

T4

# MILIEU 0™

MARC MILLER'S TRAVELLER®





## **Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future**

Witness the first days of the Third Imperium, starting page 5.

What every diplomat should know about contacting a new world, page 13.

How important a role do the Scouts play? Find out on page 29.

What every citizen should know about the Third Imperium's power structures, page 42.

Learn about the many adventure opportunities in Year 0 on page 64.

Emperor Cleon revealed! Page 75.

Get around the Core with an official map, page 103.

## **The Future is Around The Corner**

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## LESTER SMITH

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Lester Smith gave up three different, entirely reasonable careers in order to pursue an occupation (perhaps more accurately, a preoccupation) as a game designer.

An alumnus of GDW, Les began working full-time in the hobby as lead designer of the 2300 AD role-playing game (a near future, "hard-science" spin-off of the TRAVELLER RPG), and managed the line throughout its existence. Also for GDW, he worked on several TWILIGHT: 2000 supplements and many SPACE: 1889 projects (including the TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN board game), designed the DARK CONSPIRACY horror RPG and many of its supplements (including the MINION HUNTER board game), helped a bit with historical board game design, managed the DANGEROUS JOURNEYS project, and contributed to the initial work on the TRAVELLER: THE NEW ERA RPG, besides doing regular articles for CHALLENGE magazine.

Les then moved to TSR (following the trail of ex-GDW members Timothy Brown and Julia Martin), where he began work as designer of the BUGHUNTERS RPG, part of the short-lived AMAZING ENGINE line of games, and designed the Origins-award winning DRAGON DICE game, among other things (some of which saw print, and others of which probably never will).

Shortly thereafter, Les left TSR to join Timothy Brown in the founding of Destination Games (producers of PULP DUNGEONS adventures and the CHAOS PROGENITUS dice game), and to help Ken Whitman in the relaunch of the TRAVELLER RPG line by Imperium. Currently, he is also doing design work on a few DEADLANDS supplements by Pinnacle Entertainment.

Some will also recognize the name Lester Smith from the byline of various review articles around the industry, and the "Weasel Game" column originally in POLYHEDRON magazine and now in SHADIS. Les is also a frequent guest at game conventions, where he tends to run small-press horror RPG sessions, and tries to educate prospective game designers concerning the joys and woes of making a living in this hobby. If you see him some place, please be sure to stop and say "Hi."

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# INTRODUCTION

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There are many possible universes to *TRAVELLER*. As the world's first science-fiction role-playing game, it was originally designed with the entire spectrum of SF stories in mind—from hard science fiction, to social science fiction (both human and alien), to the speculative realms of psionic powers, to “space opera” and high adventure. Early in the game's development, however, due to player demand, a singular vision of the universe began to evolve. It was a vision of the Third Imperium, a vast interstellar empire, heir to two others that have arisen and fallen over the millennia of human history. It was a vision of amazing deeds, brilliant successes and monumental tragedies, as humanity struggled to tame the galaxy, and to master itself. As a backdrop, this history is quite large enough to still allow for that original broad range of SF stories, but able also to provide unity to the game.

Earlier versions of the game have dealt with the Third Imperium during its maturity and decline, a thousand or more years into its development. The original game (*CLASSIC TRAVELLER*) was set at the heyday of that empire, the second (*MEGATRAVELLER*) at its decline into rebellion, and the third (*TRAVELLER: THE NEW ERA*) during the aftermath of that rebellion. The current version, however, steps back to the infancy of the Third Imperium, when it consists of merely a handful of member worlds, together emerging from the shadow of the Long Night, jointly believing in their destiny to reestablish civilization throughout known space, to match the legacies of Imperiums past, and to reach far beyond them. It is a time rife with opportunity for the bold and adventurous, when individuals can influence the fates of worlds.

That is what this book is all about. *Milieu 0* details the central persons, groups, and events of

the opening years of the Third Imperium. Within these pages, you will find a wealth of information to bring this backdrop to life in your own campaign. Included herein are details of the history that has led to the formation of the Third Imperium, of its initial steps to re-explore the galaxy, of its economies and strategies for doing so and its politics for administering the fledgling empire, of the Emperor who has brought it all to pass, of his closest allies and worst enemies. Along the way, there are scores of adventure ideas, ranging from straightforward mercenary actions, to political maneuvering both within the heart of the Imperium and on its fringes, to clandestine missions on new worlds, to simple trade opportunities.

This is a meaty book. There is a lot here to digest. But there is also incredible potential for adventure. Enjoy.

# ANTECEDENTS OF THE THIRD IMPERIUM

1

*Excerpts from "A commentary on the formation of the Third Imperium" by Jesse H. Phalow, Director of the Imperial Ministry of Information, 299-0013.*

The history of the current Imperium begins in the earliest days of humanity's voyages to the stars, with what we now know as the First Imperium. More than forty centuries ago, the Vilani people established the Grand Imperium of the Stars. Although it truly was grand (spanning more than 15,000 worlds at its height), one of the principles it was founded upon aided in its destruction.

An interstellar empire cannot be governed like a single world because the communications lag between the central government and the farthest worlds can be a year, or even more. The Vilani, being conservative, solved this problem by encouraging the people of the Imperium into a highly structured and uniform society. With all of its citizens subscribing to the same beliefs, and never venturing beyond their allotted place, the task of governance became simpler; the masses needed less attention on a daily basis.

The caste system that developed was one of the most obvious examples of the cultural rigidity of the First Imperium. Each person was, in effect, required to perform the same job his parents had. This reduced the amount of social unrest experienced during the First Imperium, and allowed the Vilani to maintain power for eighteen centuries. However, this cultural rigidity also brought technological progress to a halt. The Imperium had ceased expansion, and the decline of the Grand Empire of the Stars had begun.

The full impact of the Vilani cultural structure wasn't felt until the Terrans made contact in Year -2048 (as reckoned by the Third Imperial calendar). The Terrans, being aggressive, expansionist, and dynamic, were able to defeat the Vilani in a series of interstellar wars. This was partially because the Vilani were too preoccupied with internal politics to bring the proper force to bear, but another factor was their lack of technological innovation. In short, the Grand Imperium of the Stars had been rotting at its core for centuries, and the Terrans took advantage of it. In Year -2219, the Vilani were finally defeated. The Rule of Man was established in Year -2204.

## The Fall Of Civilization

Calamitously, the Terrans were unprepared to rule an interstellar empire. They had neither the temperament to enforce cultural rigidity nor the experience to find a better solution. Thus, the Second Imperium (more often called the Rule of Man, or shamefully referred to as the Ramshackle Empire) collapsed after little more than four centuries. Thereafter, the worlds ruled by the former First and Second Imperiums were plunged into a period of economic and technological regression known as the Long Night.

Many civilizations collapsed entirely, being unable to survive without the support of an interstellar community. Xenophobia, jealousy, superstition, and greed destroyed still more civilizations, while most of those that remained simply tried to cling to their technological capabilities in spite of the interstellar disaster raging around them.

Even in the depths of the Long Night, however, some civilizations dared to venture forth from their own systems, re-contacting neighboring worlds. Occasionally, the result was beneficial to both societies, with mutual trade and prosperity ensuing. Some of those mutually beneficial encounters resulted in pocket empires—small groups of worlds, joined under one government. Miniature Imperiums, if you will.

In other instances, the result was far less positive. Sometimes, the contacting world's forces were routed or destroyed by the xenophobic society with which they had come into contact. More often, the contacting world would actually attempt an invasion of the neighbor, hoping to pull

itself out of economic depression by appropriating the resources of the conquered planet. Such efforts almost always ended in disaster for both civilizations.

Throughout the Long Night, a few hardy traders continued to ply the space lanes. Indeed, a few bold individuals were successful enough to carve out pocket empires based on the strength they gained through successful trade and commerce. One such trading empire was based on Sylea.

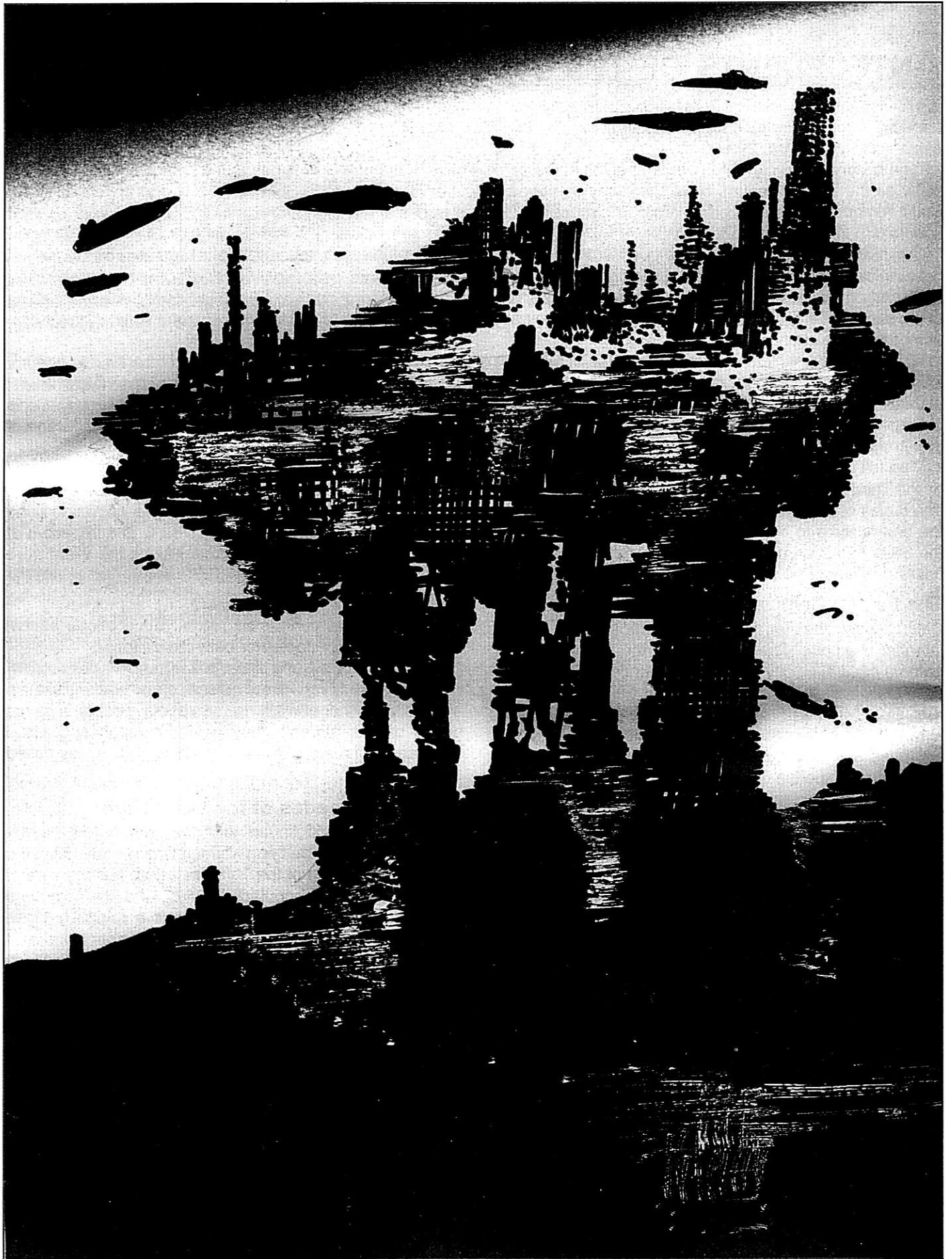
## The Last Decades of the Long Night

Although Sylea continued to trade with a few nearby worlds throughout the Long Night, it wasn't until 650 years before the founding of the Third Imperium that the idea of expansion gained popularity. Sylea and its neighbors formed the Sylean Federation. It was a relatively loose confederation of worlds, in which each member world sent one representative to the Sylean Grand Senate, which acted as the legislative branch of the government.

Over time, the Sylean Federation began expanding its sphere of influence to include worlds that were farther and farther away from the seat of government. After six hundred years of expansion, the Federation had member worlds scattered across the Core Sector (yet many worlds remained independent, for one reason or another). There were benefits to this expansion, but there were also many negative aspects.

While the Federation had to continuously seek new member worlds to expand the economy through trade, each additional world decreased the effectiveness of the Sylean government, setting the stage for disaster. The





communication lag from the center of the Federation to the outskirts became worse as the distance traversed increased. So, while the opportunities for trade were greater than ever, it was increasingly difficult for the central government to control its space. These two factors combined to make the perfect situation for piracy to thrive.

The Grand Senate passed a series of taxes and tariffs to finance ever larger naval and marine forces to combat piracy. These revenue measures were ignored by some member worlds, who were exasperated with the ineffectiveness of the central government. Those who complied with the new taxation measures found them to have a deleterious effect on business. This, coupled with the continuing problem of piracy, threatened to stop trade completely. The subject worlds were not pleased with this development.

The Sylean government was seen as the source of the problems confronting member worlds. By choosing a very centralized form of government, the Sylean Federation had limited its ability to act. In addition, each member of the Federation had its own agenda, and it was rare that the members of the Grand Senate could agree on an effective course of action. Many worthy initiatives died from lack of a consensus, while many more were rendered ineffective through attempts to please every member world. It was also widely known that many proposals were never enacted because certain corporate interests were willing to do whatever was necessary to ensure no unfavorable legislation survived the process. The Sylean Federation was becoming almost completely ineffective.

Although many people and organizations disliked the Sylean government, few attempted to bring about change. Cleon Zhunastu, who had ascended to the Grand Senate upon the death of his father Felix Zhunastu in Year -30, was the first person both to recognize the fact that the current situation was untenable, and to do something about it. He determined to make Sylea rise to prominence again, for the benefit of all.

### **Sylea's Rise**

Thirty years before the founding of the Third Imperium, Grand Duke Cleon Zhunastu, whose holdings included an industrial megacorporation and several research facilities, determined that the Sylean Federation could not last. What was necessary was a government which had as its primary purpose the preservation of free trade between member worlds, and which implemented this through a strong central government coupled with properly distributed local power. Cleon felt strongly about expanding the territory of the Federation, as his businesses would flourish where free and safe trade was possible. Yet the Sylean Federation's inability to effectively govern its current worlds had proven that expansion would only be made possible by abolishing the Sylean Federation and instituting a different form of government.

Cleon envisioned a decentralized government, founded upon the twin principles of honor and duty. History had shown that centralized governments could not successfully administer an interstellar empire. However, if govern-

mental power were distributed among many local branches, acting under the authority of a central government but with the ability to make the decisions necessary for its sphere of influence, growth would be effectively unrestrained. Of course, this would only be successful if honorable people were in control of the government at every level. Corruption should never be part of any government, but it would be particularly disastrous under this decentralized model.

The Grand Duke's goal was nothing less than to make Sylea the capital of a newly revived Imperium. This would allow legal claim to be laid to all the worlds of the previous two Imperiums. With its ability to remain effective at great distances, his distributed government would be able to bring peace and prosperity to thousands of worlds. That would be, quite literally, an industrialist's dream come true.

Before that would be possible, Cleon would have to show that he had the ability to solve the problems of the Federation, then use that fact to gather a group of honorable and powerful supporters. So, he began working on solutions to the most pressing problems.

### **Economic Pressures**

The largest of the problems were economic in nature. By the sixth century of the Sylean Federation, piracy had progressed from a nuisance to an epidemic. At the same time, corporations were in control of society to a greater extent than was the Sylean government. Civilization was again in a downward spiral.

**Piracy:** Trade between the many worlds scattered throughout the Federation had been slowing due to rampant piracy. Many of the neighboring pocket empires had discovered that their own economic systems could be augmented through acts of piracy against the relatively wealthy Sylean trading vessels. Of course, many independent pirate groups developed in various locations so that they, too, could live off the bounty of the Federation.

The government agencies of the Sylean Federation had been facing increasing pressure to put a stop to this piracy and privateering, but they had been unable to do so. While Sylea maintained a central fleet of ships, and most of the wealthier member worlds had at least a minor defensive force, much of the Federation was effectively undefended. Purchasing and manning enough of the huge fighting ships to defend every member world in the Federation was simply too expensive.

Instead, ships were based within strategically located systems throughout the Federation, and dispatched to member worlds as necessary. Because the communication time involved was several weeks in most instances, ranging to several months in others, the pirates knew that they had little to fear. They would move into a system, hit traders for a few weeks, then move on to the next long before the Federation ships could be informed of the activity, let alone arrive in-system. In addition, to remain flexible, the ships had to be jump capable; with a substantial part of each ship dedicated to jump fuel and power plants



## Solving the Piracy Problem

Zhunastu Labs' patented cold fusion process, Fusion Plus, allowed for the creation of small, fast fighting ships which, when supported by a large 'parent' ship, were able to overwhelm pirate ship defenses with relative ease. After demonstrating this ability to the Federation government, Cleon's dream would be that much closer to realization.

The first such demonstration occurred near the gas giant in the Azimuth system (Azimuth/Core 0202-B6566B9-A). Trading ships going to and from Azimuth had been hit hard by the ruthless pirates operating there. One in every four ships travelling there had been the subject of a pirate assault during the previous six months. All aboard were typically either killed or sold into slavery, along with the ship and cargo, at a non-member world. To suppress this piracy, the Sylean Federation had been sending task forces consisting of four patrol cruisers each time the pirates struck. Due to the enormous cost of producing and operating these ships, it was not possible to keep a sufficient supply of patrol cruisers in each system. Instead, cruisers had to be sent here and there as needed.

Cleon now suggested that they send two patrol cruisers, each with four prototype gunships (powered by Fusion Plus) attached by external grapples. As the cruisers left for Azimuth, Cleon appeared confident in public, but privately he knew that this untested strategy could very well fail, forever shattering his chances of realizing his vision.

One month later, the patrol cruisers returned to Sylea. The mission had been a partial success: the pirates' corsair had been found and destroyed, but several of the gunships had also been destroyed in the battle. Fortunately, this did not mean that Cleon's plans were for naught. Cleon addressed the other members of the Grand Senate, and convinced them that the failure had been due to the pilots' unfamiliarity with the ships and the new tactics necessary, rather than in the overall strategy of using the smaller fighting ships. The members agreed to hold their judgment of the plan until three more such piracy suppression attempts could be performed.

In the end, Cleon's assumptions were shown to be correct. The final mission resulted in no losses on the Sylean side. The gunships' superior maneuverability and heavy firepower had won out. Cleon had proven his point, and was an additional step closer to realizing his dream of reviving the Imperium.

the ships were, at best, equal to the pirates and required significantly larger ships or superior numbers to successfully counter a given pirate unit.

Cleon had an idea that he hoped would change that. Professor Aldin Zhunastu (who headed the advanced technology research facility at the Cleon-owned Zhunastu Labs) had invented a new technology: cold fusion. This advancement allowed for the creation of very small fusion plants, useful for a wide variety of purposes: from civilian

transport to small, fast, and deadly fighting ships. Cleon planned to use this new technology to solve the problem of piracy. He also saw it as a way to make decentralized government more effective.

Inexpensive, fast, and effective fighting ships, if made available to all member worlds, would allow each world to afford a force capable of keeping pirates at bay. That would leave the central government free to focus on larger issues.

But first, it was necessary to prove the worthiness of these light fighting ships. Cleon achieved this through financing several demonstrations, which he very carefully publicized afterward to generate interest among member worlds. After a few initial failures, he was finally able to prove that his ships, when commanded by well trained and capable people, could do the job.

**Corporations:** Cleon Zhunastu, although himself the owner of one of the largest corporations in Sylean space, was dismayed at the behavior of some of his corporate rivals. Violations of Sylean sovereignty were routine. Worse, every citizen knew that there was no means of redress for such actions, because many members of the Grand Senate were well compensated by their constituent corporations for their inaction.

Since before the founding of the Sylean Federation, it had been considered natural and expected that corporations would act to aggressively secure the highest profit. Such things as corporate espionage, labor practices, product safety, and sales tactics were considered matters for individual member worlds to regulate (or not) as they felt was appropriate. It was not the duty of interstellar government to manage such things.

Even so, this great degree of freedom was not enough for some corporate leaders, who felt it necessary to commit crimes against the Federation in the pursuit of profit. Some corporations financed acts of piracy against their rivals. If this meant that some Sylean Naval Service ships were destroyed, that was just an unfortunate aspect of doing business. Others traded with rival pocket empires, knowingly providing technologies and materials that would be used against Federation military forces and civilians. Some went so far as to traffic in human lives, providing slaves to any world decadent and depraved enough to pay for them. Clearly, such corporations had no sense of honor.

Though all of these crimes and more were committed by Federation-based corporations, the government did nothing to stop it. Politicians made speeches, the press wrote stories, consumers and honorable corporations attempted boycotts, but it all amounted to little more than hand wringing. The Federation was the only entity with the power to stop them, yet each time legislation was introduced to curtail such activity, it failed miserably, thanks to politicians who were as dishonorable as the corporations who owned them.

Cleon was determined that such actions would not be tolerated, as they contributed only to the detriment of society. It was expected that every corporation would aggressively seek profit, but in his opinion some went too far.

Corporations warring with each other was one thing; corporations making war on society and the interstellar government was another. Yet he knew that the situation would not change until a different, more effective interstellar government was created.

One of Cleon's greatest desires was for free trade, and he saw that as the central task of any interstellar government, including his Imperium. Yet, to preserve free trade, the interstellar government must be strong enough to enforce its wishes. Corporations must never be allowed to trample on Imperial sovereignty, so he made plans for his Imperium that would ensure corporations would never be above Imperial law. Honor, Cleon recalled, must be one of the founding principles of the Imperium. But was it possible to sort the honorable from the dishonorable, and remove the latter, prior to the foundation of the Imperium?

**Political Maneuvering:** While Cleon was a Grand Duke, had nominal control of the Grand Senate, and had full control over the largest corporation in the Sylean Federation, he did not have the power necessary to make the changeover to the Imperium politically feasible. So, he met privately with the heads of key industries, and explained his plan to ensure that no corporation would ever trample on Imperial sovereignty.

Under the Imperial form of government, there would be no politicians to corrupt. The Imperium would be a feudal system, with progressive levels of nobles who would be subject to the highest noble, the Emperor. Cleon proposed that the Emperor would own a minority interest in each interstellar corporation. With an equal stake in each, he would be above favoritism, as what helped one would hurt another.

Many of the corporate leaders agreed to the plan, since they knew and trusted Cleon. His corporation, while aggressive, had always behaved with honor. Others, trusting no one who would have as much power as the Emperor, did not give him their support. In essence, those with honor believed in Cleon and his plan, while dishonorable individuals did not.

Cleon then met with the leaders of key world governments (all of whom were members of the Grand Senate), and explained other aspects of his plan to them. Under the Imperial structure of government, free trade would be the prime focus. Piracy and corporate misdeeds would not be tolerated within the Imperium, maximizing the opportunities for trade. In nearly all other matters, each member world would be autonomous.

In addition, the Emperor would not make his decisions entirely alone. Each member world's ruling family would become nobles. One individual from each family would be a member of the Imperial Moot, and would be tasked with advising the Emperor. Honor would be paramount in this, as in all other aspects of Imperial government.

As with his efforts toward convincing corporations to throw in their lot with him, his politicking appeared to be less than a complete success. However, by judicious use of charm, power, and persuasive dialogue, he was able to convince key, honorable individuals to support his plan. That, coupled with the backing of many important, honor-

able corporations, his proven solution to the problem of piracy, and his system of distributed government based upon personal honor, was enough to set the stage for the massive political and economic changes Cleon desired.

## Chanestin Kingdom

One rival to the Sylean Federation during the closing years of the Long Night—and consequently something of a threat to the establishment of Cleon's new Third Imperium—was a minor empire known as the Chanestin Kingdom. Based on Keshi/Dunea, one subsector to rimward of Sylea, the militaristic rulers of Keshi were able to maintain jump capability as the worlds around them sank deeper and deeper into the Long Night. In Year -1304, King Brzeszcze decided that the time was right for Keshi to take advantage of its now superior technology and conquer its neighboring worlds. Over the next fifty years, the Keshi executed their plan with chilling efficiency; world by world they invaded, consolidated and moved on. By Year -1250, some twenty-five worlds were theirs, all within five parsecs of Keshi.

Chanestin rule was relatively benign, although any moves against the Kingdom were harshly dealt with. As the Night deepened, the Chanestin clung desperately on to the handful of interstellar craft which still worked. With each century, another ship would become irreparable, and by Year -200 there was only one functioning jump ship in the Kingdom, doing the rounds from planet to planet to ensure that the Kingdom's will was being done.

**Contact with Sylea:** In Year -107, the first formal trader mission from Sylea arrived. So tenuous was the Kingdom by then that the Syleans had actually missed the fact that there was a kingdom at all. However, the Chanestin had rapidly taken advantage of the resurgence in travel and trade in the last few decades to secretly build back up their own fleet, and by the time that Sylea made contact, the Chanestin fleet was ready for action. The Chanestin were quick to recognize the threat represented by the Sylean Federation and its federal ideas. On the orders of Queen Nayarit herself, the twenty-strong trade mission was executed by firing squad for attempting to seed the Kingdom with treasonable ideas.

When the mission did not return, the Sylean council authorized a military expedition to find out what had happened. In Year -107, a Sylean flotilla consisting of a 90,000-ton battleship and two cruisers arrived in the Keshi system. In a brief and frank exchange of messages, the Syleans demanded to know what had happened to their traders, the Chanestin told them and ordered the Syleans to vacate Chanestin space immediately. In fact, the Chanestin local defense squadron was already closing on the Sylean force and the first engagement of the Sylean-Chanestin war began.

The war lasted over a hundred years, alternating between hot and cold, low and high intensity warfare. The Chanestin initially had the upper hand, taking several Sylean worlds by Year -102. A stand-off ensued for some thirty years, whilst Syleans and Chanestin tried to fuel rebellion on either side. In Year -69, the Syleans launched



an offensive to recapture their lost worlds. This offensive started well, but soon developed into a war of attrition, and minor skirmishes continued for the next twenty-five years, with many worlds changing hands several times. By Year -44, both sides were worn out, and a peace treaty was finally agreed.

**Chanestin's Decline:** All could have been well, except that when Cleon started to expand the Federation, the Chanestin saw this for the threat which it undoubtedly was. In Year -25, they launched a daring deep strike against the Sylean industrial world of Shudusham. War flared again, but now Sylea had the technological edge. The Chanestin did not admit defeat easily, and their strategy of launching deep strikes into the Sylean heartland placed the whole of the Sylean Federation on a war footing. The effect on Sylean culture was marked, forcing the adoption of a paranoid siege mentality. The most manifest example of this is Cleon's palace, the pyramidal structure being designed to offer the best defense against drop-troops.

From Year -3 onwards, Cleon carried the war deep into Chanestin territory, and in Year 2 the flag of the new Imperium was finally raised above the Chanestin palace on Keshi. The Chanestins finally knew they were beaten, and sued for peace.

## Interstellar Confederacy

The Interstellar Confederacy was perhaps Sylea's greatest external threat during the new dawn. Founded in Year -684, the Confederacy occupied thirty-two worlds in the Bunkeria and Cemplas subsectors immediately to spinward of Sylea. The Confederacy centered on three powerful worlds: Marsus, Protalus and Sketola (the capital). As the Long Night drew to an end, these worlds rapidly rose to TL12 and started to forge close bonds among themselves and neighboring worlds on the Sylean Main, lifting several to TL11. The leading light was Grand Senator Rom Debeshuut, an outstanding scientist and diplomat renowned for his blunt, frank approach. Over time, the Confederacy grew to include thirty-two worlds, at which point the Confederacy Senate called a halt to expansion, on the basis that it was the largest group of planets that could be efficiently coordinated—especially given the high importance attached to planetary laws and rights. From Year -623, the Confederacy turned in on itself and its worlds of the Great Spiral, and effectively ceased interstellar contact.

**Isolation:** This isolation did not mean that the Confederacy was stagnant. For a start, Marsus was well known for the quality of its mercenary soldiers, who fought many a brush war in support of other Confederacy governments. In Year -567, Rualto Achenaar and Joffan Antilles founded the Achenaar Antilles merchant and passenger line on F'now. The line originally plied the Great Spiral worlds, but has managed to outlive the Confederacy and is now one of the largest merchant lines in Core.

In Year -301, the first scout ships from the Sylean Federation arrived. The isolationist Confederates were wary of the expansionist, and federal, Syleans. In Year -258, near Velpare on the Confederacy's trailing border, a

Confederacy patrol was attacked by a Sylean naval squadron and soundly beaten. Unfortunately the Sylean commander, Admiral Rudolf, made the mistake of thinking that a planetary assault on Velpare itself would be as easy. He was sorely defeated and sent back to Sylea licking his wounds.

By Year -250, many smaller worlds of the Confederacy thought that the time had begun to expand the Confederacy further, particularly as the Sylean Federation threatened to encompass and restrict, or perhaps even destroy, the Confederacy. Many of the more powerful worlds refused, thinking that they might lose their own powerful grip on the region, and could best fend off Sylea by not challenging it outside the Spiral. In Year -248, Sketola, which sided with the expansionists, started testing ramscoop jumpships, which would free jump craft from the need for wilderness or portside refueling.

As the moves towards expansion grew, the opposition decided it had to strike. The final straw came when arch-expansionist Beau-Ta-Quitalla was elected Chamberlain of the Confederacy in Year -239. The isolationists immediately withdrew from the Council and, under Baron Rolf Von Toerbach of Protalus, five worlds attacked the capital Sketola. The planet's defenses were destroyed, and the isolationists launched a successful jump assault. The Council moved hurriedly to Kelpo, a world seven parsecs to trailing. The next year saw minor actions, and in Year -237 the rebels launched a new assault, this time against Belicose. This time the loyalists had the upper hand and routed the rebels back to Sketola, where the *coup de grace* was delivered against the rebel fleet as it tried to refuel at the system's largest gas giant.

Although the Confederacy was again unified, the cost had been tremendous. Marsus was particularly badly mauled, as was Oorpic, a major industrial center. The war very much reduced the Confederacy's economic, military and political strength, which made it far more difficult for it to withstand the Sylean Federation.

**War with the Federation:** By Year -201, after a series of border skirmishes, relations between the Confederacy and the Federation had broken down completely. That year Sylea launched a fresh attack against Velpare, was successful, and pushed on spinwards. The Confederacy Navy acquitted itself well in battle and managed to halt the Syleans' initial thrust. But over the next few decades, the Confederacy was repeatedly out-manuevered by the superior strategists of the Federation.

For most of the next century, the worlds of Heraldia, Belicose, Shibasiim, Eorvin and Keplo changed hands many times, and even now Heraldia suffers from a irrevocable eco-damage, its inhabitants having been forced from the surface to live within protective domes and tunnels.

By Year -100, Sylea had taken most of the Confederacy worlds to trailing of Ye-Lu, and the Confederacy was effectively broken as a major political force. Although the military battle was over, a cold war settled between the two powers. In Year -30, when Cleon came to power, it was obvious to him that the Confederacy

blocked one of his major routes of expansion and forced his new scouts to go to core or rimward. Cleon initiated a massive diplomatic campaign against the Confederacy, and was rewarded in Year -17, when several worlds left the Confederacy for the Federation. The Confederacy appeared to realize that it was beaten, and made little attempt to defend against this onslaught. By Year -1, the Confederacy finally dissolved itself. Five years after the founding of the Third Imperium, all the Confederacy's former worlds were absorbed into the Imperium.

## **Establishment of the Third Imperium**

By the six hundred and fiftieth year of the Sylean Federation, Cleon had assembled a coalition of honorable political and economic interests that gave him solid backing, and who believed in his dream. His allies included some of the most important member worlds and corporations, as well as many smaller organizations. However, there remained powerful groups who wished to preserve the current order. The factions arrayed against Cleon were primarily those who saw their economic interests best served by the current regime.

Cleon's political maneuvering had given him enough leverage to ensure that his plan would be adopted, if a vote were forced. However, that would have left the door open to civil unrest in the newly formed Imperium, as opponents of the new order inevitably expressed their dissatisfaction. He wanted to avoid that, as the new empire would be severely hobbled (if not doomed) by a civil war early in its existence. Also, he wanted to purge or neutralize as many dishonorable elements as possible prior to the foundation of the Imperium.

In an attempt to resolve the matter, Cleon met with political leaders of the thirteen member worlds most in opposition to the restoration of the Imperium. Although the meeting was not publicized, it was not made entirely a secret either. No one associated with the meeting would provide full details of what occurred.

It is known that the meeting lasted for approximately four hours, and that it took place in a remote area of Sylea. Beyond that, little has been disclosed. None of the parties in attendance has ever revealed what was said. However, five weeks after the meeting seven of the thirteen worlds took the unprecedented move of announcing their withdrawal from the Federation. More shocking, the Sylean Grand Senate took no action to stop them.

While it is known that Cleon's overall goal was the rebirth of the Imperium, it is unknown what his specific objective was for this meeting. Clearly, he did not want dishonorable people or organizations to be part of the new order, but did he feel it necessary for those entire worlds to remove themselves? Further, what, if anything, occurred during the five weeks between the meeting and the worlds' withdrawal? Because of these unanswered questions, it is unknown whether the result of the meeting indicated he had achieved success, or that he had failed miserably.

Cleon's only statement on the subject was, "They chose not to join us at this time." An official of one of the

secessionist worlds responded to queries about the subject, saying only, "It is evident that Cleon will get his way and have his Imperium. We choose to stick with proven ways, rather than follow a madman over the precipice." No other participants of the meeting would answer queries regarding what had occurred.

Over the next four weeks, Cleon continued working toward building a consensus among the remaining member worlds. At the end of that time, Cleon presented the Sylean Grand Senate with his Warrant for the Restoration of the Imperium. Following surprisingly little debate, it was passed unanimously. After thirty years of work, Cleon had finally realized his dream.

**The First Days of the Third Imperium:** Having laid the groundwork during the three previous decades, Cleon Zhunastu now watched his plans come to fruition. One of the final events was the adoption of the Warrant of Restoration by the Grand Senate of the Sylean Federation. That deceptively simple document did not only provide for the restoration of the Grand Imperium of the Stars. It also laid the foundation for the government that would replace the Sylean Federation, and laid legal claim to all of the former worlds of the First and Second Imperiums. Upon its adoption, the Sylean Federation ceased to exist, and the Third Imperium came into being.

The first day after the ratification of the Warrant of Restoration, Cleon was officially declared hereditary Emperor of the Third Imperium for life. After a solemn ceremony, the Starburst Banner of the Third Imperium was raised and the new capital erupted in celebration. Cleon's first official Edict was that the first day of each year would be held as the Imperial Holiday, to be celebrated throughout the Imperium in honor of this occasion.

In the following weeks, Cleon began to issue a series of Imperial Edicts for the purpose of reforming or creating the various governmental agencies that would enact his vision of the Third Imperium. These included military and civil organizations from the former Sylean Federation, as well as newly created ones. Cleon was careful to make only those changes necessary to bring about his vision.

Each of the military organizations was affected: The Sylean personal combat forces were re-organized into two services, one being the Imperial Marine force, tasked with defending the Imperium in small-scale combat on the ground and aboard Naval vessels, and the other being the Imperial Army, tasked with defending the Imperium in large-scale ground combat. The Marines had previously existed to some degree as a separate force but Cleon realized the value of having crack troops who could fight well in both space and on the ground for his anti-piracy campaigns and the reinforcement of Imperial policy on those worlds who were not fully cooperative.

The Sylean Federation Naval Service was reformed as the Imperial Navy, tasked with the maintenance of peace and order throughout the spacelanes of the Imperium; the Sylean Federation Scout Service was reformed as the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service, tasked with re-contacting the former worlds of the Imperium.



## An Alternative View

*Recording of a draft of a speech by Baron Yandi Willer, a noted opponent of Cleon's imperialism. The final draft has never been found, and unfortunately Willer was killed in a tragic road accident the day before he was due to present this to a subcommittee of the Moot.*

"Is that recording? Level? Okay, first I have to assert the stuff about accepting that the old Federation was too damned slow to move and all that, yes Cleon was justified in doing something, then I leave it hanging with a 'but...' and go on to the main stuff of the speech:

"Was Cleon the man to make those changes? Dramatic pause for effect, then: Should the Senate not have thought twice about someone who wielded so much power already through the Zhunastu corporation? Especially given his father Felix' sometimes rebellious performances in the Senate?

"Perhaps most sickening is the constant repetition that Cleon was 'doing it for the good of all.' Dribble. Absolute rabid fantasies. He was doing it because breaking open the trade barriers with him at the helm of the 'grand ship Imperium' meant the Zhunastu corporation would be out there first!

"Yes, I know I'll have to shout at this point because they'll all be clamoring for me to step down from the podium—the usual reaction to anyone stepping out of line...

"Ah, but his great Fusion Plus I hear you say... Cleon gets this wonderful invention and does he start installing it on the home worlds? Do we see cheaper transport? More efficient power generators? Smaller power units for those critical everyday uses such as life-support systems on ambulances? Providing power to the homeless, the poor? The children on the streets? NO! He sends it straight out in gunships to defeat a few measly pirates—and doesn't even get that right, sending untrained pilots to their deaths! No, everything is focused on proving that his great

Imperium is possible, papering over the fact that he wants to rule the universe with this rubbish that the Imperium's only there to establish free trade!

"And as we form this great brotherhood of new worlds, are we really making life better for these people? NO! Have any of you actually read the IISS contact manuals? The teachings of 'The School'? Every core principle of the exploration and re-contact is based on making them into consumer nations so that Zhunastu industries can rape their resources and then sell them back the goods manufactured from their planet's life blood....

"Oh, you like that bit? Hmmm. Wish I could say they were my own words but actually I was talking to Marquess Aurion the other day, and she suggested them! Er, where was I? Oh yes, I should follow on to say that Cleon's universe-wide control isn't apparent until you realize that his whole aim is to build up the planets until they are reliant upon interstellar trade; then he really does control them, without having to dabble in their politics. He need only threaten to sever the trade links—look at what happened to planets in the Long Night, eh?

"Anyway, I was going to go on to criticize all this 'honor' rubbish that Cleon used at the 'great founding' when he was 'persuaded' to become emperor. Yeh, the bit where two seconds later Cleon says 'Step forward all those who are in the new Moot.... not so fast Marquess Aurion....' and all that. I mean, within hours it was clear that those few posts he'd not sewn up before becoming emperor were now filled with his 'Yes' men. Honor? And his statements that 'Corruption should never be part of any government'—oh please, stop me rolling on the floor laughing!

"You think that's too strong? Well, there are a few of us left to oppose him, and if we don't speak up... Oh all right, I'll cut the honor bit and leave that to a future speech. What? Time for the appointment with Duke Rynaor. Okay, I'll finish this later."

In the area of civil services, Cleon created the Office of Calendar Compliance, which would determine each world's acquiescence to Imperial rule by monitoring compliance with the new Imperial Calendar. Those which did not comply were given a bit more pressure, in various ways, by the Imperial government. Most other civil agencies were left unchanged, at least initially.

Although many of the Imperial Edicts were concerned with routine matters, of special interest is Imperial Edict 97. On file at all Imperial installations, it directs all Imperial citizens to assist the holder of an Imperial Warrant with all the power that the citizen can bring to bear. While the Imperial Warrant has been portrayed with exaggeration in the popular media, it nonetheless is an important aspect of Cleon's method of reviving the past glories of the Grand Imperium of the Stars. Warrants are issued by the Emperor to individuals who use the power it provides to accomplish some mission deemed to be of great importance. Warrants were issued most frequently in the early days of the Imperium, when the needs were greatest and the government was least able to meet them on its own.

With the skeleton of his new government in place, Cleon turned his attention to bringing the worlds of the Imperium more solidly into the fold, solving the problems of the previous government, and otherwise building a solid base. Once that was completed, he could turn his attention to the expansion process.



*The following analysis of IISS and general Imperial expansion tactics was compiled by Gan Torj of the IISS Strategic Planning Unit in 064-0007. The document is considered "Scout Restricted" material and should not be made available to any persons outside the service.*

## Exploration

The borders of The Sylean Federation in the pre-Imperial declaration years were not so much measured as lines on the map but rather as spheres of influence. A line implies a clear line of demarcation between one polity and another, and is not applicable to the gradual development of the Imperium. During the Sylean Expansion, a number of worlds gradually came under the economic influence of the Federation, developing to the point where they eventually joined as full members. Although no official terms were approved, it was common parlance to refer to the periphery states when contact had been established as "The Fringe" and those beyond this as "The Outback."

When examining the expansion process we start in The Outback. The available information on these worlds is over a thousand years out of date and the Scout service of the Syleans was formed to venture into The Outback and bring this knowledge up to date.

System astrography was considered unlikely to change (except in very rare catastrophic cases). Planets were assumed to maintain the same orbits, the presence or absence of gas giants and most other system features would not have changed. Planetary geography was also unlikely to have changed significantly. The ongoing efforts of erosion, subsidence, volcanization and craterization would have had some minor effects but normally not enough to affect trade predictions.

Political geography, however, was seen as likely to be considerably different. No assumptions could be made about the current state of a planet's government based on the available Second Imperium data. In some cases even the main world of a system would have changed. The goals of the Scout Service were then to establish a line of communication into The Outback and to gain as much information as possible about the nature of the planet's government and society.

## Communication

Venturing into the unknown is a hazardous job. Almost as much time is spent by exploring scouts in preparation as in actual exploration. Before a previously reached system is jumped to, scanning has to be done from the nearest system. High gain receivers are deployed and trace emissions are monitored from the system. For planets that have radio technology, this can provide useful information.

Once the system is entered another period of monitoring is begun. The aim at this stage is to establish if the planet had retained or achieved space flight in any capacity. This will determine where the local depot should be located. If the planet has space flight, then the depot will

likely be in far orbit or at a Trojan point. If the planet does not have space flight capacity, the depot is more likely to be in near orbit or on a satellite of the main world.

At this point the scouts should deploy the initial materials they have brought. Usually this includes a fuel tank, emergency shelter and sustenance, and long term, long range monitoring sensors. After this the scouts return along their route, usually to restock and make a first deployment elsewhere. The first survey data is then routed through their information network, and eventually a second team is assigned.

**Contact-1 Mission:** The PCs may be a collection of recruits brought together to form a Contact-1 team. They will be given a ship, routes, cache points, and a number of planets to bring up to Contact-1. They may have been formed based on prior successes or because of their unique training, or perhaps they may be in trouble with higher authorities and are being sent out into The Outback. Problems they may encounter include:

- A vital cache is not where it is supposed to be. PCs must use their ingenuity or engineering to overcome its absence.
- A small, overlooked nation of a balkanized world is more advanced than the others. The initial deployment strategy (say on a satellite) has to be moved before they uncover this fact. The team must determine whether the technology is local or somehow imported.

## Survey

The second team will usually deploy more advanced monitoring equipment and supplies over the course of several runs. Once sufficient equipment is in place, they will begin the survey proper. The first stage is largely orbital monitoring. Patterns of settlement, agriculture, and infrastructure are recorded and analyzed. Best guesses can be made as to the political divisions, stage of development, and, most importantly, population.

Depending on how promising the results are, actual ground contact will begin. Landings will occur in remote places and personnel will observe and collect data at close range. If the local population are undifferentiated human, stock some amount of intermingling will occur for on the spot information collection. Once sufficient data is gathered, preparation for contact can begin.

**Contact-2 Mission:** In a campaign, a party may move from a Contact-1 assignment to a Contact-2 assignment. Or the team may be formed for any of the reasons given in "Contact-1" above. They will be dropped on a particular point with in-system craft and survey equipment. Their tour of duty is to last for a fixed time. They will have a schedule



of other ships passing through and equipment to stockpile for them. Some possible plots to pose the PCs might include:

- Due to an accident a unshielded transmission is broadcast from the base and picked up by the locals. The PCs must manage the fallout from this.
- During an air survey, equipment failure forces the PCs' craft to land. They must race against time to repair it before any locals are encountered (or any hostile flora or fauna).
- Some of the PCs are disguised for a local walk-through of a town to collect more sociological data. A small omission in their disguise violates a local dress taboo and they are harassed by a local constable who speaks far too fast for their translator to work effectively. Some fast thinking is required....

## Stages of Contact

The "Zhunastu School of Contact" can refer directly to the teachings employed by Zhunastu Merchant Academy on Sylea or indirectly to the methods they have followed. Many merchant clans outside of the Zhunastu employ these methods rigorously in hopes of achieving the same success (despite the fact that the "Rules of Contact" were only ever meant as guidelines). The Zhunastu penchant for acting outside of their own "rules" in certain circumstances is probably the distinguishing difference between their approach and that of their emulators. Since the accession of Cleon to the throne "The Rules" have become a matter of Imperial Policy.

The School teaches a progressing interaction with undeveloped planets that seeks to be profitable at every stage of development, but not at the expense of long term investment. The main constraining factor on development is the volume of cargo that can be shipped to and from the world. In the initial stages, this is a very low tonnage, due to the distance the target world is from developed regions, and its lack of a developed market. In later stages, the assumed expansion of the fringe brings the world into closer contact with developed worlds. Patrolling of the shipping lanes decreases the risk to shipping and makes it possible to deploy bulk liners and commensurably higher tonnage rates.

**Stage 1: Initial Contact:** The first stage is marked by an average cargo tonnage of a mere ten tons per annum being delivered to and from the planet. At this small tonnage, the goods travelling in both directions must be high value, low mass. With small tonnage and no continuous contact, it is impossible to deliver any mass-market commodities to or from the target world. Instead, based on information gathered during exploration, powerful individuals with ready access to wealth or the means to extract wealth are approached and offered wares.

The goods offered may vary widely, depending on the culture and technological development. The chief admiral of a sea-faring culture might pay a king's ransom for two hundred quartz watches (20,000 pounds was the price offered in 18th century England for a clock that would keep

accurate time at sea). The leader of a small, ambitious nation might empty their treasury to acquire a map box connected to the satellite network deployed for monitoring, so they could watch and plan for enemy troop movements. Should these types of items not prove tempting, very few potentates would pass up an opportunity to gain a supply of anagathics and wide spectrum antibiotics.

Return goods from these planets are at first limited. Even a planet as advanced as TL9 is unlikely to produce anything new, interesting or relevant that can be packaged small enough to make it worth the interstellar shipping costs. Precious metals and certain gems are just about the only cross-tech commodity that retain their value and are low bulk. Also, The School teaches that it is useful to deplete a planet of such cross-tech capital at this stage. If this is done, it is easier to encourage them later to move to Imperial backed currency if any local currencies lack a firm base to back it. (Two Imperiums have already ruled over these planets. Although few social structures may retain traces of this Imperial rule, you can be sure that any easily accessible ores have already been removed and the bulk of such items will be in circulation. These planets should not be assumed to have large amounts of unexploited resources).

*First Trade:* In a campaign, a group of PCs may be a Contact-2 team that has been ordered to be present to advise the First Trade team, or they may be trustworthy individuals who form the First Trade team itself. For an alternative campaign, the PCs might take on the role of the natives of the target world.

The First Trade team will be given basic cultural information and told of the various personages from which they should choose persons to approach. They will have a number of goods and skills to demonstrate their superiority over the target culture and items that will likely be highly desired by those they are dealing with.

However, there are many possible pitfalls for even the most experienced First Trade team...

