans, Odalisesques, and Al Hawwa' hackers.



THE SULTAN AND THE EVOLVED INTELLIGENCE

Kerim Bey's enemies aren't simply domestic. Some of them aren't even human. Covert Shasvastii agents for the Evolved Intelligence have identified him as the leader of the Qapu Khalqi armada, a key obstacle to the Combined Army's invasion plans. Multiple attempts have been made on his life by Shasvastii Speculo Killers, and other members of the Shasvastii Expeditionary Force. This alone justifies Kerim Bey's paranoia.

MAGLEV HEIST

Silk is transported from Khiva Kala in the Gabqar Khanate, to Dar El Funduq in the Funduq Sultanate via a maglev. This single point of failure is defended by the Azra'il Special Deterrence Group. Ex-soldiers of the Sultan's personal guard, they wear massive armour and carry massive guns. Nevertheless, with some regularity people – criminals, renegade Silk Lords, foreign governments, even agents of the EI – get it into their heads to attempt a maglev robbery.

The most recent attempt was particularly ambitious, involving the creation of an entire fake maglev train. Its burnt-out remains still lie beside the maglev track, a source of pride for the Azra'il, and a sobering reminder for any would-be thieves.

EXAMPLE SILK LORDS

Efe El-Hashem Lund: Lund is one of the Silk Lords who has chosen to reside close to the source of Silk, in Khiva Kala. He is known for the lavish parties that he throws to see off the Silk maglev every Friday. These parties are extremely exclusive – the rich and famous of Haqqislamite society vie for invitations and are flown in for the occasion. Lund also operates a lottery, in which ten ordinary citizens receive an invitation to each party. The recipients of these lottery invites are also provided with the free services of a tailor.

Mariette "Jet" Naskali: After three separate attempts on the life of Kerim Bey, the Sultan of Funduq, Jet Naskali was declared an enemy of Haqqislam. Her assets were seized and handed over to her former chief advisor Halim Sleiman. Sleiman promptly pledged his absolute allegiance to Funduq's ruler.

Unbeknownst to Kerim Bey, Sleiman remains loyal to Jet Naskali; the old Silk Lord is still in charge, running her operation from space. She lives in opulent quarters, specially designed to be easily inserted into any of her corsair ships, or even secreted inside caravanserai across the Human Sphere. Tracking her is an almost impossible task; a team of loyal Al Hawwa' hackers cover her movements, scrambling her transmissions so no one knows if she is communicating from a distant system, or the corsair ship right off your port side.

ORGANISATION

The Silk Lords operate like a collection of independent crime families. Each has their own Silk production facilities, land, ships, corsairs, and soldiers. Each also has their own pet government officials – members of the Silk Lord's extended family, or else individuals bribed or threatened into collaboration.

The personality of each individual Silk Lord sets the tone for their own operation. Some think of themselves purely as businesspeople, whereas others run their operations ruthlessly. Organisations tend to be dynastic, although power plays by not-so-loyal advisors and would-be warlords aren't uncommon. Hiranur Begum won her position by popular acclaim following the assassination of Selim IX, for example, and that election has proven a successful choice for her organisation.

The Silk Consortium nominally speaks for the Silk Lords collectively. It is a body where all of the Lords can meet on neutral ground with guarantees of safety in place and argue out issues that concern them all. In practice, it is only united when the whole system is threatened. Since the rise of Kerim Bey, the Silk Consortium has seen an unusually high level of cooperation.

The Silk Lords also combine their resources at several key bottlenecks in the supply chain, the maglev that transports Silk across the continent from Khiva Kala to Dar El Funduq, for example. They also pool their resources for military training; the Al Hawwa', a secret naval unit of combat hackers and electronic warfare specialists, are funded in part by the Silk Consortium. Although they officially serve the Sultanate, few doubt that Silk Consortium funding comes with strings attached.

Most Silk Lords maintain headquarters in Dar El Funduq, at the heart of Haqqislam's mercantile empire. They typically reside in beautiful but well-fortified compounds, patrolled by bodyguards that essentially amount to private armies. A few Silk Lords prefer to reside in more remote places – Khiva Kala, or even on Haqqislamite caravanserai. This inevitably makes them safer but takes them away from the action.

CHAPTER 2

BOURAK

In the footsteps of the Prophet travelled the Sālik, the settlers, adventurers, and Haqqislam faithful. Hope for a new home led them on, the will of Allah guided them, the twin traditions of Haqqislam gave them wings, and the Fareedat system they found. Of the four planets of the Fareedat system, the second closest to the star, Bourak, was their destiny...

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

When the Sālik first arrived in orbit around Bourak they found a barely hospitable new world. Close to its star and with a majority of the continents straddling the tropical latitudes, it was uncomfortably hot. Undeterred in the face of a challenge, the Haqqislamites set about turning this new world into a home.

Terraforming projects, most predominantly a vast network of T2 or Terraforming Towers, were introduced and built slowly. This project was not to be the harsh subjugation of a new world, but a gentle coaxing, a step-by-step and patient luring of vibrancy and life from the coarse and mottled lands they found. As their work continued, the verdancy of life extended, the boundaries of habitability shifted, and Bourak took its first steps toward becoming the garden world of Al-Andalus.

Bourak is a world of contrasts that blend one into the other. The tropical bands are the heart of civilisation, in many places the terraforming project has resulted in lush gardens, arable fields, and the slow spread of flora from Earth. As the latitudes get more distant from the equator, the lands are harsher, dominated by savannahs of wild grasses and vast deserts punctuated by oases of parasol fungus, tough scrub, and low spiny trees.

There are many mountain ranges across Bourak. These are cold and unforgiving places, rocky and barren, except for the scrub and gorse that are hardy enough to survive. A majority of the mountain ranges are low extensive networks of valleys and peaks and cover a significant area. The ranges govern the weather systems. With a blistering sun, the rain clouds don't travel far inland, and the ranges dictate where they move and where they dump their precious cargoes of water. This, in turn, directs abundance and scarcity, a measure of how hard life must work to survive.

Haqqislamite citizens, and any traveling far beyond the comforting embrace of the cities, must make sure they pack intelligently. Survival and the will to see another day were hallmarks of the early settlers, and this has become a pervasive cultural attitude that lives on. Even with the noticeable effects terraforming has had on the planet and its climate and weather systems, storms can be violent and sudden. Great rolling winds off the savannahs or deserts, pushed by the heat in the atmosphere, can be frightening for those used to it and terrifying for those not. Storms off the deserts carry sand with enough force to sandblast building exteriors or vehicles and even injure the unprepared. From the savannahs, the storms often carry seed-threads. The violence of a storm's electrically charged temper often dissipates as quickly as it arrives.

In contrast to the land, the oceans are awash with life. The intensity of the star Fareedat might blister the earth, but in the oceans, it causes vast algal blooms and a profusion of phytoplankton-like lifeforms that form the basis for a massive food chain. The most common marine animals are the sea-snakes, which are present in a huge variety of species, ranging from the small and worm-like through to true basilisks, serpents of gargantuan proportion. Due to the warmth of the waters, many of the reptile-like species have evolutionary counterparts which thrive in the oceans.

Bourak is a hard world in many respects, but through faith, tenacity, and endurance, the Haqqislamites have managed to do more than survive, they have thrived. Faith runs deeper at the core of Haqqislamite society, beyond the obvious, the daily calls to prayer and contemplation, the minarets that puncture the skyline. One expression of this faith is in the planet itself. The nursery of Haqqislam is an ongoing project deeply threaded with social and spiritual importance.

Over generations, the Haqqislamites have quietly toiled at the task of bringing life to the deserts, abundance where there was scarcity. This task is far from done and yet edges closer to the ideal. The search for knowledge goes on, and so with it the process of transforming Bourak from a harsh land into a verdant paradise. The inherent duality of the Haqqislamite mind set, the methodical and naturalistic approach of the Hakim and the introspective and more mystical Mawla, seeks an overall balance in the world. A world where high civilisation and nature in all its fullness can co-exist in equilibrium.

A BALANCE

Haqqislam is a journey with two dominant paths, that of the Hakim and that of the Mawla. Cities, towns, and villages throughout Bourak, even the poorest, usually contain some symbol of the balance between the two. Gardens, some small and some luxuriant, form a significant part of the architecture and layout of settlements on Bourak, and for many symbolise the dual paths of the faith. Of course, such displays of life, like displays of opulence, also represent progress and change being wrought on the planet itself. As much as the caravanserais are of the Khaniqah, so are the gardens and parks of the towns and cities.

OCEAN ZONES

The Euphotic (Sunlight) Zone of the oceans of Bourak extends somewhat deeper than on Earth. This results, as far as researchers have been able to estimate, in a much higher density of marine life on Bourak compared to Earth. Little research has been undertaken into what life exists in the Dysphotic and Aphotic (Twilight and Midnight) Zones of Bourak's oceans. Biologists assume there is plenty to be found, but so far so much of the Euphotic Zone is unexplored and unknown that scientific research has been focused there. The occasional horror story pops up though, of some monster or other dredged from the abyss by a fisherman who let his net run too deep. It's hard to tell often, if the blurred footage of these strange and alien beasts is real, or the twisted work of visual artists looking to captivate and terrify.

FLORA

The plant life of Bourak appears to be fairly limited in variety, but there is a large collection of plant families that have managed to survive and dominate their niches. Speciation has led to a huge diversity within a limited set of families, with each species carving out a niche within the various environments.

Grasses dominate the landscape, from the savannahs to the deserts and mountains. Most are tough and spindly, coarse and dry through the long summer and flowering with an array of bright small flowers during the shorter spring and autumn periods when the clouds of insects that serve as their pollinators breed. Most grasses use the strong winds as their method of seed dispersal, and clouds of seeds, particularly the despised seed-threads, can wreak havoc on anyone who hasn't paid to have their hay fever dealt with. Even in a year where there has been good rainfall, seed-threads can plague and envelop a community, causing fires, getting into houses, clinging to machinery, and generally providing frustration and risk. As the terraforming efforts have started to affect the weather patterns, such seed-plagues are becoming a more common and significant occurrence. Smaller towns and villages have been clamouring about the issue for several years.

Standing above the grasses are various types of hard springy plants, most resembling bush scrub. These plants have thick barked stalks and a multitude of small sharp pointed leaves. They grow in clonal groves, large patches of scrub where each 'tree' is genetically identical to those in the grove. They produce bunches of small sweet berries after heavy rains. These berries hang from wispy branches quite close to the ground and are a key source of food for many of the native reptile-like creatures. Scurrying back to their burrows during the heat of the day, these creatures then deposit the seeds in a nice little place, just waiting for the next heavy rain.

There is also a wide variety of squat, bulbous succulents that can be found across Bourak. In the savannahs, species can grow up to one or two metres in height, while in the deserts they sit large and low to the ground. Like most of the plants across Bourak the succulent species tend to flower swiftly after rainfall, attracting a wide range of pollinators, from small flying lizards to snakes and insects. Several desert varieties produce a large flower pod from which a powerful hallucinogen can be extracted. Haram for the Haqqislamites, it is nonetheless rumoured that the Hassassins sometimes utilise it during interrogations.

One of the strangest varieties of succulent is the uninspiringly named Hofrehgiyahi. The Hofrehgiyahi appears as a circle of giant bulbous leaves with a radius of up to three metres. These plants send down a long tap root that widens as the plant ages and is hollow in the centre. These cavities are invisible from outside but can be up to two metres wide and two to three deep. Many outlaw groups and criminal groups lift up the central leaves and use the cavities to store all manner of contraband. Doing so causes the plant to die slowly, and a thriving culture of treasure hunters search for dying plants, a sure sign they hold something! After heavy rains, the plant sends up a single shoot that bursts as it dries, releasing a hallucinogenic, deadly cloud of tiny seeds to the wind. More than one criminal in need of their stash has come reeling back to town seeing visions and dying slowly.

Most famous of all the native flora is the Bourak Parasol, a tall growing fungus that supports many uniquely umbrella shaped pilei. The trunk of the Bourak Parasol is rough and hard, protecting the softer interior from the harsh sun. Offshoots from the trunk may carry one or more of these odd, natural umbrellas. Bourak Parasol, like the scrub, are clonal, and large patches of them are often found together.

The pileus is the portion of the fungi that produces the spores. When wet, the pileus softens and launches clouds of spores into the air. As it dries and the pileus contracts, a staccato series of small cracking sounds is heard. The spores themselves are mostly harmless to people, but certain parasites can render them dangerous. A Bourak Parasol affected by such a parasite has discolouration of the trunk and streaks of colour in the pilei.

The Bourak Parasol enjoys a level of cultural significance; it was a grove of these fungi that indicated an underground source of water to a group of early Sālik, a survival tip even the most city-bound Haqqislamite will be able to relate to. There are many stories of the parched traveller, seeking shelter from a killer noon-day sun, who took refuge and was saved by the Bourak Parasol. Even regular sun parasols for sale in the souks are often patterned naturalistically after wild varieties of this fungi.

The focus of civilisation sits in the tropics to the North and South and the terraforming project has influenced steadily growing pockets of vegetation from Earth. Aside from crop plants like wheat, rye, and barley, there are many gardens and groves of trees and plants from Earth like cyprus pines, acacias, olive groves, palm trees, and more. These are not just tokens planted carefully in the gardens and parks of the cities. They have been introduced in

POP-GRASS

Termed because the seed pods of this grass species swell until the outer shell bursts with a pop, the small, light seeds within scatter to the winds. If the seed pods are gathered before they start to swell, the interior of the pod can be scraped out, and is quite a deadly cyanotoxin, which, if injected, can quickly cause respiratory failure.

carefully planned vegetation corridors, encouraged to grow, and have taken hold. As the terraforming efforts see effect, so too are the corridors extended, bit by bit, tree by tree.

FAUNA

Bourak's wide swathes of grassland are broken by patches of larger flora all scorching under the intensity of Fareedat. While the star itself produces less ultraviolet radiation than Sol, the heat is more intense. Animals on Bourak are predominantly nocturnal or crepuscular in their habits, preferring the night or the relatively cool mornings and evenings to the heat of the day.

A majority of the larger land animals bear striking similarities to the reptiles of Earth. They are scaly, ectothermic egg-laying vertebrates and come in a vast range of sizes and shapes, managing to dominate almost every environmental niche on the planet. The smallest lizards and snakes can sit on a fingernail, while the largest can be as large as four metres long and two at the shoulder.

One of the largest of these is the Ezhdeha Sabz. These giants of the savannahs are slow moving herbivores, feeding off the grasses and the succulents that thrive there. The scales on their outer legs, back, and head have evolved to become large armoured plates, and they live in herds that tend to follow the fleeting seasonal rains.

Smaller at around two metres in length, the Ezhdeha Tariki are relentless predators chasing the Ezhdeha Sabz and many other animals. With the intelligence of wild dogs, they hunt in packs to harry and wound their targets, the necrotic toxins in their saliva weakening and cramping the muscles of their prey until they can be overcome and consumed while still alive.

There are endotherms too, from small rodent-like animals to much larger savannah-dwelling herbivores. The endotherms tend toward nocturnal habits with large eyes and other senses honed for such a lifestyle. The most feared of the predators is undoubtedly the Sakht Taqdeer of the Gabqar mountains, a large leonine predator with a coat of midnight fur that is a ferocious and unforgiving hunter. These apex predators were so dangerous that they were almost hunted to extinction in the early days of Bourak's settlement. More recently a concerted effort has been made to preserve and breed the species, particularly for big game hunters traveling to Bourak looking for a thrill.

As on Earth, one of the most populous animal groups on Bourak is undoubtedly the arthropods. Despite these arthropods having lung-like organs

rather than tracheae, the similarities are so numerous a clear distinction is relevant only for biologists. These animals form a vital link in the food chains across the planet, serving most vitally as decomposers and pollinators.

As the climate of Bourak shifts, the slow introduction of Earth animals has begun, grown from fertilised eggs in artificial wombs with the young tended by a handful of livestock brought from Earth. The early colonists introduced a collection of domesticated species: chickens, sheep, camels, horses, and goats. But the program has recently extended to include birds and other animals. Release of such animals is carefully monitored, both for the effects those animals suffer from the environment and for the effects they may have on the established eco-systems. Most releases seek to limit such impacts by genetically modifying the animals to be sterile or by restricting their movement.

ECONOMY

As the Haqqislamite Sālik took to the stars and the Bourak pilgrimage was truly underway, the business magnates and tycoons who had helped sponsor the venture set-up the great space transportation routes. As the pilgrimage slowed and the Human Sphere took shape, these routes remained as bustling and vibrant trade arteries, with caravanserai located at important junctures, typically close by the great Vila Boosters. Haqqislam has always had close ties to the trade networks, a unique and energetic bond that helps provide momentum and vigour to the melting pot of cultures, ideas, experiences, and knowledge that influences the intellectual and social state of Bourak.

Bourak is an exceptional interstellar power for its size. A vast wealth flows into the planetary economy despite the fact it relies heavily on a wide range of vital imports. Bourak's exports are dominated by precious and extravagant products, medical skills, knowledge and training are high among them, as well as expensive wood products like the native scrub which produces a tough and luxurious wood when worked by a skilled artisan. Most famously, though, Bourak produces and exports Silk.

Stories of the Silk Lords and the Silk Routes ring with echoes of the greatest trade magnates through history, of the ancient Silk Road, the coal and rail barons, the fossil fuel tycoons. In truth, these references fall short of the mark. The Silk Lords are some of the wealthiest trade families to have ever existed. Their export product, Silk, so vital to the resurrection industry, is a product

A GREENER FUTURE

Almost every university, and many wealthy households, maintain a seed bank containing seeds from plants back on Earth that will one day be planted on Bourak. As the conditions change, and the nutrients in the soil made more conducive, they will be planted and grow. So, the vegetation corridors will be extended, and so too the terraforming continued.

HARAM?

There is still some minor debate over whether the consumption of native herbivores is haram, but the vast consensus among religious leaders is that as long as the animals are slaughtered appropriately, they should be considered halal.



HIGH RISK, HIGH REWARD

There are regular, and usually unsuccessful, attempts to raid the maglevs traversing the Silk Route. Masked by the weather, well equipped and highly skilled, it just may be possible to pull off a well-planned snatch and grab. The Silk Lords regard such ventures as a fool's errand, but it doesn't stop some enterprising souls from trying. Silk Lords have even been rumoured to fund such attempts on shipments made by other families!

exclusively traded from Bourak, and the wealth it produces is phenomenal. This is not to say the vast revenues produced by the Silk trade are automatically fed into the economy. The disparity in wealth on Bourak is striking with much ending up in the coffers of the Silk Lords rather than feeding the economy of the planet. But taxation and other fees imposed by the government and the Hachib's efforts to curb the power of the Silk Lords have had an effect, and Bourak's economy would be a shadow of itself without the Silk trade.

The effects of the vital Silk trade are striking. Silk is derived from Nassiat, which is cultivated in the Gabqar Khanate, mostly in Khiva Kala. To protect this industry, the area is barely terraformed, making life for the average citizen very difficult as they contend not only with the hard work involved in Silk manufacturing but also with the harsh conditions of Bourak itself. From the Khiva Kala station, Nassiat and Silk is transported via maglev overland along the Silk Route to Dar El Funduq. This route is one of the most highly militarised in the Human Sphere, from the martial law ruled Gabqar Khanate through the Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahnate region to the city of Dar El Funduq. The route is guarded by regular military patrols, and the Silk transported on heavily armed and armoured maglev carriages. In Dar El Funduq, the Silk is either placed into storage in Hakkâri or transported up the orbital elevator to Gelişmek station, and from there, it is accompanied

by ships of the Qapu Khalqi armada across the Human Sphere.

Corruption, organised crime, and the self-interest of the Silk Lords make the Silk trade a turbulent, dangerous, and high-stakes affair. Money greases every wheel, from the Qapu Khalqi military of the Funduq Sultanate, to law-enforcement, trade officials, and members of Government. Much effort has been expended in limiting this corruption, but it is so ingrained that it has proven difficult to quash. It also helps that the trade continues and money flows regardless.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CULTURE

Bourak is often seen from the outside as a world dominated by its religion. Visitors and people who have met Haqqislamites can attest quite a different story to this stereotype. Bourak is a world of cultural pluralism, a melting pot of cultures and ideas, ideologies, and beliefs. Haqqislam is present in every aspect of society and life, obvious even for the uninitiated, but the Search for Knowledge that is a core tenant of the faith. Combined with the life-blood of trade, this has led to a society more open, accepting, curious, and prejudice-free than many give credit for.

RELIGION

Religion is a fundamental part of life on Bourak, Haqqislam still places important emphasis on practices such as wudu, ritual washing before prayer, and the Salah, the five daily prayers, but these are less stringent than many assume. The minarets and Mosques, the comlogs of the Haqqislamite faithful all still ring with the calls to Salah, but these are not a direct call to prayer. The daily prayers are instead times for contemplation and reflection, for introspection, for examining how one has acted and reacted, how one's life reflects the Search for Knowledge. Much emphasis is still placed on communal activities, and the parks, coffee houses, public debates, and even Maya entertainments all encourage active participation in connecting and interacting as a community and people. Religion is vital, but an emphasis on observances has been replaced with an emphasis on thoughts and deeds, on personal growth and self-examination, and above all, the Search for Knowledge.

LIFE BALANCE

Haqqislam is a religion that places a unique emphasis on personal growth. The ideal stresses an importance on life balance, with the day broken into periods of work, contemplation, study, and personal projects. The business world of Bourak, as busy as it is, reflects this cultural milieu. Though many jobs are demanding, physically and mentally, there is also a recognition that it is important for a person to be more than what they do to earn a living. With their coffee houses, gardens, public entertainment, and family activities, the cities of Bourak allow the day to flow through periods of hectic bustle and slower relaxation. Laziness is frowned upon, and the hardy nature and tough lifestyle of the early colonists has carried through culturally to engender the people with a hard-working attitude. But hard work is not solely the province of the operating theatre, field, or office block, it is also in the improvement of self, the development of hobbies, the engagement with society, the religious contemplation, and the Search for Knowledge.

FASHION

Bourak is a harsh world tempered by the labours of generations of settlers. Clothing tends toward the practical, simple airy layers that cover the skin for protection, hats, scarves, or hijab to protect the head and face. Shawls and sashes are popular, too.

The colours tend toward the muted; white is popular for its cooling effect, but light earthy tones with

the occasional splash of personalised colour tend to be the norm.

Jewellery is popular with both men and woman. Bracelets and arm bands in twisted metals or carved wood, waterfalls of necklaces and pendants, earrings and hair pins are all tokens of fashion and most importantly signifiers of wealth and influence. For the poorer families clothing is practical in all its considerations, any jewellery a family might be able to afford worn only on special occasions. The middle classes tend to favour complex geometric patterns on their scarves and edging their clothing, and an abundance of adornments from rings to necklaces. Such displays, however, are not for the truly wealthy. A single ring or ostentatious necklace are the fashion among the elite, crusted with valuable stones and beautifully etched. But more than that, the elite are not signified by what they wear as much as they are by their surroundings. Neo-Concubines, opulence, and beauty are the hallmarks of wealth and influence.

Across the planet, the fashions vary. In Gabqar, fashions tend to be more reserved and conservative in nature, and the divide between the elite and the working classes starkly obvious. While on the Al-Idrisi coast, fashions tend toward the more revealing, following the cult of beauty and the fascination with the Neo-Concubines.

The cult of beauty is one fashion common across Bourak. Neo-Concubines and Maya Stars dominate the public perspective on attractiveness and appearance for both males and females. More than investing in a piece of jewellery, the defining fashion of Bourak is the amount of money spent on cosmetic surgery. The medical industry on Bourak is the best in the Human Sphere, and a portion of that is dedicated to cosmetic procedures. The vulgar and drastic physical alterations of the Praxis Black Laboratories are a world apart from the gentle, natural refinement and emphasis on human beauty that is the fashion on Bourak.

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment on Bourak is an eclectic blend of media and activities. Sports like Kabaddi have a popular following, with teams from the major cities vying in a fierce competition for the annual national trophy. In the Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahnate, Zoorkhaneh wrestling is widely followed, with teams sponsored by wealthy and influential families, and much pride staked on their records. Zoorkhaneh is also widespread in the military used to build the physical condition of the soldiers, with competitions held between units and privileges awarded to the victors. These sports have a broad following on the Maya channels across Bourak.

PRAYER MATS

Many Haqqislamites carry prayer mats with them. Culturally these tie strongly with the roots of their religion, but they are not dedicated solely to religious observances. As the practice of the Salah has changed, so has the use of the mats. They are portable spaces, and whether at work, at home, in camp, or onboard a ship their use is in providing the Haqqislamite with a place of calm and peace, a place for contemplation.

THE DAY OF FOUNDING

The Day of Founding is a public holiday across Bourak. Traditionally the holiday begins just before sunrise on the same date across the planet, with a replayed message from the Hachib. It continues with public celebrations throughout the day and into the night. It celebrates the date on which the first Sālik stepped onto the surface of Bourak and is a strange mixture of festival and reflection. The day unites the planet with a reminder of the national identity. Public concerts and feasts are held in city gardens and squares, and even the smallest of settlements pauses to mark the occasion. For the day all Maya broadcasts are dominated by public discourse, celebrations of the progress their society is making, the successes of their nationwide terraforming project, call backs, discussion, and reflection on the early days of settlement. The rich and famous, the influential and wealthy are more visible this day than on any other — a reminder to all of what Bourak was, is, and will become.

In the towns and cities, entertainment is often seen as training for the mind with a focus on interactive activities, whether on Maya or face-to-face. Games like dominoes and backgammon are still widely enjoyed, and no coffee house is complete without both.

Maya Channels stream non-stop entertainment, from less popular immersive game experiences to documentaries and fiction. The adventures, trials, and triumphs of swashbuckling corsair Rifat Kulthum were developed into an extremely popular Maya show, as is the medical drama set in the research department of the Medina University starring Maya darling Fatimah Rizk. Cookery shows are also extremely popular, with food preparation and fine cooking being popular hobbies.

Music is widely enjoyed, and publicly funded concerts are often held in the gardens and parks of cities and towns. Heavy drumbeats layered with electronic chords and melodies, stringed instruments and complex rhythms, music is to be enjoyed, celebrated, and felt. The poetry of sound, the metaphor sometimes used for music, is to be contemplated. It lifts a soul and encourages an emotional engagement that is worth consideration and discussion.

AL MEDINAT CALIPHATE

Home. This simple sentiment captures the feeling of the millions of colonists who live in the beautiful vistas of Al Medinat. The continent has benefitted from the combined knowledge and skills of thousands of researchers and engineers have transformed the area into a veritable garden.

Al Medinat's verdant landscape stands in stark contrast to the rest of Bourak, and while the equatorial band maintains a tough and arid climate, for a majority of the region the planet's harsh environment seems like a distant memory. To a traveller, the beautiful view is only spoiled by the dozens of T2 terraforming towers that spot the landscape. To the natives of Al Medinat however, these are symbolic of a bright future. Thousands travel to the region every year with the hopes of finding employment or the chance to study at one of Al Medinat's prestigious universities. Al Medinat Caliphate is often considered the cultural reserve of Bourak, with theatres, galleries, and museums showcasing the many cultures that have collaborated in making Haqqislam the vibrant nation that it is.



AD QALWARA

The City of Halves is often the butt of many jokes due to its history. Its orbital elevator was never finished, and its universities are smaller than others in the region. Though it has been home to numerous great thinkers and many great achievements have been born out of its universities, the city is often mocked by others across the planet as the “City of Halves-Not’s.” This has led to numerous attempts by the city council to try to salvage the city’s reputation.

AL MISH’YAH

As a principal trade link between Al Medinat and Iran Zhat Al Amat, the docksides and waters of Al Mish’iyah are heavily patrolled by law enforcement in an effort to cut down on the illegal smuggling that goes through the region. Local authorities do their best to downplay the criminal underside to Al Mish’iyah and to portray the region as a refuge for travellers. This marketing campaign has been highly successful, and many making their pilgrimage across Bourak or tourists traveling between major cities stop over here. The Al Mish’iyah Superhighway is well lit at night and possesses dozens of places for weary travellers to stop, rest, and eat.

MEDINA

The capital of the Caliphate is a brilliant beacon standing out on the horizon of Bourak. Its stylised architecture with low buildings often extends as far beneath the ground as up, a significant change to the towering appearance of most cities in the Human Sphere. Shining like gold under the orange sun, the dome of the Great Mosque is a glory to behold. Hundreds of minarets echo the call to prayer throughout the city and travellers from across Bourak, Sol, and the rest of the Human Sphere travel there to pay homage to one of the greatest monuments ever constructed. Over ten million people call the city home, and almost as many followers of the faith make pilgrimage to Bourak each year to pray in the shadow of the Great Mosque.

Medina is more than just a city dedicated to religious observance. Although the Great Mosque is undoubtedly the soul of the city, Medina is full of life with many open zoos and museums showcasing not just relics from its colonisation and animals from across Bourak and Earth, but art, music and plays from across the Sphere. The parks of the city are home to numerous poets and artists who perform alongside imams preaching sermons to encourage the faithful and uplift the people around them.

The city’s cosmopolitan nature is the result of its foundation. The early colonists who settled Medina chose the site well, and the city was always intended to be more than just a settlement for colonists. It had to be the centre of a new holy land for those brave enough to travel across the stars. Work on the city was a symbol of what was possible, not just functional but also to be a place that represented the hundreds of cultures and ideals of the pilgrims. Those traveling to Bourak brought with them not just the sights and sounds of their homelands, but the skills needed to make Medina more than an outpost of cold concrete and technology. It is a vibrant, living place of worship and life.

The outskirts of the city seem haphazard in building organisation. Small oases of houses and businesses sit hundreds of yards from each other, and the wide streets are rarely paved, instead relying upon trampled dirt roads. The apparent disorder of these suburbs was intentional. It was planned to provide a breathing space for recent immigrants from Sol, so they need not feel like they were being loaded into a tight, cramped place and instead given the option to live out in the open while still being part of the city.

The coffee houses are as iconic to Bourak as taverns and pubs are to Ariadna. Throughout the city, public places and coffee houses can be found in abundance. Coffee houses here are much larger and more important to the community than they are on other planets. People can not only get their daily fix of stimulants, but also gather communally, socialise, debate each other, and relax.

Philosophy Teams meet at the coffee houses to compete in debates. The coffee houses also frequently host great poets and philosophers, and at night they become vibrant as the people of the city look to rest and enjoy themselves. Couples meet to enjoy exotic coffees and teas from across the Sphere while playing board with their friends and enjoy music inspired by dozens of different cultures.

The University of Medina is renowned across the Human Sphere as a centre of learning and discovery, and for possessing some of the most sophisticated research labs anywhere. Thanks to the patronage of hundreds of prominent families and businesses across the planet, almost every department in the university is well funded and able to bring in guest lecturers from across the Sphere, as well as feature the latest in arts, technology, and philosophy. The university continually sees record enrolment numbers, and it is the dream of many families for their children to graduate from the university’s esteemed and prestigious programs. Competition is fierce, and burnout very common due to the exacting standards and intense programs run. Though the

families of those who drop out of the university do their best to conceal the shame brought upon them, the prestige of the university often leads to many failed students being able to easily find places at universities elsewhere on the planet.

As the capital of the Caliphate, Medina has sizeable facilities dedicated to maintaining the Sword of Allah and the military resources needed to keep Haqqislam's sphere of influence safe from both outsiders and the threat of the Combined Army. Fortress Almanzor, named after the famous Islamic ruler and general of the Caliphate of Cordoba, is as visible in the Medina skyline as the Great Mosque due to its enormous communications towers. Thanks to its uplink with the Eye of Allah satellite network and the constant influx of information brought from interstellar couriers and relay stations across the planet, it is a core nerve centre in the military apparatus of Haqqislam. Hundreds of personnel spend every day sifting through a deluge of information as they hand top-secret communiqués and briefs to the council of generals in charge of planning Haqqislam's military strategy.

The city is home to several divisions, but the most prominent of these are the 3rd Janissaries Corps and the 5th Desert Combat Wing. Together they represent a fierce force capable of dealing with any threats to the city. The 5th Desert Combat Wing is known for flying medium Roc-class troop transports. These transports are capable of lifting twelve to seventeen troops in full battle gear and deploy them across the region in a matter of minutes.

For all its opulence, culture, and civilisation, Medina must contend with criminals who make the capital their home. The Medina Black Market, considered an urban legend whispered throughout the city's coffee houses, is a real and powerful entity that has managed to avoid being destroyed by the authorities on numerous occasions. The Haqqislam government would like nothing more than to crush the black market utterly as an example towards others, but the truth is that the Medina Black Market is not only profitable to criminals but to the many sheikhs and businessman in the city as well. It is a place where information is sold at a premium, and rival companies have been known to use criminals in the black market to wage war or industrial espionage against their competitors. Everything can be found on the black market in Medina from illegal Silk canisters to bootleg Aristeia! holovids from the Nomads.

Medina is also home to the ruthless and mythical Siyah Sokak, the black alley, where surgeons and doctors practice banned forms of medicine and psychosurgeries for those who can pay the right price. Classic villains of Haqqislamite melodramas, the surgeons of the Siyah Sokak are few in number

but desired throughout the Human Sphere for their talents and willingness to attempt any procedure. But just like finding the black market, it is nearly impossible to find the surgeons of the Siyah Sokak. The doctors and surgeons of the Siyah Sokak do not gather in a single place but are scattered across the planet where their contacts in Bourak's criminal underworld help them avoid detection. When a nameless middle-man decides the appropriate price has been reached, the surgeons will fly in, perform whatever procedures are required, and then return to their homes in relative peace. Surgeons of the Siyah Sokak are usually very paranoid since being outed as a member is almost certain death. Not only are the police notoriously indelicate when arresting such criminals, but the Hassassins view these doctors as an impediment to the Search for Knowledge, and petty criminals also see them as trash. Few doctors survive being outed for longer than a week.

THE GREAT MOSQUE

The greatest landmark in Medina is its most holy of institutions. The Great Mosque is a towering structure surrounded by four massive minarets with speakers that are capable of echoing the call to prayer across the entire city. Designed to capture the past combined with the present, the dazzling architecture of the Dome is encased in a nimbus of light at night. In daytime, due to the ingenious nature of the mosque's design combined with the thousands of windows carrying and refracting the light of Fareedat, it requires barely any artificial lighting inside it.

The interior of the Great Mosque is split into two areas, the Outer Area, where travellers are allowed to keep their technology and are able to enjoy the comforts of Maya connections, and the Inner Chamber, where the daily sermons are held. The imams who are responsible for administering to the faithful would prefer if people were forbidden the distraction of technology throughout the entire structure, but they understand that many cannot be parted from modern conveniences. Some consider it a necessary act to purge the corrupting influence of technology from their mind, while others prefer to sit on the padded floors in the Outer Area where they can contemplate their faith in comfort.

Though it has never had to use the labyrinth of tunnels and shelters that stretch beneath it, the Great Mosque also serves as a community shelter for the entire city. This was intentional on the part of the city planners, who always viewed the Great Mosque as the centre of Medina and thus essential for its survival. It is rumoured that the black market has a tunnel system of its own that connect to the shelters, and that government officials will often meet there in secret to discuss things best kept out of council chambers.

TALAWAT

The University of Talawat welcomes all those interested in the study of the faith but is most famous for its philosophical exploration of the Haqq Tasawwuf path of the Haqqislam faith. The university is made up of many campuses, laid out between well-maintained gardens and tucked away coffee houses in which imams-in-training can debate and discuss the words of the prophets and the paths of Haqqislam.

Talawat is famous for its arts, music, visual art, literature, and Maya productions. This oeuvre of work is all of the highest aesthetic and intellectual calibre and has been born of the city's cultural melting pot of creativity and expression.

HURIYYAH ARCHIPELAGO

The Huriyyah archipelago is an ongoing terraforming experiment. Each island is its own separate biosphere and the perfect testing ground for new technologies and terraforming processes. Given the enclosed nature of each island biosphere, the archipelago has also been used to test the impact Earth animals are projected to have on the wider ecosystems of Bourak. Culturally distinct enough from the rest of the planet to be a curiosity due to its population of Javanese and Malay descendants, the Huriyyah Archipelago attributes a sizeable percentage of its economy to tourism.

FERDOUS

Ferdous is an unusual city, founded around primary industries such as fishing and small-time crop production. The docks are still worked, but many of the local businesses now centre on tourism, with charter boats taking passengers on exciting fishing expeditions and tours of the local coastlines. The culture of the city itself has changed as well. The unique aspects of the Javanese and Malay cultures have been exaggerated to dazzle the tourist industry. At the centre of the city, large, low buildings descending beneath the ground are home to some of the biggest terraforming guilds on Bourak. Many top-grade scientists in planetology, biology, geology, and related fields live and work here.

Ferdous is home to a wild and raucous blood sport. Hordes of locals as well as thrilled and terrified tourists bet cash on the animals that will survive the fights. Most commonly, the combatants used are Ezhdeha Tariki, large lizard-like predators, usually complimented with metal blades sheathing their front claws. The fights are meant to be to

first blood, but they usually only stop when one of the beasts has been killed. Local authorities have tried to crack down on these highly illegal animal fights for years, but their efforts have been largely tokenistic with speculation that kickbacks are paid to avoid interference.

TABA

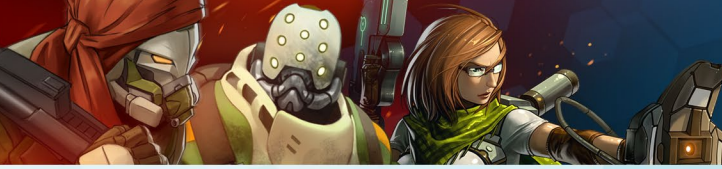
Taba is a sub-continental region of the Al Medinat continent. Straddling the equatorial band, it is dominated by large swathes of desert abutting an extensive mountain range, which occasionally becomes verdant gardens when the rains come. These rains occur infrequently, and can cause serious and violent flash-flooding, leaving ephemeral lakes in their wake. Such lakes are the fulcrum around which the ecosystems of Taba pivot. They are focal points for animals and plants alike, literal oases in an otherwise arid desert.

Largest of the ephemeral lakes is Lake Mundafen, something of a cultural centre for the Murabid tribes that make Taba their home. While the Murabid have no permanent settlement, different tribes can be found encamped along its shores, wet or dry, throughout the year, trading stories, goods, news, and forming important relationships before moving on.

In addition to the nomadic Murabid, there are three special Jewish kibbutz, or farming settlements around the shores of Lake Mundafen: Karmia, meaning 'vineyard' for the produce it is famous for, Matzuba, meaning 'pyramid', after the shape of the settlement, and Zikim, meaning 'point of light', for the lighthouse on the rocky shore, a perennial trap for fishermen and research vessels when the lake is full. These three settlements are home to several thousand Jewish land-owners and workers. They were allowed to settle as long as they continued to pledge support to the Search for Knowledge by maintaining a continual study and detailed report of their terraforming efforts in the region. Such has been their success that the Terraformation Institute has opened a regional centre in Karmia offering a student exchange program.

'AMAL

Something of a desert wasteland, the decrepit remains of the city of 'Amal sits largely abandoned, surrounded by inhospitable terrain. 'Amal was mostly deserted by the people who had called it home due to a terraforming failure that caused serious eco-system collapse. Oddly enough, 'Amal has, in recent years, attracted the attention of the Maya film industry of Medina, using the forsaken remains of 'Amal as the backdrop for several Maya



THE FLOW OF MONEY

Money changes hands quickly and unobserved as bookies take cash and hand out stubs in return. The races of Öngüt are a serious cash market and used regularly by criminal networks to launder money and government agencies to pass around 'off-the-record' funding, usually for clandestine work. Spies, adventurers, and mercenaries in the know understand that race days in Öngüt can be a source of all manner of objectives, missions, and jobs. The hotels of Öngüt often house guests with surprising histories.

dramas, from post-apocalyptic science fiction to lonely survival epics charting the first settlement of Bourak. Film crews, set designers, Maya stars, and industry investors treat 'Amal as their own personal playground, something that is both welcomed and despised by the few citizens who still eke out an existence there.

ÖNGÜT

A seemingly quiet port city, Öngüt's major industries are fishing and horse breeding. The city itself hugs the coastline, while extensive and deliberately cultivated grasslands stretch out behind it. Much of these grasslands is fenced off as stud farms, and the Arabian horses bred here are a sought-after commodity across Bourak.

The buildings of the city are low, with a good half of houses extending beneath the ground. Descending into the cool interiors, one can immediately appreciate why they are built this way. Like most housing on Bourak, the homes of the wealthier families of Öngüt are hollow squares, the central spaces dominated by quiet and well-maintained gardens.

In the straights of Bahiti, the large fishing fleets of Öngüt fill their holds with the teeming ocean life found there. The most sought-after marine life is the Fasji, purple sea-snakes that can grow up to seventy centimetres in length. When prepared with spices and cooked well, Fasji are considered a delicacy, and make up the main meat in the diet of Öngüt. There is little competition over fishing grounds, as the straights offer life in abundance, enough for the town and a burgeoning trade in spiced Fasji. The snakes need to be prepared carefully though, slicing the venom sac accidentally can poison the meat. The effects of this poison are usually muscle cramps and mild seizure. Deaths are rare, and usually the result of such cramps or seizures kicking in at an inopportune time.

With such a bountiful source of food so easily accessible, the port area of Öngüt is extensive. Always a bustle of activity, with boats coming and going, holds being unloaded, catches packed quickly in transports headed to the souks and bound for dinner tables across the city, the port area is a sight to behold.

If fishing is the life blood of Öngüt, horses are its soul. Revered and loved by the citizens, the Arabian horses of Öngüt are famous across Bourak. If Öngüt ever seems a busy but otherwise quiet fishing town, it is usually because there are no races that day. The most wild and popular sports and events revolve around horse racing. Dominating the races are two of the most prestigious stables in Öngüt,

Qasr and Al-Malaz. These two dynasties of the horse industry in the city have a savage rivalry, and followers of one often come to blows with fans of the other at race events and meets. The colours of each are worn with zealous pride by their followers, flags are hung from windows and decorate establishments, betting is rampant and high-stakes, and the races a swelling of noise and excitement, colour and life.

Horses not fit to race or not sent to stud are often destined for the other sport Öngüt is famous for, Buzkashi. Two teams of riders charge at one another in a flurry of earth, hooves, and bravery, seeking to loft a trophy from the centre of the field and deposit it in the opponents start area. Riders require rare horsemanship to excel at Buzkashi. Injuries are common for there are few rules. Wounds from fist, hoof, or lash can be serious, and deaths are not uncommon in the tight and violent tussle for control of the trophy. This sport is often used to test the mettle of those seeking employ with the rich and powerful of Öngüt.

SAIF

A garden paradise, Saif is one of the only locations on Bourak where one can see the vast and mobile T-Palaces still hard at work. This verdant wonderland is not simply terraformed to the highest of standards, it is also carefully sculpted and terraced. The entire peninsula is carefully moulded to a deliberate and artistic design. Full of surprises, ascending one crest can reveal a sudden shift in plant variety and landscaping in the valley that stretches away below. Here, more than anywhere else on Bourak, the plant varieties and animals of Earth proliferate. Fruit trees of all varieties in orchards, copses of pine and olive groves punctuate a delicate and lovingly sculpted vista.

Saif itself, a former industrial centre, has abandoned this heritage in favour of carving out a niche for itself as the fruit basket of Bourak. A steady supply of its rich produce is shipped overland and along the coast to find a place at dinner tables across the planet, and even to the caravanserais and beyond.

FUNDUQ SULTANATE

A region of wealth and disparity in extremes, the Funduq Sultanate is the centre of the Silk trade, base of the Qapu Khalqi armada, headquarters to merchant families whose wealth is staggering by any standard, seat of the Sultan Kerim Bay, and home to some of the poorest of Bourak's citizens.

The interior of Funduq is largely uninhabitable. A tough and unforgiving environment, the centre of Funduq is dominated by areas used as a training grounds for the Qapu Khalqi and the winding maglev Silk Route, heavily patrolled by the military.

Abandoned space ports, made redundant by the cheaper and more accessible orbital elevator, dot the line of the equator as it traverses Funduq. Some are occasionally used by merchant families shipping goods off the grid or by pirates and smugglers. While the military is supposed to keep a close eye on these decaying facilities, money can buy a lot of privacy in the Funduq Sultanate.

By contrast, the coastal regions are vibrant with life. The vast majority of the Sultanate's population live in the cities that nestle against the oceans, surrounded by lush gardens.

BALISEHIR

Balisehir is a town built on order and gridlines. It is a starkly military place, with little in the way of decoration or display. A majority of the houses are simple barracks, while the commercial enterprises that feed, entertain, and supply the soldiers are gathered in small clusters around the town. Dominating Balisehir are a handful of giant buildings, some arms and vehicle manufactories, several space ports and the Naval Academy. Nearby and further inland is Balisehir's sister town Al-Khaafdif, where the Military Academy is found and soldiers are regularly sent out into the interior of Funduq on patrol or training exercises. Despite their very spartan appearance, Balisehir and Al-Khaafdif are both hives of activity. The Qapu Khalqi prepare and equip nearly all their forces here. Training drills and fierce competitions between units and military personnel off duty make for a turbulent and busy place.

DAR EL FUNDUQ

Home to more than thirty million people, Dar El Funduq is the largest, most prosperous and chaotic city on Bourak. Nowhere else is unbridled opulence so starkly set against abject poverty.

The city itself is a naturalistic sprawl. Unplanned, and haphazard, it has extended outward like a living growth. Narrow alleyways and streets are often blocked or built over, with unofficial bypasses running through buildings. The streets straggle through the city like whipping tendrils, up and over, under and through, straight then blocked. They are a myriad of confusion, a mystery and maze that is easy to get lost in without the continually updated AR maps available via comlog. The locals pride themselves on their knowledge of short cuts and quicker ways, spurning the use of technology for

know-how. Slums can give way to shopping centres in a handful of steps and turns, and wide roads run straight before unplanned bazaars suddenly cover them. It is a mish-mash of styles jostled together, the unintended development of an enormous city home to a huge and resourceful population.

As chaotic and tumbling as the layout and architecture of the city is, it is also home to a hundred cultures, a polyglot of languages and customs. While Haqqislam dominates, there are Christian sections, the famous Jewish Quarter, as well as conglomerations of dozens more cultures, religions, and practices. The sights and sounds of Dar El Funduq are overwhelming. The cries of merchants and sellers, music, both live and recorded, traffic and the hub-bub of civilisation, advertising, the call to prayer, all these combine with the bustle of colour and movement, and the mixture of smells to cloy and confound the senses.

The Sultanate sails on, seemingly unheeding of the seething life of the city, and the inhabitants of Dar El Funduq, for their own part, are inured to the sudden whims of Government. A district may be suddenly closed here with no explanation, or a route cleared there to allow the passage of some important magnate. Like water, the people flow back in, and soon enough the ramshackle housing and makeshift bazaars have returned as if they had never been disturbed in the first place.

Tüccarların Evi, the Home of Traders, is one such improvised bazaar. Built initially in an unfinished garden near the city centre, it soon extended and grew. With nowhere else to go, the merchants and sellers soon spread into the surrounding buildings, taking over houses, knocking down walls, building through alleyways until a vast jumble of little shops and food stalls had burrowed its way into a snaking and complex arrangement. The sounds and smells are a rich tapestry, pleasant and arresting, sickening and repulsive all a-mingle. Tüccarların Evi was, in its early days, threatened with destruction, but several well-connected tourists found it charming, and the allure has stuck.