- An error in observation lead the team to make an appearance in a guise reserved for the gods. Revealing they are mortal is likely to raise religious indignation but continuing to portray themselves as gods is unlikely to develop trade.
- The team have selected a person to approach and concluded a deal, but the person is assassinated by a jealous relative. The team ends up besieged by large numbers of angry locals who may think the PCs killed the person, and who may decide to take the team's high value trade goods, and also take back the precious metals the PCs were trading for.
- Through Byzantine politics and maneuvering, the PCs' team has ended up separated from their goods. They must reassert control over the goods without letting the natives realize just what they are. If the PCs indicate the goods are valuable, they may "disappear" without trace, taken by the natives.
- As part of a local gift exchange custom, a local has asked, out of politeness, for what appears as a small trinket of little worth but is in fact the team's disguised



radio transmitter. To decline to give such a minor item would be a great social *faux pas*, but to give it would put them out of contact with their ship.

- In order to conduct the tightest deal possible a Trade Team needs to know the exact contents of a royal treasure house. The team must break in undetected, conduct an inventory, and get out without raising an alarm.

**Stage 2: Autocrat Support:** The initial trading policies encourage oppressive and dictatorial governments. The trade team deals with individual powerful people, and sets the price of their imported goods as high as possible. In order to maintain the flow of these expensive imported goods, the individuals dealt with must attempt to gain control over wider and wider areas, so that they may raise larger and larger amounts of revenue.

When the level of trade can reach a few hundred tons per annum, The School counsels that these autocrats are encouraged and supported. There may be any number of "Philip of Macedonia" on a world, however with a small quantity of imported military hardware almost any of them can be turned into an "Alexander the Great." Military imports are usually large-scale strategic items (e.g. satellite monitoring; encrypted radio communications, weather forecasting) and small scale tactical equipment (e.g. twenty sets of armor and rocket launchers for the praetorian guard). The limited quantity of cargo tonnage cannot support equipping entire armies, nor would it be desirable to do so in case the locals became aggressive to off-worlders at a later date.

Any remaining precious wealth (often gained through military conquest) can now be exported. However, The School suggests that the autocrat's hold on the people be used to maximize possible profits. There are still many things, particularly luxuries, that can only be produced by large amounts of manual labor. As a precursor to more organized labor, the autocrats can be directed to employ the weavers, artisans and other skilled creative workers of the community (who are not directly used in the art of war) to create intricate and detailed works of art for export. Modern examples might be oriental carpets, Shaker furniture or katana swords.

*Pick Your Leader:* A Trade Team in this phase is likely to consist of diplomats, military advisors, and handicraft specialists. A familiarity with personal weapons is essential to prevent forced acquisition of their goods. Difficulties will be in the assessment of suitable handicrafts and persuading the autocrats that these goods are desirable. Potential hazards at this stage might include:

- One of the generals of an autocratic state proves to be much more capable than the actual autocrat. The team must choose between eliminating the general and making do with their original choice or changing their choice and dealing with the political fallout.
- A autocrat who rules by divine right is now fully convinced of their own divinity. The autocrat shows a distressing tendency to take great risks to publicly demonstrate this divine status.

- A real "Alexander the Great" has risen amongst an autocrat's opposition, has captured some of the technology and is using it against the team's autocrat.
- A number of autocrats have discovered how to change the frequency of their newly imported radios and are now in communication with each other. Together they plan to ambush the team. The plans have been monitored and the team is warned, but they still have to deal with the situation.

**Stage 3: Establishment of Processing Base:** After initial clashes, another level of stability will be reached. The autocrats themselves will likely be planning against each other. Since they have the same level of off-world support and this is completely proof against native-produced weapons, it will be hard to progress their ambitions further. Doubtless they will ask for more or better arms in preference to their neighbors, but the School recommends against such preferential actions at this stage. Rather, the autocrats' desires should be channeled into future promises of preferential treatment, as long as they keep to present agreements.

When the level of trade can reach thousands of tons per annum, the School suggests that the team import stand-alone processing units along with a few select personnel to oversee their operation. Portable recyclers and machine shops can be set up within this tonnage. Initially these can be used to create other higher tech processing equipment. Eventually, when enough additional equipment has been produced, it can all be turned to creating any number of basic processed and machined goods. In addition to building the local economy these can be used for export. The world is still too far into the fringe for these goods to be economical for transport back to more central worlds. However, the deployment of supply caches in The Outback consists largely of spare parts and backups as well as standard monitoring components. A world in this phase can easily produce these.

*New Technology:* A Trade Team in this phase is likely to consist of mechanical and electrical engineers and many instructors. Regular supplies of raw materials need to be ensured during this operation. Additionally, due to the extended time between deployment and the production of something tangibly beneficial, a certain amount of faith in the process needs to be maintained among the autocrats. Situations that might occur include:

- A local religion, already in turmoil over extra-planetary life, see machines that make exact copies of themselves to make more machines to be a philosophical expression of godhood. They are very helpful in production but resist any change of settings which have the machines make anything other than themselves.
- An autocrat is unable to understand why the team values small round balls and rings (ball bearings and washers) so highly and concludes that they must have some magical benefit. To derive personal benefit from this "great secret," nearly a whole shipment is stolen and worked into garments and temple fixtures. The team must recover this as diplomatically as possible.

- Fear-mongers amongst the populace stir up feelings against anything that is produced by machine rather than hand as being soulless and evil (they also fear such production will deprive them of jobs). The local autocrat is reluctant to oppress these people without strong personal encouragement.

- A vocal detractor of the Trade Team spreads dissent. Despite the local government's best efforts, this self-appointed "Robin Hood" character cannot be silenced. Although reported killed many times, this person always is eventually reported to have escaped. (Perhaps in reality, another opponent has arisen, and is using the original evocative name).

**Stage 4: Thinning out the Autocrats:** Eventually the autocrats will develop some mercantile awareness or just lose their fear of the Visitors from the Stars. Their desire for military superiority to crush their neighbors is likely to eventually prompt them to withhold trade goods until promises of preferential aid are met. Even if this condition does not arise naturally, The School teaches that it is good to select the most appropriate autocrats, or rather the autocrats of the most appropriate nations, and to promote them above their rivals.

Wars have both positive and negative economic benefits. They spur production, increase national pride (for the winning side), and encourage scientific innovation. They can also cause massive destruction of manufacturing bases, infrastructure and depletion of population. When a war is planned, it needs to be controlled so that the maximum benefit is gained through the positive elements and the negative ones are guided in the productive directions.

With a trade level of tens of thousands of tons per annum, more sophisticated manufacturing units can be brought in as well as more specialists to operate them. There will never be enough cargo space to equip entire armies, so the emphasis will be on giving the favored autocrat the ability to produce the required equipment. The war needs to be directed so that it will have ancillary benefits of production in areas other than the purely military. The drive for innovations should be diverted into a drive to understand the production methods that are being taught, as the economy will not grow satisfactorily if the world's natives are satisfied simply with pressing buttons in sequence.

Even the negative aspects of war can be driven beneficially. It is difficult to justify the expense of upgrading the outdated manufacturing facilities, but if these facilities are largely taken out by war damage, it becomes inarguable that they need to be replaced with new modern facilities. Similarly, as the antiquated infrastructure is damaged, it can be replaced with something more useful to a modern economy.

The only negative aspect of war that has no benefits is population depletion. A planet's economic and industrial base is closely related to the size of its population. All participants in the war should be encouraged not to conduct warfare against civilian populations. A long war where long term damage occurs must be avoided at all costs. (The School therefore spends as much time studying how to end wars as how to start them).

The strategy that meets with the most frequent success in this control of war is the deployment of off-world mercenaries. When an autocrat has passed the mature stage of their campaign, the Trade Combine can offer to relax the constraints on importing high-tech weapons (the previous excuse for not arming too many soldiers with off-world weapons) but only if they are used by licensed personnel. The services of a mercenary brigade fully equipped with high-tech weapons is offered to the autocrat. It is likely that most of the local armies will be equipped to TL6-8 at this point. Even a small unit of TL12 mercenaries with grav vehicles and orbital strategic fire support can likely eliminate any amount of opposition in short order. When the enemy is unquestionably defeated, they can be withdrawn.

Although this is largely an investment phase, enough goods can be drawn off the developing industrial base for export to meet the costs of this period. These goods are most likely to be used for direct support further inward or laterally with other planets along the fringe in similar phases.

*Limited War:* There are many opportunities for PCs to play teams in this phase, perhaps as the term liaison with one of the chosen autocrats who must now successfully guide the autocrat along the "correct" path. Or they could be supporters of one of the autocrats that has been chosen to lose and have to face plotting their demise. In an alternative campaign, each player could play the advisor to a different nation and compete with each other. And, of course, the PCs could always play the mercenaries responsible for the ultimate conclusion of the war.

Duties are extremely varied. As an advisor, PCs might be called upon as a tactical presence in the autocrat's war room. The engineers will need to deploy the new manufacturing plants and get the locals up to production on them while under threat of war. Frequent "spotter" or surgical destruction missions will be the most likely combat missions to be run. The range of adventures is almost limitless. The following are a few possibilities:

- An unexpected ruse of the enemy decoys the defensive units away from a city and a large force invades it. The team stationed there must use its mechanical engineers to get the vital components of the processing plants out of the path of destruction immediately.

- Over-zealous bombardment of an enemy city has created a dangerous firestorm situation. The team must intervene and put out the blaze before the whole city and population are consumed.

- An autocrat is consumed with remorse over the deprivations visited on an enemy. They desire peace whereas the School requires that the war be fought to the end. The PCs have an interesting moral dilemma as to whether to continue to push for war, or attempt to get permission from their superiors to allow a peace.

- A PC's unit of heavy mercenaries (battle dress, grav belt, rocket launchers) is cut off from backup and has to delay a whole brigade of native fighters (a panzer division, for example) with no support.

**Stage 5: Post-War Boom:** Ideally there should be but one political state at this point, although in some circumstances there may be more. With a lack of opposition, the position of the autocrat declines in importance. They may now either be removed through backing a populist movement or else allowed to decline into a figurehead.

The industrial base built up for the war effort can now be turned to other means. The innovations that brought many wartime advances can now be bent toward general improvement of the world. Modernized infrastructure ensures that goods can be quickly moved from manufacturing base to market and encourages economies of scale. As well as being able to export bulk goods of value, the local market also becomes important.

Whereas in the first phase, Imperial efforts were turned towards removing the hard capital of the planet, in this stage much capital returns in the form of Imperial Currency. The trade combine now should diversify beyond simple import and export and should form many joint ventures with local companies in key industries. This guarantees the combine a fixed segment of the Gross Planetary Product and ensures that they derive profit from the trickle-down trade as well as the simple import.

Many popular imports become possible at this point, particularly in the arts and entertainment industry. New forms of recreation can be introduced and Imperial culture can be presented to the general population. Since the quality of import entertainment is generally far superior to locally produced forms, this is likely to have particular appeal to people, especially the youths. This serves to make desirable other commodities exemplifying Imperial life.

Some amount of travel can now occur between this world and worlds closer to the Imperial core. The expense, however, will usually limit such travel to leaders of states and industries, with perhaps some scholars or students. It is also recognized that a small trickle of locals will make their way off planet by working their passage, generally in the hope of "making their fortune" in the "great" Imperium. The School advocates that such fortune-seekers not be discouraged and, occasionally, advantage can be gained from aiding such and ensuring tales of their success in the Imperium are returned to their home world.

With their manufacturing industries coming fully on-line, the local populations can now produce the goods desired by other worlds. As their economy is new to the interstellar market, their currency will at this time only be gaining in value: this has the effect of making their goods cheaper than those produced on other mature worlds. It is most likely that it is at this stage that their main starport facility will be built.

It should be recognized that the freedom of trade allowed in this stage, and the relaxation of direct IISS influence (at the lower levels of the planet's society) can result in undesirable conflict between Imperial concerns trying to penetrate this huge new marketplace. The IISS and various Imperial Ministries must often dedicate a substantial amount of time to ensuring that their hard work in bringing a planet into the Imperium is not ruined by the over-zealous approaches of competing megacorps.

*The Power Behind the Throne:* The scope for adventure expands still further in this stage. The planet is no longer limited to just Trade Teams from the contacting Trade House. PCs may play characters from a rival merchant house trying to buy up a piece of the action, or they could be contracted "governmental engineers" to help the citizenry revolt against their dictator.

Where there is a market boom, there is profit to be made. Such a planet is fertile ground for rogues and confidence tricksters. Entertainers will be in high demand. Due to the demands of currency exchange, the prices are unlikely to be the best but will still be quite attractive to those either at the beginning or end of their career. The following are a few potential plots for this stage:

- Since conquering the world, an autocrat has lost personal direction. The PCs are contracted, given a stipend, and are to escort the leader around the wonders of the Imperium. Their hidden agenda is to ensure that all her will to rule is removed by the time she returns.
- Failure to read the fine print in a previous contract has resulted in the PCs having a large quantity of local currency that cannot be disposed of off-planet. They have to try to set up some operation here that will allow them to convert it to something more transportable.
- The PCs are an entertainment troupe, their roadies, or security. Their reception on this planet is well beyond the scope that they are prepared to deal with. All hands must be mustered to deal with the barrage of reel-to-reel deals, concert and pop show requests, and personal invitations to dinner from what passes for the rich and famous on this world.
- Down-and-out PCs may accept a contact from a local company to journey to its location in The Fringe and give the benefit of their professional advice. They wish to compete with the trade consortium developing the planet but need off-world advice.

**Stage 6: Maturity:** When the trade level approaches or exceeds millions of tons per annum, the world can be considered to be a stable part of the inner community. Bulk goods of standard Imperial items are imported and exported, and the travel of individuals is as common as elsewhere. The most important aspect of this phase is that the planet may be allowed, for the first time, to begin to build its own starships. Local investors may have representation in the trading combines or, after the Imperial Declaration, they may have representation in the Imperial Government.

*The Imperium is your Oyster...:* The planet at this stage comprises part of the Imperial core. All normal adventure opportunities apply. Additional opportunities worth considering are the organizing and development of worlds further out in The Fringe or Outback.

## **Basis for Trade**

When treading the path of trade development, there are three major points that must be established for there to be a basis for trade: Currency, Copyright, and Courts.



**Currency:** Currency is a requirement for dealing with goods in the abstract. Although not vital to the first stage and most of the second, currency must be introduced before further progress can take place. Barter only goes so far. It is not possible to conduct large exchanges of disparate goods without a means of abstract evaluation: currency is then the foundation for later concepts of credit, interest, and, of course, debt.

For planets that already have a local currency, the first conceptual gap is bridged. If they use hard currency, i.e., made from a substance that has value of its own, then they have to make the second conceptual leap to abstract currency. For representational currency to work, there must be faith in the issuing body, in this case the Imperium via the trade consortium. In the early stages, most currency exchange will be with the autocrats, and as their personal confidence is key to the development plan, there should be few problems.

For those systems which already have representational currency, all the concepts are already in place. This may be a disadvantage, as such worlds will understand better the plans being set to direct their economy along lines profitable to the Imperial merchant houses. The denuding of the wealth of the nation called for in the early stages should serve to undermine the world's own currency by removing anything of physical value from backing it.

As the external value of the world's currency shifts or fluctuates, the School recommends using this fluctuation to reduce the planet's confidence in their own currency. Imperial currency does not shift. In the final stages, when popular demand for export goods grows quickly, the currency of choice for business should be the Imperial Credit.

*Money Makes the World Go Round:* The following plots are linked to the currencies of developing worlds:

- A child on a Stage 3 planet has visions of the impact of currency: by abstracting the value of goods it is thus possible to abstractly calculate the value of work, and further, to thus put differing values on people. Despite religious views of all people having equal value in God's sight, this calculation makes some people inherently more valuable than others. Many people from various factions of the religion (which splintered upon the discovery that extra-terrestrials were not just abstract religious concepts) are drawn to this new faction, and oppose efforts to introduce a representational currency. The PCs should set things right.
- A number of rich, but not ruling, families in a world in the later stages of trade contact are used to trading to maintain their wealth. They can see the direction in which things are going and know that a re-evaluation of their currency would destroy all their family capital. To protect their investments, the family is counter-manipulating the local economy to remove faith in the Imperial Currency, causing a run on the Trade Consortium's local bank. The PCs are called in to reaffirm the faith of the people in the currency and to prevent this happening again.
- Someone has been counterfeiting Imperial Currency. Although at this stage in the planet's development it is

impossible to forge perfectly, there is as yet no widespread use of currency authenticators. The gang has made copies that pass even detailed visual examination. The PCs must track down the gang and put a halt to their operations.

**Copyright:** Copyright and patents cover the abstract notion that ideas, processes and designs can be owned. These are vital requirements once the plan calls for bringing in external tech that planets can duplicate for themselves. The locals must be educated into respecting copyright if the concept has not occurred to them (which may occur surprisingly early; for example copyright was first invented in Ireland in the 6th Century).

This concept may be more easily accepted if local creations are copyrighted to native persons, particularly in the craft stage where their designs may be used as the basis for duplication of motifs off-world. Naturally these will be licensed to the consortium which will pay the copyright owner the royalties.

Most imported tech will either be copyright to the trade consortium or off-world interests. The majority of it will be licensed to locals at nominal costs. A certain cost is essential to maintain the principal, but too much cost would encourage native resistance and deplete the economy that is being developed.

*You Can't Copy That!:* The following ideas can be used as plots for adventures concerning copyright:

- The PCs are part of a Stage 2 team. They must venture amongst the natives in search of local handicrafts that might appeal to imperial tastes. Once they find them, they must explain the concept of copyright to the crafter and get them to license the trade consortium to duplicate their designs.
- Due to the over-zealousness of a previous team in explaining the idea of copyright publicly, "trademark fever" has struck the populace. Citizens are queuing up at the patent office to register all manner of things as their personal trademarks. One bright spark has trademarked the four hundred most common nouns and is refusing to let them be used without extortionate royalties. The PCs inherit this situation and have to deal with it.
- The Zhunastu own the copyright on most of the standard items used for provincial development. They regularly license it to other trade houses for their own development. They suspect that one particular design for a mechanical fabricator is being used much more widely than reported on one particular planet. The PCs are agents for Zhunastu and must conduct a surprise survey and audit.

**Courts:** Courts are impartial upholders of law. When two parties are in dispute they must go to a third for arbitration. Currency deals cannot be upheld and copyright is meaningless unless there is a guarantee that agreements will be adhered to and protection respected.

Where possible, The School recommends dealing with local courts. Although quite often these dealings are sprinkled with biased decisions, it is a far less painful course than attempting to impose foreign courts. The School out-

lines a template of laws, as a guideline, that developers must ensure are supported by the local courts before they can be accepted. This then forms an abstract “common denominator” between worlds so that developmental contracts can be worked out in abstract.

Lawyers who specialize in this Planetary Trade Law and who are used to its basic derivatives can be frequently found in The Fringe. Most often they work on behalf of various trade houses, although when the price is right, they will support local planetary claims as well.

*It's the Law!*: The following are examples of law-oriented adventures:

- The courts of one planet are in the habit of always ruling against the trade consortium. The PCs are drafted in to pursue some of the high court officials to see things a different way.
- Arbitration on one planet is done by random residents selected by divination. Some of the PCs are selected for “judge duty” in a complicated case between the trade house and local investors.

**Balance:** Although often viewed as evil capitalist vampires whose only desire is to suck the wealth from The Fringe to enrich their palaces back in the core, trade houses are just as concerned about the economies of the worlds they are developing as the more central ones. A key concept taught by The School is “A Balance of Trade.”

If the net value of exported goods from a world is less than the net value of the imported goods then the planet will, overall, become depressed and be able to afford less imports—a vicious circle which can only be balanced by the governments accepting loans from off-world banks. Trade cannot be allowed to die, and thus there is no overall benefit overly depleting a planet. Certainly keeping them “hungry” for goods is a benefit. It keeps them working hard and provides excess capital that the core can use for development of the outback.

“An empty hold is wasted space” is another maxim taught. If something of some value cannot be found to export from a planet, then the space on the ship is wasted. There is always something worth trading, but it sometimes requires much experience in the field to recognize the valuable commodities of a world.

## Interactions and Conflicts

The planetary development philosophy taught by the Zhunastu Merchant Academy on Sylea is now widely accepted and, since the accession of Cleon, has become Imperial policy. However, there have been its detractors, and it has not always been in favor amongst other houses—particularly along the rimward and anti-spinward edges of the sphere of Sylean influence. When there are small numbers of individuals courting autocrats with great personal power, and introducing items of extreme value to accentuate this courtship, there are three common problems that can face companies with inadequately trained personnel: greed, egotism, and sentimentality.

**Greed:** A small crew, far into the Outback, which has been laying down caches for others, might end up with a

Stage 1 shipment to bring back towards the Core. Ten tons of precious metals is enough to make anyone greedy, and the temptation to skip can be quite high. The crew might go either to some world in the core where the aggrieved noble house is not active or else to some planet far in the Outback that has been previously surveyed and which has sufficient local comforts to ensure a long and pleasant life.

A more common problem is skimming. Large selections of unique and highly valued cargo are seldom completely inventoried. When a crew is laying caches, it is not too difficult to walk an extra hundred meters across an airless monitoring station and bury a treasure for later collection. It can make a very attractive retirement policy.

No matter how important the balance of trade, there will always be operators without enough discipline to keep to this. The temptation to abuse economic power for personal gain is great, given the funds involved. Oppression is not a good long term policy, though, and when such people are discovered their plans usually turn against them.

*It's Mine, All Mine!*: Greed is a powerful motivator and is the source for many an adventure:

- The PCs receive an alert that a skipping ship has just jumped into the system with a highly valuable shipment. As they have the only Jump-2 ship in system, they are commandeered for pursuit.
- The news of the early death of a relative of one of the PCs catches up with them along with the remains of his estate: a map to buried treasure on a remote world in the Outback.
- A standard joke telex was delivered to a local consortium representative saying “All is known, flee the planet!” She took the advice to heart and has vanished. The PCs must either investigate or are contracted by her to aid her escape.

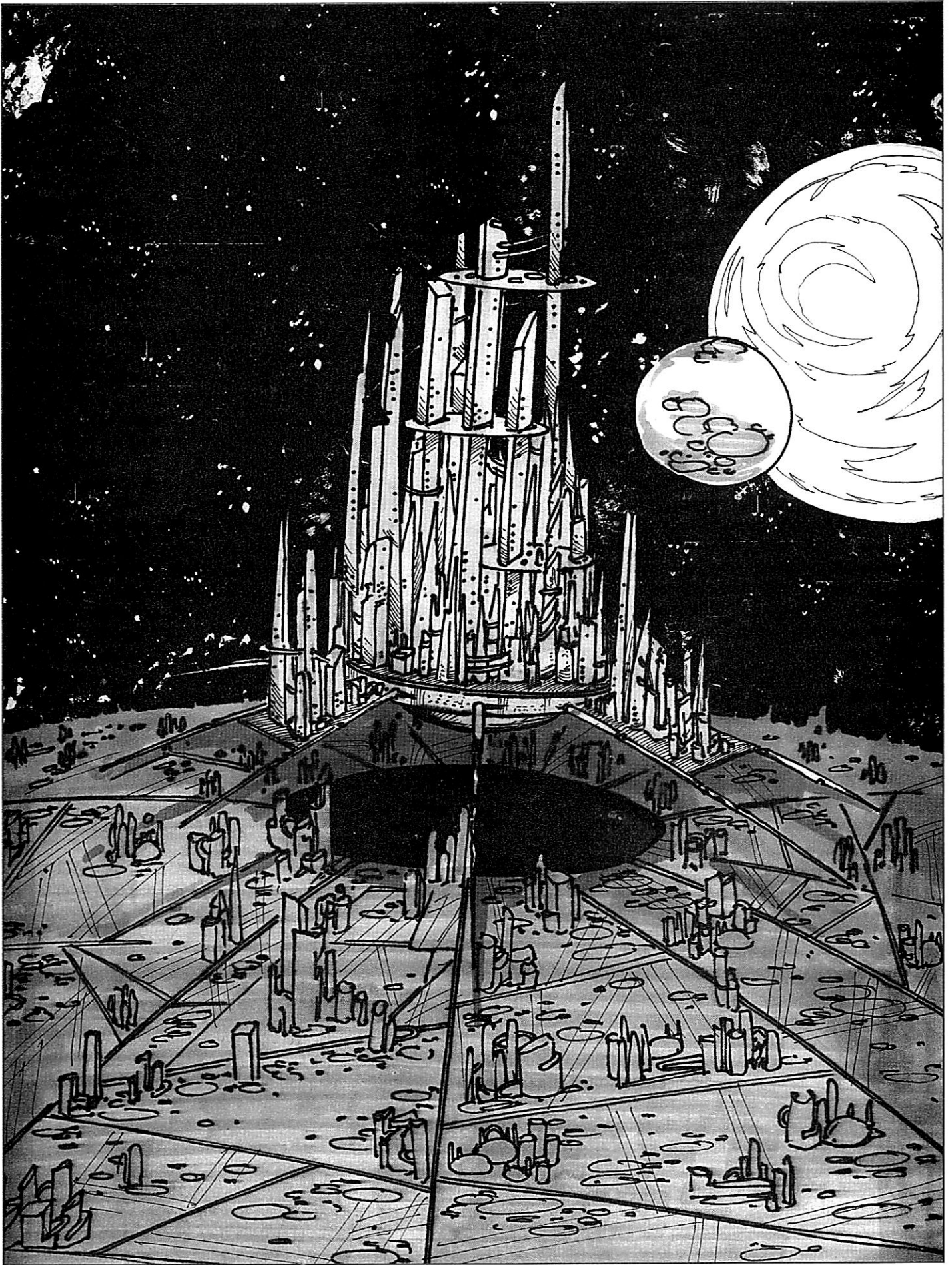
**Egotism:** Early planetary development plans call for pandering to dictators and autocrats. Frequently those without true charismatic appeal or ability are boosted into positions of power through this external aid. It can be very frustrating for an operative to see a hopeless idiot blunder through planetary conquest. Occasionally those without discipline break and decide that they could do the job better. The native monarch is booted out and the Imperial agent takes over.

In other circumstances agents involved in initial contact may be taken as great prophets, wizards or divine avatars. For those not prepared for this, it is easy to let this go to the head, especially if the natives are prone to offer gold temple ornaments and hordes of nubile slaves to cater for the gods' every whim. Some agents who may have been less than stable might end up believing that they are, in fact, agents of the god and begin wielding divine authority.

*Bow Before Me, Lesser Mortals!*: Corruption of a planet by a rogue Imperial element must be handled carefully, for the situation must be remedied without endangering the Imperium's chances of bringing the planet into its fold. Such adventures are typically performed by highly trained IISS teams:

- The PCs are the orbital backup for a Contact-2 team. They are lured through a false message into an







ambush by the local army who capture them and their ship. One member of the Contact-2 team has decided that he is going to take planetary development into his own hands. He offers the PCs the choice of being imprisoned or ruling as his sub-lieutenants.

- An agent fails to appear at a pick-up location. Instead the party are met by a religious procession who attempt to drive them away as evil spirits who will try to steal the soul of their god.

- On a cache-deposit trip, the PCs discover an automated message from an agent warning of an extremely virulent local plague hazardous to Sylean genetic stock. Unknown to the agent, their bio-monitor is still connected to the satellite relay and shows her to be perfectly healthy. The PCs must investigate to find out the real story (the agent has set herself up as a god and doesn't want to be disturbed!)

**Sentimentality:** Early operations require setting up a repressive regime to ensure efficiency in the development process. Without an obedient populace, too many questions are raised that would take too long to answer for development to reach its full profit potential. In the later stages, the local culture is either exploited where profitable, or eroded in order to make it a good market for mass-produced Imperial goods.

Some people who are less than convinced by the over-all development plan occasionally have reservations. The long term benefits of short term wars are been proven but that can sometime be difficult to believe in when natives the agent has befriended are dying. If the local government or autocrat the agents have been dealing with for a long time is scheduled by the Imperial bureaucrats to be on the losing side, it can be difficult for the agents to see the greater good.

Other agents "go native" and adopt native relations and customs. The mass marketing of Imperial culture will appear in a new light to them as cultural imperialism. Whereas the natives may not be completely aware of what is happening, the agents will be aware because they have been part of it.

*Going Native:* Operatives who have succumbed to sentimentality can be the source of some of the most dangerous problems. They may either just make the occasional slip, go completely renegade, or else continue operations for some time as a sleeper, feeding seditious information to the natives.

- When the PCs arrive to do a Stage 2 analysis for a planet, they find one of the monitoring operatives has defected. The chosen autocrat has been deposed and a elected body set up instead. In reality the operative naively is being used by another local noble who wishes to seize power for themselves.

- An agent sent secret messages via a courier and registered large amounts of native designs back on Sylea in their own name, thus circumventing trade combine profits. As punishment, he has been assigned to the PCs' Outback survey team.

- In the course of conducting a war on a planet one of the governments scheduled to lose suddenly gains the

upper hand. It is discovered that an agent has defected and made all war plans available to them. The PCs may be either a mercenary band brought in early to settle the matter or else the war directors for the polity originally scheduled to easily win, who now have a real war to fight.

## Things that Have Gone Wrong

In the course of the Sylean Federation's evolution, there have been notable departures from the planned development. Sometimes the rules were broken, sometimes operatives dramatically failed. Other times, for various reasons of self-interest, individuals have taken it upon themselves to circumvent operations.

Preceding sections have outlined many of the ways things can go wrong. The referee is encouraged to build upon these and create their own situations. For the remainder of this section we will give some specific places and situations where the development plan has gone awry and their result. The referee can use these directly, or as inspiration.

**Pholishie:** Pholishie is a frozen planet in a system well into The Fringe. The core is still active with a number of hot-spots. Above these hot-spots the ice vaporizes and vents to the surface. Along the vent the pressure is high enough to resemble a normal atmosphere before it erupts over the surface and freezes back as oxygen snow. Along these regions of the vents live the inhabitants of Pholishie.

It was originally overlooked by the initial Scout survey as it is not the planet that was listed as the main world in the Second Imperium. After restoration of a Naval Archive, it was revealed that it once possessed a naval base. A team was sent to investigate and did not return. A second, better prepared team was sent and was met by a warning from the natives. They had access to an operational meson bay mounted too deep below the planet's surface for bombardment to take out.

The system of Pholishie was erased from the development plans. However it has carried on for some time as a free-port. They will allow anyone to land and conduct business with no restrictions whatsoever. From old tech to illegal tech, anything can probably be found on Pholishie eventually.

Getting to one of the phols is a difficult task. Usually there is a primitive landing pad on the top of the vent and a number of local pilots who offer to pilot incoming ships down the vents. As often as not their price changes during the course of the descent. Those pilots who feel they have got a bad deal from the crew usually park the ship with a less than reputable factor.

There are no laws in the phols and the locals usually trade off protection from various gangs. These range from small street gangs responsible for protecting shops up to large organized outfits insuring factors get the supplies they need.

The natives take no one at their word. There is no official currency, but each phol has standard items that are worth fairly standard amounts that are easily identifiable.

One may trade in certain drugs, another may trade in standard microprocessors. All business is done by direct exchange.

The Imperium does not like the existence of Pholishie. It is officially interdicted. However, with more pressing matters elsewhere, the interdiction is rarely enforced and trade continues.

*Adventuring on Pholishie:* The following adventure possibilities arise in connection with this world.

- The PCs could be part of the follow up contact team early in the development of Pholishie. While studying the natives, they will be subject to the distrust and potential violence inherent in the Pholishie society.
- The PCs could be contracted by the Navy to infiltrate Pholishie and capture or destroy their meson guns.
- The PCs could find a picture postcard from Pholishie of a junk yard and recognize one piece in the picture as valuable old-tech equipment. They must then determine where the yard is and whether it holds more valuable resources. Perhaps these were discarded by original Scout teams, or some passing trader has used it in barter.
- The PCs might have been palmed off with some highly dubious cargo that they can only get rid of on Pholishie.

**The Morinmoss Pirates:** The nobles of the Zuu Trading Family are forbidden by custom to have children themselves. Instead they carry on their line by adopting children at infancy from the orphanages of the lower quarters. Stee-Jans Morinmoss came from this humble background to be the playboy son of a more important noble. Although a commission was bought for him in the Navy, his complete dereliction of duty resulted in his discharge. Only a large amount of Zuu sponsorship converted his dishonorable discharge into a simple mustering out.

To encourage him in more appropriate ways, he was sent into the Outback as part of a survey and contact team. It was thought that by depriving him of all the luxuries on which he had come to depend that he would mature and become more responsible. To a degree, the family's plan worked, but not in the way they intended.

According to his recently publicized musical-autobiography, he came to an understanding amongst the native peoples of the Outback. He sympathized with their plight and grew determined to become their champion and take a stance against their exploitation.

To the Navy's extreme embarrassment, he managed to talk his way onto a cruiser and take command of it. To crew his ship, he has adopted natives from many Outback worlds, all of whom were also orphans, dressing them all in high Zuu fashion. They cruise the space lanes, seeking opportunities to raid commerce or embarrass the Navy who have a vendetta against them.

*Nice Pirates?:* The Morinmoss Pirates can be played as a serious threat in a given region of space, or perhaps can be used to add a light-hearted moment to a campaign through their archaic dress and strange musical pretensions:

- The Navy will co-opt the PCs to try to infiltrate the Morinmoss Pirates since one of them is an orphan. However, unlike popular reports, Stee-Jans does not take pity on all orphans and the PCs will have to work hard to be recruited. They may find the pirates are actually more of a "Robin Hood" type group and thus have a moral dilemma as to whether to aid the Navy or defect and become a true pirate.

- The PCs' ship is boarded by the Morinmoss Pirates. They are quite civil about it all, just taking their cargo and any passengers or crew who can raise a ransom. They will, though, inflict their singing and hornpipes upon the PCs. If the PCs react well (joining in the cacophony of music?) the pirates might even give back some of the cargo...

- The PCs are venturing into the Fringe. On one world, the local bank won't exchange their currency. It passes the electronic validator fine but the local says it doesn't look right. When they compare it, they will find that virtually all of the Imperial currency on this world bears the face of Stee-Jans instead of Cleon. Reports come through that a currency printer was stolen some time ago by the pirates. The PCs are hired to track it down.

- As a contact team, the PCs start having particular difficulty with one autocrat of a world. He wants nothing more to do with the Imperium due to the recent abduction by a Navy ship of his adopted daughter. From the description of the "Navy" crew, they can only be The Morinmoss Pirates. The PCs must try to locate the pirates and retrieve the daughter.

**The Santry-Cordova Cluster:** The world of Santry had been a naval depot of the Rule of Man. During the collapse, a terrorist movement arose and destroyed the base. The officers sealed themselves into a deep subterranean bunker to await aid. By Year -250, all the units had failed except for one. This was discovered in an archaeological expedition from the civilization of survivors that managed to continue on the planet's surface through the Long Night.

Captain Neva al-Zena was revived, and through her help, much of the archived data was made comprehensible to the world's scientists. She led them to re-contact some local worlds first with sub-light drives, then with scavenged jump drives and finally with revived jump-drive technology.

Over the next two hundred years they expanded slowly, but in about Year -75 internal divisions led to fragmentation of the worlds into the Santry Cluster and the Cordovian Republic. There was an inconclusive war for some twelve years before an armistice was brokered. Although there was never an official peace, there was regular trade and contact between the polities.

In Year -16, Sylean scouts came into contact with a Cordovian colony. A second official meeting was arranged to which the Cordovians brought a small naval force. With this they "persuaded" the Scouts to give them all the information they had on-line about the Sylean Federation and for one to accompany them back as an advisor. Word spread quickly, and by Year -14 all the worlds of both

Cordova and Santry were consumed with rumors of a vast expansionist empire on the edge of Cordova that had the technology to build very fast, well armed ships.

Santry offered Cordova a mutual defense pact but Cordova delayed, seeking instead to acquire some of this technology from the Syleans. Their inner government circles had decided that it was probable that the Syleans, being a large empire, would ultimately encapsulate their own. So the objective was to become as large and strong as they could so that they had a better stance from which to negotiate. In their overtures to the Syleans, Cordova complained of their aggressive neighbor, Santry, from whom they only won their independence recently. The Syleans could not verify this as Santry was on the far side of Cordova from them. There were also reluctant to pass on their high tech secrets to a spacefaring polity without some very restrictive terms.

Santry, in the meantime, was greatly upset by the offer to officially end the war and rather worried about preferential treatment from the rumored Syleans. In a complete reversal, they dropped the armistice and began arming up for war. Aware of their neighbor's military build-up, the Cordovians attempted to compete. However they still were holding out for Federation aid and were keen to show a peaceful face to the Syleans. The Federation attempted to establish independent contact with the Santrians but the mission was lost. Both sides claimed sabotage by the other.

In Year -7, an official Federation ambassador was delivered to Cordova with a Naval escort. This move was interpreted by Santry as the precursor to an alliance. By pre-arranged signals, they began their offensive and quickly captured several Cordovian border worlds. Cordova withdrew its forces and concentrated on forming a blockade. With only Jump-1 technology, it was possible to form a line of defense and guard against any major task force. Santry, similarly, drew up its battle line. The offensive stagnated by Year -3, with only a few worlds having changed hands. The Santrians offered another armistice which was not officially accepted by the Cordovians, who merely "considered the proposal" for some years. Santry used this time to build a new fleet. Cordova was limited to repairing its existing fleet under the careful eye of the Federation ambassador, who was still unwilling to pass on any superior naval technology.

With the Imperial declaration in Year 0, this region effectively came under the direction of House Zhunastu. It was evident that Santry-Cordova was a reasonably strong potential market and the Empire would benefit well from their induction. Cleon appointed Sir Karl wide ranging authority and dispatched him with the Imperial Dragonwood Task Force to bring the region under Imperial suzerainty. Sir Karl arrived in Cordovian territory and was escorted to the capital. There he made an offer to the ruling council they couldn't refuse: submit to Imperial authority and his task force would be at their disposal to secure their borders.

The Dragonwood ships were not large nor numerous. However, due to their superior power plants, they were

much more heavily armed and maneuverable than other ships of their class. The task force was broken up and re-deployed amongst Cordovian naval units. In a coordinated operation, the center of the Santrian line was attacked at the expense of the flanks. As the Santrians counterattacked along the flanks into Cordova, the main force split to secure the worlds they had vacated and to cut off their support. The main fleets maintained this blockade and smaller forces were dispatched to hunt down the isolated ships.

A number of notable battles took place during this time, as the Santrians fought to try to return to their command line. The Santrian line was reluctant to counter-strike given, the reported heavy losses already taken. In desperation, a number of Santrian captains held civilian populations hostage to try to elicit safe passage. Against Cordovian wishes, Sir Karl refused to comply. Some captains fled and were destroyed when their bluff was called. Others made true their threats and, in one particular incident, ninety percent of the population of Meadowmarsh was destroyed.

Once the majority of the Santrians in what was originally Cordovian territory were destroyed or captured, the Cordovians started planning a counter offensive to "pacify" them completely. By this stage Sir Karl was well aware of the Cordovian naval capacity and did not think it was in Imperial interests for them to grow any larger. He informed the Cordovian council that their navy only had authority under Imperial law to act against internal threats. As Imperial citizens they now had the right of protection against external threats by the Imperial Navy.

He reassembled the Dragonwood Taskforce back into a single force. As previously deployed, they were able to utilize their superior tactical maneuverability and armament. Now, as a unit, the advantage of their Jump-2 strategic maneuverability could be displayed. Taking re-supply on the Cordovian border, the task force over-jumped the Santrian blockade in a single jump. Their second jump took them well into Santrian territory. After a full refuel and jump, the whole task force was in high guard over Santry. They quickly dispensed with the naval guard there and the planetary defenses before calling for Santry to surrender unconditionally.

Santry had little choice but to capitulate. This particular display of force convinced them of the inevitable, and also sent a powerful signal to Cordova of just what a modern navy could do. Santry sent out the word to the fleets to surrender and submit themselves to Imperial authorities for judgment for war crimes.

The fleets of Santry were completely overwhelmed and in vast disarray by this maneuver. Now their high command was calling on them to surrender. It was quite clear that there was a gun pointed at their collective head. A conclave of fleet admirals was called under the leadership of Admiral Etienne de Fevour. The admirals quickly divided into those who wished to follow the directives of their government and those who claimed the government had given up its legitimacy by consorting with the enemy. No agreement could be reached, so it was decided to send a



delegation of those loyal to the Santrian government to negotiate. En route, an impatient foray of Cordovians ventured across the border to strike at a Santrian world. Santrian government officials had been sent out to personally negotiate with the fleet and urged them not to retaliate. After a second such strike the Santrian captains could take no more. Since they were prevented, politically, from defending their border they assembled their ships into a single force with the intention of re-taking Santry.

As they moved to advance, however, word came from Santry that the fleet originally sent in had surrendered their ships, as asked. The captains had all been summarily executed for participating in war crimes and the ships consigned to a decaying solar orbit. Only a few couriers left in the outer system escaped to report this. That, along with tactical reports of the engagement of the world's defenses by the Imperial ships made it clear that a head-on engagement could not be won. After another conclave, the fleet decided to disperse and carry on the war as best they could, in whatever way they could.

Disowned by their government, hunted by both the Cordovians and Imperials, the renegade Santrian Navy roams the Outback in the vicinity of Santry and Cordova. Occasionally one or two ships jointly make a lightning strike on some Cordovian outpost, or raid the shipping of either nation for re-supply. Sometimes secret Santrian nationalists feed them information and spares. Occasionally they can be found defending fringe worlds not sufficiently commercially valuable for development and thus left subject to less scrupulous neighbors.

Very few of the captains retain the honor and civility of Naval officers. Many have sunk to the level of the pirates they are accused of being. One or two have given over completely to being reavers and are bent only on causing as much destruction as possible to any concern.

*A War Between Pocket Empires:* This setting is conducive to a campaign background. The referee is encouraged to develop the details of the interactions and history. There are a number of areas for potential player activity:

- Set in Year -7, the PCs could be part of the embassy delivered to Cordova. They would need to react to maintain Imperial interests during subsequent events.
- PCs interested in tactics could be put in command of one of The Dragonwood Taskforce ships during Year 0.
- PCs interested in strategy might each be given Santry, Cordova, and Sir Karl to play. The referee can work out the starting position and details of the whole Imperial offensive.
- The referee could start a campaign in this region with the PCs as Santrian merchants with secret sympathies for the Fleet.
- Another interesting campaign settings would be for all the PCs to be the officers of a renegade Santrian ship.

*This section is based mainly upon "From Federation to Empire: An Early History of the Expansion" by Vur Biddaden, Sylean University New Media Publications, 127-0020.*

## Ever Outwards

As Cleon sat in the Presidential chamber in Year -30, the boundaries of rediscovered space were already extensive. During the early centuries of the Federation, scouts and traders had pushed out a long way, buoyed by a new optimism with the dawn of a new era. Over two or three centuries, these brave souls had travelled up to sixty parsecs to spin and core, to contact the Vilani and visit the Vland homeworld, which was reached in Year -495. By around Year -480, a near permanent corridor had been established between the two worlds. Although traffic was never heavy (the threat of piracy being all too high), this link served as a reminder to all that space extended beyond the dozen or so worlds of the Federation.

In other directions, the forays had been less successful. To core, missions had been lost to alien attacks; to trailing the Lesser Rift made progress difficult for the Federations best Jump-2 scouts, and rumors of fierce aliens beyond were enough to put many scouts off trying too hard. To rimward, scouts had also pushed to forty or fifty parsecs or so, but the area was full of competing, but ultimately short lived pocket empires, all with a loathing for anything emanating from coreward. Swinging to spinward, traders brought back stories of conflict with alien, feline warriors, and then the desolation of the spinward worlds and the Great Rift itself made directly spinward travel unattractive to many adventurers.

Given time, Sylea could have pushed its own borders and its scouts out further, but a combination of poor coordination, lack of political will, and frequent wars with the Chanestin Kingdom and the Interstellar Confederacy meant that after the initial push, Sylea's border grew but slowly, and its frontiers of knowledge hardly at all.

By Year -30 though, things were changing. The Long Night really was now all but gone from many worlds. Whilst Sylea's near neighbors still carried on the struggle, they were beaten in all but name. And Cleon brought the will and plan to expand the Federation.

**Cleon's Planning:** At his first meetings with the Sylean Federation Scout Service, Cleon and his Scout commanders contemplated the data they had available. Apart from a great quantity of rumor, speculation and sketchy logs from traders and scouts, what other, more factual, information they possessed was often very old indeed. As a former Imperial capital, Sylea had inherited a vast war chest of Solomani military maps and economic data. But in 2000 years, recording standards and media had changed, original media had deteriorated, been damaged or lost, and with little comparative data, it was often impossible to tell which of several versions of a database was the right one. As a result, the first maps issued to SFSS to work from were sketchy at best, and pure fiction at worst. For

the nearer stars, direct observation was used to corroborate physical data, but the details—whether there was life there and what culture had developed—would require someone to go there.

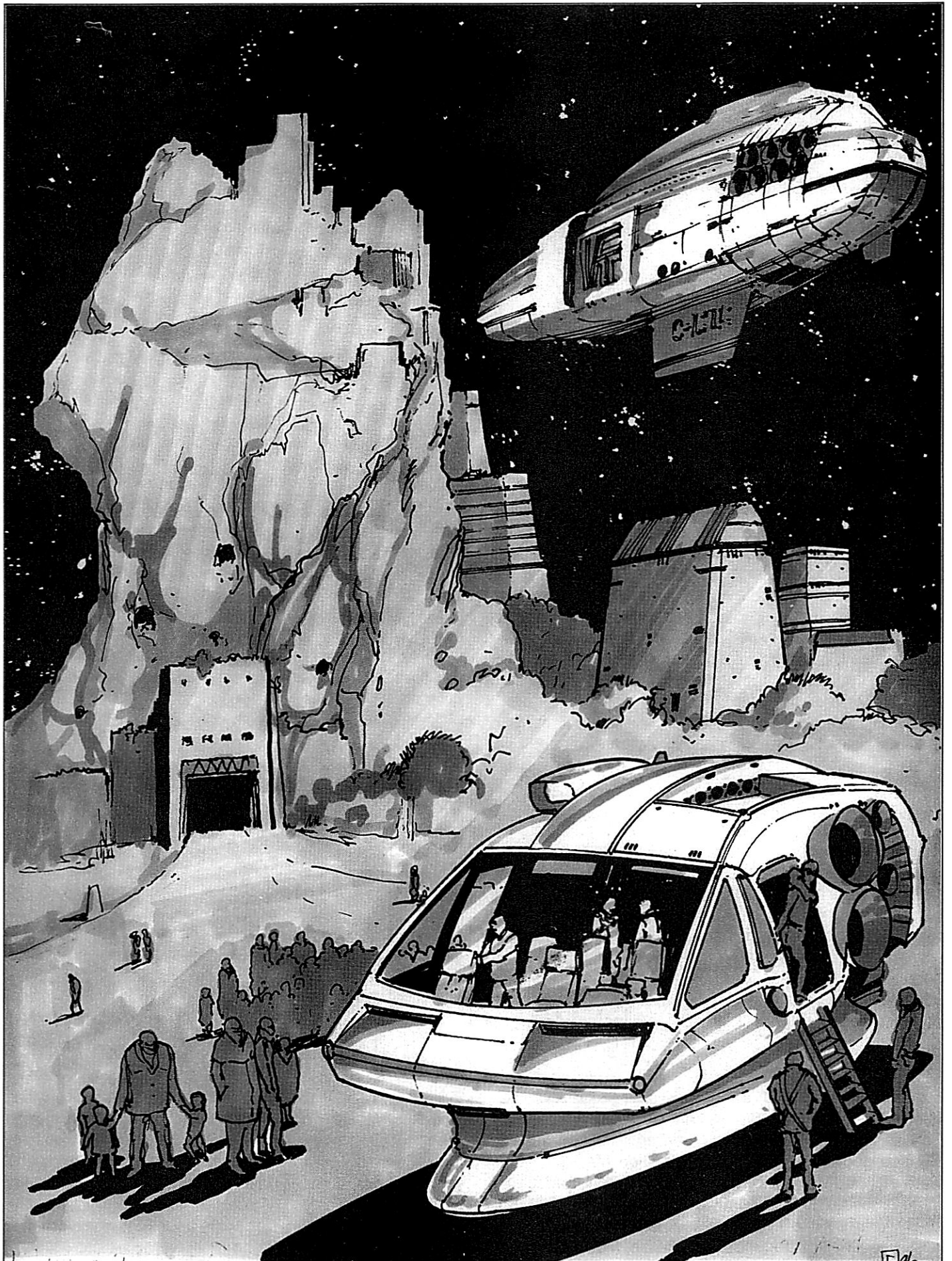
Given this background, and particularly the more recent knowledge of the strength of the Terran state to rimward and the psionic aliens to rimward, of whom the Vilani were now speaking, Cleon laid his plans. The thrust of expansion would be to spinward, towards and possibly beyond the Great Rift. This had a number of benefits: Vland was well positioned to assist, the Federation could grow before having to take on, diplomatically or militarily, the Terrans, and the dangers aliens beyond the Lesser Rift could also be avoided. Other benefits were that helping the Vilani secure their own borders would bind them closer into the Federation, and reports from the Vilani of high technology artifacts around the Rift could be investigated.