In contrast to this winding mess of pop-up shops, hidden merchant houses and food vendors is Beş Mil. Between the needle-like orbital elevator and the towering megastructure of the Helezon is a stretch of now covered-in road called Beş Mil or Five Mile. Inside Beş Mil is a glittering shopper's paradise. Expansive stores carry the latest in fashion and gadgetry, large playgrounds for children, live theatre and music, food courts and restaurants, surgeries, and even a heated water park are all there to ensnare tourists arriving on Bourak for the first time.

At one end of Beş Mil is the orbital elevator, the largest and busiest spaceport on Bourak. A vast network of clean-cut buildings surrounds it, and entryways are guarded by heavily armed soldiers. Inside is a city within a city. Wide roads cut straight lines between high-end retailers and merchants. Fine eateries and coffee houses, usually surrounded by narrow but lush gardens, break up the lines with natural shapes and colour. The pace and life within the precinct is a world apart from the jumble of the streets outside. There are extensive shipping and freight facilities with huge warehouses cleverly hidden out of sight. All roads radiate out from and lead to the central building, the orbital elevator itself. Terminals and security points, shops and cafes, all of it leading to the luxuriously appointed carriages passengers ride to and from orbit. The carriages that haul cargo from the surface are concealed in a different part of the facility, as are those carriages used exclusively by the military. Arriving here is no preparation for the experience of Dar El Funduq beyond, and an encounter with both sides of the city will confirm the contradiction and disparity at the city's core.

At the other end of Five Mile is an edifice to opulence and wealth on an incomprehensible scale. A crystalline skyscraper called the Helezon, with entire floors that can be rotated, stretches 250 stories into Bourak's sky. Alongside the orbital elevator, it dominates the skyline. The seat of the Sultanate, offices of the Merchants Guilds, and home of the Government of Funduq, Helezon is a breath-taking achievement in engineering and architecture, a bold and unmistakable statement of wealth and power, and the symbol of Funduq itself.

Where Dar El Funduq descends to the coast, it is dominated by the warehouses and facilities of industry. Moving away from the coast, through the city and up into the foothills, are the gated communities of the rich and powerful. As the urban sprawl begins to climb the slopes, it gives way to clearer and cleaner roads. Fences and walls start to break up the flow of housing and each building begins to stand independent and separated from those around it, the monotony of construction broken by walls and gardens, high fences and security. Houses here have plain exteriors, size being the indicator of influence, interior gardens and large networks of rooms for the popular harems of neo-concubines. Large heavy gates, high walls, and efficient private security, often Odalisques, are the norm. Citizens of Dar El Funduq do not venture here; this is no place for them. Such homes are the city dwellings of the Silk Lords, government officials, and merchants when not on their estates.

Despite the façade of impenetrability and the separation from the rest of Dar El Funduq, there are still

those daring enough to risk the dice and take from the wealthy. The Akinti or the Stream is a criminal network with such ambitions. It has managed to pull off some of the most talked about raids in Bourak criminal. The theft of the Al Massat Gem from the Ustalar family is legendary and was made into a hugely popular Maya drama. How the Akinti managed their successes is a mystery, and rumour suggests they are a broad network operating across Dar El Funduq, with further links to Submondo factions across the Human Sphere. High risk is high reward, and despite stealing from some of the wealthiest families of Bourak, they have managed to avoid detection, so far.

HAKKÂRI

Hakkâri is better known through Bourak and the Human Sphere as the Silk Fortress. The labyrinthine storage facility where the Silk reserves are stored is guarded by a standing army. The Hachib, in consultation with his government and the Silk Lords, sets the quantity of Silk to be traded. Naturally, this is enough to meet the market demands, but also limited enough to ensure that prices don't slip. It is a delicate balance, weighing diplomatic pressures against financial benefits, but one that has seen the coffers of the Silk Merchants and the economy of Bourak benefit from as a result.

Hakkâri, beyond the Silk Fortress, is a farming town. A small town centre is surrounded by many spread out farmhouses cultivating a mix of fig, pomegranate, pistachio, and carob trees modified to survive in particularly harsh conditions. The fruit produced by these orchards is smaller than typical, and the flesh and nuts more bitter, but harvests are significant enough to maintain the settlement and provide some trade with the Silk Fortress.

There is often a palpable sense of resentment between the farming community and the soldiers and agents of the Muhafiz who serve in the Silk Fortress and live apart in a barrack community. Both regard the other as something akin to a parasite. The farmers often disgruntled at the meagre rations and money traded for their goods flare to angry at times when more land is acquired by the fortress seemingly on whim. The men and women manning the fortress, on the other hand, regard the farming community as hangers-on that would long have vanished into the dust were it not for the trade offered them.

Despite this clash of cultures however, the Silk Fortress and the people of Hakkâri form a strange and contradictory community. They are loyal to one another whatever their other differences; Hakkâri proud of its association to the Fortress, and the Fortress appreciative of the town of Hakkâri. When

trouble hits and a particularly bad season has damaged crops, soldiers are often tasked with helping to rebuild or replant. When a stranger comes near Hakkâri, the farmers will quietly organise for Muhafiz agents to hear of it.

When shipments of Silk arrive by maglev at the fortress, the entire town goes into lockdown. The community is thoroughly familiar with the routine and complies without second thought. The maglev carriages are disconnected from the main train and shunted along special tracks inside the walls of the Silk Fortress, where they are unloaded, and their precious cargo recorded and put into sealed storage vaults of the highest security.

There have been a handful of attempts on the Silk Fortress over the years. Several of these have focused on explosively targeting the maglev with a hailstorm of bullets and violence when it is being de-coupled. But the most close-to-successful was an under-cover infiltration attempt, foiled in the end by one of the farming families noticing a stranger to town was keeping too much to his room at the local hotel. Investigation by Muhafiz agents revealed a communications array in the hotel communicating with infiltrators within the Fortress.

SARIKAMIS

Nestled against the ocean on the southernmost point of the Funduq sub-continent is Sarikamis – an opulent playground for the ultra-rich, with resorts and hotels, extensive shopping centres, and a hundred varieties of leisure activities. The working men

and women of Sarikamis have lodgings hidden well away from the pulsing centre of the town. While it has a reputation for an almost hedonistic delight in the wasteful extravagances extreme wealth can produce, Sarikamis is also a place where business people, merchant princes, criminal bosses, government officials, and Silk Lords rub shoulders and conduct important business deals.

GABQAR KHANATE

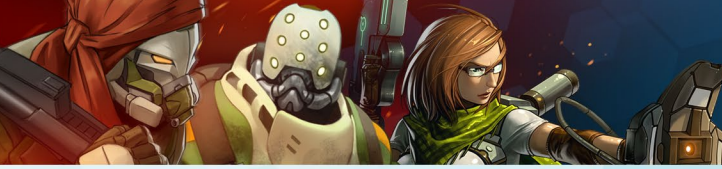
Wild and lawless, strict and militarised – the two contradictions of the Gabqar region. With Nasiat farming and Silk production forming the basis of the economy here and a sizeable chunk of Bourak's income as a whole, the protections surrounding this industry are extreme and effect every level of life for those who call the Gabqar region home. With almost no influence on the local climate from terraforming to not impact Silk production, life is hard and the conditions harder. Martial law is the rule across Gabqar, though in practice this affects only key cities in the region, and the rest of the subcontinent is riddled by lawlessness and criminality.

Low lying mountain chains snake across the landscape, filled with tunnels and hidden valleys. They are the province of organised crime networks and outlaw tribes. Some effort has been invested in rooting these elements out, but the mountain passes, cave systems, and small valleys are too defensible, too hidden, and too harsh an environment for the extended operations that would be required to deal with the problems. In

HASSASSINS?

Rumours abound that the Hassassins maintain a constant presence in Hakkâri. This is a constant source of gossip in the community, but if true, the agents are buried deep.





the end, as long as Silk production continues, and the maglevs travel the Silk Route, little else is of significant concern.

HUNZA

A small but bustling city nestled against the Bajram-Balk mountains, Hunza is a surprisingly prosperous place. Unlike most other cities and settlements across Gabqar, Hunza has managed to break the reliance on one industry. While Nasiat farming is still a vital part of the city's wealth, it is also something of a tourist haven. Many travel to the area to enjoy adventure tourism, rock climbing and bouldering in the foothills, paragliding and wingsuit flying, and many more such activities.

The Hunza are also famous hunters. The nearby mountains and valleys are the prowling ground of the frighteningly infamous Sakht Taqdeer and other large predators. Only the Hunza are able to reliably track and kill these apex predators, and big-game tourists pay handsomely for the opportunity to join a hunt.

KHIVA KALA

A city of two names and a city of two sides. Built in a chain of valleys, Khiva Kala is the main source of Nasiat and the main centre for Silk production for the entire Human Sphere. Nasiat grows in abundance on the valley and mountainsides around this city, and the refineries and silos that store it and the Silk derived from it hug the edges of the slopes on which it grows.

Khiva Kala is a city of divides. The poorer classes who work the slopes and refineries must travel from their almost barrack-style dormitories built well away from the city proper. The wealthiest families have sprawling mansions that dominate the centre of the city, while a large population of nouveau riche cling to the edges in opulent townhouses. The old-money families do much to enforce the status quo through complex arrangements of patronage and inheritances, and despite occasional rumblings of discontent from the poorer classes, the disparity has changed little.

The old-money families typically own the Nasiat fields and refineries of Khiva Kala, from which astonishing wealth flows into the city. With clean, uncluttered, and well-lit streets and gleaming buildings, Khiva Kala sits incongruent with the landscape around it. Many of the buildings and townhouses sit empty, built as much to show they could be built than for any practical purpose. The gardens of the city centre are a wonder, but all sealed and roofed, an artificial sun traversing the

lofty ceiling and basking the cool promenades and garden beds below with light. It is an engineering marvel.

Despite the obvious wealth on display at every corner, despite the shopping centres and buildings of commerce and trade, the heart of industry, the city itself is oddly muted. As night descends the curfew causes the rush of workers to make their way back to their dormitories, and the town falls eerily quiet. The parties of the nouveau riche and wealthy young echo across the streets, spilling light and music and colour into the emptiness. But for all this regular festivity, the city still feels empty.

Never out of sight, Ghulam soldiers and military police are everywhere. They enforce the curfew and martial laws on all but the wealthiest families, and often with surprising force. The visible military are ever-present and a reminder of how important this place is to Gabqar and to Bourak as a whole. While one might expect to see a soldier on any street or corner, they are most on show around the storage silos and refineries vital to the Silk trade. Here permanent patrols and guards are on constant duty, heavily armed and armoured, for attempts to steal the precious Silk are not uncommon.

Every Friday after the communal prayer, loaded maglev carriages are shunted onto the rails of the Silk Route and sent on their way. Accompanied by armed guards and military escorts, these departures are a sight to behold. Many people, even locals who have seen the sight before, will make their way to the high fences surrounding the maglev to watch the tumult of a shipment's departure.

KUM-DAG

A town out of step with the rest of Bourak, out of step with the tenets of Haqqislam, and out of step with the law, Kum-dag is a hive of restless criminality and violence. Martial law reigns in the Gabqar Khanate, but the biker gangs of Kum-dag regularly descend from the Tien Shan mountains, and the mighty Kyrgyz who call this town home know no law but their own. Historically the Kum were light mounted troops with a long and proud heritage. The Kum troops still wear their generic patch, the silver fist of Alexander the Great, the wings for freedom and victory, and the blade for the fighter. Although the most famous and visible outlaws of the Gabqar region and Kum-dag particularly, the Kum Bikers are actually the strong arm for the Kyrgyz mafias. The bikers are road warriors and drug and weapons dealers. They also play a key role in protecting the illegal Silk production of the mafias, as well as take a hand in the manufacture and sale of a large range of silk-derived drugs.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

The Juma Komiteti, or Friday Committee, a semi-organised union of sorts, has recently been agitating for more rights for the workers and a fairer distribution of the Silk trade's staggering wealth. They have been met with force, security and military personnel coming down hard on any hint of insurrectionist talk (as it is referred to).

Some concerted attempts to deal with the gangs and outlaws of Kum-dag have been attempted. Some were even moderately successful – gangers killed, bikes milled, drug labs incinerated. But, the cost in lives has been high, and deals to broker some level of peace have proved more effective than direct intervention. The Kum-Biker gangs and Kyrgyz mafias are extremely territorial, offering protection to those settlements in their area of influence. The Kum are turbulent. They love brawls, alcohol, beautiful women (and men), and noisy motorcycles. Gang fights and turf wars are common, and an alcohol-fuelled celebration of a deal struck between gangs can suddenly erupt into bloody violence and retribution as easily as to a hungover morning after.

Jury-rigged together by its own inhabitants, Kum-dag is a ramshackle town, buildings are haphazard, and the streets unplanned. Construction is poor, and the strong winds whistling out of the Tien Shan range can cause significant property damage. A good portion of the town is dug in to deal with the wind. Buildings extend below the ground and can be like rabbit warrens with lined tunnels and escape routes everywhere.

Kum-dag has a reputation as a lawless hell-hole of gangs and turf-wars, of violence and sex, of drugs and debauchery, but this is not entirely true. The town itself has a thriving economy. Mining in the foothills nearby produces good metals, and these are manufactured into strong alloys that in turn are used to make tools and bikes. The bikes and roadsters built in Kum-dag are famous for their connection with the Kyrgyz gangs of the Tien Shan range, but are also shipped out across Bourak to racing teams and wealthy playboys alike. Manufactories here also make the joint housings used in many remotes. Kum-dag's people are tough, inventive, and hard working.

The renowned Mercenary Market of Kum-dag draws the hard-bitten and desperate from across Bourak and beyond. Held in a series of connected underground caverns beneath the east portion of town, the Mercenary Markets are a bustle of activity year round. Here ex-soldiers, gangers, toughs, and criminal thugs rub shoulders with hackers and docs, with drivers and TAG pilots all there to meet and greet potential clients. The military maintains an unofficial presence, hiring crews for missions they want off the books. Representatives of Silk Lords and merchants seek groups for retribution attacks, snatch and grabs, and all manner of activities. Company executives look for men and women to commit industrial espionage, and crime families look for people tough enough to execute the boss's will. Secrecy and silence is expected. A merc who betrays his employer, even a former employer, can

expect to have their name on the Maya-based 'X Board.' A death of a person on X Board delivers hard cash to the killers. It's not a list any sane person is happy to be on.

A majority of the truly illegal activities – the weapons manufactories, drug labs, distilleries, brothels, counterfeiting rings, and gangs – are all concealed outside the town, in abandoned mines and caverns, in hidden valleys and secret places in the Tien Shan range.

The Khan of Gabqar can press the Kum into service in the Sword of Allah by appealing to their history and sense of honour. Service is something embraced by the Kum-bikers, and a majority of the high-ranking gang members have previous military experience. Kums are a strange element in civilized Haqqislamite society, and they can only exist in a frontier area like Gabqar. As long as that region stays wild, the Kyrgyz riders will be king of the hill in the Tien Shan range, no matter what Khanate forces may do. The roads belong to the Kums, and the roar of their bikes may be the last sound you hear!

ORZUBEK'S KARAKÇI

Orzubek's Karakçı (Outlaws) is a Kum gang that holds territory west of Kum-dag. They were fierce rivals with the Irfaz Satanists until the death of Satanists' leader Radbuk Beg. Since then they have formed a bond agreement with Kasym Beg, and ride out at his back when called upon. A large and wealthy gang, the Orzubek's Karakçı operate several brothels and an underground fighting ring in old mines on the outskirts of Kum-dag. Members frequent the town and have an uneasy truce with the law since a gun battle between the two saw half a dozen Orzubek's Karakçı gangers killed. Orzubek's Karakçı are distinctive by their large belt buckles and propensity to wear knuckledusters.

THE KUYUNDAR

The Kuyundar, or Tornadoes, is a relatively new Kum gang named after the high-adrenaline madness that comes from the drug of the same name and led by feared female fighter Bübüsara. Living in a male-dominated culture of tough men and chieftains, Bübüsara is one of a handful of female gang leaders gaining acceptance in the wake of the highly feared Nazaroova twins. Rumour has it that she was the daughter of a miner from Kum-dag, captured by the gang for ransom. There are a dozen different stories about how she ended up leading the gang she was taken by, but all of them involve unrelenting violence. The Dancers was originally a name slung in insult, earned from the party drug they manufacture using succulent flowers native to the Tien Shan range. This drug is shipped by a hundred different routes out of Kum-dag and across



KUM HERALDRY

Kum gangs take great pride in their bikes, and the best are all custom parts put together to specifically suit the rider. Given that the bikes hold such a central place in the culture of the Kum gangs, it is unsurprising that so much energy is put into keeping them clean and well maintained. Every paint job is custom, with some patterns and colours gaining popularity among certain groups or used to denote specific gangs. An experienced Kum biker will be able to tell who is coming long before they see them by the specific roar of the engine, but even more obvious is the paint scheme. Some gangs like to mock the law by spraying their bikes in what has been referred to as the Bluestreak paint job, a mockery of the O-12 official colour pattern. Many of the paint schemes and patterns make striking use of vivid reds, a colour deeply loved by the Kums. Full red schemes are usually reserved for the most-fierce warriors, the gang leaders and toughest fighters. Not only does it make the rank and power of the individual obvious, it also helps to hide the blood.

Bourak, and the trade is worth a significant amount of money. Since Bübüsara's ascendancy as leader of the gang and with her reputation for extreme violence, the name has lost its insulting overtones.

SEITEK'S DEATH RIDE

Seitek's Death Ride is a series of overland races held as a form of competition between Kum gangs. Named for the epic Krygyz hero, the race crosses some of the most dangerous and narrow mountain paths. Racers compete to be the first to cross the line of each stretch. It is a no-holds-barred race with few rules and often few survivors. The Death Ride is usually made up of four to six stretches, held over a series of days. Riders are not allowed to use guns against their competitors, but aside from that there is little a rider is not allowed to try. Prestige and glory follow the winners of each stretch, and the outcomes can sort pecking orders and rankings between gangs and be used to settle disagreements. The nights over the course of the races are given over to revelry and excess, wild times fuelled by alcohol and drugs and given over to sex and violence.

SEMETEI

Sitting beneath a noxious valley of poison where soft clouds of deadly spores float gently through the air, Semetei is the site of a terraforming disaster. Changes to the local ecosystem let loose a horrific parasite that consumed and subsumed the thick clusters of Bourak Parasols. The fungi's spores are deadly, inducing a period of wild hallucination and paranoia before the nervous system shuts down. Semetei is surrounded by a veritable wall of T2s, struggling to keep the city free of poison. The valley in the hills above the city affected is a fungal bloom. From the sky it appears as a series of lighter and darker fungal rings, each capable of almost continually producing spores. With a strong wind the spores can be blown a long way from the valley, sometimes creating deadly, polluted sandstorms.

Semetei survives on its mines and consistent Nasiat harvesting. Whether the fungal spores have affected the Nasiat or not is still an open question. Nobody in Semetei wants to see the industry threatened, so nobody is willing to start digging too deeply for the answer.

TAMERLANE

Tamerlane is an industrial city of ore smelters and refineries. Black smokes curls from a myriad of exhausts and chimney stacks, staining the sky above a permanent bruised-black colour. The refineries of Tamerlane are ancestrally owned and operated, their internecine politics and rivalries rife

with ingrained disputes that stretch back generations. One of the deepest of these current disputes is between the Vitsin and Usenov guilds, initiated a decade ago over the mineral rights of several towns in the Tien Shan mountain range. It has, in the last year, seen worker uprisings, accusations of industrial sabotage, and even bloody rioting in the streets.

Local law enforcement has its hands largely tied, as both guilds are run by wealthy families with deep connections to the powerful, and influential in Tamerlane. Several high-ranking officers in the local police have written directly to the Khanate asking for assistance in dealing with the disputes, and rumour suggests a military presence may be planned in response. The Vitsin and Usenov guilds have responded by upping the belligerence of their discourse. It doesn't look like a problem that is going to be solved cleanly or quickly.

IRAN ZHAT AL AMAT SHAHNATE

Once an inhospitable and arid region, the Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahnate has been largely transformed by a consistent and well-implemented terraforming effort. The transformation is most notable in the north and south of the region, with the coastlines offering idyllic and carefully maintained landscapes, a magnet for tourists with many luxurious resorts.

The resorts, medical institutes, and tourist locales of the Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahnate are so well known, that the region's reputation extends well beyond Bourak. The facilities, cities, and institutions of the region attract tourists from across the Human Sphere, making it one of the most diverse and culturally eclectic regions on Bourak, and an ever-changing kaleidoscope of people and activity.

ALAMUT

Flying in the face of Iran Zhat Al Amat's reputation as a garden resort, the Alamut subcontinent instead is a desert wasteland. If rumour and hearsay is to be believed, terraforming in Alamut has been deliberately abandoned at the hand of the Old Man of the Mountain. The Hassassins purportedly have hidden bases and training facilities scattered throughout the inhospitable desert region, and of course, the Holy Mountain, headquarters to this infamous group, is said to be located somewhere beneath the rolling sand storms of the desert.

The Alamut subcontinent stretches from the edges of the Tien Shan Mountains in the North-East to the city of Turfan in the South-West. It is a tough



and rocky landscape easy to get lost in as every direction is dominated by outcroppings of stone and strewn with boulders, rocks, and pebbles. Vegetation is sparse, with the succulents prevalent throughout Bourak and some hardy spindle grasses breaking the otherwise dreary landscape. For those with honed survival skills or to the natives of the region, these outcroppings of life amongst the rocks are key signposts, used both for navigation and as a source of food and vital water. A handful of settlements have tried to scrape a living on the fringes of this vast desert, but most have collapsed either due to the sheer difficulty of survival or to the attacks of the Daylami tribesmen, who are the only peoples who have managed to make their lives here.

Wiry, short, and resilient, the Daylami make their homes in this impossible network of seemingly barren mountains that wind through the Eastern edges of Alamut. They are an independent people with a tough and unforgiving warrior spirit and are raised from the womb to survive in a place that would see them shrivel and die. Daylami are a testament to the tenacity, adaptability, and sheer will that exemplify the human spirit to live.

The Daylami exist almost as a separate nation within Bourak living in a network of caves and caverns, roaming the rocky deserts, or striking out of the ranges in raiding parties. Almost, for it is hinted that they trade with the Holy Mountain in information as well as goods. That Hassassin soldiers train with the Daylami warriors, learning to live tough and lean in the harshest of places. That they treat the Old Man of the Mountain like one of their own, a head chieftain among chieftains.

Due to rumours that swirl around the name Alamut, like the barren rocks themselves and the sudden violence of the Daylami raiders, a sinister air hangs over the subcontinent. This reputation of mystery and danger is a pall so completely wrapped around Alamut, that anyone who has heard of the region understands that there is something menacing about it, a patient, watching, lurking kind of danger, felt as much as spoken.

TURFAN

Long boats with spear guns ply the waters outside Turfan to hunt the great serpents of the deep. These marine gargantuan are hauled back to the



long docks of the city to be butchered, their meat consumed by the city or traded across the waters. It is a hardy place, Turfan, sitting alone with its back to a desolate region.

NOROUZ

Norouz is the largest province of Iran Zhat Al Amat extending from the rivers and mountains that indicate the edges of Alamut to the coast in the far north. Alamut is a desolate and menacing place, and Norouz is its opposite. Renowned throughout the Human Sphere for the paradisiacal landscapes of its Northern coast, as well as for its sophisticated medical retreats, it is a famed destination for tourists and travellers.

The cities and resorts of the northern coast are nestled in idiosyncratic and carefully sculpted ecosystems. Each one is different; the sights, colours, scents, and moods of each are artistically designed and brilliantly realised. As much as they draw in visitors from across the Human Sphere, they are also advertisements for the skill, cunning, and artistry of the Haqqislamite planetologists.

MARACANDA

Surrounded by a desert that stretches to the horizon on all fronts, the city of Maracanda is an oasis of luxuriant colour and life made even more spectacular by its arid framing. Maracanda is the location of the main headquarters of the Terraformation Institute, appointed with carrying out the glorious task of re-sculpting the very environment of the planet. The Institute brings considerable wealth to Bourak, since many hyper-corps and nations across the Human Sphere seek advisors and scientists to manage or run terraforming projects on a multitude of planets.

Maracanda is a hub of activity, sitting on both the Silk and Nizari Routes. It is a centre for trade, and goods flow into and out of the city in enormous quantities. The impact of the Silk Route, like elsewhere, is significant. As a maglev train arrives along the Silk Route into Maracanda, its passage is a bubble, the airspace above the maglev is a no-fly zone, and portions of the city even transition into a temporary lockdown until it has passed. This has led city life to follow a pattern of punctuated equilibrium, work, and relaxation both in equal measure, following the rhythm of the Silk Route.

QORSAPTAR

Hugging the coastline, Qorsaptar is an expansive city, well laid out, carefully planned, and dominated by an austere yet beautiful classic aesthetic. Wide boulevards and extensive gardens allow sweeping

views of the coastal vista from almost anywhere in the city. The streets are a riot of colour to match the bustling atmosphere. Trade across the Masudi Straight is continual, as the tourist boats and fishing charters continually ply the waters off the coast. Hidden under the surface of this genteel bustle is a healthy smuggling trade the city law enforcement is trying to stamp out.

Despite the buzz of activity, Qorsaptar has a leisurely rhythm. Its riads – charming little hotels of the medina districts – are always full of tourists, as are the coffee houses and bazaars. Entertainment is frequently staged in the public parks, and coffee houses compete for customers by offering not only sublime service, but also shows, music, and games.

RAVANSĀR

Capital of Iran Zhat Al Amat, Ravansār is the seat of the Shahnate and location of the Regional Government houses. The sprawling and low buildings of Government are almost hidden by extensive gardens and continually patrolled by soldiers. Central to these is the Palace of Keyumars, the home, business, and meeting halls of the Shah himself. A large and opulent building, it rears over the houses of Government as a deliberate reminder of the order of things. The Palace of Keyumars is where ambassadors from around Bourak Sphere come to deal with the Shahnate, from the Hachib and other regional leaders to the officials and politicians from other powers in the Human. Many of the power-brokers from off-world that call upon or stay at the Palace of Keyumars have come to Ravansār to enjoy its atmosphere or visit one of the many Theriac resorts the city is famous for, but as always, business and pleasure are closely tied.

The city itself is cosmopolitan, an eclectic mix of professionals, workers, academics, artists, and thinkers. It is also home to a substantial transient population of tourists, and this lends the city an air of vibrancy and life, of newness and activity. There are always fresh faces arriving in Ravansār, wealthy tourists, Maya stars, and business men and women who are looking for a place to unwind and relax or one of the many services the city offers.

Relaxation and leisure are hallmarks of Ravansār, and even the government moves at its own rhythm and pace. The people here work hard, but they are also very aware of the work-life balance and ensure that however many hours they toil, they also make time for personal hobbies and relaxation. The busiest portion of Ravansār is undoubtedly the Gazsi Financial District. Here trades are made and deals struck involving stupendous sums of money. The share market and currency exchanges are a vibrant wall of noise and activity. But even here, the

GAMES, GAMES, GAMES...

Qorsaptar is known for the city's love of games, a unique idiosyncrasy. Kabaddi is an obsession, and teams sponsored by wealthy families and businesses compete year-round. Often in open air courts in the public gardens, these events are free for anyone to attend. The coffee houses are famed for their eclectic mix of trivia events and board games, regularly putting together teams to compete against one another for pride and amusement.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

There are a string of resorts that specialise in providing a home away from home for tourists from specific nationalities or planets. These resorts are carefully sculpted to reflect these different homelands, from having gardens filled with native flora, to the climate control inside the buildings themselves. Some resorts offer a gentrified Haqqislamite experience, ascetic and austere, religious and thought-provoking, a real taste of so-called 'true' Bourak.

economists and traders all make sure they spend time enjoying the fruits of their labour.

The city is famous for its Theriac Resorts – medical getaways where visitors are treated for diseases and injuries both physical and mental and can seek out experts in cosmetic surgery. Research coupled with resort-style treatment facilities wash away the weariness, stitch muscle and bone back together, and heal the wounds of the body, mind, and heart. The doctors, psychologists, and surgeons of Ravansār are some of the best and brightest in the Human Sphere. Because of this emphasis, the people of the city are far more aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Gyms and physical activities are ubiquitous and well attended. Fine food is appreciated, but it is always checked by an understanding that healthy eating is vital. The life expectancy of the average Ravansār citizen is longer than anywhere else on Bourak, and the citizen happiness rating is higher too.

The city has been carefully planned, with the hollow square houses of the locals occupying the foothills, the long city centre follows the coast, and every building, from the glass clad commerce halls of the Gazsi Financial District to the street lights and footpaths themselves. While a majority of the long-term citizens of Ravansār live in houses built into the foothills back from the city centre, the tourists and travellers tend to congregate in hotels and resorts dotting the coastline like so many fairy lights. The city centre, with its expansive gardens and winding roads, is where the two meet in an effervescent mass of energy, movement, and noise.

Everything is designed to blend and meld, to follow naturalistic styles, curving lines and to create a whole that is as beautiful a city as anywhere else in the Human Sphere. Surrounding and embracing the entire city is an extensive and magnificent stretch of native palms called the Centenary Grove of Parvaneh, and a small army of gardeners works to maintain its beauty. Nestled in this grove and winding through the hills are a myriad of spacious residential districts, resorts, and leisure centres. At the highest point on the Western edge of the city is the Minaret of the Dusk, an architectural triumph that looks impossible in its fine and fluted body and wide, glorious top. Ravansār is a city that blends into and celebrates the natural.

Ravansār is a beautiful city, and the emphasis on aesthetic is deliberate, the luxury and obvious wealth, the medical houses, and Theriac resorts, the wondrous examples of terraforming and sheer beauty is all designed with a careful eye. Ravansār is a showcase for Haqqislam, the jewel of Bourak. It is the centrepiece of marvel that demonstrates the achievements of the Haqqislamite ideal. In many

senses, it is built less for the people of Bourak than it is as an advertisement to the rest of humanity, a paradise born of a desert, inspired by faith.

ISLANDS

BAHITI

Home to the widest variety of Bourak Parasol species anywhere on the planet, Bahiti is a unique eco-system. Torrents of rain coming off the Ibn Battuta Ocean soak the island and make it an ideal habitat for the Parasol fungi. Artists and fashion designers often visit the island to draw inspiration from the psychedelic profusion of colours and patterns found on the pileus of these species. Researchers have just begun to catalogue the species of fungi, and there is cautious optimism that a range of chemical compounds analysed will result in a new boom in pharmaceuticals. In the north, the island valleys have been cleared out to make way for tobacco cultivation, though lobbyists are trying to pass regulations limiting the growth of this industry in light of the potential discoveries to be made with the native flora.

OLABISI

Largely unknown outside of Bourak, Olabisi is a hidden gem. A tourist resort popular with natives of Bourak, it is largely off the 'tourist trail' sold to off-worlders. Quiet during the monsoonal season, the town doubles in size as the summer season gets underway. Most tourist activities run out of Olabisi are adventure sports; windsurfing, serpent fishing, and paragliding have been the most popular in recent years, although the industry is new, and every summer more seems to be on offer.

One of the most popular events is the Olabisi Windsurfing Race. Once only loved by locals and with those who have a passion for the sport, it has exploded in the last three years with extensive Maya coverage. Sponsorships and prize pools have grown exponentially, and as a result the contest draws competitors from across Bourak. Teams now are sponsored by resorts, and the competition is fierce, especially so since the best season is when the Tasliyat sea-serpents are breeding!

BANIYA

Baniya, a volcanic island of high peaks and deep valleys, is heavily covered in vegetation due to its rich soils. Lashed by wild weather during autumn and winter, Baniya has no major population centre. Instead, the island is home to a collection of disparate farming communities who rely on trade and transport to Parthalia island for many of the

HAMDARDI

Hamdardi is one of the most successful and wealthy of the health resorts in Ravansār. Not a single entity, Hamdardi as a brand runs a dozen small Theriac Resorts, each specialising in different maladies. In addition to these enterprises, Hamdardi runs regular seminars on health and wellbeing, courses that are well-attended, popular, and often streamed on Maya to millions of paid-viewers. Much of their profit is poured back into the industry in the form of medical research. They have a particular emphasis on dealing with health problems associated with exposure to Bourak's harsh conditions and environment.

BIG INDUSTRY

One of the key economic successes of Olabisi is the explosion of the tobacco industry. Genetically modified to remove the carcinogenic chemicals found in the Ariadnan variety, the tobacco of Olabisi is widely exported around the Human Sphere.

SABBATICAL RETREAT

The University of Medina and many other institutions around Bourak regularly send their researchers and academic to Ravansār on sabbaticals. These can be earned through exemplary conduct or as a reward for a particular success in their field. Sometimes, these sabbaticals disguise a hidden motive. Espionage between medical research teams is common, and such short trips are often used as an excuse to snoop around. There have also been many occasions where a researcher or academic has attracted unwanted attention, either for breakthroughs made or information uncovered. Sabbaticals can be used as a way of providing a 'safe-house' for such high-risk targets.



HARSH TRAINING

In the frozen waste of Karli's most northern coast are several military facilities. Here special force soldiers train and are acclimatised to weather and temperatures not present elsewhere on Bourak. Training runs in these ice-locked wildlands can be extremely dangerous.

HONOURED

Hajar AlAtar and Hasan Ali are collectively known as the Mošarraḡ. Many stories surrounding the two speak of an unrequited love, and indeed there has been at least one Maya drama that did more than imply it. When asked, they will just laugh, they love each other, of that there is no doubt, but as life friends and artists might, not as lovers. It is something of a game in Khadijah, to play the Mošarraḡ game, to walk the streets and guess at whether a building is the work of Hajar or Hasan.

REFUGE

Many of the Bygones are former high-flying government, corporate, or military personnel seeking a quieter location and pace of life. There are few places in the Human Sphere where such a multitude of farms so close together is also home to the rich, formerly powerful and highly experienced. There are always rumours that politicians seeking to avoid media attention, those involved with some controversy, or other are sequestered in these peaceful farmlands until the heat dies down.

goods and services required. There has been some suggestion that a smugglers network operates from this island base, but this is little more than hearsay.

KARLI

Located close to the North Pole, Karli is as cold a location as is possible on Bourak. Half locked by ice, it is home to a handful of small fishing communities who engage in the dangerous task of fishing for squid-like creatures called Solh. Solh grow to around three metres in length, and their tentacles are covered with small sharp hooks, each coated with a jelly-like substance that causes mind-numbing hallucinations followed by cardiac arrest. The dangers of fishing are mitigated somewhat by the delicacy of the Solh flesh, much in demand by high-end restaurants around Bourak, and their toxic secretions are sold to ne'er-do-wells and medical researchers alike.

NAWAL ISLAND

Sitting at a high enough latitude that the intensity of Fareedat's heat is muted somewhat, Nawal Island is a balmy place between the Alhazen and Al-Adrisi seas. Terraforming this island to become comfortable for living required only a little nudge, and the native eco-systems adjusted easily. Further efforts have gone into shaping the island flora into a rolling mix of native and introduced species. Beyond the city of Khadijah the countryside is crafted with a combination of carefully laid out wild reserves and rolling farmland. Here the Bygones live, people seeking refuge from a busy life, retired, or just wanting to slow down. They live on a multitude of small farmlets, some just self-sustaining, some large enough to produce a surplus which is traded with the capital city.

KHADIJAH

A city of splendour built for a singular purpose, Khadijah is the beating bureaucratic heart of Bourak and the seat of Haqqislamite power. The city is alive with meaning and purpose. Every citizen, from the lowest to the highest, is engaged with the dynamism and swirling discourse surrounding the politics of Bourak and Haqqislam. Because the organs of government are so plain and so much the driving force for Khadijah, it is typical for any conversation to be laced with political views, whether asked or unasked for. Citizens here feel like they are part of the machine of governance. Despite the predilection for people in modern times to exist in echo chambers of thought and religious and political views, the people of Khadijah are surprisingly well informed of all sides of an issue. It is a culturally unique aspect of Khadijah, that its citizenry actively engages the two paths of their faith to

examine geopolitical issues from both sides of the coin. Conversations for outsiders can be confusing as Khadijahans can often appear to vacillate or switch viewpoints swiftly. This is not a product of not knowing what they think, but a result of their unique willingness to actively examine a problem from multiple and conflicting perspectives.

Khadijah is a busy tumult of activity. Permanent locals have learned to live with the hectic, twenty-two hours a day cycle of news and motion, something that can be exhausting for newcomers. The city has a large itinerant population, with young hopefuls dreaming of a career in the public service or as politicians making their way here after university. It is typical for these young professionals to return to their home regions after they have managed to establish themselves. Those who last longer and manage to find a place in the political establishment, have large followings of the younger generation, and something of a culture of hero worship exists around the life-long politicians of Khadijah.

While it is a fact that Khadijah would be a shadow of its current form where it not the seat of government, this ubiquity of appearance is due to the architecture. The major buildings of Khadijah, those of the city centre and the Majlis, were all designed by two architects, Hajar AlAtar and Hasan Ali. Both these architects are of the same school, believing a building should reflect its national character, flow with the landscape synergy, and artistic statement. Both are fans of each other's work, and while they are now in their eighties, they still continue to have a dominating influence on the architecture of Khadijah and the cities of Bourak.

Despite this ubiquity of visual design, regional governments mark their buildings out with decorations or additions that may be impossible for a stranger to note, but which will be obvious to a regional local. There are also buildings designed specifically to stand apart; the glorious palace of the Hachib in all its splendour, the Central Mosque, the Garden of Dreaming Pillars, the Ta'Assor Concert Hall and the Avvalan Hotel Precinct are all architectural gems nestled in the crown of Khadijah.

Central to the city is the Palace of the Hachib, which is surrounded by extensive gardens and other buildings which house the engines of government; the Majlis al-Bourak and the Diwāns all have their central offices here. Surrounding this in an equally divided concentric circle is the Majlis District. Each quarter of this wide ring reflects the character of the four regions of Bourak, and each government has its national offices here, which include the four Majlis that come together to form the Lower House of Parliament.

Radiating out from the Palace of the Hachib in the four cardinal directions is the Promenade. Each arm of the Promenade runs through one of the regional Majlis districts before joining a wide ring road that separates the Majlis districts from the rest of Khadijah. The Promenade is a wide road that extends from the ring around the Majlis and out through the city itself. It is a parade route, along which honoured guests are conveyed, and the Hachib and members of government can proceed on ceremonial occasions. It is also wide enough to show off the strength of Bourak, the mighty Maghariba Guard Regiment, in all its fearsome splendour.

As a sign of respect to the regions that make up Bourak, every local festival and public holiday is celebrated in Khadijah. This has led to a surprising number of free days and celebrations throughout the year, and the government has been forced to place a limit on the holidays enjoyed across the regions to avoid significantly impacting the working year of the capital city.

Standing guard over the city is an extensive chain of forts and military buildings. Each one of these houses squads of soldiers and infowar specialists providing protection and defence for the city.

PARTHALIA ISLAND

Settled primarily by Indonesian Haqqislamites, Parthalia Island is a home to a unique and diverse set of sub-cultures that see themselves somewhat as separate from the rest of Bourak. Sitting as it does between the Al-Idrisi Sea and the Ibn Battuta Ocean, it is frequently soaked by monsoons, particularly during the spring and summer periods when high levels of evaporation push rain-laden clouds into the mountains central to Parthalia, which, cooling as they rise, drop significant rainfall.

The mountain foothills are heavily terraced, and much effort has been made to introduce crops of modified rice into the region with significant

success. The 'Beautiful Rice' produced by the island is shipped across Bourak and is the major export for Parthalia, bringing in substantial trade revenue.

Considerable effort has gone into attempting to wipe out all forms of the Bourak Parasol from Parthalia. This fungus enjoys the conditions of the wet island and grows in abundance. With more and more land every year terraced off and turned to rice paddies, the competition for good soil is something local farmers take much effort to influence.

The architecture of Parthalia is unique to Bourak. Due to the heavy rainfall endured by the island, a vast majority of buildings are stilted; standing several metres off the ground. This tradition carries through even into the settlements and cities where it is less required by the environment. The architecture and unique blend of cultures are drawing cards for tourists wishing to experience something out of step with the rest of the planet.

Parthalia is an eclectic mix of Haqqislamite Indonesian cultures and those from around Bourak. It is widely regarded as insular, and even as somewhat seditious. Happy to keep to themselves as long as trade is good, the reputation for sedition is broadly unfair. In several extremely high-profile foreign espionage cases, PanOceania used the island as the location of their agents' safe houses, where they could lay-low and switch their identities. Uncovered by Hassassin agents, the cases fell into the open media who took to them with a frenzy. Parthalia's reputation has taken a severe hit since, and this has had the effect of making the locals somewhat mistrustful of the rest of Bourak.

Whatever Parthalia's reputation, one industry that thrives, perhaps in part because of it, is biomedicine. The island houses a dozen significant biomedical resorts of questionable legality, and unlike the Theriac resorts of Ravansār, these have a reputation for seeing the laws around treatment and surgery as something of a grey area. There have been occasional attempts to shut these facilities down, but many official investigations have been side-lined or 'found nothing' leading journalists to speculate on corruption within the

THE GARDEN OF DREAMING PILLARS

A place of solitude and calm for peaceful reflection and quiet conversation, the wide Garden of Dreaming Pillars sits adjacent to the Central Mosque. It is a beautiful and brilliantly designed garden with many hidden alcoves and secret spaces. Flowing water is everywhere, preventing the sound of conversation from traveling far. A frequent escape for bureaucrats and politicians, the Garden of Dreaming Pillars has also been the scene for many a discreet deal made along its winding paths.

THE AVVALAN HOTEL PRECINCT

A chain of four large buildings each sitting at the corners of a large square garden. By clever design, the hotels interconnect gracefully towards their lofty heights. The Avvalan Hotel Precinct is one of the finest hotels in the Human Sphere. Known for its appointed luxury, it is the place of choice for merchants, lobbyists, politicians, and ambassadors visiting Khadijah.

THE TA'ASSOR CONCERT HALL

A vast opulent building located close to the Majlis districts, the hall is famed throughout Bourak and beyond. Renowned entertainers, shows, speakers, and artists showcase their talents here, and performing on one of the Ta'Assor's wide stages is the dream of many aspiring performers. Many of the shows are from off-world; a deliberate and high-paying program designed to bring music and performance styles not common on Bourak to its people. The cavern-like building also contains a handful of shops and restaurants. Frequented by lobbyists and politicians, it is also a key, if unofficial, location in the wheels of government.

ZUMORRODA

A palatial artificial island owned by renowned and infamous warmonger Qaid Fahesh, it is the headquarters of his mercenary company Dahshat. The training bases and facilities of the company are well hidden from prying eyes however, and Fahesh uses Zumorroda as a cover for his many business interests. Surrounding the island is a network of breath-taking reefs, a draw for thousands of tourists every year. The constant flow of people to and from Zumorroda makes it difficult for authorities to track his contacts, businesses, and movements. Fahesh is a wily and ruthless operator. He rules over Zumorroda like a King in his kingdom, and there is little capacity authorities have to prevent him from doing so.



SMUGGLERS

Parthalia and Baniya are home to a close-knit community of smugglers. Using fishing boats to conceal their contraband, they are experts at using low-tech methods to escape detection. Able to bring people and resources from the mainland to Parthalia, they have proven ingenious at slipping past even the most honest of customs boats.

local police. Whether there is much substance to these rumours, or they have been put about by competitors, or they have been used as a form of subversive marketing is unknown.

BAHAL

The City on Stilts is how Bahal is known to the rest of Bourak. A mismatch of cultures that somehow blend into a homogenous whole, Bahal is a bustling place of dry streets and a multitude of winding alleyways. Here, in the seedy bars and gathering holes, if one knows where to look, one can find contacts to the extensive black market of Parthalia.

FAREEDAT SYSTEM

Though discovered centuries ago, the Fareedat System became home not just for a burgeoning power in the Human Sphere but for a people united by one ideal, an ideal born of a new religion. The wave of religious fervour that changed and modernized Islam throughout old Sol helped carry its followers like the famed steed that carried the Prophet himself across the stars to a new home for the Haqqislamite people.

Thanks to the wormhole and through the ingenuity and charity of their Muslim brothers back on Sol, the Haqqislamites were able to travel across space and colonise their new world. A harsher planet than expected, it tested the mettle of early explorers. Few believed that the Sālik would be able to do more than establish an outpost on the desert planet, but soon the early colonists had mapped Bourak and devised plans for entire cities.

The planet has grown faster than the planets of Shentang or Paradiso, and thanks to the skills, mettle, and resources of its early colonisers, the planet itself has begun to change into the idyllic jewel promised by Allah.

The Fardeet system is comprised of four planets while Bourak itself is orbited by seven moons known collectively as the Moons of the Seven Imams.

PLANETS

The four planets of the Fardeet system include Ababil, a mesoplanet; Bourak, a terrestrial planet and homeland of the Haqqislamites; 'Uj ibn Anaq, and AL-Mi'Raj, both class I gas giants.

ABABIL

Small, molten, and geographically unstable, the planet of Ababil is used as a high-security storage facility close to the star of Fareedat. Compounds there have been equipped with banks of solar panels, which power the planet's many research labs. What exactly is being researched may be known to the Hachib, but beyond the very highest seat of government, no-one is certain. Its rumoured that even the Hassassins have been unable to discover what kind of research is being carried out on Ababil.

'UJ IBN ANAQ

'Uj ibn Anaq's violent storms and statically charged atmosphere kept researchers from being able to do much with this planet other than carry out observations. Thanks to improvements in Haqqislamite ships and technology purchased from the Nomads, a series of research probes has been sent through the deep atmosphere to analyse the planet's core, and readings seem to indicate it is laced with Teseum. Despite the urgency for developing mining equipment that can withstand the planet's dense gravity and rough atmosphere, Haqqislam has been unable to access the mineral so far. Bourak has had to remain satisfied with mining the upper atmosphere of 'Uj ibn Anaq for hydrogen, and many large stations hang in orbit serving this industry.

AL-MI'RAJ

Located at the edge of the system, AL-Mi'Raj is surprisingly calm with wind-speeds in the upper atmosphere manageable enough that ships needing to traverse it have little trouble. Due to the slow-moving nature of the nitrogen and methane in its atmosphere, and a mix of other gasses, images reflect off the cloud layers and give the illusion of other ships or orbital stations being in different locations, either further or closer, than reality. Moving around AL-Mi'Raj can be a risky proposition. The planet has a wildly fluctuating ionosphere, which plays havoc with navigational equipment, and the use of cameras can be dangerously deceiving due to the reflective cloud layers. Mining stations in orbit around AL-Mi'Raj have difficulty with small shuttlecraft getting lost, disorientated, or descending too deep into the giant atmosphere by accident, but mining for nitrogen has been too profitable for these minor difficulties to disturb them. AL-Mi'Raj has also become home to several small and well-hidden pirate bases. These use the planet's reflective atmosphere as a way to keep their movements concealed. Rather than attacking the mining trade of the planet, they tend to operate deeper, striking at ships exiting the Sari Han Vila Booster high in AL-Mi'Raj's orbit.

THE MOONS OF THE SEVEN IMAMS

The Moons of the Seven Imams follow a highly complex orbital pattern around Bourak. On the rare occasions in which three or more of these are in syzygy, Bourak can experience uncomfortably extreme tides. The fact there are seven moons has been taken by many as a sign of deep religious significance, which has fed the inviolable nature of what many used to refer to as the 'Bourak experiment'. In Haqqislam, Imam is a title given to a worship leader, but here it is a metaphor for the most important virtues a Haqqislamite should aspire to.