**Expansion:** With this direction, the Federation's expansion was swift, which put an untold strain on both scouts and megacorporations (who were charged with much of the colonization work) alike. The SFSS started from a zero-line of the existing Federation boundary, and, following its new modus operandi, pushed out to the previously explored limits by Year -10. After that, and assisted by the new Jump-3 drives, they expanded along the whole of the "near shore" of the Great Rift, through Gushemege, Verge, Ilelish and Zarushagar.

The Vilani, naturally more conservative, concentrated on the development of neighboring subsectors, rather than on pushing the limits of known space, but eventually Imperial scouts began to edge beyond Vland into Deneb. It was only towards the rim that Cleon forbade official expansion beyond Massilia.

This expansion of the known space boundary was accomplished by a far slower, but well managed, expansion of the Federation's own boundary. By Holiday Year, Cleon had, by dint of diplomacy, hearts and minds, commerce and military action, brought the majority of the Sector into the Federation. The years after this saw the Imperial boundary expand at around half a parsec per year, at least to spinward.

Expansion was by a link-and-branch system, contacting worlds and societies, and establishing important bases along the ever-expanding frontier. Links connected the older bases with the newer ones, and became highways for trade and transport. Branches emanated from the various bases to touch the scattered worlds that promised resources and markets. It was only natural that the merchant and transport corporations should adopt these same links and branches in their activities. From the main links, these corporations (as well as the independent merchants and settlers looking for challenge or for a hand in their own





## The Worlds We've Found

*The following is an extract from a lecture given 124-0019 by Professor Rale Ives to the Imperial Scout Academy.*

"I turn now to the worlds which we have found out in that great vastness which is unexplored space. We can broadly identify five types of world: virgin worlds, dead worlds, agrarian worlds, industrial worlds, and technological worlds. In the first category lie those which have never been visited by humaniti before. Principally these include any worlds which require Jump-3 to get to—the Vilani never achieved Jump-3—or which require so many Jump-2 links that again they were never worth the bother of the Solomani or the Vilani visiting them. These worlds are the classic scout's place of work. Of these worlds which we have found to date—some fifteen percent of the total visited—about forty percent have developed at least microscopic life. Out of this total, about forty percent have gone on to develop complex plant life, and twenty percent have gone on to develop animal life. Only a handful of these worlds have proved to be home to sentient life, and these are naturally the focus of much Scout and xenobiological and xenocultural attention.

"The other classes include all those worlds easily reached by Jump-2 and Jump-1 routes. Our research suggests that some ninety percent of these systems had been colonized at some time by either the First or Second Imperium. However, as our Scouts now revisit, we are finding that nearly half have not survived the Long Night. These worlds are a tragedy, and their exploration can often be a traumatic experience. Their reasons for decline seem many. Mass exodus with the falling of the Long Night seems common. Many have perished due to catastrophic environmental, system or technology failure, especially on those worlds with hostile environments or exotic architecture. Another cause appears to have been starvation—the result of depending on imported foodstuffs and not developing local resources—a crime for which the Rule of Man appears to have paid often.

"Our remaining categories reflect principally the technology level of the surviving worlds. At the bottom, and accounting for about thirty percent of the survivors, are the worlds which are at little more than Stone Age culture. On these worlds, the failure of power and food systems forced the inhabitants to become hunter-gatherers once again, living off of whatever they could. Over the last millennia, a few have either grown into, or managed to maintain, some vestiges of organized civilization, but still within an agrarian, TL2, culture. But on many worlds, the whole history of star-flight appears to have been lost, and there is no common ground between our Scout recontact teams and these near-savages.

destiny) set out to the worlds farther off the mainstream. Fertile worlds were settled, enterprising merchants shipped goods to them and established markets, goods were shipped back in order to pay. Everyone prospered, more or less. The Imperium was expanding.

By Year 20, the Imperium seems destined to encompass about half of Dagudashaag, Ilelish, Massilia, Fornast

"A crucial differentiation between these worlds and the rest appears to be the existence of fossil fuels. With sophisticated fusion plants failing, civilizations which could fall back on oil, gas and coal stood a good chance of surviving. Generally these societies have fallen back to around TL3 to 5, the tech level appearing to be proportional to population. Their knowledge bases are fairly intact, but often the new rulers are not keen on seeing a technologically superior force coming in to take charge.

"The final category contains those worlds which managed to transcend the limitations of isolation. A pre-requisite for this appears to have been the maintenance of an electric power grid. With electricity, almost anything was possible. And these ten percent can be expected to display TLs all the way up to 9 or 10. The sophistication and variety of technology again appears to be in direct relation to the population size, assuming a benign environment. It is these worlds which have given us the pocket empires, reaching out into space in sub-light and jump ships, and helping to lift the new dawn over the last few centuries. It is these worlds which are now the Imperium's opponents, and yet also its best hope for the future.

"Having talked much about technology, I should—before I finish—say something about the other cultural characteristics. We have found that populations follow a skewed bell curve, centered around the one to ten million mark. Small populations were just too vulnerable to reliably survive the Long Night, so there are very few worlds that we have found with populations of less than ten thousand souls. Very large populations usually only grew where worlds were full of indigenous or well-rooted transplanted life. They were self-sufficient, and so when trade failed they could survive. A population of a few billion people is very resilient. Even if the population halves, it is still a few billion!

"Finally, the Long Night has not bequeathed to us any startling original governmental systems. The categorization system devised in Year 29 by Gurkilli Adaani, one of our most respected psychohistorians, has proved more than up to the task of describing the new found worlds. Whilst some expected that many worlds would be under some form of Technological Elite, this has not proved the case. The time scale has been so long that any advantages invested by a small number of pieces of high technology has long since gone, as the technology has failed or been copied, and the playing field leveled. Similarly, law levels show little deviation from the norm.

"Well, I hope that this short talk has been of interest, and has given you some idea of what you might find out there. You have a universe of worlds to explore, so explore it!"

and Antares, as well as a wide corridor to Vland though Lishun. But in every one of these areas, the Imperium is now meeting increasing resistance from local worlds and pocket empires, and is having to constantly bypass worlds and clusters in order to keep up momentum. In time, the islands of independence from the Imperium which are now being created will have to be dealt with.

## The Key to Survival

An extract from the IISS "Scout Handbook," 3rd Edition, published Sylea 001-18.

For a world to survive the Long Night it had to address three key technologies: power, food, and shelter.

**Power:** Without indigenous life, even if only microscopic, worlds had a hard time meeting their power needs during this period of decline. Manpower, animal power, water, wind and wave were the only practical options. All of these had to be used where and when generated, so work and home had to be close to the power source, which mitigated against large settlements. If there was extensive plant growth, particularly of woody species, then fire was possible, which gave a crucial advantage. This enabled some limited material working and more sophisticated food and material processing, as well as allowing heating. However, the amount of wood which a civilization needs should not be underestimated.

The availability of fossil fuels, the result of micro-organisms from millennia ago, would have given a society a great boost. At its simplest, coal could be burnt to give heat or steam, especially for ships and industry, or oil could be refined to give petroleum for ground cars or generators. The ultimate aim was, naturally, to establish an electricity supply, so that power could be generated in one place, and used in another. This was also the enabling power for high technology and information technology. Only the most lucky societies managed to retain fission or fusion power generation.

**Food:** If there was indigenous life, or well established imported life, then food was not usually a problem. If a world had relied upon imported food, then there was a crash course in trying to establish local sources. Many worlds relied upon hydroponics and other forms of hi-tech intensive agriculture. On these worlds, systems were nursed for years on end to keep output up, whilst trying to develop resilient local strains. However even if basic foodstuffs existed, related food technologies for processing, cooking, storage and distribution were often unavailable, and depended heavily on power technology.

**Shelter:** The most basic shelter used eventually on many hundred of worlds is the cave. A useful tip if surveying, look for geological forms which may have caves. Beyond this, inhabitants were dependent on indigenous or transplanted plants to provide simple shelters. However, the resource and technology requirements for mud/adobe building were not too high, but the expertise was long since forgotten and had to be re-learned over many decades. Similarly, brick and concrete were more a case of skill than technology, but it was the non-availability of transport, material handing equipment and cranes which restricted the construction of larger buildings. Rock was not a popular media for ex-star travellers. Where materials industries had been maintained, then metal found a lot of structural uses, and on some worlds with resources to spare, even plastic was used.

## Role of the Scouts

It was in Year -29 that Cleon pulled together the various scout operations active in the Federation into a coherent unit: the Sylean Federation Scout Service. For the next thirty years the SFSS was a key player in the expansion planned by Cleon. Over the years, the SFSS became a very effective organization, with skilled operatives, and lean support structure. In Holiday Year, the SFSS was renamed the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service (IISS).

The IISS consists of four offices: Administration, Technical Services, Operations and Exploration. Exploration fulfills the key missions of the exploration of neighboring regions for the consequent contact or recontact of their inhabitants; and second the use of advanced Imperial technology to lure these contacted worlds into the growing Imperium. It consists of three branches: Exploration, Intelligence, and Contact & Liaison, and accounts for seventy percent of the Scout strength. Operations provides the field support, notably the Deep Bases and Scout Bases, maintaining ships, and providing security. Technical Services and Administration provide the Bureaucracy, supporting the rest of the scout operation.

The IISS works closely with another organization: the Imperial Survey. This office is tasked with producing detailed maps of Imperial Space, and in assisting Exploration Branch to map space beyond Imperial boundaries. IS uses a unique fleet of *Leonov*-class survey ships, equipped with the best sensors that the Imperium can provide.

In seeking to push out the borders of the Sylean Federation, and later the Third Imperium, the SFSS/IISS developed a modus operandi based around seven key missions: Deep Recon, Hot Prospect, Interdiction, Survey, Recontact, Trade and Diplomacy, and Fleet Support.

**1. Deep Recon:** *Scout Ninse Moeenj, 125th Deep Recon Squadron, 087-0003.*

"Each time we dropped out of jump, it was like there was something new there waiting for us. We were visiting systems that hadn't seen a starship in hundreds of years, if not a thousand years. But we didn't have time to dawdle. We knew our brief: Deep Recon—getting out as far into space as you can and locating potential hot prospects, and potential major threats. Pocket empires, high tech worlds, garden worlds, high population worlds. They were our bread and butter."

Ahead of everybody else went the Deep Recon teams. Using Extended Scout starships, these teams would spend months at a time probing deep into uncharted territory, identifying the most likely worlds for contact. But they were also on the look-out for anybody, or anything, which might pose a threat to the fledgling empire. Cleon's policy was that strong Pocket Empires should be bypassed, isolated, rather than tackled head on. It was up to the Deep Recon teams to locate these threats and gauge their strengths and likely disposition. All of their work was usually done covertly, without making formal overt approaches to any of the worlds they visited. They became experts



at skulking around the dark-side of moons or the upper reaches of gas giants, listening in to EMS sensors and watching traffic patterns.

It was the Deep Recon teams that made it first to the Great Rift, probing it for crossing places, and signs of Aslan and Zhodani. Only the very best joined Deep Recon.

*Automatic Defense:* The PCs have jumped into system close to a gas giant. Within minutes, their sensors report a missile coming out from a small moon towards them. Hopefully, having taken successful evasive action, the PCs can investigate and will discover a deserted, automated system defense site on the moon.

*Newcomers in Space:* The new system the PCs are surveying shows signs of space traffic, particularly between the main world, its two moons and an asteroid belt in the next orbit. The PCs have to find out what they can about the civilization without getting spotted. Covert recce's of mining sites, the world's surface, and perhaps inspecting the odd parked spaceship are in order.

**2. Hot Prospects:** *Scout Sinjta Iisi, 312th Forward Operating Squadron, 063-0013.*

"We'd studied the deep recon reports and thought we knew what to expect. Wishaw had shown up large lanthanum deposits and significant signs of past civilization. But no matter how many dead worlds I visit, there's always a great sense of loss as you step out of the air-raft into the deserted streets of a derelict city. Centuries ago this place must have been a thronging metropolis. But it just couldn't keep going through the Long Night. And now here we were, like vultures, taking the pickings from a dead carcass. I shook these thoughts from my head and looked at the multi's display. The lanthanum deposit was about five kilometers away, in what looked like an old refinery complex. I checked my suit stats, picked up my '898 and gave the signal to move on...."

Once Deep Recon has spotted something of interest, a Hot Prospect team will be despatched to take a closer look. On dead worlds, this will involve investigating resource deposits or technology caches. For living worlds, it may mean further covert recce's and mapping to better understand who the civilization is and how they might respond to contact. Whilst Deep Recon is unlikely to spend more than a week in a system, Hot Prospect teams could stay for several months, until they are sure that a Recontact team can move in.

*Zuchai Crystals:* Deep Recon has found an old mining base in an asteroid belt rich in zuchai crystals. The Hot Prospect team has to check out the old mining base and the mine workings to see if it is worth re-opening. Apart from the natural dangers, there's no telling who, or what, may have taken up residence since the mine closed.

*Good Potential:* Pagazii has struggled to retain TL6, but now appears to be a developing world. Its high population will make it a good market for the Imperium. The scout team has to map the world from orbit, and visit the major cities to identify the world's political and cultural characteristics, without revealing their off-world origin.

**3. Interdiction:** *Scout Boyou Durmathe, 13th Fleet, 265-0018.*

"We'd been here in the Patrol Cruiser for two months now. Sat well out amongst the gas giants, monitoring the sursats we'd left in system. The "weasels"—at least that's what we call them—appeared to have a steady flow of military ships coming in and out of jump space. We'd seen them on six worlds around here, and this looked like it must be home. We'd also seen enough laser-scarred hulks of traders and scouts to know that these weren't the friendliest critters in this part of space. Still, if we kept them under observation, we could warn the Imperium if they started to mobilize for a strike against our new settled worlds only eight parsecs away."

Where pocket empires, or even larger empires, are encountered and judged not suitable for contact, an interdiction plan is put into place to steer friendly vessels away, and to keep tabs on the movements of the hostiles. This is one of the most dangerous assignments going, and is often performed by a joint Navy/Scout task force. A Deep Base is usually established in safe territory, and from there picket and patrol cruisers provide a constant watch.

*Enemy Territory:* Having just placed a sursat in orbit above a moon base created by the sapient species of this system, the PCs' craft develops a fault, and they have to crash land on the moon. They then have to decide how to escape. Can they afford to trigger their emergency beacon so that their cruiser can come in? Will this attract the local aliens? Can they steal an alien ship? Where can they hide, and how long will the oxygen last?

*Picket Duty:* The PCs are on picket duty, turning traders away from a nearby aggressive race of aliens. One trader decides he won't take no for an answer and jumps straight for the homeworld. The PCs must decide whether to let him go or chase after him? If they choose the latter option, can they get him before the aliens do?

**4. Survey:** *Scout Stanj Ricelk, 23rd Survey Squadron, 004-0018.*

"Some people think that Survey is boring, but me, I've always been fascinated by maps and charts. If you saw the quality of some of the old pre-Night charts we have to start from, you'd know just how much we're needed. Usually we get tasked to go out for two or three months, surveying every cubic light-year of space in a box about two parsecs square. It'll take us almost a month just to do a system, and that's only for a first look. Second line survey guys can be in a place a year or more, going out to the outer worlds and the Oort cloud, visiting distant companions and the like.

"But the IISS is increasingly subcontracting that work to freelancers and commercial survey companies, rightly concentrating us on first surveys. We typically work about ten to twenty parsecs ahead of the Imperial border. Deep Recon would have been through years ago, and Hot Prospect teams are just getting ready to hand over to Trade and Diplomacy. That's where we can really help. We can point out resource deposits, identify hazards to travel and health, find the best sites for settlement or colonization, and give a new world the best start in life."



Survey uses a special class of 1200-ton *Leonov*-class survey vessels for its work. Apart from advanced sensor suites and a flotilla of small craft, these also carry one or two 100-ton scouts for detached survey work, usually in-system. On arrival in a system, all the major planets and their satellites will be surveyed, typically from the vantage points of the inner-most gas giant. Then rocky and molten core inner worlds are checked, with sursats being placed to conduct complete planetary mapping and survey. After that, its planetoid belts, particularly concentrating on the amount of carbonaceous asteroids, before heading out into the gas giants and their satellites, and finally out towards the Oort cloud and on to any far companion. Once the initial space survey is complete and the sursats have finished mapping, then ground survey usually starts, focusing on the most interesting or commercially attractive locations. These surveys are often very dangerous, but are almost always very rewarding.

Where the system is inhabited, procedures vary with tech level, culture, and the existing degree of off-world contact. With low tech levels, then survey is little altered, although care is taken when doing dirtside surveys of the inhabited worlds. With higher tech levels, often only a space survey is done, and that surreptitiously, and planetary survey left until the Trade and Diplomacy team goes in.

*It's Life, Jim:* A space survey reveals a strange rock formation on the icy moon of a gas giant. The PCs are sent to have a look. Touching down on the ice-cold surface near the feature, the PCs move in slowly. As they enter the a valley, they see the huge coils of rock on either side, which the sensors had seen from space. Moving up to examine the rock, the PCs find that it is warm to the touch. As the PCs try to chip or blast some off for analysis, the whole rock moves. It and the others start uncoiling and rearing up above the PCs. They are a silicon life-form, and start projecting lava jets towards the PCs!

*No Survivors:* Insidious worlds are never pleasant to survey, and this one is no exception. But survey has spotted what looks like a man-made structure, floating out in a caustic, viscous sea. The PCs investigate and find that the structure is an old survival capsule, probably from before the Long Night. Inside are four dead aliens of a type unknown to the PCs. Can the PCs find out who they are and where they are from?

**5. Recontact:** *Scout Jem Igiishi, 4235th Contact Team, 298-0019.*

"We had done this dozens of times, but each time there was some new variable that had to be considered. We'd boned up on the Prospect reports, had spent a week or so covertly on-planet just getting the feel of the place. Finally it was time to "make an entrance." Our scout ship dropped out of the sky above a large park in what was the capital city. This place hadn't seen a starship in a thousand years. From this height you couldn't tell if it was panic or ecstasy that was driving people out of or into the park. But as we came lower and lower an oval clearing grew naturally below us.

"You getting this?" I asked over the comm to the scout cruiser keeping station below the planet's south pole:

backup, you always needed backup. The scout settled to a gentle landing. I watched through the security cam' as Lidra stepped slowly down the ramp, her linguist following three steps behind, comm linked, and her backup, two scouts with concealed armor and laser carbines, took up positions at the top of the ramp. The crowd just stood there—they didn't know what to do. A few local police had pushed through to the front.

"Then a cavalcade came streaming into the park, outriders, blues and twos, the works. The crowd parted, and the cars stopped, about 100 meters from the bottom of the ramp. Out of the car came two powerful looking "suits," and a veritable army of shade-wearing heavies. One of the suits came forward, Lidra stepped out to meet him. 'I know this sounds corny,' she said, 'but please take me to your leader.'"

Every recontact is different. That is why the IISS spends so much time gathering information before waltzing in with a 90,000-ton battleship. Some contacts take place totally overtly: a clearing, a park, a palace, a barracks, even on a settled moon. Others can be covert: a team slipping into the presidents palace to give her something more interesting to think about at breakfast. Sometimes warnings are given, a lot of heavy radio chitchat or jump flares to get the world's astronomers and radio engineers twitching. Other times, there's a direct broadcast from orbit. In every case, it is left up to the leader of the scout re-contact team to make the decisions.

At the actual interface level, the procedure is almost always the same. The scout leader invariably takes the point role. He or she has the team linguist/xenopsychologist very close by, comm-linked in to give word by word advice. Then there's an armed backup team just far enough away not to be intrusive, but close enough to get the point team out and away to safety. Then there's the back office, comm-linked in and able to look up references, history, plot strategies—any such thing that might be needed to smooth the way.

Once the initial meet is over, the team starts to explain who they are, where they come from, and most importantly that they are here in peace, and to help. The recce's have already identified principle needs and the contact team is equipped and ready: medicines, spares, agrochemicals, educators, whatever. With immediate needs filled, plans are laid for the future. A liaison team is left on world to ready the way for the trade team, and the contact team departs.

*The First Meeting:* The place is a TL1 world, heavily wooded. The locals scrape a living from the soil, moving from clearing to clearing as the soil gives out. They've been hard to monitor, and they're expert hunters, so robotic surveillance has been the norm. But now the PCs are ready to move in. They should choose the time of day, location and approach. There are choices of small camps (about thirty people), or large ones (about 500 people). During the day, about half the population goes into the crop beds or the forest to work. At night there is drinking and singing around the campfire. Each community has a small group of "elders," from three to thirty strong. No one

appears to be the sole “leader.” In any contact, three natural factions will emerge: allies, conservatives, and isolationists. Recce identified major needs as medicines and better crop seed, also survey maps of the continental forests, so that the locals can identify the best growing areas, and those with the best concentrations of fruit trees. For extra spice, the isolationists could get violent, maybe even try an assassination attempt, knife or bow being their only weapons.

**6. Trade and Diplomacy:** *Second Secretary Kilin Giirkhe, Actos Embassy, 184-0019.*

“It was my first post as Trade Secretary. The mission had been here for about six months and was just getting into the swing of things. The Imperial Ambassador had made sure that the Embassy and Trade Mission worked together as much as possible to further the cause of the Imperium, and to ultimately bring Gershalli into the fold. I’d read through the notes from the contact team, and there were even one or two of its members still here, ensuring a smooth hand-over of responsibility. Gershalli had an abundance of hydrocarbons, mineral ores, and crystals. It was a resourcer’s paradise. They were at TL6. Their society had weathered the Long Night well, and they knew a lot of what they wanted to do. But the thing they really lacked were semiconductor and micro-electronic skills and facilities. So it looked like most of my job would involve bringing in the megacorps and some hi-tech companies to establish development labs and production facilities, backed up by a skills transfer program, and to take natural resources as payment. Okay, so we could probably have got many of these, except the hydrocarbons, from some of the airless planets, but that would not have benefited the locals. This way, instead, the Ministry of Trade could make available some generous subsidies, and trade could flow.”

Once re-contact is well established, the diplomats and bureaucrats start to arrive and take over from the Scouts. The IISS still plays a key role as it advises the newcomers on how best to go about business, what the political landscape is, who are the influences and decision makers and so on. They may also assist with surveying the planet for resources, or mapping the planet to assist the community. The hand-over can be a very gradual process taking many years to complete.

It is during this period that the Imperium needs to decide just how to handle this new world. During contact, even if not before, it can become rapidly apparent that certain characteristics of a society are undesirable. The world may practice slavery, may be a totalitarian state, may have a dreadful civil rights record, may be racist, or may have very corrupt business processes. Whilst the Imperium makes a great play of its origins as a free trade federation, the fact is that the Imperium does have certain limits to acceptable behavior on member worlds. Once the IISS identifies such a problem, a meeting is usually convened between the relevant ministries, Imperial Justice, the IISS and the subsector nobles to decide a course of action.

Where a world is keen to join the Imperium, and keen for its technology, then setting suitable “entry standards” or

trading conditions usually works wonders. Otherwise, and if the Imperium considers the effort involved to be of long term benefit to the Imperium, the meeting may decide to initiate a covert influence or psycho-history campaign to gradually change the situation. If the locals have a healthy opposition party concerning the offensive issue, this can make the process easier (although the Imperium normally avoids being linked to a single faction). On the other hand, if the world is not particularly important to the Imperium, and does not seek to join, then the Imperium is unlikely to waste much time on it. Trade and diplomatic contact may be kept at a low level, and in extreme circumstances the world may be classified as an Amber or Red zone to effectively quarantine its undesirable practices.

*Across the Ice Lands:* The PCs are part of an IISS hand-over team. The world in question has some significant uranium deposits in its polar continent, and the new Trade Secretary wants to visit the area to assess the situation in the existing mines himself. The PCs offer to use their own air raft or G-carrier for the mission. The bureaucrat will be accompanied by an assistant, and will travel in a government regulation jump-suit.

About 100 km short of the mining base, the air raft gets hit by a surface-to-air missile and crash-lands on the ice. The first task for the PCs is to get themselves and the bureaucrats to the safety of the mine, not easy in -100 C conditions. Their second task is to trace the origins of the SAM. This was, in fact, fired by the miners themselves. They have a lucrative business selling radioactives to unscrupulous free traders who pass through the system, and they don’t want the Imperium to rob them of this profitable side-line.

*Political Maneuvers:* The world of Safdieshki lies close to the Imperial border, and its debate about whether the world should join the Imperium is heating up. There are four main factions, pro-Imperium, isolationist, conservative and expansionist. All but the isolationist can see some merit in joining the Imperium. As part of the diplomatic mission to this world, the PCs must use their influence and diplomatic skills to persuade it to join the Imperium. This adventure should be resolved using the political adventuring rules in chapter five of this book.

**7. Fleet Support:** The glory work done, the Scouts’ work is still not over. Instead the Scouts fall back into the more traditional role of supporting the Navy, and indeed the populace at large. For a start, there are still places to be explored, anomalies to be investigated in even the busiest system. Then there is the need to provide protective pickets against both border and depth attacks. In these fluid times, almost every system except those in the Imperial core has a resident scout picket whose job it is to report whenever any hostile ships arrive in system. Scouts also maintain screens ahead of Navy movements, checking out system to the front and flank. They also patrol systems just across the border, and likely concentration points in depth, to ensure that there is no immediate threat to the Imperium.

**The Concept of “Hearts and Minds”:** At the center of many SFSS/IISS operations is the concept of “hearts and

minds" (H&M). If you want to win people over to the Imperium, then not only must you start from the very beginning, but you must also start from the very bottom—with the general populace. To this end, the IISS expends a lot of time and effort to help the "ordinary" people of the worlds it contacts. On sophisticated worlds, this can be by providing useful high technology, or better maps or environmental information. On more backward worlds, it may be medical aid, education, or training. Often Trade and Diplomacy teams will seed a large area with a number of four-man H&M teams, to work with locals in the desert or jungle, on farmland or in factories, to show them how to improve their quality of life, and of course, how the Imperium could help them even further. While most worlds are happy to accept this approach, because it reflects well on the local rulers as well as on the off-worlders, some worlds take umbrage to this subtle form of bribery.

*Keeping the Natives Happy:* The PCs are a hearts-and-minds team that has been sent into the jungle to work with a TL2/3 civilization. During the three months the PCs are there, they will have a wide variety of encounters and adventures involving the local natives, flora and fauna. Examples include exploration, natural disasters, turf wars, engineering problems, and medical problems, to name but a few.

**The Concept of Deep Bases:** With scout operations extending so far beyond the Imperial borders, it soon became illogical to have every scout start from and return to the core Sylean worlds on each mission. So the concept of the deep base was born, with one or two such bases established per sector.

Deep bases support the operations of all Scout activities in the area. The Imperial Courier Service runs links to these bases and back to the Imperium so that exploration and survey findings can be quickly disseminated. A deep base is typically a free-flying facility in high orbit above a gas giant. Some ground facilities are established on rocky satellites, and a garden world in the system for R&R can be a nice luxury. As well as its dependent scout craft, a deep base has its own flight of systems defense boats to provide local protection, and is often a staging post for passing Imperial Navy patrols, as well as for Imperial traders. In some cases, a base prefers to keep its existence secret, and traffic is then much reduced.

The character of a deep base is animated, the atmosphere electric. Here you really get a sense of the expanding Imperium. Everyone has tales of new sights, of daring-do, and of opportunities to be grabbed. The permanent complement of a deep base can range from ten or twenty for a very remote base to up to a thousand for one about to be overtaken by the Imperium's own borders. Most of these latter bases become converted to Scout way stations once within the Imperium.

## Role of the Imperial Navy

The Imperial Navy has been as busy as the Scouts in these first years of the Imperium. Within the Sylean Federation, the Navy was still fighting a war against the

Chaneston Kingdom until Year 2 or 3. As the IISS began its re-expansion, the Navy deployed patrols in support, particularly providing backup to interdiction missions, system protection for new colonies and member worlds, and anti-piracy escorts and strike missions, as well as providing offensive and defensive fleets in response to pocket empires.

The Navy has also played a vital role in "gunboat diplomacy." The sight of a 90,000-ton battleship has often caused a world to rethink its opposition to joining the Imperium. Conversely, the same ship appearing above a newly joined world on a flag-waving mission gives the locals a nice warm feeling that the Imperium is a big, powerful, but protective family to be a part of.

**Anti-Piracy Patrol:** The PCs are in command of a Navy detachment of four patrol cruisers, deployed to the world of Terschaps where a new colony has been formed. In a few years, a SDB squadron will be based here, but for now it is up to a Navy patrol to provide local protection. The area has seen a lot of pirate activity, particularly against freighters around the system's largest gas giant, when they make a run from its largest rings in far orbit, either outward to jump or inward to refuel.

The PCs must first deploy their forces. Then, after two days of waiting, a fat trader making a run for jump is ambushed from the ring by a pirate. The trader manages to escape to jump, but not before it has placed a few good shots on the pirate and disabled its jump drive. The PCs pick up the contact report and give chase....

**Interdiction:** The PCs' detachment has been moved on to deal with the threat of a local pocket empire. They are placed in defense of a Deep Base which is supporting an interdiction mission in this area. After two weeks on station, an alien force of two cruisers jumps into the system, and the base goes to red alert....

## Role of the Imperial Army

Occupying ground is what the Army has always done best. With an expanding Imperium, there has been a need to occupy ground as never before. Any Imperial facility established on a colony or contacted world comes with its complement of Imperial soldiers for protection. Major depots take up whole regiments just in security alone. Many worlds see the Army as a useful resource to have around "just in case." In addition to training and maintenance of their own facilities, they are often used for "bridging" missions, helping the local community or civil powers, managing disasters, controlling riots, building roads and bridges, and suchlike.

The training of world armies is a major occupation much valued by the member worlds. Whereas the Imperial Navy is growing to be a centralized force, with only minor local, or "colony" squadrons, the Army is already heavily decentralized. Each world maintains its own army, but commits a number of battalions for off-world duties. The whole world army is trained by the Sylean cadre, or the now much expanded Imperial Army, so as to bring it up to a common standard. Major maneuver units are pulled



together as and when needed, with battalions drawn from a multiplicity of worlds. It is the Marines who bear the brunt of any ground combat, and so far the Imperium has seen few wars of the scale which would require significant Army intervention.

**Hold The Mine:** The PCs are part of a small Army unit protecting a Lanthanum mine complex on a small, very thin atmosphere world. It's the end of another quiet week, when there's a blinding flash and the whole dome covering the mine shakes. A local pirate band is trying to get its hands on the Lanthanum stocks, but had obviously missed the Army reinforcement. The pirates arrive in two corsairs, strafing the complex before landing by the store rooms.

It is up to the PCs' unit to defend the complex, minimizing the damage, if they can't actually repel the pirates.

### Role of the Marines

The Marines have generally had a quieter time of things than the Imperial Navy. Cleon's policy of bypassing opposing worlds has meant that Marines have had little chance to practice orbital assault for real. The opportunities that they have had have been those worlds which have refused to accept Cleon's "quarantine," and which the Imperium has decided are best neutralized. Particular instances include the humaniti world of Yabean, and the Voyle's homeworld of Voy.

The assaults have followed a fairly predictably pattern, with covert insertions of commando and target designation teams, followed by orbital bombardments of key points and area defense sites, and of communications and military command sites and garrisons. Then come orbital drops against key civilian command and power centers.

Shipboard Marines have seen more action in minor engagements against a variety of opponents, including pirates, organized crime, mercenaries and opposition worlds.

**Search and Rescue:** The PCs are part of the Marine detachment on a 2000-ton Imperial destroyer. The destroyer is making a flag-waving visit to a new member of the Imperium. While it is in orbit, guerrillas supporting a pro-isolationist faction kidnap the wife and daughter of the planet's president. The planetary forces appear unable to trace the guerrillas in the mountainous area to which they have fled. Naturally, the president calls upon the Imperium for help. The terrorists are equipped to TL10 and number twenty strong. They have six bases hidden in cave complexes around the mountains.

**Decapitation:** The PCs are coordinating a "decapitation" strike (to remove key leaders of the government) against a world which has launched repeated attacks on Imperium worlds. This approach is being taken since the majority of the populace appear to be pro-Imperium, but the nature of the attacks has meant that the Imperium cannot wait for Imperium-funded freedom fighters to overthrow the government. The presidential guard is equipped to TL11 standards. They have twelve tanks and eighteen APCs, as well as four point-defense missile sites. There

are sixty guards in total. The president has a helijet on a roof pad, and will try to escape in this once things start getting "hairy."

### Opportunities from the Expansion

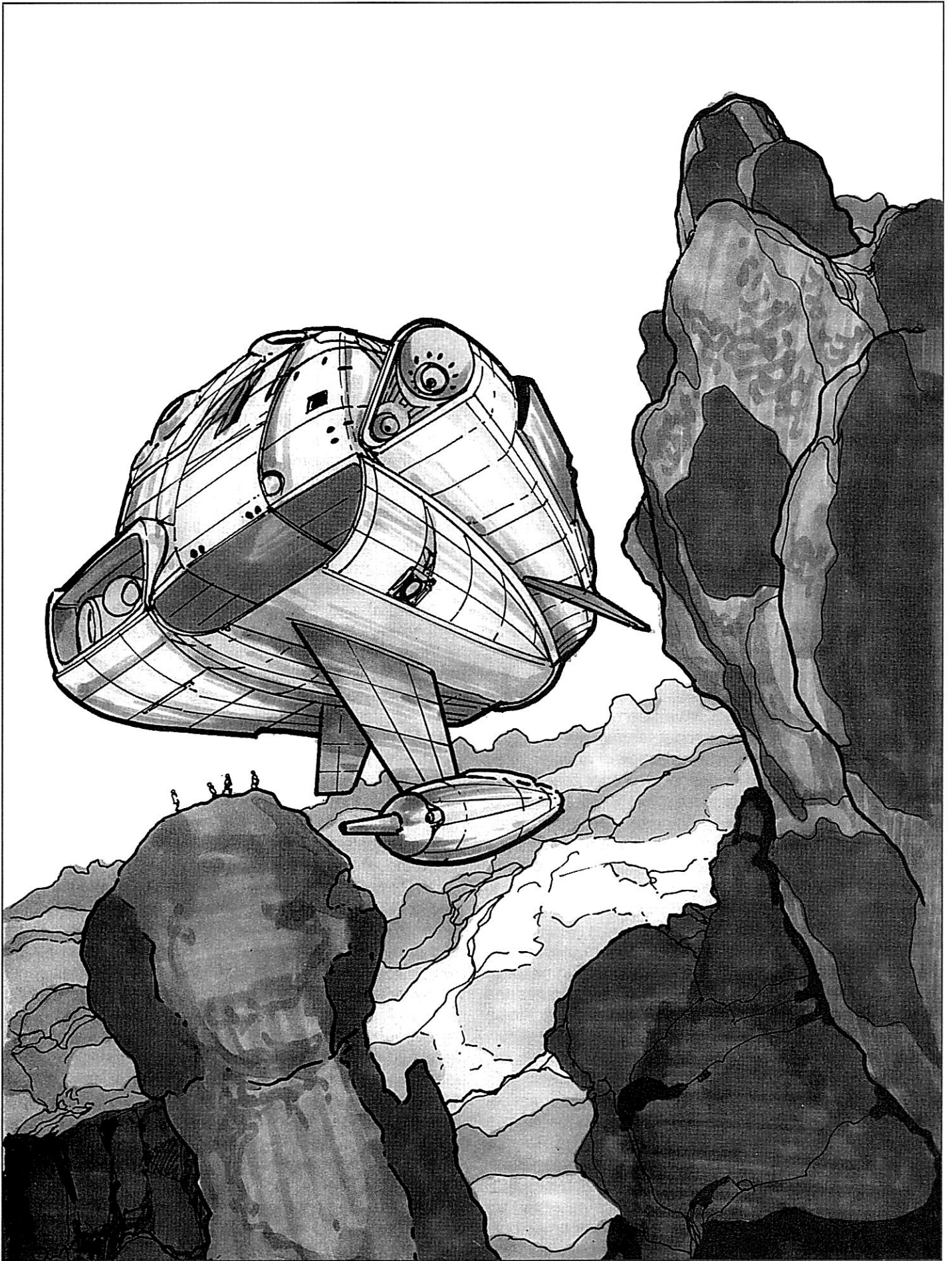
The expansion of the Imperium has brought with it a whole new universe of opportunities. In this brave new world, Free Traders rub shoulders with academics, mercenaries with corporate suits, settlers and colonists with traders and diplomats. And wherever society goes, the more undesirable elements will go too. If you're not worrying about your crops, or the local aliens, then a fine assortment of criminals, con-men, pirates, prisoners, bounty hunters and rip-off merchants will make sure that your life is far from dull.

**Free Traders:** "We traders had been pushing back the frontiers of the Federation long before the SFSS got in on the act. Hey, some of us had never even let the Long Night stop us. Young people nowadays reckon that star-travel only started again in Year -30. But I tell you, it never really went away. There was always some poor trader (sure weren't any rich traders) who could keep a wreck of a ship going just long enough to buy low, haul cargo and sell high. And its the traders who really let Cleon know what's going on. Scouts never really get out to the depths of space, to star systems that haven't seen other sentient creatures for millennia. Less still do they get to understand the minds of these people, know what drives them, what they want, what they'll buy. Hey, why else do you think Cleon made an old trader like Stakislour his Minister for Recontact...."

Trade missions are as numerous as there are free traders. The most adventurous traders push far beyond the bounds of scout activity, following rumor and their own instincts to find a good deal ahead of anyone else. Others exploit newly re-contacted worlds, new markets, new goods. Yet others make a living from the new colonists, bringing them goods from their prior home, and buying new foodstuffs, natural resources and materials in return. There's good money to be made just shifting freight for colonists or the IISS, and the IISS is always on the lookout for freelancers.

**Corporate Maneuvers:** A corporate official hires the PC to carry a sealed container to the company office on a new colony world. However, the megacorp LSP is interested in the container, which contains a new strain of genetically engineered wheat stolen from them. The PCs are asked to pick up the container from a warehouse on the edge of the city. On their way back to the starport, there is an attempted ambush by four NPCs hired by LSP. If the PCs escape and depart, then on their way to jump an LSP corporate 200-ton courier attempts to intercept them. En route to the target system, the PCs can expect to be followed by mysterious strangers, but if they keep moving they should be able to stay one step ahead of any LSP force.

On arrival at the destination world, LSP will be waiting for them. LSP has hired a local mercenary unit, Grant's Guerrillas, to try to intercept the PCs. They have a platoon of paramilitaries, and a subsidized merchant retrofitted



with a laser battery. Soon after arrival in far orbit, the PCs receive a coded message giving a warning that LSP is after them, and indicating they should head for a wilderness rendezvous in a remote part of the planet. Assuming that they evade, the paramilitaries (by staying away from the main population centers, etc.) they will be met at the rendezvous by the local contact and her G-Carrier and corporate security. As the hand-over is being made, two enclosed air rafts come screaming over the horizon, with eight paramilitaries aboard....

**Mercenaries:** *An interview with Colonel Amanda Fra, CEO Star One Mercenaries, 253-0015.*

"I suppose the merc' business really only picked up in the last decade or so. Sure when the fighting with the Chanestins or the Confederacy was at its height, there were tickets going, but now it's like you just can't find enough grunts to go round. The steadiest tickets are working for the megacorps, providing security on new colonies or mines. They pay well too. Colonist tickets pay poorly, but unless they are well out, it's usually a safe bet, and you're often as much policewoman as merc.'

"Sometimes there's a real hot ticket going. Last year IISS had to do a quick decap' job on some local warlord. Whole platoon of us went in, orbital drop, the lot. This year it's been quieter. Low intensity ops mostly, running hearts-and-minds in some balkanized world that Zirunkariish want to take over. But I hear there's a big op coming up. Cleon's finally got fed up with the flak he's taking from a PE (that's "pocket empire" for you rubes), and the Imperial Army is still trying to work out which way round its new uniform goes. So me and the girls'll be doing our bit for Empire and Emperor."

**Rescue!** The PCs have joined Hales Hawks, a small mercenary outfit. The Hawks have been hired by a local IISS commander. One of his scout teams was meant to have been on covert remote surveillance of an interdicted world. However the team leader got a bit over zealous and decided to do some dirtside recce. Unfortunately, they got caught and have been thrown into jail. The orbital team raised the alarm, but IISS will not sanction a rescue. Hales Hawks have been hired to go in and rescue the scouts.

**Megacorporations:** *Extracts from "The Power Behind the Empire," an informal lecture given by Laars Laargir, VP Marketing, LSP, 301-0010.*

"First slide please. Okay. In the Imperium, well Sylea, there are four significant Megacorporations: Zirunkariish, Tukera, GSbaG and good ol' LSP. As Cleon pushes the bounds of re-contacted space further out, we all want to be out there establishing new markets and exploiting new technologies and resources. LSP's operation is typical. We have a Scout Liaison Office that works closely with IISS, offering them help and gaining inside information. Our own "business development" office operates its own Scout fleet to follow up IISS Hot Prospects and Re-contacts, and to even do some prospecting of its own.

"I assure you that reports of, ah, conflict, between IISS and our BDO are totally ungrounded. Once new markets are identified, we usually set up an office as soon as possible, just a dozen or so staff at first. They develop sales

plans and technology-transfer cases, and very much run their own show. Our own cargo fleet is of course second to none, which gives us a big advantage. Our freighter fleets add new worlds to their routes almost daily. Sometimes we have problems, but LSP has a good deal with Star One, a reliable risk-minimization operation. Okay, that should give you a quick overview, if you have any questions I'll do my best to answer them...."

**The Courier Run:** The PCs have been recruited by a new megacorp office to provide a local courier service. Initially it is simple dirtside runs, city to city, but this is a violent world, and not everybody is convinced that joining the Imperium was a good move. Stories about megacorp exploitation abound. If the PCs survive a few weeks, then they'll start doing the runs back to Regional HQ, four parsecs away, mainly carrying high value items, new products, VIPs and the like. And of course where there's trade there's piracy.

**Corporate Trade:** With all these new routes opening up, even megacorps can be stretched for ships. The PCs are either hired to crew a megacorp ship or can use their own, when they are given the contract for a monthly three-parsec trade run. Two hundred tons of cargo are guaranteed every jump. But apart from the bureaucracy and fuel prices, the PCs soon find out that there's a history of sabotage on this run. The last ship blew up as it went in to jump, all hands lost. And maybe it's not local dissenters who are out to stop the trade; maybe it's another megacorp.

**Imperial Agents:** *From an interview with Agent [Name Withheld], IISS Covert Operations Executive, 113-0012.*

"I can remember dropping away from the Scout ship in my drop capsule and thinking 'what the Cleon am I doing here?.' The ride went smooth enough, and the view through my II goggles as my grav-belt dropped me to dirt was quite wonderful. But there I soon was, alone in a forest, trying to get to the nearby city without falling afoul of a farmer's guard-line or an animal snare. The mission was standard enough, but that didn't mean it wasn't dangerous. I was to take up residence in one of the world's larger cities, posing as an out-of-town trader, and try to find out what the world thought about the Imperium.

"A Deep Recon mission had gone 'open,' and the world had gone into a panic—potential xenophobes every one. So before the Federation sent in a re-contact team to try and paper over the cracks, they wanted to know who the real drivers were on this world, what they really felt about re-contact, and what the Imperium could offer to a world like this to bring it into the fold."

**Organizing the Opposition:** A Hot Prospect mission has identified a world as ideal for contact, except that the leader is an extreme xenophobe. He also isn't popular. The PCs' mission is to make contact with the disorganized opposition, bring it to order, and orchestrate a coup against the leader.

**Hot Recovery:** A re-contact mission has gone belly-up. Whether the IISS misjudged it or not is too late to tell, but four scouts are now trapped on a hostile world. The PCs have to get in, find the scouts, and bring them out, all without jeopardizing any future re-contact.



*Digging in the Dirt:* The Imperium is vying with a local pocket empire for a garden world's allegiance. The PCs need to work with the local Imperium diplomacy team to "dig the dirt" on the opposition. Bugging, breaking and entering, and planting false information are all in the cards.

**Academics:** *Professor Danla Muassh, Sorca Polytechnic, 147-0015.*

"Sorca Polytechnic had sent us out here on a three month field trip to look at the remains of the Turel race. The best guess to date was that the Turel had died out in the early years of the First Imperium. They had left a magnificent array of ruins on their homeworld, and the initial surveys had turned up some interesting looking artifacts. Sorca had secured the archaeological rights to the planet, and had even got a Red Zone posting for it until the archaeological work was complete. We'd set up our camp on the edge of one of the finest cities, and sat down to prepare our dig plan."

*Stealing History:* The PCs have been hired by an academic to provide support and protection during an excavation of a possible Ancient site. Unfortunately, the site has become known to a shameless entrepreneur who wants any finds to herself. Soon after the PCs arrive, the rival team turn up, with fewer scientists but more weapons. The PCs must decide whether to run, out-manuever the rivals, or get ready for a shoot out.

*Gone Missing:* An academic has gone missing whilst researching a TL0 jungle culture. The PCs are hired by his daughter to go in and locate him. After following leads from a logging camp to a medical center to a mission, the PCs find themselves in a TL0 settlement. The locals report that the professor left here many days ago to try to locate a crashed starship high up in the mountains. Along with a local guide, the PCs battle against jungle monsters and natural dangers to the crash site of an alien craft. The professor's body lies sprawled before an entry hatch, shot through with laser burns from a door defense laser. The PCs can try to get into the ship to investigate where it came from and what technology it uses.