HIKMA

Hikma means 'wisdom'; "Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious." (Al-Quraan 16:125).

Hikma is home to the largest colony for Haqqislamite citizens off Bourak. Hikma is an experimental settlement on the threshold of entering full operation. It is a proving ground for Haqqislamite ideals, ingenuity, and skill.

Millions of credits have been spent on developing the colony's biodomes and generators to prove that Haqqislamites are just as capable a space-faring power as the rest of Human Sphere.

Deep underneath the Hikma's central outpost, Mecca 1, near the location of the geothermal plants, the Hassassins maintain a secret base known as the Inverted Mountain. Not only does this base serve a purpose of training Hassassins in brutal off-world conditions designed to improve their extraplanetary skills, but it gives the Hassassins close access to the Eye of Allah Satellite network. This network is responsible for providing Bourak with atmospheric updates, maintains their Maya Net, and serves to monitor Bourak's surface. Thanks to carefully programmed blind spots in the security network, the Hassassins are able to work around security satellites when they need to in order to conduct operations without being observed.

TAFAWUT

Tafawut means 'tolerance'; "If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!" (Al-Quraan 10:99).

Tafawut is a desolate rock whose only major feature is a massive destroyed complex located on the southern portion of the moon. The "Mountain's Grave" is believed by some to be a former base of the Hassassins. This lie is carefully cultivated by

the Old Man of the Mountain, extending the apparent influence of the organisation in the minds of all.

RAHMA

Rahma means 'mercy'; "Overlook (any human faults) with gracious forgiveness." (Al-Quraan 15:85).

The moon of Rahma is home to Haqqislam's off-world storage facilities, and numerous computer stations dot its surface containing secure files linked to Bourak's growing information network.

EADALA

Eadala means 'justice'; "Allah loveth those who judge in equity." (Al-Quraan 5:42).

The moon of Eadala was home to an early attempt to develop an off-world colony, which failed due to the increasingly unstable surface of the planet. The Hassassins maintain a secret proving ground on this world where recruits are buried alive beneath the surface in carefully monitored tunnels designed to inspire abject terror. It is in these tunnels, where moon tremors are part of a carefully controlled simulation, that Hassassins help break their recruits of fear.

SADAQA

Sadaqa means 'charity'; "If ye disclose (acts of) charity, even so it is well, but if ye conceal them, and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you." (Al-Quraan 2:271)

Sadaqa is a moon punctured with deep caverns and fissures. Mining stations dot the surface, and low orbit is dominated by stations rerouting the mined resources to Bourak.

TAWADAE

Tawadae means 'humility'; "The servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, 'Peace!'" (Al-Quraan 25:63)

Tawadae is home to the notorious penal colony known as Hirāsīdan. Prisoners here work in the mines that riddle the crust of the moon and represent the worst law-breakers in the Haqqislamite nation.

AMAL HAQIQIUN

Amal Haqiqiun means 'true hope'; "Lose not heart, nor fall into despair: For ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith." (Al-Quraan 3:138-139)

Amal Haqiqiun is a radioactive moon full of large veins of uranium. The moon is home to top secret research facilities dedicated to testing weaponry considered too risky to use on Bourak.

THE EYE OF ALLAH

Faulty, full of technological difficulties, and centuries behind PanOceania's famed stellar communications systems, the Eye is notorious for its poor resolution and its faulty software. Due to flaws in its gyroscopic jets, the Eye of Allah requires continual orbital adjustments. All of this is exactly as the Hassassins intended.

Thanks to their control of the Inverted Mountain, the Hassassins are the first ones able to access any information entering the satellite network. They happily share information with Haqqislam's authorities, but only after they see the information first, making any alterations the Old Man in the Mountain requires. The public image of faulty equipment allows the Hassassins to mask their movements behind "the usual difficulties." When the network functions to full capacity, it is regarded as something of a minor miracle.

ORBITALS

There are three key orbitals in stable geocentric orbits around Bourak and one in close proximity of the Sari Han Vila Booster station. The most famous of these is undoubtedly Gelişmek station, but the others are also significant.

GELIŞMEK STATION

An ever-expanding and monstrous behemoth sitting on top of the Dar el Funduq orbital elevator, Gelişmek is the first stop for most visitors to Bourak. Home to hundreds of shops, restaurants, and hotels, its refinement is only equalled to its sister station of Zulqibar. The main difference between the two is that Gelişmek is meant to welcome visitors and help them feel at home so that they will acclimatise faster to life on Bourak. Despite its grandeur, Gelişmek is often mocked on several Maya Net programs. These focus on the general disarray and confusing nature of the station, where thousands of people tend to move around its cramped hallways, unsure of where to go and speaking dozens of languages.

SURAT I-NAJM STATION

Surat I-Najm, named after the star Sirius, is a station marred by sabotage. Three times the station has had unexpected explosions or EMP devices detonated within it or close by. These have damaged the station to the point where few believe it will ever be finished. As a Druze transport was captured during one incident, many blame the Druze for the attacks, though the government has not officially confirmed this. If the station can be successfully repaired and brought online, then it will be a great triumph for Haqqislam.

ALNAMAR STATION

An orbital currently under construction over Saif, the aptly named "Panther" station has the backing of several prominent families on Bourak but is also the source of major controversy. Originally billed as a station for astronomical research, Alnamar Station was revealed to possess advanced transportation and docking stations in clear violation of the Funduq Sultanate's hegemony over all orbital transportation. Though ordered to cease operations, the station continues to be constructed and is near 100% completion.

ZULQIBAR STATION

Orbiting in close proximity to the Sari Han Vila Booster, Zulqibar Station is the headquarters and main waystation for the Qapu Khalqi fleet. Zulqibar is named after an ancient hero's sword. When it came to outfitting the station, Qapu Khalqi spared no expense. The station is in a constant state of repair and upgrade as armaments and materials from across the Human Sphere are brought in to keep the station at peak efficiency. The irony is that due to the numerous sheikhs and businesses interested in funding the Qapu Khalqi, the station's own efficiency will never reach its peak as the ever-changing technological needs of the station are constantly being updated and refined.

The station is shaped like a five-pointed star, and numerous transports and cruisers are often docked. Half of the station maintains a very spartan aesthetic as engineers and construction workers continually work on the defences and infrastructure. The other half is opulent to the point of decadence, a place of thick carpets, water fountains, and gilded columns.

Foreign corporate representatives and international officials seeking to hire mercenaries are welcomed to the station regularly. Bourak's laws are only loosely enforced on the station, as many in the Haqqislam government see the need for a place where they can conduct certain kinds of businesses that may be frowned upon planetside.

CHAPTER 3

CARAVANSERAI

Travelling across the galaxy is like travelling across a vast desert. Straying from the road can be dangerous, and travelling without maps and charts can lead even the most experienced caravan into oblivion. The caravanserai serves as important a role in this era as they did centuries ago. They allow travellers, merchants, and even the soldiers of the Qapu Khalqi to obtain shelter and supplies as they travel across the Human Sphere. The caravanserais are bustling ports, refuges, and above all markets where cultures intermingle and trade flourishes.

Though each nation in O-12 maintains their own space stations and trading outposts, the caravanserais of Haqqislam stand out among their peers. Even the simplest of these stations is a place of culture and warmth designed to provide a home for weary travellers. In times of hardship, merchants have been known to frequent these floating havens for repairs and resources which their owners give, though always for a fair price.

HISTORY OF THE CARAVANSERAI

The caravanserai started with the Bourak Pilgrimage. Though the will of the people travelling to Bourak was strong, they had little resources to aid them in their journey at first. The Energy Crisis had sapped them of resources and though the faithful contained some of the greatest minds of their generation they still needed practical aid in order to achieve their dream. They combined the resources of several ruling families, corporations, and donations from the faithful to acquire ships, technology, and launch sites from the old NASA facilities abandoned by the North American government. The voyage was long, and the cost of travelling through space was difficult due to the lack of support from Yu Jing or PanOceania. Even the Nomads were wary of helping the large numbers of immigrants travelling through space,



though they soon realised that helping Haqqislam thrive forced competition into Yu Jing and PanOceania's markets.

An unknown number of pilgrims were lost on the journey to Bourak. Some were lost to pirates or were detained by Yu Jing ships for straying too far into their space. Others disappeared as they travelled through wormholes, perhaps due to poor navigational information or contact with dangerous stellar phenomena. Many of the vessels were old and prone to malfunction, purchased at great cost despite their many flaws. Ships of pilgrims praying for a safe and speedy trip to their new home were wiped out in an instant as the reactors on their vessels went critical, or worse, they faced starvation as engines failed and their supplies ran out. Though these dangers were all considered in the planning of the Pilgrimage, the extent of the problem made it clear that a better solution was needed.

THE SAFAR COUNCIL

The Safar Council, or the Faithful's Council for Facilitating the Journey, was originally an unimportant collective of engineers and biologists who established four very basic stations where only the most primitive of supplies and repairs were available. Over time these basic stations became the modern caravanserais, and when the space routes were finally consolidated into the current network of caravanserais, the group was formally disbanded. Several members of the Safar Council wield more influence than might be otherwise apparent and are still considered external councillors to the Hachib.

The Safar Council knew that for their journey to Bourak to be successful, they would need to provide waystations that could help the faithful while at the same time spreading Haqqislam's influence across the Sphere. Travellers who needed aid could stop at these stations in exchange for trading essential resources. Though the Bourak Pilgrimage became easier as Haqqislam's resources grew, the importance of these stations was never forgotten, and they became an essential part of the nation's identity when it comes to matters of trade and diplomacy.

Though many faithful remaining on Sol make the pilgrimage to Bourak, the numbers of immigrants passing through space decline each year. The numerous industries that made colossal profits from the purchasing and outfitting of ships for the pilgrimage needed to find a way to remain profitable to further support Haqqislam. It was then that ingenuity paved the way for Haqqislam to become one of the major trading powers of the Human Sphere. Realising that although they did not need a large fleet to ferry passengers to Bourak, the emerging Haqqislam Sultanate offered cheap, reliable shipping of goods as well as commercial space travel across the Sphere. This helped build an enormous power base for Haqqislam, and their markets to grow quickly and powerfully to rival the other powers.

BAZAARS AMONG THE STARS

The caravanserais may have the appearance of simple trading posts, but it is not just the resources and trade goods that make these stations so unique. It is the culture that has formed around them and the people who make these stations

home that cause them to stand out from the commercial outposts of PanOceania or from the nearby Commercial Missions of the Nomads. The caravanserais offer travellers a taste of home, a taste of other cultures, and for those with more exotic discerning tastes a chance to sate urges that might not be tolerated on other worlds.

Stepping through the airlock leads to a culture shock for those who are unaccustomed to caravanserais. Unlike other space stations, Haqqislamites treat their stations as if they were on-world businesses and take great pride in making their stations homey. Often the floor is lavishly decorated with ornate rugs and tiles, the walls lined with tapestries or painted with resplendent vistas and colours. Water fountains, often considered a luxury for space travellers, form the centrepiece of each station, and the centre of the caravanserai is based around the Garden district that sits right next to a mosque. Here travellers can listen to imams calling Haqqislamites to prayer while enjoying the goods of the open markets, and the smell of freshly cooked food or the promise of warm showers makes even the most hardened spacer feel at home.

Although each station offers a welcoming and accepting atmosphere, they still possess the reputation of being where illegal goods can be found for the right price. Despite the claims of the Sectoral Diwân who control these stations, the truth is that each station tolerates a small amount of crime in order to encourage trade. This tolerance does not come out of weakness but rather out of an understanding between the Qapu Khalqi and various criminal organizations. In exchange for intelligence gathered on foreign dignitaries and other powers, they are allowed to earn a modest amount of profit from the vices of visitors. This does not mean that all criminal acts are permitted, and the security officers on the station are more than willing to crack down on any operation that is seen to profit from the abuse of the faithful. Essentially, so long as the crime rate is low and nobody is inconvenienced by violence, criminals are allowed to operate with minimal persecution. Officially the stations have zero tolerance policies on crime so criminals who break this arrangement are usually sent to Bourak for long sentences of hard labour.

LIFE ON THE ROAD

Space affects each traveller differently. Some simply consider it another region to travel across, with its own dangers and its own beauty that is no different than a region on the planet they came from. Others consider it a place of exploration and adventure and tie their lives to exploring the vastness that makes up the galaxy. There are others still that consider it to be a refuge where they can escape the pressures and dangers of the world,

where criminals and runaways alike can find new meaning and homes across the stars.

The caravanserais create a tempting port of call for those who make their home among the stars. Though there are other stations that offer visitors a comfortable experience and the many orbital stations around Shentang, Dawn, and Earth are every bit as luxurious as to be expected for stations orbiting the major planets of the Human Sphere, the caravanserais offer a more comfortable feeling for visitors. Some are gaudy, others are seedy, but most are places of warmth and comfort where the unexpected is normal, and rare and lost items may be found in a merchant's table.

The most common kind of visitor to the caravanserais are known by the simplest of names: the Caravaners. Though their name reflects who they are, it does not cover the vast variety of people who end up being Caravaners nor does it explain the culture of these travellers adequately. Caravaners are the captains and crewmen of ships who make their living plying the stars to travel between each caravanserai, bringing trade goods and transporting people. To the people who make their homes on the station, they are treated like family coming to visit and always as the potential customers they could be rather than as unwelcomed guests.

Caravaners tend to keep to themselves, preferring a solitary existence even among the stars. It is said they can taste gravity fluctuations or can smell when their ship needs repair. These stereotypes are often exaggerated, but most Caravaners are full of knowledge and skills gleaned from years working across the stars.

The next group to be found in a caravanserai are the Bayie, those who set up businesses on the stations. While some have actual stalls and tents from which they peddle their wares, many own legitimate businesses where visitors can walk through their doors and look at merchandise on racks and shelves. The Bayie come from all walks of life. Some went to the stars seeking fortune away from the busy streets of their home planets. Some Bayie are disgraced merchants whose debts and business dealings have forced them to deal their wares away from the eyes of the authorities.

On the caravanserais there are usually a few permanent residents whose lack of wealth or connections makes their stay on the station long term. Known as Tafili, these residents come from all walks of life. Some are criminals seeking refuge off the grid, and they live in fear that their pursuers, whether legal or criminal, will finally catch up with them. Others are disgraced or exiled members of other nations who have ended up without a home

and now are forced to stay on the station until they can figure out their next step. Then there are the rare few who enjoy staying on the station and who find it romantic to sleep in cargo bays or scavenge water from filtration pipes running across the station.

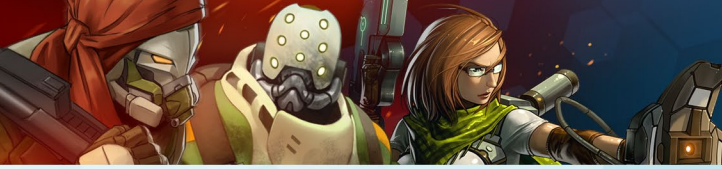
This is to say nothing of the interior of the station where the garrisons and the service personnel live. Though hundreds of visitors pass through the caravanserais each month and there are dozens of clerks, salespeople, and clerics to tend to the needs of these visitors, each caravanserai has a small, dedicated section for the station's administration and protection. At the heart of each caravanserai is Central Control where the numerous smaller system and departments are routed through. From this chamber direct changes to the station's ecosystem and environmental controls can be made. Located near Central Control are the offices of the Muhafiz, Qapu Khalqi, and occasionally other more dubious security personnel all of which contribute to maintaining peace on the station. It is rare for a caravanserai not to have a neighbourly corsair or pirate willing to lend a hand in exchange for an understanding nod should footage of a raid have been 'accidentally destroyed' or cargo 'unexpectedly discovered' floating freely in the void. Together these forces work not just to deter criminals and raiders but to also provide a means to transport security teams and armed personnel quickly, efficiently, and quietly across Haqqislam space.

NATURE OF TRADE

Food, Fuel, and Fellowship. This is a catch phrase that has as many variations as there are caravanserais in the Sphere. While the Diwân collects taxes, fines and rents aplenty, the merchants and promoters of the Caravanserai want visitors to feel as comfortable as possible while they trade in goods, commodities, and secrets. Advertisements for each station are copied onto electronic billboards and commercials on Maya Net. Some travellers who visit these stations are struck with the small-town feel of each station and how even in space the station makes them feel like they are back planet-side.

The truth is that the caravanserais serve two purposes, to support travellers across the stars and to help spread the extent of Haqqislam across the Human Sphere. For the former, they have been successful, and thousands visit these stations every day. With regards to the latter, the caravanserais have given Haqqislam the ability to not only expand their trade venues but to be able to conduct business and espionage that other nations are envious of and have never been able to copy on their own.

On each station visitors will find similar amenities, fuel, food, and spare parts to repair their ships.



CONTRABAND AND CRIME

It is unfair to say that all caravanserais have their own black markets where illegal goods are traded between unsavoury elements, but truthfully many stations do have a few contacts with criminal syndicates across the Sphere. Though these contacts do their best to stay discreet, they are willing to negotiate with others for the right price. One common method of smuggling goods is to store them in the middle of ice cylinders and stash them among the thousands of cylinders being transported across the Sphere each day. Another method involves hiding data chips and black-market Spice by placing them beneath small tiles meant for the azulejo tile works lining the walls of the station. These ceramics are considered so gaudy that few can look at them for long, but to criminals they are a perfect method for smuggling as they are the last place anyone would look.

Several of the larger caravanserais have taken on special roles throughout the Human Sphere and have altered their appearances to stand out from their fellows. Qasr Altawaus, meaning Palace of the Peacocks, is a luxurious caravanerai whose holographic displays of swooping feathers and magnificent birds lets visitors know that the station caters only to the most opulent and wealthy. By comparison, MAR or Malja Al-raei, the Refuge of the Herder, may seem to be no more than a dull and undecorated space station. It however has found celebrity in the quality of both its butchers and chefs who provide meat of a quality otherwise unseen in the vastness of space. Some traders have their own preferred caravanserais that cater to their needs, but most stations try to cater to a wide variety of visitors.

Though much has been said on the trade each station engages in, what some visitors are unaware of is the intense scrutiny placed upon them by the Muhafiz and the rest of the Haqqislam government. From a public relations stand point, the stations give visitors a friendly face and a willingness to cater to their needs. The numerous soldiers of the Caliphate are explained away as guards stationed there to protect Haqqislam's interests, and those who disappear from the station are said to have simply bought a ticket and left on an unmarked shuttle that cannot be reached by any means.

The appeal of the caravanserais also gives Haqqislam an edge in the Human Sphere's economy. In its early days, the nation struggled to compete with PanOceania's dominance of financial markets. Haqqislam offered an alternative for those who were sick of the high taxes of many of the O-12 nations, and they did so in a setting that was more appealing and warm than the cold boardrooms full of stodgy businessmen. By contrast, the caravanserais offered a chance to conduct business in a warm and welcoming environment, where businessmen were treated to luxury with a friendly smile.

Though the threat of attack from pirates and rival nations is quite real, each station has managed to survive applying two philosophies of defence. The first is to build a station fitted with numerous guns and docking stations so that visiting ships feel they have found a safe port in the storm. These stations are often always under construction as Haqqislam's business relations mean they are able to afford the latest technology and the best defences that money can buy.

The second philosophy is simpler, but no less effective. Reputations, whether they are built on notoriety or genuine respect, are a powerful deterrent to those seeking to damage these stations.

The caravanserais who have had trade deals with powerful corporations or criminal syndicates are able to deter even the most belligerent of pirates by reminding them of the consequences of threatening their station. Though some governors often exaggerate their connections, the most powerful caravanserais are able to afford to have their stations appear like they are totally unarmed but at a moment's notice they can surround their station with ships willing to fight to protect them.

THE CARAVANSERAI COLLECTION

Whether they are small stations home to a few travellers each day or large marketplaces where dignitaries from across the Human Sphere meet to discuss business, the caravanserais stand out from other space stations not just by offering a friendly atmosphere and a place for discreet dealings but by also allowing a different experience per station. The caravanerai shine like beacons in space, and through their offers of aid and commerce, Haqqislam is able to spread their message across the stars and give them the strength to compete against other nations.

Bandakar: Calm, quiet, and almost forgettable. This small caravanerai in the Helicon belt of the Human Edge does its best to appear as unremarkable as possible and despite a lack of visitors has managed to stay open. It is said that the station is used to launder money and goods for those that dabble in inner-system piracy. It is well known that those seeking goods or people taken by such actions have been able to negotiate their ransom through the caravanerai's security service.

Parsipur's Palace: Situated on the far side of the Guanxia Asteroid chain, this once glorious symbol of opulence has fallen on hard times. Its gilded exterior is flaking away from micrometeor strikes, and the thick water ice exterior common to most caravanerai has long been broken up and sold to cover debts. Each year more sections of the station's bazaar are shut down due to lack of resources to keep them running. The owner of the station, Nozar Parsipur, died from a wasting illness after years spending his family's fortunes in an attempt to find a wormhole said to be near his station. Despite the failing systems on the station, researchers and explorers still travel to the station with the hope they may find the so-called "Pasipur's Treasure Hole."

Kosmet: Prior to the commercial conflicts Kosmet was famous as a place for selling or buying pieces or replacements for spaceships and other pieces of technology. Built in proximity to the Vila Booster that services Shentang-Yutang and Neoterra and maintained by the Sekban Special Naval Unit of the Qapu Khalqi, Kosmet was in an ideal position to

acquire new technology while others sought repairs. Indeed, while repairing the ships of all manner of customers, the Qapu Khalqi had a unique opportunity to install spyware and tracking devices to keep track of their customers. With the coming of the commercial conflicts, Kosmet transitioned to a second more important role, that of neutral ground between PanOceania and Yuling. Now representatives of both sides, the O-12, and the Nomads are present year-round and the Diwân makes more profit from rent than she ever did in repairs.

Yanbue Alruwea: Meaning Fountain of Splendour, it is located past Sorvete near a small asteroid belt whose composition reflects the light of Descoberta in such a way that it looks like a shimmering spray of water across the horizon. The Yanbue Alruwea is home to numerous churches and temples from dozens of religions. Although the Haqqislamite mosque on the station is the most attended, each year more religious groups move into the station and attempt to convert others to their cause. The competition between the groups is being encouraged by several of the station's businessmen whose well-supplied depots and printers allow them to cater to the station's inhabitants ever-changing religious needs.

CARAVANSERAI GENERATOR

When creating a caravanserai, it can seem daunting to try to create a location that is vivid but also realistic. For those who need help in fleshing out their space station, use the following chart to add interesting traits and locations to the station.

SCALE

D20	SIZE
1-6	A small facility, often no more than a few converted cargo containers and airlocks repurposed into a station. Population: 12
7-12	A modest caravanserai, it can accommodate several vessels safely as well as provide a complete repair bay. Population: 50
13-18	A larger station the size of several spaceships, this station is a small town with dozens of businesses and numerous defences. Population: 200
19-20	A station the size of a city, possessing dozens of defensive emplacements, and the area around the station is often full of traffic. Population: 400

FOCUS

D20	FOCUS
1-5	Agrarian. This station is full of resources such as food and water and sees over a dozen transport ships each week that funnel food and supplies to colonies across the Human Sphere.
6-10	Technological. This station is home to numerous research firms, and those seeking radical medical treatments or the latest in bleeding edge technology can find it here.
11-15	High Society. This caravanserai is a vacation resort catering to the rich and the wealthy. High tech medical pavilions sit alongside such luxuries as water parks that function in the low gravity the stations offer.
16-19	Military. This station is home to numerous arms manufacturers, and the Qapu Khalqi presence on the station is large and obvious. Purveyors of military equipment gather at this station hoping to find buyers for their extensive arsenals.
20	This station is a well-known hub of information trading, and it is used by the Hassassins to test their agents. The personnel on the station have been infiltrated by acolytes training in the art of deception, and do their best to fool visitors into believing their fake identities. (roll again for cover)

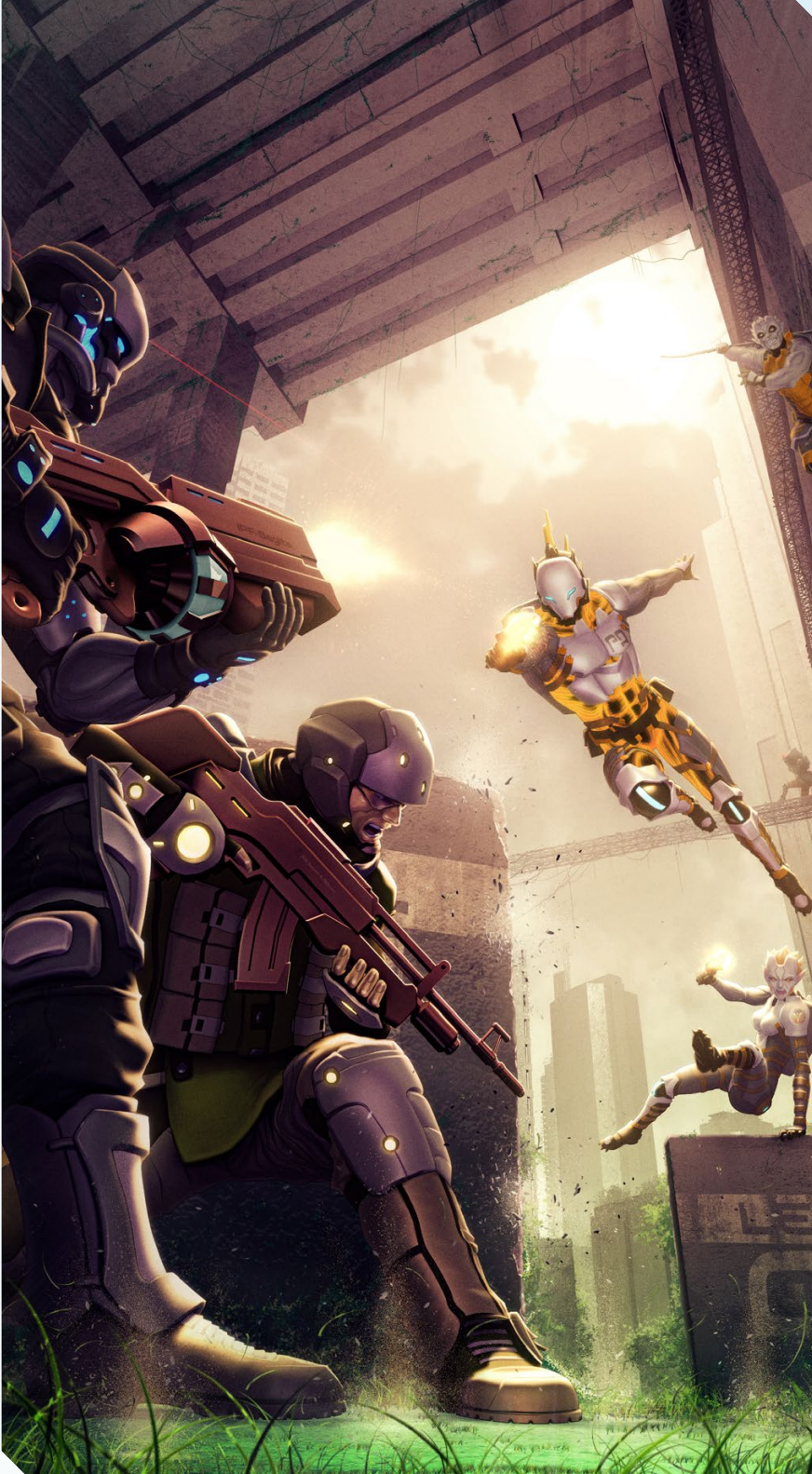




CORVUS 55100

OFF WORLD
TOURS
OPEN

CORSAIRS



Piracy is illegal throughout the Human Sphere. Pirates are reviled by every nation, rigorously pursued, and aggressively punished whenever they are caught. Only the most heartless, violent, or desperate would ever consider a life of piracy – once they take up the pirate flag, they leave civilised society behind.

There is, however, one way to carry out piratical raids without condemning yourself, privateering. Privateers, popularly known as corsairs, are state-sanctioned pirates. They are legally considered a branch of the armed forces, provided they only prey on ships and cargo owned by an enemy nation. If they are captured, they must be treated as prisoners of war. At least, that's what the supporters of privateering maintain; the reality is often more complicated.

Privateering has a long history on Earth – in the year 1579, for example, the English privateer Sir Francis Drake robbed the Spanish of so much treasure that the Queen's share was sufficient to pay off the entire national debt for that year. More than five hundred years later, privateering has moved into space.

HAQQISLAMITE CORSAIRS

Although they publicly condemn its practice, privateering is practised by every nation to one degree or another. Haqqislam, however, has elevated the custom to levels not seen for centuries. Following the colonisation of Bourak, the new Haqqislamite nation had a vast, rag-tag collection of space vessels at its command. The majority of these ships formed the merchant fleet that grants the Haqqislamite nation so much of its economic power. A fraction, however, were armed and deployed as privateers.

A bureaucratic system of privateering regulations has since developed on Bourak. Rules give corsairs an air of legitimacy and provide the Haqqislamite government with the best of both worlds; they can reap the benefits of an active fleet of reavers, with plausible deniability if any corsair captains go too far or become political liabilities. Corsairs operate under a contract defined in a *letter of marque* (discussed below).

CORSAIRS OUTSIDE HAQQISLAM

Haqqislam is the only major power in the Human Sphere to make extensive use of privateers. Nevertheless, non-Haqqislamite corsairs do exist, mostly amongst the smaller nations on Earth. Very

rarely will another major power issue a letter of marque. These usually have a specific target, rather than focussing on any enemy shipping. They are essentially a legal, cost-free bounty.

LETTERS OF MARQUE

The most crucial weapon in a corsair's arsenal is their **letter of marque**. This document is a contract granting a corsair the right to pursue and capture spaceships and cargo belonging to a specific enemy nation or organisation. The letter of marque is held at all times by the captain of a corsair ship – without it, corsairs face punishment as pirates.

Haqqislamite letters of marque are issued by the Admiralty at the Diwân al Jund (War Office) in Khadijah. The Diwân al Jund, however, has a reputation for slow, byzantine bureaucracy, meaning applications frequently stall and lead to exorbitant costs in docking fees and considerable wage bills for idle crews.

Fortunately, there's an alternative. Branches of the War Office in the larger caravanserai are authorised to issue temporary letters of marque. These are valid for only a single expedition, but they are frequently much easier to obtain. This is in no small part because the caravanserai are controlled by the Funduq Sultanate, and Sultanate officials are often amenable to bribery to help speed privateering applications along.

The modern letter of marque is a quantum datafile, prepared using government encoding and associated with a specific corsair captain's biometric data. It is carried in the captain's comlog, backed up in the corsair ship's datasphere, and layered with anti-tampering algorithms. It specifies the terms under which the corsair captain can engage in privateering, as well as a crew manifest and ship characteristics. The letter also includes accounts of any booty captured.

The terms and conditions are hard-coded into the letter of marque. The additional details – manifests and accounts – are automatically updated by LAIs, which although intended to be secure, are a weak-point frequently targeted by opportunistic hackers.

Most of the major powers in the Human Sphere dispute the legitimacy of letters of marque, irrespective of the opinions of Haqqislamite legal scholars. Captured corsair captains can hope for protection from Bourak, but rival powers will frequently push for severe punishment. Sometimes, the Haqqislamites do not have the political capital to spend on saving their corsair crews

WHAT'S IN A LETTER OF MARQUE?

Letters of marque issued by the Haqqislamite authorities always contain the following information:

PERSONNEL:

- Identity of the corsair ship's owner
- Identity and biometric information of the corsair ship's captain
- A complete crew manifest (This does not include any mercenaries hired by the corsair captain.)

CORSAIR SHIP INFORMATION:

- Name
- Identification number
- Port of registry ("home port")
- Tonnage
- Armament
- Cargo capacity

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Eligible targets: anywhere from a single ship or individual, to an organisation, or an entire nation
- Duration: a single raid, until a given deadline, or until hostilities are officially ended (usually by the Hachib's decree)
- Division of profits
- Standard clauses regarding when force is authorised, a prohibition on looting, standards of care for any captives

AFTER-ACTION REPORTS:

- Reports on any raids, prepared by the corsair captain
- Accounts of any booty taken

ACCEPTABLE TARGETS

Letters of marque are only valid during periods of conflict. Fortunately, *conflict* is broadly defined: war, but also minor territorial skirmishes, trade disputes, heated diplomatic disagreements, retaliation for perceived or actual slights, and any number of other circumstances.

Typically, a letter of marque will target a specific nation, although rarely an organisation, vessel, or individual is named. Corsairs are authorised to capture any ships – merchant, military, or pirate – or cargo owned by the specified enemy. Any ships carrying cargo to or from an enemy port are also legitimate targets.

Enemy ships are the cleanest targets and are therefore generally preferred by corsair captains. Although a neutral vessel carrying enemy cargo falls under the provisions of a letter of marque, raiding such ships can be risky. Dragging an uninvolved third-party into a conflict often has political implications. This is bad news if the corsair is captured. The Haqqislam government may well hang them out to dry rather than risk widening a conflict. Corsair captains are advised to clear any raids on third-party targets with the Diwân al Jund

FORGED LETTERS OF MARQUE

During any significant conflict, a small number of pirates attempt to masquerade as privateers. Letters of marque can be forged, but the task is difficult and typically requires a legitimate example to copy. Most forgeries don't stand up to close scrutiny.

One particularly unpleasant pirate tactic involves infiltrating the crew of a legitimate privateer and staging a mutiny. The former corsair captain is then coerced – or sometimes drugged – into cooperating long enough for the pirates to make off with at least a few prizes.



CORSAIR AUCTIONS

On Bourak, the auctioning of any loot captured by privateers is an orderly, relatively dull affair. Attendees are carefully vetted, and the whole process is overseen by bureaucrats from the Diwān al Jund and the office of the Hachib.

Corsair auctions out on the Haqqislamite caravanserai are an entirely different matter. They are raucous and chaotic, attracting all manner of shady dealers, as well as agents of foreign powers. Bidding is often ferocious, and it is not uncommon for caravanserai security to break up disputes. A great many deals – legal and otherwise – are conducted at these auctions. Only some of them are directly related to the loot on sale.

in advance or make sure they have powerful political patrons to back them up.

Looting and violence are completely forbidden if the target crew surrenders without resistance. Destroying an enemy ship is only permitted if boarding is impossible. In practice, corsair ships rarely destroy enemy vessels because nobody makes any money if there's no prize. Excessively-violent corsairs make juicy targets for any naval vessels in the area.

BOOTY

The last standard provisions in a letter of marque involve the handling of loot. Looting of targets not in the letter of marque is forbidden. Corsairs are also forbidden from claiming the personal property of any captured crew or passengers as booty. The exception to this rule is weaponry, which can always be seized. Where possible, corsair crews are ordered to let uninvolved parties go free. If they have no reasonable transport, the corsairs must keep them protected until they can be dropped at a safe port.

DIVVYING UP THE BOOTY

Standard provisions in Haqqislamite letters of marque divide the proceeds of any raids up as follows:

Ten percent goes to the Haqqislam government

Three percent for the docking port where the loot is auctioned

Two percent goes to the Haqqislamite Naval Compensation Fund for the protection of the families of space workers killed on duty

The remaining eighty-five percent is divided up between the corsair ship's owner, captain, and crew according to their private agreement (These agreements typically heavily favour the ship's owner.)

Corsairs must return any captured booty or vessels to the port where their letter of marque is registered. On arrival, all of the documents and quantronic records relating to the raid must be delivered to the local Diwân al Jund office. This includes a complete report of the raid prepared by the corsair captain. Prisoners are handed over to official authorities, for interrogation and either release or transfer to military custody as appropriate.

If the Diwân al Jund considers the raid to have been legitimate, any captured booty is auctioned. These auctions usually take place within a few weeks.

PRIVATEERING: THE REALITY

The Haqqislam government would prefer the Human Sphere only saw the orderly, bureaucratic side of the privateering system. The reality is that raids and space battles are always messy, particularly when boarding actions are a necessary part of a successful corsair raid.

The rules laid out in letters of marque are clear, but their application is often hopelessly complicated. Corsair captains must constantly ask whether a given target truly is legitimate, what the political implications of a raid might be, whether their own crews are reliable, and a dozen other things besides. The tides of war can shift quickly, and privateers are particularly susceptible to any sudden changes.

CORSAIR CREWS

A corsair ship's complement usually consists of two parts, the ship's crew, and the boarding party or parties. The ship's crew is usually highly skilled and disciplined, allowing for the idiosyncrasies of anyone who takes up privateering. Sometimes the boarding parties are too, although just as often they're wild, barely controlled, and looking to create some chaos.

The exact complement of a corsair ship has a strong impact on its tactics and on the targets its captain chooses. Top-tier combat hackers, heavily drilled military boarding teams, ex-government intelligence officers, and precision pilots all contribute specialized proficiencies. Of course, a corsair captain rarely has access to all the skills they might desire. The most successful privateers know how to exploit the elements they have available and compensate for the ones they lack.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS: ROMANCE AND CELEBRITY

The public often has a surprisingly positive view of privateers. It's a career with an air of romance: dashing corsairs plying the space lanes, launching dangerous raids for their homeland, bound by a code but forever flirting with the law.

Partly, this is a result of clever propaganda. Corsairs are a popular topic for Maya dramas, profiles, and immersive gaming. The Sabot! Channel has a long-running series of action-filled documentaries called *Buccaneers*, where they embed reporters with individual corsair crews on the hunt. The Maya drama *Red Skies* follows the exploits of a barely-fictionalised Captain "Red" Roksaneh Balisehiri and is hugely popular throughout the Human Sphere.

Of course, those who have suffered at the hands of corsairs rarely have such a glamorous view. Merchants and naval crews carry a particular hatred for privateers, although some are nevertheless avid consumers of corsair-themed entertainment.

CORSAIR CREW ROLES

Captain: Each captain runs their ship differently. Some prefer a military-like chain of command, whereas others run their ships more democratically. Captains can lead raids from their bridge or join the boarding parties, personally leading the most dangerous part of any raid.

Pilot: Every corsair pilot knows how to get in and out of a combat zone fast. The best can undertake much more daring manoeuvres, hiding in dense debris fields, slamming right up to a target's hull to allow swift boarding, and weaving between elements of a convoy to avoid point defences.

Hackers: A hacker is crucial for quantronic defence during a raid, even if just to jam distress calls. Depending on their skills and the ship's equipment, they might also aid in camouflage, fill conflict zones with quantronic chaff, or launch devastating attacks on a target's quantronic defences. Against particularly advanced targets, they're also needed in boarding teams for taking control of smart-room bridges.

Engineers: Corsair engineers have a tough job, keep a combat vessel running on a shoe-string, through extended periods in deep space and during battles where they are outnumbered and outgunned. It's a thankless, vital task.

Intelligence Officers: Most of an intelligence officer's work is done before a raid, gathering intel on targets: flight plans, defences and armaments, and profiles on key officers. Some act as con artists, luring targets directly into ambushes.

Boarders: Boarders have a staggeringly dangerous job, but they're absolutely crucial to the success of a raid. A boarding party's style can vary wildly, from frenzied parties of marauders, to tightly disciplined military teams, or remote-heavy combat groups. Whatever their style, a corsair captain needs some way to keep them under control so they don't run completely wild.

Support Crew: Corsair ships spend extended periods in space, so they need support crew: cooks, cargo officers, comms officers, clerks, doctors, shuttle pilots, and perhaps a morale officer or religious advisor. Some wealthy crews even have an escort fighter or two. Often these roles are filled by members of the crew doing double duty.



THE SHASVASTII SCAM

The corsair ship Bourakian *Dinar* famously took eight prizes using the following scam: first, they got two crewmembers recruited to the target ship. Once in open space, these crewmen staged their own deaths, leaving behind evidence implicating a Shasvastii infiltrator. The *Dinar* lurked nearby, using faked credentials to appear trustworthy when they responded to the inevitable distress call. By the time the target crew realised their mistake, the *Dinar's* boarding parties had already been warmly welcomed aboard.

DIL UZATMA (BROADSIDE)

The privateer Dil Uzatma does away with any pretence of stealth; she's a warship, plain and simple. Once, during the Terminal Phase of the NeoColonial Wars, she single-handedly captured a PanOceanian destroyer. A ship this aggressive has a huge target painted on its hull. Her captain keeps her hidden in deep space for years at a time, relying on a network of loyal supply ships to keep her armed and fighting fit. The bounty for information on her whereabouts is huge.

MERCENARIES AND NOMADS

Corsair crews sometimes hire mercenaries if chasing a tough target. Mercenaries are happy to sign on – they get paid no matter the outcome and don't have to worry about any complicated politics. Privateering also gives them a chance to practice their skills in the field.

These mercenaries are often Nomads who have a similar reckless attitude to life in space and like to thumb their nose at the major powers as much as any good corsair. Some Nomad mercenaries stay with one corsair crew so long they become practically integrated, which can have a significant impact on which targets that crew are willing to raid. Such crews often make themselves an even bigger target for ALEPH and its proxies.

More recently, in the wake of the Uprising events, semi-permanent contracts have arisen between mercenary companies and corsair captains. In particular, the corsairs Mina Saylan and Azra Yalman – captains of the *Kara Gölge* (Black Shadow) and *Vahşi Köpek* (Wild Dog) respectively – have been gaining fearsome reputations thanks to their defence of StarCo assets along the trade routes.

ANATOMY OF A RAID

After a letter of marque has been secured the real, messy work begins. A corsair ship needs to find targets, perhaps even a very specific target depending on the details of their contract. They need to figure out how to take down their prey as quickly and bloodlessly as possible and then get their booty safely back to port. All of this without drawing the attention of enemy patrols and without any support from home.

FINDING TARGETS

Privateers sometimes make their way to popular shipping routes and lurk until a likely target happens by, using their superior speed to swoop down and capture it. However, this is only possible in the opening stages of a conflict and if the target has many merchant ships in space. Before long, busy shipping routes are inundated with naval and mercenary ships, and this tactic becomes far too risky for the reward.

More often, corsairs need to do the legwork to find good targets. This can involve anything from asking the right questions in the right ports, to hacking traffic control networks, or even physical infiltration to steal records. The preparation often takes up as much time as the actual assault. Although most people imagine dramatic boarding actions when they think of corsairs, these make up only a small fraction of their exploits.

A good corsair crew cultivates sources all across the Human Sphere. Dockworkers can pass on manifests or sneak tracking devices into cargo holds, and friendly hackers can steal flight plans or cover the corsair crew's tracks. Sympathetic bureaucrats – or compromised ones – are invaluable. Even an eagle eye on a caravanserai or orbital can help by keeping a look out for who is coming and going.

A *brilliant* corsair crew goes one step further, manipulating a target into doing exactly what they want. These crews function less like pirates and more like con artists, luring targets in with sham deals, tricking them into altering their plans or sneaking away from their escorts, and even setting up entire fake businesses to manipulate shipping routes. These are usually short cons aimed to build up just enough of a fiction to trick the target into making a mistake. These master corsair crews are rare, but their exploits are particularly famed.

OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED

Corsair ships are generally well armed relative to merchantmen and cargo haulers. They can probably survive a brief battle with system monitors or police vessels but can't endure a direct engagement with a naval vessel. Moreover, ship repairs are expensive; any damage suffered in a battle cuts into potential profits.

Corsair captains therefore prefer to take their prizes without firing a single shot. They generally rely on two tools: fear and surprise.

Fear is all about cultivating a reputation. Corsairs can either earn their infamy by undertaking a few spectacular raids or fake it through clever propaganda campaigns. Sometimes these propaganda campaigns are broad. Maya programmes are endlessly fascinated with corsair crews, and a sympathetic reporter can be extremely helpful. Other times, they are very specific, cultivated to reach only a few carefully chosen targets. Building these campaigns can be part of a corsair crew's prep-work for a raid.

Surprise is always a corsair's friend. Some crews rely solely on speed, aiming to hit their targets before they know what's happening. Others adopt a stealthier approach, physically disguising their ships or relying on jamming and sensor ghosts to fool their targets. Virtually all these techniques require a degree of quantronic trickery, from faked transponder codes and network handshakes all the way up to full datasphere subversion.

Hiding in space is challenging, but not impossible. Busy trade routes are tempting, where there is lots of traffic to disguise a raider. Unfortunately, these routes are often the best protected. Some



privateers equip themselves with special baffles to deflect active sensing and store heat in internal sinks to mask their signatures. This is never entirely effective – space is very cold – but a few extra seconds of confusion can make all the difference.

THE ACTUAL RAID

An ideal raid always goes the same way. The privateers broadcast their intentions to their prey. Realising their predicament, secure in the knowledge that they won't be harmed if they cooperate, and covered by insurance, the target surrenders. Boarding parties take control of the ship, securing quantum records and confining the crew.

This rarely happens. Targets try to run or, worse, attack. Space warfare is always dangerous, so every good corsair captain looks to end it quickly. Sometimes they do so with a display of overwhelming force. One or two good shots is usually sufficient, although only precise targeting will preserve the value of the prize. Most crews carry only enough ammunition or power for a few good volleys. If a battle goes on longer than this, they must flee.

Corsairs try to board quickly, sometimes even beginning their assault with a boarding action. True meteor heads don EVA suits and lurk in open space. Before the target even knows there is a corsair ship in the area, they've already got corsairs on their

hull, hooked on like lampreys.

DELIVERING THE BOOTY

Even after a successful raid, the work isn't done. Returning to port with the prize is rarely easy. Crews are frequently pursued, and there's also the matter of keeping captives calm and cooperative. While the letters of marque require corsairs to deliver any loot to their home port, every corsair captain must make a judgement – is it worth taking the time to complete that voyage, or should they simply make for the nearest friendly orbital?

Many corsair captains equip their ships with the fastest engines they can afford to avoid exactly these sorts of issues. The quicker they can get to port, the quicker they can free themselves of any troublesome complications. Such powerful engines are also useful in any naval engagements and make it easier to catch quarry unawares.

Once in port, privateers are usually safe. Their cargo and captives will be handed over to the authorities, and procedures for auction and payment swing into action. Nevertheless, most crews like to watch how this plays out very closely as they're often targets for scams. Government officials lie or seek bribes, or politics gets in the way of a clean auction. Enemy agents even use this as a last opportunity to rescue particularly valuable cargoes or prisoners.

KEEPING ORDER

For some corsair captains, the greatest challenge once they've taken a prize is keeping their own crew in line. The temptation to loot or mistreat captives is strong, particularly if the raid itself went poorly. Each captain deals with these issues differently, some via iron discipline or threats of punishment, others by choosing who they recruit very carefully.



Calculating the eventual return on booty is made relatively straightforward for the purposes of corsair campaigns, largely to allow the action to return to the stars, but also to avoid duplicating the mercantile rules presented within the Merchant Traders chapter of the *Ariadna* sourcebook. (See *Profit of Privateering* p. 33) While corsair captains are certainly out to make a profit, they focus more on the immediate concerns of shedding their cargo than the more logistical concerns presented in *Ariadna*.

INTERDICTION

Provided pirates and corsairs don't get too greedy, most merchants and governments consider raids a cost of doing business. Many have insurance policies that cover acts of piracy, although they can find themselves stuck in legal wrangling if privateers are acting in strict accordance with their letters of marque.

When organisations or individuals learn they are the target of a letter of marque, it's not uncommon for them to hire protection. This might be a mercenary escort; sometimes a privateer will swoop down on a target that looks thinly defended, only to discover that it's full of mercenaries ready to repel boarders. Particularly wealthy targets might even hire mercenary ships to hunt down corsairs. This can be quite unsettling for corsair crews as suddenly, they become the prey.

In times of open warfare, nations tend to treat privateers as a military threat. Naval squadrons are dispatched to hunt them down, to patrol key supply routes, or to escort merchant convoys. This makes the corsair's life more difficult. Some shift tactics, going after secondary targets or abandoning the job altogether. Others rise to the challenge, using ever more sophisticated techniques to evade capture or launching ever more daring raids on well-protected convoys. Either way, Haqqislam wins. Even if the privateers fail to capture any prey, they're still drawing naval assets away from the front lines.

During times of open warfare, the legality of letters of marque is likely to be overlooked. The more trouble corsairs cause, the more likely they are to suffer summary punishment when they're captured.

GOING RENEGADE

Corsairs occasionally go bad, crossing the line into piracy. A corsair crew may develop a bloodthirsty streak or start to chafe under the restrictions of their letter of marque. Sometimes corsair captains lose control over their crews, particularly if pickings are slim or if their contract requires them to abandon a juicy target. Out in the depths of space, disagreements between crew and captain rarely end peacefully.

Some crews dance back and forth over the line between piracy and privateering. They hunt under the conditions of their letter of marque, but they're willing to breach the rules if they think they can get away with it. A small target, easy to disappear entirely, or a valuable, easily fenced cargo is a dangerous temptation.

The most tragic of the corsairs-turned-pirate are the ones who are forced there by circumstance. More than once, a conflict has ended while a corsair crew is out hunting. Unaware that their letter of marque is now void, they strike at a now-illegal target and inadvertently become pirates. Hunted by their former enemies and their former compatriots, they often have no choice but to steal their own ship and flee.

PIRATE HAVENS

Required to return to their home ports, there's often a corsair ship or two docked at most major caravanserais. Complications exist docking at your home port, however, officials from the Diwân al Jund, tax collectors, the corsair ship's owners, and even enemies who have managed to determine where a ship is registered. For this reason, corsairs often look for a place where they can truly relax, a place where they're welcome and, if not exactly safe, at least comfortable.

CERES (SOL SYSTEM)

Ceres is the oldest orbital pirate haven in the Human Sphere and the prototype for all others. The dwarf planet was initially tunnelled out by miners following veins of precious elements. They pressurised the tunnels to make their work easier but moved on when the resources ran dry. The famous pirate captain, Giacomo 'Jim' Argento, first started hiding out in the disused mines. As word of his success spread, more and more pirates came to Ceres.

Ceres is unique amongst pirate havens for its deep history, nearly a hundred years of use. It has been swept clean by PanOceanian and Yu Jingese militaries on three separate occasions, and famously defended by a pirate fleet once during the Second NeoColonial War. The port is rich with its own traditions, including a week-long holiday celebrating the NeoColonial War victory, an unsanctioned offshoot of the Christian church, and a quanontronic leaderboard tracking the annual takings of pirates and privateers across the Human Sphere.

SĒFUROKKU (SAFE ROCK, HUMAN EDGE)

Human Edge is a rich hunting ground for pirates and privateers alike. Huge wealth passes through the system, there is an almost infinite number of places to hide, and no one nation lays

SYMPATHY FOR ACCIDENTAL PIRATES

The public has special sympathy for corsairs who are forced into piracy by suddenly shifting political circumstances.

Such crews, if they want to survive, do well to trade on that sympathy. It's much easier to find allies if they see you as a noble victim of an unpredictable twist of fate.

JOLLY JIM ARGENTO'S FANCIULLA

Ceres is a dwarf planet, the largest object in the Ceres Belt. The network of mining tunnels criss-crosses only a small fraction of the rock, and the pirate haven occupies only a small fraction of the tunnel network. Rumours persist that Torrance's ship, the *Fanciulla*, is still hidden in a disused cavern somewhere inside the planet, laden with treasure from his hugely successful raiding career.

claim to it all. Several ports in the system are sympathetic to pirates and privateers. The most popular is Sefurokku, buried in a sensor-deflecting Kordylewski dust cloud meandering through the Helicon Belt.

The rock was always known as a pirate haven, but recently it has fallen under the control of the Ikari mercenary company. Colonel Ikari strives to maintain an air of secrecy over the location of the station, meaning company outsiders are rarely allowed access to the outfit's headquarters. A certain degree of paranoia and self-preservation ensures that visitors are subjected to strict security protocols and are required to offer certain guarantees. It is uncommon knowledge, however, that preferential docking privileges and superior quarters with no questions asked can be purchased for an exorbitant price, so long as the protocols and guarantees are also followed of course. The strict requirements and extortionate cost make Sefurokku a last resort for corsairs and pirates alike.

KÖSMET CARAVANSARY (SVALARHEIMA)

Like Human Edge, Svalarheima is resource-rich, disputed territory, and like Human Edge it is a hot-spot for privateer activity. It's also a slightly riskier place to hunt, since Yu Jingese and PanOceanian naval assets frequently pass through. The Kösmet Caravansary, situated between the wormholes connecting Svalarheima with Neoterra and Yu Jing, acts as neutral ground for the two great powers.

Unbeknownst to either power, Kösmet is also safe harbour for Haqqislamite corsairs. The current Trade Diwân of the caravansary, Aleah Harrak-Bey, was a corsair captain for the Sultanate who parlayed her success into a comfortable political career. With the local branch of the Diwân al Jund under her thumb, she allows corsairs to come and go without engaging in any of the reporting or other responsibilities that their letters of marque might require. The Sfr Sector docks on the caravan-serai are kept aside for this purpose, cleared of any PanOceanian or Yu Jingese ships.

Harrak-Bey is aware that she walks a delicate line in conflict-ridden Svalarheima. She values discretion above all other traits; corsairs making use of her port would do well not to disappoint her.

HISTORICAL CONFLICTS

There are always conflicts in the Human Sphere, even at times of relative peace. Provided corsairs are willing to regularly update their letters of

marque and switch targets, they never want for work. Nevertheless, some major conflagrations have led to dramatic increases in corsair activity. During these periods, privateering bloomed and great fortunes were made.

The following are three periods of conflict where Haqqislamite privateers were particularly active. This sampling of wars in which corsairs have played a significant role does not include the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts, the NeoColonial Wars, and scores of other minor conflicts.

PHANTOM CONFLICT

During the Phantom Conflict (14 NC), PanOceanian and Yu Jingese proxies for ALEPH attempted to destroy the Nomad Nation without ever making a formal declaration of war. The Nomads responded by escalating wherever they could, attempting to force their rivals into declaring their true, popularly-unpalatable goals.

Haqqislam was never directly involved in the Phantom Conflicts, preferring not to anger the larger powers in the Human Sphere. Nevertheless, their political sympathies lay with the fledgling Nomad Nation, whose rise they had helped to facilitate. Unable to openly dispatch military aid, a frustrated Sultanate Grand Admiral called Turgut "Pasha" Zeybek came up with a plan.

Pasha Zeybek rounded up a fleet of Haqqislamite corsair ships and flew with them to the Nomad Mothership *Tunguska*. He also brought "retired" legal experts from the Diwân al Jund. Once on *Tunguska*, they set up a Nomad privateering system and re-registered the entire corsair fleet in their new home port.

Each of Zeybek's raiders took a new name to reflect its new allegiance. Most were sly nods to their original names, or translations into one of the languages spoken on the Nomad Motherships. They harried PanOceanian and Yu Jingese commercial shipping throughout the Phantom Conflict, using Black Hand intelligence to cut off enemy clandestine agents before they could ever reach their targets.

Following the close of the Phantom Conflict, most of Zeybek's corsairs returned to their original home ports, becoming Haqqislamite again. Some of them, however, remained with the Nomads. Zeybeck was amongst their number, disappearing into the inner workings of the Black Hand.

SILK REVOLTS

During the Silk Revolts (30 NC), rogue Haqqislamite Silk Lords attempted to overthrow the government of Hachib Mudassar. Forces loyal to the Hachib and

NEOCOLONIAL WARS: THE NUMBERS

During the Terminal Stage of the NeoColonial Wars, Haqqislamite corsairs made prizes of one hundred seventy-four ships and destroyed twenty-four more.

PROPAGANDA TOOLS: THE HOUND OF ARCTURUS

The Phantom Conflict was a clandestine war. Technically, letters of marque were invalid without an open declaration. In line with the Nomad strategy of escalation, captured corsairs were used as propaganda tools. The Nomads loudly proclaimed that their privateers were legitimate and should be treated as prisoners of war. Anything less would be brutality on the part of the major powers. Unwilling to risk public ire by executing privateer crews as pirates, both PanOceania and Yu Jing instead confiscated corsair ships and returned their crews to the Nomads.

This famously backfired in the Hound of Arcturus incident. Confiscated by the Yu Jing government, the Hound's crew were dumped on a neutral orbital in Sol. There, the corsairs re-armed, re-equipped, and launched a daring raid to steal back their own ship. The Arcturus went on to be a scourge of Yu Jingese shipping in Sol.

CORSAIRS AND THE COMBINED ARMY

Ever since the First Paradiso Offensive, letters of marque targeting the Combined Army have always been available. Corsairs who are willing to take on these letters are rare; virtually all Combined Army shipping is naval, so only the most heavily-armed privateers need apply.

Consequently, corsairs fighting the Combined Army are a grizzled sort of space veteran. They consider themselves a cut above ordinary privateers, virtually a private navy. Such crews typically look out for each other and often hunt in packs. The risk is monumental, but the possible rewards are equally huge as VoodooTech and captives are extremely valuable to O-12 in their search for understanding humanity's greatest foe. To ensure nothing slips onto the black market, tight controls and intense scrutiny are also part of the bargain.

Many of these corsair ships operate out of El Arsenal, a Nomad-run orbital in Paradiso very close to the Acheron Blockade. This orbital has extensive salvage and repair facilities, and most corsair ships based there are over-gunned patchwork monstrosities pieced together from the corpses of many mangled ships. An unspoken agreement between corsair captains has made Exrah Commissariat vessels the preferred targets for their sport. These comparatively older ships – in Combined Army terms at least – are accompanied by lightly armed transports, meaning they offer a much more lucrative and less punishing prize than Morat or Shasvastii targets.

There is some doubt amongst the higher echelons of Bureau Aegis as to whether Combined Army-hunting corsairs are worth the potential future risk. Should humanity be victorious in this war or should the corsairs be forced to leave Paradiso, they are a heavily-armed, highly-trained threat that might be difficult to control.



the renegade Silk Lords clashed across the Human Sphere, focussed particularly around Bourak and the Haqqislamite caravanserai.

Corsairs were deployed on both sides. As a rule, letters of marque issued on Bourak opposed the rebellious Silk Lords, whereas those issued by caravanserai authorities tended to favour the Silk Lords, who were the foundation of the Sultanate's power.

Chaos was the rule during this period. A given corsair captain might be loyal to a single faction or might switch sides based on who offered the easiest, most-lucrative targets. Some were press-ganged by Qapu Khalqi into full military service, usually with an officer assigned to ensure loyalty. Other corsairs disappeared to neutral ports until the trouble blew over or found themselves stranded by shifting politics when their letters of marque were rendered invalid.

A few enterprising corsairs set themselves up for life by choosing to aggressively back the Hachib. When he was ultimately successful, those corsair captains were richly rewarded.

OUTER MERCANTILE CRISIS

The Outer Mercantile Crisis (58NC) was a series of skirmishes between PanOceania and Haqqislam, fought mainly around the caravanserai in Human Edge, Svalarheima, and Sol. Outgunned by the superior PanOceanian Navy, Haqqislam's only hope was to strike at the hyperpower's economy. Corsair ships were dispatched to harry PanOceanian shipping wherever they could. By stretching the PanOceanian Defence Fleets thin, Bourak hoped to pull Attack Fleet assets away from their positions blockading the caravanserai.

Haqqislamite corsairs hit PanOceania shipping in virtually every system in the Human Sphere. These corsairs operated a long way from any support, and their exploits were splashed all over the networks on Bourak. Reputations were made, and daring corsair captains firmly cemented their romantic appeal. To this day, many corsairs claim that they single-handedly secured favourable conditions for Haqqislam at the cessation of hostilities.

THE PRIVATEER'S TOOLBOX

Corsair campaigns assume that a captain begins play with a ship, though how they have come into the possession of such a capital asset will need a little backstory or perhaps even a prelude session. Most corsair captains begin with a smaller vessel and plunder their way towards larger classes of ship, though the GM could easily allow a larger class of ship from the outset if the captain's backstory or prelude is particularly remarkable.

RELIEF VESSEL

Relief vessels are small, lightweight freighters designed to rapidly move smaller amounts of supplies towards planets and systems that are critically short of specific items. The statistics below represent a relief vessel that has been repurposed for privateering.

RELIEF VESSEL

ATTRIBUTES				
Class	2	Type	Cargo Ship, Remora, Warship	
Construction	Engines	Network	Sensors	
10	12	8	9	

COMBAT		
Combat	Navigation	Technical
2	2	2
Thrust	Impact	Endurance
6	2+6 (N)	12

DEFENCES			
Armour	Hull Integrity	Security	Firewall
9	25	2	10

ARMAMENT

- 1× Missile Battery (Missile, Class 1, Damage 3+6 (N), Area 0, Piercing 2, Vicious 1), 4 Reloads
- 1× Defensive Battery (Point Defence, Class 1, Range 1, Burst 3, Damage 2+5 (N), Salvo 1 (Area 0), Piercing 2), 6 Reloads

NOTES

- Can carry approximately nine shipping containers of cargo. Corsair variants also carry a small boarding craft.

COLONIAL TRANSPORT

Colonial Transports are dedicated freighters that target raw materials in bulk at the places that need them most. Unlike their smaller cousins, the relief vessels that speed shipments to crisis zones at a moment's notice, the slower moving colonial transports create steady streams of bulk freight to new colonies and outposts in remote regions. The statistics below represent a colonial transport that has been repurposed for privateering.

COLONIAL TRANSPORT

ATTRIBUTES				
Class	3	Type	Cargo Ship, Remora, Warship	
Construction	Engines	Network	Sensors	
12	10	8	9	

COMBAT		
Combat	Navigation	Technical
2	2	2
Thrust	Impact	Endurance
5	3+6 (N)	12

DEFENCES			
Armour	Hull Integrity	Security	Firewall
10	54	2	10

ARMAMENT

- 1× Missile Battery (Missile, Class 1, Damage 3+6 (N), Area 0, Piercing 2, Vicious 1), 4 Reloads
- 1× Defensive Battery (Point Defence, Class 1, Range 1, Burst 3, Damage 2+5 (N), Salvo 1 (Area 0), Piercing 2), 6 Reloads

NOTES

- Can carry approximately forty to fifty shipping containers of cargo. Corsair variants also carry two small boarding craft.

CONVERTED FREIGHTER

Common freighters are normally constructed with cavernous holds, unpressurised and easily opened to space, with relatively small crew and engine compartments added around the edges. The holds can be filled with shipping containers mag-locked together, with the outer hull mainly there to protect the cargo from damage during transit. The statistics below represent a freighter that has been repurposed for privateering.

HAFT KHÂJ

Achieving the *Haft Khâj* (Seven Clubs) was an accolade that every corsair crew aspired to during the Outer Mercantile Crisis. Any ship which managed to take a prize in each of the systems where PanOceania had an interest was informally inducted into the society of *Haft Khâj* crews, guaranteeing them boasting rights and financial rewards. The Seven Clubs were Acontecimento, Sol, Neoterra, Svalarheima, Dawn, Varuna, and Neoterra.

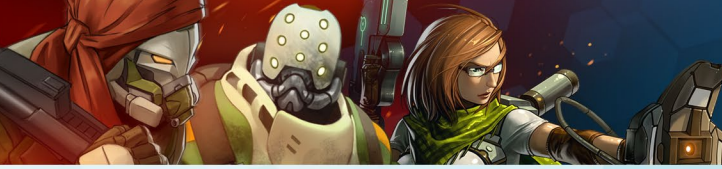
Many corsairs managed five or six of these raids. The seventh – Neoterra – was so well-protected that many considered it a fool's errand to try. Nevertheless, eight corsair crews were successful

DEEP COVER: GHARAR

Humayd Bey was the owner of the corsair ship *Tehlike* (Danger). At the outset of the Silk Revolts, he sided with the dissident Silk Lords. He ordered *Tehlike* to travel to Rihla caravanserai in Sol and collect letters of marque targeting ships loyal to the Hachib.

Captain Catur Natalegawa and his crew, however, were loyal to the Hachib. Rather than break with their owner or blindly follow his orders, they became double agents. On three separate occasions they recruited a corsair fleet to raid the Hachib's shipping, only to leak their details to loyalist naval assets. For their brave actions, the Hachib stripped Humayd Bey of the *Tehlike* and handed her over to Natalegawa and his crew. She was renamed *Hachib's Revenge* in honour of her service.

Captain Natalegawa was ultimately assassinated on the bridge of his own ship. The assassin's identity is unknown to this day.



STARSHIP COMBAT

The statistics presented here for the corsair variant starships are relevant to the full range of stellar warfare rules presented in the *Infinity Gamemasters Guide*, which can also be supplemented with *Ships of the Human Sphere* when available. Corsair captains should intend for their target to capitulate without a shot being fired or else seek to cripple their target's defensive capabilities through boarding action rather than ship-to-ship combat. Such intense encounters should be driven through narrative and intuition. More detailed rules-driven encounters will require the rules presented in the *Infinity Gamemasters Guide*, p. 145 onwards.

CONVERTED FREIGHTER

ATTRIBUTES

Class	3	Type	Cargo Ship, Remora, Warship	
Construction	Engines	Network	Sensors	
14	10	8	9	

COMBAT

Combat	Navigation	Technical
2	2	2
Thrust	Impact	Endurance
5	3+7	14

DEFENCES

Armour	Hull Integrity	Security	Firewall
11	63	2	10

ARMAMENT

- 1x Missile Battery (Missile, Class 1, Damage 3+6 , Area 0, Piercing 2, Vicious 1), 4 Reloads
- 1x Defensive Battery (Point Defence, Class 1, Range 1, Burst 3, Damage 2+5 , Salvo 1 (Area 0), Piercing 2), 6 Reloads

NOTES

- Can carry approximately ninety standard shipping containers. Corsair variants also carry two or three small boarding craft.

PRIVATEERING WITH PURPOSE: CORSAIR CAMPAIGNS

GMs inspired to outline a campaign that lets the players operate or crew their own ship, having taken a look at why corsairs exist and how they gain agency, can use the follow sections to plan their campaign. This type of campaign can be particularly enticing to players who prefer to operate independently, as the PCs will be free from the O-12 shackles that accompany the default setting. Much like the nature of their business, corsairs lend themselves well to campaigns that are more freeform and open-ended.

TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS

As with any campaign, discussing the theme and style of the game with everyone involved beforehand will always pay dividends. The actual details and plot of the campaign need not and should not be revealed, but player expectations can help to guide the campaign's structure. Although there are



several types of campaigns can be designed with corsairs in mind, there are two that lend themselves particularly well to the life of a privateer, sandbox and plot point.

SANDBOX

Sandbox campaigns lack a predefined story, leaving the plot to be truly driven by the players and their choices. The life of a corsair offers a certain amount of freedom and choice, which can be truly reflected in this type of campaign. The PCs can take their letter of marque and use it to travel the trade routes and hidden byways of the Human Sphere. Whether this is in search of fame or infamy is up to them.

Preparation for a sandbox campaign can be as simple as noting prominent locations within a system and prominent NPCs therein. Such campaigns also offer the GM the freedom to react to the players' decisions and mould the setting to suit their requirements. If the PCs manage their own ship, for instance, and are badly in need of repairs following an intense battle, then a nearby caravan-serai can be introduced to provide some downtime and a chance to recuperate. The free reign introduced by this type of campaign can be somewhat overwhelming however, particularly when the playground is one as vast as the Human Sphere. The GM will need to be comfortable with ad-hoc NPCs and settings, while the players will need to be comfortable with driving the narrative themselves based on the decisions of their characters.

There are some steps that can be taken to provide a sense of the campaign being grounded in a real universe, as opposed to a series of frozen bubbles that only awaken when the PCs arrive. The GM can diarise a timeline involving major NPCs and events. This timeline is designed to occur regardless of the PCs' presence, though their input can affect the outcome if they choose to become involved. The PCs then receive news snippets or witness events that evolve as time progresses, helping to provide a real sense of the campaign's development outside and irrespective of the players' immediate concerns.

PLOT POINT CAMPAIGNS

Plot point campaigns offer a rich experience and sense of direction, the latter of which can sometimes be lacking in a true sandbox campaign. Plot point campaigns require more groundwork than sandbox campaigns, but the rewards can be worth the preparation.

Successful plot point campaigns require a backstory to work but are tailored to encourage the PCs to interact with it. The players still enjoy a large sense of freedom, but also benefit from a feeling of agency as their actions introduce tangible effects

on the backstory. The backstory itself will need a beginning, a middle, and an end, which will include a prelude that led to the point of its introduction to the PCs and considerations for the epilogue to its conclusion. Key locations and corresponding NPCs can be planned that relate to the backstory. The PCs might never once visit these locations, but they should eventually hear of the events that occur there and any related impact to the backstory. Additional settings and locations can be introduced as the PCs travel, though there should always be considerations over how much connection such locales and their denizens have with the backstory.

The main concern with plot point campaigns is avoiding the sense of railroading the PCs – forcing them to interact with the backstory whether they want to or not – which is a fine balancing act to achieve. Consider the recent events surrounding the Japanese uprising, which included the news that the Combined Army have somehow achieved the impossible, a forward base of operations on Ariadna. On the surface, this news is likely to have little or no impact for corsairs prowling the less-travelled trade routes of Bourak. But building on this backstory with localised effects such as trade being impacted and Teseum prices rocketing can draw the PCs into an epic, system-spanning, open-ended series of events. Eventually, maybe unwittingly at first, the PCs work to thwart the Combined Army from reinforcing their troops on Ariadna whilst simultaneously increasing their profits and notoriety, all from the perceived safety of the Bourak system.

FAME AND INFAMY

Two opposite sides of the same coin, fame and infamy work both for and against corsairs in their day-to-day lives. A corsair famed for being generous with captives might have a better chance of convincing a target to stand down, whilst a corsair renowned for taking no prisoners would never expect the same but might relate better to their peers. For the purposes of corsair campaigns, fame and infamy achieve the same results. A corsair captain's Fame and Infamy rating is therefore tracked with a single combined score, rather than individually. Make note of a captain's Fame and Infamy rating on a relevant part of their character sheet or somewhere on the ship's stat sheet.

In game terms, Fame and Infamy is rated from 1 to 10 and has several practical manifestations regarding contracts, booty, and negotiating power. Use the Fame and Infamy table to determine any bonuses for each rating. The GM will always have final veto on whether Fame and Infamy can be applied to a test or situation. Additionally, the life of a corsair is not for the fainthearted. At the start of each session

RUDDERLESS LUNACY

To varying degrees, sandbox and plot point campaigns rely on the PCs driving the narrative. They are at the opposite end of the scale from story driven campaigns that rely on specific events occurring. There is a danger, however, that the players run out of incentives or otherwise feel at a loose end. Without a friendly geist (GM) on hand to guide the action, the vastness of the Human Sphere might create an immensity-induced paralysis. Before beginning a more open-ended campaign, the group should be clear that they're comfortable with the style of game. Once the campaign is underway, the GM can then step occasionally to offer advice and adventure seeds designed to keep the game interesting.

INFAMY BY ASSOCIATION

It is important to note that a Fame and Infamy rating is attached to a captain and their ship rather than individuals of the crew. The captain is the face and voice of their ship, their commands dictate the actions their subordinates take, and it is their name that gets broadcast across Maya. A captain can always draw upon their Fame and Infamy rating when making certain tests (see Fame and Infamy Table). A captain's crew may only do so when operating as the commander and representative of the captain in a situation that draws upon the skills associated with fame and infamy – and even then, only at the GM's discretion. Examples include a hacker searching Maya for shipping routes and manifests or a trusted lieutenant conducting contract negotiations on the captain's behalf. Alternatively, a crew member may spend an Infinity Point at any time to make use of their captain's Fame and Infamy. (Though there may be later repercussions from the captain if the action undertaken does not meet with their subsequent approval.)

in a corsair campaign, the GM gains an amount of bonus Heat to their pool equal to half the corsair captain's Fame and Infamy rating (rounding down). If the corsair captain is an NPC, the GM instead gains 2 Heat each session.

FAME AND INFAMY TABLE	
FAME AND INFAMY RATING	CONTRACTS/BOOTY/NEGOTIATING POWER
1	–
2	Negotiating Power 1
3	Booty 1 , Contracts 1
4	Negotiating Power 2
5	Booty 2 , Contracts 2
6	Negotiating Power 3
7	Booty 3 , Contracts 3
8	Negotiating Power 4
9	Booty 4 , Contracts 4
10	Booty 5 , Contracts 4 , Negotiating Power 5

Unless predetermined with the GM – which should include background reasons for the increase – Fame and Infamy ratings always begin at 1. The rating is raised through the course of play. Following a significant action related to the exploits associated with privateering, a corsair captain can employ the Cultivate Fame and Infamy action whilst *Carousing* (see p. 59). If successful, word of the recent deed makes its way into news channels across the system and increases the captain's Fame and Infamy rating by 1.

CONTRACTS

Success breeds success. Famous corsairs rarely need to track down contracts or hunt for information regarding lucrative targets. Commissions and shipping route data find their way into such a captain's private encrypted inbox regularly. Lesser-known captains must hunt for such data and contracts, often pitting themselves against other ships and crews when doing so.

Prior to or subsequent to an **Analysis** or **Persuade** test related to searching for a contract or a viable target (which also includes the *Rumours* within *Carousing* action, p. 60) the captain can roll the number of for contracts they have achieved according to their current rating on the Fame and Infamy Table. A captain with Fame and Infamy 5, for instance, would roll 2 . If the bonus were rolled prior to the test, each two Effects rolled reduces the difficulty of the **Analysis** or **Persuade** test by 1 (to a minimum of 0). If subsequent to the test, each effect rolled generates one bonus Momentum on the test.

Bonus towards contracts can be employed once per day without issue. For each use beyond this, increase the Repercussion of the test by one, representing competitors moving to block contract avenues, data regulators detecting suspicious monitoring of traffic, etc.

NEGOTIATING POWER

As previously discussed, raising Fame and Infamy through the course of privateering can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, targets are more likely to capitulate to well-known corsairs who are renowned for catching their prey no matter how fast they run, but on the other, the authorities and military are likely to have short thrift for anything the corsairs might have to say, unless they also fly the same flag, of course. Negotiating power represents a corsair captain's ability to positively influence their target or unfriendly agencies during critical negotiations, such as convincing a target to cut their engines and stand down or persuading the local system patrol to let the corsair continue unhindered.

When conducting Psywar related to privateering, a corsair captain can roll the number of for negotiating power they have achieved according to their current rating on the Fame and Infamy Table. A corsair captain with Fame and Infamy 5 would roll 2 . Each effect rolled on the grants one bonus Momentum for the test.

MANNING THE OARS

In a similar vein to their forebears who plundered the sea lanes of Earth through the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods, the corsairs operate starships outfitted for combat. These spacefaring vessels, regardless of their size, require a crew to function effectively. Once the type of campaign has been determined, it makes sense to understand the PCs' roles within their own localised setting, for example their role onboard their ship. As with the type of campaign being run, there are a few ways that this can be handled.

CORSAIR BAND

Working in tandem to secure larger prizes or close out larger contracts, each player captain operates their own ship. These types of campaigns should be the exception rather than the norm. The players each choose a ship type and outfit each separately. Whether the group operate as a democracy or dictatorship, with one PC taking the role of an admiral above the others, should be established before the campaign begins. These types of campaigns allow for plenty of intrigue between the PCs as they jostle for supremacy amongst themselves, undercut each other for contracts, and perhaps hide booty from one another. Also, the larger and more

infamous their enterprise becomes, the more focus and ire they are likely to draw from outfits and nations actively engaged in anti-piracy activities. When operating as a corsair band, each captain maintains their own Fame and Infamy rating (see p. 62), but also the group gains a rating for their band equivalent to half the sum of each captain's rating (rounding up). For example, three captains each with a Fame and Infamy rating of 3 equates to a group rating of 5. Use an individual captain's rating for tests when operating independently or the group's rating when operating in a band of two or more ships.

CAPTAIN & CREW CHIEFS

In this type of campaign, one of the PCs takes up the captain's role, with the rest of the group taking up roles as heads of their respective fields (see *Corsair Crew Roles*, p. 47). As with the corsair band option, a more diplomatic view for the captain's chair is an option, perhaps with the PC best suited to the current operation or situation taking overall command when required – the Hacker taking command when responding to Infowar attacks, or the Engineer when the ship's integrity is compromised, for instance. Fame and Infamy follow the standard rules presented below, affecting the relevant skill tests for the PC in command at the time of the test. When creating characters, consideration should be given to matching the PC's skills to the intended crew role, but this isn't a hard and fast rule. There are plenty of brutes who have made it to the top of their respective ladders through fear and intimidation, relying on the skills of their underlings and their own fearsome reputations to mask their ineptitude.

CREW CHIEFS

Rather than concern themselves with the operational nuances of a starship, the players might opt to remain as lieutenants to a captain. Alternatively, they may wish to work their way up towards their own captaincy through play rather than begin with their own command. This option involves a little more bookkeeping for the GM, as the captain will need to be run as an NPC and the ship's statistics will largely be their concern, although there is no reason the GM and players can't conceive these details collaboratively. The players also have the option to take turns to make decisions for the captain during the game. The captain and their crew will still attract Fame and Infamy, though its effects will likely provide a narrative result unless one of the PCs is participating in a situation that could be considered to warrant its benefits. Halve the Fame and Infamy rating if any of the PCs step up to command during play (perhaps through mutiny) or reduce Fame and Infamy to 0 if the PCs progress to the point that they take control of a new ship.

THE BOTTOM RUNG

In this type of campaign, the PCs begin play as minions amongst the crew. None hold command positions, and they will all need to prove their worth. Perhaps they have chosen to operate as a boarding party team at the front of the action – even boarding parties need specialists drawn from any number of the crew roles – or maybe they have elected to begin as a squadron of small-wing support for their larger host ship, but either way, they go where they are told. The start of the campaign will largely be concerned with surviving the situations they are thrust into and celebrating afterwards, but can eventually develop into larger concerns such as their own command. For these campaigns, Fame and Infamy have no relevance unless the PCs progress upwards in their roles.

PROFIT OF PRIVATEERING

The GM and players will also need to calculate the profits of their campaigns. The first concern is the amount of cargo that they can carry. It would be all well and good for a medium-sized corsair to capture a large crippled freighter, but half of the cargo would need to be left behind because of their own hold size. The captain can calculate the potential profit from their captured booty, which is based on the type and amount of cargo captured, adjusted by the previous figure. Finally, the actual profit at point of sale will need to be calculated.

1. Calculate available cargo capacity for the corsair ship. Establish the baseline using the *Cargo Space Table* as a guideline, then adjust for any cargo the corsair ship is already carrying. The guidelines provided in the table do not need adjusting for any internal supplies the ship might be carrying for its own crew – such as rations, ammunition, etc. – only for any previously captured booty or transported cargo.
2. Calculate the potential profit for the booty. Establish the amount of cargo being transported by the target using the *Cargo Space Table*. Assume the target is at full capacity, though the GM can reduce this amount by one-quarter for each 3 Heat spent, to a maximum of one-half and 6 Heat spent. (It's a rare occurrence for interstellar ships to travel with their holds empty.) Regardless of how much cargo the target is carrying however, the corsair ship can only claim an amount of cargo equivalent to the calculation from the previous step. Finally, the GM can determine whether the cargo is considered mundane or precious, which will apply a multiplier to the potential profit according to the *Cargo Type Table*.
3. At the actual point of sale, usually a caravan-serai or similar marketplace, apply a random multiplier to the potential profit using the Market Potential Table, which represents the



CARGO SPACE TABLE

SHIP TYPE	APPROXIMATE CORSAIR CARGO CAPACITY	APPROXIMATE TRANSPORT CARGO CAPACITY	CLASS OF SHIP
Courier	N/A	35	2
Relief Vessel	300	350	2
Colonial Transport	1500	1750	3
Freighter	3000	3500	3
Bulk Freighter	N/A	35000	4

CARGO TYPE TABLE

D6	CARGO TYPE	MULTIPLIER
1	Common Raw Materials	×0.75
2-3	Consumer Goods	×1
4-5	High-Tech Goods	×1.25
6	Rare Goods (Silk derivatives, Teseum, Nessium)	×2 (or more at GMs discretion)

CORSAIR CASHFLOW

Unlike the standard rules for Cashflow (see *Infinity Corebook* p. 328), a corsair's Cashflow does not replenish at the start of each game. They must use the system of booty presented here to replenish their short-term wealth. A corsair can never exceed their maximum Cashflow rating using the rules presented here, although additional Assets can be used to increase overall Earnings (and thus Cashflow in retrospect). Despite there being no hard cap on Earnings within the *Infinity* RPG ruleset, GMs should keep in mind that most corsairs rarely surpass an equivalent of Earnings 2, while most corsair captains enjoy life at Earnings 3. Corsairs live life in the now, spending Cashflow and Assets to enjoy life while they can and worrying little about retirement plans or nest eggs.

constantly fluctuating supply and demand values of commercial markets. The sale of goods follows the standard rules presented on p. 331 of the *Infinity Corebook*, though the captain can apply any modifiers they might possess from their Fame and Infamy rating (see p. 62). Divide the result by ten, then deduct two-tenths of this total. The final calculation represents the actual profit gained by the corsair captain, which equates to their cut once all other percentages, bribes, and fees have been considered.

BOOTY

Despite the title, booty represents the ability to sell acquired goods. Corsair captains might not always be able to find a buyer for the particular plunder they have acquired, but with time and experience generally gain a sense of the right pitstop to head to in order to complete a sale. This rating can also be applied in reverse to find much needed supplies or replacement parts for a ship or its crew.

Prior to or subsequent to an acquisition test for the sale of goods (see *Infinity Corebook* p. 331), the captain can roll the number of **N** for booty they have achieved according to their current Fame and Infamy rating. For example, a captain with Fame and Infamy 6 would roll 2 **N**. If the bonus **N** were rolled prior to a test for selling goods, each two Effects rolled reduces the difficulty of the **Acquisition** test by 1 (to a minimum of 0). If subsequent to the test, each 1, 2, or Effect rolled provides an equivalent number of bonus Assets towards the pool, which is in addition to any other benefits that the **Acquisition** test for the sale of goods generates. (Effects count as a 1.)

DIVVYING THE BOOTY

Once the actual profit has been calculated, it's time for the captain to divvy the loot. Corsair crews never volunteer to work for free, after all. The actual profit represents a pool of Assets that can be shared between the crew and used for repairs and upgrades to the ship. Rather than track the inherent value of each Asset from the pool and its representative value to the crew, the actual value of each Asset is dealt with in an abstract manner.

Maintenance & Resupply: Before anything else, the captain must first pay for the maintenance, restocking, and repair of their ship. This will absorb an amount of the Assets pool equal to the equal to the Class of the ship +1. An amount equal to this must also be spent for each attribute or feature that has suffered any damage. The captain can choose to ignore repair costs, thereby leaving the system or feature in its damaged condition, and even maintenance costs if they so choose, but opting to cut corners on the latter will begin to introduce dire consequences. First, future maintenance fees will increase by 1 for each maintenance phase not previously undertaken. Second, once the corsair ship leaves port, the GM will gain an amount of bonus Heat equal to twice the unpaid maintenance fee. Third, available systems and features will begin to malfunction on their own. Increase the complication range for skill tests involved with the use of a random ship feature or attribute by 2 following the first skipped maintenance fee, two random ship features or attributes following the second, and so on. As an example, a captain chooses to not spend Assets from the pool on maintenance and leaves port at the first opportunity. When they do so, a random roll indicates that the engines are suffering from the lack of maintenance. Until maintenance is undertaken, any rolls involving use of the engines such as Pilot will have its complication range increased by 2.

Crew Loot: Once maintenance, resupply, and repair have been accounted for, the captain can divide the remaining booty. The captain can allot as much of the Assets pool to their own Assets and Cashflow rating as they wish, but not remunerating the crew will undoubtedly lead to a short career at their mutinous hands. The NPC element of the ship's crew, i.e. any member of the crew not represented as a PC, can be considered as a large abstract portion of Assets. To maintain morale and reduce infractions on Class 2 ships, the NPC members of the crew should be allotted an amount of the Assets pool equal to 2 plus 1 for each crew role being fulfilled. For Class 3 ships, the increase in crew numbers requires 30 of the Assets plus 1 for each crew role being fulfilled. Each crew member in each function must be accounted for separately, so if there are two hackers and two engineers in the

crew for instance, this would require 4 additional Assets from the pool.

Members of the crew who are PCs should individually receive one fifth (Class 2) or one tenth (Class 3) of the remaining Assets pool, or possibly more. If the captain allots less than the required amount to the NPC crew, the complication range of any **Command** or **Persuade** tests towards their crew increases by 1 for each point of shortfall until the next division of booty. It is left to the PCs to choose how they show their own disgruntlement.

Once the Assets pool has been divided, the captain and each PC applies the new figure to their own Assets, which then remains in place until the next time any booty is divvied up or until it is spent. Once the Assets have been gained, they can immediately be used to replenish Cashflow. One Asset will replenish one point of Cashflow. If the captain or any PCs have not replenished their Cashflow rating to an amount that at least equals their Earnings – though the total beyond this can be to any amount, not necessarily to maximum – the character suffers a Shortfall. Corsairs often use the liquid funds of Assets to fund their downtime activities, saving their Cashflow for more substantial purchases, such as new weaponry, upgraded weaponry, or the latest hacker subroutines.

REAPING THE REWARDS

Corsairs work hard and play hard. They never know whether any particular day will lead to glory, death, or capture. As a result, they make sure to live life to the fullest when able to. Any captain worth their salt will put their crew's chance to carouse before their own and will make sure to use the hint of an opportunity to make for port and unwind as a proverbial carrot on a stick. In return, almost every captain asks for a degree of focus and professionalism when reaving across the void. Denying the crew an opportunity to revel and relax from the constant tensions that go hand-in-hand with the life of an active corsair is a sure way to foster malcontent. Most corsairs love nothing more than the opportunity to boast of their exploits and spend their plunder on high stakes pursuits, various narcotic substances, or the pleasures of the flesh. Eventually, they run out of ready cash and seek out their captain for information concerning the next plump target. And so, the circle perpetuates.

CAROUSING

Carousing covers all of the activities the crew – including the captain and other PCs if relevant – partake in between their voyages across the stars. It is a necessary and fundamental pressure relief from the stresses of privateering. Unless otherwise stated by the captain, Carousing will always

take place immediately following the sale of booty (see *Divvying the Booty*, p. 46). Although dubbed Carousing for the purposes of a corsair campaign, these scenes can also involve the more mundane aspects that the PCs might like to indulge in such as upgrading or repairing their gear, checking in on loved ones, and even sourcing information. Unless the GM or the players have a particular side-plot or activity in mind when docked, the point of this phase is to move the process speedily along so that the story can return to the main action driving the campaign.

FERVOUR

Privateering is hardly a respectable profession. The fluctuation and etherealness of a PC's finances are representative of the fickle fortunes of war. For a PC to live beyond their means and enjoy luxuries that make all the hardship bearable means offloading their hard-earned booty. Although the cost draws parallels to Lifestyle Maintenance from the *Infinity Corebook* (see p. 387), the fluid nature of booty and passion inherent in Carousing require a slightly different term and outcome, which can even be seen in activities such as replenishing ammo or repairing armour for the next boarding action. Carousing requires Fervour, a zest for life that contrasts the deadly tension inherent in privateering.

The cost of Fervour covers a corsair's food and lodgings, non-specialised ammo replenishment, and armour repair, plus any other indulgences such as gambling, VR suites, and alcohol. Major purchases, such as new weaponry, armour, or other expensive equipment require the normal purchasing rules.

When Carousing gets under way, all PCs must spend an amount of Fervour equal to 3 plus the sum of the PC's Clothing and Fashion and Entertainment Lifestyle Maintenance costs (see *Infinity Corebook* p. 389). It should never be possible for a PC to carouse without costing *something*. Despite what the hypercorps propaganda machines spout, everything has a cost to some degree in the quantronic age. Fervour is first paid from Assets, with any shortfall covered by Cashflow.

Unless the PC can't afford it, the actual cost of living life to the full during downtime is straightforward. On the occasions that PCs are unable to fund their Fervour, they have one of two choices. They can either borrow from friends, although this risks some form of interest rate or future obligation, or they can choose to suffer 2 Shortfalls.

There are two main benefits associated with Carousing and indulging in Fervour:

1. The PC removes all Stress damage they are currently suffering from. This is handled before the PC chooses any other desired activities (see Carousing Activities).

A CAPTAIN'S CREW

A corsair captain is their crew, and vice-versa. Considering the lives they have chosen to lead, the two should be able to trust each other implicitly. If a captain regularly neglects their crew or chooses to continuously undercut their share of the booty, the GM should begin to introduce increasingly threatening repercussions into their games. These can be as low-key as vocal disgruntlement, and can easily escalate towards threats of violence, tainted food, and full-scale mutiny. How many games it will take to reach mutinous action is largely a reflection of the captain's approach to their crew (heavy-handed fear and intimidation, or mutual respect and admiration), but there should always be a warning or two before this action manifests itself.

TAKING A BACK SEAT

Normally, the GM unfolds the narrative as the game progresses and the PCs react to the story. When Carousing, however, the GM can sit back and allow the players the opportunity to drive the narrative. As they describe their character's exploits, the GM can note their future intent, the NPCs they interact with, and any mishaps or successes they experience whilst spending their hard-earned loot. All of these events between the main action can be used to guide the core narrative in any style of campaign. Employing aftershocks based on the character's exploits will also provide a sense of realism to the campaign, allowing the players to understand that their actions have an impact in small yet meaningful ways.



ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

Within the vague boundaries of the activities and any events or troubles that might occur, the GM should allow the players to freely narrate what transpires. By their nature, however, some activities are better suited to being played out in full and should be deemed as adventures in their own right. This is a very real benefit of playing a sandbox or plot point campaign; the larger narrative can be driven by these small actions. The GM can intervene and offer up an adventure seed at any time.

SKILL TESTS AND CAROUSING

During the Carousing phase, most activities happen without the need for skill tests. The activities aren't challenges to overcome, but rather represent an over-indulgence in the routine task of living life. In the few situations where a skill test is required during Carousing, there are additional considerations.

First, as Carousing can happen between adventures, any circumstances that add to Heat such as complications, bonus dice purchased, or necessary expenditures of Heat should add to the amount of Heat the GM begins with at the start of the next adventure.

Further, any complications which aren't used to add Heat should have an effect during Carousing. By default, the GM can rule this as the loss (or theft) of an Asset (1 Asset per Complication), but it can be far more interesting to use these complications to set up future entanglements to deal with further down the line.

2. As previously mentioned – and barring major mishaps – Fervour assumes the PC re-joins their ship with non-specialised ammo replenished, armour repaired, and other missing items replaced and/or repaired. Fervour essentially allows a PC to maintain the same equipment from one mission to the next without having to perform further bookkeeping.

CAROUSING ACTIVITIES

There are several possible activities which PCs can indulge in during the Carousing stage, ranging from the immoral to the demure. Virtual Reality suites cater to any and all pursuits, after all. Each PC decides what activity draws them during a given Carousing phase. The nature and specifics of these activities may vary based on where the PCs are resting; a group seeking a benefactor may find a very different kind of patron in a caravanserai as opposed to a pirate haven. Each activity costs a certain amount of Assets to undertake.

No specific length of time is listed for any given activity. It is up to the GM and players to determine what seems like a reasonable length of time. However, as a rule of thumb, Carousing lasts one day for each Asset spent on activities.

MEETING A BENEFACTOR

A benefactor is usually a renowned or powerful person who can, from time to time, offer the PC or group a job, support, or advice. So long as they are in the same location, the PC or group can elect to meet with such a benefactor while Carousing. While a PC or group can have several benefactors at once, individual patrons may have demands, agendas, and requirements that they place upon those with whom they associate.

First, the PCs have to find a benefactor. One may be designated by the GM as part of the course of play, which is usually, but not always, an agent handler. Alternatively, the PC or group can seek out a new patron at a cost of 10 Assets, a mixture of bribes and tedious meetings with subordinates and middlemen. So long as the potential benefactor is favourable towards the PC and their actions, this can be reduced by 1 for every rank of Fame and Infamy the PC has. Alternatively, a negative outlook towards the PC can increase the cost.

Meeting an existing benefactor costs 5 Assets. As with meeting a new benefactor, this cost is modified by Fame and Infamy, which can result in a positive number, as the benefactor pays handsomely for the opportunity to entreat the captain directly.

Meeting with a benefactor may open future lucrative targets, further personal goals, or secure access to resources that may not otherwise be available. It is recommended that benefactors are used to provide access to advancements that would otherwise be out of reach in general game play, such as the refitting and upgrading of ships.

The obvious drawback to a benefactor is that they undoubtedly have goals and objectives of their own, and thus come already equipped with the kind of enemies that accompany such agendas. When the PCs work with a benefactor, they take on that patron's enemies as their own. Beyond those described above, the specific mechanical and narrative effects – both positive and negative – of meeting with a benefactor are interpreted by the GM but are usually quantified by opportunities for future privateering and profit.

ACQUISITIONS

While common items are replenished as a function of Fervour, obtaining something new, or significant requires more time and more effort such as a new suit of power armour, an upgraded Hacking Device, or a Teseum blade. It may take hours or days to find the right trader and, if an item is to be made to order, it may take days or weeks to arrive. Use the standard process of acquiring new items as described in *Acquisitions*, p. 329 *Infinity Corebook*. This activity also covers the selling of items.

GAMBLING

When not gambling with their lives, corsairs often find themselves gambling with the last of their coin. Games of chance, bets on blood sports, and other forms of gambling are a common part of the lives of privateers. Not all PCs need be of the gambling sort, but part of Carousing is indulgence to excess, and this is one way to do that. Whatever the PC is gambling on, the process is the same. The PC wagers 1 or more Assets, and rolls 1d20 for each Asset so wagered. The wager is spent, but the total rolled on the d20 is the amount of Assets they walk away with after gambling, which could be more, less, or the same.

A PC that chooses to cheat when gambling adds an additional +1 to the total for each Effect rolled, but if a number of Effects equal to or greater than the character's Thievery Expertise are rolled, then the character is caught cheating and loses all Assets wagered. Getting caught cheating can easily lead to a side adventure or at the very least should create an unwelcome reputation and a lack of opportunity for gambling further in the region or dock.

RUMOURS

Keeping an ear to the ground can be as lucrative in terms of information as endless hours spent trawling the Maya news channels. Listening to



local gossip is a valuable way to learn what's important to whom, pick up poorly kept secrets, and find out the next possible opportunity for plunder and booty.

Communities – particularly caravanserai and pirate havens – are filled with all manner of news and gossip, as well as stories both reasonable and fanciful. Frequently, just through their mere presence, PCs contribute to this buzz of discussion. There's a difference, however, between merely listening to people and actually seeking out interesting information. The latter takes time, effort, and incentives. If done carelessly, such blatant information gathering can cause trouble for the PCs and others.

Assets spent on rumours represents a mixture of hospitality, bribes, and a measure of the effort spent to find the right people to talk to. It can be a rewarding investment that leads to opportunities and potential wealth later.