**Adventurers and Explorers:** *Extract from the diary of Dir Maerde, "Explorer," 065-0018.*

"We'd heard all about the Dessin. Claws that could rip open an ATV, jaws that could bite through combat armor, and scales that could take a 25mm round at point blank range; and our patron wanted one for his private zoo! He'd lent us his safari ship and enough ex-military hardware to equip a small army. From the flight we'd made, it looked like these things never travelled in packs of less than a dozen. This was going to be some adventure."

With the majority of the Imperium busy trading, expanding and growing, there are jobs a-plenty for adventurers and explorers. Freelancing, rich patrons, contracts to IISS or Megacorporations, helping settlers or contactees, a team of adventurers is never going to be short of work. Of course there are problems to be dealt with—rival teams, officialdom, pirates and criminals, pocket empires—but it all adds to the excitement.

*The Garden of Eden:* The PCs are contacted by a religious organization which wants them to locate a "Garden

of Eden" which their sacred books claims lies just beyond the new boundary of the Imperium. The PCs' research yields a doctor who has been working on a primary health care mission on a newly contacted world which fits the description. In exchange for running in some drugs, the doctor offers to guide the PCs to the world. However, on arrival they find that the area is under the control of a local robber baron who terrorizes the local populace. Their patrons ask the PC to defeat the baron and secure the area so that the believers can establish their claim on the land.

**Prospectors and Miners:** *An interview with Shu Shumean, Chief Geologist, "Excelsior," 211-0018.*

"We'd always pushed out beyond the boundaries of the Federation in search of the mother lode. The belts of Sylea had long been exhausted, so it was an economic necessity to look elsewhere. A gang with a Jump-2 ship could get to belts that hadn't been touched in millennia, and hadn't been heavily exploited even then. First thing you did on finding a claim was to file it with the Imperial Survey, and put an ID beacon on the rock itself. Depending on the size of the rock, you'd then either mine it or blow it. The carbonaceous rocks were always the best ones, and a thirty percent carbonaceous belt could set a miner up for life. But it was certainly a tough life out there. You could be on the face for years at a time. Supply ships did the rounds of dropping freight and picking up ore. There was the occasional pirate raid or claim war to contend with, and just the occasional miners gala to relax at."

*The Claim War:* The PCs are hired to provide protection for a miner who is the target of a claim war. Their opponents are a small group of rival prospectors with bigger commercial backing. Depending upon how this is handled, the PCs may be able to handle the miners, but they must avoid attracting sufficient attention that the backing consortium feels it has to throw a mercenary team in their direction....

*The Missing Ore:* The PCs are recruited by an agent of Imperial Intelligence to run surveillance on a mining operation in the Auxwell belt. A miner there, Gihilli Shagushi, runs a large mining operation and is believed to be supplying radioactives to a local pirate band. The agent can arrange to have the PCs recruited to work in Gihilli's mine. Once there, they should keep their eyes and ears open, particularly where radioactive ore is mined and stored.

By sneaking around and asking a few subtle questions, the PCs should find that a some of the radioactives are stored in a separate warehouse and never make it into the mine's books. They also learn that every month or so this cargo is taken out in a pinnace, which returns a couple of days later. In fact, the pinnace rendezvous elsewhere in the belt with a pirate corsair to transship the cargo. The PCs may decide just to observe, or to disrupt the operation.

**Artists:** *"An Expression of Freedom," Gezu Riarant, Quee Colony, 297-0017.*

"The spirit of the new Imperium is reflected in the vibrancy of the arts movement over the last few decades.

The renaissance in the arts which accompanied Cleon's expansion of the Sylean Federation was the beginning of all this. We artists have been in the first wave of the Sylean diaspora. This artists' colony, Banksville, is fairly typical. There were a hundred of us who left Sylea to seek somewhere with new experiences, with space, without any limitations on our artistic expression.

"Of course there are other types of artists active out here. With so many military and colonial types flung out away from Sylea, there is a huge market for touring companies and bands bringing a bit of home to these exiles. There is also a flourishing trade in cultural exchanges and tours with re-contacted worlds, and most Sylean embassies have a small cultural mission. Finally, there are a number of artists who are just travelling and performing in order to experience these new worlds."

*The Stolen Car:* The PCs are contacted by a member of a local artists' colony. The colony is well known for its industrial design work, and recently completed a project to develop a "concept grav car" for a major megacorporation. However, the day before the "suits" were due to arrive, the grav car was stolen. The PCs are asked to trace the car and return it safely to the artists.

*The Plant:* The PCs are performers with a new media collective touring the new colonies and re-contacted worlds of the new Imperium. After a particularly good performance, they are approached backstage by a well dressed man. This patron offers the PCs a sizable amount of money if they will assist him in a little task. He is a diplomat who has been trying to get mineral rights to a particular part of the planet, but is being thwarted by the representative of a megacorporation which is also looking for exclusive rights. The patron, a member of the Imperial Embassy here, would like to discredit the corporate "suit." He outlines a plan to frame the executive by planting illegal substances (on this world this includes any drink containing caffeine) on him and then alerting the police. The PCs may arrange a performance at the megacorporation depot, and then afterwards have a party to which the NPC can be invited. After that it is up to the PCs to arrange the plant, and their own escape route.

**Non-Sylean Settlers:** *"Memoirs of a Traveller," Farppre Couett, Cemoer Colony, 046-0018.*

"The arrival of the Imperium gave us new hope, and new challenges. During those first years following recontact, we discovered so much: new races, new worlds, new foods, new art forms, new technologies. Most we assimilated easily, some less so, and some were so contradictory to our own culture that we rejected them. And we learnt new skills and trades, using them to improve our own world, our own lives.

"Only five years after re-contact we had our own orbital facility, helped by LSP, and were building spacecraft soon after. Two years later, our first indigenous starship was launched. Initially our emphasis was on trade with neighboring worlds, with the Imperium. But soon some of us were thinking, if the Imperium could colonize new worlds, why couldn't we? We worked again with LSP, and through their contacts in the IISS we identified a suitable world. A

little harsher than our world, a sad world where civilization had not survived the Long Night. But it would be our new home. We could rebuild it."

*The Ancient Guardians:* A new colony has suffered a number of mysterious murders. The colonists are from a re-contacted world and not particularly "worldly wise." They hire the PCs to find out what is going on. The PCs are directed into the more desolate areas of an old city; their search gets "hairy" when something starts taking potshots at them with a laser rifle. A game of cat and mouse ensues and eventually reveals two ancient warbots which had been hibernating until the colonists arrived. The PCs can either play safe and try and take them out at a distance, or try and capture them and sell the relic technology back to the Imperium, or the highest bidder.

*A Failing Colony:* The PCs are hired by a new colony world to provide training and support. Over the first few weeks, they have a variety of low key adventures and encounters, perhaps acting as explorers, trainers, policemen, security, animal hunters or joining the defense force. But generally the colony isn't going too well, apparently due to a run of bad luck: poor crops, disease and bad weather. There is talk of returning home. The PCs are asked by the faction who wish to stay to use the influence they've gained to persuade the "returners" to change their minds.

Perhaps more importantly, is there some ulterior motive behind the recent problems? Perhaps a megacorp wishes to have this planet for its own uses and is trying to persuade the settlers to leave?

**...And the Rest:** *Commentary by Chief Inspector Dalm Slatre, 301-0016.*

"When humanity returned to the stars, it took with it the bad and ugly as well as the good. For every noble colonist with a vision of utopia, there was a con-man, a thief, an extortionist or a drug dealer working out how to make an illegal credit. So many worlds are naive as to the negative opportunities colonization presents that they do not bother to set up a proper police force. By the time they realize what is happening, it is almost too late. Mercenary units are doing a brisk trade in providing paramilitary forces on such worlds. Of course, the expansion has also enabled us to rid Sylean society of some of its most dangerous criminals, by establishing penal colonies on some of the more remote and inhospitable worlds. Space also gives criminals a greater place to hide in, and our own police forces are hard pressed to track escapees and those on the run. This has led to a growth in the number of bounty hunters plying their trade.

"But it is not only those of a criminal persuasion who make life interesting out here. Along with the skilled and motivated colonists have come a flood of cheap and unskilled labor, desperate to find a way out of the slums of Sylea. In almost every case, all they manage to do is to create new slums in the new colonies. There are destitutes, prostitutes, drug addicts, petty criminals, scroungers, and the con-artists and other low-lives who live off them.

"The final group are those who are 'above board,' but whose activity can give a police chief cause for concern.

Amongst their ranks I would include political exiles—who never seem to be able to live quietly (and who are always of interest to off-world intelligence agencies), ruthless businessmen and entrepreneurs looking to make an extra credit on every deal, religious missionaries (of whom the Imperium appears to have more than its fair share), and political activists, intent on inciting even the most passive colonists to break the law. Fair enough to say that a policeman's lot is a very busy one out here on the wild frontier."

*Jail Break:* The PCs are visiting a system, when there is a break-out from a local penal colony. Three infamous felons—local gangland bosses—have escaped. The local police post a Cr50,000 reward. The PCs ask around and pick up some rumors that point them towards a huge deserted refinery station in orbit around the principal gas giant. At first sight, the station appears to be lifeless, but some parts may have been added recently. As the PCs penetrate further, they soon start finding live defense systems, and finally working air-locks. This secret base is well equipped, and there are four bodyguards along with the escapees. They are waiting to be picked up by a Far Trader which will arrive about six hours after the PCs.

**The Traveller's Aid Society (TAS):** *A few words from Ve Nu Lant, TAS Chief Executive Officer, 145-0008.*

"In those early years of expansion, many people just packed a bag and headed off into space, hitching rides on scouts, traders, and even warships. It didn't take long for an informal self-help network on the 'net to start up, passing Traveller's tips, places to go to, places to avoid, what to eat, and what not to. So one summer, I collected the stories coming back, and put together the first *Crowded Space* guides. They were instant hits, but many people needed more practical help. So with a few friends, I set up the Travellers' Aid Society. We started off with 'net lectures, devised a simple color code for planet safety, and in Year -16 we opened up our first planetary office. It was a great hit, helping people to get oriented, providing a meeting place and information exchange, and even a few beds for the night. The rest, as they say, is history."

*Wilderness Survey:* The PCs are hired by TAS to update the TAS guide to a wilderness trekking area on a small, thin-atmosphere planet. The PCs are given a rough map, which proves to be totally inaccurate, and are asked to "fill in the gaps." The survey should involve the PCs visiting every map hex, each of which may hold an encounter. The survey should take about three weeks.

**Nobles:** A special mention should perhaps be made of the role that nobles are playing in the Imperial expansion. For a start, they are difficult to categorize, and can be found in many of the roles already described: adventurer, diplomat, agent, artist, bounty hunter, even con-men. Nobles travel under their own patronage, under that of a patron, or even in the employ of a megacorporation. In the first category are the real adventuring nobles. Dissatisfied or just bored with life on Sylea or Vland, they have set out to seek their fortunes and to make their names in the vastness of space. They will often be useful patrons for PCs, acting as companions, bodyguards or guides.

In the second category are those working for their own houses, or for the Emperor himself. Most of the major noble houses want to establish their own networks of power, influence and knowledge amongst new worlds, and will dispatch their own unofficial "ambassadors" to the worlds of the Imperium and beyond. These nobles and the information they gain are vital if the Imperium's most important families are to maintain their power. The Emperor and the Imperium itself are major "employers" of the nobility. For a start, there is the system of sector, sub-sector, county and world government to be populated. Then the Imperial Ministries need Ministers, Secretaries and Consuls. Finally, the Imperium has an extensive network of lesser known, but highly organized agencies providing the Emperor with loyal support in specific, and often highly sensitive areas, sometimes acting independently (and even at cross-purposes) to the "official" agencies. Such agencies might be performing intelligence missions, courier services or internal security. A young noble with a penchant for loyal adventure will always be able to find a suitable career here.

Although it may seem that the worlds of nobles and commerce do not mix, the fact is that many of the most powerful families have industrial roots, so it is not surprising that close links are maintained with the Megacorporations. From the latter's viewpoint, using nobles brings a certain marketing edge, and also opens doors into government both locally and at the Imperial level, which may otherwise be closed. For the poorer noble, the work can provide some much needed additional income, and for others the Megacorporations can prove useful allies in the political battles back on Capital.

## Problems of the Expansion

Conquering a galaxy is, not surprisingly, not without its problems. And in the early years of the Third Imperium, Cleon and his explorers have had many to deal with.

**Internal Conflicts:** Within the old Sylean Federation, and now the Imperium, there has always been a strong conservative streak—part of the Vilani heritage. The factional fighting within the government is covered elsewhere in this book, but for those involved in exploration it has often meant that critical funds have been delayed or not forthcoming, that political will has not been there to back up military or bold commercial action when needed, and almost always that planning has always to be carried out with one eye toward internal political concerns.

In contrast, there is a significant group of adventurous politicians, businessmen, nobles and military men who do not want to be held back from seizing their share of the new empire. They will use all their energies to channel resources into their expansion plans, often neglecting other commitments and responsibilities to do so. Sometime their plans are well thought out, but often they are overly ambitious or downright fool-hardy, which can put all those working for them at risk. A classic example was the Zillai colony established in Year 8 by Teram Boshesh, a senior executive at Tukera. Late in Year 7, he



heard reports that plant life on the planet Zillai had proven to be exceptionally high in certain jamilipeds, and could act as an anagathic. Teram immediately diverted resources from the new colony on Absalo to put a Tukera colony on Zillai. The Absalo colony found itself without key spares and medical support, and was soon suffering from virulent disease and power shortages. The Zillai colony grew to over 10,000 in under a year, but by late in Year 8 when the first run of drugs was ready, scientists from the Imperial Bioscience Foundation discovered that the drug not only had no verifiable anagathic qualities, but that it also caused migraines and loss of memory. By this time, Teram was already trying to establish a colony on another world to extend his own personal fiefdom.

**Opposing Empires:** During the earliest years, Sylea was not alone in its expansion. The Chanestin Kingdom did its best to expand to rimward, whilst also renewing its war with Cleon, and between the Years -25 and -3, there were many conflicts between the two over disputed worlds. The Interstellar Confederacy, with its isolationist attitude, never challenged Sylean expansion, and by Year -1 had lost so many members to the Federation that it ceased to be an entity anyway.

Where Sylea has met real opposition, however, has been in the pocket (and some not so pocket) empires which it has encountered amongst the stars. Several of these have histories dating back many centuries, and they are not about to see their influence diminished. Wherever possible, Cleon has sought to use diplomacy, trade and technology to win these states over, but when this has failed, the pocket empire has usually been bypassed and expansion continued beyond it. Belligerent empires have declared war, begun low intensity operations, or tried to race the Imperium to new worlds nearby, and the Navy and Scouts are kept busy trying to keep these bush fires under control.

The Vilani position has led to some problems for the Imperium. For a start, they have not been keen to back the expansionist scouting plans of Cleon, which has meant that exploration beyond Vland has been slow to start. Secondly, the Vilani bureau, particularly Sharurshid, which used to dominate the rimward sectors, sought to regain their old supremacy and hunting grounds, which brought them into direct conflict with the new Megacorporations of Sylea. Trade wars, and even mercenary-led "protective actions," are not uncommon. That said, Vland has generally seen the Imperium as a useful conduit for extending its own influence. Vilani nobles hold key posts in the Moot and back spinward development, and the involvement of the Vilani Megacorporations provides a significant injection of funds and markets.

**Conflicting Interests:** Other problems emerge from conflicts of interest between the various parties involved in the expansion process. The Navy and Scouts often have different ideas about how to approach the same problem. And the Megacorporations often have yet different ideas about it. Many has been the time when scout, commander and executive have stood before a planet and debated the best way of bringing it into the Imperium. But while these

disagreements usually tend to be peaceful, those between two different Megacorporations are more likely to move into the realms of real conflict. Industrial espionage is a growth industry in the Imperium, and Megacorporations vie with one another for the best intelligence on scout findings and competitor finds and plans. Where espionage ends, sabotage begins, and as with Vilani competition, this can ultimately result in corporate financed "small wars."

**Logistical Nightmares:** Above and beyond all the preceding problems is the basic expansion process itself. Logistics and communications are always problems, and with growing borders, Jump-1 and Jump-2 craft and a myriad new colonies and markets, the expansion of the Imperium is no exception. In the third year of the Imperium, Cleon establish a Ministry of Colonization to oversee the process of expansion, and to work in concert with the Ministry of Trade to coordinate the development and supply of new markets. While both of these ministries have few resources of their own, they are able to mobilize the resources of the Megacorporations and thousands of smaller corporations in order to ensure that the Imperium grows in a controlled manner. This is one of the reasons why expansion only averages half a parsec a year; Cleon is well aware of the dangers of over-extension.

Central to this planning are three types of Imperial office. First, Cleon has established a Duchy responsible for the management of the development of each subsector. The Duke's office works with all agencies involved to develop and implement five, ten and twenty-five-year plans for the subsector. Second, each world has one lead agency assigned to coordinate its own development, although there are strict pro-competition laws to ensure that other companies can gain equal access. Third, the Duchy maintains a Trade Depot, which acts as a clearing house for information, and as a central trade and stores depot for developing colonies, with attractive rates of finance available to support development.

**A Case of Attitude:** The final hurdle that must be overcome in Imperial expansion is the attitude of the new worlds themselves. The many centuries of the Long Night bred an isolationism and xenophobia into the galaxy which even now is proving hard to break. It is here that the skills of the contact teams really pay off, smoothing the way for trade and diplomacy and, eventually, a world's incorporation into the Imperium. Some worlds resist, but in time the benefits of off-world trade become too hard to withstand, and local attitudes change. One of the great merits of the Imperium is that it is playing a strategic game, and it is willing to give most worlds as long as they need to decide to join. This strategy, coupled with the Imperium's emphasis on interstellar trade development rather than Sylean cultural imperialism, has meant that the overall view of it is as a benign force for unification.

*The Gas-Bag Link:* The PCs have just left jump aboard a 1000-ton freighter headed for a LSP colony world when they hear is a loud explosion. The craft's power supply and maneuver drive have been hit. With life support failing fast, the PCs must work out how to get to safety, or at least to survive until rescued. Once rescued, they will want to find

out who caused the explosion. A forensic expert will be able to identify the source of the explosion as being a spare parts container bought just before departure. It appears to have been carrying a set of tactical missiles which, through some fault, detonated. The computer log will reveal the address of the suppliers.

The PCs can board the next starship back and begin checking out the suppliers. The trail leads through a network of fronts and rough encounters to a specialist mercenary unit ultimately in the pay of a GSbaG executive. (See the library data for details of this megacorporation.) However, the PCs will never be able to prove that he was not just acting on his own initiative and beyond the limits of his powers. GSbaG will sack the man involved. If the PCs care to put a trace on the executive's name thereafter, they will note a couple of weeks later that he has died in a speeder accident.

*A Conflict of Interest:* The PCs have been asked to investigate a phenomena out on a gas giant's moon. They are just getting ready to depart when another order comes through asking them to survey a possible ore deposit on another planet. If the PCs start to ask why these conflicting orders, they will soon find that two different agencies are both trying to use them for "top priority" missions. Using their powers of influence, the PCs could try to adjust the outcome, although the losing agency may then start raising all sorts of barriers ("You want an exit visa when?") which will require further work on the PCs part to overcome. Rest assured that if the PCs do nothing, then they'll likely never receive another mission from either agency.

Groups adventuring against the backdrop of the nascent Third Imperium will be well served by an understanding of the organization of the primary power structures of the time. There are several worthy of discussion, from the early governmental structure of the Third Imperium itself, to the Sylean Federation from which it arose, to the megacorporations within its purview, to the centuries-old Vilani AAB, the "Repository of All Knowledge." All shape the universe that the PCs exist within, and all are likely to touch their lives at some point or another.

## Structure of the Sylean Federation

*Extracts from "A Dying Nation" by Urdol Talstar, Travelling Researcher for the Core Chronicle, 264-0012.*

**The Environment for Sylean Government During the Long Night:** To understand the structure for growth championed by Cleon I and his fledgling Imperium, it is necessary to understand the structure of its predecessor government and the environment in which it was created.

Sylea suffered lightly by comparison with most worlds during the Long Night. Space flight and jump technology were never entirely lost by Sylea, and the world was therefore able to maintain a tenuous grasp over a few neighboring systems throughout the Long Night. The last sovereign government of the Rule of Man needed to be restructured to meet the challenges of the lawless chaos of the Long Night. The response was to create a more tightly controlled governing body, which nonetheless would rule by at least some pretense of democratic principles.

**Establishment of the Presidency:** The first change was the replacement of the hereditary Emperor by an elected President. Despite the title, this President was not by any means a man of the people. The electorate was very select; the only persons eligible to vote were the owners of lands and businesses whose holdings met a minimum level of net worth. As a result, the President usually was a noble, or a wealthy business owner, or, as was most often the case, both. The President would rarely be someone of humble origins, since even if a pauper did rise to the station where he was eligible to vote, "Old Money" saw to it that he had no chance of winning the election.

Each President was elected for a period of eight Terran standard years, and could be re-elected repeatedly.

**The Grand Senate of Sylea:** For a long time, the Presidency was the only change to Sylea's government. The next change to the structure of the Sylean Federation was the result of Sylea's first tentative steps to reclaim the stars. As the Syleans added more and more worlds to their Federation, these new worlds were less and less willing to incorporate into a new government which was ruled by an autocrat (even a popularly elected one) without having a direct voice in the legislative process for the Federation.

The outbreak of several popular uprisings on a number of the more recently incorporated worlds caused the Sylean government to create the Grand Senate (of Sylea). The Grand Senate was a popularly elected body (with the same tight electorate as the Presidency).

Each member world was granted a number of Senators based vaguely on its population level and strategic importance to the Federation. As originally envisioned,

the Senate was created as an advisory body. Over the course of the first two hundred years of the Federation, it evolved into a legislative body with considerable powers.

**Powers of the President:** No single body was responsible for making the law in the Sylean Federation. The President was able to establish temporary laws (called Declarations) by decree in times of crisis. The President was authorized to establish these Declarations for a period of up to one year, under the authority of the Declaration Enabling Act of Year -350. The Grand Senate was given power to cancel the extension of such laws by simple majority after the expiration of the Declaration. If not specifically canceled, such Declarations could be extended year after year by the President.

It is important to note that the President had another very specific power which limited the effectiveness of the Grand Senate. He could quietly refuse to enforce acts of legislation passed by the Grand Senate. There was no set of enabling laws that forced the President to act on laws that he felt not in the best interest of the Federation, and there was no judicial oversight regarding acts of either the President or the Grand Senate. In many ways, the President, through his appointed bureaucracy, was policeman, judge, jury, and sometimes law-maker.

One of the rarely used powers of the Sylean President was the ability to dissolve the Grand Senate and call for new elections. This power could be utilized repeatedly during a particular administration, though the Senate could not be dissolved more frequently than once per year.

The President was envisioned as a strong head of state. He was responsible for foreign policy decisions, control of the military, and most internal police powers within the Federation, as well as control over the Federation bureaucracy. In addition, he controlled the Federation judicial system in a direct manner—able to appoint and replace judges at whim (with confirmation from the Senate). The acts of his government in enforcing the laws was not subject to oversight in any direct way by others, with the exception of whatever broad guidelines the Grand Senate might lay down.

**Powers of the Grand Senate:** The primary fear of the newer member worlds of the Sylean Federation at the time the Grand Senate was created was that they would be forced to stomach legislative acts passed by the much larger (and older) bloc of core worlds of the Federation. As a result, the newer members did not find the simple majority system of passing legislation to be acceptable. As a compromise, it was agreed that all legislative acts must be passed by a three-quarters majority.





The main check on the power of the President by the Grand Senate was the simple ability to paralyze the President's administration. With control over appropriations, as well as the ability to approve Presidential appointments, the Grand Senate would not hesitate to use either weapon, even arbitrarily, if necessary to curb the excesses of a President who was perceived to have overstepped his bounds.

It is important to note however, that the Grand Senate had no power to actually remove a sitting President. An unsuitable President would usually end up resigning when he found himself totally unable to govern due to the opposition of the Grand Senate to every appointment or budget request. Indeed, the Sylean term for "ineffective" has a second meaning of "being unable to set a budget." More recent Sylean history is full of examples where Presidents resigned during extended "Budget Crises." In extreme cases, if they could not be made to see the light, Presidents were removed by the archaic method of assassination (though such instances were rare during the life of the Federation).

**The Sylean Bureaucracy:** As one would expect of a tightly organized central government, the Bureaucracy of the Sylean Federation was highly centralized in nature, with decision-making being deferred to higher levels for most non-routine situations. The bureaucracy for internal departments would consist of a number of levels. By way of example, the Sylean Commission of Trade consisted of the following levels of organization:

- Commissioner of Trade.
- Assistant Commissioner of Trade.
- Quadrant #X Representative of Trade (there were four quadrants in the old Federation, centering on the four stellar directions).
- System #X Representative of Trade.
- Continental Representative of Trade.
- City/Region Representative of Trade.
- Local Supervisory Personnel for all departments.
- Customs Officials, Consulate Officials, Starport Officials, Inspectors, etc....

In some cases, there could be twenty or more levels between those making the significant decisions and those who implemented them. This complex level of bureaucracy, and a centralized decision-making structure, had the effect of pushing difficult, non-routine decisions upward for answers, sometimes to Commissioner level or higher.

**Weaknesses of the Sylean Federation:** The weaknesses of the Sylean Federation can be easily seen by the flaws in the structure of the Federation. It was a tightly controlled centralized government, in which difficult bureaucratic decisions were pushed upwards to higher levels of authority. When Sylea was governing the half-dozen or so worlds of a pocket empire, such control was satisfactory, and possibly even desirable, as decision time was measured in a few weeks.

As the Federation grew, however, and new worlds with new agendas began joining en masse, things changed. Passing effective legislation became difficult with the seventy-five percent majority provision for new legislation by

the Grand Senate. While the President was able to govern by decree for limited periods of time, the Grand Senate would usually block any significant policy changes, which would increasingly force him to use decrees and thus encourage the Senate to react further by crippling the President's ability to make appointments, or even to get budget appropriations passed.

Relations became strained between President and Senate, creating a governmental vicious circle: given a particular problem, the Grand Senate would usually require lengthy deliberation to come to a consensus to pass the laws needed to solve said problem. The President, frustrated by the inactivity, might create a Declaration to temporarily solve the problem. This would rarely encourage the members Grand Senate to reach a consensus about the legislation, but often provoked them into deciding that the President had overstepped their bounds. The Declaration would then be canceled and, in addition, they might begin arbitrarily blocking Presidential appointments.

After several such events, the President's only hope of securing a solution to the original problem would be to dissolve the Grand Senate in the hopes of creating a Senate more in line with his Presidential wishes. The limited electorate would often return virtually the same Senate, leaving the President as a lame duck for a further year, until he could dissolve the Senate again. This process could be repeated year after year, until the Grand Senate gave in or the President resigned. At a time when Sylea was suffering from rampant piracy, unrest, and the possibility of Civil War, the government was effectively putting a gun to its head. All anyone needed to do was pull the trigger....

## **Sylea (Core 2118) A586A98-C**

The world of Sylea itself is, of course, of central importance to this era. It is quite likely to serve as a site in many PC adventures.

**Physical Data:** The planet Sylea is a pleasant world, 7,600 km in diameter and with a surface gravity of approximately 0.7g. The atmosphere is a dense mix of oxygen and nitrogen. Three fifths of the planetary surface is covered by water oceans, with five major continents and a number of large islands and archipelagos.

**Population:** As of Year 0, fourteen billion sentients inhabit Sylea. Of these, eighty percent are primarily racial Vilani, eleven percent are Solomani, six percent are native Syleans, and the remaining three percent consists of a mixture of various human and non-human minor races. There remains some hostility between the "lower classes" (which sometimes extends even to certain Vilani) and the "elite" (Solomani and pure-bred Syleans), although substantial intermingling among the lower classes mitigates these attitudes somewhat. However, many of the humans distrust non-humans as "dangerous," "criminal" or "inhuman," and many of these aliens survive only by taking low paying jobs or public welfare.

**Government:** Government on Sylea is complex, and as of Year 0 is in a state of flux as it transforms from the center of a trade federation to the capital of an interstellar

empire. The head of state, formerly the President of the Grand Senate, is now the Emperor Cleon. The chief deliberative body was, until recently, the Grand Senate of the Sylean Federation (which has now become the Moot of the Third Imperium). The executive government, formerly subordinate to the Grand Senate, now reports directly to the Emperor, with the Moot as an advisory council.

Positions in Government service are by selection on the basis of merit; after an intensive battery of intellectual and physical testing over a week, about a quarter of the applicants are accepted. These successful applicants spend their first two years as trainees of a senior bureaucrat. At the same time, trainees must also study for a diploma in administration at one of the University of Sylea's city campuses. While appointment to the bureaucracy is practically automatic for members of the nobility, promotion is much more closely based on achievement. This has allowed capable citizens of low social standing to rise to very high positions in government service.

**Law:** The Constabulary is an arm of the Imperial Ministry of Justice, and is responsible for maintaining order in the cities of the planet. While the Constabulary is only armed with handguns and batons, each city maintains a company of elite Imperial Army Commandos on call to deal with crimes involving mass civil disturbance or illegal weaponry. Constables may also call upon any military or civilian assets in order to assist in investigating crime or apprehending criminals; refusing to assist a Constable in his duties may lead to prosecution for aiding and abetting criminal activities.

Although the Constabulary possesses broad powers, these powers are rarely misused: the penalties for corruption or deliberate abuse of police powers are severe, with ten years imprisonment a minimum; the death penalty is available for more serious offenses. Constables are generally well respected by the populace, and they work hard at maintaining that trust.

Law enforcement outside the cities is the responsibility of the noble on whose property the crime was committed. The nobles themselves answer to the Moot and, ultimately, the Emperor himself. The penalties for a noble committing a deliberate offense against the law are even more severe than those for a law enforcement official.

**Industry and Economy:** Sylea exports a large number of primary products to nearby worlds. Chief among these are metal ores, including those of radioactive uranium and thorium, foodstuffs and other agricultural products, and a wide range of manufactured goods, including electronics, heavy machinery and weapons.

**The Syleans:** The origin of the original Sylean (minor) human race is a mystery, as is the case with the humans found throughout known space. Human biochemistry is somewhat different from most species present on the planet, but is sufficiently compatible that most foodstuffs are edible, and the planet is otherwise a very acceptable home (some might regard it as a "paradise" for humanoids).

The Syleans have evolved along lines that are typical for human races on moderate gravity worlds. Their bodies

### Dear Father...

*From the personal letters of Mirela Bachry, Noble, writing to his father, on his first trip to Sylea.*

"Dear Father,

As I write this message, the ship is moving into orbit around Sylea. The cities of the planet look enormous, like a great metallic shell growing over the surface. Still, it is hard to believe that the larger cities contain billions of people, when the largest we have back home is only a few million! As I look across to the night side of the planet, I can see the floating city of Mifa Lanco coming into view, with literally millions of lights blazing into space, almost as if a nebula were hovering over the planet.

Now the Ton Vorn orbital city is in sight, and what a sight it is! Soon I shall be able to sample the delights of this wonderful center—and no, I shan't spend my allowance in the gaming halls! I promised to come back with a degree from the Sylean University and so I shall. Or perhaps I'll join the Scouts? Don't fear—only kidding!"

are a little taller (on average 2.1 meters tall) and a little more massive than the typical Solomani frame (about ninety kg). However, Sylea's 0.69 standard gravities have made Sylean muscles somewhat weaker than those of Solomani or Vilani. Syleans are otherwise unremarkable among humans, other than the high incidence of albinism in the population (almost ten percent of all Syleans are albinos, the result of a limited original gene pool), and the fact that a high proportion of Syleans are left-handed.

### Structure of the Third Imperium

*Extracts from "The Foundation and Creation of Imperial Government," Professor Tralut Ralsod, University of Sylea, 285-0036.*

**The End of the Sylean Government:** As the last pre-Imperium century dawned, the Sylean Federation was a government in disarray. The Sylean Grand Senate, wracked by internal dissension, was rarely able to reach a consensus on anything. The individual agendas of each member world, combined with the muscle-flexing of the major corporations, paralyzed the Senate.

The importance of the megacorporations in hastening the demise of the Sylean Federation cannot be understated. On many worlds, these corporations were becoming a shadow government of a sort—more powerful, in many instances, than the real governments of the worlds. In the increasingly chaotic Federation, these corporations were seeking to guide public policy for their own ends.

In Year -30, a single man found himself in the position to be able to do something about it. Cleon Zhunastu, head of Zhunastu industries (the largest of the corporations in Sylean space) became leader of the Grand Senate by hereditary claim. Cleon had seen for years that the increasing paralysis of the Federation government was actually aiding those who sought to bring Sylea low. Piracy was increasing, and conflicts between worlds—whether open warfare, trade wars or privateering—were breaking



out, even on worlds close to the Sylean core. The government, when it was able to respond at all, usually acted too late to do anything successfully.

During his early years in industry, Cleon had built a vision of a decentralized government, based on a concept of personal loyalty, honor, and duty. He seized upon the ancient feudal structures of pre-space-flight Terra for a governmental model which he felt would work. He foresaw and created a vision of an Imperium that would draw upon the glories of the First and Second Empires for legitimacy.

Knowing that in the early stages he would face the opposition of both government and business, Cleon began a systematic process of burrowing within. His title as head of the Senate was useful, but in many respects was an impotent position which threatened to absorb his time in the daily administration of the Senate. Cleon carefully handed off much of the responsibility for this to his senior advisors (e.g. Artemsus Lentuli), allowing him to concentrate on his vision for a new Imperium. His first critical task—converting his fellow industrialists—was vital to creating any successful government. In many ways, the megacorps were more powerful than the government they were technically subordinate to. By selling the vision of a much larger, more stable empire, uniting all of human space, Cleon made it easy for his fellow industrialists to see the commercial profits to be had in such a government. They quickly united behind Cleon. Systematic attack, by a combination of trade war, hostile take-over, and other means, quickly brought the few holdouts in line.

With the megacorps solidified behind Cleon's leadership, the demise of the Sylean Federation was relatively painless. Cleon now effectively had control of the purse strings of many of the government's elected officials. Indeed, many of the elected officials were also megacorp owners or local employees, so it was relatively easy to take control of the Federation. Essentially, most of the elected officials were faced with two choices: line up with Cleon, become part of the nobility, and enjoy a long life, or get voted out office, killed, or worse. Obviously, under these circumstances, most officials quickly saw the light, and agreed to become knights, barons, dukes, etc. Those who didn't were encouraged to resign, voted out of office, or occasionally suffered an unfortunate accident.

With the Grand Senate under proper control, Cleon knew that he now had to remove himself from the leadership of the Senate, for remaining in that station would not provide the powers he needed. Although nominally "all powerful" he would still be totally unable to govern, except by decree. In a series of complex political maneuvers, he resigned, allowed one of his closest aides (William Shigaka) to be elected to the post and, a mere two months later, declared himself Emperor. Shigaka's role in Cleon's ascendance has, to some degree, been lost in the mists of time, but without his ability to issue immediate decrees to support Cleon's massive restructuring, the new Imperium might have taken decades to become established. As history shows, Cleon's take-over was smooth and rapid, and when Shigaku's role was eliminated, he was absorbed back into Cleon's closest group of trusty advisors.

**The Creation of the Third Imperium:** With Cleon Zhunastu now in control of the governing body of the Federation, he began the process of remaking the government of Sylea into the Imperium. A series of proclamations, including the famous Warrant of Restoration, remade the various organs of Sylean government into the Imperial institutions which succeeded them where possible, or dissolved and replaced them where necessary.

Cleon crowned himself Emperor, by tracing his lineage to that of the rulers of the Second Imperium. The Grand Senate, with some alteration of membership, became the Moot. Many of the members of the Senate resigned from the Moot to take local leadership positions within their native worlds. Others became part of Cleon's government. Some others resigned or were forcibly removed. The Sylean bureaucracy was for the most part torn down, restructured or replaced.

**Concept of Government within the Third Imperium:** The concept of government within the Third Imperium was to make loyalty to the Emperor seem like a good deal on balance. The Third Imperium fundamentally was structured to take much less interest in the internal political nature of its member worlds. Cleon's emphasis was to create a government which would foster interstellar trade. He therefore fostered the concept that the Imperium controlled and was responsible for the protection of the space between member worlds, while generally leaving the worlds themselves to worry about internal decision making and the form of local government. Each planetary government was expected to show loyalty to the Emperor and to higher nobility, and pay taxes necessary to the support of the armed forces and apparatus of Imperial government, but could otherwise govern its fief with little supervision.

Individual initiative was encouraged within the Imperium, to solve local problems within the framework of loyalty to the Emperor, and other superiors. These concepts of honor, duty, and loyalty to one's betters, combined with freedom of action within these parameters to solve problems, are essential to understanding the concept and spirit of Imperial government.

For most purposes, Imperial jurisdiction within a system ends within one hundred planetary diameters from the main world (and occupied subordinate worlds) of most systems. The Imperium does consider star/spaceports to be Imperial territory, and thus subject to Imperial jurisdiction, but in the first years of the Imperium, very little else was considered to be within the Imperial domain.

**Organization of Imperial Government:** The government of the Third Imperium can be discussed perhaps most easily in three major categories: The nobility, the Moot, and the bureaucracy.

*The Nobility:* The vast majority of the early nobility, as can be determined from earlier discussion, were the business and political leaders who sided with Cleon in his effort to remake the Federation. One important concept which cannot be overstated was the ability of any member to improve his station. Exceptional acts of bravery, initiative, courage, and duty could potentially raise anybody to

a higher station, including the nobility. Cleon knew that encouraging individual initiative was a useful way to reward talent, and he was therefore to knight a number of individuals whose efforts would aid the Imperium.

In the early years of the Imperium, the highest rank of noble station (other than the Emperor himself) were the dukes/duchesses. In Year 0, it was not uncommon for a duke's domain to be one world within the Imperium. As the Empire grew, these dukes would in many cases be elevated to the control of small groups of worlds and then, perhaps, whole subsectors.

The next lowest station of noble rank was the count/countess. In many cases in the early Imperium, counts would be responsible for a particular continent or region. It was counts or countesses who often served in the Moot in the early years of the Imperium. Others still were landless members of the Imperial bureaucracy, who would gradually add to their domains as the Imperium grew.

The marquis/marquises of the Imperium were virtually all landless in Year 0. They often served the Imperium in other ways, many of them acting as diplomats, or in middle management positions within the Imperial Bureaucracy or upper ranks in the newly formed Imperial Navy.

Noble ranks of lesser stature (knights, barons) served in lesser positions in virtually all portions of the Imperial government, often acting as couriers or personal representatives of higher nobles on critical missions. All landless in Year 0, they would be awarded the control of worlds as they were added to the Imperium.

*The Moot:* It did not serve Cleon's purpose to strip the powers of the Grand Senate all at once. In the early years of the Imperium, the terms Grand Senate and Moot were often used interchangeably. One of Cleon's first acts of government in the First Imperium was to change the Moot from an elective body to a hereditary body, which it had been effectively for some time in any case. In the early years of the Imperium, the Moot retained its powers to approve cabinet appointments and the elevation of nobility from the marquis class and up, but otherwise was gradually stripped of its powers. As a matter of course, since the Moot had personal loyalty to Cleon, approval of these matters were all but automatic. If the early nobility had a problem with an appointment of Cleon's, such things were usually discussed behind closed doors with the Emperor himself.

While there was some nervousness at the thought of the Grand Senate being stripped of its powers, the successes of the Imperium in its early growth, the solution of the piracy problem and relaxation of tax and governmental burdens in the member worlds made such a change relatively easy to accept.

(The Moot is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.)

*The Bureaucracy:* In Year 0, the Imperial bureaucracy can be grouped into five primary governmental bodies, each with one or more Ministries:

- The Military (Navy and Army; Marines were under the jurisdiction of the Navy) which protects the space lanes, as well as helping to protect lesser developed member worlds incapable of defending themselves.
- The Office of Standards (including the office of Calendar Compliance, which see below) which regulates trade within the Imperium, as well as monitoring adherence to Imperial regulations governing interstellar trade, enforcement of taxation, etc. The OCC also controls the law enforcement arm of the Imperium—the Imperial Office (soon to be Ministry) of Justice.
- The Scout and Exploratory Services (Sylean Federation Scout Service, later to be renamed the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service).
- The Ministry of Information, which is the public relations branch of the Imperial government.
- The Diplomatic Corps, which is the Imperial foreign service.

While there are other governmental bodies subordinate to Cleon, these five are by all means the most important.

The makeup of each of these bureaucracies is at least superficially the same. A cabinet-level noble heads the Ministry in question (Chief of Staff in the case of the military, Minister of the Department otherwise). An appointed position, these ministries are usually rewarded for life, as long as the minister in question proves competent. Below the ministry level, nobles (officers in the military) of decreasingly lesser rank staff most positions in the early government of the Imperium, leading down to the middle class at the lowest levels of service.

One concept dear to Cleon is the practice of contracting out, or recruiting on a freelance basis, various people of special qualification for various tasks. Cleon believes that initiative is to be rewarded and encouraged, and that often the best problem-solvers in tight spots are people of talent who need not be politicians. This informal style of leadership was initially a source of exasperation, as well as inspiration, for Cleon's subordinates but has since become ingrained within the Imperial system.

**Summary:** The Imperial government has so far answered all challenges expected of it. The flexible approach to government within a feudal system, and the specific encouragement of unorthodox solutions within the concept of personal loyalty, has created a dynamic government which has far exceeded the quality of its Federation predecessor. As for its prospects for long term success, only time will tell.

## **The Structure of the Vilani Confederation**

*Excerpted from "The Vilani & The Third Imperium" by Lorlad Trouts, Makhidkarun Press, 004-0017.*

**Vland During the Long Night:** Like Sylea, Vland never completely lost the Jump drive during the Long Night. While interstellar trade slowed tremendously, it never truly halted. Culturally, the Vilani worked hard to return to their older, more traditional ways. Rejection of Solomani culture became more widespread, and the Vilani

of the home worlds began to re-emphasize their own rich tradition. The Ziru Sirka (Vilani Imperium, First Imperium) was regarded as still being the model of interstellar civilization, and it was during this period that the Rule of Man became known to the Vilani as the Ramshackle Empire.

**First Contact with the Syleans:** One of the results of the Long Night was that contact with the various minor races of the Ziru Sirka ceased. Even among the Vilani systems, for many worlds almost a millennium passed without significant contact from Vland. Finally, in Year -495, Scouts from the Sylean Federation re-contacted the Vilani home worlds. These first overtures from Sylea were rejected, and indeed the Syleans were expelled from Vilani territory in rather short order.

Nonetheless, recontact with the Syleans proved to be the "jump start" that Vilani society needed. With it becoming apparent that other governments were beginning to come out of the Long Night, the Vilani realized that the time for retrenchment was past, and that they needed to work actively to restore Vland to its former position of dominance. Six years later, in Year -489, the newly reformed Vilani Bureaus, after years of debate, resolved to begin expansion of interstellar trade within the Vilani Cultural Region. In Year -475, the Zirunkariish corporation was formed on Vland to finance this trade.

As befit the Vilani character, commercial expansion within the Vilani worlds was swift, while technical progress was slower. Vland remained insular, with little exploration or trade occurring beyond the Vilani core.

**Recontact with the Syleans:** In Year -100, the now much larger Sylean Federation again officially contacted the Vilani home worlds. The intervening four hundred years had changed Vilani opinions regarding the Syleans to a realization that Sylean contact had been the impetus for the restoration of interstellar trade. When the Syleans re-contacted the Vilani, Vland was more willing to listen. Years of interstellar trade between the two governments were followed by years of diplomatic overtures. In Year -30, Vland, and the bulk of the Vilani cultural region, agreed to join the Sylean Federation, in return for a promise not to interfere in the internal culture of the Vilani people.

This represented a break with tradition for the Sylean Federation, and would serve later as a model for relations with member worlds of the Imperium. One of the chief negotiators for the Sylean side, was Cleon Zhunastu, then a member of the Sylean Grand Senate.

**Vland under the Third Imperium:** Denied the governmental responsibilities in the Federation that they had previously enjoyed under the Ziru Sirka, the Vilani Bureaus restructured themselves as megacorporations. Although it was not widely advertised, these megacorporations enjoyed a large say in the internal affairs of the Vilani home worlds and, indirectly through their commercial links, had an increasing influence within even the Sylean Grand Senate.

The corporate officers of the Bureaus saw the political winds that would eventually create the Third Imperium out of the increasingly fractured Sylean Federation, and right-

ly sought positions of influence, and loyalty to Cleon, and his fledgling Third Imperium. Vilani nobility make up a sizable and influential minority of the newly established Moot, and are staunch supporters of Cleon's new empire, as beneficial to trade, and the Vilani megacorps.

Vilani governmental structure internally resembles the form it always has. Each of the megacorps holds much sway politically within territories it dominated under the Ziru Sirka. Solomani influence has widened the types of governments which are created, but all Vilani governments enjoy a number of common characteristics. All Vilani governments tend to be conservative, particularly about radical changes in technology, social structure, and culture. The former Vilani Bureaus act as a sort of government within a government on most worlds, and Vland exists almost as a state within a state of the Third Imperium as a result.

The relationship of a typical Vilani government with the Bureaus is as follows:

Head of State — Bureaus(Megacorps)  
| | Government Bureaucracy | | People

The bureaus, which do not have direct control over Vilani worlds under the Imperium, nonetheless act as an advisory body to most Vilani world governments, and have much influence over the future of most Vilani worlds. On some Vilani worlds, the megacorporations still hold the direct reigns of government, in one form or another.

Despite Imperial law, Vilani tradition still sees a large number of Vilani refer to the Vilani megacorporations as the bureaus, although this trend is lessening.

**Challenges to Imperial Government Posed by the Vilani:** The Vilani are both a major asset, and a major annoyance for the Imperium. To this point in time, they are the largest intact culture absorbed by the Imperium. The fact that the culture has been absorbed intact by the Imperium means that Vland has, and will continue to have undue influence on the near future direction of the Imperium. Already the core Sylean worlds are unhappy with the strength of the Vilani at court.

One of the greatest challenges to Cleon and his successors will continue to be the balancing of Vilani and Sylean interests at court.

The Vilani have proven to be a loyal, important asset to the Imperial cause, if for no other reason than being the protectors and guardians of a vast warehouse of knowledge (the AAB) about the thousands of worlds of the Old Imperium still as yet uncontacted by Imperial Scouts. Much of what the Imperium knows about its neighbors originated with the Vilani, a fact of which Cleon is well aware.

**The Importance of the Vilani Megacorporations:** The significance of the Vilani megacorporations to Vilani culture cannot be underestimated. The megacorps were the governmental bodies of the Ziru Sirka, and had become the governing body of the Vilani home worlds when they were re-contacted and absorbed by Sylea. They continue to have major influence in all worlds, and



## Guests in Vilani Society

Syleans travelling to Vland on corporate business may be surprised at the type of accommodation that they receive. Vilani consider it impolite to leave a guest to an empty room at a hotel; such places are lonely and without tradition, and should be left for those genuinely rootless individuals that the Vilani regard with some pity. Honored guests, particularly those having business dealings with the Bureau, stay with a host family of their own caste, which is chosen by a senior Bureau manager, known as diikari or "sponsor."

The diikari carefully chooses a family for the guest so that both the visitor and host family benefit from intellectual, professional and social stimulation of the other. Visitors to Vland should not feel alarmed or insulted if their host family is of a radically different social class; such a placement is actually a high honor. The placement is an indication that the diikari feels the visitor is honorable enough to take an interest in the lives of those of a completely different social status, and that the host family is likely to benefit greatly from the visitor's knowledge and experience. Such placement is also a way of rewarding particularly loyal or talented Bureau employees by entrusting them with the well-being of a highly important guest.

The host family must make sure that their guest is well cared for. Host families lavish great effort on entertaining their guests, and will seek out expensive delicacies prepared by the best local shugillii, in order to ensure their guest's happiness. Many hosts even hire the services of a shugillii for the duration of their guest's stay, which should be considered among the highest of honors.

direct control of a number of worlds in the Vilani home worlds. In addition, they are playing an increasingly powerful role at the Imperial Court through the nobility. All Vilani world governments owe some amount of allegiance to the Vilani megacorps.

## Life on Vland

Vilani traditionally prefer to live and work in large extended family groups, in close proximity to other families of the same caste, but of a variety of levels of social status. This especially confuses Solomani, who find it difficult to differentiate employment (caste) from social status, and may become confused at finding people from a variety of social positions all doing similar work and living in the same buildings.

Vilani living quarters are usually close to (or part of) their place of employment. Vilani dwellings seem to be a hybrid of army barracks, company offices, schools and child care centers. Vilani workplaces are full of children; but they are quiet, disciplined children, who spend their time learning basic skills from adults and older children in a cooperative environment. Every few hours, at irregular intervals, mixed groups of children and adults will move to a recreational area to engage in group recreation. Many of these games were first invented over ten thousand years

Nonetheless, the Vilani megacorp influence over Vilani worlds is slowly weakening. Inroads are being made by a number of the corporations based in other regions of the Imperium, and with each loss of market share, the megacorp influence begins to wane. It is highly unlikely that the influence of the megacorps will ever totally disappear, however, if for no other reason than the cultural conservatism of the Vilani.

**Vilani Culture:** No general discussion of the structure of Vilani home worlds would be complete without discussion of Vilani culture at this date. The Vilani are culturally conservative. Tried and true methods of problem solving are preferred, and decision by consensus is the preferred method of tackling any difficulty. A natural distrust of technological growth gone rampant sits at the core of the Vilani being. Indeed, the Vilani tend to believe that growth or expansion of any sort needs to be carefully monitored, controlled, and thought out. While the Vilani will break out of this mold at times, when circumstances warrant it, the typical Vilani hero is a person who looks at a new problem, and comes up with a creative way to apply an old solution to solve the problem.

Technologically, Vilani growth has been slow. In the five hundred years since their first contact with Sylea, they have technically progressed only incrementally. Ziru Sirka designs have been improvements on old ones, with little in the way of new technical development. They have remained at TL9 throughout the five hundred years, although emerging portions of their worlds are beginning to develop early TL10 designs.

**Summary:** The Vilani are a culturally conservative people, whose internal governmental structure would seem very similar in many ways to that of their ancestors. Nonetheless, they are the depository and guardians of nearly nine thousand years of interstellar culture. Their importance to, and power within, the Imperium cannot be underestimated.

ago—the oldest predate space flight—and are intended to improve the child's body, mind and social skills.

Beginning at age six, the child and family start to assess the most suitable caste for the young person to spend his working life. It is a testament to Vilani psychological science that over eighty percent of children are placed in a caste by age eight. Interestingly enough, about half of the time, this caste will be different to that of the child's biological parents. Once casted, the child immediately moves to a family of the same caste, whose members treat the child exactly as they would their own. Although some children and even parents may find their separation somewhat traumatic, the cultural understanding is that it is best for the whole society that the child be raised in a manner consistent with caste.

The child is then apprenticed to a master, who introduces the child to the caste's secret ways of work. The child learns and develops, and over many years will achieve a high level of proficiency, at which time he will be able to take on an apprentice of his own.

## Vilani Cuisine

Traditional Vilani meals bear the hallmark of the shugilii's trade: almost all food is native to Vland, but processed using a variety of traditional techniques. The shugilii will prepare the meal at the back of the room, while the host family and guest politely avert their eyes in order to keep from seeing the food being prepared, a tradition that originated in prehistoric times in order to preserve the secrets of the shugilii's craft.

The meal is usually arrives quite quickly, as most ingredients have already been treated and preserved beforehand. The shugilii takes two identical meals, and places one before the family head and the other before the most senior merchant (usually the guest), and intones the ritual benediction "vaaluuin malauuikki binerii" ("to your life and strong health"); the traditional response is "naaseri binerii mikalen shugilii viilem" ("this health I owe to you, good shugilii"). This ritual predates recorded history, and symbolizes the almost religious awe with which the ordinary Vilani people regard their shugilii.

Gracious guests should ensure that they compliment the shugilii loudly throughout the meal, as a compliment to the shugilii applies equally to the host family. Vilani food is surprisingly good, considering the fact that their raw foodstuffs are almost completely inedible, and the processes by which the food becomes edible may include any combination of aging, beating, sun drying, boiling, saltwater immersion, partial pre-digestion, burning, infection with molds or yeasts, subjection to parasitic infestation, grinding, or marinating. This list is far from exhaustive, as shugilii still guard their traditional culinary secrets most jealously. Polite inquiries about recipes will usually be greeted with the cold stare of disapproval that Vilani reserve for those that exhibit a perverted interest in knowledge that is none of their concern.

The meal invariably includes a large quantity of argu, a fibrous tuber that is almost entirely carbohydrate, and one of the few Vilani foodstuffs that requires only soaking and boiling to be rendered digestible. Solomani guests frequently remark on argu's nutty flavor, which is due to traces of incompatible proteins remaining after processing. Such remarks are considered mildly impolite in Vilani company, as none but the very best shugilii can make completely flavorless argu.

The rest of the meal is placed on the floor in the center of the room in square ceramic pots, and consists of a variety of stews, thick soups, savory fondues, dips and gravies, all heavily spiced to disguise whatever traces of natural toxins and processing agents remain in the food. Family members and close friends may take turns at feeding one another, which is a sign of close affection; guests should avoid trying to feed others in case they overstep some social boundary and commit a dreadful faux pas.

Sneezing and coughing are considered polite, and indicate that the guest considers the spices to be quite hot enough; guests who display no such signs may find a thoughtful shugilii adding hot spices to their meal in order to give it a more agreeable "bite."

As a courtesy to non-Vilani guests, shugilii will usually place a small bowl of naa to one side of the guest's place. Naa is a cloudy liquid plant extract that contains a number of natural antihistamines, and is generally only given to children who have an allergic intolerance for certain trace food impurities. Vilani children usually outgrow their allergies around their seventh year, but many humans of Solomani descent are not so lucky.

In less formal settings, a meal will often finish with a sweet dessert, a tradition that many Vilani adopted from their Solomani conquerors during the Long Night. An unfortunate side effect of shugilii processing techniques is that Vilani foods contain very few simple sugars, causing many Vilani to have a craving for sweet Solomani-style delicacies. However, most shugilii frown upon desserts, considering them to be an unnecessary extravagance and a severe risk to dietary health.

A logical, but lesser known, role of the shugilii is that of community nutritionist. Vilani dietary theory is one of the few areas of medical science that has always been quite well developed, for the simple reason that shugilii have made nutrition their profession for tens of thousands of years. In pre-space-flight days, most "illnesses" were dietary, rather than infectious, in nature. A good shugilii is able to diagnose many illnesses and dietary deficiencies by a simple examination of skin, fingernails, hair and eyes for telltale signs. The shugilii will generally announce a regime of diet, special foods and exercise in order to combat the disorder. A few shugilii today specialize in certain fields of nutrition, but this is an innovation that dates from the Ramshackle Empire.

## Intelligence Agencies in Year 0

The Emperor commands the assets of a number of intelligence organizations. He recognizes the power that these agencies can wield in society, and often checks one source against another, or employs independent agents to investigate a particularly vital piece of information.

**Imperial Naval Intelligence (INI):** The INI is primarily concerned with military intelligence. It tracks starship and troop operations, and can mount intelligence-gathering activities in all parts of the Imperium. INI's sphere of operations often conflicts with that of the Scout Service's Intelligence Branch. For example, a world that the IISS has interdicted, in order to protect its developing culture,

may lie in a highly strategic location, and so attract the attention of Naval Intelligence agents seeking local alliances.

**Imperial Ministry of Justice (MoJ):** The MoJ is primarily concerned with potential threats within Imperial society. It maintains contacts within the law enforcement systems of the worlds of the empire, and it has an intelligence network focused on criminal activity. The MoJ is especially valuable when dealing with criminal elements of the Empire, and can offer great rewards in terms of amnesty or pardons. MoJ and megacorporation agents often oppose one another's efforts.



### **Office of Calendar Compliance**

As the Third Imperium expands its territory and brings more and more systems into the community of worlds, the Imperial Ministry of Trade is charged with the responsibility of regulating trade and commerce: to promote economic expansion as well as to reduce or eliminate fraud or deception.

Within that ministry, the Bureau of Standards administers a wide variety of standards and specifications, and disseminates this information as an educational effort to all the members of the Imperium. Typical standards which are promulgated include the metric system of measurement, statistical standards used in quality control, and specifications for packaging, safety, and convenience.

As a portion of that bureau, the Office of Calendar Compliance is normally viewed as a sinecure: a cushy job inspecting the compliance of member worlds with the standard Imperial Calendar. Its agents hold instructional seminars, meet with educators and legislators, inspect textbooks and computer systems, and generally gauge compliance with the Imperial standards. The office also publishes an interesting pamphlet about the Imperial Calendar, and an annual report to the Moot, documenting the state of Calendar compliance with the Imperium.

Employees of the OCC must have a variety of talents: They are called upon to speak in public, to negotiate compliance agreements, and generally to get along with a wide range of peoples and cultures. Significantly, because the Empire presents itself as ruling space, leaving world governance to the locals, OCC employees are the only official Imperial agents empowered to enforce Imperial law on member worlds.

Agents of the OCC travel on ITRs (Imperial Travel Requisitions, which allow them to travel freely on scheduled liners or charter ships as necessary) in order to reach their scheduled destinations. They can call on any local or Imperial forces for assistance in order to inspect existing records or documents. Their authority to inspect is guaranteed by the documents which establish individual world membership in the Imperium.

Given this unique authority, agents of the OCC are frequently assigned secondary, clandestine mission objectives for the good of the Imperium. Unofficially, then, the OCC can be viewed as an intelligence agency of sorts.

**Imperial Interstellar Scout Service Intelligence Branch (IB):** Intelligence Branch is an information-gathering agency for the Scouts. Much like the rest of the IISS, its primary function is to obtain every possible scrap of information about the worlds and societies found both within and without the Imperium. However, the IB uses this data for analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each world, their mentality and thus their likely reaction to any particular event, how they can best be manipulated to the advantage of the Imperium.

An additional function is to debrief detached-duty scouts when they visit scout bases for refueling or maintenance

on their vessels. The Intelligence Branch maintains a very wide base of active agents, but also relies heavily upon the normal Recon and Contact branches for information.

**Vilani Bureaus:** Each Vilani Bureau maintains an intelligence-gathering and security apparatus. Bureaus agents are particularly skilled in gathering trade intelligence and performing industrial espionage, and exchange information with various Imperial intelligence agencies.

**Imperial University:** The Faculty of Social Sciences maintains an extensive sociological database and psychohistorical research facility, funded primarily by the Emperor's personal funds. Although this facility is not secret, its connection with the Emperor is not widely known. Another "open secret" is the existence of the Imperial University's six social research starships; these ships travel throughout the Imperium and neighboring regions performing social research and gathering information for the sociological databases of the University. This data is used for large-scale psychohistorical predictions of Imperial society. The only clue to the sensitivity of the University's work is the Faculty of Social Sciences' high level of security.

**The Loyal Association of Pages:** This unusual but highly effective source of intelligence is drawn entirely from the boy and girl pages that run minor errands for Moot nobles, senior Imperial bureaucrats and military officers. Ranging from fourteen to seventeen years old, pages are drawn from high-status (Soc 10) commoner families. Most nobles consider pages to be invisible, and frequently reveal information in their presence that is of interest to the Emperor. A number of pages from particularly loyal families report directly through the intelligence apparatus of Djugashvili Lentuli of the BIA. The other pages have no suspicion of their colleagues' activities.

**Bureau for Interstellar Affairs (BIA):** Although the BIA is ostensibly an Imperial publicity and information dissemination agency, a significant proportion of its resources is secretly diverted to intelligence gathering, psychological operations and other covert activities on the Emperor's behalf. Djugashvili Lentuli, the Third Undersecretary of the BIA, answers directly to the Emperor. This range of virtually independent intelligence agencies makes it almost inevitable that some agents will find themselves working at cross purposes.

*Working for the BIA:* Djugashvili Lentuli—Third Secretary of the Bureau for Interstellar Affairs—will initially offer new hirelings difficult but non-vital missions, as a means of testing their loyalty and ability. Only after they have proven themselves in a number of assignments will he trust them with more important work. The BIA can provide access to almost any resources that its agents may need to carry out a mission, but maintains no heavy personal weapons or armored vehicles, as there are few uses for these assets, and they are inappropriately difficult to conceal.



The following is a list of just a few of the possible missions the BIA might undertake in support of Cleon and his Imperium:

- \* Striking covertly against the Emperor's political opponents.
- \* Acting as bodyguards for visiting diplomats.
- \* Investigating the level of support for the Emperor among the Vilani.
- \* Exploring frontier areas seeking new opportunities for trade.
- \* Performing reconnaissance (in force) through the pirate-infested Lishun sector.
- \* Spying on potentially disloyal personnel of the IISS Vland sector.
- \* Securing a trade agreement with a new race beyond the frontier.
- \* Seizing a hostage from one of the Emperor's political enemies.
- \* Destroying evidence that implicates Imperial Naval Intelligence agents in an uprising on a frontier planet.
- \* Investigating the major Conservative opponents of the Emperor (in an attempt to discover embarrassing information).
- \* Locating one of the Emperor's guards, who disappeared only a few days ago.
- \* Investigating rumors that a number of Navy admirals may be planning a *coup d'état* against the Emperor.
- \* Assisting and training rebels on the homeworld of one of Cleon's political opponents.
- \* Spreading false information to undermine the government of a neighboring state.
- \* Infiltrating a group of terrorists based in the University of Sylea.
- \* Performing a close reconnaissance of an enemy military base on the edge of the Chaneston Kingdom.
- \* Gathering information to assist planning for an orbital assault by Imperial Marines.
- \* Infiltrating an organized crime syndicate operating within one of the megacorporations.
- \* Establishing trade links with the region coreward of Antares.
- \* Penetrating the security surrounding a corporate laboratory (to gather evidence that the laboratory is researching technology beyond legal bounds, e.g. biological weapons).
- \* Acting as courier for a vital message from the Emperor to one of his supporters.
- \* Establishing an embassy and opening trade links with a previously uncontacted planet.
- \* Carrying intelligence reports to a naval base on the frontier (and perhaps returning with an urgent message for the Emperor).
- \* Establishing an agreement with the Vilani Bureaus for sharing information with the Imperial intelligence services.
- \* Performing a sweep through Lishun sector for pirates (locating and destroying pirate bases).
- \* Leading a commando raid against one of the Chaneston Kingdom's industrial centers.

- \* Escorting a group of Sylean trader-emissaries on a goodwill mission to a newly contacted world on the Frontier.

- \* Negotiating anti-piracy treaties with non-Imperial worlds in Antares, Lishun and Vland sectors.

- \* Smuggling weapons to Imperial sympathizers within the Chaneston Kingdom.

- \* Escorting a prisoner to neutral territory and perform an exchange for an Imperial agent.

### Missions for BIA Agents

The following are sample adventure concepts for agents of the BIA (Bureau for Interstellar Affairs).

**Rebel Arms:** Naval Intelligence recently captured a shipment of arms intended for rebels along the border of the Chaneston Kingdom. Unsubstantiated rumors have linked the weapons to a junior noble of the Conservative Faction of the Moot. The PC group's mission is to determine whether the rumors are true, and if so, to discover whether the noble is working alone or not.

**Assassination:** A splinter group of Confederacy terrorists is planning to assassinate the Emperor. Although no assassin has ever before breached Cleon's security, the sheer desperation of the terrorists will probably give rise to a variety of fanatical suicide attacks. The PC group's mission is to find the splinter group and stop them before they can make an attempt on the Emperor's life.

**The Prototype:** Somebody has penetrated the security around the Zhunastu laboratories and has stolen a prototype of the new Fusion Plus micro power plant. The thief is either an industrial spy for another corporation or an agent of a foreign power. The PC group's mission is to find or destroy the Fusion Plus prototype and capture the thief for interrogation.

**The Derelict:** An asteroid miner recently sold Naval Intelligence agents the location of a derelict scout vessel from the Rule of Man. The ship was badly damaged and had been looted long ago, but its navigational database remained intact, and it might contain a clue to the exact location of Terra, the fabulous <?> homeworld of the Solomani. The PC group's mission is to retrieve the database and assess whether it contains any useful data.

**Misjump?:** A courier ship loaded with sensitive diplomatic documents recently vanished while en route from Sylea to Capital. The ship was officially declared to have been destroyed in a misjump, but investigators have actually been unable to determine the ship's fate. The PC group's mission is to investigate the events leading up to the ship's departure, particularly if there appears to be any criminal or foreign power involvement.

**The Skeleton in the Cupboard:** An archaeologist claims to have uncovered evidence that disproves Cleon's claim that Frances Repzinski was the last legitimate ruler of the Rule of Man. The Emperor is reported to be most displeased with growing public doubts over the legitimacy of the Third Imperium. The PC group's mission is to investigate the alleged evidence, "secure" it from unauthorized investigation, and if possible discredit the archaeologist himself.

## Megacorporations

*Excerpts from "The Megacorps: Critical to the New Prosperity of the Imperium" by Rall D. Trusato, University of Sylea Press, 084-0019.*

**Philosophy of the Decentralized Corporate Structure:** When Cleon Zhunastu first envisioned the replacement of the Sylean Federation with a better form of government, his motives were not entirely altruistic. Cleon was first and foremost a businessman, and became a politician when it occurred to him that the political structure of Sylea was too rigidly organized to succeed on the kind of scope that Cleon envisioned.

Similar creative thinking needed to be applied to the organizational structure of businesses which Cleon envisioned for his own company. When a business is confined to a single world, or region of a world, with a sufficient level of communications technology, information exchange (and particularly the timing of information) becomes near perfect, allowing businesses the luxury of operating with a strong degree of certainty about market conditions, sales, market share, growth, new opportunities, and new dangers. However, for a highly centralized business, these luxuries disappear at the interstellar scale.

Effective leaders in business and politics are wise to heed Zaladon's First Law of Interstellar Communications: "For time-sensitive information, the quality of information sent or received is inversely proportionate to the distance travelled in parsecs." In light of this particular pearl of wisdom, the most workable solution found by the early Sylean megacorps was a decentralized structure. By decentralizing the decision-making process, local decision centers of the company are able to act more quickly to exploit opportunities and react to dangers than a centralized corporate structure would ever be able to. Bearing in mind this principle, we decide to dissect a particular megacorporation to look at its organizational structure: that of Cleon Zhunastu's own, Zhunastu Industries.

**Introduction to Zhunastu Industries:** Zhunastu Industries, LIC is a conglomerate which was formed out of the buyout and merger of several smaller companies over a ten-year period from Year -40 to Year -30. The principal subsidiary of Zhunastu Industries is the ship-building firm Zhunastu Shipbuilding, LIC. As a result of the series of mergers, Zhunastu Industries is in a wide variety of industries spanning the civilian, commercial and military sectors. Its emphasis, however, is in shipbuilding (civilian and military), fusion plant construction, shipboard weapons design, electronics (particularly as relates to the shipbuilding industry), and most recently, transportation. Zhunastu Industries is the leader in known space in ship design, fusion engine design, and has the vast majority of market share in its industry.

**Zhunastu Industries: Basic Organizational Structure:** As with any Imperial corporation, Zhunastu Industries has a Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officer, and several Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents each oversee a particular division. Zhunastu Industries divides its business into divisions based on broad, general categories: Ship Building, Power Plant Construction,

Weapons, Transportation and Courier Services and Electronics. Numerous other subsections are handled on a smaller local level by specific regional managers.

Within each specific division, several departments exist which are the responsibility of individual regional managers. In the case of Zhunastu Industries, these organizations include Security, Production, Research and Development, Marketing, Finance, and Communications for their particular business or local division of a larger business.

These offices however, do not make day-to-day business decisions in most cases, but rather set general policy, and serve in public relations functions at the Imperial Court, and other important worlds in the Imperium.

Most of the actual day-to-day decisions are done at the Regional Manager level. The territorial span of control for Regional Managers can vary wildly from small portions of a world, as on Sylea or Vland, all the way up to sub-sectors, in the case of frontier territories, or may be focused on specific export customers. A large, highly concentrated sales territory might have several Divisional Managers each running the local office of a particular division under that manager, or might have employees of those divisions reporting directly to a Regional Manager in the case of a smaller territory.

It is important to note that the majority of power, rewards, and in many cases the ultimate responsibility for the success of a megacorp lies with the Regional Managers. Within their own "area of influence," the Regional Manager is king.

In larger astrographic territories, another level of management usually exists, that of the local world office. Such offices can range from small skeletal staffs of a few company representatives, to large, fully equipped offices and production facilities. These managers are referred to as System Managers at Zhunastu Industries, and further localize decision making in areas as needed.

As with local nobility in the Imperium, local area managers and employees are expected to act with initiative, subject to the general directives of upper management. The luxury of being able to solve problems flexibly and exploit opportunities on a local level is ultimately balanced against the responsibility of being able to demonstrate how well the manager or other employee has served his company.

**Zhunastu Industries: Departments:** Although most of the departments listed above are self-explanatory, two merit more specific mention: Security and Communications.

**Security:** As the size of a business increases, the potential for loss from theft, vandalism, sabotage, etc. also increases. This is especially true for larger interstellar firms, such as Zhunastu Industries. Security concerns include theft of business/technological secrets, employee theft, fraud, piracy, computer network security violations, trade wars, the safety of company officials, and numerous other concerns.

Zhunastu Industries employs its own private security firm for internal security needs, ZhulntSec. Problems are



investigated internally, or in cooperation with local law enforcement authorities. ZhulntSec has acquired a well deserved reputation for the thoroughness of its investigations, as well as the ruthlessness with which it responds to situations where the company has been wronged.

**Communications:** Secure, timely, and reliable lines of communications are critical for a business of any size. In the case of a firm of interstellar scope, this means the security of company records and communications through ciphers, as well as the security of company ships, which are the critical lines of communication in most instances.

Zhunastu Industries has an internal division which is charged with maintaining company ciphers and lines of communications. Its span of control includes the maintenance of computer networks and ciphers, as well as maintenance, and operation of Zhunastu Industries fleet of fast information couriers.

More recently, a stockpile of ships has led to the creation of a new business for Zhunastu Industries, that of commercial courier and fast freight shipper. This business, ZhunaLines, has grown rapidly and now operates as a separate division of the company.

**Corporate Government Relations:** Zhunastu Industries enjoys a unique relationship with of the Empire. The company's chairman of the board, and majority stockholder, Cleon Zhunastu, is the Emperor, after all. Needless to say, Cleon the businessman enjoys close relations with Cleon the Emperor. Despite the humorous implications of this fact, virtually all of the businesses of the Imperium have enjoyed a healthy twenty years under the leadership of the Imperium. The business climate encouraged by the success of anti-piracy, pro-commerce programs of the Imperium have led most companies to enjoy two decades of unprecedented success, and are making the Imperium the envy of interstellar governments near and far.

It is therefore in the best interests of most companies to work to further the growth of the Imperium as a means of increasing the potential growth of their own company. The expansion of the Imperium means new markets, new opportunities, and new sources of labor, raw materials and finished goods. In this respect, at the very least, the Imperium has been a success.

## Megacorporations of the Imperium

The following megacorporations are arguably the most significant ones in Year 0. They are poised to prosper with the further expansion of the Third Imperium in the decades and centuries to come. Even if they do not all serve as major players in the adventures of any particular adventure campaign, they should certainly be mentioned as stage dressing.

**Baldang Arms, LIC:** A manufacturer of small craft for civilian and military small craft (primarily military), Baldang Arms is currently undergoing financial difficulties due to the technical advances which have given Baldang's much larger competitor, Zhunastu Industries, a competitive edge. Recent rumors indicate that Baldang Arms may be in danger of a hostile takeover bid, possibly by InStarSpec

(to get into the small craft business), or perhaps by Ling Standard Products (for the same reason).

**Zhunastu Industries:** Surveyed at length elsewhere in this article.

**InStarSpec, LIC:** The primary manufacturer of military equipment of all sorts, InStarSpec is the premier weapons dealer, broker and manufacturer in the Imperium.

**Ling Standard Products:** A mining firm, Ling Products recently acquired Standard General Manufacturing, a major manufacturer of vehicles (combat and civilian) and electronics equipment. The new Ling Standard Products also manufactures computer systems and small arms, and maintains a strong presence in the mining and refining of vital ores within the Imperium.

**Makhidkarun:** Makhidkarun, another of the original Vilani Bureaus, specializes in the entertainment, and communications industries. The firm produces recordings of all types for entertainment and educational purposes, including books and magazines (paper, holocrystal, holoivid), and musical and video recordings and performances. Makhidkarun produces much of the equipment for storage and retrieval for such products.

Makhidkarun also operates a gourmet foods division, as well as a software division which has developed a reputation as a leader in the field of artificial intelligence research.

**Naasirka:** One of the three original Vilani Bureaus, Naasirka specializes in robotics and computer hardware and software, as well as consumer and commercial electronics. Naasirka is the primary manufacturer of sensor and communications equipment in the Imperium.

**Sharurshid:** Primarily a trading and speculation company, Sharurshid is one of the original Vilani Bureaus. Sharurshid specializes in luxury goods, including furs, rare wines, spirits, and other intoxicants, as well as imported foods, and *objets d'art*, originating both from within and outside of the Imperium.

**Sternmetal, LIC:** A mining conglomerate within the Imperium, Sternmetal is the dominant player in the mining and refining of ores of every conceivable variety within the Imperium.

**Tukera Lines:** One of the oldest corporations in the Sylean Federation, the Tukera family contends Tukera Lines to be older than the Federation itself. Tukera is the single largest shipping concern in the Imperium, with a large share of the market in both passenger and freight services. Tukera also operates an independent courier service, which is the principal competitor of CleonLines.

**Zirunkariish:** One of four Imperial megacorps of Vilani Origin, Zirunkariish was formed in Year -425 as a banking and investment company, which financed a great deal of the Vilani resurgence following first recontact with the Syleans. Formed by the Shiishuginsa family, Zirunkariish is the largest investment banking and insurance underwriting firm in the young Imperium.



## Smaller Corporations in Year 0

What defines a megacorporation? In the eyes of *Credits & Sense* magazine, it is a company with large diversity in product line, as well as an Imperium-wide span of operations and markets with appropriate size of sales and assets. There are literally thousands of small companies out there; but let's take a look at the likely megacorps of the next hundred years.

**Agadugashaam, LIC:** The largest buyer/reseller for the "ivory-hunting" trade within the Imperium. Agadashaam is famed as a buyer and auctioneer of *objets d'art* and artifacts, particularly those originating from pre-space-flight Vland, as well as the First and Second Imperiums. The scourge of museums, and serious archaeologists within the Imperium, Agadugashaam finances expeditions to recover lost artifacts, but more commonly buys them from private treasure hunters, then resells them at auction.

Agadugashaam has been accused repeatedly of encouraging private treasure hunters to wreck sites of historical significance on frontier worlds for the mere discovery of a few artifacts. So far however, Agadugashaam has managed to avoid legal trouble, largely as the result of an expert team of corporate lawyers.

**Agasaddan Importers, LIC:** An importer of the most delicate of cargoes, Agasaddan imports native flora and fauna from both inside and outside the Imperium. Agasaddan supplies zoological samples, research animals, pets, botanical samples, rare plants, and other items throughout the Imperium. It is most famous for its standing reward for the private discovery of a new species of animal life deemed suitable for import as pets, of Cr10,000 per species.

**BiodyneSys, LIC:** Premier Research and Applied Research company for genetic engineering in the Imperium. Currently seeking a contract with the Imperium regarding engineered species and human races for settlement of environmentally hostile worlds within and without the Imperium.

**CorViProCo, LIC:** An entertainment conglomerate which specializes in the production and financing of entertainment productions, which are often distributed by Makhidkarun as well as other entertainment companies. Recognized as the leader in its field, CorViProCo has recently purchased a talent development agency (renamed CorTalEnt), hoping to control both sides of the production picture.

**DaguMassilines, LIC:** Interface lines to a wide variety of pocket empires on the rimward and spinward edge of Core sector. Importer/exporter of art objects, manufactured goods, and raw materials. Now facing heavy competition with Tukera Lines, DaguMassilines banks its future on its ability to continue expanding into new markets in the coreward frontier areas of the Imperium.

**FrontMark, LIC:** A company that has become a real player in interstellar agribusiness within the Imperium. FrontMark has grown by offering farmers a set purchase price for their particular crops, in exchange for long-term exclusive contracts. Well-respected by the farmers whom

they serve and profit from, FrontMark has a virtual monopoly on the market of several key staple crops within the Imperium. *Credits & Sense* expect FrontMark to emerge as the newest Megacorp within a couple of years.

**Hortalez et Cie, LIC:** A Sylean banking and investment house, Hortalez et Cie is a young firm which has nonetheless made a name for itself as the primary financier of ship construction for the Imperial Navy. Recently opened an insurance house. Undoubtedly the number two investment banking firm in the Imperium, Hortalez is still dwarfed by the much larger Zirunkariish.

**InSysVee, LIC:** The largest manufacturer of paramilitary vehicles, particularly grav vehicles, in the Core sector, InSysVee has become the vendor of choice for a number of private security firms and the security departments of numerous large corporations. InSysVee has a reputation for designing equipment which emphasizes durability and ease of maintenance ahead of cutting edge technology.

**Kirgaasanakka Publishing:** A large publishing house based on Vland which enjoys (along with Makhidkarun) the status of having been charged with the publication of a series of volumes comprising the recovered works of the AAB. Kirgaasanakka is best known for providing low cost entertainment and educational titles for the lower classes. Kirgaasanakka is hyping itself as an emergent competitor to Makhidkarun in the field of entertainment and educational materials, although Kirgaasanakka doesn't have Makhidkarun's manufacturing base. Kirgaasanakka would be well served by a merger or buyout to accelerate financing of her main revenue producer, the AAB archive project.

**LishunLine, LIC:** Interface Line/Trading company with operations centered in the Coreward areas of the Imperium. Specializes in trading luxury goods, as well as being an emerging shipping company in the as yet untapped markets in Lishun sector. Referred to by *Imperial Investor* magazine as the "Tukera Lines of Lishun Sector."

**OmarFactors, LIC:** The single largest manufacturer/seller of survival and wilderness gear in the Core sector, which are sold through a chain of outlet stores. OmarFactors has a reputation for building durable, reliable equipment, and is respected by its competitors in the industry.

**Pharmacologique Fabrique, LIC:** The primary pharmaceutical manufacturer in the Imperium. Centered on Sylea, Pharmacologique is a spin-off from an ancient Terran firm, which has been in continual operation for some 2500 years. Pharmacologique specializes in immunobooster research, but has recently begun research into the development of anagathics.

**PsiAssist, LIC:** Premier manufacturer of psionic enhancement drugs in the Imperium. Currently the subject of a hostile take-over attempt by Pharmacologique.

**Rupee Weapon Systems, LIC:** The premier manufacturer of weapons control systems in the Imperium, Rupee is the holder of several vital patented fire-control-system technologies which give the Imperial Navy much of its cutting edge. Rupee has been the target of numerous merger offers, and hostile take-over attempts, most recently (and unsuccessfully) by Zhunastu Industries.

**Seeker Systems, LIC:** A starship customization company centered in Core. Seeker Systems is most famous for its line of ship modification components, including mechanical arms, fuel scoops and purification plants, mining lasers, and specialized modules for the standard modular cutter. Seeker got its name for its origins as a company converting early scout/courier ships to asteroid mining *Seeker* ships. Seeker also has a number of small contracts with the Scout Service for some of its more specialized components, and manufactures the standard survey ship sensor suites on Scout survey vessels.

**Silvasys, LIC:** Manufacturer of control console systems for ship positions, as well as a major manufacturer of inertial compensator and artificial gravity systems for starships and space stations. Recently became a primary supplier of inertial compensation systems to the Scout Service.

**StellarSekure, LIC:** An emerging private security firm within the Imperium, concentrated within the Core Sector. Manufacturer of security devices ranging from electronic surveillance and counter-surveillance apparatus, to small-arms, to body armor, to courier and security services. An emerging player in the security field.

**SylTalEnt, LIC:** The largest talent agency in the Imperium. Representing a number of major clients in virtually every field of the performing arts, SylTalEnt has a reputation for discovering and signing new acts regardless of cost, and has a rather strong reputation as a tough negotiator with holoivid and music production companies.

## The Imperial Moot

*"A Summary of the Noble Moot," Daibhidh Eilrig, Scientific Editor of the Moot Public Relations Newsletter, 007-0008.*

The Imperial Moot is the only deliberative body of the Third Imperium's government. In theory, the Moot includes all Imperial nobles of baronial or higher rank, but most nobles do not find it convenient to travel to Capital, and so many of those nobles attending hold proxy votes. Large blocks of these votes can be wielded by an influential noble.

**Origins and History of the Moot:** The Imperial Moot (commonly called just "the Moot") is the oldest of the institutions which form the Third Imperium. It has its origins in the Sylean Federation's Grand Senate—the legislative assembly of the old Federation. The Grand Senate was formed of the oldest and most powerful families within the Sylean Federation. From it, they deliberated and controlled the Sylean Federation with an iron grip, demanding absolute obedience from the member worlds.

When Cleon Zhunastu ascended to the Grand Senate upon the death of his father, the Grand Duke Felix, he realized that the Sylean Federation was stagnating—and the main reason for the stagnation was the death grip of the Grand Senate. The subsequent campaigns of the then Grand Duke Cleon to create the trade Federation which eventually became the Third Imperium have been more than amply documented elsewhere, but one of his first tasks was to set in place the plans for a new deliberative

assembly which would incorporate the most powerful of the families which made up the Grand Senate.

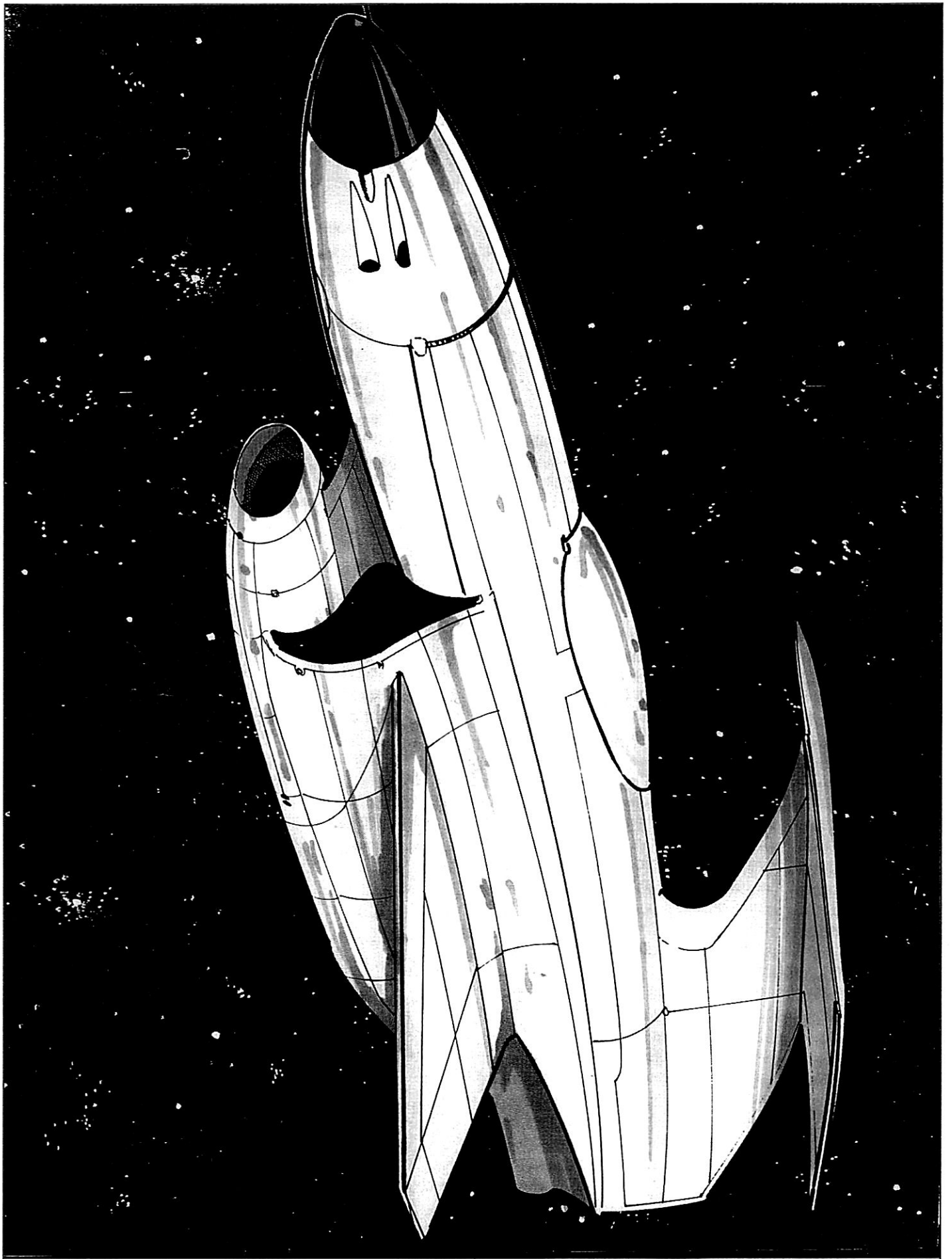
Through judicious use of diplomacy, the Grand Duke Cleon formed a small clique of close friends, all of whom were heads or heirs of most of the great families. Between them, they drafted the charter of Arlea, which determined the relationship between this new body and its Emperor. However, the Grand Duke Cleon and his friends could only guess at the potential difficulties in ruling an interstellar empire, especially one which would rapidly expand to encompass the inhabited worlds of both the Vilani empire and the Sylean Federation. This ignorance explains the initial simplicity of the charter. Paradoxically, for a document which would come to underpin such a vast interstellar government, this simplicity proved to be the charter's greatest asset. It gave the Moot absolute authority in two areas only: finance and law.

The Emperor was recognized by the charter as being above the Moot, and being the only authority able to grant or remove powers from noble families. When the Grand Duke Cleon was "persuaded" by the Grand Senate to ascend the Iridium Throne, he appointed the great families who had been signatories of the charter of Arlea to form the High Moot. Their first task was to reorganize and simplify the many noble orders and titles from all parts of the new Imperium (from Vland to Sylea) to form an order of nobility which would, in turn, form the peerage and the membership of the Moot.

**The Imperial Nobility:** The Third Imperium is not a democracy. Social Standing indicates not only the lifestyle and peer group for a citizen of the Imperium, but also the social weight an individual can throw around when he wants something done. But while noble status does accord an individual a special place in the Imperium, it also carries certain responsibilities, including limitations to prevent abuse of this power. The Peerage, or Imperial Nobility, is a narrow class of people at the upper strata of society who hold, either personally or through their family line, noble rank from the Emperor. It consists of nobles of all ranks above knights.

Collectively, the Peerage constitutes the Moot (even though not all nobles actually attend the Moot, or hold office there). Nobility is granted to an individual by the Emperor, and is held by the individual entirely at the Emperor's pleasure. Noble rank can be revoked by the Emperor, either personally or through the Moot. Reasons for such revocation include treason, murder, kidnapping, and extortion, as well as other offenses classed as "Imperial" (or High) Law. In such cases, the rank may then go to another member of the noble's family, lie dormant for the generation, or even be removed completely and either passed to a new family (displacing the former line), or be destroyed.

New nobles are created by issue of Letters Patent (letters of nobility) from the Emperor. Emperor Cleon has made it a habit to publish Letters Patent twice a year—in the Holiday List (issued on the first day of each new year) and in the Emperor's Birthday List (on the Emperor's birthday). Additional patents of nobility for political purposes or





special occasions can be published at other times, if necessary. Hereditary titles (baron and above—unless they are for political purposes, when they are not made hereditary) must additionally be confirmed by the Moot. Once confirmed by the Moot, a hereditary title continues to be passed down to succeeding generations. Titles need not pass through the first-born (in some parts of the Imperium, other methods of succession are used), and individuals with several titles may divide them among their children as they see fit.

**Types of Nobles:** There are three possible types of noble in the Third Imperium: Honor nobles, rank nobles, and high nobles.

Honor nobles (sometimes known, rather disparagingly, as “achievement” or “award” nobles) receive their patents from the Emperor for “heroism in the military, success in civil or commercial enterprise, or innovation and discovery in the sciences.” Only patents for knights, barons and marquis may be issued for achievement, and the patents for barons and marquis may be given with or without heredity. Honor nobles are often the real celebrities of the Third Imperium, and their noble rank is usually recognition of an already important status within their own field, or the Imperium at large.

Rank nobles are usually local nobles, serving in (or often running) system governments which do not merit the attention of a high noble (which see, below). Patents for rank nobles are typically hereditary and remain with families of local leaders from generation to generation. The sphere of influence of such nobles usually only encompasses one or two star systems. Although such nobles typically have little power outside their local sphere of influence, they are entitled to take their seats in the Moot and exercise their voting privileges.

Another, no less important, type of rank noble comprises ordinary citizens who hold Imperial office. Often, these nobles are administrators of worlds or territories with no formal Imperial representation. Because the title is tied to a position, these patents are never hereditary and carry no entitlement to seats or voting privileges in the Moot. These patents usually include a generous letter of pension (and the use of the title until death) to keep the individual comfortable when his term of office or career comes to an end.

The high nobility is the smallest segment of the peerage, consisting of members of the oldest and most powerful families in the Imperium. Patents for high nobility are made extremely rarely and are always hereditary (upon confirmation of the Moot). They always include a fief or feudal estate granted by a Letter of Enfeoffment. The high nobles directly administer Imperial policy or territories and are personal representatives of the Emperor. Members of the high nobility are trained from birth to lead, and they have enormous personal power to sustain the awesome responsibility of holding together an interstellar community. When the successor to a title cannot fulfill his duties, the noble family or its supporters can and will take (often drastic) steps to see responsibilities fulfilled.

In addition to the Imperial title and the fiefs which accompany it, the high noble frequently holds titles of lesser precedence which may include other local titles.

**Noble Ranks:** The lowest noble rank is knight and the highest is Emperor.

*Knight:* The lowest noble rank is the knight, which is awarded by the Emperor as an honorific rank in recognition of extreme heroism, achievement or service to the Imperium. As such, a knighthood is coveted by non-nobles and is seen as more attainable than membership in the peerage. A knighthood entitles the recipient the prefix “Sir” (some females prefer “Dame,” but such usage is generally considered obsolete) before the name and to suffix the initials of the order of knighthood after the name.

Knights are not members of the peerage and are thus not subject to all protocols. Knights instead belong to orders of knighthood and are awarded privileges according to the order. Each order has its own code (some lax, some stringent) and member knights are expected to abide by these codes. Less than half a dozen orders of knighthood exist within the Imperium, and while they are all technically equivalent in honor, they are generally accepted to have a distinct order or precedence. The orders of knighthood are listed below in their order of precedence (note that orders of knighthood marked with an asterisk have less than twenty members at Year 0, all of whom were members of the Imperial family, or high noble families).

An individual awarded a knighthood for service may also be awarded a small fief of land (generally not more than ten square kilometers) on a single world. Members of the peerage generally consider knights “separate but equal” members of the nobility, and it is considered a breach of protocol for a member of the peerage to treat a knight with disrespect.

The closest equivalent to knight in the Vilani nobility was the kiduunuuzii (literally “holder of special privileges”). This non-hereditary title was usually awarded for service at the higher ranks of the civil service (originally for the civil

Orders of Knighthood	
Order of the Imperial Sunburst	Knight Commander (KCIS*)
Order of The Cross of Arlea	Knight Grand Cross (KGCA*)
	Knight (KCA)
	Companion (CCA)
Order of Terra	Knight Commander (KCT)
	Knight (KT)
	Companion (CT)
Order of Vland	Knight Commander (KCV)
	Knight (KV)
	Companion (CV)
Order of Sylea	Knight Commander (KCS)
	Knight (KS)
	Companion (CS)

service only) or military where a higher title was not already possessed. When the Vilani became part of the Third Imperium, all kiduunuuzii became members of the Order of Vland, with specific criteria determining which rank within the order each individual kiduunuuzii assumed.

*Baron:* The second level of noble rank is the baron, which is the lowest level accorded membership in the peerage (and thus is able to take place in the Moot). Barons can be referred to in any one of several styles, including the use of prefixes to the surname (such as “von,” “haut,” or “hault”) and the title “Baron” (or “Baroness” for females).

An individual awarded a barony for service may also receive a fief of land on a single world (generally not more than one hundred square kilometers). When a barony includes a fief, the title is traditionally followed by the fief’s name (such as Baron Solvenos). Iishakku (literally “governor”) was the closest Vilani title to baron, although it included wider judicial and police powers than Imperial barons now possess. By virtue of their powers, the iishakku performed a role similar to an Imperial District Court Judge—and, in fact, on Vland their original role was as the chief executive of a region or large city.

*Count:* The third level of noble rank is the count, who is associated either with one important world, or two or three worlds within a subsector. Counts are referred to by their title, followed by the individual’s surname or by the name of one of the worlds within the county. An individual accorded a county may receive small fiefs of land on each of the worlds in their county, or one larger fief on one world (generally not more than ten thousand square kilometers).

When it was created, the Imperial Count replaced the Vilani shakkanakhu (literally “provincial governor”), and the Sylean earls and viscounts. Vilani counts still tend to use the title shakkanakhu, especially in the area of the old Vilani “core” (primarily Vland, Lishun and parts of Corridor and Dagudashaag) and, where the title of count is used in these older sectors, shakkanakhu is commonly used as a subsidiary title—often being given to the heir to the main title when he reaches majority. In the early years of the new Imperium, former Sylean earls and viscounts tended to be very jealous of their status in relation to each other (a viscount traditionally outranked an earl), and a great many feuds and duels were caused as a result of this rationalization.

*Marquis:* The fourth level of noble rank is the marquis. A marquis is usually associated with a group of worlds (generally including a large and important one with a good starport). The title consists of the world name after the title, as in the Marquis of Kosseff. An individual accorded a marquisate may receive a fief of land on a single world (generally not more than one thousand square kilometers).