The group or individual PC pays 1 or more Assets and makes a **Daunting (D3) Lifestyle** or **Persuade** test. The PC or group rolls 1 N for each Asset spent. The total from all N rolled is the number of local rumours uncovered, which are independent of the success of the test. If the **Lifestyle** or **Persuade** test is successful, each point of Momentum gains one piece of **valuable knowledge**. If the **Lifestyle** or **Persuade** test fails, the PC or group instead draw Unwelcome Attention (see table on p. 62).

Rumours are normally created by the GM in advance or on the spot and should be a mixture of local flavour, interesting tall tales, misunderstandings, folk lore, and similar glimpses into life in the local area. Rumours can even relate to the same tale yet be completely contradictory in the telling. They might lead to some minor encounters, but more often than not they're simply bits of information that don't really lead anywhere significant.

Valuable knowledge is a different matter entirely. The GM has a choice with regards to valuable knowledge. The PC can be provided with a piece of important information which pertains to a new target, a significant ally, a major adversary, or some other half-digested gobblet of information which is otherwise valuable to know. This could include a significant plot hook for a future adventure.

Alternatively, when several pieces of valuable knowledge are gained, the GM may leave the knowledge undeclared. If this option is chosen, each piece of undeclared valuable knowledge may be used by the PC or group during the next session, representing a single question for the GM about the session's parameters that must be answered truthfully. If valuable knowledge is not used or declared by the end the next session, it is lost to the rumour mill.

SURREPTITIOUS TIE-INS

The term benefactor and patron are interchangeable, representing someone who has a vested interest in assisting the PC or group along their chosen path. The term benefactors, however, specifically ties in with the advice provided for NPCs within the *Infinity GMs Guide*.

GAMES WITHIN GAMES

The gambling system presented here does not represent a single toss of the dice or match, but instead covers the entirety of the gambling session and the overall total of wagers and winnings. If the GM and player wish to recreate the experience of a by-the-action gambling session, this should be done during gameplay and with everyone's agreement, not while Carousing.



RECOVERY

While a PC can recover from the cuts and scrapes of a rough life quickly enough, longer-term problems such as Harms are more time-consuming to deal with. By devoting a period of Carousing to recovery, the PC can more fully recover.

Time spent on recovery means seeking out medical care and staying there for a protracted period, providing an exceptionally effective means of removing Harms. A PC may spend Assets on recovery at the rate of 1 Asset per Harm (this includes ones that were treated during the adventure), plus 1 Asset for each type of poison or disease removed. There is no test required, merely the expenditure of Assets. It is assumed that if one practitioner is not adequate, another is found who can do the job.

CULTIVATE FAME AND INFAMY

To gain bigger contracts and garner news of juicier targets, corsair captains revel in their exploits and brandish their achievements to all who listen. It is this currency, more than any digital coin, in which the most audacious captains wish to bathe. Following their escapades, captains sometimes join their crews in indulging in legendary bouts of celebration and excess. During this time, they recount tales of heroism and danger, feast heartily, drink to excess, enjoy the company of others, and generally squander their hard-earned booty.

The main advantage of this revelry is that it spreads word of a captain's might, not only in terms

of the tales told, but also in terms of how much booty has been spent, and the scale of the revelry that has taken place.

Cultivating the captain's Fame and Infamy requires that the captain spend 1 or more Asset and succeed at a **Daunting (D3) Lifestyle** test. If successful, the captain should roll **(N)** equal to the amount of Assets spent. If the total rolled is equal to or higher than their current Fame and Infamy, and the deed meets their requirements for a significant action according to the captain's current renown, then they increase their Fame and Infamy by 1. If one or more Effects are generated, the captain suffers from some negative attention as the Carousing gets out of control and causes problems. If the **Lifestyle** test is unsuccessful, any Assets are wasted though Effects can still generate negative attention.

The requirements for a deed to qualify as a significant action increase alongside the captain's rating, with examples found in the *Infamous Deeds Table*. At the GM's discretion, if the significant action outweighs anything covered in the table, or if coverage of the deed is boosted in some way – such as employing a popular Mayacaster to report the event – the difficulty of the **Lifestyle** test can be reduced by one or two steps, to a minimum of **Average (D1)**.

As shown on the *Unwelcome Attention Table*, the number of Effects generated determines the scale of this negative attention.

CAROUSING EVENTS

Although carousing represents downtime for a corsair captain and their crew, random events can and should still occasionally happen to railroad their revelry. Certain Carousing activities require skill tests that might generate complications, or certain situations will certainly warrant Heat. GMs can and should build in random events that bring the local area to life. These events themselves might lead to full-fledged side plots that themselves provide a break from the vastness of space and the pressure of finding the next haul of booty.

AFTER CAROUSING

Once Carousing has run its course, it's time to return to the void in search of the next big haul. How this is triggered is up to the corsair captain. They might simply stipulate that the ship will leave once everyone has spent their booty, or they may round everyone up to chase down a lucrative prize. Regardless of the how and when, the captain and their crew can be sure that rumours and trouble will follow in their wake thanks to the activities they undertook during their Carousing. Both the GM and the PCs should have plenty of future hooks brewing when the ship leaves port towards its next destination.

INFAMOUS DEEDS TABLE

FAME AND INFAMY RATING	SIGNIFICANT ACTION
1–3	Capturing a vessel, evading capture, raiding an enemy outpost
4–6	Capturing precious cargo, escaping a hunting party targeting the corsair, gaining a second starship
7–9	Capturing a famous political figure, escaping from captivity, destroying an enemy warship

UNWELCOME ATTENTION TABLE

EFFECTS	EXAMPLE UNWELCOME ATTENTION
1–2	The PC gets a little rowdy and breaks some of the furniture at one of the bars or drinking establishments being frequented. The PC must pay 1 additional Asset to compensate the landlord.
3–4	The PC gets into a drunken argument that escalates into a sizeable brawl, leaving several people bruised and sore and resulting in plenty of broken furniture. The PC must pay 2 additional Assets to compensate the landlord.
5+	The revel spill into the streets, causing considerable disarray and no small amount of destruction. This costs 3 additional Assets in fines, bribes, and compensation, or the local authorities castigate the crew's captain, causing the loss of 1 point of Fame and Infamy. For every additional Effect generated after 5, the cost of the fines and bribes increases by 1.

CHAPTER 5

HAQQISLAM GEAR

Acquiring possessions is not particularly praiseworthy in Haqqislam, since they can distract a seeker from the Search for Knowledge. But while Farhad Khadivar primarily intended a spiritual meaning when he spoke of the Search leading to prosperity, Haqqislam has grown unmistakably wealthy in practical and material ways as well.

Bustling caravanserai at critical junctions throughout the Sphere ensure availability, even abundance, of interesting and valuable wares for and from Haqqislamites, and reliable hubs of opportunity and connection wherever they roam. Constant contact with other cultures informs debate and research at all levels of society. The depth of caravanserai café discussions and debates often surprise outsiders, particularly how closely they incorporate recent advancements and events.

Bourak's challenging ecology and the gift of Silk drive both biomedical research and terraforming expertise, critical tools for humanity to evolve and thrive. Though these outward tools are lucrative, they are most valuable as aids to inner spiritual and intellectual growth. A longer, healthier life in a nourishing environment allows time for experience to become wisdom and to put those hard-earned lessons into practice.

Their biomedical knowledge casts deep shadows. The same learning that nurtures and heals, can easily turn deadly or dangerous in the hands of the determined or desperate. With a tenuous position as an interstellar power and with relatively easy access to Silk, Haqqislamite agents and experts readily undergo martial augmentation or deadly xenograft implantation. They even use drugs and poisons to secretly manipulate their bodies and those of their opponents for advantage.

In light of these dangers and challenges, Haqqislam's traders and researchers are often cautious about sharing what they know, selling only a subset to outsiders and even other faithful with unproven loyalties. The right connections are invaluable when searching for rare goods. The precise word in a particular caravanserai can open doors and reveal transformative wonders found nowhere else in the Human Sphere without the risks of Nomad experimentation or Lhost dysphoria.

NEW ITEM TYPES

AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)

Used in combination with eye implants, glasses, visors, or comlog displays, these programs add a digital patina layer to the user's augmented reality environment and can be disabled or enabled with a Free Action. They vary from simple virtual visual layers, to experiences elaborate enough to take up the majority of the user's sensorium. Complex versions can incorporate other patinas into their aesthetic, but undivided attention is ideal.

I-KOHL

Initially a cosmetics brand named for ancient Egyptian make-up, i-Kohl is a generic term for synthetic pheromones and biochemical psychotropics worn on the user's skin that interfere with a target's cognition and hormonal response. Each has Subtle 2 and takes five minutes and a **Lifestyle (D1)** test to apply. If a complication is generated when applying or using an i-Kohl product, its Subtle quality is reduced by 1 due to smudging, dissolving, or vaporisation. If Subtle would be reduced to 0, its active ingredients are used up and are no longer effective.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

Two new item types: AR programs and i-Kohl cosmetics

A catalogue of new weapons, armour, items, drugs, poisons, and vehicles used in Haqqislam, including five new full-body augmentations



GEAR CATALOGUE

STRIKING LOOKS

While cultures and subcultures have varying aesthetic expectations, i-Kohl can be worn without attracting particular notice by users of all gender expressions, particularly formulations that closely mimic or accentuate the wearer's skin tone. They can also be embedded in painted-on artificial tattoos or henna-like patterns, but these immediately smudge, dissolve, or vaporise when used, potentially alerting observers. Bold make-up styles are more common in youthful or Elite subcultures, but every faction has at least a few scenes that encourage a heavy hand with the brush.

360° Vision/Visor: Lhost biosynthetic vision research at the University of Medina led to the current benign, albeit invasive, installation process of 360° vision augmentations. Users can see in all directions, granting a bonus d20 on Observation tests. Unimplanted 360° visors are less intuitive, adding +1 Complication Range to those tests as well.

Ad-Qali Armour X: Nicknamed after the Ad Qaliwara knack for half-finishing projects, Ad-Qali motorcycle armour sets sacrifice effective armour coverage for fashionable flash, providing X bonus Momentum to social tests related to street fashion or Kum culture with anyone with a lower Pilot or Lifestyle Expertise than the wearer. When purchased, roll for X distinct hit locations, reducing the Armour Soak provided in those locations to 0 instead of 2.

Akbar Kit: *Akbar* means "great" in Arabic, as used in the phrase, "Allah-hu Akbar" ("God is Great"). Akbar Doctors take the title at the end of their studies, vowing to place their considerable skills at the service of the faithful. The invitation to do so is a profound honour. On taking their vow, each is granted an Akbar Kit and receives improvements and updates to its contents throughout their career provided they remain in good standing. It requires at least 3 Medicine Focus to use, but grants -1 difficulty on Medicine tests, and contains six loads of Serum, three

loads of Silk, and a single dose of Psychotropics. If a Medicine Serious Treatment attempt is started within an hour of a patient's injury, the time required is halved and can be repeatedly halved by spending additional Momentum, to a minimum of fifteen minutes.

Akrep TAG: Piloted by the prestigious Maghariba Guard, the XPR-5 Akrep – "scorpion" in Arabic – is a replacement for the Artefaktech XPR-1 Bokböceği – "beetle" in Turkish – a PanOceanian design manufactured under license on Bourak. Updated with the best optical systems available, the XPR-5 is so extensively retrofitted its origins are barely recognizable.

Instead of an axially mounted HMG, it has an articulated tail mount for its Askari AS Laheeb MULTI HMG and cutting-edge anti-ballistic defence canisters. Four legs, instead of six, provide for simpler maintenance and wider range of motion – grip-tracks at the end of each limb add speed and stability, and modular "claws" add tactical flexibility in its front arc. Needless to say, the Guard's pilots are thrilled with their new mounts and have put them to good effect during several recent, albeit unreported, direct actions.

AKREP TAG

ENCLOSED, GROUND, SINGLE-SEAT, WALKER, WHEELED

ATTRIBUTES

Scale	Speed	Brawn
2	2	17 (+1)

DETAILS

Max. Passengers	Impact
1	3+6 (N) (Knockdown)
Hard Points	
-	

DEFENCES

Structure	16	Firewall	10
Armour	8	BTS	6

TAIL WEAPON:

- **MULTI HMG:** Range L, 2+5 (N) damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Medium MULTI, MULTI Heavy Mod, Spread 1, Unsubtle

SECONDARY WEAPONS:

- **Heavy Flamethrower:** Range L, 2+5 (N) damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Medium MULTI, MULTI Heavy Mod, Spread 1, Unsubtle
- **OR 2× Heavy Pistols:** Range R/C, 2+4 (N) damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Piercing 2, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Clamber:** Can ignore difficult or hazardous terrain X with a Pilot (D(X-1)) test.
- **Hull Down:** Not Hindered when Prone, and +3 Soak per Cover dice Effect.
- **Qutb Rasasa:** If Prone and Braced, a Swift Action momentum spend to make a second MULTI HMG attack costs only one Momentum.

GEAR: 360° Visor, ECM 2



al-Masjid AR: A key AR program for traditionally minded Haqqislamites who still pray at the five prescribed times per day, *al-Masjid* – “mosque” in Arabic – slowly converts the user’s surroundings into one of millions of random or preset mosques as the time for prayer approaches. Live feeds also incorporate friends and family who are participating as part of the imagery of gathered worshipers. Less formal Haqqislamites sometimes use the program to stay in touch with those who are important to them, as cover for subtle communication, or as a cue to meditate on the divine in their own way.

Azelik Poison: Azelik poison is a bitter-tasting chalky powder that induces Azelik Syndrome. It is notoriously difficult to cure, and few doctors in Haqqislamite territory will risk offending the Tuareg people by attempting treatment. (*Azelik Syndrome*: Ingested 3, Chronic Progressive 2 (6 Momentum), Week, 1+6 Radiation 2 physical damage)

Azelik Shells: Named for a Tuareg-reclaimed uranium-rich region on Earth, built from extensive deposits of the same on Bourak’s moon of Yusef Al-Hamir, and used only against profoundly despised enemies, Azelik shells use micro-sculpted loads of depleted uranium that detonate into clouds of toxic radioactive dust, adding Area(Close) and Radiation 2, and inflict Azelik Syndrome (see Azelik poison) as a Wound Effect.

Bardom Rifle: Named for the oxidation they acquire through extended exposure to Bourak’s scouring sands, craftily customised bardom (“red” in Hanzakut-Burushaski) rifles incorporate wide-bore light grenade launchers that can fire deployable repeaters as if they were grenades, albeit at +2 Complication Range. (Range M, 1+5 damage, Burst 2, 2H, MULTI Light Mod[light grenade launcher], Non-Hackable, Vicious 1)

Bio-Invulnerability Augmentation: A combination of gene-spliced auto-immune reinforcement and embedded artificial-antibody factories in the user’s lymphatic system, bio-invulnerability augmentation provides +6 BTS vs attacks with the Biotech quality, but the inflammation it induces reduces the user’s Vigour by 1 as long as it is installed. Regular updates on potential threats are key. For each month its Maintenance goes unpaid, reduce the BTS vs. Biotech attacks it provides by 1. Once paid in full, its effectiveness is restored.

Blitzen: A linchpin of KTS’s victories during the Silk Revolts and their ongoing operational strategy, the E/M pulse emitting Blitzen is a Panzerfaust variant designed for anti-quantronic impact against enemy vehicles and hackers. It contains two Reloads, and once those are used, the weapon is empty and cannot be used until reloaded. Disassembling the

weapon to reload it requires a Tech (D2) test as a Standard Action.

Blu Khat: Also known as hagigatto in Dar El Funduq’s Jewish Quarter, blu khat are chewable leaves or herbal pills from extensively biohacked versions of flowering plants native to Earth’s Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula. While they lack the original’s carcinogenic and cardiovascular risks, long-term usage can have serious psychological effects.

Special Effect: Once chewed or ingested, the user stays awake for the next four hours, does not need to make Resistance tests against sleep deprivation, heals 1 Resolve every 10 minutes, and gains a bonus d20 to Observation and Personality tests.

Addiction 1 (4 doses), *Compulsion* 1
Withdrawal 2, 1+5 mental damage, Harm Effect (+2 Complication Range to Willpower and Observation tests from impaired inhibition and periodic hallucinations)

Boarding-Colt: A favourite of corsair boarding parties thanks to its formidable stopping power and versatility, a boarding-colt is a heavy revolver with a single-shot underbarrel tube compatible with any shotgun shell or slug. It functions as a Light MULTI weapon, but fires Shells instead of Special ammo in its secondary mode. Disassembling the shotgun tube to reload it requires a Tech (D1) test as a Standard Action. (Range R/C, 2+4 damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Light MULTI)

- *Revolver Mode (Primary):* Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1
- *Shot-tube Mode (Secondary):* Improvised 1, and all other qualities per Shell type.

Chisisi Ark X: These luxurious safe boxes range from pocket-sized cases to a full traveller’s trunk. Made of slow-growing hardwoods surrounding a reinforced inner compartment, they always feature a geometric pattern of parquetry – inlaid blocks of especially exotic woods – that conceal a high-tech secret lock. Displayed by Haqqislamite elites as a symbol of status, simpler versions are regularly used by highly specialised couriers such as Tristeryon’s T8 Division to safeguard their charges and by Hassassins to transfer crucial information or equipment. Opening an ark requires manipulating and pressing concealed pressure plates in a precise timed sequence – doing so without knowing the combination is a complex Intelligence + Thievery test (D(X+2), 2X Momentum, 6 failures).

Djanbazan Regeneration: Created for the Djanbazan Tactical Group, this advanced regeneration augmentation allows the user to heal 2 of physical damage as a Minor Action, and one Wound if an effect is rolled. It also provides +5 BTS vs attacks with the Biotech quality, but rapid tissue renewal causes the user’s body to reject

TOHAA GLAMOUR

Tohaa Diplomats can generate i-Kohl equivalents and apply it to themselves for 2 Heat as a **Discipline (D1) Reaction**. Applying it to a willing target takes a full round, 4 Heat, a *Discipline (D2) test*, and direct contact. It cannot be applied to an unwilling target.

HEAVY COMBAT ARMOUR VARIANT:

AZRA'IL

It is Qapu Khalqi’s Azra’il Special Deterrent Group’s duty to annihilate anyone who assaults a Silk Route outpost. Licensed from Yu Jing’s Department of Military Support Technologies Development, their armour’s multi-staged servo design adds Exoskeleton 1, allowing heavy weapons usage without compromising protection, though the additional bulk adds +1 Complication Range to Agility-based skill tests.

“لجأنا نم قيسأ” (SWIFTER THAN FATE)

Maghariba Guard pilots are the best equipped unit in the Sword of Allah, Haqqislam’s state army, and carefully selected for daring, cunning, and intuitive precision. In addition to their military utility, they serve as the Hachib’s personal guard, proactively identifying and eradicating adversaries before they can become threats to the Prime Minister. Often outnumbered though rarely outmanoeuvred, they rely on mobile ambush tactics, serving as a heavy anvil for Ghulam Infantry’s hammer.



BLAK KHAT

A submondo urban legend, blak khat is supposedly blak khat cultivated in poisonous or radioactive soil, with the same high but a deadly comedown.

The common practice of cutting blak khat with unsafe substances is a more likely reason for a junkie to drop dead.

Savvy users stick to leaves, which are much harder to falsify or adulterate.

“TUM KURTLAR KAPLANDAN KORKAR”

(Turkish, “All wolves fear the Tiger”)

Kaplan Tactical Services (KTS) is a private security subsidiary of Silk magnate Hikmet Bey's Beyhan Resources STI. Originally formed to defend Bey's properties during the chaos of the Silk Revolts, the unit proved so effective they were spun off as a separate company. They rapidly expanded to provide services to third parties aligned with Bey's interests, as well as defence and attack contracts for the Funduq Sultanate, serving extensively in the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts and the current Paradiso Offensive.

Ozalan, KTS's founder, is a former colonel and combat veteran who holds to an ethos of discipline, courage, and self-sacrifice, and uncompromisingly expects the company's soldiers to follow suit, leading to a carefully-publicised reputation as honorable mercenaries. Recruits are not asked about their past, but failure to meet company standards means immediate expulsion. To Bey's frustration, the same standards apply to client contracts.

other biograft and cybernetic augmentations. Once injured, adrenal spiking and induced hormonal oscillations add +2 Complication Range to the user's Willpower-based tests until they next fall asleep.

Djinncloak: Iteratively refined in the Commercial Conflicts' crucible, djinncloaks are lightweight protein-web cloaks coated in micron-resolution digital ink with an integrated library of textures from throughout the Human Sphere, allowing the wearer to blend seamlessly into surrounding terrain and vanish. A Djinncloak counts as a kit for face-to-face Stealth tests made against targets at Medium range or farther, granting two bonus Momentum as long as the wearer is prone or motionless. If the wearer is not *revealed*, it provides +3 Cover Soak against ranged attacks even if *detected*.

Djinn Kit: A Hassassin recipe, these kits contain all the key materials needed to grow a djinncloak, create a D-Charge, or brew a tetrodotoxin-equivalent spray that is disguised as innocuous cosmetics and toiletries. They require close examination and a Science (D3) test to detect their true purpose, and a Science (D2) test and regular attention over a six-hour period to use. The kit is consumed in the process, and if any complications are generated, the created item gains the Fragile and Improvised 2 qualities. If immersed in a solution of easily-obtained cleaning supplies, the kit dissolves into a mix of forensically-useless amino acids.

E/Marat (ranged): E/Marat (“power” in Arabic) are short-range E/M pulse transmitters with parabolic deflectors to channel the pulse and integrated batteries instead of ammunition. If a complication is rolled, they can be declared to have “drained their batteries” by the GM, requiring a Tech (D1) test to recharge. (C, 1+4 damage, Burst 1, 1H, Torrent)

ExcelRate: An illegal degenerative drug popular with mercenaries and corsairs, ExcelRate allows the user to process battlefield stimuli at incredible speed. EXXO auto-injectors are the most common delivery method, but Beyhan Resources STI dermal patch blister packs make it easy to check how many doses one's taken, an easy mistake to make in the heat of battle.

Special Effect: Once administered, the user gains a bonus d20 on Coordination and Awareness tests for 1d6 rounds. At the end of that period, the user is Dazed for 1d3 rounds as their perception snaps back to normal. Multiple doses stack, but when the Dazed periods would overlap, the user is Staggered instead.

Addiction: 1 (9 doses), Compulsion 1
Withdrawal: 1, 1+5 Damage, Harm Effect (+1 Difficulty To Coordination Tests Due To Involuntary Tremors)

Fanous Remote: Designed to extend Haqqislamite combat hackers' range, and an invaluable tool on the frontier, fanous (Arabic for “lamp”) remotes' lightweight chassis and digitigrade legs allow for incredibly swift movement without sacrificing off-road stability. They carry consumer-grade self-defence systems that are still valuable even in military-grade combat and a proven repeater for quantron

TROOPER

FANOUS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
14 (+2)	10	7	10	7	5	4

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	–	Movement	+3	1	Social	–	–
Fortitude	–	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	–	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	9	Resolve	9	Structure	12
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	–

ATTACKS

- Electric Pulse:** Melee, 1+4 damage, Immobilizing, Stun

GEAR: Flash Pulse, Repeater, Sniffer

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, Poison, and Vacuum; Superhuman Agility 2
- Chin-Arm:** An included arm attachment can replace its chin-mounted Flash Pulse projector in five minutes with a Tech (D1) test. Without it, the Fanous can only manipulate objects with one leg while balancing on the other, adding +1 difficulty.
- Hardened Repeater:** Fanous carry a milspec Muzz-AN repeater (Firewall 12, Security 2), which requires two Breaches to disable or suborn, and can be “laid” in the Fanous' current zone as a Deployable Repeater with a Tech (D0) test and a Minor action.
- Quantronic Locus:** The Fanous gains +2 Security Soak when controlled by a geist or its native LAI.
- Road Runner:** The fanous can move to a zone within Long range as a Minor Action, or a Free Action on paved roads.

Fasji Poison: While the purple sea-snakes are delicious when well-cooked, Fasji venom sacks leak easily if prepared incorrectly – or used to deliberately poison the eater. (Ingested, Instant Chronic 3 (2 Momentum), 1+2 physical damage)

Special Effect: If any effects are rolled, the target becomes Staggered for three rounds.

Fayudan Poison: Once ingested in a drink or food, this sweet-tasting liquid delivers a heavy dose of synthetic CREB proteins and propranolol beta-blockers to the target's amygdala, calming anxious thoughts and lowering their inhibitions. The target gains +3 Morale Soak against attempts to intimidate or coerce them, but with a successful Psychology (D1) test, the user can spend 2 Momentum for a special Metanoia Effect, granting

-2 difficulty on tests to extract information from the target in friendly conversation during the next hour. At the end of that period, the target must make a Resistance (D2) test or take 2+2 (N) physical damage and become Dazed for two rounds. If they succeed, they are aware they were under the influence of a psychotropic rather than in a naturally expansive mood and take no damage.

Gallabeyya: Farhad Khadivar's fondness for Gallabeyya, full-length wide-cut buttonless garments traditionally worn in Egypt and Sudan, made them a sartorial sign of alignment with Haqqislam. While modern cuts and materials often vary from the originals, they remain a national fashion staple. Versions with climacool threading are especially popular with Medinan cosmopolitans and Caravanserai traders.

Hafza Holomask: Graduates of the Military Academy of Al-Khaafdif, designated Hafza after Islam's guardian angels, receive extensive tactical and psychological training in leading from the front lines. As valuable targets, Hafza also learn disguise, using specialized holomasks that draw on High Command's biometric archives to more effectively confound the enemy. Hafza holomasks grant three bonus Momentum to disguise tests to portray a generic Haqqislamite soldier or Amir, and bonus Momentum equal to the user's Psychology Focus when imitating one the user knows.

Hawala Dot X: A common caravanserai service, a hawala dot is the visible injection site of a customised virus, which leaves a characteristic circular area of benign discoloration representing a deposit of up to 3X Assets. A randomized subset of the virus's genetic code and the user's DNA, along with the amount deposited, is then recorded in Raqib/Atib, the heavily-secured *Tunguska* datasphere shared by all hawala operators. This allows the user to prove their identity at any caravanserai in the Sphere and withdraw the same Assets minus a small fee, which temporarily reduces their Cashflow by X. Named after an ancient banking practice for transferring money over long distances, hawala dots allow users to transfer funds without needing to carry other identifying information or generating a quantronic trail.

Hofrehgiyahi Poison: After heavy rains, Hofrehgiyahi plants sprout tall shoots that burst as they dry, releasing deadly hallucinogenic clouds of pollen and tiny seeds into the wind. Since the plants' tap-roots are hollow, they are ideal for storing contraband, and their poison is a deterrent to idle curiosity – and a risk when retrieving one's stash. (Inhaled, Progressive 1 (2 Momentum), Hour, 1+3 (N) physical and mental damage))





Athnansaa is a combination of the Arabic words *athnan*, “two”, and *nansaa*, “forget”.

CRASHSUIT VARIANT:

S&J ZEPHYR ARMOUR

Optimised for comfort during long-distance motorcycle travel, this crashsuit incorporates personalisation usually reserved for Sauk & Joad's XO suits into a lightweight but durable racing frame. It provides +1 Morale soak, and unlike other crashsuits, provides one Armour Soak to all locations even once its crash protection dissolves after a round.

KAVM INC.

Maryam Omollo, chairwoman of Kenya's Associated Vehicle Manufacturers Inc., made a massive gamble on Bourak after converting to the faith, moving most of her company's manufacturing resources and personnel with the first wave of colonists. She rebranded their Ngamia (camel in Swahili) model to Arabic as the Jamal and heavily marketed it to Salik, promising on-planet technicians and parts manufacture, despite initially limited fabrication capacity.

Though it nearly bankrupted the company, KAVM Inc. became an icon of Salik adventure, with a firm grip on Haqqislam's market and mindshare. Now, a significant percentage of all the vehicles on Bourak are built in their factories, and Maryam, though semi-retired, still serves as spokeswoman and nostalgic icon for the company's wares.

Wound Effect: If any effects are rolled, the target becomes Dazed or if already Dazed has vivid and distracting hallucinations that add +2 Complication Range to all tests.

IC-X Haboob: Named for the intense dust storms that periodically ravage Bourak's arid regions, IC-X Haboob, literally translated to “blasting” or “drifting” in Arabic, camouflages the target's Quantronic Zone's data flux, adding +X difficulty to Observation tests to discover it. Characteristically, unsubstantiated rumours claim Hassassins use an IC-5 version.

I-Kohl Athnansaa: Athnansaa disrupts 5-HT receptor binding in a target's neurotransmitters using paired formulations that vaporize when they come into contact and often decorating opposite hands to avoid accidental activation. With a successful Stealth or Close Combat (D2) test to ensure the target breathes in the short-lived vapor, the target becomes Staggered for two rounds, plus two rounds per Momentum spent, and their short-term memory formation is disrupted adding +2 Difficulty to remember what occurred while under its effects. Targets with their own air supply, BTS of 4 or more, or a Brawn+Resistance of 14 or more are immune to Athnansaa's effects

I-Kohl Bilqis: The most commonly used i-Kohl product, this formulation requires genetic data or a sample from the target and is tailored to enhance the wearer's natural hormones with targeted compatibility cues and serve as a subtle aphrodisiac. With physical contact and a Persuade (D1) test, the user can spend up to three Momentum to add an equivalent number of bonus d20s to subsequent tests to seduce the target or to use affection, physical attraction, or the promise of sexual favours as part of negotiation, honestly or otherwise, until the target next sleeps. It is a Persuade (D4) test if the target would not ordinarily be attracted to the user's gender presentation or species, and if a Persuade test to use Bilqis fails, the target is immune to further effects.

i-Kohl Carrón X: Nicknamed for a socialite who used an early formulation to walk unharmed out of the Rebels of Cydonia's assault on the Marsport Gardener's Guild Expo, this i-Kohl induces a serotonin cascade response to the target's adrenaline levels, flooding them with relaxing sensations and suppressing aggression. As a Reaction, the user can make a Persuade (D1) test against a target within Reach, who must make a Discipline (D(X+ Momentum spent)) test or become unable to take aggressive action against the user unless attacked first. The target becomes immune to Carrón's effects if they succeed, and if they fail, they can attempt additional Discipline tests at the same difficulty but +X Complication Range on subsequent rounds as a Standard Action.

I-Kohl Concealer: While i-Kohl's effects are often subtle, their chemical signatures are detectable by high-quality sensors or by observers who know what to watch for. Bespoke concealer formulations catalyse with other i-Kohl products to disguise their chemical signatures and convert their by-products into forensically innocuous amino acids, increasing their Subtle quality to 3.

The quality can be reduced as usual by complications, but until that occurs, all tests to notice their use or any evidence they leave behind, including tests provided by the Microscopic Threats Analysis Talent, are at +3 Difficulty. Tests to notice i-Kohl effects are made as usual, only the source is disguised.

I-Kohl Ta'riya-T [Animal]: Each variant of Ta'riya-t (Arabic for settling an animal beside another) is chemically tailored to suppress aggression and smell familiar to a particular animal species. When encountering a new animal of the target species, the wearer can make an Animal Handling (D1) test as a Standard Action.

On a success, 1 Momentum can be spent to create a special Metanoia Effect; the animal immediately considers them a friend. If it is a guard animal or working animal, it does not alert its handlers to the wearer's presence, and if it is a pet, it provides 1 bonus Momentum to social tests with its owner or owners when present. Tohaa creations, Nomad Uplifts, and animals with Intelligence of 6 or more are all immune.

Ihya Pendant: Ihya, in Arabic, means the worthy act of “bringing to life” by putting barren land to use. Sold by Gardener Guilds to raise funds for challenging work and encourage personal connections to the terraforming process, these necklace pendants contain a tiny landscape of the area being terraformed, updated regularly with live imagery. Once complete, they are often framed or embedded in stonework alongside previously completed pendants. Wearing one provides a bonus Momentum in face-to-face social interactions with Gardener Guild members or terraforming enthusiasts.

Jamal Transport: KAVM Inc.'s Jamal (a male camel in Arabic) Transports are massive three-tiered hovercraft used during Bourak's initial settlement to haul cargo and passengers between settlements and terraforming sites. Efficient and built to last, Jamal are still used for overland freight, particularly for supplying T2's. Public transit systems handle most passenger traffic.

JAMAL TRANSPORT			
ENCLOSED, HANDS, HOVERCRAFT, RUGGED			
ATTRIBUTES			
Scale	Speed	Brawn	
4	2	16 (+2)	
DETAILS			
Max. Passengers		Impact	
93		4+7 (N) (Knockdown)	
Hard Points			
Chassis 3, Comms 2, External 2, Internal 4, Weapons 2			
DEFENCES			
Structure	27	Firewall	6
Armour	2/4*	BTS	1

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Cargo Cranes:** There are three cranes for loading cargo built into the upper deck, which can reach zones adjacent to the transport. They are not designed for subtle or delicate work, adding +2 difficulty to Pilot tests if used to interact with targets smaller than cubic meter.
- ***Hard-headed:** The prow control superstructure zone for the pilot, co-pilot, and quartermaster is reinforced against hijackers and has 4 Armour Soak.
- **Modular Interior:** Lightweight interior bulkheads and partitions halve the time required to install, reconfigure, or remove internal hardpoints and facilities.

Khafiin Microservo Armour: Arabic for “covert” or “hidden,” Khafiin armour is a lightweight take on servo-powered protection initially made for Hassassin Áyyār’s undercover missions. It can fold and compress into a backpack when not in use and, if the wearer has Agility of 10 or more, takes only 1+1 (N) rounds per hit location to remove from storage and put on. This comes at the cost of reduced protection and a slimmed-down feature set, but access to a smuggled-in set of powered armour is well worth the trade-off for most operatives. While derivative designs flood the grey market, most rely on neomaterial components that significantly increase their cost compared to the original’s elegant engineering.

Kum Motorcycle: Kirguiz bikers, and the Kum Motorized Troops drawn from their ranks, take great pride in the power and endurance of their motorcycles, covering engine cowlings and chassis with nano-painted imagery and defiant mottos each Thronging. In conflict, they rely on smoke cover and daredevil speed to overwhelm defenders and escape pursuit.

KUM MOTORCYCLE			
EXPOSED, GROUND, WHEELED, RUGGED			
ATTRIBUTES			
Scale	Speed	Brawn	
0	3	10 (+1)	
DETAILS			
Max. Passengers		Impact	
1		2+4 (N) (Knockdown)	
Hard Points			
Chassis 3, Comms 1, External 1, Internal 1, Motive 1, Weapons 1			
DEFENCES			
Structure	10	Firewall	6
Armour	2	BTS	0

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Chassis Cache:** Secret compartments allow the biker to stash and add Concealed 2 to one 2H weapon, two 1H weapons, and other small cargo, and to retrieve or draw them with a Minor Action.
- **“Salik!”:** With a Piloting D(2) test at +2 Complication Range, the biker can push their motorcycle’s speed to 4 for two rounds, plus one per Momentum spent.

Mantella Poison Augmentation: Genemodded from the Malagasy frog genus’s toxic secretions, mantella poison augmentations secrete a powerful neurotoxicant onto the skin of the user’s knuckles or fingertips on command, allowing them to add a Tariki-like ingested poison to food or drink with a touch and add Toxic 2 to their Unarmed Strikes. The user is immune to the augmentation’s effects, but the ongoing stress to their immune system reduces their Vigour by one.

Matulid Rifle: Tuareg for “how do you do?” Matulid rifles are custom-made in small manufactories throughout Taba. Though these artisans happily sell to outsiders, their designs prioritize local requirements – scrubwood stocks grip-carved in traditional geometric patterns, high-quality optics, and an underbarrel light shotgun with a radiation-sealed chamber. (Range M, 1+5 (N) damage, Burst 2, 2H, MULTI Light Mod[light shotgun], Non-Hackable, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1)

Meltsand: Coarse electrically-charged sand admixed with tiny granules of a semi-stable, smart-material solvent, meltsand dissolves on encrypted quantronic command. A one-meter cube can collapse into a few centimetres of fizzing slurry in seconds. Outlaws use it to conceal their operations and caches in the Tien Shan range and to spring ambushes on the unwary throughout the Gabqar Khanate.

Noor AR: A way to literally incorporate the Search for Knowledge into daily life, noor (light in Arabic) augmented reality programs embed small virtual

THE THRONGING

Irregularly organized via word of mouth and darknet messaging, a Thronging involves hundreds of bikers swarming to a desolate campsite in the middle of nowhere and setting up camp for one or more nights of drag racing, feasting, and raucous music. The constant roar of engines and relentless high spirits are intoxicating, although nearby settlements are sometimes raided beforehand for supplies or afterward as a distraction from hard-earned hangovers.

Tariki Poison – p. 71

MEDIUM COMBAT ARMOUR VARIANT:

LASIQ

The long arms of the Hassassins, Lasiqs specialize in assassination at even extreme range, and finding the perfect spot to await the perfect moment to strike. To that end, their armour passes for ordinary outfits for Hidden Armour 2, is subtly embedded with Chameleonwear, and has Climbing Plus pads built into its elbows, cuffs, and footwear.

Taba subcontinent – see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 232

Q-KRETE

Humidity or moisture causes meltsand to clump and break down in distinctive patterns over time, so it finds few uses or buyers outside of the Khanate. But, a factory outside Kum-Dag recently began producing and selling it in massive quantities as “Q-Krete.” Where they found funding is anyone’s guess.



tokens into the viewer's environment that teach brief lessons when found and opened, leading to deeper understanding of a topic. Ranging from basic elementary education to advanced academic esoterica, they reduce the cost to acquire a specific Education Talent by 50 XP if used at least a few hours a day for a month or more. Only one can be used at a time, and the ongoing distraction adds +1 Complication Range to Observation tests.

Odalisque Augmentation: The final training step at Dar el Funduq's Çember Odalisques Academy, this extensive augmentation renders the patient disarmingly beautiful in a way that transcends sexuality and gender, granting Superhuman Personality 2 and adding the Grievous quality to their Psywar techniques. The delicate, comprehensive alterations the patient's body requires are compatible with Silk Full-Body augmentations, but incompatible with cybernetics or biografts.

It is available to outsiders at inflated prices, although without training in the disarming arts of seduction that make odalisques so invaluable to Haqqislamite elites, successful integration requires a profound mastery of both mind and body – Agility of 10 or more, Intelligence of 10 or more, and Personality + Discipline Expertise of 12 or more.

Olabisi Board: Used in the annual Olabisi Windsurfing Race, each Olabisi board is built to identical specifications, so that the competition is strictly a question of competitor's wisdom and skill. A common sight in coastal regions where the wind is strong and steady, their smart-material sails and rigging flex on command as they speed across the waves.

OLABISI BOARD

EXPOSED (+10 COVER), WATERCRAFT

ATTRIBUTES

Scale	Speed	Brawn
0	1	7

DETAILS

Max. Passengers	Impact
1	1+3 (N) (Knockdown)
Hard Points	
Comms 1	

DEFENCES

Structure	6	Firewall	6
Armour	1	BTS	2

GEAR: Locational Beacon

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Common Special Abilities:** Superhuman Agility 1
- **Smart-Sail:** By making an Agility Piloting test as a Standard Action with difficulty equal to their current Speed, surfers can increase their board's Speed by one until they next fail a test.

Pop-pod Poison: Harvested from barely-ripened pop-grass pods, this cyanotoxin induces respiratory failure if left untreated. Easily detected and filtered, it is ineffective against anyone with BTS 1 or more. (Injected, Progressive 1 (2 Momentum), Hour, 1+4 (N) physical damage)

Wound Effect: If any effects are rolled, the target becomes Dazed or if already Dazed goes into respiratory failure and suffocates until they pass a Resistance (D1) test.

Rihla Rations: Rihla (journey in Arabic) survival rations are communally assembled in large batches for friends and family facing harsh seasons or long journeys and are tastier and more nutritious than ordinary versions. Made with hearty local ingredients and regional recipes, they grant +1 Morale Soak while supplies last. Each can feed a traveller for one month.

Runihura Augmentation: Invented by a still-secret team of Al Medinat academics and Bimiristan and biohealth corporation experts as an intensive super-soldier enhancement for Khawarij troops, the Runihura process (Arabic for destructor) transcends mere augmentation, rewriting the subject's genome and replacing over 60% of their tissues with custom-grown xenografts to grant the following abilities:

**LIGHT COMBAT
ARMOUR VARIANT:**

**BASHI BAZOUK
ARMOUR**

In Turkish başıbozuk literally means "damaged head", and Bashi Bazouk mercenary marines have a bold reputation to uphold. What most miss is that their headlong assaults and raids rely on confidence in their gear – their armour's built-in vac suit and holomask ensures they can deliver on their bravado and escape their mistakes.

See *Inured To X and Superhuman Attribute X*, *Infinity Corebook*, p. 418.



- Inured to Aging, Disease, Pain, and Poison
- Superhuman Agility 2
- Superhuman Brawn 2
- Secretes poison at will, adding Vicious 2 to Unarmed Strikes.
- Vault over obstacles up to their height without penalty. The difficulty of skill tests to move through Difficult Terrain is reduced by one.

Incompatible with other Large, Full-Body, or Replacement augmentations, the process requires a human body in peak physical health, adding +3 Complication Range to installation tests unless the patient's Brawn + Resistance Expertise is 13 or more.

Saifari AR: Often bundled with fruit baskets and popular with stressed Medina bureaucrats, this Maya overlay transforms one's surroundings into an endless verdant wonderland algorithmically derived from Saif's Impossible Gardens. Its calming effects heal 3 Resolve for every half-hour spent exploring the experience and provide a bonus d20 to one Discipline test a week if used daily.

S-Beacon: An advanced locational beacon Silk-grafted into a user's tissues, s-beacons are extraordinarily expensive to install and only see common use among Silk-Lords, Hyper-Elites, and Hypercorp executives. Instead of periodically querying friendly networks, the s-beacon transmits when triggered by a particular Brawn+Athletics (D1) sequence of muscular movements or if the user takes four or more physical damage.

Once triggered, the s-beacon transmits its location for one full round, then goes silent until activated again. It can only be detected with a full medical scan and a successful Medicine (D3) test, or by a Hacking (D1) test when transmitting. A Hacking (D4) or Medicine (D4) test is required to disable it in time to prevent transmission.

SHIELD-2 Taharat: This Supportware program counters biological and toxic attacks, requiring Medicine Expertise 2 to use effectively. Once activated as a Standard action, allies within Long range wearing Bioscanners gain +2 BTS against attacks with the Biotech or Toxic qualities until the start of the user's next turn. AR indicators for Taharat usually involve pure water raining from a Bourak parasol's pilei onto the targeted allies.

SHVYY Poison: Brewed by Yuan Yuan pirate-chemists and the similarly deranged, SHVYY, aka "shiv," is sold in cheap spraycans and applied to melee weapons with a Tech (D1) test just before combat, lasting for 1d20 rounds plus one round per Momentum spent. It adds Biotech and Grievous to the weapon while it lasts, as well as +4

Complication Range. If one or more complications are generated by the Tech test, it deals a Wound to the user.

Sniffer X: Sniffers scan their immediate surroundings for suspect particles or signals using overlapping sensors, giving operators the chance to establish and safely monitor security perimeters. They function as sensor suites with X+1 different sensor types, but deploying one only takes a Standard action. They're designed to set up quickly and easily in the field. Once deployed, they can be used by any networked ally and have sufficient power to stay active for twelve hours. Characters can treat targets within Close range of an allied Sniffer as within Close range for the purposes of Observation tests and take -1 Difficulty and one bonus Momentum on those tests. (Armour Soak 1, 1 Structure, Fragile, sold in sets of 3)

Steady: A Qapu Khalqi Armada staple, steady is a hyper-focusing stimulant for pilots facing the myriad micro-adjustments of spaceflight or anyone else who needs flawless motor control. It is sold in small cards of punch-out paper strips, flavoured somewhere between motor oil and poor life choices, with a hint of dates. Once ingested, the user gains a bonus d20 on Coordination-based tests for six hours, along with +1 Difficulty to Brawn and Agility tests.

SWORD-X Samâ: Named for Sufism's spiritual spinning dance, samâ weaponizes quantronic mastery of the body's vestibular system to devastating effect. Targets must be using Neural equipment and gain Security Soak equal to their Acrobatics Focus against the attack, but on a successful attack, the hacker can spend 4-X Momentum to deal 3+6 ^(N) physical damage with the Knockdown, Nonlethal, Stun, and Vicious X qualities, and can inflict the Dazed or Knockout Wound Effect if a Wound is inflicted.

Tariki Poison: Derived from the tetrahydro- β -carboline toxin found in Ezhdeha Tariki – two-meter-long Bourakian pack hunters-, tariki poisons are the source of many Haqqislamite nano-coatings, sprays, and munitions, but can also be used directly as neutrally-flavoured oils. (Contact/Injected, Complex Progressive 1 (2 Momentum), 1 round, 1+4 ^(N) physical damage)

Wound Effect: The target becomes Dazed, or Staggered if already Dazed.

Theraic Pod: Named after the ancient Greek "cure for all ills" and eponymous resorts in Iran Zhat Al Amut Shahnate, Theraic Pods are facilities for the Medicine skill, leveraging long-term therapeutic Serums and dynamic Silk-based gene-therapies to reduce the effects of aging and speed healing.

S-BEACONED ADVERSARIES


It costs 4 Heat to activate an adversary's implanted s-beacon, minus the number of Wounds they are currently suffering. Those nearby can react and attempt to disable the implant as usual. If it transmits successfully, the adversary can use special abilities that summon allies until the end of the scene even if unconscious or severely injured.

Linchpins of medical tourism, they are nearly impossible to acquire, though treatment in one is an easily purchased professional service at Haqqislamite bio-resorts.

Using a Theraic Pod, a physician providing long-term care can use their Medicine skill in place of the patient's Resistance for recovery tests. The patient can still assist with Resistance, and the Pod provides X Momentum to recover additional Harms. Also, with a week of treatment and successful Medicine (D2) test, the caretaker can restore an attribute reduced by aging by up to X (though not above its original value).

UPGRADE Bendelladj Archive X: Excerpts from this vast and ancient Haqqislamite library of exploit lore, buffer overflow cascades, permission enhancement tactics, and biometric extrapolation algorithms are granted only in a carefully-considered sequence of revelation. Donation of previously unknown exploits and techniques to the library's custodians is the only path to deeper lore, ensuring its relevance.


Compatible with any Hacking Device, this code library grants +X Authentication Quality on a successful Spoofing or Authentication Hack, and -X Difficulty to tests to Gain Difficult Authentication. It can only be obtained from Haqqislamite sources, and only at rating 1. Deeper lore requires the hard-earned favour of Murabid scholars.

Vrabec Pistol: A compact, silenced Breaker pistol, Vrabecs (sparrow in Czech) were purchased in bulk from Sol's Zeva CZ by dissident Silk Lords in the run-up to the Silk Revolts. While their cause was a failure, it established the Vrabec as a reliable holdout weapon in the Haqqislamite underworld. Knock-offs, including Aral Doruk's Circe, Krall Arms' Ghurab, and ADIO's Esfwy, see some use, but the original remains the favourite of agents, gangsters, and wannabees. (Range R/C, 1+4  damage, Burst 1, 1H, Concealed 1, Subtle 1, Vicious 1)

AMMUNITION TABLE

NAME	CATEGORY	QUALITIES ADDED TO WEAPON	RESTRICTION	RELOAD COST	TARIFF
Azelik Shells	Shell	Area(Close), Radiation 2	3  (Haqqislam 2)	5+1 	T3

ARMOUR TABLE

ARMOUR	ARMOUR SOAK				BTS	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
	HEAD	TORSO	ARM	LEG						
Ad-Qali Armour X	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	2 ¹	3/OAX	-	2	6+2X 	T2	2
Khafin	2	3	3	3	1	Comms, Exo-skeleton 1, Self-Repairing	4	7+7 	T3 ²	3

 Banned by the Concilium Convention.