The sarriiu (the actual usage title) was the Vilani equal of the Imperial marquis, and was normally found as a governor in control of a number of shakkanakhu. Historically, on Vland there were never more than fifty sarriiu, and although expansion into space increased the number dramatically, they are still often referred to as The Fifty. Their

role was important as they formed one of the two major assemblies of nobles, the so-called Dagjia (Council of Fifty) that assisted the kings in ruling Vland.

There are, of course, many more than fifty sarriiu in the Third Imperium, and the title has largely been replaced by marquis, except in the oldest core sectors of Vland. Even there, it is more common as a title conferred to one’s heir on his coming of age, rather than the main title of nobility—however, it is still not uncommon to hear of a marquis being referred to as sarriiu. Interestingly enough, many worlds have adopted the term The Fifty as their anglic/local term for “high society.”

*Duke:* The fifth level of noble rank is the duke, who is associated with a subsector. The noble is referred to by the title followed by “of” and the subsector name. The power of the duke depends on circumstances and the situation within the sector, as well as the other dukes in the sector. A duke receives a fief of land on a single world, generally not more than one hundred thousand square kilometers.

The Vilani equivalent of a duke was the “saarpuhii” (the closest translation is “Under King”). The saarpuhii are the surviving remnants of the several smaller kingdoms that had been gradually incorporated into the world-spanning kingdom that had finally led the Vilani on way to the stars. Historically there were fifteen such under-kings on Vland, and they belonged to the Bit Reduttii (Council of Fifteen) which was one of the two major assemblies of nobles that assisted the kings in ruling Vland. As the Vilani expanded off-planet, the rank became associated with the ruler of several worlds within a sector or subsector—and at least some of the old saarpuhii families made the transition to such greatly increased power. Almost completely extinct, the saarpuhii still exist in only two major domains, one in Vland Sector and one (strangely) in Zarushagar. There are actually many worlds where one (or more) of the planetary noble houses has the title, but these are considered to be the equal only of a count in modern Imperial usage because of their reduced circumstances.

*Archduke:* In the modern Imperium, titles above duke (with the exception of the Emperor and the Imperial Household) are largely an anachronism. In practice, however, there were a great many Sylean grand dukes, and enough Vilani apkallu kibrat arban (literally “Great Lords of the Four Quarters”—normally abbreviated to apkallu kibrat, or simply kibrat) to make the abolition of their titles troublesome. To counter this, Emperor Cleon created the purely honorary title of archduke.

Imperial Archdukes are non-voting members of the Moot, primarily responsible for the day-to-day running of the Moot while it is in session. The title of archduke is not hereditary, and upon the death of the final current bearer, the title will fall into disuse—continuing to exist only as something for future ducal households to aspire to, and to be awarded at the whim of the Emperor. Heirs to the archducal households are automatically elevated to dukes upon reaching the age of majority, and can immediately take their seats in the Moot. In this way, archdukes retain a great deal of the influence they enjoyed before the Imperium’s founding.

*Grand Prince(ess)*: Imperial titular designation of the heir to the Iridium Throne. Under Imperial law, the eldest surviving son or daughter of the Emperor will become heir to the throne upon reaching the age of twelve. Elaborate ceremonies will then confer the title of Grand Prince (or Grand Princess) on the heir and proclaim the information throughout the Imperium.

*Emperor*: Above the range of noble ranks is the Emperor and the Imperial Household. The Emperor is the ultimate object of oaths of loyalty and fealty throughout the Third Imperium.

**Powers of the Moot**: Technically, the Moot is supreme in the Imperium, second only to the Emperor. But in fact, its power is surprisingly limited. The Moot has the power to frame legislation, whether proposed by the Emperor or not, but all legislation passed by the Moot must then be signed by the Emperor before it becomes law. The Moot also has the power to confirm Emperors and other nobles to their posts. Under certain circumstances, a noble (and the noble's entire family) can opt to be tried by the Moot. These circumstances include, but are not restricted to: high treason, sedition against the Imperial Household or the Moot, or murder of another noble. The Moot's powers in such circumstances are extreme, and there is no avenue of appeal once the Moot has rendered judgment. Finally, the Moot may, by a majority decision of *all* its members (not just those sitting or voting) opt to dissolve the Imperium.

It is alleged that this last power is intended more to keep the nobles in line than to act as a threat to the Emperor, for all the noble houses have the majority of their wealth invested in the Imperium, and its dissolution would be a terrible blow for them all. Thus, should one family become a significant disruptive influence within the Moot, the other houses can use the threat of ending the Imperium and thus throwing the entire sector into chaos, to encourage them back into line.

**Voting in the Moot**: Although any attending member of the peerage may address the Moot when it is in session, voting rights are rigorously controlled. The Moot is divided into two parts, high nobles (dukes and marquis) and lesser nobles (counts and barons). The Emperor and archdukes do not hold voting rights in the Moot. High nobles are accorded individual voting status, according to their rank and power within the Imperium. Lesser nobles do not have individual voting rights, but belong to the "Great Circle" of the Imperium. The "Great Circle" subdivides the Imperium into administrative units, each of which is accorded a specific number of votes, according to its value or power within the Imperium. Generally, units of the "Great Circle" represent counties (groups of worlds under a count), but specific groupings (for example, Imperial protectorates) may form a unit for voting purposes. Any lesser noble who attends the Moot may use the votes for their unit of the "Great Circle," or may grant them as a proxy vote to any other noble present at that time. Any "Great Circle" votes may only be used by nobles representing the appropriate unit, or by nobles granted proxy. Free "Great Circle" votes are never counted.

Admission of new nobles (even lesser nobles) to full voting status is by a majority vote of all the high nobles of the Moot (not just those sitting or voting). Expulsion from full voting status is by a majority vote of all the high nobles present in the Moot at the time of the vote.

In point of fact, there is one more level of decision-making within the Moot. It is not widely publicized, and many citizens within the Imperium, and even members of the Moot, will never hear of it. It is the Arlea Committee, comprising the heads of the original nine great houses which signed the charter of Arlea (including the head of the Zhunastu house, Emperor Cleon). The Arlea Committee is the real power in the Imperium. Any decisions they make are "suggested" to members of the Moot to raise in session. All decisions made by the Committee are passed.

### **AAB: The Vilani Repository of All Knowledge**

*An analysis of the AAB structure by Plesha Joshew, Third Assistant Researcher for the AAB at Vland.*

Vland, the Vilani home world, contains many artifacts of Vilani society, culture, and former preeminence. Perhaps chief among these is the AAB (Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin, loosely translated as the Repository of All Knowledge), a series of related structures which contain more accumulated knowledge than any other single location within known space.

**Physical Data**: The AAB is located on a broad, flat area just outside of the capital city, Iltrest. It was originally to be located within the city proper, but was instead erected in its current location when the accumulated materials were shown to require greater space than what was available within the crowded city.

Although the repository clearly began as a single structure, additional structures have been added over time. As Vilani explorers, traders, archaeologists, and historians brought back new knowledge of cultures, worlds, and systems located throughout the First Imperium, the necessity for ever more storage space, coupled with increasingly sophisticated storage methods, has ensured that the AAB will never be truly complete, inside or out. Currently, there are seven main buildings (each with anywhere from eight to thirty levels), as well as twenty-six subsidiary structures. Each is connected to one or more of the others by a series of tunnels and above-ground walkways, forming an interconnected series of structures which spans more than one hundred acres.

**History**: The Vilani people are meticulous in their storage of knowledge. Even prior to their ascendancy as an interstellar power, they had accumulated more knowledge than any other single culture, even to the present day. This is not only because they are meticulous recorders of data; the Vilani also have a great respect for knowledge, and will rarely willfully destroy knowledge-carrying materials. Contrast this with the record of the Terrans, who routinely purged the records of not only conquered enemies, but also those of nominally allied cultures and groups which held beliefs different from their own!



Soon after the First Imperium was founded, the Vilani began accumulating knowledge about the societies, technology, and planets of the cultures they came into contact with. Over time, a governing board calling itself the "Trustees" formed to oversee the many tasks associated with acquiring, storing, and maintaining recorded knowledge from all worlds within known space. The Trustees set up a system by which agents would roam the space lanes, acquiring records (or copies of them where acquiring the original was impossible) and transporting them back to the AAB. Of course, all of this acquisition eventually resulted in the many expansions which have occurred to the AAB in the past, and which continue even today.

Throughout the First and Second Imperiums, the AAB maintained branch locations on most Imperial worlds with starport types A, B or C. These branches had current copies of the AAB database, as well as original copies of locally produced works. The Long Night destroyed this library system, although some individual branches (as well as the AAB itself) survived.

A crisis threatened the very existence of the AAB during the Rule of Man. At that time, there were several movements within the new ruling government to do away with the AAB. One faction held that the materials should be confiscated and moved to the Solomani capital, while many other groups wanted to go through the records and purge all those which held "dangerous" knowledge.

The Trustees took action to defend the AAB by causing the formation of the Guardians, a group of highly trained professionals whose job it was to defend the Vilani storehouse of knowledge. The AAB has retained its Guardians to this day. This small but elite force is composed of people from all walks of life, but many are former mercenaries whose principles align strongly with those of the Trustees.

Fortunately, this show of strength and resolve helped to deter any government-sponsored action against the AAB. However, individual groups took it upon themselves to perform raids of various sorts. This emphasized the need to maintain and expand the AAB's hastily-formed defensive forces.

Although the Rule of Man passed long ago, threats still arise occasionally. The Trustees and Guardians must remain ever vigilant in its defense. The research agents, who were formerly used exclusively for the acquisition of knowledge, have become part of the Guardians' Organization, and a select few are now also tasked with uncovering plots against the AAB by those who wish to appropriate or destroy the information contained within it.

Today, the AAB remains the preeminent storehouse of knowledge within known space, and it continues to grow. New wings are being added almost continuously, and old records are being converted to storage in newer, more space-efficient formats. Old branches are being re-contacted, and new ones are being founded. The most recent development in the ongoing growth of the AAB is the newly won contract to provide library data to the Travellers' Aid Society, which distributes the data throughout the Imperium in a heavily protected format. This is another

example of how the Trustees, assisted by the Guardians, ensure that all who desire it may have access to the greatest storehouse of knowledge ever known to exist.

**Visiting the AAB:** The main branch of the AAB is a popular stop for nobles and the wealthy, in addition to being a favored facility among researchers and historians. It remains open to the public continuously, and intelligent beings of all types are to be found within the various structures, day or night.

When visiting the AAB, a traveler's first contact with the staff will involve one of the guards posted at the single entrance to the facility. Each visitor is thoroughly searched for weapons and other dangerous items. A ticket is presented so that items so confiscated can be returned upon exit from the facility. Finally, an entrance fee of Cr10 is assessed, and the traveler is then granted entry.

Upon entering the AAB's main building, visitors are greeted with the sight of a facility that is thoroughly modern, juxtaposed with carefully catalogued and securely stored documents of every form, age, and place of origin.

Any visitor may access the computerized records, which consist of approximately ninety percent of the knowledge contained in the facility. However, many of the documents in computerized format also exist within the facility as physical objects—books, scrolls, tablets, and other low-tech storage media. Access to these is restricted, and normally allowed only to legitimate historians and researchers (and even then only for a fee—typically Cr100 per hour). The AAB does not allow materials to be taken outside the building—they must be referenced while in the facility.

The computerized facilities are fully indexed and referenced. Anyone with skill of Computer-1 or better can use the system with no task roll required. However, attempting to search for a specific piece of knowledge requires the use of Research skill. The referee should determine the difficulty of the task based on the specific item the character is searching for, but the task should usually be an uncertain one (see page 50 of the *TRAVELLER* rule book).

### **An Alternative View of the AAB**

*A political statement by Lewes Poshahj, member of Terrans for Truth.*

Although the AAB attempts to portray its Trustees as paragons of virtue, concerned only with saving civilization from the savages, this is absolutely false. I know for a fact that those ivory-tower intellectuals have been stealing irreplaceable documents for centuries. These include religious writings, governmental documents, and important artistic works. They send their agents throughout known space to track down such documents and steal them!

In short, the AAB is not under attack by extremists bent on destroying important artifacts of civilization. Rather, the legitimate owners of those documents are merely trying to recover their property! The hypocrisy of the Trustees must be stopped.

**Opportunities for Adventure at the AAB:** The Vilani Repository of All Knowledge presents opportunities for all types of people. For instance, while the AAB welcomes the donation of materials that have not already been acquired, the trustees have been known to pay well for rare, difficult-to-acquire original documents. A list of the most wanted documents is always available from the research department, and individual patrons of the facility may have their own, personal lists.

Alternatively, those skilled in guardianship, exploration, espionage, or other such tasks may find employment with the Guardians, for long- or short-term assignments. Those who are seeking such employment may apply at the Guardian office located in the main structure.

Another opportunity for employment within the AAB is to offer one's services as a researcher. The vast store of knowledge is daunting to even the finest of researchers, so there is always the opportunity for freelancing as a junior researcher to one of the many individuals seeking specific knowledge or working on a scientific paper. While such employment tends to be short-lived, it can often lead to interesting adventures as the quest for knowledge leads beyond the AAB, to the universe at large.

Those who are skilled in public performance can also pick up a few extra credits while at the AAB. There are several moderately sized rooms wherein one can read poetry, stage a play, or otherwise engage in the fine art of public entertainment. While the Trustees regulate this activity and require that all such entertainers schedule a time for their performance, the AAB does allow ticket sales (keeping a portion for themselves, of course), making the engagement potentially profitable. However, as part of their agreement with such performers, the AAB insists on keeping a sight-and-sound record of the performance for its archives.

Of course, adventures concerning the AAB need not be limited to that institution itself. Rather, the AAB can serve as the starting point for other adventures. Within its vast storehouse of knowledge, there lie numerous secrets that, when discovered, can send the player characters after such things as lost treasures, moth-balled starships, ancient technologies and alien races, just to name a few.

**Organizational Structure:** The following is a list of the Organizational elements that make up the AAB, along with a short description of the duties and responsibilities of each. The reader may find it helpful to refer to the AAB Organizational Chart while reading this section.

**Trustees:** All Trustees are elected by the unanimous consent of the other members of the Trusteeship. Some of the Trustees have worked their way up from the Agents or Guardians, while others were elected to the Trusteeship after making important contributions of money or materials to the AAB. All have very clearly demonstrated their alle-

giance to the organization prior to becoming Trustees. Most have very strong political ties to persons at the highest levels of the Imperium.

The responsibilities of the Trustees include overseeing the Guardians and Librarians, setting overall organizational policy, and ensuring that the organization adheres to its mission. Their duties include maintaining political liaisons which will assist in the continued success of the organization, acquiring moneys for the organization, and providing direction to the Guardians and Librarians.

**Guardians:** Guardians are recruited from the ranks of the Agents, as well as directly from the public. Their responsibility is to ensure the safety of the AAB's data and personnel. Duties include guarding individual locations and items, directing Agents, and re-contacting branch locations which lost contact during the Long Night.

**Agents:** Agents are recruited directly from the public. Their responsibility is for the location and acquisition of new items. This generally includes the legal acquisition of such items, but may (unofficially) also include illegal activities where local short-sightedness interferes with the good of the interstellar community.

**Librarians:** Librarians are typically recruited from the ranks of the Researchers, although some Clerks are promoted to this position. They are responsible for managing the main and branch locations of the AAB. Their duties include overseeing the Researchers and Clerks, and implementing the directives of the Trustees.

**Researchers:** Staff Researchers are typically recruited from outside the organization, but sometimes Clerks are promoted to this position. Researchers are responsible for understanding the works collected at the AAB branch to which they are assigned. Most Researchers specialize in one specific area (e.g. Vilani Culture, Jump Space Theories, etc.) but some Researchers choose to be generalists. Their duties include cross-referencing existing works, locating references to works not located at any AAB facility (so that Agents can then be sent to find and acquire them), and providing capsule descriptions of the various works within their specialty, for inclusion in the search database. Researchers have also been known to assist library customers in research projects (for a fee, of course).

**Clerks:** Clerks are typically drawn directly from the public. They are responsible for interacting with and assisting customers, performing accounting functions, and doing the rest of the grunt work necessary to keep things running smoothly.

**Branch Location Structure:** During the First Imperium, AAB locations were maintained throughout Imperial space, and that continued during the Rule of Man. However, the onset of the Long Night resulted in a communications break-down between the AAB on Vland and the branch locations. While this was not a catastrophe for all locations, none survived entirely unchanged.

### AAB Organizational Chart

Trustees | +-----+-----+ || Guardians Librarians || Agents | +-----+-----+ || Researchers ||| Clerical Staff



## The AAB Yesterday and Today

The AAB has always served primarily as a vast library dedicated to the protection of knowledge. But during the height of the First Imperium, it also served a darker purpose—the covert enforcement of Vilani technology-suppression laws. Vland's vast empire maintained its iron grip on its many subject races (human and non-human) by rigidly controlling access to technology through a web of patent, trademark, and copyright laws. Those individuals and companies who dared to investigate new phenomena on their own almost always found that the technology had previously been explored elsewhere in the empire, and patented (often by some quasi-governmental bureau or another). Because patent violation was treated as a criminal act, it brought on ruthless retribution by law enforcement and judicial tribunals. It was not uncommon for individuals to lose their wealth and freedom for patent violations, and the government evidence usually came from the archives of the AAB.

Most of the branches shared the fate of their host world: If the world regressed severely, the AAB did not survive; if the world was able to maintain itself at a reasonable level of technology, the AAB branch continued to be a local source and collection point for knowledge. Usually, the surviving branches became very focused on preserving artifacts of local origin. Some few became the keepers of the flame of knowledge for their worlds, as civilization regressed around them. A great many such were sealed to prevent depredations from the growing savagery of the general populace, their staff members sacrificing their own lives in protecting knowledge for future generations.

Since the founding of the Third Imperium, the AAB has sent a few Guardians and Agents to nearby worlds to recontact the old branches of the AAB, in order to determine their current status. Surviving branches are then reincorporated into the AAB, and the flow of information resumes. Otherwise, the local situation is assessed to determine whether re-establishment of the branch is possible. If so, experienced individuals are brought in to run the new branch, while locals are recruited to fill the lower positions.

Now, with the dawn of the Third Imperium, the AAB often serves a new, unintended purpose. Explorers visiting new worlds sometimes find AAB complexes still intact after two thousand years of Long Night. These complexes, built to withstand both natural disaster and human assault, have stood unopened for centuries. Explorers who can puzzle their way past the intact safeguards find archives of print material, electronic media, and even functioning information processors. In addition, the archives contain detailed astrogation data (although two thousand years out of date); historical data on the thousands of worlds that once comprised the First Imperium; and sociological and anthropological data on the sapient, fauna, and flora which inhabited the worlds of that Empire. For those who can bypass the security systems and safeguards, there are trade secrets, suppressed technology, and insights into areas of science that remain otherwise unknown even to many high-tech societies.

Currently, there are branches on many worlds with Class B starports in the Vland sector and its adjacent, formerly Imperial sectors. And, of course, there is a branch on the only world currently known to have maintained a Class A starport, Sylea, as well as those worlds within what was the Sylean Federation, now the core of the Third Imperium. Each branch maintains a database that contains a copy of the one on Vland.

Outside of the circle centered on Vland and that centered on Sylea, however, the fate of other AAB branches remains unknown at present. Undoubtedly, some have survived the Long Night, but with no knowledge of how things fare on other worlds, while others likely have been sacked by local pocket empires seeking an edge over their enemies, and still others remain sealed like tombs awaiting scholars or thieves to plunder their contents.

To determine whether an operating or inactive branch exists on a given world, throw two dice on the AAB Branch Presence Table, below. Apply these rolls only to worlds that were members of the First and Second Imperiums.

### AAB Branch Presence Table

Starport Type 2D Roll	B	C	D	E	X
2	none	none	none	none	none
3	none	none	none	none	none
4	inactive	none	none	none	none
5	active	none	none	none	none
6	active	inactive	none	none	none
7	active	active	none	none	none
8	active	active	none	none	none
9	active	active	inactive	none	none
10	active	active	inactive	none	none
11	active	active	active	inactive	none
12	active	active	active	active	none

DM +1 for each of: Pop 9+, TL A+.



Adventure possibilities within the Third Imperium during its dawning years are multitudinous. With the expansion of the fledgling empire comes incredible opportunities for motivated individuals to explore frontiers, shape the development of worlds, amass fortunes, establish their own minor empires, dabble in politics, work as agents of various organizations, or experience the gamut of these possibilities. In this chapter, the *TRAVELLER* referee will find rules and resources for making such possibilities a reality. A great deal of information is given here concerning the running of political adventures in particular, but examples are also given for other sorts of adventure possibilities within Milieu 0.

## Political Adventures

In a loose sense, all roleplaying is political to one degree or another. Players in a group are each trying constantly to get their opinion or plan heard, and possibly acted upon in preference to those of their companions. However, in normal *TRAVELLER* adventures this political activity is secondary to the main activity of carrying out the adventure mission. Most *TRAVELLER* groups tend to shy away from actively political games, perhaps seeing them as too difficult or limited in scope. Many prefer the high adventure of the *TRAVELLER* frontier, exploring ancient artifacts and travelling from world to world, doing a little business wherever it occurs. But there is no reason why a political game should be any less fun than a game based upon exploration or trading. (Well, there is one: you should always tailor your *TRAVELLER* games to your players' tastes.)

Political roleplaying suits the tastes of players who prefer subtlety and intrigue; a carefully chosen word here, a half truth there, these are the tools of the political player. The key to any roleplaying game, not just *TRAVELLER*, is conflict. For the players to be challenged, there must be an element of conflict which touches their characters' lives. It may be only a rival trader trading down the same Main as them, or perhaps instead a mercenary group fighting a war where the players want to go. One of the most exciting and interesting forms of conflict (if the sales of political thrillers is any indicator) is the political arena.

### The Politics of Push, Pull, Gimmick, and Enigma:

In purely political games, many of the aspects of normal *TRAVELLER* adventures are missing—there are no patrons, for example. However, many of the aspects of *TRAVELLER* adventures discussed in the *TRAVELLER* rule book (pages 162 to 164)—the push, the pull, the gimmick and the enigma—still apply.

*The Political Gimmick:* The first gimmick, naturally enough, is the characters' role in society. In a political campaign, the characters should be nobles, in an atmosphere where that does not necessarily guarantee them deference. On the contrary, they are in a very strictly stratified environment, where everyone's relative status and influence is measured against everyone else's. The characters should also be titular heads of their noble households (which, in some cases, can be vast), with all the familial duties that entails. The other main gimmick is the character's influence, within his own noble strata. All characters have a certain amount of influence which colors the behavior of other nobles (not just of their own rank to

them). Other gimmicks (of whatever nature) can be introduced into the campaign, as required, but should fit in with the characters position.

*The Political Push:* The primary push throughout the political campaign is the day-to-day business of the Moot. Votes (large and small) demand the character's attention. Committees and other behind-the-scenes political activity will often claim the character's time. And there is always the ever-present social structure of the nobility to be kept track of (and heaven help the characters if they use the wrong form of address, or fail to show deference to a social superior). The activities of the Moot will periodically throw up deadlines for the characters to work within (perhaps they must achieve a specific objective before the Moot meets to vote upon it).

A secondary, but no less important, push concerns the other player characters in the group. Properly used, the influence rules (see below) should keep the each member of the group working to maintain or even improve their relative position within the group.

*The Political Pull:* Pulls are, of course, best left to the individual referee to devise. Some players will relish the political cut and thrust of the Moot, never looking for an overall goal, while other players may require something definite at which to aim (the signing of a charter, or an Imperial Edict). As always, the referee should discuss with the players before the campaign starts what kind of adventures they want to play.

*The Political Enigma:* The enigma is also best left to the individual referee (although some possible enigmas have been mentioned elsewhere in this book). The best approach is probably to have several small enigmas, each of which bears on some of the characters' goals.

**Influence:** Influence is a measure of a noble's status relative to other nobles of the same rank. It indicates how well known and respected the noble is outside his immediate sphere of control. In a political campaign, it serves as an extra characteristic for characters. Nobles with a higher Influence rating tend to attract proxy votes more often than their peers with lower Influence. They also find themselves being involved more in committees and other activities peripheral to the main business of the Moot. Among nobles, then, the Influence rating is often used in place of Social Status.

Influence rating is not a static value. In practice, Influence is gained and lost according to the noble's actions and decisions. The rating of Influence is only used when you are playing a politically based *TRAVELLER* game.





In other types of *TRAVELLER* adventures, it is not used (if a player character with a Influence rating moves to a non-political *TRAVELLER* game, the rating is not lost, but neither does it fluctuate according to these rules).

Influence may be recorded after Social Status in the character's UPP (for example, Baron Dawlri of Aultan has a Influence of 7—his UPP would look like: 695BAC-7-0).

Noble characters begin the game with 1D Influence. It will fluctuate according to the actions and decisions made by the character, but it cannot go lower than 1 or higher than 15.

In situations where a character is exercising initiative and making decisions, he will be in a position to increase or decrease his Influence. When such initiative is exercised, the referee should take note of the success or failure of the decision. If it succeeded, the character may increase in Influence. But by the same token, if it fails the character may decrease in Influence.

When success is achieved on such an action, roll 2D6. If the result is greater than or equal to the character's current Influence score, the character increases his Influence by one point. Note that the higher the character's current influence score is, the harder it is to make an impression on his peers.

By the same token, if failure had occurred, roll 2D6. If the result is less than to the character's current Influence score, the character decreases his Influence by one. Note that the higher the character's current Influence, the more visible his decisions are and the easier it is for him to lose Influence with a poor decision.

In some respects, low-Influence nobles have it easy, because they are not subject to the same intense scrutiny that their peers and betters are, and the penalties for making mistakes are correspondingly smaller, while the opportunities for self-aggrandizement are much greater.

Influence advances should be fairly rare, and in general should be tied to crucial points in an adventure. If it is obvious that one noble character has "come through" and made an important decision or choice which has changed the course of the game, then the roll for an Influence advance can be made. Also remember that Influence is tied to the character's (and by extension, the player's) personality and ability to make strong decisions—not to blind luck—and the referee should keep that in mind.

Used correctly, these Influence rules should motivate the players to assume the roles of nobles within the Moot more effectively. Ambitious players, eager to rise in Influence, will tend to act with greater initiative, striving to shine and be noticed by taking chances and making controversial decisions. Equally, some players will quickly realize that it is possible to subtly sabotage a fellow player's chances of success, resulting in a loss of Influence by that player's character, and perhaps causing a shift of power within the group. That is the ultimate aim of these Influence rules in a political campaign.

Leadership of a group of player characters is always held by the character with the highest Influence rating, no matter how incapable the character (or the player) might turn out to be. The referee will quickly find such a group

duplicating, on a smaller scale, the chaotic structure of the Moot. Cooperation will be necessary if the player characters are to achieve any goals at all as a group. But at the same time, ambition and factionalism will conspire to pull the group in different directions, leading to divisive and contradictory actions that will make the game more challenging for the players!

**Reactions:** Reactions are used as a guide by the referee to the probable reactions of NPCs to the player characters. The following table and modifiers replace those in the *TRAVELLER* rule book, for political campaigns only). Reactions are rolled for under all the same circumstances as described in the *TRAVELLER* rule book. In addition, reactions are rolled when the situation involves the uncertainty between nobles of different ranks.

This table is similar to the standard table, although some results are different, and a new set of reaction modifiers is used. Each time a roll is required, the referee should roll 2D and apply the appropriate modifiers.

### Political Reaction Table

#### 2D Reaction

- 2- Hostile. The NPC will prepare an attack on the PC later.
- 3 Hostile. The NPC will offer the PC a duel.
- 4 Hostile. The NPC will offer the PC a duel on 7+.
- 5 Hostile. The NPC will offer the PC a duel on 11+.
- 6 Hostile. The NPC may offer the PC a duel (subject to the PC's subsequent actions).
- 7 Unreceptive.
- 8 Noncommittal.
- 9 Interested.
- 10 Intrigued.
- 11 Responsive.
- 12+ Enthusiastic.

All throws (including 2 and 12) are subject to die modifiers.

**Reaction throw DMs:** (Character is the individual consulting the table; Encounter is the individual reacting according to the table).

#### Character:

per own two levels of diplomacy +1  
per encounter's level of diplomacy +1

#### Encounter:

is a higher rank noble +2  
per character's level of Leadership +1  
per character's level of Carousing +1

#### Other Modifiers:

plus or minus the difference in noble rank  
(if equal, plus or minus the difference in Influence)

The referee may institute other DMs on this table, as required.



**Methods Of Resolving Disputes:** Nobles have two legal methods of resolving disputes open to them: dueling and Imperial Law; although many nobles (particularly former Sylean nobles) still occasionally favor assassination as a political tool.

*Dueling:* Among nobles of all ranks, dueling is by far the most popular response to provocation. Traditionally, duels were to first blood, although it is no longer uncommon for dueling to be to unconsciousness—or even death—if the provocation is deemed to warrant it. In Imperial Law, if someone dies as a result of a duel, the surviving party is held to be not guilty of any charge of murder, providing all the forms have been properly followed.

For a duel to be legal, a formal challenge must be issued (and accepted, obviously) in the presence of no less than two independent witnesses. The duel must then take place within two standard days at a place agreed by both parties. The challenged party gets to choose the weapons used in the duel, although it is rare to choose any other weapon than a fencing foil. However, if foils are chosen, and if both nobles agree, they may choose to use practice foils (–3 to damage rolls) to prolong the duel.

At the duel, in addition to the two characters actually dueling, there must be the following persons: a referee, to control the duel and to make sure it is conducted fairly; a “second” for each character, to hold his cape and replacement foil (or other weapons, depending upon that chosen), and generally offer encouragement. A “second” is also honor-bound to fight in place of the character he supports if, for whatever reason, that character is unable to duel at the appointed time (usually due to illness, although it has been known for a character not to arrive at the duel due to a sudden attack of cowardice).

The Moot has set aside a dueling arena within the Moot for fencing practice, and for the resolution of duels. All duels held on Moot ground must be held in the arena, and must be resolved using fencing foils. (Dueling nobles must not be armored.) The Moot expressly forbids any dueling on Moot grounds outside the arena.

*Assassination:* Assassination was a favored political tool of noble families in the days of the Sylean Grand Senate. Of course, many nobles sitting in the Moot are descendants of those same families, so it should come as no surprise that assassination has not completely fallen into disuse (although it is considerably more difficult than it once was).

Assassination is strictly controlled by a complex set of customs and practices. Assassination attempts are only permitted against the head of a noble household, and must be carried out in a way which will not cause injury or excessive distress to any other member of the targeted household. Only one assassination attempt is permitted and, should it fail, the targeted house is assumed to be proven innocent of the grievance which gave rise to the assassination attempt.

*Imperial Law:* Any noble household can bring a grievance against any other noble household before a select committee of no less than six dukes currently sitting in the Moot. The committee then has the power to investigate

and pass judgment on the grievance. The powers of punishment open to this committee are draconian (up to, and including, the execution of an entire noble household and the expunging of their names from the Imperial histories), and it even has the power to find against the house which brought the grievance and punish them instead of, or as well as, the accused house. For this reason, this form of resolving a dispute is rarely used.

**Running a Political Campaign:** The following material is written with the Moot in mind, although it would be a simple matter for the referee to set a political campaign in a smaller district, pocket empire, or planetary governing body. Before the game can begin, the referee has to prepare the campaign. This is good practice for any campaign, of course, but it is vital in a political campaign. The referee must:

- Consider the individual factions within the government. For example, the Moot contains the usual mix of conservatives, liberals and expansionists. It also contains Vilani and Solomani factions, each agitating for their own interests; and several single-issue groups. Note that these factions are not mutually exclusive—characters can belong to more than one faction, as long as the factions they belong to are not in direct opposition. (For example, while it would be hard to justify a liberal conservative, a Solomani conservative would not be unlikely.)
- Decide what is going on in the surrounding area, which the government may be involved in, or become involved in. The ongoing war with the Chanestin, when the Imperium is formed, is an example of a situation which can be turned into adventure possibilities. (Perhaps the player characters could be sent as a diplomatic mission to the Chanestin peace talks.)
- Decide what is going on which may cause problems within the government. In the early years of the Third Imperium, the introduction of Vilani nobles, with their strange language, titles and customs, and their amalgamation with Sylean noble families into a “unified Moot” (and all the redrawing of factional lines) was the single most important thing on most Imperial nobles minds.
- Decide what the situation is on the player characters’ home planets. The player characters may be weeks away from home, even by the fastest means of transport. Because of this, even the smallest political dissent at home can assume inflated proportions, because the noble never knows when a situation might blow up and become something requiring his personal attention.
- Generate non-player character nobles (some specific, with names and backgrounds, and some generic as “fillers” or one-use characters) for the PCs to deal with on a regular basis. Even in the earliest days of the Moot there were far too many nobles for even the most dedicated referee to detail them all. The most important thing in a political game is the PC group. The PCs must all be created equal (e.g. they should all be of one noble rank—all Barons, or all Counts for example)

to allow the Influence rules to “guide” the players in playing their characters. However, the referee should beware of treating the PCs solely as a group—often in roleplaying it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking of the player characters as “the party,” as if the party were a single-minded, multipurpose creature, and not a group of individuals. Player characters will each have their own ideas and agendas.

*The Case of the False Heir:* A young noble heir arrives at the Moot to claim his inheritance. However, the noble is an impostor from another planetary noble house, passing himself off as the heir to the title. Perhaps one of the player characters recognizes him, or perhaps one of the players characters knows the true heir. The question is: What has the impostor done with the true heir?

*Patent Pending:* A scientist in the pay of one of the player characters has come up with a new, and potentially profitable invention (e.g. a weapon, or a cure for a specific disease). However, the minister in charge of production or procurement of items of the same type as the new invention is a political enemy of the player character concerned. The characters must work out how to get the invention accepted and produced.

*Boundary Line:* The Imperial borders have shifted slightly in the area of one or more player characters’ noble holdings. The Moot is due to decide whether to appoint another noble of the same rank to cover the new worlds, or whether to promote one of the existing nobles.

*Ill Spoken:* Someone is spreading nasty rumors about one of the player characters and, regardless of how ridiculous the rumors might be, they sow the seeds of doubt in the minds of some nobles. The characters must find out who is slandering their friend, and why, before the damage becomes irreparable.

**Inter-Faction Rules:** While the Influence rules deal with the ability of player characters to change events on a personal basis, some players may wish their characters to get involved with some of the larger political battles fought in the Moot and in the planetary governments of the new worlds. These inter-faction rules provide a framework within which players can interact with, and ultimately influence, the great decision-making bodies of the Third Imperium.

The basis of the rules are votes and factions. In any deliberative body there are likely to be two or more factions trying to get their view accepted as policy. The classic example would be the isolationist and pro-Federation factions on a world which is being asked to join the Imperium. These faction will in turn start with a number of votes at the beginning of the campaign. These votes may be based on number of members, popular support, industrial or military support or whatever the referee decides is applicable to the situation. The campaign then begins with each side trying to increase its own votes at the expense of the other faction(s), until such time as it has enough of votes to enable its policies to be enacted (and perhaps the clout to force a vote on the issue). The number of votes that a faction has may be affected by campaigning, external actions, diplomatic action, military action, and even the action of the PCs.

The steps to running a factional campaign are:

*Step 1.* Decide how many factions are involved and what viewpoint they represent.

*Step 2.* Decide the total number of votes available, and the criteria for success. Examples might be: more than half the votes, a particular threshold number of votes, or twice as many votes as the next largest party. For simplicity’s sake, it is recommended that a hundred votes are used. The very simplest manner to handle this is to consider just one faction of interest, and count its votes towards a target level.

*Step 3.* Decide the starting number of votes for each faction. This could be decided by a die roll skewed to a particular situation.

*Step 4.* Decide the likely time scale of the campaign, and the time resolution (daily, weekly, monthly). This may well be linked to the level of detail with which the player characters wish to approach the campaign.

*Step 5.* Draw up a random table (based on a 1D or 2D roll) with different events which cause factions to gain and lose votes. The events should be specific to the campaign, the factions and (if appropriate) the precise matter being voted upon.

*Step 6.* Determine a number of actions which the PCs can take which will affect the votes, and by how much.

*Step 7.* Determine a few key NPCs for each faction whom the PCs can try and influence, and the size block vote each can influence. The NPCs will follow the PCs line on a political encounter reaction of “Responsive” or better.

*Step 8.* Start playing. For each time period, roll on the random table. Encourage the PCs to think through what actions they can take to affect the vote, and if successful (or not) change the votes held by each party accordingly (the PC’s action may of course have an adverse effect on their own cause if they foul up!).

*Step 9.* Continue until one faction reaches the success criteria.

**Example Inter-Faction Campaign:** To give an idea of how this may work in practice, here is a short example. It is set on the world of Erthun, which is run by a self-perpetuating oligarchy. The “Council” consists of one hundred members, the major landowners on the planet. The Imperium has been trying to get Erthun to join, as its agricultural land would be a valuable bread-basket for the Imperium. There are three factions, pro-Imperials, Isolationists, and Conservatives. To enact a policy, a faction must gain at least fifty votes—i.e. a simple majority. Starting votes are:

Pro-Imperials: 35

Isolationists: 30

Conservatives: 35

The pro-Imperials believe that membership of the Imperium will bring great economic advantages to Erthun. The Isolationists think that Erthun should keep its resources to itself. The conservatives have no particular views either way but are generally resistant to change.

The campaign is likely to last three months, and run in weekly time periods. A random event table is created, specific to Erthun and its factions.



## Sample Faction Table:

### Erthun Random Vote Events

#### 1D Result

- 1 Imperial Trade and Diplomacy mission arrives.  
Pro-Imperials +2 votes; Conservatives -2 votes
- 2 Imperials offer Erthun a bioengineered crop which will double yields.  
Pro-Imperials +1D votes; Isolationists and Conservatives split those losses evenly.
- 3 An Imperial diplomat is caught hacking into an Erthun Research lab's computers.  
Pro-Imperials -3 votes; Isolationists +2; Conservatives +1
- 4 A Conservative politician makes an excellent speech in the Council.  
Conservatives +2 votes; Pro-Imperials -1; Isolationists -1
- 5 Erthun agronomists return, impressed, from a fact-finding mission to Imperial worlds.  
Pro-Imperials +1D votes; Isolationists lose one-third of that roll, Conservatives two-thirds
- 6 Isolationists publish claim that the Imperium will nationalize all land.  
Isolationists +1D votes; Pro-Imperials and Conservatives split those losses evenly.

*Possible PC Actions:* Just as in any political campaign, there are many avenues by which the PCs can affect the voting. Individual actions may be roleplayed fully, or may be glossed over with a single appropriate task roll to determine how successfully the action was carried out. PCs should be rewarded for innovative tactics. Just as a good speaking tour may win votes, so political espionage, blackmail, covert payments, etc. can be used—provided, of course, that these are not revealed openly to the voters.

Remember that the opposing factions will also be implementing actions, but to save the referee effort, these should be occasional major actions rather than a series of minor actions in each period of the campaign. The PCs may benefit from gaining advance knowledge of their opponents' tactics, allowing them to sabotage or outmaneuver the other factions.

For the example Erthun situation, the following sample PC actions are possible:

- Stage their own speaking tour. Pro-Imperials +1D votes; Isolationists and Conservatives - current votes.
- Trek into a remote area to find a more resistant strain of Craya, which has recently suffered badly from blight. If successful, Pro-Imperials +2D votes; Isolationists and Conservatives - current votes.
- Use their ship to export an initial batch of agroproduce to an Imperial world. Pro-Imperials +1 vote per Cr500 profit made per ton; Isolationists -1 vote; the remainder from Conservatives. Financial losses result in lost Pro-Imperial votes.

*Key NPCs:* The PCs should be required to think through an approach which will appeal to each NPC—

whether through reasoning, persuasion, blackmail or bribery. In the Erthun example, the following NPCs are available: 1.) Kryl Achort, an Isolationist who can sway 2+1D votes, has statistics of 36794B, has Influence of 10; and 2.) Mopi Magou, a Conservative who can sway 1D-1 votes, has statistics of A97282, and Influence of 9.

*PC Influence:* PC Influence starts at 5.

*The Play:* Our sample Erthun campaign might progress as follows.

- Week 1: Pro-Imperials 35 votes; Isolationists 30 votes; Conservatives 35 votes. Roll of 1 on table adds 2 votes to Imperials, subtracts 2 from Conservatives. PCs increase their Influence to 6 through various actions.

- Week 2: Pro-Imperials 37 votes; Isolationists 30 votes; Conservatives 33 votes. Roll of 4 on table adds 2 votes to Conservatives, subtracting 1 vote from Pro-Imperials and from Isolationists. PCs increase their Influence to 7, then hit the campaign trail, gaining 3 votes (taking 1 from Isolationists and 2 from Conservatives, the referee decides).

- Week 3: Pro-Imperials 39 votes; Isolationists 28 votes; Conservatives 33 votes. Roll of 2 on the table adds 1 (on a 1D roll) to Pro-Imperials (taken from the Conservatives, the referee decides). PCs spend week trekking after Craya, gaining 2 votes (split 1 and 1 between Isolationists and Conservatives), and raise Influence to 8.

- Week 4: Pro-Imperials 42 votes; Isolationists 27 votes; Conservatives 31 votes. Roll of 1 on the table adds 2 to Pro-Imperials (losses split evenly between the other two factions). PCs depart on selling trip.

- Week 5: Pro-Imperials 44 votes; Isolationists 26 votes; Conservatives 30 votes. Roll of 6 on the table adds 3 (on a 1D roll) to Isolationists (subtracting 2 from the Pro-Imperials and 1 from the Conservatives, the referee decides). PCs sell goods for Cr2000 profit per ton and prepare for return (vote bonus not applied this week).

- Week 6: Pro-Imperials 42 votes; Isolationists 29 votes; Conservatives 29 votes. Roll of 1 on the table (another trade mission!) adds 2 votes to Pro-Imperials. PCs return and gain 4 votes (for their sales last week) and Influence increases to 10.

- Week 7: Pro-Imperials 48 votes; Isolationists 25 votes; Conservatives 27 votes. Roll of 3 on the table subtracts 3 votes from Pro-Imperials, adding 2 to Isolationists and 1 to Conservatives. PCs use their Influence to persuade Mopi Magou to swing 4 votes for the Pro-Imperial faction from the Conservatives. PCs' Influence up to 11.

- Week 8: Pro-Imperials 49 votes; Isolationists 27 votes; Conservatives 24 votes. Roll of 5 on the table adds 4 votes to the Pro-Imperials. The PCs try but fail to swing Kryl Achort's vote.

- Week 9: Pro-Imperials 53 votes; Isolationists 26 votes; Conservatives 21 votes. The Pro-Imperials are able to call a successful vote to join the Imperium.



## Major Races and the Third Imperium

By accepted reckoning, any race which achieved interstellar travel on its own is classed as a major race. All other races, inside and outside the Imperium, are classed as minor races. The Third Imperium officially recognizes only three races as "major," and all are human: Vilani, Solomani, and Zhodani. Some few persons (Emperoro Cleon included) are aware of documentation from the First and Second Imperiums referring to a few major alien races, but not much is known about them.

**Solomani and Vilani:** The Vilani originally controlled an Empire which covered human space from Vland, almost all the way to Terra. Solitary Vilani outposts still exist rimward of the Third Imperium, having survived the Long Night, although the vast majority of Vilani live within the Imperium's borders.

Humans of Solomani descent are scattered throughout space rimward of the old Vilani Empire. Indeed, many citizens of the Third Imperium are of Solomani descent. There are Solomani worlds and pocket empires scattered throughout space between the Third Imperium and Terra (believed to be located some 130 parsecs from Core) and Cleon's diplomats have just begun to contact the closest.

Political agitation from the Solomani factions within the Moot favors a dedicated expansion effort toward the region of Terra, with some factions even favoring moving the Imperium's capital there. So far, the Moot has successfully argued that the exact location of Terra is still in doubt, and further expansion in that direction should be carefully planned and controlled.

**Zhodani:** There have been several meetings between Zhodani and Vilani traders in the last hundred years or so, such that the Vilani are aware of the rough location of the trailing edge of the Zhodani Consulate (and the Zhodani are aware of the rough location of the Vilani Empire).

Contact has been limited for three main reasons. First, there is the matter of distance. From the Consulate's closest border to Vilani space in Corridor is over seventy parsecs. Although the Vilani and the Zhodani both have outposts beyond their borders, the distance has discouraged all but the most desperate of traders from attempting to maintain contact. Second, the Zhodani and the Vilani are both human races controlling (or, in the case of the Vilani, now being part of) large interstellar empires which can produce almost anything they may need. This similarity between the two races has limited their need to trade. Finally, the Zhodani are not interested in expanding contact with their trailing neighbors. Zhodani traders report that Zhodani expansion in the direction of the Vilani is virtually over. The Imperium believes that the Zhodani have contacted other races on their other borders, which require their current attention.

**Rumored Major Alien Races:** *TRAVELLER* referees familiar with previously published material that deals with other times than Milieu 0 will be aware of several major alien races: Aslan, Droyne, K'Kree, Hivers, and Vargr. In Year 0, however, there has been very little (if any) contact between citizens of the Third Imperium and any of these races. Still, a word or two is worth mentioning.

**Aslan:** So far, among the Imperium's neighbors, the Aslan are the biggest puzzle to Imperial Intelligence. All contacts with the Aslan have so far fallen into one of two categories: either the Aslan have immediately attacked, or they have traded and left.

The Aslan appear to be expanding around the edge of an offshoot of the Great Rift, into Zarushagar and Massillia sectors, with some Aslan outposts (mostly trade outposts) less than fifty parsecs from Core. However, there appears to be no organized plan of expansion and settlement, and there are unconfirmed reports of Aslan fighting with other Aslan, leading Imperial Intelligence to conclude that, although further information is required, there is currently little danger to the Imperium as a whole from the Aslan.

**Droyne:** At the dawning of the Third Imperium, humanity is not at all aware of the droyne.

**K'Kree:** The Third Imperium's intelligence services have had various reports of a major race to trailing of Antares. To date these reports (primarily drawn from Antares traders' bar tales) are garbled, but they speak of a race of large, ferocious, six-legged creatures, literally trampling everyone in their path.

**Hivers:** If little is known of the K'Kree in the Third Imperium, even less is known of the Hivers. The Hivers occupy an area of space which is sufficiently far away from most human worlds that Hivers and humans have not yet come into contact.

**Vargr:** A few surviving records from the First Imperium refer to these canine bipeds and their savage raids on outlying worlds. But in the first days of the Third Imperium, the Vargr are little more than fables.

**Jgd-II-Jagd:** The Jgd-II-Jagd are not classed as a Major Race but are one of the most alien races discovered to date who are classified as sapient.

The Jgd-II-Jagd are an intelligent species who live within gas giants. They originate in the coreward end of the former Vilani Empire, and were first contacted by Vilani explorers in about Year -4200. In the period since that first contact, they have expanded across three subsectors in their vast, slower-than-light starships. It is this that xenobiologists point to as a reason for classifying Jgd as a minor race—although the Jgd occupy an area of space approximately seventeen parsecs across, they have never developed jump drives (other Xenobiologists argue that interstellar expansion, not the development of jump drives, marks a race as a major race).

Physically, the Jgd are roughly spherical, about three meters in diameter, dotted with apparently random clusters of sensory cells, and with three long manipulative tendrils distributed around their middle. The most dense mass of sensory organs, along with a large number of manipulative feelers and feeding tendrils, are sited on the lowest point of the body. Internally, Jgd are made up of many walled compartments filled with gas. One compartment, near the center, contains the largest neural structure, which is roughly analogous to a brain.

The Jgd spring from omnivore/intermittent stock (in the loosest possible interpretation of those terms). There appears to be only one sex, with reproduction taking place

by a form of binary fission. Genetic exchange is by means of airborne spores. The creatures dwell in gas giants with high levels of ammonia. Jgd live extremely long lives, averaging over six hundred standard years. The Imperium classes Jgd as a friendly associate species with an autonomous government, although there is very little actual contact between the two races because they live in very different environments.

Systems with Jgd settlements are always “patrolled” by several large, powerful Jgdi ships. These ships take little or no notice of other vessels unless Jgdi interests are threatened. The chief taboo in such systems is fuel skimming in Jgdi-inhabited gas giants. Shock waves from the pass will inevitably result in injury and death to Jgdi, and high-energy weapons fire from the Jgdi ships. As a result, Imperial law prohibits gas giant refueling in any systems within Jgdi space.

### Sample Patrons, Encounters, and Events

As an aid to the referee, the following adventure seeds are offered.

**The Cargo:** In this adventure, the PCs discover that even a seemingly simple task can cause enormous problems.

*Patron:* Merchant

*Players' Information:* The party is approached by a merchant who has a nervous tic but who is otherwise unremarkable. He introduces himself as Stalward Iltrex, and says he has a cargo for the players to haul from the present world to a destination that is at least three parsecs distant (referee's choice). Upon arrival, they are to deliver it to Ms. Jenid, a merchant with offices at the starport on the destination world. Stalward explains that the cargo is extremely sensitive to light, heat, and exposure to atmosphere. It is contained in a vacuum-sealed, temperature-controlled cargo container which is to be opened under no circumstances. The cargo displaces 2 tons. He will pay Cr60,000 for this service.

*Referee's Information:* Prior to running this patron encounter, choose one of the options below. Thereafter, create any maps, NPC statistics that may be necessary.

1) Everything is as represented. The merchant provides all the proper papers, and there is nothing illegal or otherwise remarkable about the cargo.

2) There is no Ms. Jenid, and the cargo is an explosive device set to go off 1D days into the jump, causing 2 rolls on the Internal Explosions table. The “merchant” is actually a terrorist whose purpose is to cripple the newly founded Imperium by interrupting trade (although he isn't very effective at it).

3) The “merchant” is actually an Agent working for the AAB, and the cargo is actually a document stolen from a fanatical religious group for eventual and circuitous transfer to the AAB on Vland. Members of the religious group will attempt to recover the document by any means available.

4) The cargo is an experimental warbot design, being transferred to the destination world for testing by a robot-

ics expert in residence at the local university. Unfortunately, the robot will be accidentally activated due to jostling (during a pirate attack, evasive maneuvers, or whatever) during the voyage. At that time, it will break out of its cargo container and attempt to “secure” the ship from hostile enemies (i.e., the PC's).

5) The cargo is a reverse-engineered Fusion Plus unit. Agents of Cleon Industries (not easily identified as such, of course) will attempt to acquire the unit by subterfuge. If unsuccessful, they will use force.

6) The cargo is actually evidence showing that Cleon used unsavory methods to obtain the throne, and it is being shipped to anti-Imperialists to be used in their propaganda. Imperial agents will follow the PC's wherever they go, attempting to destroy the evidence without causing bad publicity. Regardless of the manner in which the Imperials proceed, the PCs will have marks on their Imperial records indicating that they are, at best, potential traitors.

**Assassins for Hire:** In this adventure, the PCs are approached to end a woman's suffering, but not in the manner they might expect.

*Patron:* Noble

*Players' Information:* Franja W. Higginbotham introduces herself to the adventurers as a woman who simply does not make a habit of meeting with unsavory characters, but she was simply forced into it by the uncouth behavior of her husband. She says the adventurers simply must understand that she has seen her good name dragged through the mud by her husband, Jevog H. Higginbotham, quite often enough. She wishes to retain their services to put an end to the suffering she has endured.

Quite simply, she wants her husband dead because he is an adulterer. But, it cannot appear to be murder—the players must make it look like an accident, or death by a natural cause. She is willing to pay Cr300,000 for this service. One-third will be paid upon acceptance of the assignment. The other two-thirds will be paid only upon successful completion.

*Referee's Information:* Franja should be played elaborately—she considers all who are not of noble standing to be beneath her notice, and it disturbs her to be forced into the position of asking “ruffians” for assistance. Here are some possible scenarios to use with this set-up (choose one, or you may want to combine two or more of these):

1. Franja is telling the truth. Her husband is a bumbling idiot, whose great proclivity for asocial activities is only matched by his inability to be discreet.

2. Franja is telling the truth. Her husband's indiscretions are becoming more and more blatant. One of his most recent lovers has a husband who has discovered their adultery—and plans to demand a duel with Jevog. When Franja finds out, she will want the adventurers to kill the husband as well as Jevog, preventing the duel from becoming public information.

3. Franja is lying. She wants to get rid of her husband (an honorable man) so that she can be free to marry the man with whom she is having an affair.

4. Franja sincerely believes she is telling the truth, but she doesn't know that her husband's boorish behavior is caused by the drug addiction he is suffering from. While under the influence of the drug, he seems fairly normal, since he is at the stage in his addiction where he needs a dose just to avoid the severe withdrawal symptoms. When he is experiencing withdrawals, he loses control of himself, becoming unable to stop himself from following through on his sexual urges. The adventurers can decide whether Mr. Higginbotham needs drug counseling or to be put out of his misery.

5. Franja is crazy. She is not a noble, and has no husband.

6. Franja doesn't know it, but her husband is an undercover agent for an anti-Imperial group calling itself "Terrans for Truth." The organization is made up of those who claim to be able to trace their heritage to Solomani humans. Mr. Higginbotham is not engaged in any extramarital activity—he disappears at odd times because he is on assignment. He dares not let his wife know the truth, because he fears what her reaction would be if she knew what he has really been doing.

**The Entertainer:** In this adventure, the PCs are offered a once-in-a-lifetime chance at stardom.

*Patron:* Promoter

*Players' Information:* A promoter 'discovers' one of the PC's at a local engagement, and says he wants to put the character on a five-world tour, ending at the AAB on Vland. He will hire the entertainer's companions as bodyguards, roadies, transportation experts, or whatever is appropriate. He will pay the performer as per the performances rule in the Trade and Commerce section of the *TRAVELLER* rule book, and will pay standard wages to the other characters he hires.

*Referee's Information:* The promoter can be played as anything from a conniving money-grabber to a famous star-maker. The person discovered can be an actor, a poet, a singer, a musician, or any other type of performance artist. Once these rudimentary details are worked out, select one of the following scenarios:

1) The promoter is telling the truth, and all is as has been represented. Play out the tour as a harmless and mildly lucrative diversion for the group.

2) As above, but during one of the performances a deluded fan falls in love with the performer and bothers the performer incessantly.

3) As above, but the deluded fan begins stalking the performer, following from world to world. The fan sends "love" letters that are frightening because they show that the person believes his or her love is not unrequited. The fan may eventually attempt to kidnap the performer, believing that if they can only be alone everything will be perfect, and their fantasy life with the performer will become reality.

4) The tour is a great success, but the promoter attempts to skip out with all the money.

5) One of the worlds visited happens to have a large percentage of the population which objects to the type of performance given, as it is prohibited by their religion.

They attempt to shut down the shows, picket outside, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. One fanatic believes that his deity has ordered him to kill the performer.

6) The tour is a success, and the triumphant final show at the AAB is sold out. Unfortunately, the AAB administration receives a threat from the "Terrans for Truth" group, claiming they will destroy the building if unless their demands are met with regard to altering all library data entries to reflect their radical views. The AAB is under tight security because of this, and public performances are not allowed until the crisis passes. The group may choose to hire themselves out as temporary Guardians to try to track down and neutralize the local branch of "Terrans for Truth."

**Sample Encounter:** Lead Sergeant Sylvia Leigteq, AAB Agent

685684-0 Age 27 2 Terms (Currently in third term.) Cr 50,000 Brawling-1, Camouflage-1, Computer-1, Disguise-1, Fast Talk-1, Grav Craft-1, Ground Craft-1, Intrusion-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-1, Melee Combat-2, Pistol-2,

Sylvia Leigteq is an Agent of the AAB. She will typically be encountered on low-tech worlds where there is no local branch of the AAB. She is moderately skilled at her specialty, but tends to botch things up if she has to act without appropriate pre-planning. She is very efficient at obtaining information on documents that the AAB wants. Although she will panic if required to act without a plan, her plans are still often her downfall, as they are typically elaborate but nonetheless miss the obvious.

Characters may be approached by her for use as "extras" during one of her capers. She will not directly reveal the nature of her employment, but will be so exaggerated in her attempts at deceiving them that she will make it rather obvious she is not being straightforward. For instance, she will craft an elaborate and only somewhat believable lie, then misremember the details of it the next day and state the opposite of some aspect of her story.

The characters will have plenty to do in her elaborate plans—but not getting caught (let alone helping her complete the mission in spite of herself) will prove difficult. Sylvia will always insist on being in charge. She will only rarely agree to suggestions given by her hirelings.

Possible situations for encountering Sylvia include:

1) The characters are approached by Sylvia with an offer to participate in the acquisition of a highly valued original document. This could involve the characters in almost any way, from direct involvement in the central part of her plan to a peripheral diversionary action.

2) A group of fanatics from whom Sylvia has stolen a document in the past may stalk her, seeking revenge. She might hire the characters as bodyguards, helping her get safely off the planet and to a world that has a strong AAB presence.

3) One of Sylvia's victims, seeking revenge, might hire the characters to kill her and recover the stolen document.

4) The characters might be hired to guard a highly valuable document during transport, and may thus become the targets of one of Sylvia's elaborate plans.



In whatever way the characters encounter Sylvia, she can be a great source of interesting and entertaining situations, as her elaborate schemes are implemented and almost inevitably fall apart. Of course, the characters will usually be left to deal with the consequences.

**Sample Event:** “Bomb Threat Linked to Terrans for Truth”

*Article by Shela W. Jeshop, Correspondent for the Sylean Daily Herald, 301-007.*

“Vland—Today the AAB received a bomb threat from individuals identifying themselves as members of the radical ‘Terrans for Truth’ (TFT) organization. The AAB was quickly evacuated, but the Guardians were unable to find evidence of any bomb. Terrans for Truth is an organization that works toward forcing their Solomani-centric views into the mainstream information distribution networks.

“James DeClark, a spokesperson for TFT, claims that theirs is not a terrorist organization. He said that their goal is simply to provide the public with an alternative view to what he calls ‘the unfortunate emphasis on the Vilani view of history.’ When asked about the bomb threats, he said that he finds it regrettable that some radical individuals pretend to have an association with TFT when, in fact, they do not.

“Nevertheless, TFT-associated bomb threats and other terrorist activities continue to proliferate, along with their well-publicized marches, protests, and other forms of non-violent expression.

“Eight weeks ago, a person identifying herself as representing the TFT claimed responsibility for the bombing of the TAS News Service office on Sylea.

“Imperial authorities continue to investigate all reported TFT activities. However, an agent at the Imperial Office of Security would not comment on the ongoing investigation.”

## Adventures with the

### Disciples of the Bright Way

The Disciples of the Bright Way are a sect that believe their deity exists in jump space, and communicates directly with people while they are in jump. They call the sight of J-space “The Face of the Deity” and have a secret combination of drugs and meditation practices that reduce (but not eliminate!) the insanity resulting from directly viewing J-space.

Disciples are generally not dangerous, but their disturbing practice of shooting up drugs and staring out of an open porthole into J-space during the week of a jump means that most captains refuse to allow them on board under any circumstances. However, the Disciples will pay an obscene amount of money for passage on a ship, and since they don’t care about bodily comforts, they are quite happy to bunk two to a stateroom under middle passage conditions, and pay up to Cr25,000 each for their “pilgrimage.” The Disciples also own a number of ships that they use for their own “pilgrimages”; these are generally decrepit old Scout/Couriers or Free Traders that have

been roughly remodeled to hold dozens of “whacked-out weirdoes” in flop-house style accommodation. These ships have a disturbing number of portholes and viewports....

**Carrying the Disciples:** The PCs are in dire need of cash, and take on a number of Disciples. The “nutters” are little trouble, since they prefer to spend their time staring out of a porthole, drooling and gibbering. But a small proportion of them can have unpredictable mental instabilities (genuine loonies). When they are not babbling at “The Face of God” (and the crew must get pretty sick of all this after a while), they wander the ship, trying to convert the crew and other passengers to their faith.

A typical encounter might go something like this:

Disciple: “Hey man, have you ever looked out the window while you’re in jump? It’s really cooooollll...”

Engineer: “You again? Would you just !\$#\* off!?!???”

Disciple: “Hey, you wouldn’t be so uptight if you just took a little peek... hey, is this a window?”

Engineer: “Get away from there NOW!” Draws snub pistol and strikes Red Alert button.

Disciple: “Oh wow man, I’m going to become a martyr....”

**The Only Way Out:** The PCs are trapped on an unpleasant world, or are mercenaries who have need to call on their repatriation bonds. <?> Unfortunately, the only transport available is on a Disciple ship. Not only does the ship look unsafe (creaking and groaning throughout Jump), but the PCs have to put up with the Disciples themselves for the entire trip.

**Visiting God:** The situation can initially be as in the other two adventures, such that the PCs have to take a Jump trip with the Disciples. Unfortunately this particular group is part of a breakaway sect that believes in one (or more) of the following:

1. The only way to true revelation is by leaping out into “The Face of God.” They won’t force the PCs into this suicidal exercise, but the sight is going to be pretty disturbing. The group includes children, adults and old people as well as pets!

2. Since God is J-space, the jump grid is actually preventing them from achieving nirvana. Needless to say, they will attempt to solve this problem, with potentially lethal results.

3. Unbelievers must be sacrificed to their God...by forcing them out into “The Face of God.” This plot can either be deadly serious, or played out in a humorous, sitcom fashion.

4. They are seeking the promised land, a planet of milk, honey and hallucinogenic drugs, to which their God is about to take them if they only abandon themselves to “The Face of God.” In this case they mean misjump, not direct entry into J-space. They will deliberately try to misjump the ship to maximize their exposure to jump sickness. Most Disciples are already fairly inured to such effects, but the PCs will be badly affected.

## Archon Adventures

Several branches of humaniti can be found in known space, each arising separately, apparently, on its own home world. As explained in the library data later in this book, several theories have arisen over the millennia as to how this could have happened. Currently, most scholars believe that an ancient race of humans, dubbed the Archons, seeded the galaxy with humans, then destroyed their own culture in a brutal interstellar war. In Year 0, this theory is politically expedient, lending impetus to Emperor Cleon's push to reestablish an empire throughout known space. have arisen on a surprising number of world through the galaxy.

The following are a selection of possible adventures concerning the Archon Thesis:

**Intelligence Operations:** Cleon's agents make an attempt to "silence" an archaeologist who is an outspoken critic of the Archon Thesis. She has raised a number of difficult questions, such as why many Ancient artifacts appear to have been designed along clearly non-human lines (tools and weapons designed for four-fingered hands, furniture far too small for humans and made to accommodate protruding structures on the back...), and why some of the environmental conditions within Ancient

sites (such as atmosphere, lighting, artificial gravity and temperature) seemed to be significantly different from those that humans would find comfortable.

The PCs may be intelligence agents of one of Cleon's political opponents, whom the archaeologist approaches for protection. Alternatively, the PCs could be Cleon's agents, in which case they will be pursuing the archaeologist while trying to avoid further publicity.

**Criminal Possibilities:** Some nobles with more money than brains will pay large sums of money to buy evidence of the existence of the Archons. Unscrupulous PCs might decide to try their hand at fraud, by fabricating "artifacts" for sale. Alternatively they may be hired to fabricate items, or protect a con-person who has been selling such items until their clients realized they were fakes.

**Exploration:** A scientific team, filled with enthusiasm for the glorious Solomani destiny, is setting off for Terra (or another planet such as Vland) to search for evidence of the Archons. They require a ship and crew to take them there. They do not fully realize the immense distance from Sylea to their intended destination. Given the length of that voyage, any number of events could happen to the group along the way.

This section contains data that is either common background knowledge within the Imperium, or would be readily available to player characters from most computer data sources. For certain subjects, more detailed data is given elsewhere in this book.

The reader should be warned that in some cases, the library data here does not necessarily give a full representation of the true situation, whether due to deliberate alteration for political reasons, unintentionally erroneous material, or accidental deletion of portions of the data.

### Personalities and Groups

Considering the untold numbers of people that populate the worlds of the Third Imperium, not to mention the other worlds of the galaxy, it may seem amazing that any individuals could ever be viewed as central to the unfolding events of that galaxy. Nevertheless, the fact remains that strong personalities play pivotal roles in any history, even one so vast as to span empires. The following are a collection of the most significant persons to these early years of the Third Imperium.

**The Emperor:** Entries of interest concerning the figure of Cleon Zhunastu, Emperor of the Third Imperium, include the following.

*Cleon's Sabbatical:* For centuries, young Sylean nobles have followed a tradition of taking a long journey of a year or more, in order to visit the worlds of the Federation and experience something of the lives of many different peoples. By Year -50, a number of nobles had also taken sabbaticals along the Vilani Main. When Cleon completed his own university studies in Year -34, he chose a rather novel means of obeying this tradition: the young heir decided that not only would he travel to Vland, he would make a great loop beyond the rimward frontier, returning to Sylea via Amdukan and Antares.

The Grand Duke Felix strongly opposed his heir's "foolhardy adventure," but the old man eventually relented under pressure from his consort, Denkhumi Zhunastu (Cleon's mother). She proposed that Cleon travel under great secrecy, on board a heavily armed variant of the Federation's fastest patrol cruiser; the young heir would also be accompanied by guards from the elite Zhunastu Household Guard, led by the celebrated Solomani tactical genius, Colonel Akira Kumatsu. Finally, he ship would

boast an educational staff, composed of a dozen of the greatest scientists and researchers of the Federation, whose sole task during the journey was to see to the young heir's education.

Cleon spent almost a year on Vland, studying a wide variety of topics in the AAB (see below) and the Vilani Imperial Library. Records show that he paid particular attention to the ancient records of Vilani and Terran expansions, and the foundation of the First and Second Empires. Cleon was initially bemused by the bizarre but vibrant interstellar culture of Antares, but he eventually grew to admire the Antareans' energy, flexibility and focus on freedom and interstellar trade.

The route of the trip and the events that occurred during it have never been revealed in detail. However, it is alleged that at one point, despite the extensive security precautions, Cleon was either kidnapped or nearly killed (or perhaps both) by pirate raiders. However, after almost three years, he returned to Sylea.

The man who returned home was very different from the young noble who had left. Not only had Cleon gained a keen insight into the various cultures of different races, he had also developed an intuitive grasp of the physical and social sciences, the intricacies of interstellar trade, and the elusive arts of military strategy.

*Cleon's Campaign:* In Year -30, only months after Cleon's return from his rimward journey, the old Grand Duke died. The young man took up his father's seat in the Grand Senate, and began what has become known as Cleon's Campaign: a concerted effort to transform the doddering hulk of the Sylean Federation into a new interstellar government intended one day to rule again the vast territories covered by the First and Second Empires.

#### The Emperor is a Thoughtful Man...

*Introduction to "Cleon Zhunastu: A Vision of Empire," Ilmek Ggrothu, Imperial University Press, Capital/Core, 199-0000.*

"The Emperor is a small man, but his presence naturally dominates all. Whether he is speaking before an assembled crowd of adoring subjects or walking among the highest nobles of the Imperium, he commands the respect and ultimate loyalty of all.

"The Emperor is a quiet man, but his every word strikes into the mind and heart with the force of a meteor.

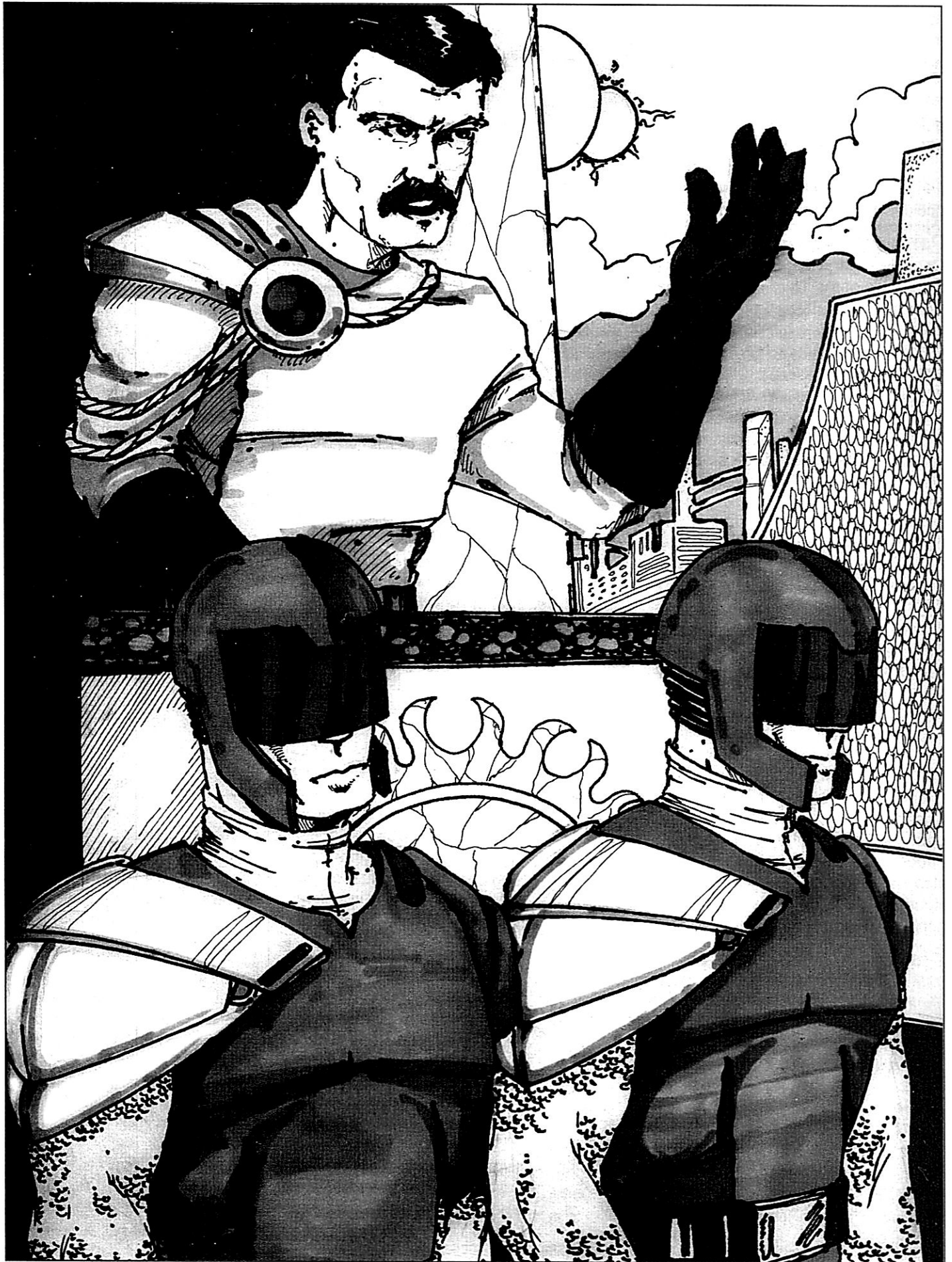
"The Emperor is a thoughtful man, but once he has decided a course for his Empire, it is as if a god has tossed aside his dark cloak and thrown the lightning bolt.

"The Emperor is a powerful man, but one who knows the sensations of loss, pain, joy, and striving to create an immortal legacy.

"The Emperor is greater than any single body, any single world, any single sector can contain. The Emperor is greater even than Cleon himself; for the person of the Emperor is the person of the Third Imperium, the Rule of Man, and the Ziru Sirka. The Emperor is bounded by nothing but devotion to humanity and the rule of law over chaos.

"The Emperor is power, wealth, light, and joy. The Emperor is the cold of blackest space, and the warmth of eleven thousand suns."





Cleon's energy, combined with the political support of his close friends, his father's former political allies, and the Zhunastu industrial conglomerate, lent almost irresistible weight to the young noble's idealism.

Cleon, heir to both the Grand Duchy of Sylea and the Zhunastu industrial empire, used his considerable personal power and support in the Grand Senate to control the Federation government, and campaigned aggressively to increase the Federation's size. Over the course of three decades in the Grand Senate, Cleon devoted himself to dismantling almost every stale institution and custom of the old Sylean Federation in favor of the fresh organizations and new conventions appropriate to a young and expanding empire.

The Vilani had been in secret negotiations with Cleon for some time, and agreed to be the first sector to join the Imperium immediately after its founding, so long as Cleon would agree to secure Vland's core-spinward frontiers against the possibility of Zhodani encroachment. Cleon devoted substantial Scout, Navy and Intelligence resources to patrolling the regions to spinward of Vland sector. After thirty years of economic, diplomatic and military maneuvering, he had extended the Federation's influence to the edge of Core sector. However, his vision encompassed far more than Core sector, and he decided that the Federation had outlived its usefulness.

Cleon planned a more flexible and decentralized interstellar government, one which would allow greater local autonomy but maintain cohesion over large distances. He decided to revive the Imperium, to restore the past glories of the Rule of Man, and to lay claim to all former territories of the First and Second Empires. In the closing years of the period known as Twilight, Francis Repzinski, one of the last claimants to the throne of the Rule of Man, had established a capital on Sylea. Cleon linked the Sylean Federation's legitimacy to the Rule of Man through this ruler, and thus also to the First Imperium.

In the Sylean Year 651, the Federation Grand Senate petitioned Cleon to claim the Iridium Throne, the symbol of ultimate Imperial power. The Grand Senate crowned Cleon Emperor, and so he proclaimed that Year Zero of the Third Imperium.

Immediately, Cleon set about reforming the old Sylean Federation Scout Service, giving the new Imperial Interstellar Scout Service a powerful mandate to re-contact the former races and territories of the First Imperium and the Rule of Man, as well as a directive to chart unexplored space and contact previously unknown races.

**Third Secretary of the Bureau for Interstellar Affairs (3S-BIA):** Djugashvili Lentuli is a Vilani nobleman of middling rank, but his position as 3S-BIA is surprisingly lowly given his vital role in the Imperium. Lentuli is Cleon's troubleshooter, charged with "negating threats to the Imperium by whatever means are deemed necessary" and armed with the power of a full Imperial Warrant. This broad mandate has effectively made Lentuli Cleon's chief of intelligence and internal security. Most intelligence data flows to the Emperor via Lentuli's office, making the man one of the most powerful persons in the Imperium.

However, Emperor Cleon still maintains a few independent sources that he uses to confirm particularly vital pieces of information. Cleon will give Lentuli an audience at pretty much any time, with virtually no notice, and once even threw a duke out of his chambers upon Lentuli's arrival.

Courier and personal assistant to Djugashvili Lentuli is his son, Artemsus. Artemsus is a leading figure among the "Young Turks," a small but highly active alliance of junior military officers and young nobles, allied with the Expansionist faction of the Grand Senate. Artemsus is famous for leading a counterattack against pirates who boarded a Zhunastu merchant vessel in Year -1. Although Artemsus was only seventeen years old, he rallied the crew in the ship's engine room and drove off the enemy, capturing the Corsairs' vessel to boot. This feat was widely reported in the media, which has made Artemsus a minor celebrity and a hero to idealistic Expansionists and young Vilani nobles.

Employees of the 3S-BIA, whether permanent agents or temporary hirelings, answer directly to Djugashvili Lentuli, who acts under the direct authority of the Emperor himself. However, all such employees are "deniable agents"—they have no official connection with the BIA or the Imperial Household. If compromised during a mission, it is their own responsibility to extricate themselves. The BIA may provide some assistance in extreme circumstances, but it is best that agents rely on their own resources rather than the Agency's goodwill.

**Commodore Francis Repzinski XVII, Marquis Ameros:** Francis Repzinski XVII is (allegedly) a direct descendant of Francis Repzinski I, the High Protector of Sylea, and Regent of the Rule of Man during the Long Night. Repzinski is tall, with blond hair and dark, space-tanned skin. His right arm is a prosthetic of black plastic; he lost his own arm during a pirate raid, and since has become fanatically obsessed with pursuing and destroying pirates wherever they may be.

Repzinski holds the rank of Commodore in the Imperial Navy, but his superior officers (also Conservative nobles) have granted him a long-term leave of absence in order to sit in the Moot and pursue his other interests (killing pirates). He strongly opposed the expansion of the Sylean Federation and the formation of the Third Imperium, and is a senior figure in the Moot's Conservative Faction.

Repzinski is secretly motivated by ambition, pride and envy of Cleon. Although he could never have worked his way to the position that Cleon now holds, Repzinski privately despises the Emperor for taking what he feels is the Repzinski family birthright: the Iridium Throne of the Rule of Man. He also believes that Cleon is an inferior, because of the Emperor's partial Vilani descent. Repzinski has even been rumored to have called the Emperor "the mongrel" (although not in public).

As Marquis Ameros, Repzinski maintains a large and well-equipped fleet based at Nimluin/Ameros (Core Subsector C). Although this fleet technically has only reserve status and is not supposed to venture beyond its home subsector except under Imperial Naval command,

Repzinski receives substantial latitude from his sympathetic Navy superiors. Repzinski has named the Ameros fleet the "New Justice Fleet," after the original Justice Fleet formed in Year -959 by Baron Ricardo Urquhardt, the infamous pirate hunter of the Long Night. Every two years, the New Justice Fleet makes at least one anti-piracy sweep deep into Lishun Sector; the "pirates' lair." Repzinski always returns from these forays refreshed and relaxed, as if he has been on a pleasant holiday.

The Emperor is aware of Repzinski's attitude, but is unwilling to risk a civil war by directly challenging the Marquis of Ameros. Cleon uses IISS Intelligence Branch agents to watch Repzinski and infiltrate the New Justice Fleet. Although Imperial Naval Intelligence would be the ideal organization to perform this kind of operation, the Emperor feels that Repzinski is too closely connected to senior Navy personnel for INI to be entirely trustworthy. The fact that INI has been left "out of the loop" on this decision has led to a number of near confrontations between the Emperor's Intelligence Branch agents and INI counter-intelligence operatives investigating reports of "spies" within the New Justice Fleet. INI's suspicion and the growing possibility of an undeclared "cold war" between Navy and Scout intelligence services has led the Emperor to recognize the need to act more directly against Repzinski in the near future.

The officers and ratings of the New Justice Fleet are fiercely loyal to Repzinski and, because of their frequent missions against the Lishun Pirates and the fact that many have only recently retired from the Imperial Navy, include many of the most experienced naval personnel in the Imperium. However, Repzinski has not shared his views about Cleon with his crew; after all, they are Imperial citizens despite their personal loyalty to Repzinski, and any declaration of disloyalty to the Emperor would meet with unpredictable results.

Cleon has recently employed a number of "free agents"—operatives with no connection to either the Scouts or the Navy—to directly investigate Repzinski and determine, once and for all, whether the Marquis is indeed engaged in treasonous activities. If Repzinski is guilty, the Emperor is willing to personally lead loyal forces to crush the New Justice Fleet.

**Professor Aldin Zhunastu:** Aldin Zhunastu is the current head of Zhunastu Industrial Laboratories (ZIL), and a cousin of Cleon's mother, Denkhumi Zhunastu. He lives in a low-gravity ZIL research habitat near the orbital city of Ton Vorn. Zhunastu is rumored to be over 110 years old, and still maintains an active lifestyle even though he must use a grav wheelchair whenever he is under standard gravity. The man spent thirty years as the head of the Technological Redevelopment Division of ZIL, before he transferred to the Energy Division in Year -19. He caused a furor among scientific circles in Year -15 when he suddenly vanished, to reappear five years later with the news that he had developed a prototype of a new kind of miniaturized fusion plant which he had dubbed Fusion Plus (F+). This new technology offered enormous opportunities over existing fusion plants. Although F+ was less efficient

than the larger plants, the technology could be scaled down to produce very small fusion power plants that would fit inside ground vehicles and small spacecraft.

By Year -10, the entire Zhunastu Conglomerate had shifted its production to exploit the new technology, which had rendered a large range of larger fuel cell, battery and solar power systems virtually obsolete. New household items, grav vehicles, spacecraft and industrial equipment made use of the Fusion Plus power technology. The most dramatic developments, however, were in the field of weapons technology: a range of grav tanks, fighter spacecraft, atmospheric interceptors and combat submersibles established a decisive lead in military technology for the Zhunastu companies, which became virtually the sole supplier of military hardware to the Sylean Federation.

Since Year -9, Professor Aldin Zhunastu has been the head of ZIL, but still maintains a close interest in Fusion Plus and related technological developments.

**Alexandra Aurion, Marquess Black Shroud:** Alexandra Aurion bears or has borne several titles during her lifetime. She is at once the Marquise Black Shroud, the Countess Arrapas, the Baroness Del'Osa, and the former Deputy President of the Grand Senate (suspended). At forty-six years of age, she appears only twenty-six—the result of the best care that money can buy (including regular anagathic treatments).

As a young woman, Aurion was admitted to college only because of her high Social Status. (Her family "pulled strings.") She did not find her studies easy—although highly intelligent, she lacked a certain motivation at this early age. She began by studying gravitic sciences, but eventually concentrated on history and literature, eventually to graduate with honors in history. As her education proceeded to graduate school, she maintained that interest in history, and also began to study Sylean Federation law.

After the mysterious death of her older sister, Alexandra was unable to pursue her intended career as an historical scholar. She was recalled home and trained in the duties of a high noble; during this time she showed strong ability in administrative and diplomatic work and was formally confirmed Baroness. On taking office, she quietly investigated her sister's death and discovered that the older sibling had died at the hands of a Zhunastu corporate agent. Incensed, the new baroness became possessed with what would prove to be a life-long obsession with making the Zhunastu family pay for that crime.

Shortly thereafter, Baroness Aurion took her seat on the Grand Senate, and showed great talent in the cut-and-thrust of Federation politics, mainly in opposition to President Cleon's and his Expansionist faction. She developed major alliances within her own Federalist faction, and drafted a number of industrial laws, treaties and Moot protocols, most of which, by seeming coincidence, attacked Cleon's political and financial interests. She also gained appointments to a number of minor Senate committees, and was eventually to be elevated to position of countess.

Soon, Aurion began gathering a broad coalition of political factions opposed to Cleon's Expansionist policies.



During this time, Aurion became widely known in the Senate as a leader, a powerful orator, and the wrong person to annoy. Within a few short years, she became leader of the Federalist faction, and was elected chair of the Senate Rules and Finance Committees, with consequent elevation to the rank of marquise. During this time, Aurion established her reputation as a fearsome questioner. Bureaucrats and military leaders dreaded appearance before the Rules and Finance committees, particularly if they supported the Zhunastu conglomerate or Expansionist policies. Eventually, Aurion was to make an eternal enemy of Cleon, by blocking Federation finance for key Expansionist policies, forcing Cleon to use his own .

Still, Marquise Aurion was elected Deputy President of the Grand Senate not long thereafter. Although heavily burdened with administrative duties, she still managed to engage in Moot politics and drafted many laws and Moot rules. Eventually however, Deputy President Aurion was to fall completely out of favor, as a result of President Cleon's increasing control of the Senate. When Cleon dissolved the Grand Senate and declared himself Emperor, he contrived that Aurion's powerful position of Deputy President of the Grand Senate, which controlled most of the administrative and financial dealings of the Senate, was transferred to the status of a ceremonial figurehead within the Imperial Moot. Key posts, including Cleon's former position of President, were filled by his supporters among the nobility.

Aurion declined the ceremonial sinecure in the Imperial Moot, and took a leave of absence with Emperor Cleon's blessing. When Cleon declared himself Emperor, Aurion's suspension from duty became effectively permanent. The Marquise now travels the frontiers, encouraging opposition to the Third Imperium. She seems dedicated to halting or delaying Imperial expansion by any means possible. While she and Cleon are politically unable to strike each at other directly, each is suspected of using covert methods to thwart one another's plans. As of Year 0, she and Cleon would seem to be engaged in a shadowy war of diplomats, spies and saboteurs.

According to reports, Aurion maintains quiet contacts among her former Federalist colleagues, who make up the Democratic Coalition in the Moot. Her allies defend her interests in the Moot and the Imperial Court, and covertly feed her resources and information in the hope that she can blunt Cleon's victory. Cleon has forbidden Aurion's name to be mentioned in his presence. Courtiers therefore tactfully refer to Aurion by her formal title, "the Marquise of Black Shroud," or simply as "Black Shroud."

## Places

Under this heading are gathered two types of data: 1) specific locations or locales, and 2) terms defining types of places. For example, both the League of Antares and the concept of interstellar naval bases are defined here.

**Antares:** The name Antares is applied to a variety of places at the trailing fringe of the Imperium. Antares is a domain of the Imperium, a sector within that domain, and the capital of that sector.

**Antares, League of:** The League of Antares (although it does not include the Antares system) is an autonomous region which has not yet been absorbed into the Imperium and appears vehemently opposed to the idea.

**Client State:** An independent political unit which has elected (or had forced upon it) the patronage of a larger political unit. This relationship is generally mutually beneficial and is essentially commercial in nature. That is, the political or defensive ties which may be part of any patron-client relationship are ultimately intended to promote trade between the two.

**Confederation:** A group of independent states, worlds or systems united for specified purposes while generally retaining more freedom of action than the members of a federation. Also a league or alliance (especially of princes, nations, states, worlds, or systems).

**Corridor:** A sector containing 267 systems, dramatically split by the Great Rift. Of that total, 69 systems lie rimward of the Rift and 149 form the coreward third of the sector. Corridor is named for its role connecting old, well-established Vland sector with the frontier sectors Deneb and the Spinward Marches. At the time of the founding of the Imperium, the common name for the Corridor region is the old Vilani "Eneri," which roughly translates as "star salad."

**Federation:** A group of states, worlds or systems each internally independent, joined into a union to which has been surrendered certain rights and responsibilities, most generally to do with foreign affairs.

**Interstellar Confederacy:** A loosely allied collection of thirty-two star systems within the Bunkeria and Cemplas subsectors of Core Sector. The Interstellar Confederacy was the largest interstellar government to oppose the Sylean Federation during their 650 year ascendance in Core Sector.

The Confederacy was formed in Year -684 and was primarily interested in preventing any further technological decline of its member worlds. It stopped accepting members after it absorbed 32 systems of the Great Spiral; Confederacy members considered that number to be the maximum that could be efficiently coordinated. Individual planetary rights were paramount in the Confederacy charter—so much so in fact that the Confederacy rarely achieved the cooperation necessary to carry out its intention to halt the slow loss of technology and loss of general prosperity.

The Interstellar Confederacy had very few contacts with outsiders, and those that it did have were generally not pleasant. However, after contact with the Sylean Federation, the Confederacy steadily weakened in influence until finally, in Year -17, Cleon convinced a number of member worlds to pull out of the Confederacy altogether. By Year -1, the Interstellar Confederacy ceased to exist as a government entity, brought low more by the apathy of its members than by any hostile intent on Cleon's part.

**Main:** A grouping of systems forming a chain of worlds all reachable by Jump-1. This grouping provides a sort of "corridor," allowing the Jump-1 capable ships to travel to

any world along the chain. Many such groupings of worlds exist in the Imperium. Prominent examples include the Vilani Main centered in the Vland Sector, the Sylean Main in Core Sector, and the Antares Main originating in Antares Sector.

Jump-1 is the first jump drive that developing states discover, and since interstellar trade is an essential prerequisite for an effective interstellar civilization, mains are highly important, as they are the routes along which large interstellar states are most likely to spring up.

**Naval Base:** Within the Imperium, the term "naval base" generally refers to a space port facility for support, maintenance, repair and refit of space naval vessels. ("Wet navy" is the term used for planetary water vessels.) Planetary surface facilities are generally provided for space vessels less than 1000 tons displacement; orbital facilities handle larger ships.

A naval base has several distinct components; each part helps accomplish the overall mission of the base. The typical naval base is composed of an orbital berthing area, a surface berthing area, a maintenance section, and an administrative headquarters. Berthing areas provide locations for ships to lay over, whether for a day or for months. All berthing areas include provisions for refueling from storage tanks or fuel lighters.

Maintenance sections at naval bases vary from base to base. Where such a section would duplicate facilities already available at the local starport shipyard, the base will have only a small maintenance unit and repairs or alterations are carried out, under contract, by the local facility. Where adequate facilities do not exist, the naval base itself may have a large maintenance section capable of extensive repairs and refits. Maintenance is performed on the world surface or in orbit as necessary.

The administrative headquarters handles the day-to-day operations of the base, as well as its paperwork (including the allocation of funds, distribution of personnel, and disbursement of supply, maintenance and repair contracts).

Imperial naval bases outside the core worlds are rarely tactical units. Rather, they are intended to support the Imperial fleet and keep it in combat-readiness. Such bases may exist in harmony with local system-defense boats (which are under a separate command).

**The New Justice Fleet:** Although the regular Navy generally looks down on most reserve and system defense fleets, the officers and ratings of the Imperial Navy treat the New Justice Fleet with grudging respect. Ambitious Imperial Navy officers seek temporary (4-year) transfers to the New Justice Fleet because they are more likely to gain combat command experience there than in the regular Navy. This flow of command-level officers has led to a substantial core of support for the fleet's leader (Commodore Repzinski) within the Imperial Navy itself. The New Justice Fleet is based on a number of older TL11 ships that have been substantially refitted with TL12 weapons, drives and other equipment. Since the New Justice Fleet is primarily a defensive subsector reserve fleet, it is largely made up of system-defense boats and

heavily armed battle riders, which use converted heavy jump freighters as jump tenders. The Fleet also maintains a couple of squadrons of modern TL12 ships as a heavy reconnaissance force and strategic reserve.

The New Justice Fleet also keeps a division of Marines, whose officers are exclusively former Imperial Marines and Imperial Army officers. The Fleet Marines have a reputation as a tough and flexible fighting force, although the enlisted soldiers are generally less experienced than their officers. The Fleet Marines specialize in zero-G, vacuum and ship-boarding operations, but train "dirtside" as well. Although pirate attacks against merchant shipping has fallen off dramatically since the New Justice Fleet began patrolling, the Fleet's aggressive campaign against piracy has forced the Lishun Pirates into larger, better organized, and better armed squadrons.

**Psychohistory:** The term "psychohistory" refers to the science of historical prediction and macrosocial manipulation. The main thesis of psychohistory is that the actions of trillions of individuals take on a fluidity and predictability which can be compared to that of molecules in a gas. The very size of the population being dealt with factors out individual peculiarities and allows the prediction of its overall behavior. Psychohistorians reason that with the ability to predict the reaction of a population to a particular stimulus comes the ability to manipulate that population.

Psychohistory began as a combination of public relations/advertising techniques, econometrics, and behavioral science, and although its techniques have been put on a more rigorous footing, the basic principles are still not well understood. A number of minor experiments have confirmed the general validity of the science, but it was also shown to be too expensive to be of any practical use on an Imperium-wide scale. Research continues at a small number of Imperial universities.

**Rifts:** Rifts are large regions of low stellar density that severely restrict interstellar travel, and may be dozens or hundreds of parsecs across. Rifts are the subject of many spacer tales, which generally involve dangerous journeys, lost civilizations, treasure ships, and horrible doom for explorers foolhardy enough to venture into such dark and forbidding regions.

There are four major rifts in the vicinity of the Third Imperium: the Great Rift, the Lesser Rift, the Windhorn, and the Delphi Rift. The Great Rift, also known as "the Claw" for its distinctive shape, is the largest rift in known space. The Vland Arm of the Great Rift extends into the Vland sector, cutting through Corridor, Deneb and Gushemege sectors, while the majority of the Claw lies far to rim-spinward. Numerous star systems actually lie within the Great Rift, but exploration will have to wait until the Imperium develops more powerful jump drive technologies. Any available information about the regions beyond the Claw is unreliable at best, and at least centuries out of date.

The Lesser Rift is "lesser" only in comparison to the Great Rift. This region lies to trailing of the Sylean Federation and has restrained alien races expanding in the trailing reaches. In Year -200, Sylean explorers



## Misjump in the Great Rift

*A short tale by ex-merchant Ryalch Briame.*

"A few years ago, I signed aboard as First Officer aboard a fat trader that was running a load of Surshi cloth along the Vland Main. Our captain thought he was something of an entrepreneur, and boasted that he could make a larger profit on the Surshi run than any other merchant in the sector. We soon found out exactly why his profits were so large. That half-wit spawn of a dust shark had falsified papers declaring that his ship had recently passed its annual maintenance inspection, while the truth was that the jump drives hadn't been overhauled for more than two years!

"He had also taken a really strange load of passengers aboard, members of a religious cult who paid high passage prices to camp in the cargo hold, so long as we let them spend hours staring out of the view screen into naked jump space! Our life support systems were straining under the excess load, but the captain wouldn't hear reason. I argued with him for hours, but he told me that they paid extremely well, so they stayed.

"While we were travelling to the jump point, the passengers seemed to be very excited. When we actually penetrated into jump space, waves of terrible nausea and severe migraines hammered away at me. I had experienced minor jump sickness before, but usually only if I was taking medication or had been drinking heavily the day of the jump. This was completely different—everybody aboard knew right away that the ship had misjumped.

"The crew came close to mutiny on the second day in jump, but I calmed them down with promises that the captain would meet his deserved fate in the hands of the authorities on our return home. I relieved the captain of

duty and confined him to his quarters, only partly for his own protection. Fortunately I found the passengers to be little trouble, other than trying to convert me to their damned religion at every opportunity. Our time in jump was mercifully short, and only a little under five days after the misjump, we precipitated out of jump space. However, our astrogator placed our location as somewhere in Corridor Sector, inside the Great Rift! Since we were more than seven parsecs from the nearest planetary system, it looked as though we would be stuck in the middle of deep space forever.

"Our fuel tanks contained enough for only one more jump, which would not be enough to reach anywhere but another part of the Rift. The crew were more than prepared to kill me as well as the captain. Then, surprisingly, the cult leader suggested a solution. He had worked as a jump drive engineer before his "conversion," and said he knew enough "mystical secrets" that he could make our drives misjump again, giving us at least a chance of exiting the Rift.

"Realizing that a second misjump was our only slim chance of survival, I let the cult leader modify the drives, and we jumped again. The second jump was even worse than the first, if that could be possible. I spent the next week chewing all of my fingernails down to the elbows joints. We came out of jump near some backwater system, but our lousy luck had almost finished us off: We had come out on the very edge of the Lesser Rift. Two more parsecs would have left us floating for the next million years or so as a very cold piece of space debris.