¹ See Description.

² No Tariff in Haqqislam.

AUGMENTATIONS TABLE

AUGMENTATION	CATEGORY	TYPE	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
360° Vison	Cybernetic	Replacement (Eyes)	Aug	2 (Haqqislam 1)	8+2	T1	-
Bio – Invulnerability	Silk	Full-Body	Aug, Comms	3 (Haqqislam 1)	9+2	T1	2
Djanbazan Regeneration	Silk	Full-Body	Aug	3 (Haqqislam 2)	10+3	T2	-
Mantella Poison	Biograft	Implant	Aug	2	9+2	T3	-
Odalisque	Silk	Full-Body	-	4 (Haqqislam 3)	10+3	T3	-
Runihura	Silk	Full-Body	Aug	4 (Haqqislam 3)	10+3	T4	-
S-Beacon	Silk	Full-Body	Aug, Comms	1	14+1	-	-

RANGED WEAPONS TABLE

NAME	RANGE	DAMAGE	BURST	SIZE	AMMO	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Bardom Rifle	M	1+5	2	2H	Standard, Deployable Repeaters	MULTI Light Mod[LGL], Non-Hackable, Vicious 1	2 (Haqqislam 1)	6+2	T1
Blitzen	L	2+5	1	2H	E/M2	Munition ¹	3 (Haqqislam 2)	8+1	T2
Boading-Col	R//C	2+4	1	Unb	Standard/Shells	Unforgiving 1, Visiours 1/ Improvised 1 + Shell	2 (Corsair 1, Submondo 1)		
E/Marat	C	1+4	1	1H	-	Torrent	2 (Haqqislam 1)	6+1	T2
Matulid Rifle	M	1+5	2	2H	Standard, Azelik Shells	MULTI Light Mod[LSG], Non-Hackable, Vicious 1	2	7+2	T1
Vrabec Pistol	R/C	1+4	1	1H	Breaker	Concealed 1, Subtle 1, Vicious 1	2	6+1	T2

PROGRAMS TABLE

TYPE	RATING	PROGRAM	DAMAGE	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
IC	X	Haboob	-	-	X+1	5+X	T(X)
SHIELD	2	Taharat	-	Supportware (Long)	3 (Haqqislam 2)	4+3	T1
SWORD	X	Samâ	3+6	Knockdown, Nonlethal, Stun, Vicious X	X+1 (Haqqislam X)	4+2X	T(X)
UPGRADE	1	Bendelladj Archive 1			4 (Haqqislam 3)	4+2	T4

¹ See entry for additional abilities

DRUGS TABLE

DRUG	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Blu Khat	2 (Illicit 1)	4+1	T2
ExcelRate	2 (Illicit 1)	3+2	T2
Steady	2 (Haqqislam 1)	4+1	T1
Surge	1	3+1	T1

POISONS TABLE

POISON	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Azelik	3 (Tuareg 1)	4+3	T3
Fasji	2 (Haqqislam 1)	3+1	T1
Fayudan	3 (Haqqislam 2)	4+2	T2
Hofrehgiyahi	2 (Illicit 1)	3+2	T1
Pop-pod	2 (Haqqislam 1)	3+1	T1
SHVYY	3 (Illicit 1)	1+5	T3
Tariki	3 (Haqqislam 2)	3+3	T2

REMOTES TABLE

REMOTE	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
Fanous	2 (Haqqislam 1)	9+3	T2	1



TOOLS TABLE

TOOL	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
360° Visor	–	3 (Haqqislam 1)	7+2 ₪	T2	–
Akbar Kit	Comms	4 (Haqqislam 3, Akbar Doctor 1)	5+4 ₪	T5 ¹	3, Akbar Doctor 0
Chisisi Ark X	Armoured 3X	Haqqislam X+1, X+2	10+2X ₪	T(X)	–
Djinncloak	Comms	3 (Haqqislam 2)	5+3 ₪	T3	–
Djinn Kit	Disposable	4 (Hassassins 1)	7+1 ₪	T1	–
Gallabeyya	Adapted (Desert)	1 (Haqqislam 0)	4+1 ₪	–	–
Hawala Dot X	Aug, Concealed X	1 (Haqqislam 0)	X (On Withdrawal)	–	–
Hafza Holomask	Comms, Fragile	4 (Haqqislam 3)	7+2 ₪	T3	–
i-Kohl Athnansaa	Disposable, Subtle 2	4 (Haqqislam 3)	6+2 ₪	T4	–
i-Kohl Bilqis	Subtle 2	3 (Haqqislam 2)	6+1 ₪	T1	–
i-Kohl Carrón X	Subtle 2	4 (Haqqislam 3)	7+2 ₪	T3	–
i-Kohl Concealer	+1 Subtle To Other I-Kohl	3 (Haqqislam 2)	5+1 ₪	T1	–
i-Kohl Tariya-t	Subtle 2	4 (Haqqislam 2)	6+1 ₪	T2	–
Ihya Pendant	Comms	2 (Haqqislam 1)	10+2 ₪	–	–
Meltsand (1 Meter ³)	Comms, Disposable	2 (Haqqislam 1)	2+2 ₪	T1	–
Noor AR	Comms	3 (Haqqislam 1)	5+1 ₪	T1	–
Rihla Rations	–	3 (Haqqislam 1)	3+3 ₪	–	–
Saifari AR	Comms	2 (Haqqislam 1)	5+1 ₪	–	–
Sniffer X	Comms	X (Haqqislam 1)	6+X ₪	T(X)	–
Theraic Pod X	Comms	X+2 (Haqqislam X+1)	16+2 ₪	T4	4

¹No Tariff for Haqqislam or Akbar Doctor

VEHICLE COSTS TABLE

NAME	SCALE	SPEED	STRENGTH	ARMOUR	BTS	IMPACT	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Akep TAG	2	2	17 (+1)	8	6	3+6 ₪	5 (Haqqislam 4)	14+3 ₪	T3 ¹
Jamal Transport	4	2	16 (+2)	2	1	4+7 ₪	3 (Haqqislam 1)	13+1 ₪	–
Kum Motorcycle	0	3'	10 (+1)	2	0	2+4 ₪	3 (Haqqislam 2, Kum 1)	9+3 ₪	T1
Olabisi Board	0	1'	7	1	2	1+3 ₪	1	6+1 ₪	–

¹No Tariff for Haqqislam

²See Vehicle special abilities



CHAPTER 6 HAQQISLAM CHARACTERS

HAQQISLAM LIFEPATH DECISIONS

The Lifepath Decisions outlined on p. 38 of the *Infinity Corebook* should be followed with the following exceptions for characters belonging to the PanOceanian faction.

DECISION FOUR—STATUS

Characters in the Haqqislam faction roll on the Haqqislam Faction Status table.

DECISION SEVEN—ADOLESCENT EVENT

Characters in the Haqqislam Faction roll on the *Haqqislam Faction Adolescent Event Tables*.

DECISION EIGHT—CAREERS

Instead of rolling on the appropriate Faction Career table in the corebook, characters in the Haqqislam Faction roll on the *Haqqislam Faction Career* table, as well as the *Haqqislam Faction Career Event* tables.

Life in Haqqislam is, by design, a very different experience than the rest of the Human Sphere. Though a patchwork of wildly different cultures, interests, and beliefs, faith provides a unifying element to society. Even for those who aren't particularly devout themselves, the pursuit of understanding, from Mutazilite logic to Tasawwuf introspection, permeates society. In the end, the Search for Knowledge thoroughly shapes Haqqislam, regardless of an individual's or group's contributions to it.

Haqqislamite characters can be created using the variant rules in this chapter, rather than those in the *Infinity Corebook*. If doing so, the entries presented here supersede their counterparts in the corebook.

DECISION FOUR: STATUS

Social status in Haqqislam is much like anywhere else in the Human Sphere, with the notable exception of Al-Mustaslaha (أهل الصلح), literally the "reclaimed." While not all go on to become Janissaries, the Orphaned, Donated, and Delivered make up a unique portion of Haqqislam society. To represent this, characters in the Haqqislam Faction roll on the *Haqqislam Faction Social Status Table*. Those of Haqqislam heritage in other factions use their current faction's table. Once someone defects, they're unlikely to send their offspring to become Al-Mustaslaha.

HAQQISLAM FACTION SOCIAL STATUS TABLE

2D6	SOCIAL STATUS	ATTRIBUTE	EARNINGS
2	Underclass	Willpower	1
3-4	Demogrant	Personality	2
5	Al-Mustaslaha ¹	Special	2
6-8	Middle	Coordination	3
9-10	Upper	Agility	4
11	Elite	Personality	5
12	Hyper-Elite	Willpower	6

¹ Roll on the *Al-Mustaslaha Table* to determine your origin and Attribute increase

AL-MUSTASLAHA TABLE

D20	ORIGIN	ATTRIBUTE
1-8	Orphaned	Willpower
9-16	Donated	Awareness
17-20	Delivered	Brawn

DECISION SEVEN: HAQQISLAMITE ADOLESCENT EVENT

During Decision Seven, characters in the Haqqislam faction roll on the *Haqqislam Faction Adolescent Event Tables*. If the character's heritage and faction are different, then they may choose to roll on either faction's unique table on a roll of 1-3.

HAQQISLAM FACTION ADOLESCENT EVENT

D6	CAREER
1	Heritage Event Table ¹
2-3	Haqqislam Adolescent Event Table
4	Adolescent Event Table A ²
5	Adolescent Event Table B ²
6	Adolescent Event Table C ²

¹ If available, otherwise roll on *Haqqislam Adolescent Event Table*.

² *Infinity Corebook*, p.49-52

THE ORPHANED, DONATED, AND DELIVERED

In Haqqislam, children become wards of the state in three primary ways. Even with the finest medical care in the Human Sphere, children are still orphaned. Colonists in some of the more inhospitable regions of Bourak will sometimes donate their children to the service of Haqqislam, knowing that a first-class education and the opportunities that come with it await. And then there are the Delivered. Whether they were rescued from pirates, slave traders, or more mundane threats, they find themselves delivered out of darkness, and in the state's care.

In each of these cases, Haqqislam raises the *Al-Mustaslaha* in the faith, providing the very best opportunities to its wards.

Lifepath Events: When rolling events that reference family members, assume that the incident involves your new family's equivalent; parents become mentors, siblings are fellow wards, and so on.

Cubeless: All *Al-Mustaslaha* forgo Cubes at the beginning of their training and are instead outfitted with special inhibitors, precluding memory recording of any sort. Upon completion of their first career, the inhibitors are removed, and they can join Haqqislamite society as full citizens.

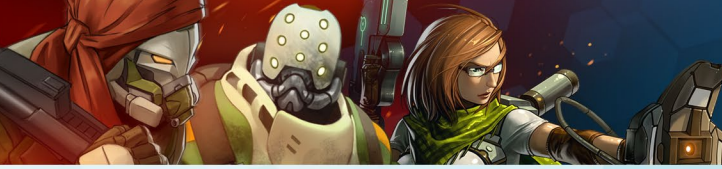
Near-Death Experience: Until they complete their first career, *Al-Mustaslaha* are Cubeless. If you roll any event which leads to your character's death and resurrection (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 54), the character is instead brought back from the brink of death. Reduce your Vigour by 2, and increase your Resolve by 1. It seems Allah is not finished with you yet.

After you complete your first career, you may purchase a Cube for 1 LP; if you do, you may no longer substitute *Near-Death Experience* for events. Either way, after completing the Lifepath, your character will no longer benefit from Near-Death Experience. Cube or no, your luck has reached its course.

Transitory: *Al-Mustaslaha* is something you grow up in; it's not a status for adults. Once you reach Decision Eight, raise your Status to Middle. From Decision Eight on, characters cannot become *Al-Mustaslaha* due to changes in status. If this would occur, treat a result of *Al-Mustaslaha* on the *Haqqislam Faction Status Table* as Middle.

Janissaries: All of the Orphaned, Donated, and Delivered are raised in the faith, receiving a good education and the chance of a better life. While not all become soldiers, many choose to serve the faith as Janissaries, fighting to protect the ideals of Haqqislam. You may choose Akbar Doctor, Military, or Special Forces as your first career without making a hazard test.





HAQQISLAM ADOLESCENT EVENT TABLE

D20	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAIT	OPTIONAL EFFECT
1	Even though it cost you most of your friends, you stood by your beliefs.	Stubborn	Reduce Personality by 1 but increase Willpower by 1.
2	So what if there was a sandstorm? Your friend needed an antivenom, and you were determined to see that they got it.	"Sālik!"	Increase Resolve by 1 rank.
3	The Mutazilite and Tasawwuf aren't oppositional; even so, you found yourself strongly drawn to one over the other.	Unbalanced	Gain 1 rank in Analysis.
4	You wake up to find your parents left in the middle of the night; you're told they defected.	Divided Loyalties	Set status to <i>Al-Mustaslah</i> .
5	Maybe you knew what you were getting into, maybe not; either way, you were caught helping a Silk smuggling ring, and the authorities were not amused.	It Takes One to Know One	Either spend 1d6 years in jail before starting your first career, and gain a Criminal Record (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54), or gain a 10 Asset debt.
6	Your logical mind attracts a prominent Mutazilite mentor.	Bookworm	Gain 1 rank in Education and your new mentor as a contact.
7	Trying to meet your mentor's expectations, you wound up hospitalized for a year. What happened?	Crushing Expectations	Reduce Vigour by 1 but gain 1 rank in Discipline.
8	Flaunting conventional interpretations of <i>taharah</i> , you underwent radical body modification. Why did you do it?	Rebel	Gain Cosmetic Augmentation 2.
9	A routine run-in with a Funduq Viper nearly proved fatal, but at least it highlighted your condition.	Weak Immune System	Reduce Vigour by 1 and add +1 Momentum to all damage from Contagions. Bolstering your immune system is possible, but expensive; it will cost 5+5 ^(N) Assets to reverse the effects.
10	A school trip to the University of Medina captured your imagination.	Insatiably Curious	You may choose Academic as your first career.
11	While at a caravanserai, you witnessed a serious hack. What happened? Who was responsible?	Paranoid	Either gain 1 rank of Hacking or increase your geist's Firewall by 2.
12	Your insightful nature attracts the attention of the Haqq Tasawwuf.	Free Spirit	Gain 1 rank in Analysis and your new mentor as a contact.
13	You were stabbed in the back; possibly literally.	Trust Issues	Gain 1 rank in Psychology.
14	One of your mentors is murdered. Their family suspects Hassassins, the Muhafiz are questioning PanOceania, and the Nomads blame ALEPH, though no one asked them. Only you know the truth. What is it?	Vengeful	Increase Resolve by 1 rank.
15	Chasing thrills, you snuck out to a Thronging (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p.234). Turns out, drag races weren't the worst they got up to.	Friends in Low Places	Spend 1d6 years in jail before starting your first career. Gain a Criminal Record (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). You may choose Kum Ganger as your first career.
16	Disaster struck, but it missed you. You were saved by the most beautiful person you'd ever seen.	Wandering Eyes	Gain 1 rank in Observation. You may take Odalisque as your first career.
17	You're chosen to represent your school at a competition between G-5 nations. Unfortunately, you freeze up.	Freeze Response	Your social skill tests suffer +2 complication range with members of the Haqqislam faction.
18	Your failing health is finally stabilized, but the drug cocktail interacts poorly with common treatments.	Myriad Medications	Serum provides you no bonuses, instead dealing 1+2 ^(N) damage if applied.
19	After months of debate in the <i>Khaniqah</i> , you finally ceded the argument. In that moment, you knew what you had to do.	Ideologue	You defect to a new faction. Roll on the Faction Table (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 41) to determine your new allegiance
20	You sought enlightenment in Bourak's deserts, but never returned from your pilgrimage.	Blind Faith	Your character died and was resurrected. See the rules for <i>Resurrection</i> (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54).

DECISION EIGHT: CAREERS

The Search for Knowledge fills Haqqislam with determination and pushes them to excel in their specialties. When compared to other Lifepaths, Haqqislamite careers have greater Willpower, and attribute distribution often eschews balance in favour of focusing in a particular area.

During Decision Eight, characters in the Haqqislamite faction follow the normal procedures for performing their career phases with the exception that they roll on the *Expanded Haqqislamite Faction Career Table* whenever they would normally roll on the *Faction Career Table* in the *Infinity Corebook*. Whenever they would normally determine a career event they roll on the *Haqqislamite Faction Career Table* to determine which *Career Event Table* to roll on.

HAQQISLAMITE FACTION CAREER EVENT TABLE	
D6	CAREER
1-3	Haqqislamite Career Event Table
4	Adolescent Event Table A ¹
5	Adolescent Event Table B ¹
6	Adolescent Event Table C ¹

¹ *Infinity Corebook*, p. 56–58

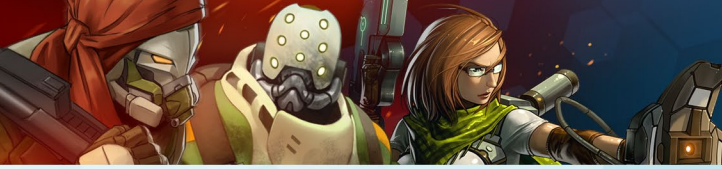
EXPANDED HAQQISLAMITE FACTION CAREER TABLE

D20	CAREER
1	Special Forces ¹
2	Hassassin Fiday ^{1,2}
3	Corsair ¹
4	Terraforming Scientist ¹
5	Bodyguard ¹
6	Khawarij
7	Diwān Functionary
8	Grey Market Spy
9	Hassassin Exemplar ²
10	Maghariba Guard ²
11	Kum Ganger
12	Medical Researcher
13	Muhafiz Agent ²
14	Odalisque
15	Caravaner
16	Akbar Doctor
17	Hafza ²
18–20	Roll on <i>Faction Table</i> of Your Choice

¹ Career from *Infinity Corebook*.

² Career has a prerequisite of belonging to this faction. You can't hazard this career unless you're of the matching faction. If you roll into this career, you automatically fail your defection check. You can override these limitations by spending 1 Life Point (in which case you were somehow undercover while working the career).





HAQQISLAMITE CAREER EVENT TABLE

D20	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
1	An old mentor puts in a good word for you. Were there strings attached?	With GM Permission, you may hazard your next career, even if you don't meet the faction or other prerequisite(s).
2	Muhafiz Agents followed you home one night. What did they think you know? Do you?	Gain Trait: On the Watchlist
3	You're forced to choose between your ideals and keeping your job.	You are either <i>Fired</i> (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54) or reduce Status by 1. Either way, gain a trait describing your experiences.
4	You stepped in to mediate a conflict before it turned violent.	Gain 1 rank in Psychology.
5	During a midnight visit to Medina's coffeehouses, you played a competitive game of dominoes with a kindly older man. As he leaves, the barista looks like they've seen a ghost.	If you attempt to hazard the Hassassin Fiday or Hassassin Exemplar careers, reduce the difficulty of the hazard step by one test. If you choose to stay in your current career (or this is your last career), increase Social Status by 1.
6	You spend so much time on a caravanserai it starts to feel like home.	You may choose Trader or Caravaner as your next career without making a hazard test.
7	You develop a rivalry with another Haqqislamite. Is it friendly? Deadly serious? What does your rival want?	Gain a trait describing your new rival.
8	You save a health tourist from a costly, serpent-related mistake.	Gain an ally. Roll on the Faction Table (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 41) to determine their faction.
9	You embrace the faith's teachings wholeheartedly. Some would say a little too much.	Gain Trait: Zealot. You may choose Hassassin Fiday or Hassassin Exemplar as your next career without making a hazard test.
10	While on a solitary desert pilgrimage, you happen across a prominent figure in a bad way; your quick thinking and natural knowledge saves their life.	Gain 1 rank in Survival. You may choose Akbar Doctor as your next career without making a hazard test.
11	You participate in the Ocean of Fire race (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 232).	Gain 1 rank in either Animal Handling or Pilot.
12	You're caught in the middle of a three-way grey market espionage tangle; someone needs to take the fall.	You must pass an Average (D1) hazard test for your current career or you are <i>Fired</i> (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54).
13	A Silk Lord bequeaths you a portion of their wealth. Are you related? If not, why have they chosen you?	Gain 5 Assets.
14	Travelling on the Silk Route maglev, your train is ambushed in the Azar Desert. The fighting is brief, but intense.	Reduce Vigour by 1, as your injuries take time to heal. Receive +4  Assets as hazard pay.
15	Walking through Khadijah's Garden of Dreaming Pillars, you chance across a secret meeting. What was it?	Gain a rival in a random faction. Lose 3 Assets, as they extract a modicum of financial revenge on you.
16	You volunteered for experimental medical treatments. They went well.	Increase Vigour by 1.
17	You volunteered for experimental medical treatments. They went badly.	Reduce Vigour by 1.
18	You are fired. What did you do? Why did you feel you had to do it?	You are <i>Fired</i> (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain an appropriate trait.
19	You are murdered. Who was blamed for this, and who do you hold responsible?	Your character died and was Resurrected. See the rules for <i>Resurrection</i> (<i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain a trait related to the experience.
20	If you see the Lion's Teeth, don't assume that it's smiling. And right now, you're seeing a lot of teeth.	Roll again three times on the Career Event Table for this career phase. (When spending a Life Point to choose a specific event, you may not choose this result.) If you roll duplicate events, it means some similar event has occurred. If you roll the Lion's Teeth again, add additional rolls.

CAREER PROFILE

AKBAR DOCTOR

The study of *Tebb al-Nabi*, the Prophet's Medicine, is more than a scholarly pursuit; it's a metaphor for understanding the cosmos and the sublime intersection of Art, Science, and Spiritual pursuits. Having said that, anyone witnessing an Akbar Doctor ("great" in Arabic) at work would be hard-pressed to deny their practical applications, they aren't just some of the best surgeons in the Human Sphere, they're arguably the finest battlefield medics anyone has ever produced. Able to perform complex surgeries, apply genetic therapy, and deploy fast-acting nanomachines in the time it takes others to perform a diagnosis, it's no exaggeration to suggest that the Great Doctors have played an integral role in Haqqislam's military holding its own against far greater numbers. Not everyone can do what an Akbar Doctor can, and almost no one does it better under pressure.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+1	-	+1	+3	+2	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Discipline	Education	Medicine	2+2 (N)
Elective	Analysis	Medicine	Psychology	

GEAR: Basic Medical Supplies, Akbar Kit or MediKit and Silk (1 dose), Light Combat Armour

CAREER PROFILE

CARAVANER

Caravanserais are more than just space stations, ports of call, or trade hubs; they're a slice of Bourak out among the stars. A thousand factors go into each decision, from the cut of a rug, to which decks will have live musical performances, to the water pressure in a fountain. If Caravanserais are the beating heart of Haqqislam in space, Caravaners are the cardiac physicians, applying *Tebb al-Nabi* to ensure its continued health. Travelling from Caravanserai to Caravanserai, staffing and maintaining a particular location, or setting up shop as a Peddler, most Caravaners have done it all, or are on their way to doing so. They are passengers, pilots, technicians, security and more, but most of all, they are citizens.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Extraterrestrial	Lifestyle	Observation	2+3 (N)
Elective	Persuasion	Pilot	Tech	

GEAR: Blu Khat (2 Doses), Riha Rations, Vac Suit (with 2 Oxygen Loads), Powered Multitool, Inlaid Palm Circuitry or Pistol and Stun Baton

CAREER PROFILE

BODYGUARD

Bodyguards are in high demand for the rich and important people of the Human Sphere. A Bodyguard might serve as protection for a high-ranking political leader, a controversial Maya personality, or a religious figurehead. A Bodyguard must be quick-witted, tough, and skilled in both offensive and defensive techniques. Bodyguards are usually well-armed and willing to take a bullet for their charges. Consequently, a Bodyguard is well paid, at least if the employer wants any sense of loyalty. The best Bodyguards are prized for their attention to discipline and skill at arms, often heading security details guarding convoys, foreign dignitaries, and important frontier missions. Most Bodyguards also display a variety of other skills picked up during their assignments.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	-	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Observation	Close Combat	Ballistics	1+2 (N)
Elective	Lifestyle	Pilot	Discipline	

GEAR: Multispectral Visor 1, High-Fashion Clothing, Ballistic Vest, Heavy Pistol (with 3 Standard Reloads)

CAREER PROFILE

CORSAIR

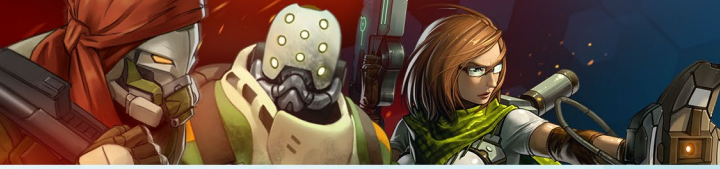
Every major nation employs Corsairs, privateers commissioned to capture military and merchant ships of enemy nations. Some Corsairs hunt other Corsairs, but most make a living pursuing less suspecting prey. Authorised to keep part of the loot, Corsairs make a profit by targeting the least-protected vessels and keeping more than their contracted allotment of bounty. A Corsair lives a dangerous lifestyle, considered by law to be an enemy combatant but without the honour or respect due the military. Despite their reputation as lawless dogs, most Corsairs stick to a strict code among their own people. Corsairs can be charming and sly in turns, skilled negotiators and dangerous in a fight. Their experience travelling human space is second to none.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	-

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Spacecraft	Extraterrestrial	Thievery	0+3 (N)
Elective	Close Combat	Acrobatics	Ballistics	

GEAR: Boarding Shotgun (with 4 Normal Shell Reloads, 1 AP Shell Reload), Surge (x2), Vac Suit (with 3 Oxygen Loads)

SPECIAL: Criminal Career



CAREER PROFILE

DIWÂN FUNCTIONARY

Many citizens find employment with Haqqislam's government. Bureaucrats, diplomats, minor local officials, statisticians, and lawyers; the Diwân provide no shortage of opportunities for Haqqislam's citizens to participate in civic governance, from supply clerks overseeing military support for the Diwân al Jund, to press agents for the Diwân al Hachib managing requests relating to the president, including flagging the journalists that might be foreign spies. Agents of the Diwân al Mazalim travel between Caravanserai, often hand-in-hand with agents from the Diwân al Kharâj, spotting foreign investors attempting to use Haqqislam's intricate tax codes as shelter. The Diwân al Rasa'il's agents coordinate with ALEPH while fending off quantum attacks both foreign and domestic. Diwân Functionaries work tirelessly in the service of Haqqislam, with no issue too small, and no challenge too great.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+1	-	+1	+2	+2	+3

SKILLS

Mandatory	Analysis	Persuasion	Psychology
Elective	Command	Hacking	Tech

EARNINGS

1+4 (N)

GEAR: Cosmetics Kit, Psychotropics (2 Doses), Repair Kit or Negotiator's Kit (2 Day's Rental), Armoured Clothing (Gallabeyya)

CAREER PROFILE

HAFZA

In Islamic mythology, four guardian spirits (known as *Hafazas* or *Hafzas*) keep watch over believers, bolstering their soul against malevolent influence and recording their deeds. In Haqqislam, the elite Hafza unit are guardian angels of the battlefield. Every Hafza trains at the prestigious Military Academy of Al-Khaafdif, where they learn tactics, philosophy, and behavioural sciences. A Hafza can turn any group of soldiers into an efficient, coordinated combat force, no matter how eclectic or diverse their skills and backgrounds. Soldiers know they can rely on the Hafza, who never ask for something they're not willing to do themselves. Enemy forces quickly learned to target these lynchpins, so the modern Hafza is a master of disguise; even other Haqqislam soldiers have difficulty identifying them. The guardians are always there, invisibly guiding their charges to safety through any storm.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	+1	+2	+2	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Command	Psychology	Stealth
Elective	Ballistics	Discipline	Lifestyle

EARNINGS

1+2 (N)

GEAR: Hafza Holomask, Spitfire or Rifle with Light Shotgun, Cosmetics Kit

SPECIAL: If the character did not take Military Training in Decision Six, add an additional 2+2 (N) years to the character's age as they attend the Al-Khaafdif Military Academy

CAREER PROFILE

GREY MARKET SPY

Given the thriving R&D industry in Haqqislam—particularly in biotechnological fields—it comes as no surprise that corporate espionage runs rampant, especially on Bourak. Free of the heavy regulations and protections that govern the Silk trade, Haqqislam Biohealth Corps are locked in a high-stakes chess game of sabotage, headhunting, and industrial espionage—and that's before foreign powers get involved. Whether acquisition, counter-espionage, or more direct forms of sabotage, there's a high demand for discreet agents willing to get their hands dirty. Enter the Grey Market Spy. Either as part of a Biohealth Corp's dedicated counter-intelligence staff, or as freelancers offering their skills to whomever holds their contract, these professionals provide a less-combative alternative to many mercenary companies. A Grey Market Spy aims for their targets to lose profits, not lives. But when the chips are down, they'll be what they always are: professional.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+3	-	+1	+1	+2	+1

SKILLS

Mandatory	Lifestyle	Stealth	Thievery
Elective	Observation	Hacking	Tech

EARNINGS

1+5 (N)

GEAR: Djinncloak, Fake ID 3 or Breaking and Entering Kit, Hacking Device or Vrabec Pistol

CAREER PROFILE

HASSASSIN EXEMPLAR

Hassassins have a singular goal: to protect the Search for Knowledge. Though, removing impediments to the scientific, cultural, and spiritual development of the Human Sphere is often anything but. Safeguarding the future requires full dedication to the cause. Seekers of Haqqislamite Virtues, committed to the Search for Knowledge. In other words, Hassassin Exemplars. While not every Hassassin is an assassin per se, each strives to understand the art of murder. The loss of any life is regrettable, but that cost is ever balanced against the Search. In a society where Cubes are commonplace, death can seem like little more than an inconvenience. Hassassins, however, use it to deliver a clear message that those who place themselves above humanity's future are never safe, no matter where they hide.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1

SKILLS

Mandatory	Close Combat	Discipline	Stealth
Elective	See <i>Hassassin Orders</i>		

EARNINGS

1+2 (N)

GEAR: See *Hassassin Orders*

SPECIAL: When taking this career for the first time, roll on the *Hassassin Orders Table* to determine your order; otherwise you may choose to continue in your Order, or roll again. In either case, you can instead spend 1 Life Point to simply choose your Order.

CAREER PROFILE

HASSASSIN FIDAY

No covert operative in human space is deadlier or more feared than those of the Hassassin Society; and among the Society, few are as deadly or feared as the Fidays. Embracing death as part of their duty, the Fidays, or “those who sacrifice,” are not sent to quietly and subtly remove their targets: they intend to make a scene. To a Fiday, assassination is more an act of communication than one of violence, and they seek to safeguard the future of humanity’s evolution through powerful disincentivizing. No matter who you are, or how safe you believe yourself to be, the Fiday can find and end you. Needless to say, many Fidays don’t outlive their assignments.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+2	+1	+1	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Close Combat	Discipline	Stealth
Elective	See <i>Hassassin Orders</i>		

EARNINGS

1+2 

GEAR: Fake ID 3, Cosmetics Kit, Climbing Plus, Grazeblade, DT Sniper Rifle (with 2 Reloads)

SPECIAL: Prerequisite (Haqqislam Faction)

NOTE: This version of the Hassassin Fiday replaces any earlier printed versions: even if a character is being created using only the *Infinity* Corebook, feel free to substitute this stat block for the version in core.



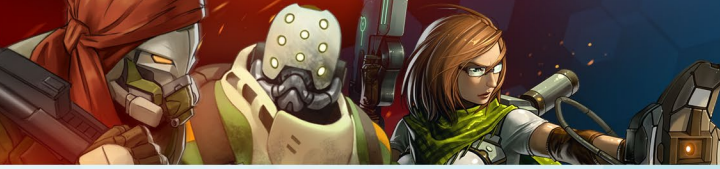
HASSASSIN ORDERS

The original Hassassins, the Govad, have laboured in the shadows long before the first Fiday was ever sighted. The Barid stalk quantum realms with an assassin’s grace, while the Lasiq’s solitary path hones precision to a nanosharp edge. The vagabondish Áyyār go so deep undercover they become unrecognizable even to their peers, while Muyibs show that brute force and explosives can be needle-precise in the right hands, and The Companions – Hassassin Ragiks – provide expert instruction, sagacious guidance, and also act as an aerial assault squad, embodying Haqqislam’s love of seeming contradictions.

When working the Hassassin Exemplar career, select your Order from the list below, use its elective skills, and acquire its gear. You may also use your Order’s elective skills in place of the standard when working the Hassassin Fiday career, or – at your GM’s discretion – for other careers on a case-by-case basis.

HASSASSIN ORDERS TABLE

D6	ORDER	ELECTIVE SKILLS	GEAR
1	Barid	Hacking, Stealth, Tech	Killer Hacking Device, (with SWORD-1 Samá) Stealth Repeater
2	Govad	Acrobatics, Analysis, Ballistics	Breaker Pistol, Grazeblade, Recorder, Light Combat Armour, Djinncloak
3	Lasiq	Ballistics, Lifestyle, Observation	Viral Sniper Rifle, Light Combat Armour (Lasiq Variant)
4	Muyib	Athletics, Resistance, Tech	Medium Combat Armour, 2 D-Charges, Light Grenade Launcher or Panzerfaust
5	Ragik	Ballistics, Education, Persuasion	Combat Jump Pack, Boarding Shotgun, Medium Combat Armour
6	Áyyār	Lifestyle, Persuasion, Psychology	Djinn Kit or Fake ID 3 and Cosmetics Kit, 2 Viral Pistols, <i>Khafiin</i> Microservo Armour



CAREER PROFILE

KHAWARIJ

Haqqislam's biomedical research is second to none, a fact embodied by their best-in-class super soldier programs. Most notable among these are the Khawarijs, a group of Haqq Mutazilite scholars who undergo Runihura—literally “destructor” — treatment, resulting in sagacious super-soldiers who look as though they could subdue an Ezhdeha Tariki with their bare hands. Khawarijs endeavour to maintain a “wise contradiction and perfect balance,” weighing their scholarly pursuits and enhanced combat prowess against each other in delicate harmony. Though not all Khawarijs possess such a philosophical bent, it would be a mistake to classify any as soulless, unnatural, or otherwise detached from humanity. Unlike the Nomads' Chimera, who push for transcendence, Haqqislam's super-soldiers seek a greater understanding of the self through skilful application of The Prophet's Medicine, building the temple in which Paradise is found.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	-	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Athletics	Discipline	Athletics	2+4 ^{IN}
Elective	Acrobatics	Ballistics	Close Combat	

GEAR: Spitfire, Runihura Augmentation

CAREER PROFILE

KUM GANGER

“North, South, East, or West, where to find the Kyrgyz? By the silver hand of Alexander, look for them around their enemies!” For the Kum, this age-old Kyrgyz battle shout is as much a way of life as it is a rallying cry. Of course, to a Kum Ganger, the definition of enemy can include foreign militaries, rival gangs, local police, or a best friend, depending on the day. While the Sword of Allah recruits from these ruthless biker gangs for their Kum Motorized Troops, most Kum Gangers are preoccupied with dealings far less savoury or essential to the continued well-being of Haqqislam. The Kum Gangers few rules include: ride hard, fight harder, and keep what you kill. Possession is the whole of the law. If you're not strong enough to stop something being taken, it was never truly yours to begin with.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	-	+1	-	+2	+2	+3

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Ballistic	Resistance	Pilot	1+2 ^{IN}
Elective	Command	Tech	Thievery	

GEAR: Smoke Grenade, Chain Rifle, Knife, Signal Flare, Kum Motorcycle, Ad-Qali Armour 2, ExcelRate (1 Dose)

SPECIAL: Criminal Career



CAREER PROFILE

MAGHARIBA GUARD

While not exactly known for armoured regiments, the Maghariba Guard is nevertheless the pride of the Haqqislamite military. Impressive firepower and mobility mean the XPR-5 Akrep Scorpion TAGs can keep pace with anything PanOceania or Yu Jing can throw at them. When it comes to military spending, however, Haqqislam doesn't have a seat at that table. Always outnumbered, and often out-gunned, the Maghariba Guard are nevertheless anything but tentative or cautious. And crafty. That's a must. Most TAG pilots would struggle with the cognitive dissonance in piloting a battlefield colossus with patience, precision, and cunning, so the Maghariba cannot afford to be most TAG Pilots. They must be better, or at the very least, more thoughtful in their actions. Maghariba tend to embody this contradiction in every aspect of their life: hyper-analysing the smallest details, yet willing to throw caution to the wind at a moment's notice.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	-	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Discipline	Observation	Pilot	3+1
Elective	Analysis	Ballistics	Education	

GEAR: Steady (2 Doses), Rihla Rations, Pistol



CAREER PROFILE

MEDICAL RESEARCHER

For most Biomedical researchers, there is no more attractive environment than Bourak. Compared to the capitalistic pressures of most Hypercorps to create marketable products, the Search for Knowledge has prioritized understanding, and Tebb al-Nabi has given medicine a near-sacred place in Haqqislamite society. For a Medical Researcher, the chance to truly push the limits of human understanding without the need for results is incredibly attractive, though it's not all roses and sunshine. Competition between Biohealth Corps is incredibly fierce, and recruiting tactics aren't always ethical. Most Medical Researchers receive at least cursory training in counter-espionage; finding themselves employed in very different circumstances on short notice is a real risk. Everyone involved wants to see a Medical Researchers work come to fruition, however and for many that more than makes up for any unanticipated excitement.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+1	+2	+1	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Education	Medicine	Science	3+2
Elective	Analysis	Animal Handling	Command	

GEAR: Laboratory (two month's rental credit), Geist Upgrade (+2 ranks in Education, or Research Specialist talent), Noor AR, Saifari AR, Sniffer 2

CAREER PROFILE

MUHAFIZ AGENT

Outside of the Hassassins, the Muhafiz make up Haqqislam's only significant intelligence agency. In theory, the authority of the Funduq Security and Intelligence Force—the Muhafiz—is limited to trade route security. In practice, every aspect of the Human Sphere technically intersects with Haqqislam's trade interests. High Command enjoy working with agents who don't answer to a quasi-mythical figure outside of their command chain and send Muhafiz Agents across the Human Sphere. Some units have gained considerable notoriety, including their special assault corps: the Djanbazan Tactical Group. Many undergo extensive biogenic treatments and augmentations. Al Hawwa' ("the snake charmer" in Classical Arabic) are a clandestine naval unit specializing in Infowar and covert operations. But whatever their classification, the Muhafiz are a popular tool for those uncomfortable with the Old Man's stranglehold on Haqqislamite intelligence.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Analysis	Hacking	Observation	2+1
Elective	Ballistic	Close Combat	Medicine	

GEAR: Assault Hacking Device or Multispectral Visor 2, Vrabec Pistol, Armoured Clothing, Hawala Dot 1, Djanbazan Regeneration or Sixth Sense



CAREER PROFILE

ODALISQUE

The most effective bodyguards in the Human Sphere, Funduq's Çember Odalisques Academy turns pretty faces into ethereal beauties, gifted athletes into precise killers, and flirtatious personalities into master manipulators. Their composure, precision, and beauty are the envy of agents across the Human Sphere. Able to wield their bodies and minds as precise instruments to achieve their goals, everything about an Odalisque is painstakingly considered; even the title is designed to conjure the image of an exotic beauty gracefully reclining over a divan. Though possessing every courtly charm imaginable, there is nothing languid about them once they spring to action. Combining the grace of a dancer with the ferocity of a tiger, more than one would-be kidnapper has wound up at the mercy of an Odalisque they mistook for just another pretty face.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+1	-	+1	+1	+3	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Acrobatics	Observation	Persuasion
Elective	Ballistics	Education	Resistance

EARNINGS

3+1

GEAR: Aletheia Kit, I-Kohl, Nanopulser, Subdermal Grafts (Choose) or Odalisque Augmentation



CAREER PROFILE

SPECIAL FORCES

The most elite soldiers in the Human Sphere carry out spec ops missions across known space... and sometimes upon unknown worlds. Special Forces units operate in covert missions of international warfare, hunting down war criminals, striking important assets, and retreating before anyone can blame their acting governments. These elite units also carry out the most difficult ops in the war for Paradiso, attacking Combined Army commanders and bases, rescuing allies caught far behind enemy lines, and countering the threat of elite enemy units. Governments deploy Special Forces when discretion is needed – all too common in the shadow warfare fought between nations of the Human Sphere – and when regular mercenaries or law enforcement simply aren't enough. A Special Forces soldier receives the finest training, equipment, and most important missions, demanding as much from themselves as their people do.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+2	+1	+1	-	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Survival	Resistance	Ballistics
Elective	Close Combat	Hacking	Discipline

EARNINGS

2+1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, Combi Rifle or AP Rifle (with 5 Standard Reloads), Climbing Plus or Combat Jump Pack, Garrotte

CAREER PROFILE

TERRAFORMING SCIENTIST

Terraforming Scientists help transform new worlds into places much more fit for human habitation. Terraforming is an expensive and time-consuming process, so only the brightest minds oversee the work. Characters in this profession possess a wide variety of scientific knowledge, from geology, climatology, and biology, to engineering and chemistry degrees. A Terraforming Scientist is usually adventurous, as they must brave alien environments filled with dangerous flora and fauna. Every new world is a potential gold mine of resources. A Terraforming Scientist must be ambitious and persistent in order to prosper. She has probably seen stranger things than most, living out on the frontier. Terraforming Scientists are often more rugged than lab-bound folk, though it'd be a mistake to doubt their academic prowess.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+2	+1	+3	+2	+1	-

SKILLS

Mandatory	Science	Education	Observation
Elective	Pilot	Tech	Extraterrestrial

EARNINGS

2+1

GEAR: Survival Kit, Analytical Kit (with 5 Reagents), Sensor Suite or Recorder

LIVING HAQQISLAM

Haqqislam's macro-culture forms a vast and teeming garden of ideas and ideological practices that are deeply rooted in its subcultural soil and groundwork principles, the sum of which are sustained by wellsprings of unwavering belief and oases of community. Seemingly immutable at first glance, this landscape is continually and subtly reshaped by new ideas, discoveries, events, and the choices of each individual adherent. To be a believer is to become a handful of loam, a breath of air, a precious draught of water within that garden – to define what it is in some small way, and be shaped by it in turn.

BEDROCK

Belief in Haqqislam entails faith in five core principles, from which all other virtues, obligations, and rewards derive. Living out these principals individually or societally absorbs a great deal of resources, focus, and time – sacrifices the faithful gladly make, trusting their efforts will lead to fulfilment for not only themselves and their communities, but all of humankind. They understand perfection is impossible, but steady iterative improvement to the best of one's abilities can not only lead to a life well-lived, but a great deal of respect and influence.

Even when wealth, pragmatism, or raw force seemingly determine the course of events, ambitious or greedy Haqqislamites or non-believers are still well-advised to show these principles some degree of deference to garner trust avoid social ostracisation.

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

Haqqislam's core principle, the pursuit of artistic, philosophical, spiritual, and scientific Truth takes myriad forms: uncovering stark physical truths via rigorous scientific research or sudden intuition, subtle inward exploration of memories, detailed documentation of meditations, nuanced artistic expression of subjective truths, bold exploration of other solar systems and worlds, careful untangling and examination of human relationships and societal structures, even enduring trials the most daring Bakunian would balk at. Since Allah is all-pervasive and all-encompassing throughout the universe, any starting point and approach, pursued with the correct intentions and virtuous purity of process, must inevitably lead towards His truth.

These truths are not mere spiritual abstractions: Haqqislamites believe every cause of human suffering, every seeming flaw in the universe's construction, every seeming scarcity, has a discoverable solution divinely embedded within it. And while humanity in its current imperfect form could never inhabit a perfect universe, the flawed desert of this reality is abundant with the seeds of possibility and countless hidden springs of truth, filled with everything needed to make it a paradise, if only it was tended correctly. This duty's massive scope can be overwhelming, but personal responsibility for the Search extends only to the best of one's abilities – approaching almost any work virtuously can meet this obligation.

Mercantile, biomedical, and terraforming research, for example, are not only pillars of Haqqislam's society and economy, paths to prosperity, and techniques for healthier living, but also expressions of faith itself. Every new discovery and connection within these fields, each test of hypothesis or intuitive step, every life experience survived and shared, and most especially each correlation and comparison of these truths within one another's context, expands understanding and leads the faithful closer to the truth of reality, the face of God, the gates of Paradise. What worthier cause could a person, a society, possibly pursue?

THE PROPHET'S MEDICINE

"There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its remedy."

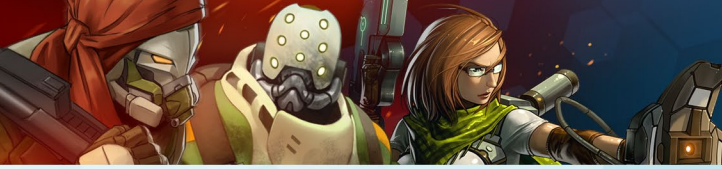
–(Qur'an 76:1), favourite verse of Farhad Khadivar, and the University of Medina's motto

OPTIONAL RULE: VARIABLE TRAITS

A GM can allow characters to have one or more variable traits to represent their beliefs or core issues. These traits can change at the end or beginning of each session to reflect how the character's outlook or issue has changed, how they plan to act in the near future, or to highlight an aspect of the character the player wants to see challenged and explore.

For example, a Haqqislamite character might alter their faith-related variable trait to 'Charity is the Soul of Haqqislam' when expecting to visit an Atek encampment, Remember Sabr (i.e. endurance) when facing a grinding overland hike, or Solitary Sālik after a rough breakup. The GM and other players can offer ideas, but the final decision for trait changes lies with the player. They should tell the GM if a trait changes, ideally at the end of the session to allow the GM time to prepare relevant material.

Just as with an ordinary trait, the GM can invoke a variable trait to bring dormant problems or conflicts to the forefront, complicating situations and forcing characters to face their issues. To ensure the trait is addressed, and as a partial counterweight to the increased opportunity for refreshing Infinity points it provides, Heat costs to introduce complications related to or affecting the trait are reduced by 2, to a minimum of 0 Heat. As with any other trait, the GM can revoke the Trait if they feel it is being misused.



If there is an underlying oneness of all things, it does not matter where we begin, whether with stars, or laws of supply and demand, or frogs, or Napoleon Bonaparte.

One measures a circle, beginning anywhere.

— Charles Forte, Lo!, as quoted in Khadivar's *majis al-hikma (sessions of wisdom) #7, Coordinate Origins & His Countenance.*

SANBUR

Some Haqqislamite subcultures use specific body language and motions to indicate the seriousness of their statements. Tapping a nearby surface with one or more fingers (and even one's thumb) indicates increasing depth of belief or intensity of experience on a rough 1–5 scale; doing so while someone else speaks indicates how truthful, revelatory, or important one takes what they are saying. Tapping on one's own chest for a personal or emotional experience, rather than an observed or measured one, is common, though what using one hand vs another means varies wildly. Reversing the motion usually indicates disbelief or denial — the vulgar are fond of one finger in particular to show just how seriously they take something.

“Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return.” (Qur'an 30:41), opening verse of *majis al-hikma #14, Conservation & Ihya.*

“Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”

— George Bernard Shaw

SĀLIK

During the O-12 ceremony formally recognising Haqqislam as an independent nation following Bourak's discovery, Farhad Khadivar declared “We have all become Sālik now”. Originally a term for Sufi travellers and pilgrims, it soon became an identity for all who joined the Bourak Pilgrimage, and a byword for bold (even daring or foolhardy) adventure. Even now, in a somewhat more settled era, the idea that each believer is on a lifelong and open-ended Hajj — whether spiritual or physical — keep the spirit of Sālik integral to Haqqislam's faith and culture.

Periodic sharing and reflection on one's experiences — both individually via meditation or prayer, or more particularly with trusted friends for discussion, perspective, and counsel — is key for turning happenstance and the ephemera of daily life into genuine insight towards the Search for Knowledge. The information shared, and the kinds of responses requested, can vary widely, but providing counsel and experiences to one another reinforces trust and friendship among Haqqislamites. To support this, part of every Khaniqah (communal gathering spaces and meeting halls) is set aside specifically for quiet discussion among friends, with psychologists and teachers provided free of cost. Many outsiders are surprised by how deep even a casual conversation with a believer can become, and how seriously the giving or receiving advice is viewed.

IHYA

Environmental stewardship and conservation was a part of Haqqislam from the very beginning: the consequences of humanity's short-sighted use and abuse of Earth's natural resources, climate, water, and land were obvious and pervasive, particularly to an observer as insightful as Farhad Khadivar. That message particularly resonated in the Middle East, where the post-oil economic collapse shook extraction-dependent societies to their foundations, creating a vast spiritual and ideological vacuum Haqqislam then filled.

But it was only after Bourak's initial colonisation, when the founders of the Gardener's Guild and Terraforming Committee began to slowly nurture regions of their arid world towards lush and welcoming green, that the ancient concept of Ihya, or “Bringing the Land to Life”, became a central principle of the faith. Now, thanks in part to the Committee's educational curriculum, taking sustainable advantage of resources and leaving your charge in better condition than you found it is common sense for those who grow up in the faith, particularly when it comes to their homes and communal spaces. At the societal level, this also ensures strong support for terraforming and conservation, to a degree outsiders often balk at.

The concept has surprisingly broad relevance: if a merchant fails to maintain or grow sales at their stall within a caravansary, a Trade Diwān who gives the space away to another able to put it to better use would be seen as religiously and pragmatically correct. The concept often extends to cover personal development; nurturing the skills and opportunities granted to you — particularly in ways that don't degrade others' opportunities or hinder their growth — is not only profoundly virtuous, but also cultivates the Search for Knowledge. Not doing so, as so many parents are fond of reminding young students, is a not only wasteful, but immoral.

SABR

Observance of Sabr (endurance, persistence) is less reliably observed, or at least acted on, with many subcultures interpreting it in different ways. All share a core belief, however, in restraint and perseverance as admirable virtues, even when its potential for passivity and inertia comes into conflict with Sālik-inspired daring. Haqqislam's believers draw on a panoply of ancient traditions to suit their lives and preferences when incorporating this principle into their lives. This is a key point of interfaith agreement with NeoVatican Christianity and Judaism, particularly within the Dar el Funduq community.

WAYFARER, THERE IS NO WAY

Wayfarer, the only way

Is your footprints and no other.

Wayfarer, there is no way.

Make your way by going farther.

By going farther, make your way

Till looking back at where you've wandered,

You look back on that path you may

Not set foot on from now onward.

Wayfarer, there is no way;

Only wake-trails on the waters.

— Antonio Machado, *Proverbios y Cantares*, as recited by Farhad Khadivar at funeral of his close friend and promoter Hamid al-Din al-Hamdani

Most tributaries of Haqqislam incorporate periods of conscious constraint. A believer might go without food and water during the daylight hours, isolate themselves quanontrically for a few random minutes or hours a day, continually refrain from intoxicants or stimulants or a favoured vice for weeks or months at a time, isolate themselves in prayer or sensory deprivation at preordained or random times each day, or hundreds of alternative practices. The goal is to focus the believer's mind on the divine by removing distractions, reveal and contend with unconscious habitual patterns, and act as a vaccine against unconsidered living.

ZAKAT AND JAZIYA

Every believer whether or not they live within Haqqislam's territory, is expected to pay Zakat, a yearly charitable tithe equivalent to 5% of their wealth, possessions, and income above a minimum amount roughly equivalent to the demogrant. These funds are then distributed to the infirm, elderly, refugees, orphans, or a part of Haqqislam's demogrant program. Non-believers are exempt, and instead pay Jaziya (also referred to as Jizyah on Earth), a solidarity tax that goes toward social needs of the wider community.

Payment of Zakat and Jaziya is administered by Diwân al Kharâj (the Tax Office), but regional governments and Khaniqahs regularly hold charity fundraisers for those who choose to go beyond

their official obligations. Concealing wealth to avoid Zakat can have severe social and legal consequences if discovered, and jokes involving a Kharâj official and a Hassassin are common: the Hassassin is inevitably the more merciful.

SAND & SOIL

Haqqislam has internal stratifications of power and status like any other faction, but those social classes are heavily influenced by shared religious faith, as well as wealth and popularity. Each comes with religious as well as cultural expectations, variably adhered to, that can affect relationships with the others in surprising ways.

Underclass: Members of this social class fall into two broad categories: those who largely reject societal expectations and forgo demogrant resources to pursue an idiosyncratic or ascetic interpretation of their faith, and those who do the same for selfish, temperamental, or mental health reasons. Haqqislam is extremely accepting of neurodiversity and emphasises bodily autonomy, so rejection of psychiatric treatment or the demogrant are rigorously respected – even when those choices lead to poverty or isolation, to override them is anathema. Faith's framework is hard to escape, however: even those who reject its tenets are considered Sâlik, albeit on an unusual path.

2015 ISLAMIC DECLARATION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

"The stars, the sun and moon, and this earth in all the diversity, richness, and vitality of its communities of living beings, reflect and manifest the boundless glory and mercy of their Creator. All by nature serve and glorify their Maker, all bow to their Lord's will. We humans are created to serve the Lord of all beings, to work the greatest good we can for all the species, individuals, and generations of God's creatures."

–Farhad Khadivar's childhood bedroom wall held a poster of the full declaration, and he put up a copy in any office he occupied longer than a week. Surviving posters are near-priceless collectibles.

SOLOMON'S RING

A small but steady percentage of Haqqislam's Underclass eschew interaction with Geists, LAI, and ALEPH when possible, interpreting them as djinn, immaterial untrustworthy spirits who serve only to tempt humanity into error and vanity. While primarily non-violent, sporadic attacks by Nomad-inspired extremists within the community amplify stigma against them; those unafraid of showing allegiance publically wear heavy lead, gold, or Teseum rings inscribed with a mystic Key of Solomon representing their authority over djinn, and refer to Geist users as *majnun*, meaning "jinn-possessed". Rumours claim several Silk Lords share their beliefs, and rely only on servants and crude electronics in private – perhaps for security as well as religious reasons.

"If you only say one prayer in a day, make it Thank You."

–Rumi, 13th Century Sufi poet



NON-BELIEVERS & THE DEMOGRANT

Haqqislam is a tolerant society, welcoming visitors and immigrants of all ethnicities

and creeds, particularly fellow “people of the Book” – Christians, Jews, and Muslims of other sects. Social class expectations of piety are replaced in their cases with ones around pro-social work, fund-raising, and military service. Social censure for failing to live up to demogrant expectations can be much harsher, however, even to the point of expulsion.

THE HOUSE OF WISDOM

Known in Arabic as the *Bayt al-Hikma*, this secretive collective of neo-Sufi astronomers, astrologists, librarians, wormhole scouts, and seekers dates to the team that discovered the Fareedat System and Bourak. A subset of the team believed that leap was only the first step on a divinely journey across the stars, and the inheritors of their tradition continually search for new wormholes, however unstable, and for the arcane and rare texts to derive where to search next. Subtle clues of their ongoing work imply they are well-funded, and have multiple scouting vessels active in systems beyond the Human Sphere’s well-scouted frontiers.

Except when attempting to unobtrusively serve their communities, few Haqqislamites of other classes present themselves as Underclass, but teens and young adults often spend a period of time living within it, exploring alternative or fringe interpretations of the faith they were raised in. Many adult believers have a charismatic Underclass teacher, or consider themselves less-devoted members of an Underclass-led subculture – at the very least, asceticism is a good indication of a group’s seriousness.

Demogrant: Like every faction, Haqqislam provides a basic income guarantee, but with the expectation that participants will further the Search for Knowledge with a significant percentage of their time. As with religious practices, this can take myriad forms – from child-raising, to full-time study, to well-documented travel – but whatever one’s path, it is expected that it continually trodden to the limit of one’s abilities. As a result, those on the demogrant are among the most prolific posters on Maya in Haqqislam: failure to regularly demonstrate one’s devotion is grounds for a reduction in benefits to a bare-subsistence level, and serious opprobrium from peers. Doing so, however, earns unique respect from other believers.

Many believers, from all social classes, deliberately live their lives within the limitations of the demogrant and donate the rest of their earnings to Zakat or other charitable causes; expectations of focused diligence are less onerous when voluntary.

Middle: If one’s natural gifts and interests aren’t suited to the pursuit of the Search for Knowledge, then removing obstacles and providing resources for those who do is a worthy, even virtuous, calling. The middle class often serve as administrators, servants, managers, or other enablers of others’ work, or in moderately lucrative careers such as merchants, analysts, bankers, or labourers. It’s expected that they donate far beyond the requirements of Zakat without complaint, and live virtuously to the best of their abilities, but there are relatively low expectations of piety or service otherwise.

Higher class Haqqislamites somewhat indifferent to their faith can present themselves as middle class to avoid pious expectations: often only their Kharāj officer knows the truth. Similarly, lower class individuals seeking a less intense religious life often train into middle class jobs, exchanging religious respect for the ease of a steady job.

Upper: Material possessions were repeatedly called out as potential distractions from the Search for Knowledge by Farhad Khadivar, a message somewhat muted and elided by modern affluent Haqqislamites. Many present themselves as a lower social class, justify themselves as an “upper Middle class” of higher-level supporters of more devout seekers and worthy causes, or least convincingly as seekers on unique paths only great wealth can enable, such as constant travel on circulars.

A much smaller percentage are considered to hold their wealth legitimately, as just rewards for significant sacrifices on behalf of their community, or advancements of the faith. Still, wealth has its allure, and many lower-class individuals imitate the upper-class fads and fashion trends of those above them, while quietly deriding their greed.

Elite: At a certain point, wealth and power can become self-sustaining, particularly for one’s reputation. Members of this social class still donate significantly more of their resources than those in other factions, but are able to do so to a degree that there is significantly less critique than those and the Upper class face. They are also able to put on media-friendly events and pay for publicists and foundations to sustain the appearance of devoted piety.

Behind the closed gates of Elite estates and high-hedged playgrounds, behaviour varies wildly, though not to the degree firebrands claim – those with no faith whatsoever can easily turn Corporate if wealth is their only aim. Still, like the Upper class, Elite actions are followed closely by jealous, disapproving, or avid observers and commentators.

Hyper-Elite: At this level, an individual’s choices have such vast impact that they are living embodiments of Haqqislam, particularly to other factions. They must chose those they listen to, love, trust, and most of all confide in extremely carefully if they are to live virtuously – the Search for Knowledge’s future rests in their hands.

CHAPTER 7

ADVERSARIES

PHILOSOPHERS,
HASSASSINS, AND
PIRATES

Regarded as a minor player in the Human Sphere, what Haqqislam – the *Neo Islam* – lacks in raw political power, they more than make up for in soft skills and cultural influence. Drawing on the best traditions of scholarly Islam of the early Middle Ages has propelled Haqqislam forward as a nation of explorers, in both metaphorical and literal terms. Though preaching peace and embracing the best of humanity, Haqqislamites wisely remember the old saying: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. The Sword of Allah remain amongst the strongest and highly valued soldiers of the Sphere.

The adversaries in this chapter are divided into Protectors of Knowledge, Super-Soldiers, and Pirates and Mercenaries. This triumvirate has for many years ensured that Haqqislam has maintained its status, despite having only one planet to call home.

PROTECTORS OF
KNOWLEDGE

The Hassassins were founded in the grief-stricken aftermath of Farhad Khadivar's murder. In his quest to prevent reactionary forces from ever standing in the way of the Search for Knowledge, the scholar Abdulahmed Rashad recruited agents and consulted with contacts from around the globe. Within weeks, Khadivar's killer was dead in prison. A month later, Imam Khalaf ibn Ahmad died on a public street, the executioner shouting Haqqislam's truths even as Khalaf's bodyguards shot him down. The Hassassins claimed every member of the Legion of Exalted over the next several years, and so began their fearsome legend.

OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

The Society's leader is the mysterious Old Man of the Mountain. There are some who say that the current Old Man is, in fact, still Abdulahmed Rashad himself, the founder of the order. Whatever the truth may be, it is the Old Man of the Mountain who is the ultimate determiner of who (or what) constitutes a threat to the ongoing Search for Knowledge, a mission which extends beyond Haqqislam and includes anyone obstructing humanity's development. He designates the targets who are marked for death by his disciples, and

once they are marked, sooner or later death inevitably follows.

HASSASSIN EXEMPLARS

The Hassassins consider themselves seekers pursuing the Haqqislamite Virtues who, in their defence of the Search of Knowledge, have transformed themselves into the embodiment of the Haqqislamite Ideals. Their teachings wed the martial lore of the Nizari Isma'ilism (an ancient order of assassins) with the mysticism of neo-Sufism.

The Hassassin philosophy centres on the *lataif-e-sitta*, the psycho-spiritual organs known as the Six Subtleties. Mastering the use of these organs unlocks a physical and spiritual perfection which attains its ultimate purpose in the art of divine murder.

The Hassassins are diverse in their skills and training but united in their devotion to the cause and not afraid to die if that is what it takes. They seek public executions, viewing their killings as an instrument of propaganda for both themselves and the Search for Knowledge.

LAYERS OF DECEPTION

Even before Bourak's government was formed, the Hassassins appointed themselves Haqqislam's intelligence organization. The society's government liaison is officially listed as an agency of the Diwan al Jund, under the title of Hassassin ETTVAK (an acronym for *Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar*, a Farsi phrase meaning Circle of Intelligence and Security).

The public face of ETTVAK, however, is a cover for the Hassassin Bahram ("Victory" in Farsi), a supposedly ultra-secret organization that controls the Special Operations Division of the Sword of Allah.

In practice, the Hassassin Bahram is an open secret, almost as well-known as PanOceania's Hexahedron. What very few people realize (outside of elite intelligence operatives and fringe conspiracy channels on Maya) is that the Bahram is *also* a cover operation, protecting the true Hassassin order which operates out of secret bases in the Alamut deserts of the Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahnate. This, the core of the sect, is not truly under the Hachib's control. The Hassassins are a law unto themselves. Haqqislamite leaders are reluctant to admit this in public even when Hassassin activities cause anger and revulsion, at home or abroad, believing that it's better to take the blame for the Old Man's actions than to admit that they cannot truly control them.

Science moves fast and implacably, and the diversity of studies and avenues of investigation that could result in the creation of a Judgement Day weapon multiplies with each passing day. Misuse of corrupt Science could cause the cancellation of true Science by provoking an irrational, instinctive reaction from fear and ignorance. This would gravely affect the Search for Knowledge.

–Speech given via holoconference by the Old Man of the Mountain during the Authorisation Ceremony of the Hassassin Society



ELITE

HASSASSIN GOVAD

Named for the Persian word for “wind”, as well as Zoroastrian Yazata – quasi-divine wind spirits, analogous to Christian and Islamic angels – the Govads are the original Hassassin Order, clandestinely operating for years before the sect’s first public appearance. Carrying out covert missions at the Old Man of the Mountain’s behest, the larger intelligence community was entirely unaware of their presence – until about ten years ago, when they were nearly wiped out in a costly protracted battle with the terrorist group, Equinox. While the campaign was ultimately successful, the Govad barely survived, at one point reduced to a single operative, Dawud Al-Dafani.

Today, the rebuilt Govad function as a covert tracking and elimination unit, but they haven’t forgotten their losses at the hands of Equinox, and are diligently preparing for their return.

This time, they’ll be ready.

ATTRIBUTES							
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL	
10	9	9	9	8	8	10	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE								
Combat	+2	2	Movement	+1	1	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+1	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	+1	1
DEFENCES								
Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	9			
Security	–	Morale	2	Armour	2			

ATTACKS

- **Breaker Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+5 (N) damage, Burst 1, 1H, Biotech, Breaker, Piercing 1, Vicious 1
- **Grazeblade:** Melee, 1+5 (N) damage, 1H, Breaker, Non-Hackable, Stun, Subtle 2, Thrown, Toxic 3

GEAR: Multispectral Visor 1, Light Combat Armour, Smoke Grenades; no Cube

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ever-Ready:** After their near-extinction combating Equinox, new Govads are trained to expect anything. They gain 2 bonus Momentum on face-to-face tests made to determine surprise.
- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins never let themselves be taken alive. If the player characters try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).
- **Old Man’s Dirty Work:** Autonomous agents of Alamut, Govads are masters of death, with all that implies. They can reroll up to 3 (N) when making a Combat test, but must accept the new results.

NEMESIS

HASSASSIN FIDAY

Every soldier knows death is a possibility. Every contract killer knows they’re expendable. Hassassin Fidays are neither of those, but something much greater. ‘They who are willing to sacrifice’ – the Fiday – are the Old Man’s hidden aces. Selected from Hassassins with incredible skill, faith, and dedication, but a lack of ability or desire to tutor others, Fiday are assigned the most dangerous, risky, and important missions.

Wholly focused on their task, they become the society’s ultimate weapon; elite operatives able to infiltrate any location and eliminate any target, regardless of their own survival. The rich and powerful depend on the fear of retribution and self-preservation instincts to keep them safe from enemies. But death is a Fiday’s friend and companion. They no more fear its arrival than they do the rising of the sun... and the sun always rises.

ATTRIBUTES							
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL	
13	12	12	8	8	7	10	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE								
Combat	+5	3	Movement	+2	2	Social	+1	–
Fortitude	+3	–	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+1	1
DEFENCES								
Firewall	9	Resolve	13	Vigour	15			
Security	–	Morale	4	Armour	2			

ATTACKS

- **Boarding Shotgun:** Range C, 1+8 (N) damage, Burst 1, 2H, Knockdown, Medium MULTI
 - *Normal Shells Mode (Primary):* Area (Close), Spread 1
 - *AP Slugs Mode (Secondary):* Piercing 3
- **Grazeblade:** Melee, 1+7 (N) damage, 1H, Breaker, Non-Hackable, Stun, Subtle 2, Thrown, Toxic 3

GEAR: Holomask, Light Combat Armour, Smoke Grenades; no Cube

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Fear 1, Menacing 2.
- **Death, My Old Friend:** Resolute in the face of annihilation, Fiday gain a Morale Soak of 4.
- **Inevitable:** Though not afraid to greet death, Fiday consider it poor manners to go alone. Each time they receive a Wound, they gain +1 (N) to warfare attacks for the scene.
- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins never let themselves be taken alive. If the player characters try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).
- **Zealous Charge:** With target acquired, few things stop a Fiday. All Defence and Guard Reactions taken in response to a Fiday’s attacks are at +1D, with failed tests adding 1 Heat to the pool.

ELITE

HASSASSIN BARID

The Hassassin’s power flows from the notion that nowhere is truly safe from them. They could strike at anytime, anywhere, as anyone. As society evolved towards quantronic infrastructure and data-based interactions, however, they knew they would need to adapt.

The Barid – “messenger” – were formed to provide expertise in quantronic environments. Drawing on their considerable infowar capabilities, they provide support and intelligence for their fellow Hassassins. Their signature message reiterates that of their fellows in the physical; threaten the Search for Knowledge, and your smouldering corpse will serve as a warning.

ATTRIBUTES							
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL	
8	10	8	9	11	9	8	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE								
Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	1	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	–	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	+3	1
DEFENCES								
Firewall	11	Resolve	8	Vigour	8			
Security	–	Morale	2	Armour	2			

ATTACKS

- **Killer Hacking Device:** CLAW-0, SWORD-2, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1, UPGRADE Cybermask, Sucker Punch; +2 (N) bonus damage, Piercing 3
- **SWORD-2 Redrum:** 2+6 (N) damage, Grievous, Piercing 5, Unforgiving 2
- **IC-1 Black ICE:** 1+1 (N) damage
- **Rifle:** Range M, 1+6 (N) damage, Burst 2, 2H, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
 - *Light Shotgun Mode (Secondary):* Range C, 1+5 (N) damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Knockdown
- **Wetspike:** Melee, 1+4 (N) damage, 1H, Biotech, Piercing 1, Subtle 3, Toxic 1

GEAR: Deployable Repeaters, Light Combat Armour; no Cube

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins never let themselves be taken alive. If the player characters try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).
- **Quantronic Assassin:** Barid are living proof that infowar can be equally as deadly as warfare. Against targets using equipment with the Neural quality, they can choose to deal physical or quantronic damage.
- **Trained Messenger:** Whether providing intelligence, or making a statement, a Barid’s message is always sent with force. They can reroll one d20 when making a Tech test, but must accept the new result.

ELITE

HASSASSIN LASIQS

Despite their gregarious demeanour, the life of a Lasiq is a lonely one. Snipers par excellence, they provide a quiet, precise alternative to the order's typical methods. Unlike the dramatic statements of other Hassassins, the silent and invisible Lasiqs pride themselves on eliminating their target and leaving no trace of their presence.

Patient and deliberate, Lasiqs stalk their prey fastidiously. Whether by remote surveillance, investigation, or infiltration, a Lasiq becomes intimately familiar with their target – their habits, routines, moods, and secrets – before striking. In the moment of death, they are often closer to their victim than anyone ever has been... or ever will be.

Because of this intimacy, Lasiqs honour their victims in ways the rest of the order normally eschew. Regardless, the message is still unmistakably delivered: evil is never safe, for nowhere is truly outside of the Hassassin's reach.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	10	8	12	8	9	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE								
Combat	+3	2	Movement	+1	1	Social	+3	–
Fortitude	–	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES					
Firewall	8	Resolve	8	Vigour	8
Security	–	Morale	1	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Viral Sniper Rifle:** Range L, 1+8 (N) damage, Burst 2, BioTech, Toxic 2, Unwieldy, Unforgiving 2, Vicious 2
- **Wetspike:** Melee, 1+4 (N) damage, 1H, Biotech, Piercing 1, Subtle 3, Toxic 1

GEAR: Climbing Plus, Fake ID 3, Light Combat Armour, Long ModCoat, Multispectral Visor 2; no Cube

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Applied Knowledge:** The time Lasiqs spend studying their targets isn't for nothing. When attacking a character they have previously succeeded on a Senses or Social test against, they can reroll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll, but must accept the new results.
- **Hawk-Eyed:** Lasiq do their best work at a distance. When attacking at long or extreme range, they may reroll up to 4 (N), but must accept the new results.
- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins never let themselves be taken alive. If the player characters try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).

ELITE

HASSASSIN MUYIBS

Hassassin Muyib, translated as "Those, Who Respond," are the main battle forces of the Society. The typical path of initiation that a Hassassin treads starts in the inhospitable mountains of Alamut. The Society recruits from among the native tribes of the Daylami, looking for independent souls hardened by the harsh conditions they grew up in. The Daylami are excellent candidates by virtue of upbringing, however they are not the only source the Society takes its recruits from. The Muyib is the first step on the path that each Hassassin takes. They receive specialist training with a variety of weapons but are considered to be true masters of explosives and demolitions. Whenever a Muyib is committed to the task, they will succeed or die trying. There is no other way.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	9	9	10	8	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE								
Combat	+2	2	Movement	+1	–	Social	+1	–
Fortitude	+3	1	Senses	+1	–	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES					
Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	9
Security	2	Morale	1	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Rifle:** M 1+6 (N), 2H Standard MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Light Shotgun:** Range C, 1+5 (N) damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Knockdown
- **Panzerfaust:** Range L, 2+6 (N) damage, Burst 1, 2H, Munition, Piercing 2, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2
- **Pistol:** R/C, 1+5 (N), Burst 2, 1H, Vicious 1
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+4 (N) damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, D-charges

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Seeker of Truth:** Hassassin recruits are chosen for their fortitude and mental toughness. Each member of the sect undergoes rigorous mental training, and they are taught never to falter from the Path of Knowledge they were assigned. Hassassin Muyibs ignore the effects of the Fear Common Special Ability and benefit from a Morale soak of 1, incorporated into their profile.
- **Expert Training:** Hassassin Muyib are trained to be the most versatile field operatives of the Society. The Hassassin Muyib can reroll a single face-to-face roll of their choice during each encounter turn. They must accept the new result.

NEMESIS

HASSASSIN FARZAN

Whereas the Muyib are the first step on the Path to Knowledge, the Farzan – "Wise Man" – is likely the last. Only the most experienced agents receive the title, so it's considered wise to heed a Farzan's advice. The Farzan tutor topics ranging from spiritual teaching to field operations in hostile territory. Though they rarely take to the field, they usually act as supervisors to younger operatives when they do. They have been tasked with judging the preparedness of their wards for advancement on the Path, but that doesn't mean they should be underestimated. If a mission goes south, Farzans often step in to contain the damage. Their many years of experience makes them very dangerous combatants.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	9	9	9	12	10	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE								
Combat	+3	1	Movement	+2	1	Social	+3	1
Fortitude	+2	–	Senses	+3	–	Technical	+3	2

DEFENCES					
Firewall	15	Resolve	14	Vigour	11
Security	–	Morale	1	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Boarding Shotgun:** Range C, 1+6 (N) damage, Burst 1, 2H, Knockdown, Medium MULTI
- **Normal Shells Mode (Primary):** Area (Close), Spread 1
- **AP Slugs Mode (Secondary):** Piercing 3
- **Pistol:** R/C, 1+5 (N), Burst 2, 1H, Vicious 1
- **Grazeblade:** Melee, 1+5 (N) damage, 1H, Breaker, Non-Hackable, Stun, Subtle 2, Thrown, Toxic 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Skills:** Menacing 2, Threatening 2
- **Seeker of Truth:** Toughened from years of field work, Farzan ignore the effects of the Fear Common Special Ability and benefit from a Morale soak of 3.
- **Eye On You (1 Heat):** For 1 Heat, the Farzan relates to any one other Hassassin present as a current or former protégé. As long as the Farzan has uninterrupted communications with this character, the Farzan can use a Minor Action to engage in a special teamwork test with that character. This does not impede the Farzan in using their Standard Action for any normal use.
- **Voice of Authority:** In constant communication with HQ, Farzan receive constant updates. When spending Heat to call reinforcements, reduce the total Heat cost by 2, to a minimum of 1.
- **Death's Loyalty (X Heat):** Every Hassassin knows the value of the Farzan. If an attempt is made to capture the Farzan alive, X Heat spent allows the Hassassin to escape while a distraction is created by another member of the sect. X is equal to twice the amount of Heat required to summon the reinforcement.



NEMESIS

HASSASSIN RAGIK

Innovation. Determination. Independence. Ragiks embody these to near-perfection. As the Hassassin's Society's elite, Ragiks are trained in secret camps in the Moons of the Seven Imams, supplementing their skills with airborne assault training that allows them to rapidly insert into any field of operation. Once there, they work to turn the tide of battle or seize and defend strategic assets.

The Ragiks – or Companions – elite status means they also act as leaders, instructors, and exemplars in the Search for Knowledge. They are also the most public-facing of the order, acting as liaisons to the Sword of Allah to coordinate the Hassassin's military deployment. Some Ragik struggle with the need to partially emerge from the shadows, but many eventually embrace this role and relish the opportunity to represent the best that Haqqislam has to offer.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
11	12	10	8	9	9	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	Movement	Social
+3 3	+2 2	+1 1
Fortitude	Senses	Technical
+2 1	+1 1	+2 1

DEFENCES

Firewall	Resolve	Vigour
11	13	12
Security	Morale	Armour
-	2	3

ATTACKS

- **Hacking Device:** CLAW-1, SWORD-1, SHIELD-1, GADGET-3, IC-1; +1 bonus damage
 - CLAW-1 Spotlight
 - IC-1 Hivemines: 1+2 damage, Vicious 1
- **Grazeblade:** Melee, 1+6 damage, 1H, Breaker, Non-Hackable, Stun, Subtle 2, Thrown, Toxic 3
- **Boarding Shotgun:** Range C, 1+7 damage, Burst 1, 2H, Knockdown, Medium MULTI

GEAR: AutoMediKit, Combat Jump Pack, Medium Combat Armour; no Cube

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Menacing 1
- **Blitz:** Hit first, hit hard, hit fast. When attacking a target they have not yet damaged in this scene, they generate 2 bonus Momentum. Determined: Ragiks gain +2 Morale Soak.
- **Exemplar:** Ragiks train hard to be the face the public sees. They have a Morale Soak of 2. Additionally, they can reroll 1d20 when making a Command, Lifestyle, or Persuade test, but must accept the new result
- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins never let themselves be taken alive. If the player characters try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).

ELITE

AL-MEDINAT UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

'When asked to describe a professor, most students will reference their days in college being lectured by a studious type with thick-rimmed glasses, maybe a beard, a smoking pipe, or a tweed jacket. Though such individuals do exist within the folds of Haqqislam, mostly teaching at prestigious Universities such as the one located in Al-Medinat within the Caliphate, the statistics here represent lecturers of all genders, shapes, and sizes.'

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
6	9	6	7	13	11	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	Movement	Social
- -	+1 -	+3 1
Fortitude	Senses	Technical
- -	+2 1	+3 1

DEFENCES

Firewall	Resolve	Vigour
13	11	8
Security	Morale	Armour
-	-	-

ATTACKS

- **Swordcane:** Melee, 1+4 damage, Unbalanced, Concealed 2, Non-Hackable, Parry 1, Vicious 1

GEAR: Smoking pipe

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Skill:** Knowledge Specialisation (Choose three)
- **I Should Know This:** Even if they don't know the topic exactly, they know something. When making an Education test outside of their Knowledge Specialisation, the Professor gains 1 bonus Momentum and can reroll a d20, though they must accept the new result.
- **As I've Been Saying...:** Any Psywar attacks made by the Professor gain 1 additional die and do +1 .

SUPER-SOLDIERS

Haqqislam is renowned for its ability to create super-soldiers. The most famous program of that sort, the Runihura, produces warriors who are faster, possess greater tactical acumen, are more resistant and generally have exceptional physical capabilities. Tarik Mansuri, the Khawarij *Amir*, is the best-known graduate. There are other, less-known enhancement programs, as well, for example the one that created the Djanbazan, the strong-armed protectors of Sultanate's Silk. The Haqqislamite creed is based on improvement of Humanity, but within the boundaries established by nature. It is improvement, without intrusion. Therefore, a flesh-machine hybrid amalgam so commonly seen in the creations of the Evolved Intelligence would be *anathema* to the Haqqislamites. Their improvements are subtle in nature. This proves doubly useful to those who want to conceal their true capabilities. After all, the beautiful and deadly Odaliques are also super-soldiers.

ELITE

ASAWIRA REGIMENT

Recruited from the tribes of the inhospitable area of Alamut, Haqqislam's elite shock troops are only sent to the worst situations. To the dismay of their enemies, they usually emerge victorious. In the rare situations where the Asawira are unable to complete an objective, they always ensure their enemy pays dearly. To augment their training and equipment, which also includes a lightweight powered armour for enhanced mobility, they receive a small suite of non-intrusive enhancements which includes an ability to heal grievous wounds. With the bulk of the unit in training or deployment, a select few Asawira remain stationed on Bourak as the bodyguard of the Shah. Members of the regiment also serve as command and control elements for Bahram sections operating in Joint Task Forces for the Haqqislamite High Command.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	9	10 (+1)	10	8	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+2	–	Social	–	–
Fortitude	+3	1	Senses	+2	–	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	9	Vigour	11
Security	3	Morale	1	Armour	5

ATTACKS

- **Spitfire:** M 1+5 (N), 2H Normal Spread 2, Unsubtle 2 6+2 (N)
- **Nanopulser(Grafted):** C 1+5 (N), 1H – Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2 3 6+2 (N) T3
- **Shock Sword:** Melee, 1+10 (N) damage, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Shock

GEAR: Powered Combat Armour, Djanbazan Augmentation (p. 65), AR Eye Implants, Attribute Augmentation (Silk)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Ability:** Superhuman Attribute Brawn
- **Guardian of the Mountain:** The Asawira are resilient and stubborn, refusing to lay down their weapons even if a situation seems dire. They benefit from a Morale soak of 1.
- **Master of the Blade:** The Asawira are rigorously trained in the art of Close Combat, and their knowledge of fighting techniques, together with the gifts of technology, make them fearsome combatants. An Asawira may reroll up to 2 dice when making a Close Combat test, but they must accept the new result.

ELITE

DJANBAZAN

The Djanbazan Tactical Group is a corps of veterans established by the Funduq Sultanate to protect their interests off-world. Designed as an anti-terrorist force and garrison unit, they quickly became a go-to whenever the intelligence community wanted some dirty work done. Possessing an enhanced physique and a plethora of biological additions, the Djanbazan are a tough, experienced unit, albeit with an aura of recklessness gained by the many violent operations they participated in. Officially under the jurisdiction of the Muhafiz, some analysts say that the Djanbazan have started working for a variety of entities, including corrupt Silk conglomerates or even the Submondo. Regardless, the Tactical Group continues to serve the interests of Haqqislam first and foremost and their commanders know better than to keep them on a short leash.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	10	10	10	8	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	1	Movement	+1	–	Social	+3	1
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	–	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	9	Vigour	10
Security	2	Morale	–	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Marksmen's Rifle:** Range L, 1+7 (N) damage, Burst 2, 2H, Unforgiving 1
- **Pistol:** R/C, 1+6 (N), Burst 2, 1H, Vicious 1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, Multispectral Visor 2, Djanbazan Augmentation (p. 65)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Guardians of Silk:** The Djanbazan are guardians of the national interests of Haqqislam, whatever they might be. When fighting for such a cause (broadly defined as it might be), they benefit from a Morale Soak of 2.
- **Dirty business specialists:** Due to their Submondo contacts, Djanbazan are seen as dirty by many outside observers. Djanbazan can be called in as Reinforcements for a Submondo encounter and are then treated as having a Heat cost of 1, not the usual 2, for an Elite adversary.

TROOPER

NAFFATÛN

Naffatûn are a specialized unit of the Ghulam infantry corps trained in the handling of incendiary armaments. Their name comes from the Napht liquid that they carry as ammunition for their flamethrowers. Some scholars argue that the unit's history can be traced back to the Byzantine Empire of the Middle Ages. A thousand years ago, ancient generals saw it fit to equip some of their troopers with paraffin, or kerosene. Then, much like today, fire was a potent weapon. The Naffatûn are given light augmentation that makes them resistant to heat. Coupled with the fact that historically troopers handling fire were usually scorned both by enemies as well as allies, means that the Naffatûn have few friends, but most of them don't actually mind.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	9	8	9	8	6	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	1	Movement	+1	–	Social	–	–
Fortitude	+2	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	–	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	8	Vigour	8
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Heavy Flamethrower:** Range C, 2+6 (N) damage, Burst 1, Incendiary 3, Munition, Terrifying 2, Torrent
- **Rifle:** M 1+6 (N) 2 2H Standard MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Grenades, Subdermal Grafts (Torso)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Blaze of Glory:** The backpacks of the Naffatûn are filled with extra ammunition for their Flamethrower, Napht. Being essentially hyper-concentrated Napalm, this means that when a Naffatûn goes out, it turns messy. Whenever a Naffatûn suffers his last Wound, the GM can spend a Heat point to make his remains explode, as if an EXP Round of ammunition was centred at the point where the Naffatûn died.



PIRATES AND MERCENARIES

Haqqislam is the nation with the highest number of contracts with mercenary companies, bands, and individual contractors among all the nations of the Human Sphere. The Hachib, the President of Haqqislam, having to draw from limited human resources but with access to the lucrative trade in Silk, can afford to let others do his nation's dirty work. The Haqqislamite flotilla, for example, compared to the other Powers, is relatively large, all thanks to the many corsairs and pirates that get handsomely remunerated for their bloody trade. Various mercenary companies have operated under Haqqislamite orders throughout the years; some even have contracts of exclusivity signed with the Government. However, they are still nominally independent, meaning they can be sent to theatres where official troops cannot, or will not, be allowed to operate.

ELITE

DRUZE SHOCK TEAMS

If the Kaplan can be considered noble mercenaries, then the Druze Shock Teams represent the other end of the spectrum. Born from territorial struggles around the East-African space elevator, the Druze Society are one of the most vicious Submondo sub-factions. Not to be confused with the Druze people—who they are part of—the Druze Society is the infamously brutal mafia responsible for the destruction of the Drygalsky Group, though their enforcers have undergone a makeover of sorts in the decades since. Now tied to the Bayram Caravanserai as the legitimate private security company, Druze Bayram Security, these enforcers are licensed mercenaries willing to work for any client able to stomach their methods. On paper, Druze Shock Teams are regular mercs, but the reality is that each brutality serves as additional shock team training. One day soon, the Society will need the Shock Teams to bring their A game and settle a score with a level of ferocity not seen since the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts. Neither can hardly wait.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	10	10	10	8	7	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	1	Social	-	-
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	-

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	8	Vigour	10
Security	2	Morale	-	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Combi Rifle:** Range C/M, 1+7 damage, Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Chain-Colt:** Range C, 1+7 damage, Burst 1, 2H, Concealed 1, Torrent, Vicious 1
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+5 damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, D-Charges, Grenades

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Skills:** Menacing 2
- **We Are Bad People (2 Heat):** Civilians make handy human shields. Spend 2 Heat during any encounter with the Druze to create a heavy saturation zone (*Infinity Corebook* p. 109), with the obstacles representing civilians. The crowds must arrive in a logical manner, i.e. people ending their shift, pre-arranged hostages, crowds exiting an entertainment venue, etc.
- **But We Can Be Worse (1 Heat):** Part of the Druze's modus operandi is to relish the collateral damage. Spend 1 Heat to trigger prepared bombs and similar booby traps. These function as hazards (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 34) but include the Indiscriminate (Close) quality at no additional cost.

TROOPER

KAPLAN TACTICAL SERVICES

Kaplan, meaning "Tiger" in Turkish, is the name that Beyhan Resources Şti., a private engineering and construction corporation, has given its private contractors branch. Silk tycoon and entrepreneur Hikmet Bey needed protection from his business enemies and, being the rich man that he is, decided to establish a security company to provide the services that he needed. He has personally chosen the first recruits who now head the subsidiary of Beyhan called Kaplan Tactical Services. Hikmet, a pious and devout man who keeps true to the dogmas of Islam, set up strict ground rules for operation of the Kaplans. The rule of *Three Nos* (No Collateral Damage, No Warlords, and No Work on the Side) and the fact that any potential recruit's past is thoroughly examined before they are allowed to join, mean that the Tigers have over the years earned a reputation as just and honourable mercenaries, only taking to the field if the cause is right. Each soldier hired by the company is given basic training in engineering, a legacy trait of the connection between Beyhan and the KTS. In any case, Hikmet Bey takes pride in the fact that his troops are making the Sphere a brighter place.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	9	9	9	9	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	-	Social	+2	-
Fortitude	+2	-	Senses	+1	-	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	9	Resolve	10	Vigour	9
Security	2	Morale	-	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Combi Rifle:** Range C/M, 1+6 damage, Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Pistol:** R/C, 1+5 damage, Burst 2, 1H, Vicious 1
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+4 damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, D-charges, Grenades

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Heart of the Tiger:** The Kaplan are recognised as just and fair all across the Sphere. Any Persuasion tests that they make are at -1 difficulty.
- **Mimetism:** Any attacks targeting a Kaplan at ranges beyond Close are made at +1 difficulty.
- **Combat Engineer:** Each Kaplan Merc is given basic training in all aspects technological. During a Technical test, they can reroll a d20, though they must accept the new result.



NOTABLE PERSONALITIES OF HAQQISLAM

TARIK MANSURI

If the Khawarijs are exemplars of physical, tactical, and spiritual perfection, then Tarik Mansuri – one of the first of the Red Turbans to receive Runihura – is the principal amir of these mighty amirs. His accomplishments both on and off the battlefield have ensured his status as a living legend, but despite this he is most comfortable when vanquishing enemies of the Word on the field of valour.

Tarik and the gene therapy program of Runihura were perfectly suited to each other, so much so that a specimen so flawlessly meshed with the super-soldier serum has never been encountered since. His organs and tissues absorbed and bonded with the treatment in unprecedented ways to alter his frame and metabolic properties into deific proportions. Blessed with imperceptible aging, perfect health, lightning-fast reactions, extraordinary strength, a keen intellect, and a hulking frame, Tarik has yet to meet an opponent that fazes his unwavering resolve.

And yet, if his enhanced abilities were not enough to give his enemies pause, his combat record is enough to make their blood run cold. A veteran of the Silk Revolts, the NeoColonial Wars, and the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts, Tarik's history is steeped in the blood of his foes and the legends of his exploits; using his armour as a bedroll and guns as a pillow, he sleeps in the dirt amongst the bones of the fallen, never wavering, always victorious.

Some say that so long as there is a Haqqislam, so there will also be a Tarik Mansuri.



NEMESIS

TARIK MANSURI

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
11 (+2)	10	12 (+2)	11	10	10	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+5	3	Movement	+3	2	Social	+2	+1
Fortitude	+3	2	Senses	+3	2	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	13	Vigour	17
Security	2	Morale	5	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Knife:** Melee, 3+6 (3), 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Teseum Chopper:** Melee, 3+8 (3), Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Piercing 4, Vicious 1
- **Nanopulser:** Range C, 1+5 (3), 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2
- **Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+6 (3), Burst 1, 1H, Standard, Vicious 1
- **Spitfire:** Range M, 1+8 (3), Burst 3, 2H, Spread 2, Unsubtle
- **EXP Grenades:** Range M, 2+4 (3), 1H, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Speculative Fire, Spread 1, Thrown, Unsubtle, Vicious 2

GEAR: Comlog, Survival Kit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Rules:** Fast Recovery (Resolve/Vigour 1), Inured to Aging, Disease, Pain, and Poison, Superhuman Agility 2, Brawn 2
- **Impeccable Specimen:** A demi-god in physique, he has all the Runihura benefits (p. 68) plus he may reroll 1d20 when making an Acrobatics or Discipline test, or any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll for a Resistance test, but must accept the new results. Further, he gains 2 bonus Momentum on Athletics tests. Finally, he applies -1D to difficult terrain tests and to Resistance tests made to avoid status conditions (which may eliminate the need for a test).
- **Living Emblem:** Tarik is a living icon. He may reroll up to 3 (3) when making a melee or ranged attack, or 1d20 on Observation tests, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by 1 (to a minimum of 0). Further, each Momentum or Heat spent for bonus dice to Close Combat tests net two dice, instead of one (+3d20 maximum applies), and Defence or Guard Reactions cost 1 less Heat (minimum of 0). Finally, if spending Momentum to make another attack against the same target with the same ranged weapon, the attack is made at -1D, to a minimum of Average (D1). (Useable only once per round.)
- **Runihura Perfection:** Tarik's physiology has meshed perfectly with Runihura. In addition to standard benefits, he gains Fast Recovery 1 (Resolve and Vigour), plus a Morale Soak of 5.
- **Shield of Allah (X Heat):** Tarik's presence and oratory can stir the hearts of Haqqislam's faithful. As a Minor Action, he may spend up to 5 Heat to grant any follower of the Word within Close Range a Morale Soak of X, where X is equal to the amount of Heat spent to activate this ability.
- **Sworn Defender:** Skilled at defending the word both on and off the battlefield, he may reroll 1d20 when making an Analysis, Education, or Persuade test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he can substitute Analysis for Observation for unhurried tasks. Further, when making a skill test related to the ideology of Haqqislam, he gains +2d20 on the test. Finally, he gains 1 bonus Momentum when making a Persuade test.

LEILA SHARIF

Misinformation isn't just a training regimen for Hassassins, it is a way of life. This exacting truth is no different for the notable Husam, Leila Sharif. As with anyone who trains with the legendary Hassassins, her background is shrouded in mystery. What little is known has been leaked from documents stolen from the Paradiso Coordinated Command, where Leila spent some time during the Combined Army's second offensive.

The documents claim to be a transcript of Leila's own words, in which she places herself as an underestimated daughter of the Daylami neotribes who wander the harsh Alamut wastes. She saw the Sword of Allah as her only escape and, when she came of age, wasted no time in signing up. After honing her formidable talents, she was accepted into the Special Forces – the Husam – which led her to the Old Man of the Mountain and the deadly Hassassins. Of course, this could all just be another cover story; ultimately, only Leila and a handful of others know her true story.

With so many false identities and misnomers to her name, even her exploits across the conflict zones of the Human Sphere are hard to pinpoint. Her involvement has been flagged in hotspots from Sol to Human Edge, though only a few of those alleged sightings have ever been connected to her presence. Potential antagonists should pay important heed to one fact: she rarely operates alone.



ELITE

LEILA SHARIF

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	9	9	10	9	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	1	Movement	+2	1	Social	+1	–
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	9	Resolve	9	Vigour	9
Security	2	Morale	3	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Knife:** Melee, 1+4 (N), 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Breaker Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+5 (N), Breaker, Burst 1, 1H, Standard, Vicious 1
- **Shock Marksman Rifle:** Range M/L, 1+6 (N), Burst 2, 2H, Biotech, Expert 1, Grievous, Vicious 1
- **D-Charges:** Charge, 2+6 (N), 1H, Anti-Materiel 2, Comms, Disposable, Piercing 3, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Daylami Born:** Leila grew up amongst the insular Daylami tribes in the harsh climate of inner Zhat al Amat. She benefits from a Morale Soak of 3 and may reroll 1d20 when making a Survival test, or any dice that did not generate a success when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new results.
- **Husam Trained:** Enlistment in the Sword of Allah led to recruitment and training by the Hassassins. Leila may reroll 1d20 when making an Acrobatics or Stealth test, or up to 2 (N) when making a melee or ranged attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by 1 step (to a minimum of 0). Further, she pays 1 less Heat to make Guard or Defence Reactions (minimum of 0). Finally, when making Stealth tests to make or use a disguise, she gains 2 bonus Momentum.
- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins can never let themselves be taken alive. If the PCs try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).
- **Skilled Infiltrator:** Leila can draw on her various skills to infiltrate behind enemy lines. She can reroll 1d20 when making a Persuade or Thievery test, but must accept the new result.

NAZAROVA TWINS

Zamira and Zuleyka. Beauty and death. The twin consorts of the Kum Chieftan, Kasym Beg, are not only as stunning as they are deadly, they are also ambitious, bewitching, and savvy enough to know when to rely on their consort to settle an issue.

The twins have survived a short but sultry life through a grim determination to prove their own mettle and a burning desire to ride the finest machines. Their rise to power began courtesy of a Kazdhan Rudeboy gene bomb that ensured their mother could only bear daughters. As the eldest siblings, Zamira and Zuleyka fought endless battles to protect their younger sisters. Honing their skills and fostering their infamy, the twins soon learnt that just as many conquests could be won with their other natural talents – their beauty and brazenness.

Their unbridled ambition soon snared them the attention of a powerful chieftain in the form of Radbuk Beg, though he was soon cast aside for the greatest prize of all: Izzat Beg. The chieftain of chieftains soon earned their ire, however, for he was old, wise, and unyielding. Where before their wiles and charm had always held sway, now they grew frustrated under Izzat's immovable will and sardonic chuckle. Following his death at the hands of his own foster son, Kasym Beg, they seem to have had the last laugh for now. Some say they now reign from the shadows, nibbling on his earlobe and guiding his leash. How long they'll be satisfied keeping their dog on a rein is anyone's guess.



NEMESIS

NAZAROVA TWINS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	10	9	10	10	11	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	2	Movement	+3	3	Social	+3	1
Fortitude	+2	2	Senses	+2	2	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	11	Resolve	13	Vigour	11
Security	–	Morale	4	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Zamira:**
 - **E/M Sword (Zamira):** Melee, 1+6 (NS), Non-Hackable, E/M, Parry 2, Vicious 1
 - **Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+6 (NS), Burst 1, 1H, Standard, Vicious 1
 - **Light Shotgun:** Range R/C, 1+6 (NS), Burst 1, Unbalanced, Standard, Knockdown
- **Zuleyka:**
 - **DA Sword:** Melee, 1+6 (NS), Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Piercing 1, Vicious 2
 - **Breaker Pistol ×2:** Range R/C, 1+6 (NS), Breaker, Burst 1, 1H, Standard, Vicious 1
 - **Light Flamethrower ×2:** Range C, 1+6 (NS), Unbalanced, Incendiary 3, Munition, Terrifying 2, Torrent

GEAR: Armoured Clothing, motorcycle (fitted with grenade launchers)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Kasym's Consorts:** Concubines to Kasym, notorious leader of the Beg Kum clan, the twins fear nothing. They benefit from 2 bonus Resole, have a Morale Soak of 4, and may reroll 1d20 when making a Command or Discipline test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, they gain 2 bonus Momentum when making Psywar attacks using the Command skill. Further, when targeted by a Command or Persuade test, Momentum spent to add dice to their Discipline test adds two d20s (instead of one). Finally, they gain +2 (NS) Morale Soak when targeted by Psywar attacks and count each Effect rolled on soak dice for morale as a 2.
- **Kum Veterans:** The twins have survived living among many different Kum gangs. They may reroll 1d20 when making an Acrobatics, Observation, or Pilot test, or up to 2 (NS) when making a ranged attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, they reduce the difficulty of Pilot tests by –1D when riding motorcycles. Finally, they can draw a weapon as a Free Action and do not need to have a weapon in hand in order to respond to attacks – as long as they have a weapon within Reach, they can always make a Close Combat test as part of a Defence or Guard Reaction.
- **Lecherous Harpies:** Many people have fallen to their manipulative allure and charm, and many more will. They may reroll 1d20 when making a Lifestyle or Persuade test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, any time they need assistance from other individual, they may reduce the difficulty of the Lifestyle test to find a contact by –1D, to a minimum of Simple (D0). Finally, they gain 2 bonus Momentum on Persuade tests and two extra d20s when using affection, physical attraction, or the promise of sexual favours as part of a negotiation.
- **Seduce and Manipulate (2 Heat):** The twins know exactly how to get what they want. When seducing an opponent, they inflict a Metanoia for each 4 Resolve their target suffers (instead of 4). Additionally, when a Metanoia is inflicted, they may spend 2 Heat to inflict 1 additional Metanoia.

HUSAM YASBIR

If misinformation is a way of life for the Hassassins, then the Husam, Yasbir, is the one example who epitomises that lifestyle. A living spectre, an enigmatic myth, a ghost story to terrorise new recruits in the secret services of opposing nations. Yasbir doesn't just espouse the principals of deception, he wrote the book on them.

Rumours insist that Yasbir's involvement with the Hassassins can be traced back to their founding in the wake of Farhad Khadivar's murder. There are even those who say that Yasbir was the first Fiday, that he was the one to orchestrate the campaign of vengeance against Khalaf ibn Ahmad. Some reports place Yasbir on the Hassassin's inner council, the Old Man's right hand there to ensure the hardest tasks are successfully completed. A few go as far as to say that Yasbir is the Old Man of the Mountain, hiding in plain sight and taunting his enemies.

Regardless of the truth, which will almost certainly never be known, Yasbir is without doubt the preeminent Husam – those deadly special agents of the Hassassin society. Yasbir's knowledge, wit, and intellect are also renowned away from the subterfuge arena, where he is credited with an insightful knowledge of the Haqqislam doctrine. He is also known to harbour a mischievous temperament that can be surgically aimed to rouse a response, as the Odalisques have recently discovered, much to their chagrin.



NEMESIS

HUSAM YASBIR

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
11	12	10	11	10	10	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+5	3	Movement	+3	3	Social	+2	2
Fortitude	+2	2	Senses	+3	2	Technical	+3	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	11	Resolve	11	Vigour	9
Security	3	Morale	5	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Knife:** Melee, 1+5 (N), 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Viral Sword:** Melee, 1+6 (N), 1H, Non-Hackable, Parry 1, Piercing 2, Subtle 1, Vicious 1
- **Rifle + Light Shotgun:** Range C, 1+8 (N), Burst 2, 2H, Medium MULTI, Vicious 1
 - *Light Shotgun:* Range C, 1+7 (N), Unbalanced, Knockdown
- **Nanopulser:** Range C, 1+5 (N), 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Holoprojector

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Loyal Unto Death (2 Heat):** Hassassins can never let themselves be taken alive. If the PCs try to capture a Hassassin, a Heat point spend allows the Hassassin to take their own life (with a concealed cyanide capsule or similar method).
- **Old Man's Right Hand:** Old Man's Right Hand: Though the truth of his position and identity might never be known, Yasbir is undeniably deeply embedded. He can reroll 1d20 when making a Command or Lifestyle test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he nets 2 d20s when spending Momentum to add extra dice (instead of 1) and gains 2 bonus Momentum on successful Psywar attacks when using the Command skill. Further, any time he needs assistance from other individuals, he reduces the difficulty of the Lifestyle test to find a contact by -1D, to a minimum of Simple (D0). Finally, he has several elite contacts drawn from across the Human Sphere, which allows him to make a Challenging (D2) Lifestyle test to gain additional Assets and resources for any task related to Hassassin activity.
- **Silent Death (1 Heat):** Yasbir's targets never see him coming. He may spend Heat in place of Momentum to reduce the category of stealth actions – noisy, sneaky, silent – and reduces the cost by 1 Heat.
- **The First Fiday:** Yasbir's legend serves as a master-class in misdirection and peerless skill. He benefits from a Morale Soak of 5 and may reroll up to 3 (N) when making a melee or ranged attack, or 1d20 when an Acrobatics, Stealth, or Thievery test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by 1 (to a minimum of 0) and can draw a weapon as a Free Action; he does not need to have a weapon in hand in order to respond to an attack – as long as he has a weapon within Reach, he can always make a Close Combat test as part of a Defence or Guard Reaction. Further, each Momentum or Heat he spends to gain additional dice for a Close Combat or Stealth test provides two dice, instead of one (+3d20 maximum still applies), and he can substitute his Close Combat skill for Acrobatics when attempting a Defence or Guard Reaction. Finally, he can reroll 2 d20s when attempting to pick a lock or overcome a security system, but must accept the new results.
- **Train and Counsel:** Yasbir has decades of experience drawn from many fields, which he freely relates and debates with his students. He may reroll 1 d20 when making an Analysis, Education, Hacking, Persuade or Tech test, but must accept the new result.



THE YAZ

NEMESIS

YAZ "THE TURK"

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	12	7	10	12	10	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

	+	1		+	1		+	1
Combat	+1	1	Movement	+2	1	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+2	2	Technical	+4	4

DEFENCES

Firewall	16	Resolve	11	Vigour	8
Security	4	Morale	-	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Assault Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+47CD damage], Burst 2, Unbalanced, Vicious 1
- **D-Charges:** 2+6 (NS) damage, 1H, Anti-Materiel, Piercing 3, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2
- **Hacking Device:** CLAW-1 (CLAW-1 Gotcha!), SWORD-1 (SWORD-1 Samā), SHIELD-1, GADGET-3 (GADGET-1 Fairy Dust, GADGET-1 Lockpicker), IC-1 (IC-1 Haboob) +3 (NS) Bonus Damage

GEAR: Ad-Qali Armour, Kum Motorcycle, Powered Multitool

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Hyper-Focused:** A suitably interesting challenge can lose Yaz in his own thoughts. When attempting a complex Technical skill test, he gains 1 bonus Momentum but also adds 1 to the complication range.
- **Perpetual Tinkering:** If it isn't broke, Yaz won't fix it. He'll improve it. When making a Tech test, he can reroll 1d20, but must accept the new result.
- **Ramshackle Firewall:** The tangled mess of spaghetti logic that makes up Yaz's custom Firewall is quite effective, right up until it's a hot mess. He has a Security Soak of 4, but suffers 2 Breaches for each 5 quantronic damage (instead of 1).

YAZ "THE TURK" (HACKER/ENGINEER)

"Well Yaz, one down, four more to go, and inshaAllah a nice vacation in Acontecimiento! We are doing great!"

The young man whispered to himself and attached a small remote device on a demolition charge. Then he affixed the whole package to a column in the immense basement of the R&D HQ of Phoenix Industries in Turoqua, Neoterra.

Hurriedly, he hopped onto a big, black motorcycle, more appropriate for a Kum nomad than one of the best freelance saboteurs this side of the Sphere.

He buzzed around the building's basement installing and activating demolition charges on the foundations of the edifice. After checking the time, he headed toward the central elevators. "Almost done, Yaz. One more and off we go!"

Why his contact wanted such a thorough destruction job was not something Yaz was willing to risk investigating. They had a good relationship. She "outsourced" jobs for Yaz's particular skillset, and he got paid handsomely.

This time it was clear his contact wanted results fast. But it had to be clean – no casualties – and that's why she'd called him. He could level a whole block and come up with a way to keep fatalities to a minimum.

The plan took several days to implement but had been executed to perfection. It was the night of the Aristeia! Grand Slam finals, and he managed to secure many tickets with a little hacking and old-fashioned bribery. These Yaz then gifted to the employees scheduled to work that night. With almost everyone in the building at the game, he was free to force out the few workers remaining in the installations one way or another.

Yaz leisurely worked once he hacked into the building's system. As he was placing the last demolition charge next to the elevator, a loud "ping" told him someone was descending to the basement.

Anxiously, Yaz looked around and noticed something out of place – a detail he missed – a motorcycle parked next to the elevator well.

He quickly ran a scan of the building's vehicle pool, and all were accounted for. Why was an additional bike here? Unless, it was an unregistered vehicle! Only high-clearance personnel would be able to avoid the system.

The elevator's doors opened. Yaz was frantic; he had to come up with something, otherwise the whole operation would be finished.

A young executive came out of the elevator heading straight for the parked motorcycle. The man stopped, looked around questioningly, and activated his Comlog.

"It's all or nothing, Yaz!" The Turk took a deep breath and approached the executive. "Excuse me! You do not have clearance to be here!"

APPEARANCE

A young man in outmoded, vintage clothes. He is wearing a black leather jacket and rides a huge motorcycle reminiscent of the Kum nomads in Bourak. He carries a messenger bag full of technological equipment.

ROLEPLAYING

- Aware of his image and takes care not to get dirty
- Refers to his motorcycle as "Mara"
- If given the chance, will talk about a Nasmat he is building by himself

BACKGROUND

Yaz "The Turk" is a very talented Haqqislamite freelancer. An experienced engineer and brilliant hacker, he would have been a perfect candidate for recruitment by Alamut were it not for his carefree and somewhat self-absorbed attitude. As a freelancer, Yaz roams the Human Sphere, chasing his own fortune and accepting the occasional odd job from unnamed sources. Forever tinkering, he is currently modifying a Nasmat remote. Inspired by Yu Jing's Sù-Jiàn Remote Presence technologies, he hopes his model "Hayat" will be a success in prospecting and retrieval projects, if he ever gets it to work right. To that end, he is attempting to develop a semi-AI algorithm which he keeps in a dedicated datapack. With the typical preoccupation of genius, Yaz hasn't realized this algorithm will put him at odds with the Bahram when they learn about it. It's only a matter of time before trouble kicks in his door.

FRIEDRICH (DILETTANTE)



DAVID KAUFMAN

NEMESIS

FRIEDRICH

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	8	8	11	9	13	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	-	Movement	+2	2	Social	+4	4
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	-	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	14	Vigour	10
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Nanopulser Cuff Links:** Range C, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2
- **Unarmed Strike:** Melee, 1+2 (N) damage, Stun, Subtle 1

GEAR: Armoured Clothing (Bespoke Suit), Blu Khat, Negotiator's Suite (24-Hour Rental)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Abandon Discretion (2 Heat):** One too many joyrides taught Friedrich a thing or two about vehicle collisions. He can double the damage of a ramming attack by spending 2 Heat. If he's piloting a motorcycle, this also lets him reroll up to 3 (N) on the attack, but he must accept the new result.
- **Commanding Presence:** Friedrich tends to assume that he's in charge. In his defence, it's because he so often is. When making tests based on Personality, he may reroll 1d20, but must accept the new result.
- **Old Money:** Some folks are born with a silver spoon; Friedrich got the rest of the place setting as well. He generates +1 additional Momentum on successful Lifestyle tests.

Friedrich was exasperated. Team Orange was beating Team Green in the final. He didn't care much for Aristeia! but he had bet on the Greens. If the board got wind of his gambling, he was in for a lecture from his father and uncles about responsibility... again.

He left his luxurious office in Phoenix Industries' R&D HQ still scowling at his Comlog. The building was strangely empty and dark. Even during the game, there should be people working and compiling data. As he entered the elevator, his Comlog holo-projected the 5th round.

The doors opened into the almost-empty underground parking lot. Two vehicles stood out. His motorcycle, parked besides next to a massive column, and a larger black motorcycle; a greasy piece of equipment more in keeping with a backward rock like Ariadna. It was also parked in a prohibited area. Friedrich lifted his wrist to summon security, but was interrupted.

"Excuse me! You do not have clearance to be here!"

The scowling young heir spun around to face a man wearing a black jacket who was hurriedly storing a small electronic device in a messenger bag.

"Who are you?" Friedrich demanded.

"We are fixing the... ah security protocols. Who are you?"

"Me? I own this place! Show me your credentials!"

"Sure! Sure!"

The man opened his messenger bag and pulled a pistol. Friedrich lunged instinctively, throwing the assailant to the floor. The gun skidded to one side, the bag the other, causing a small device to roll out – a detonation trigger!

Friedrich hesitated then, against his common sense grabbed, the wrist of the stranger as he dove for the trigger.

Friedrich's opponent lashed out, catching him in the groin. He scooped up the device, ran for the black motorcycle, and sped away. Friedrich limped to his own bike. The Teseum/Atlassium engine roared to life, and within moments he burst free of the garage. It took a few heartbeats, to reel in the saboteur and pull alongside. Having no weapons at hand, Friedrich disabled the bike's safety features, initiated autopilot, and dove off his bike. With a horrific crunch, the bike rammed the saboteur at top speed and sent him flying.

Friedrich staggered up and eyed the nearby detonator..

"Well, either I prevent the building from being bombed or I get fired by the board tomorrow morning. I guess there is only one way to find out if I'm getting a bonus this year!" Friedrich thought as he dove towards the trigger.

APPEARANCE

Friedrich is an elegantly dressed young man. He regards people as if they were some kind of merchandise, and he mentally appraises their value. He is exceptionally polite in his speech with a distinct, cultured PanOceanian accent.

ROLEPLAYING

- Moves very confidently, and assumes he is in charge of every situation
- Slightly arrogant but never impolite
- Always impeccably dressed

BACKGROUND

Friedrich is heir to an important stakeholder in Phoenix Industries, a powerful Hypercorp based in PanOceania that belongs to one of the technological lobbies. Although Neoterran, his family hails from the aristocracy in Sol, and he has always played the part. Elegant and well educated, his father and uncles groomed him for leadership of the Hypercorp. Until he got involved in a scandal involving the launch of a defective remote GPS system for the PanOceanian Navy. Instead of shifting the blame to manufacturers or distributors, Friedrich took the noble action of assuming the blame, generating heavy losses for the R&D division.

This unheard of response from a top-level executive generated quite a ruckus in the datasphere. Even though the public praised Phoenix Industries' responsibility at the time, the Board of Directors did not approve, black-balling Friedrich until he atoned.

The situation has Friedrich in an uncomfortable situation; he has always considered himself a citizen of PanOceania, but now his family is demanding he shift his allegiances. Although it would seem a simple decision, he is worried there is a darker side to the bargain. One with a price too high to pay.



Zaid Farha (Maghariba Guard Pilot)



DAVID OGER

NEMESIS

Zaid Farha

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	11	11	11	8	7	13

Fields of Expertise

	+	1		+	1		+	1
Combat	+4	1	Movement	+3	1	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+3	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	1

Defences

Firewall	9	Resolve	16	Vigour	14
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

Attacks

- **Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+6 damage, Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1

GEAR: Crashesuit, MediKit

Special Abilities

- **Born to the Pilot's Seat:** Zaid is extremely comfortable inside Akrep 75, and equally uncomfortable outside of it. When piloting a TAG, he reduces the Heat cost of taking Reactions by 1 (to a minimum of 1). Outside of a TAG, however, he increases the Heat cost of taking Reactions by +1.
- **Cool Under Fire:** Zaid is many things, but rash isn't one of them. When making a Discipline test, he can reroll 1d20, but must accept the new result.
- **Simple Plan (1 Heat):** Sometimes it's the best plan. When spending Heat to seize initiative, if he makes a ranged attack, he can use a Reload at no additional Heat cost.

"This is Farha, Akrep 75 to Patrol 2! Do you have eyes?"

"Akrep 75, this is Al Phenix. The security system is down. Satellite scans indicate two flying vehicles on the west end of the warehouse."

Zaid spun his TAG and quickly came face to face with two heavy transports. One had its ramp down; the other was taking off.

Without hesitation he opened fire, raking the landed craft with his HMG and ending any hope of its escaping. Zaid was turning his targeting systems towards the fleeing vehicle when an alarm started to ring in the cabin. Someone was trying to hack into the TAG's systems. He quickly flicked the safety that would reboot the vehicle to avoid being immobilized. Then, as suddenly as the attack had begun, it stopped.

"Akrep 75, we've got your back. Patrol 2 is here. Enemy hacker is 23.5 metres north-east. You got him?"

"Got him!" The TAG wheeled around and positioned itself between the burning wreckage and the warehouse. A squad of hostiles in mismatched uniforms was taking cover behind a forklift. The hacker threw his headset to the ground and ran to one of his comrades who was aiming a missile launcher at Zaid.

"No, you don't!" Zaid squeezed one trigger, and a white-blue tongue of flame bathed the interior of the already burning warehouse, followed by an explosion after the forklift and ammunition ignited.

Zaid didn't have time to gloat. He turned the TAG's heavy machine gun 85° north and started firing full auto at an Anaconda TAG that had just come around the corner. Zaid's shots were true, and the enemy TAG fell to the ground.

"This is Patrol 2. East wing is clear. Proceeding to your location."

Zaid approached the fallen TAG and warily dismounted, carrying his TAG's MediKit with him. With any luck, he could save the wounded pilot, and then they would have someone to interrogate about this heist.

Appearance

He is a serious-looking man with the full, greying beard common among some Haqqislamites. Zaid carries a MediKit pack with him and seems uncomfortable when out of his TAG and always smells of sweat.

Roleplaying

- Speaks in tactical terms
- Tends to oversimplify things, particularly military actions
- Does not like open places

Background

Akrep 75 is the lead TAG of the Third Armoured Company of the Muhafiz. Its pilot, Zaid Farha is one of the regiment's aces and as such stands to the stereotypical image of the Haqqislamite TAG pilots, confident but cunning, with a backup plan ready for any occasion.

Propaganda aside, Zaid is a very level-headed specialist most of the time, understanding that overreaching and bravado are the best ways to have his unit isolated, surrounded, or worse, hacked into uselessness.

He cares about his team's members and honour, training them to perform perfectly as one of the most prestigious Muhafiz units.

AL PHENIX (DJANBAZAN HACKER)



DHED JR.

NEMESIS

AL PHENIX

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	11	10	10	13	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	1	Movement	+2	2	Social	+1	-
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+2	2	Technical	+4	4

DEFENCES

Firewall	17	Resolve	10	Vigour	11
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Rifle:** Range M, 1+7 (N) damage, Burst 2, 2H, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Light Shotgun:** Range C, 1+6 (N) damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Knockdown
- **Killer Hacking Device:** CLAW-0, SWORD-2, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1, UPGRADE Cybermask, Piercing 3, +3 (N) Bonus Damage

GEAR: Blue Khat, Djanbazan Regeneration, Light Combat Armour, Multispectral Visor 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Combat Hacker:** Phenix is laser-focused on taking out enemy hackers and constantly searches for new methods of attack. When making an Infowar attack, he can reroll up to 6 (N) but must accept the new result.
- **It's All Over but the Crying (2 Heat):** Phenix takes a special sort of joy in highlighting enemy positions. By spending 2 Heat, he can inflict the Marked condition on any one target in the scene that he can perceive.

The five-man squad of Djanbazan operatives soared through the desert in the all-terrain vehicle. Their target was a distinct smoke column from a series of explosions. Everyone was focused and ready for action, except for the hacker in the back of the vehicle trying to adjust his headgear.

"I cannot reach anybody in the warehouse, Raqib! Somehow the communications have been cut!"

"Well, either you do something to find out what is happening, or we are going in blind Phenix!"

Al Phenix grumbled to himself and, running out of ideas, went old-school to access Bourak's military satellite net. He quickly found visuals on Mehmanzara Silk warehouse, a top-secret installation near Funduq.

The satellite feed showed the burning warehouse and no signs of defensive action. Two unidentified air transports were being loaded with the precious Haqqislamite chemical.

Radio silence was broken. The first good news of the night. It was the patrolling TAG, an Akrep assigned to the Muhafiz for delicate missions like guarding Haqqislam's Silk.

Quickly, Al Phenix gave the TAG pilot the whereabouts of the shuttles and scanned the cyberlinks near the warehouse.

His retinal display showed five nodes: one blue and four reds. Blue was Akrep 75, and the reds were the two shuttles, broadcasting communications, another repeater with open comms channels and a series of interconnected firewalls, and a final red source, broadcasting crude but very aggressive code – a cyber-attack.

Since he was still alive, the attack wasn't directed at him, so it looked like the Akrep 75 would soon get a nasty surprise. Quickly, Al Phenix uploaded an offensive code he had been tweaking for the past few weeks and broadcast it through all open channels. Then he waited to adjust and bring down any firewall the enemy hacker could put up.

Al Phenix watched with glee as the red nodes started flickering. First one of the shuttles went offline, the second one blocked all transmissions, and the third red cyberlink stood its ground and turned amber as security was bypassed. But all

this was a distraction, as the final red cyberlink, the hacker's technology, went dead changing to the simple white of a "fatal error" signal.

With a grim smile Phenix relayed the co-ordinates of the hacker to the TAG. Whether the thieves knew it or not, it was all over before the shooting.

APPEARANCE

Tall and well-built, Al Phenix ignores pretty much everyone except those carrying high-tech gear. He constantly checks his hacking device every time someone enters the room, scanning them as potential threats.

ROLEPLAYING

- Very haughty, believing himself the best of the best
- Smokes a lot when not on a mission.
- Always tending to his equipment, constantly updating code and servicing his hacking device when off duty

BACKGROUND

Al Phenix is what you would expect from a Djanbazan operative – a fit superhuman with a dangerous look and steel-cold eyes. He joined the Djanbazan out of patriotism but quickly adapted to the brutal training and cold approach to life and death of the unit. During his first deployment against a smuggler ring in Bourak, he faced his first cyber-enemy, barely coming out alive.

This encounter was exhilarating to Al Phenix, and since then he has focused on cyber-attacks and programming the perfect way to neutralize any hacking threat to his unit.



JOHN KRAEMER

NEMESIS

MIKHA'IL AL-TAJAR

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	13	7	9	11	10	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	—	Movement	+1	1	Social	+3	2
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+3	3	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	13	Vigour	8
Security	—	Morale	4	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Vrabc Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+7 damage, Burst 1, 1H, Concealed 1, Subtle 1, Vicious 1

GEAR: Ballistic Vest

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Authorial Intent:** Mikha'il has a way with words; when he can get out of his own way, that is. When making a test based on Personality, he adds +1 Momentum if the test is successful. However, if it's a face-to-face test, he also adds +4 complication range and +1 Difficulty.
- **Deductive Reasoning:** Whatever else can be said about him, nobody puts disparate clues together quite like Mikha'il. He generates +1 additional Momentum on successful Analysis tests.
- **Pins and Needles:** It's not paranoia if they're actually out to get you. When making an Observation or Surprise test, Mikha'il can reroll 1d20, but must accept the new result.

MIKHA'IL AL-TAJAR (CIVILIAN AUTHOR)

"I tell you, sweet Zobeida, I should have gone the way of my brother Jalil and become a poet! Sure, there are always angry husbands looking to beat him senseless, but I'd gladly trade three furious cuckolds for a crime lord on the warpath!"

The Odalisque escorting Mikha'il al-Tajar ignored him, having heard the famous political author's tirade for the third time in as many days. Zobeida took a sharp breath, her muscles tensing, and then quick as lightning threw the author to the floor, barely dodging the shots fired at them. With a silent curse, the bodyguard made sure her client was safe before firing back at the already-vanished aggressors.

"A curse on Kadir and all his ancestors! And a curse on me for meddling in their crimes!"

Few minutes later, Mikha'il was in the Divân safehouse studying his notes. There was something wrong here, and he just couldn't point to exactly what. Still rattled, he realized he would be dead by now if not for the beautiful Zobeida. That grim idea set the author thinking out loud.

"Only the Divân knew we were visiting him... I personally contacted him with my encryption code... which would mean the Divân..."

He opened several files about the current research regarding Kalid's web of corruption but found nothing relating the Divân. "Why would the Divân attack me? It doesn't make sense. He could have killed me earlier in a more discreet manner, unless someone wants me to investigate the Divân, perhaps as a diversion!" On a hunch, he crossed-checked his files, and this time he found a name appearing in Kalid's contact lists and in the Divân's household staff, one of the main investors in the caravansary. Scratching his beard, he called his bodyguard.

"Zobeida, pack your bags. We are leaving for Neoterra!"

APPEARANCE

Mikha'il wears the latest in Haqqislamite finery. He is a nervous man, fretting about everything around him and takes notes in his Comlog constantly. He is constantly looking over his shoulder as if someone is following him.

ROLEPLAYING

- Intelligent and informed, always talking about current politics
- Constantly makes exaggerated compliments to women
- Very uncomfortable telling a lie

BACKGROUND

Mikha'il has always been good with the written word (if not necessarily speaking it), and he continually asks the right questions. He is also a bit careless and never takes into consideration the consequences of his actions. Still, this is what got him one of the highest-paid posts in investigative journalism and several awards, including the prestigious O-12 journalism award for his piece on the Helot revolts in Varuna.

Mikha'il is an idealist, and he truly writes not for fame or recognition but to right injustice in the Human Sphere. When one of his contacts commented on the rising number of Cube kidnappings, he began a casual investigation only to realise he had discovered a much more dreadful cycle of crime, violence, and corruption with a little-known crime lord known as Kalid.

His three-part exposé promises to rattle the Human Sphere status quo to its foundations. Publishing the first part has already made him a target of Kalid's henchmen, and he actually fears for his life for the first time.

HASHIM MAHIR ABD AL-QADIR "E FAHDA" (THE PANTHER)



DIETMAR BOEHMER

NEMESIS

"E FAHDA"

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	9	11	9	9	10	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+2	1	Social	+2	2
Fortitude	+3	3	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	-

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	15	Vigour	14
Security	-	Morale	3	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Spike Knuckles:** Melee, 1+6 (N) damage, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Piercing 1, Vicious 1
- **Heavy Pistol:** Range R/C, 2+7 (N) damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1

GEAR: Armoured Clothing, Blu Khat, Nitrocaine, Tear Gas Grenades

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Go Ahead, Champ:** Some people are just naturally abrasive. E Fahda, however, has a personality like a sharpened knife and wit to match. When making a Psywar attack, he can reroll up to 6 (N), but must accept the new result.
- **Like a Panther:** E Fahda is noticed when he wishes to be. Otherwise, it's surprisingly difficult. He can reroll one d20 when making a Stealth test but must accept the new result.
- **Sure Thing, Princess:** It's difficult to make emotional appeals to someone who sees you as a tool. His callous attitude grants E Fahda a Morale Soak of 3.

A huge and bloodied dogface stood in front of the desk, breathing heavily and rubbing his neck. He might have been a Dog-Bowl player once, but now he was just another beaten-down thug.

The man behind the very expensive-looking desk sat calmly counting flextabs.

"... 1,800 and 2,000 Caledonian pounds for my friend! Here..." He handed the plastic bills to the standing man "Don't spend them all in one place!"

The dogface snatched the bills with a bruised hand and spat.

"Back in the day I wouldn't have to stand this crap from scum like you!"

"Well, back in the day you didn't have a 'caine addiction and your wife hadn't run away with your money, ain't that right, champ?"

The huge man cracked the desk with a ham-sized fist and started hyperventilating, foaming at his lips. As his red eyes fixed on the promoter, a heavy pistol was shoved into his face.

"Go ahead champ! It will take you at least one or two seconds to transform and at this distance I'm not likely to miss your ugly face."

Slowly the man composed himself, still covered in sweat but once again breathing steadily.

"Good, take the money and get out. Remember, I can always find another burned-out chump to fight in my pits."

The man exited, and Hashim, known as "E Fahda" or "the Panther" turned on his holoprojector and started checking the night's profits. "Maybe I am done using the dogface after all..."

Once he was satisfied, he turned to more serious business and the holoprojector showed a criminal profile of the most recent kingpin in the Human Sphere: Kalid, his childhood friend and current nemesis.

Hashim relaxed on his chair and observed the 3D image slowly rotate before him.

"On second thought, I may have one more use for the chump, one more attuned to his current mood..."

APPEARANCE

With an evil gaze and rough facial features, Hashim looks more like an executioner than the suave businessman his clothes try to indicate. Although his physical characteristics tell of a brute, he moves with the economy and elegance of a graceful predator.

ROLEPLAYING

- Will not resort to violence until sure he will be victorious
- Selfish and envious, never offers aid unless there is profit
- Never bothers to learn other people's names, calling them "champ" or "princess"

BACKGROUND

The bastard son of a lesser caravanerai Diwân, Hashim Mahir Abd Al-Qadir, quickly understood his lot in life would not be one of prominence in his father's family or state. Disenfranchised and resentful, he became a problematic teenager falling out of grace, when he began to pursue illegal activities taking advantage of his clearance in the caravanerai. An innate smuggler, Hashim also learned to fend for himself and to avoid the caravanerai's security systems, earning the nickname "E Fahda."

Eventually, he would spend time in prison, but instead of correcting his ways, he found a veritable oasis of vices and criminals from which to build an increasingly powerful crime syndicate. And now that he's finished his time, he is ready to flex his criminal muscles in the Submondo.



CHRONOWRAITH

NEMESIS

KHAYAL AL BAHADUR

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	14	8	9	12	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

	+	2	+	1	Social	+1	1
Combat	+2	2	Movement	+2	1	Social	+1 1
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+3	1	Technical	+4 2

DEFENCES

Firewall	16	Resolve	11	Vigour	9
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Assault Hacking Device:** CLAW-3 (CLAW-2 Oblivion (1+6 **NS**), CLAW-3 Basilisk (1+7 **NS**)), SWORD-0, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1, UPGRADE (Cybermask, Bendelladj Archive 1) +3 **NS** bonus damage (already factored into CLAW attacks)
- **Bardom Rifle:** Range M, 1+9 **NS** damage. Burst 2, 2H, MULTI Light Mod[LGL], Non-Hackable, Vicious 1
- **Wetspike:** Melee, 1+4 **NS** damage, 1H, Biotech, Piercing 1, Subtle 3, Toxic 1

GEAR: Deployable Repeaters, Light Combat Armour, Assorted Exotic Tea Leaves

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Efficient Analyst:** A trained Barid, Khayal is quite at home analysing mountains of data. He gains 1 bonus Momentum on Analysis or Education tests.
- **Professionally Nosey:** Khayal has a nose for trouble. When taking a Reaction to make a stealth state test a face-to-face test, he reduces the Heat cost by 1 (to a minimum of 0).
- **Trained Messenger:** Khayal, like all Barid, gets his message across. He can reroll 1d20 when making a Hacking test, but must accept the new result.

KHAYAL AL BAHADUR (BARID)

Khayal, a Barid agent, sat in front of his console, reviewing the information he continually surveyed. For the past few months, his mission was to scourge a particularly remote sector of Human Edge looking for the whereabouts of certain persons of interest.

Whenever he found a trace in Maya's dataflux, he would report back to Alamut and try to pinpoint the target's location. From there, he was either logistical support in case a Fiday was deployed, or he simply shadowed the individual with a quantronic tracking program.

Navigating Human Edge's hodgepodge of micronets and dataspheres was amusing to Khayal. His holographic displays were a constant sea of reassuring green and occasional yellow code-names streaming through the dataflux. Security protections came and went as his system routinely overcame the poorly guarded networks of small mining complexes, semi-abandoned outposts, and the occasional prospector ship.

Suddenly, a red serial number popped up in the dataflux stream. It was a Frigate from Yu Jing broadcasting its patrol path around Fujian orbital station, a message of live and let live to any pirates or smugglers in the region.

A second red ping, this time a message package. "Probably executive plans for one of the mines." Khayal said out loud. "Yallah! I need a tea..." The hacker took his gear off, rubbing his tired eyes. When he put his headset back on, the high-security package had vanished as if it had never been sent! Khayal remembered then that supposedly there was no-one in the zone with a system capable of opening such a high security data package either.

Frowning, he ran a surreptitious search, quietly running riot through a dozen systems before he found it. The package had camouflaged itself as a holo-sports broadcast in the central core of an abandoned prospecting outpost. What business did the StateEmpire have with such a place? Surveying the site, Khayal noted that, for an abandoned outpost, it had a surprisingly high population. Khayal had more questions than answers.

He opened his list of targets and found only one candidate with that kind of security access. He needed to learn more without spooking the mark. Khayal sent two encrypted messages, one to Alamut and the next to his contact, Song, informing them of a potential bounty in Human Edge's farthest regions.

APPEARANCE

A young man with a well-trimmed goatee. He seems quite agreeable although slightly distracted. He carries his hacking device and equipment in a bag with several Aristeia! pins and badges.

ROLEPLAYING

- Enjoys a nice hot cup of tea and always carries a thermos
- Constantly prying into other people's businesses and secrets
- Quite untidy, leaving trash and assorted stuff all over the place

BACKGROUND

Born in a small village east of Turfan, Khayal had patience, intellect and the curiosity that Alamut looks for in their hackers, which ensured that his education and indoctrination flowed easily and normally into the ranks of the secret group. During his training he managed to rig the waging system of the season's Aristeia! regional finals, earning him a harsh punishment by his superiors and the nickname "Al – Bahadur" from his friends.

Since then, he has worked under the surveillance of his superiors as a data analyst, looking for anomalies and potential threats in Maya. Although efficient, his superiors wonder if he will prove to have the mettle required to be a field operative. Khayal's next mission will involve him going to Paradise in a search and destroy mission of a reported rogue hacker listed in the B4ckd00r files. How he solves that mission will be his final test.



DAVID WHITWORTH

NEMESIS

MUS'AB MAHD

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
11	10	13	10	8	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	1	Movement	+3	1	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+4	1	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	14	Vigour	17
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Knives:** Melee, 1+6 (N) damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Light Shotgun:** Range C, 1+6 (N) damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Knockdown

GEAR: Ad-Qali Armour 1, Kum Motorcycle

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Fear 2, Menacing 2
- **"Salik!" (X Heat):** Mus'ab likes to go fast; his ride doesn't get a say in the matter. By spending 1 Heat, he can increase a land vehicle's speed by +1 for two rounds, plus an additional round for each Heat spent, though doing so increases the complication range on his Pilot tests by +1 per round until the vehicle's speed returns to normal.

MUS'AB MAHD (KUM MOTORIZED TROOPER)

The double trail of dust led to the West. Mus'ab Mahd gritted his teeth and accelerated, ignoring the blasting sun of Tamerlane. Someone had infiltrated the chemicals laboratory where Silk was synthesised and destroyed the computer system with an electromagnetic bomb.

The loss of the lab was bad, and certainly worthy of serious punishment, but killing Hazim and Fouad, the two tribesmen Mus'ab had left as guards, escalated matters. The saboteur had to die.

He was thinking on the gruesome demise of his enemies when he noticed the single trail of dust zigzagging some hundred metres in front of him.

A single trail of dust. "Sons of dogs!" Mus'ab Mahd cursed, realising he rode into an ambush. As if on cue, the threat materialized out of nowhere, shooting an arrow – of all the weapons in the Sphere! – at Mus'ab. He shifted all his weight to the left to avoid the missile only to lose control of his motorcycle and skid on the desert sands.

Roaring, Mus'ab jumped up as quickly as he'd landed, firing his shotgun blindly at his attacker. The black-clad, masked killer deftly jumped sideways in an amazing cartwheel, dodging the Kum's fire.

Mus'ab spat in contempt, threw his shotgun at the ninja and drew his knife, a huge and cruel piece of serrated steel.

The operative responded by drawing a delicate, deadly sword and charged Mus'ab. Instead of dodging the ninja's blow, he parried the blade with his left arm. The sword bit through Mus'ab's bracelets easily, into his flesh, but the worst of the force had been absorbed. Clenching his teeth, Mus'ab grabbed his attacker and growled.

"Now, it's my turn!"

APPEARANCE

Mus'ab, a heavily tattooed Kum motorcyclist, often is astride a huge motorcycle. Smelling of sweat and motor oil, he carries several wicked-looking knives and a shotgun. His clothes show more muscles than covering them despite living in the Bourak deserts.

ROLEPLAYING

- Calls Yu Jing citizens "cowardly murderers"
- Brags about his achievements, particularly romantic and military ones
- Impatient and cannot stand still or be in a slow-moving vehicle

BACKGROUND

Mus'ab Mahd is a pragmatic man. You have to be if you intend to survive in the Tien Shan mountains; that is the way of the Kyrgyz nomads. What not all Kyrgyz understand, though, is that you can always escape your enemies (or your tribe chief which oftentimes is the same thing) and fight another day. Plus, revenge is always best served cold. Sharif Sher, his old chieftain, is going to pay for his crimes. This Mus'ab has sworn.

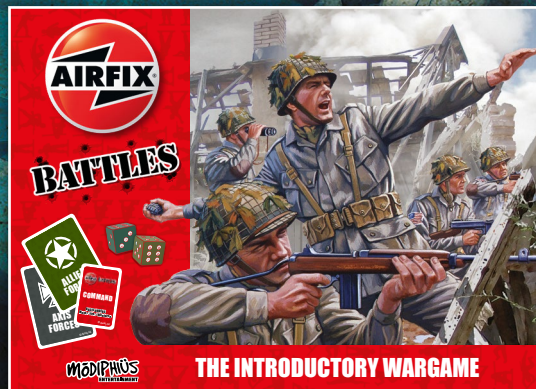
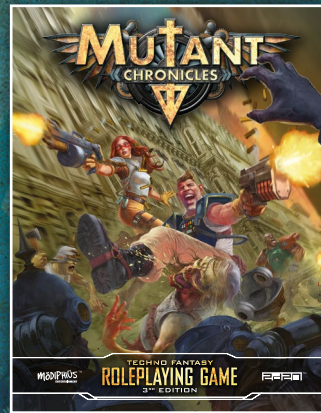
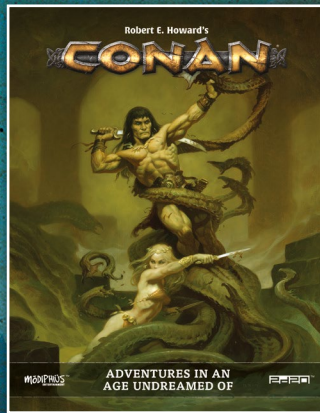
To this end, he has sided with the Haqqislamite army, along with his childhood friends who chose to join him in this temporary exile. He now has a haven and access to resources, weapons, and men to lead, slowly building his reputation and warband. Once he has the strength he needs, he will make his comeback and extract a painful revenge on the man who cast him away.



INFINITY
INDEX

360° Vision/Visor	64	Djanbazan Regeneration	65	I-Kohl Ta'riya-T	68	Qorsaptar	30
Ababil	34	Djanbazan Tactical Group	4–5	Iran Zhat Al Amat	8, 10–11, 16–17, 19, 28, 30, 91	Rahma	35
Adid, Abigail	10	Djinncloak	66	Iran Zhat Al Amat Shahname	28–30	Ravansär	30–31, 33
Ad-Qali Armour X	64	Djinn Kit	66	Item Types		Rihla Rations	70
Akbar Doctor (Career Profile)	81	Druze Shock Teams	96	Augmented Reality (AR)	63	Runihura Augmentation	70
Akbar Kit	64	Druze Society	5	i-Kohl	63	Sabr	87–88
Akrep TAG	64	Eadala	35	Jamal Transport	68	Sadaqa	35
Alamut	28–30, 91–92, 108	Echelon Technologies	11	Janissary	4	Safar Council	38
Al-Andalus	13	E/Marat	66	Jaziya	89	Saif	22, 36
al-Masjid AR	65	Equinox	9	Jolly Jim Argento's Fanciulla	50	Saifari AR	71
Al Medinat	10–11, 18–19, 21	ExcelRate	66	Kaplan Tactical Services	5, 96	Salik	88
Al Medinat Caliphate	18–20	Eye of Allah	35	Karli	32	Sanbur	88
Al-Medinat University Professor	94	Fareedat System	34	KAVM Inc	68	Sari Han Vila Booster	34, 36
Al-Mi'raj	34	Orbitals	36	Kösmet Caravansary	51	Sarikamis	25
Alnamar Station	36	Planets	34–35	Khadijah	32–33, 45, 80	S-Beacon	71
'Amal	21–22	Fasji Poison	66	Khafiin Microservo Armour	69	S-Beaconed Adversaries	71
Amal Haqiqiun	35	Fayudan Poison	66	Khawarij (Career Profile)	84	Sefurokku (Safe Rock)	50
Asawira Regiment	95	Ferdous	21	Khiva Kala	12, 16, 26	Seitek's Death Ride	28
Avvalan Hotel	33	Functionary (Career Profile)	82	Kosmet	40–41	Semetei	9, 28
Azelik Poison	65	Funduu Sultanate	5, 22–25	Kum-Dag	26	SHIELD-2 Taharat	71
Azelik Shells	65	Gabqar	4	Kum Ganger (Career Profile)	84	Ships	
Azra'il Special Deterrence Group	5	Gabqar Khanate	25–28	Kum Gangs	4	Colonial Transport	53
Bahal	34	Gallabeyya	67	Kum Motorcycle	69	Converted Freighter	53
Bahiti	22, 31	Garden of Dreaming Pillars	33	Leila Sharif	99	Relief Vessel	53
Balisehir	6, 23	Gelişmek Station	36	Letter of Marque	45	SHVYY Poison	71
Balisehir Naval Academy	6	Ghazi Muttawiah	8	Maghariba Guard (Career Profile)	85	Silk Lords	11–12
Bandakar	40	Great Mosque	19–20	Mantella Poison Augmentation	69	Silk Revolts	51, 65
Baniya	31	Grey Market Spy (Career Profile)	82	Maracanda	30	Silk Route	5, 16, 23, 26, 30, 80
Bardom Rifle	65	Haft Khāj	53	Master Gardeners	9–10	Sniffer X	71
Bayie	39	Hafza (Career Profile)	82	Matulid Rifle	69	Solomon's Ring	89
Biohealth Corps	10–11	Hafza Holomask	67	Medical Researcher (Career Profile)	85	Special Forces (Career Profile)	86
Bio-Invulnerability Augmentation	65	Hafzas	4	Medina	4, 11, 18–21, 64, 78, 80	Steady	71
Blak Khat	66	Hafza Unit	6	Meltsand	69	Surat I-Najm Station	36
Blitzen	65	Hakkāri	16, 24–25	M'Hidi, Izil Ben	10	Sword of Allah	2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 27, 84, 91, 99
Blu Khat	65	Haqqislamite High Command	4	Moons of the Seven Imams	35	SWORD-X Samā	71
Boarding-Colt	65	Hassassin Barid	92	Muhafiz Agent (Career Profile)	85	Ta'Assor Concert Hall	33
Bodyguard (Career Profile)	81	Hassassin Exemplar (Career Profile)	82	Naffatūn	95	Taba	4, 21
Booty	46	Hassassin Farzan	93	Nawal Island	32	Tafawut	35
Bourak	2–6, 9–11, 13–38, 44–45, 52–53, 55, 63–65, 77–78, 81–82, 85, 88, 91, 105, 109	Hassassin Fiday	92	Nazarova Twins	100	Talawat	21
Climate and Geography	13–15	Hassassin Fiday (Career Profile)	83	Nomads	5	Tamerlane	28, 109
Demographics and Culture	16–18	Hassassin Govad	92	Noor AR	69	Tariki Poison	71
Economy	15–16	Hassassin Lasiqs	93	Norouz	30	Tarik Mansuri	98
Bourak Parasol	14, 31, 33	Hassassin Muyibs	93	Odalisque Augmentation	70	Tawadae	35
Caravaner (Career Profile)	81	Hassassin Orders	83	Odalisque (Career Profile)	86	Tebb Al-Nabi. See Prophet's Medicine	
Caravaners	39, 81	Hassassin Ragik	94	Odalisques	6	Terraforming Scientist (Career Profile)	86
Caravanserai	5, 37, 39–41, 81	Hassassin Society	6–9	Olabisi	31, 70, 74	Theraic Pod	71
Carousing	59–63	Hawala Dot X	67	Olabisi Board	70	The Shasvastii Scam	48
Ceres	50	Hikma	35	Old Man of the Mountain	6–8, 28–29, 35, 91–92	The Tahan Family	10
Chisisi Ark X	65	Hofrehgiyahi Poison	67	Öngüt	22	Tohaa Glamour	65
Corregidor	5	House of Wisdom	90	Outer Mercantile Crisis	52	Tuareg	4
Corsair Campaigns	54–62	Hunza	4, 26	Parsipur's Palace	40	Turfan	28–30
Corsair (Career Profile)	81	Huriyyah Archipelago	21	Parthalia Island	33	'Uj Ibn Anaq	34
Current Resort and Spa	11	Husam Yasbir	101	Phantom Conflict	51	UPGRADE Bendelladj Archive X	72
Dar el Funduq	12, 16, 23–24, 36, 65, 88	IC-X Haboob	68	Pirate Havens	50–51	Variable Traits (Optional Rule)	87
Day of Founding	17	Ihya	74, 88	Pop-grass	14	Vrabec Pistol	72
Dil Uzatma	48	Ihya Pendant	68	Pop-pod Poison	70	Yanbue Alruwea	41
Diwān al Jund	7, 45, 47, 50–51, 91	I-Kohl Athnansaa	68	Prophet's Medicine	4, 81, 84, 87	Zakat	89–90
Djanbazan	95	I-Kohl Bilqis	68	Qapu Khalqi	2–6, 9, 16, 22–23, 36–41, 52	Zulqibar Station	36
		i-Kohl Carrón X	68			Zumorroda	33
		I-Kohl Concealer	68				

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