"It took us almost two years to repair our drives and work our way back to Vland. Once we got home, I quit my position for this nice, dull, safe desk job in the AAB on Vland."

returned from beyond the Lesser Rift with tales of a bizarre and aggressive race of herbivores that possibly present a threat to the long-term security of the Imperium.

The Windhorn lies coreward of Vland sector, and almost meets the Vland Arm of the Great Rift.

The Delphi Rift dominates the astrography to the rim-trailing of the Sylean Federation, and has historically impeded efforts to exploit resources of Gateway region.

The Rifts have made a significant impact upon the economic and military history of the Third Imperium as well as the First and Second Empires. Although merchant shipping must find a way around the rifts, so must any invading enemy force. The exact definition of a rift may vary, depending upon the prevailing jump drive technology of the time. For example, in the time of the First Imperium, when Jump-2 was the best technology available, hundreds of smaller regions with low stellar density impeded interstellar traffic and were referred to as rifts.

**Scout Base:** A port facility for support, maintenance and repair of scout vessels. The Imperial Interstellar Scout Service maintains a variety of scout bases scattered throughout the Imperium, with installations tending to be on less developed worlds with starports type C or D. Scout bases tend to be surface installations equipped with basic

facilities for fueling, and for minor maintenance activities oriented toward ships of 1000 tons or less.

Scout bases are positioned in more isolated systems than are naval bases. The reason is that these bases serve as a source of ships carrying dispatches from the well travelled starlanes to more remote worlds. Scout bases also have other responsibilities, and most have a responsibility for administrative command, monitoring and data-gathering, in addition to maintaining and refueling scout ships. Within a subsector, one base will hold responsibility for cartography, another will be responsible for technical developments, and still another for contact or liaison activities.

**Signal GK:** Abbreviation for "Gashimeku Kaalariin," Vilani for "vessel in distress." The code signal GK originated on Vland as a distress signal in maritime and aviation activity, and it was one of the standard communications codes of the Vilani Imperium. When the Second Imperium succeeded that empire, Signal GK was retained as a distress code concurrently with the Terran SOS and Mayday signals. It is a very firm custom that any vessel must respond to the GK, SOS or Mayday signals, provided that such a response does not endanger the ship or crew of the responding vessel.



## Someone is Out There

*A Rift-related experience told by Scout Leader Mirael Charby.*

"I was once engineer aboard a two-man Scout Courier, which had a mission to explore for a jump route across the Delphi Rift. My partner and I were on a routine mission, searching "empty" parsecs for rogue planets, brown dwarfs, snowball comets, ice clouds, anything that might support refueling operations and allow our ships to approach some of the systems buried deep inside the Rift.

"The mission was uneventful—dead boring in fact—until we came out of jump inside a dark nebula. The sensor array went berserk, so I checked the view screen...and felt my heart drop through my seat. It looked as if something was eating the stars! At first I thought the effect was a mirage, caused by a denser patch of dust or gas within the nebula, until our active sensor sweep bounced off it. The mass was solid, spherical, thousands of kilometers across, but its surface was as smooth as if it were laser-polished, right down beyond the centimeter-level. It reflected radar, laser, maser, everything, perfectly.

"When we returned to the Way Station and submitted our logbooks, nobody believed us. The Scout Service sent a Scout Cruiser with a full astrographic team to verify our story, but they found nothing at all. What do I think it was? Well, I couldn't say exactly. But I do know that it's almost impossible for a natural body of that size to be so regular unless it's something like a neutron star or black hole. Since I'm sitting here right now, it couldn't have been either of those. The natural universe just couldn't produce something like that.

"Right to this day, I can't shake the feeling that the object was... artificial..."

**Solomani Movement:** An organization devoted to the doctrine that humans of Solomani descent are superior to all other races and are most fit to rule the galaxy. A number of senior Solomani nobles are rumored to be members of the Movement.

**Starport:** An establishment for landing, servicing, refueling and control of starships. Starports range in quality from A (the most extensive facilities) to E (little more than a spot of cleared ground). Type A, B and C starports generally have both surface and orbital facilities. The surface facility includes cargo handling installations, a landing field, control towers, and construction and maintenance bays. Surface starport components are frequently called "Down" (for example, Cleon Down Starport on Capital). Orbital facilities are usually present in geostationary orbit above the downport, to enable handling of unstreamlined ships and to allow heavy craft to be constructed in orbit.

The orbital component is usually known as "Orbital" or "High" (for example, Cleon Orbital Starport). Type D and E starports have no significant orbital facilities, but they usually have navigational satellites or similar equipment. Unstreamlined ships at these starports must be serviced in orbit by shuttles. Starports, being the primary point at

which starships interact with a system, are usually the location for shipyards and additional bases, such as scout bases, naval bases or other military installations.

**Sketola/Bunkeria (Core 0622):** The capital world of the old Interstellar Confederacy. Sketola was brutally conquered by rebel forces during the Confederacy Civil War (Year -239 to Year -237). With the decline of the Confederacy, Sketola has declined considerably in interstellar influence.

## Things

The entries under this heading are concerned with several items and institutions that are important to the citizens of the Third Imperium. Of particular note is the entry concerning the Imperial Warrant of Restoration.

**AAB:** The Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin, which in Vilani means literally "the Vilani repository of all knowledge," is a major scientific institution located on the world of Vland, with branches on many other worlds. The extensive AAB facilities include a vast museum, a library and several research centers and publishing houses. Not only does the AAB collect samples, specimens and recorded materials from all over explored space, it also publishes an abridged, ten-holocystal encyclopedia set of its extensive data files, known simply as "The Encyclopedia." The set includes the equivalent of 2,500 extensively illustrated volumes, yet it can easily fit into a large pocket.

**Achenaar Antilles Line:** The largest merchant trading and passenger line in the Great Spiral area of the Sylean Main, operating over a thousand ships of all sizes throughout Core sector. Rualto Achenaar and Joffan Antilles founded the line on F'rnow in Year -567, during the years of the Interstellar Confederacy.

**The Archon Thesis:** During the early years of the Imperium, as in the previous Imperiums, there is considerable speculation as to why humaniti has arisen on so many different worlds within the galaxy. Because of genetic evidence that all these branches of humaniti sprang from common stock, it is generally assumed that the race originated on one world, and was then scattered across the galaxy by some mysterious ancient race. And ruins on multiple worlds throughout human space attest to the one-time existence of just such a race of "Ancients," for lack of a better term.

Numerous academics, novelists and tabloid journalists have proposed competing theories about the identity of these Ancients. Few generalizations can be made from the vast diversity even within the few Ancient sites in known space; however, it seems evident that the Ancients had spread throughout known space, then destroyed themselves during a final war that lasted over a thousand years, and that these Ancient sites appear to be strongly correlated with minor subspecies of humaniti, both existing and extinct.

During the Second Imperium, the leading scientific theory of the period was the "Archon Thesis." That thesis postulates that the Ancients were actually a race of humaniti (the Archons), who developed vast technology on

their home world—supposedly Terra, the legendary home of the Solomani—some hundreds of thousands of years ago. The minor human races across known space are believed to be the descendants of the Ancient human survivors of the “Final War,” who had been blasted back to a pre-technological existence.

Given the degree of bigotry within the Solomani of the early Imperium, it is hardly surprising that the Archon Thesis attracted substantial support, particularly from Solomani nobility and archaeological scientists. But it also serves Emperor Cleon’s purposes well, acting as a powerful force for Imperial expansion. First, it has transformed many scientists into enthusiastic supporters of the Emperor’s expansionist plans; these “Archonists” are keen to return to known worlds of humaniti to search for further evidence of Ancient artifacts. Second, since the thesis postulates that the Archon Ancients evolved on Terra, it lent further force to the Solomani nobility’s delusions of grandeur. Third, it led many Solomani to claim, arrogantly, that they were entitled to rule the galaxy, not merely as the former lords of the Ramshackle Empire, but as the descendants of the Ancients themselves. Considering how much stock Cleon has put in presenting the Third Imperium as the rightful heir to both the First and Second, the Archon Thesis serves his expansionist purposes as well as it did theirs.

**Fusion Plus:** Fusion Plus is the technology that makes the Imperium possible (as opposed to the distributed power structure of government, which is the social order that makes the Imperium possible). By Imperial Year 0, any world with a civilization has learned how to be self-sufficient. The ones who couldn’t have died. With the various cultures at approximately the same level of technology, and not having a need for other people’s products, the incentive for interstellar trade was not that great.

Fusion Plus changed all that. It is a size breakthrough in fusion power plants that opens up a whole new realm of technological possibilities. And Sylea is the only planet that has it. If you want it, you buy it from Sylea’s Cleon Industries, which invented Fusion Plus.

Fusion Plus forces deuterium-enriched water (“heavy water,” which can be produced on any TL5+ world by various means, including electrolysis) into a solid-state matrix. The matrix causes the deuterium (a hydrogen isotope) to fuse, heating the whole and generating electricity (usually via some type of thermoelectric junction, but other mechanisms are possible).

Fusion Plus is “cold” fusion only in comparison to the millions of degrees generated in a normal fusion reactor’s core. Electrical generation is most efficient when the reactor core is significantly hotter than the surrounding heat sink. Fusion Plus reactors generally use their fuel as a coolant, and continuously boil off small amounts of water to keep the core temperature under control (above a certain temperature, the structure of the core begins to break down, and it loses the properties that allow the reaction to continue).

Fusion Plus units were originally manufactured starting in Year –28, but until Year 3, the only place a unit could

be serviced was on Sylea because all units were “factory sealed” encapsulated units, with a great deal of effort put into preventing reverse-engineering of them. Eventually, of course, someone managed to reverse-engineer and duplicate the technology, at which point Cleon Industries released the TL12 version to keep its competitive lead. Cleon is, obviously, willing to take some financial risks to expand the Imperium, sacrificing short-term profit for long-term gain.

**GSbAG:** GSbAG is an Imperial megacorporation. Unlike other manufacturers, GSbAG (popularly known as “Gas-bag”) has restricted itself almost exclusively to the manufacture of starships since its earliest known existence. Its products command extremely high prices, but the quality justifies the price. GSbAG is one of two firms charged with the manufacture of the personal vessels of the Imperial family, and is a major contractor for the Imperial military.

According to company propaganda, the company was founded in Year –2438 from a consortium of old Terran manufacturing firms. In actual fact, there is no concrete evidence of the corporation’s existence prior to a contract with the Sylean Federation Navy in Year –334. Stock ownership: Imperial family, 29%; Hortalez et Cie, 3%; noble families, 54%; other corporations, 8%; public, 2%; other, 4%.

**The Warrant of Restoration:** When Cleon Zhunastu formed the Third Imperium, he was actually reviving the First and Second Imperiums, and therefore laying claim to the many thousands of worlds which made up those earlier entities. What follows is the text of the Imperial Constitution, including the Preamble, or “Warrant for the Restoration of the Imperium.”

*Preamble—The Warrant of Restoration of the Imperium:* The worlds of the universe lie separated by the vastness of space, each alone, and dependent upon its own resources. In the past, a greater community of worlds has existed, promoting a greater good for all its members, and for all those who have interacted with it. The time has now come to reestablish that greater community.

On the foundations of the past, in order to promote:

Safe travel among the stars,  
the exploration of worlds circling those stars,  
the pursuit of knowledge,  
mutually profitable trade and commerce,  
the active exchange of information and technology,  
the individual pursuit of personal betterment,  
and the collective pursuit of community good,  
we hereby reestablish the Grand Empire of the Stars.

*Article I—Imperial Governance, Membership, Citizenship:* The Imperium shall exercise no direct governance over any member world. Instead, the purpose of the Imperium shall be to provide for the defense of all of the member worlds as a group, and to bring the rule of law to the spaces between worlds. No interference with local law or custom is contemplated, except where such local law or custom is in conflict with Imperial law.



Any world may, through a recognized representative, proclaim allegiance to the Imperium, and in so doing, such world shall become a member of the Imperium, equal in status to all other members of the Imperium. Member worlds shall govern themselves as they see proper, provided that such government does not violate Imperial laws.

The Imperium reserves to itself the power to create as it sees fit governmental entities superior to the member worlds but subordinate to the Imperium. This shall include the power to abolish said entities as the Imperium sees fit. The Imperium reserves to itself the power to create as it sees fit bureaus and agencies to carry out and enforce the Imperial will. This shall include the power to abolish said bureaus and agencies as the Imperium sees fit.

The Imperium considers as citizens any living recognized sentient creature native to or naturalized by a member world of the Imperium, or any living recognized sentient creature swearing fealty to the Imperium directly. No immunity, protection, right, or privilege granted by the Imperium to a citizen of the Imperium may be abridged or denied by any member world.

*Article II—The Emperor, Hereditary Succession:* The Powers of the Imperium shall be vested in an Emperor, who shall maintain that title and those powers until his death or voluntary abdication. Upon such death or abdication, the title and powers shall pass to the oldest child of the Emperor, whether by birth or by adoption, provided that the child shall have been publicly acknowledged as the rightful heir of the Emperor by the Emperor, and providing that there are no conditions which would disqualify the child as fit to maintain the Powers of the Imperium.

*Article III—The Moot, Nobility:* The recognized nobles of the Imperium shall provide their advice and counsel to the Emperor prior to any legislation or action by the Emperor. The recognized nobles, acting in this capacity, shall be designated as “the Imperial Moot.” The Imperial Moot shall have two powers over the Emperor: They shall have the power to declare the dissolution of the Imperium, and they shall have the power to disqualify an Imperial Heir Apparent from ascending to the Imperial Power. However, the latter power shall only be exercised for just and proper cause. If the Emperor dies or abdicates having provided no heirs either by blood or by adoption, or if no heir of the Emperor is found fit to maintain the Powers of the Imperium, the Moot shall have the power to designate the next recipient of the Imperial Powers. Should the Moot find it necessary to exercise this power, the designee shall be a citizen of the Imperium.

A recognized noble of the Imperium shall be a citizen granted a noble title (by the Emperor or by one empowered by the Emperor to grant noble titles). Noble titles granted by member worlds may be recognized by the Imperium on a case-by-case basis.

*Article IV—Free Trade:* The Imperium shall support free trade among its members. No member shall engage in piracy or smuggling, nor allow its territory to be used for piracy or smuggling, nor shall it issue letters of marque or reprisal or other permission for ships operating within its territory to engage in piracy or smuggling.

*Article V—Standards:* The Imperium shall conduct all of its activities according to the Imperial Calendar, which shall consist of a year made up of 365 (three hundred and sixty five) consecutive Days of 24 (twenty four) consecutive hours each. The Days shall be numbered 1 (one) to 365 (three hundred and sixty five) in order. The day that this Charter shall become effective shall be designated Day 1 of Year 0 on the Imperial Calendar. Day 1 of any year on the Imperial Calendar (henceforth “Imperial Year”) shall be designated as an Imperial Holiday, named Holiday.

The unit of exchange in interstellar commerce, and between the Imperium and the member worlds, shall be the Imperial Credit. The Imperial Credit shall be valued independently of the value of any coin, currency, or value of any member world. The Imperium shall have the responsibility and power to control the value of the Imperial Credit.

The Imperium shall use as its standard of measurement the presently accepted standard measures and nomenclature used by the Sylean Federation. These standards shall be designated the Standard Imperial (SI) Measurement System.

*Article VI—Slavery Prohibited:* Chattel slavery shall not exist within the Imperium, nor in any territory directly under its control, nor on any member world, nor within any territory with which a member world shall have dealings.

*Article VII—Extra-territoriality of Designated Imperial Possessions:* The governance and operation of starports or other territories ceded to Imperial use is reserved to the Imperium. Movement of material and sentients between such territories and the member world shall be controlled by the member world, subject to Imperial laws governing such movement. Such territory shall be excluded from the jurisdiction of any member world, and no material or sentients shall enter such territories from any member world without the express consent of the governing Imperial authorities responsible for such territory.

*Article VIII—Acknowledgment of Imperial Power:* Notwithstanding any provisions to the contrary contained in this document or in subsequent Imperial actions, the Imperium, for the purpose of ensuring its continued safety and stability, reserves to itself the power to unilaterally enact changes in any or all aspects of the relationship between itself and any member world or citizen.

**Zhunastu Industrial Laboratories, LIC:** Zhunastu Industrial Laboratories (ZIL) is the high-technology research arm of the Zhunastu Conglomerate, and enjoys the services of some of the brightest scientists in the Imperium. ZIL does not confine its recruiting to the Imperium, however; it maintains a corps of scientific recruiting agents (otherwise known as “Talent Scouts,” after an obscure Solomani reference) who scour universities and research bodies throughout explored space, prepared to make irresistible offers of employment.

ZIL maintains a range of research divisions, each of which specializes in a different aspect of technology: Energy Division (ED) researches new sources of energy and improvements in existing energy generation technology.





gies. ED is now almost exclusively focused on further development of the Fusion Plus technology. Advanced Materials Division (AMD) studies materials science and devises new metal alloys, polymers, ceramics and superconducting materials. AMD is rumored to be developing a new type of spacecraft hull armor. Bioproducts Division (BPD) researches genetic engineering and related biological technologies for industrial, agricultural and other uses. A small proportion of BPD's funding is channeled via Weapon Systems Division. Robotics Division (RD) develops new robotic technologies, largely for industrial purposes. A growing proportion of RD work is being funded by the Weapon Systems Division. Industrial Division (ID) concentrates on improving existing industrial technologies. ID is also responsible for researching new computer and communications technologies, such as meson communicators. Vehicles Division (VD) develops prototypes of starships, spacecraft, planetary vehicles and installations such as bases and space stations. This division also researches new jump drive and propulsion technologies, as well as life support and related equipment such as vac suits.

Weapon Systems Division grew from one of the smallest ZIL divisions to the largest within only a couple of years. WSD directly commands over a third of ZIL's resources, and maintains a huge influence over the research carried out in the rest of the organization. It has been estimated that over eighty percent of ZIL's resources are either directly or indirectly going into developing new weapons systems. WSD is rumored to be working on a range of powerful hand-held and vehicle-mounted energy weapons, based on an extension of the Fusion Plus micro-containment technology.

Technological Redevelopment Division (TRD) is the least interestingly named division, but is the true technological powerhouse of ZIL. TRD maintains a large staff of theoretical physicists and engineers, as well as a number of technological archaeologists, whose job it is to search through the records and artifacts left by previous civilizations, in order to extract useful technological innovations that can be passed on to other divisions. It is a closely kept secret that most of ZIL's "discoveries" are actually "rediscoveries" of Rule of Man, First Imperium and even Ancient technologies. TRD has made significant advances in a number of fields in which the Sylean Federation has traditionally been weak, such as robotics, genetics and energy technologies.

**Scout Cruiser:** The Scout Cruiser, based upon an 800-ton, streamlined, disk-shaped hull, is typically used for extended exploration missions to a single system. While Scout/Courier ships range ahead to perform the initial cursory survey, Scout Cruisers follow behind and gather detailed information on each system's worlds and life forms.

The Scout Cruiser is equipped with two air rafts, a 1000-AU-range communicator, two maser communicators, and a laser communicator as backup. The ship is lightly armed and armored to withstand moderate attacks, although the standard procedure in cases of battle is to flee, allowing the Imperial Navy and/or Diplomatic Corps to handle the situation.

For extended survey missions, the ship has a fuel purification plant (capable of purifying twenty tons of fuel per hour), ten laboratory shops, ten sick bays, one engineering shop, and one vehicle shop. The hangar is capable of handling ten tons of small craft, but is typically used

**Scout Cruiser Statistics:**

Tons: 800	Volume: 11200	Cost: 428.51
Crew: 17	Passengers (H/M): 3/17	Passengers (L): 0
Cargo: 43.2	Controls: Military W/Bridge	Tech Level: 12
08 Size Rating		02 Jump Rating
04 Fire Control Rating		02 G Rating / Thrusters
L Battery 4-3-2-0		05 Power Plant Rating
L Battery 4-3-2-0		170.7 Fuel Rating
L Battery 4-3-2-0		00 Meson Screen Rating
L Battery 4-3-2-0		04 Sand Caster (120)
		00 Damper Rating
		A10 P4 J10 Sensors/ Small Military TL12
		20 Armor 21 Structure

**Crew Detail:** 3 Command, 1 Pilot, 1 Astrogator, 2 Electronics, 4 Gunners, 1 Medic, 1 Steward

**Deck plan key:**

1: Fuel tankage	2: Maneuver Drive
3: Jump Drive	4: Power Plant
5: Engineering Shop	6: Hangar
7: Vehicle Shop	8: Cargo (1st & 2nd Decks)
9: Fuel Tankage (2nd Deck)	10: Sickbay
11: Laboratory	12: Crew or Scientist Stateroom
13: Bridge	14: Command Crew Stateroom
15: Senior Scientist Stateroom	16: Lounge
17: Dining (Mess) Hall	18: Conference Room

only for the two air rafts. The large cargo hold is available for carrying the numerous samples typically gathered during the extended missions to which this type of craft is typically assigned.

Accommodations include six large staterooms (for the three command officers and three senior scientists), plus 31 small staterooms for the rest of the crew and scientists.

Vessels of the Scout Cruiser-class are traditionally named after ancient Solomani exploration vessels. Examples include such names as *Albemarle*, *Endeavor*, *Discovery*, *Mayflower*, *Nina*, *Pinta*, *Penrhyn*, *Santa Maria*, and *Scarborough*.

## History

The history of intelligent life in this section of the galaxy begins approximately 300,000 years before the founding of the Third Imperium. Although little is known about those years, the remaining knowledge is great enough to fill the largest repository of them all, the AAB on Vland. What follows is a sampling of the data available within that vast storehouse of knowledge.

**Chronology:** This chronology covers the basic historical events leading up to the founding of the Third Imperium. The chart below shows the date of the event according to the Imperial Standard dating system.

*Note:* Imperial and Terran years have 365 days, while Vilani years are approximately 1.33 standard years in length. Common suffixes include: PI for Pre-Imperium, VI for Vilani Imperium, BCE for Before Common Era, and CE for Common Era. In Imperial Year 0, the Vilani year is 3039 and the Terran year was 4521.

- Year –8000 Vilani arrive at Sylea.
- Year –4045 First Imperium founded.
- Year –3000 Technology leakage.
- Year –2800 Insurrections common.
- Year –2422 Terrans contacted.
- Year –2219 First Imperium ends.
- Year –2204 Rule of Man.
- Year –1900 Many worlds decayed into bedlam.  
Governor Frances Repzinski becomes High Protector of Sylea.
- Year –1850 Lack of cooperation within states.
- Year –1800 Vland at TL12 (Jump-3).  
Resurgent Sylean nationalism.
- Year –1799 Border worlds start refusing off-world currency.
- Year –1776 Financial collapse of Rule of Man.
- Year –1700 Loss of fusion technology on Sylea.
- Year –1550 Vland at TL9 (Jump-1).
- Year –1526 Long Night: off-world travel all but stopped.
- Year –1120 Aslan Border Wars start.
- Year –962 Reaver attacks on Sylea.
- Year –930 Reavers beaten back.
- Year –908 King Ricardo I of Sylea, blockade of Sylea.
- Year –905 Ton Vorn occupied by Ricardo I.
- Year –690 Queen Rowena abdicates.
- Year –684 Interstellar Confederacy founded.

- Year –650 Sylean Federation established.
- Year –495 Sylean scouts contact Vland.
- Year –489 New Vilani merchant fleet.
- Year –475 Zirunkariish finances Vilani trading.
- Year –425 Zirunkariish established.
- Year –301 Interstellar Confederacy contacted by Sylea.
- Year –239 Interstellar Confederacy Civil War (to Year –237).
- Year –201 Open war between Sylean Federation and Interstellar Confederacy as Sylean Federation threat of expansion increases; Sylean Expansion Wars.
- Year –112 Sylean battleship destroyed by robot at Shudusham.
- Year –110 Shudusham Concords.
- Year –107 Sylean traders contact Chanestin Kingdom.
- Year –100 End of Sylean Expansion Wars.
- Year –59 Cleon born.
- Year –30 Cleon gains control of Federation; begins active expansion campaign. Vland agrees to join Federation. Vland still TL9.
- Year –28 Fusion Plus invented.
- Year –17 Cleon persuades some worlds to leave Interstellar Confederacy.
- Year –1 Interstellar Confederacy ceases to exist.
- Year 0 Sylean Federation at TL12. Cleon is declared Emperor of Third Imperium.
- Year 17 Order of Starship and Crown established.
- Year 17 Cleon delivers his pro-sentient speech.

**Ancients:** The name given to a race of intelligent, non-human beings who inhabited various locations in humaniti's portion of the galaxy approximately 300,000 years prior to the establishment of the Third Imperium. Archaeological evidence recovered from excavations of the few known Ancient cities indicates that the race destroyed itself during a 2,000-year period of intense warfare which left only ruined cities and shattered planets.

The Ancients were responsible for several major features within known space. For example, their warfare resulted in the large proportion of asteroid belts throughout this spiral arm. Scattered cities, most of them severely damaged by battle (and all vacant), stand as evidence of their wars. Most such areas, however, are under investigation and are therefore not open to the public. The Ancients are generally accepted as being responsible for the dissemination of humaniti within its current domain. It is theorized that they transplanted genetic stock from Terra to at least forty worlds across a span of some 360 parsecs.

**Aslan Border Wars (Year –1118 and Onward):** A series of conflicts between various Aslan clans and human systems as the Aslan expanded toward already settled human territory. The Aslan achieved jump drive late (Year –1999) and proceeded to expand into the available territory in their region of space. Contacts along their trailing border necessarily resulted in friction with the human systems in that region.

Because the Long Night was already well under way by the time the Aslan encountered humans, there was no



central human government to resist Aslan attacks. Since there was no united Aslan authority either, the sides were fairly matched, and numerous small wars erupted between Aslan clans and human splinter states, with alliances among the powers constantly forming and dissolving.

The border between human and Aslan space remained relatively constant, with a few systems changing hands after each war. At this time, some clans also launched raids into the interior of the former Imperial domains, where they conquered and settled worlds as far as forty parsecs beyond the border. As of the founding of the Third Imperium, knowledge of the Aslan is limited to tales brought back by traders and scouts who have witnessed the aggressive expansionism of this alien race. The Emperor himself is known to have expressed concern at this threat, but military advisors generally agree that the rate of expansion of the Aslan and Imperium indicates no significant clashes should occur for perhaps a century.

**First Imperium (Year -4045 to Year -2204):** The first major interstellar civilization, politically and culturally dominated by humans originating on Vland. The Jump drive was invented on Vland in Year -9235. The Vilani soon discovered a number of inter-fertile and technologically primitive human races on worlds within sixty parsecs of Vland. These were gradually brought to a state of high technology with Vilani help, and were assimilated into a loose interstellar community bound by trade and common culture.

Eventually, the client races themselves explored beyond the local sphere, contacting and trading with still more races. These new races gained their technology without being assimilated into Vilani culture; the resulting increased friction eventually resulted in a series of wars beginning in about Year -5400.

In response to this growing threat, Vland began tightening its control of its trade sphere, and finally organized it into a centralized state in Year -5273. This marked the beginnings of the First Imperium, although there was as yet no emperor. During the thousand-year period of The Consolidation Wars, Vland conquered and absorbed its enemies until there were no longer any separate civilized states on its borders.

The last war ended in Year -4045, and the Vilani declared the establishment of an interstellar empire to govern all Vilani territory, known as the Grand Empire of Stars, or Ziru Sirka. Vilani dating begins at this point. With no exterior threats, the Pax Vilanica/Ziru Sirka lasted for nearly 1,200 years. At its height, which was attained soon after the end of the wars, the First Imperium contained twenty-seven sectors and over 15,000 worlds.

However, the price of maintaining centralized control over this vast expanse was a cultural rigidity. Exploration had ceased with the beginning of the wars; now scientific research slowed to a halt and the beginnings of a hereditary caste system began to emerge. The Imperial civilization was in decline. As long as there was no exterior threat, the Grand Empire was safe; but gradually, despite all efforts, technology leaked across its borders. New interstellar states arose, and the Imperium could no longer afford to absorb them. Gradually, the Imperium lost

territory along its coreward and trailing marches. Then, in Year -2422, the Imperium was contacted along its rimward border by the Terrans, who had recently emerged into space. Terran expansionism led to a series of interstellar wars, which ultimately resulted in the Terran conquest of the Imperium in Year -2219, and the founding of the Rule of Man. The First Imperium bore many names in its long life, including the Grand Imperium of the Stars, the Grand Imperium, and the Vilani Empire.

**First Interstellar War (Year -2408 to Year -2400):** The first military engagement between the Vilani of the First Imperium, and the Solomani of the Terran Confederation. This began an on-again, off-again series of wars between the two major human races, which ended in the defeat of the Imperium and the beginning of Solomani ascendancy.

**Nth Interstellar War:** Any one of an intermediate number of interstellar wars fought between the Terran Confederation and the First Imperium, during the period 2048 to Year -2219. The First Interstellar War (Year -2408 to Year -2400) marked the initial clash between Terra and Vland. The peace that concluded those hostilities was both uneasy and short. The Second through Seventh Interstellar Wars were marked by see-saw exchanges of territory, mostly confined to the Dingir and Sol subsectors. These initial wars were fought on the Vilani side, with only the forces available to the Vilani provincial governor; the central government was preoccupied with other problems. This was fortunate for the Terrans, as Vilani power, even at this late date, was sufficient to crush the Terrans in short order had it been applied in full.

The Eighth War finally broke upon the frontier and ended in the first major Terran victory. Finally, the Grand Imperium took notice, and dispatched major fleet elements to the area, but the time for action had passed. Terran invention of the Jump-3 drive made the Ninth War a crushing victory for Terra and forced the Vilani to relinquish most of the Solomani Rim. Thereafter the Terrans were almost constantly on the offensive.

In the centuries after the conclusion of the wars, no consensus could be reached in the academic community as to when the later conflicts began or ended. All were interrupted several times by armistices, cease-fires or shaky periods of peace. (Indeed, a new war would often break out along the front lines before the existence of a peace treaty could be communicated to the respective capitals).

Periods of warfare are lumped together or split apart depending on the historian's individual point of view, and a single war to one historian can be identified as two or more wars by another. The situation is complicated by the fact that records for some of the years in question are sketchy. To clarify matters, an accommodation was arrived at which simply labels all interstellar wars after the Ninth with the indeterminate variable N. Proper usage calls for the war to be defined with the actual years being discussed. Many history texts use this system to refer to all the wars except the first. The Nth Interstellar War (Year -2235 to Year -2219) ended the series when the Vilani Grand Imperium

collapsed, as much from its own weight, age and decadence as from Terran victories. The Terrans moved quickly to occupy the remaining Vilani territories.

**Ramshackle Empire:** Common term used during the Long Night to refer to the Rule of Man (also known as the Second Imperium).

**Rule Of Man (Year –2204 to Year –1776):** A short-lived interstellar empire formed after the conquest of the Vilani Imperium by the Terrans. The conquered territories were under military rule from Year –2219 to Year –2204. Vilani military forces were incorporated into the Terran forces. Terran Naval forces took over key posts in the Vilani bureaucracy (which otherwise retained intact).

In Year –2204, the Terran secretariat attempted to transfer control directly to Terra and to incorporate the conquered regions into the Terran Confederation. The commander-in-chief of the Terran Navy, Admiral Hiroshi Estegarribia, realized that the Confederation government could not possibly control the vast territories of the Vilani Imperium. He proclaimed himself Regent of the Vilani Imperium, and Protector of Terra, so both states were now united in the Rule of Man. Nearly all the fleet sided with Estegarribia, both because it was composed largely of colonials who were under-represented under the Terran Confederation government, and because of Estegarribia's careful preparation. The Confederation was dissolved without significant resistance.

The Terran Fleet headquarters on Dingir became the capital of the Rule of Man. The bureaucratic center of the Imperium remained on Vland, although arrangements were undertaken to transfer it gradually elsewhere. Upon his death, Estegarribia was succeeded by his chief of staff, who crowned himself Emperor Hiroshi II. Estegarribia, even though he did not actually assume the crown, is therefore known to history as Emperor Hiroshi I. Hiroshi II transferred all functions of government from both Vland and Dingir to a more centrally located world, renamed bilingually Hub/Ershur. This world was to remain the capital of the Rule of Man for the next 400 years. During the Rule of Man, large numbers of humans from Terra and its oldest colonies emigrated throughout the Imperium. People of Terran ancestry of culture (many of them assimilated Vilani) assumed positions of power on most worlds and became industrialists and administrators.

The problems of sheer size and scientific stagnation which had brought about the fall of the Vilani Imperium continued to plague the Rule of Man. The Vilani had coped with the problems of ruling a large empire by a rigid caste system, with all citizens rooted firmly in their place. But this system could last only as long as there was no significant external threat. The Terrans did away with this system but were not able to replace it with a workable new social order. The destruction of the caste system swept away the foundations of interstellar society. Key industries fell apart as their workers became free to move elsewhere.

The Year –1776 date for the end of the Rule of Man is arbitrary, and it notes the financial collapse of the central government when the treasury at Hub/Ershur refused to

honor a monetary issue of the branch treasury at Antares. The resulting lack of confidence within monetary circles marked the end of large-scale interstellar trade and of effective governmental power within the Rule of Man. Although the Imperium did not completely fall apart for many years, the Rule of Man had effectively ceased to exist as a viable interstellar community, and the period known as Twilight had begun. The Third Imperium refers to the Rule of Man as the Second Imperium, which emphasizes its own roots in the Solomani-dominated Second Imperium and the Vilani-dominated First Imperium. Anti-Solomani elements emphasize the failure of the Solomani-dominated Ramshackle Empire.

**Solomani:** Strictly, a member of that human race which developed on Terra from the original human stock (*h. Sapiens*). The term "Solomani" is often used to refer to members of the Solomani race (or, more palatably to some, to members of the human race of Solomani descent). Its original meaning is obscure, but the word seems to have originally meant either "men of Sol" or "sole men." After the Solomani developed jump drives in Year –2431, Solomani humans were scattered to the stars in several waves. Early colonization efforts first settled the worlds closest to Terra. The later conquest of the First Imperium and the establishment of the Rule of Man sent more Solomani humans out, primarily to occupy the former Imperial regions.

**Sylea:** By the time that the Vilani arrived around Year –8000, the Syleans had reached a technological level currently classified as TL2, at most. Many of the natives resisted the invasion, but they had little chance of standing against the overwhelming technology and massive resources of the First Imperium. These "rebels" were largely exterminated by the efficient Vilani. The survivors found themselves forced into a few small mountainous areas and plateaus that had been briefly surveyed and found to have few resources. Over time, this area became a Sylean reservation. Most Syleans simply integrated within the Vilani society, receiving education and other benefits of the Vilani society. The First Imperium largely ignored Sylea for many thousands of years after that. By the time the Rule of Man "liberated" the Syleans from Vilani rule, the population was over ninety-five percent Vilani. The Solomani confiscated key Vilani business and industrial interests, particularly media and energy generation, because they "gave the perfidious Vilani the means to dominate through the immoral abuse of economic power."

The Plague of Duskir struck Sylea soon after the Solomani arrived, nearly destroying the Vilani, whose unaccustomed immune systems and preference for communal living assisted the plague pathogens spread throughout the population. The native Syleans were, however, far more fortunate: their relative isolation protected them from the worst effects of the Plague. By the time the Plague of Duskir was brought under control, the Solomani appointed loyal Syleans as mid-level managers in businesses and the bureaucracy, and proceeded to concentrate on the money flowing from their newly acquired businesses.

Around Year –1900, while the Rule of Man was straining under the weight of administering 11,000 star systems, the Imperial government declared Governor Frances Repzinski the High Protector of Sylea. The Sylean Protectorate administered an area roughly corresponding to the eight coreward subsectors of Core sector, as well as a number of systems in the rimward portions of Lishun and Antares sectors. High Protector Frances Repzinski and her descendants ruled Sylea until well into the Long Night.

The planetary rulers “re-contacted” the exiled Sylean natives around Year –1800, during a resurgence in Sylean nationalism. By this time, the population had long forgotten the substantial benefits that the First Imperium had brought to Sylea. The exiles became folk heroes for their “long and valiant struggle against the Vilani oppressors.” Despite this new-found fame, conditions within the reservation territories improved only marginally over the next five hundred years.

As the Long Night began to make itself felt on Sylea, and the high tech fusion power and other equipment wore out and could not be replaced, the Solomani ruling elite made a planet-wide search for alternative low-tech energy sources, particularly fossil fuels and radioactives. It turned out that the planet’s major economically viable sources of thorium and uranium lay within the Sylean reservation territories. The Solomani industrialists made a deal with the Syleans, and established a grid of nuclear power reactors that virtually conferred a planetary monopoly over power generation. The Solomani and Syleans became very wealthy, while the Vilani majority became even poorer than before. Middle and upper class Solomani and Syleans interbred extensively, until, around Year –1200, there were few distinctions between the Solomani and Sylean races.

After the Wars of the Reavers, Baron Urquhardt returned as the victorious commander of the Grand Fleet. However, although the High Protector and many of the noble families wanted to disband the Fleet, Urquhardt held significant support among Vilani nobles and the general populace, and was reluctant to release his hold on power. Urquhardt and the Grand Fleet had gathered enormous wealth from Reaver plunder (some of which had itself been stolen from Sylea), and over the following decade, they resisted the Sylean nobility’s attempts to exert control.

In Year –908, High Protector Francis XI issued Baron Urquhardt an ultimatum: Disband the Fleet or be exiled from Sylea. The Baron’s response was unusual, but not entirely unexpected. Urquhardt declared himself King Ricardo I of Sylea, blockaded the planet, and threatened orbital bombardment of his opponents’ major industrial centers if the High Protector did not abdicate. The stalemate held for two years, with the planetary populace in an increasing state of terror. Fortunately, cooler minds prevailed, and at a conference in early Year –905 the parties achieved a compromise. Ricardo would remain King of Sylea and retain responsibility for defense of the Realm, but he and his military forces would never attack Sylean territory or ships, and would never set foot upon the planet itself. In return, Repzinski would step down as High

Protector, but would retain all his properties and receive a new, hereditary noble patent, the Duchy of Aramoth. The nobility would provide money and personnel to Ricardo, who would hold court in an L-5 orbital habitat above Sylea. This habitat became known as Ton Vorn in the Sylean language, or “City of Kings.”

The Kingdom of Sylea survived for another two hundred years, but the compromise arrangement was essentially unstable. Inevitably the power of the Sylean Kings ebbed as their wealth steadily declined. Finally, in Year –650, Queen Rowena abdicated under pressure from a number of senior Solomani nobles, and the Kingdom of Sylea was transformed into the Sylean Federation.

**Sylean Federation (Year –650 to Year 0):** Large interstellar federation which served as the basis for the Third Imperium. Established on Sylea in Year –650, the Federation grew slowly, absorbing several surrounding worlds and increasing trade and interaction between them. The new members (largely ethnic Vilani) exerted pressure on the Solomani to make a number of fundamental social reforms. As a result of these reforms, the situation of wealthy Vilani nobles improved somewhat, but the needs of the lower classes were still universally ignored.

The Sylean and Solomani nobles constituted a power bloc that became known as the Conservative Faction. The Conservatives opposed any change that would not directly benefit Sylean and Solomani interests, and they dominated the Grand Senate for centuries.

The opposing Democratic Faction was largely composed of lower-ranked Vilani, but also included a small number of Solomani and Sylean nobles who did not agree with the Conservatives’ policies. The Democrats believed that Sylean government needed radical reform so that it would be more representative of the noble population of the planet and give substantially more recognition to the lower classes. However, this version of “democracy” was to apply only to members of the nobility; no noble would allow the commoners any direct influence in matters of government. The main influence of the Democratic Faction lay in the sympathy of the Grand Dukes of Sylea, who as hereditary Presidents of the Grand Senate used their position to blunt a number of the more draconian anti-Vilani measures.

As conditions for Vilani on Sylea became worse, many young Vilani emigrated to settle frontier planets and trade with the outer reaches, as did those young Solomani nobles who would not inherit their family titles. As the Sylean Federation expanded its influence, these young nobles received titles over frontier territories, which also gave them representation in the Grand Senate. This new frontier nobility originally sided with the Democrats, but in Year –84 they split away to form a new faction, the Expansionists. This faction was originally small, but its members wielded influence out of all proportion to their numbers, based on their wealth, energy and ability to organize.

By the mid-Federation period (Year –350 to Year –200), the Senate had splintered even further. The Industrialist Faction sprang from a group of wealthy Vilani



who had left the Democratic Faction over a violent clash concerning labor reforms. A few other individuals distanced themselves from any faction, and became known collectively as Independents.

In Year -57, Grand Duke Felix of Sylea succeeded his father to the hereditary position of President of the Grand Senate, and in the same year Felix and his consort Denkhumi Zhunastu produced a child. Making a substantial break with Solomani tradition, Felix and Denkhumi made the half-Vilani child heir to both the Grand Duchy of Sylea and the Zhunastu industrial conglomerate. Cleon Zhunastu combined two of the greatest forces in the Sylean Federation—and made many powerful enemies—at the very moment of his birth. By Year -30, the real power in the Federation was the Zhunastu industrial consortium headed by Cleon. Under his parents' tutelage, Cleon had become a noble of great vision, and he used his family industrial base and the support of other families (obtained by the persuasiveness of his personality) to obtain behind-the-scenes control of the Federation government, and to begin an active campaign to increase the number of worlds under its control.

After thirty years of economic and diplomatic maneuvering (and the occasional military action), Cleon had increased the size of the Federation and extended its explorative forays to the edge of what is now Core sector. He envisioned a territory larger than a single sector, however, and concluded that the tightly controlled, highly centralized nature of the government of the Sylean Federation was not suitable for a large, star-spanning empire.

Cleon decided the Federation had served its purpose, and he began plans for a more suitable form of interstellar government which would allow greater local autonomy but still maintain cohesion over large distances. In addition, to restore the past glories of the Rule of Man (and therefore lay claim to all former territories of the First and Second Imperiums), Cleon proposed to revive the Imperium.

This was made possible by the fact that in the closing years of the period known as Twilight, one of the last claimants to the throne of the Rule of Man had made Sylea his capital. Cleon traced the legitimacy of the Sylean Federation backwards through this emperor to the Rule of Man and (since the Rule of Man claimed to be the lawful successor to the Vilani Imperium) to the First Imperium as well.

In the 651st year of the Sylean Federation, the Grand Senate of the Federation "persuaded" Cleon to accept the Imperial crown. That year, he was crowned First Emperor of the Third Imperium, and he proclaimed the 651st year of the Sylean Federation to be the Year 0 of the Third Imperium.

**Terran Confederation (Year -2499 to Year -2204):** An interstellar government consisting of Terra and its colony worlds. Modern historians consider the foundation of the Terran Confederation to date from the signing of the Treaty of New York in Year -2499. Essentially, that treaty placed the armed forces of the major nations of Terra under the centralized control of the United Nations (until that time, a loose organization of the nation states of Terra,

with no actual governmental authority). In addition, the treaty formalized the changes that had been made to the structure of the UN up to that time. The Secretary General was granted a wider range of executive powers than before. The Secretariat, previously an unofficial advisory group of representatives from the major nation states, was made chief legislative body. The General Assembly was retained, but it was an institution without real power and served merely as a forum for debate among the representatives of both major and minor nations. The Security Council was dispensed with altogether.

After the invention of jump drive and Terra's initial interstellar colonization efforts, representatives from the colony worlds were admitted to the General Assembly (and, later on, to the Secretariat). Throughout history, Terran representatives (and thus Terran interests) dominated the Secretariat and General Assembly.

When the first Jump to Barnard's Star discovered Vilani prospectors, Terrans were shocked and then outraged that a humanoid race from several hundred light years away could be claiming worlds so close to Terra as their own. Over the next thirty years, the UN transformed into a true world government to administer the defense of Terra against the Vilani Empire. In Year -2400, the name was changed to the United Worlds, then, in Year -2398, with the admission of the first colonial representative to the General Assembly, to the Terran Confederation. Modern historians, for simplicity, use this term exclusively.

The Terran Confederation fought a series of interstellar wars with the Vilani Imperium over the period Year -2408 to Year -2219. These wars ultimately resulted in the fall of the Vilani Imperium. The Confederation was dissolved in Year -2204 upon the proclamation of the Rule of Man.

**Third Imperium:** Also called simply the Imperium. Founded in Year 0 by Cleon Zhunastu from the Sylean Federation.

**Twilight (Year -1776 to Year -1526):** The failure of the Rule of Man triggered the collapse of most interstellar civilization. While interstellar travel and commerce continued, it was at a greatly reduced rate, and the many worlds of the Imperium turned in on themselves. This period of collapse is termed Twilight, and it lasted for two and a half centuries.

Modern historians consider Twilight to have begun in Year -1776, when the treasury on Hub/Ershur refused to acknowledge a monetary issue of the branch treasury at Antares, which triggered a financial collapse and the destruction of large-scale interstellar trade within the Imperium.

The end of Twilight is commonly accepted as the Year -1526, when the last governmental body claiming to be the Rule of Man ceased to exist.

**Vilani:** A human major race (*h. Sapiens*) which developed on Vland from human stock placed there by the Ancients.

The Vilani were the first of humaniti to develop the jump drive (in Year -9235) and were the first humans to establish an interstellar empire. The old Vilani culture

which developed during the first Imperium was a rigid caste system based on the idea that each citizen had a specific and set place in the universe, and it was each citizen's duty to remain in that place. Society could not afford to let individuals do as they pleased. Not all of the subject races of the Vilani Imperium were able to be absorbed completely into this culture, and those societies did not do well under the rule of the Vilani Imperium.

The stability which Vilani culture achieved was not obtained without cost. Cultural rigidity brought with it technological as well as social stagnation, and the Vilani Imperium collapsed soon after contact with the young, vigorous Terran Confederation. Currently, the term "Vilani" is a cultural rather than a racial or national labeling, and is applied to those within the Imperium who retain some of the old ways. The Vilani language survives in certain places, along with a few fragments of Vilani culture, such as musical forms and other fine arts, as well as the AAB (see above). Certain of the old Vilani noble families have maintained more of the old culture, particularly those families who control the Vilani megacorporations.

**Vland:** Homeworld of the Vilani, and former capital of the Vilani Imperium.

**Wars of the Reavers:** Although interstellar trade had practically ceased during the Long Night, a number of wealthy Vilani families maintained a small fleet of jump-capable merchants, which traded with the nearer worlds of the Sylean Main. Unfortunately, this traffic attracted the attention of a number of desperate raider bands from Lishun sector, collectively known as Reavers. Initially the rulers of Sylea ignored reports of Reaver attacks on Vilani merchant ships. However, in Year -962, a series of raids on ships near Sylea itself meant that the ruling classes could not ignore the Reavers any longer. A number of squadrons of warships patrolled the coreward regions of the Sylean Main, but either could not locate Reaver ships or, even worse, were captured or destroyed in cunning Reaver ambushes.

In Year -959, Baron Ricardo Urquhardt, a young Solomani nobleman, gathered substantial support among Vilani merchant families and some of the more aggressive Solomani nobles. He levied warships, marines and armed merchantmen from his supporters, and organized a force that he named the Sylean Grand Fleet. The Fleet was not equipped or trained to mount large anti-piracy fleet actions, but instead it enforced the Urquhardt Doctrine: Any Reaver attack on a Sylean merchant ship would be answered by a massive retaliatory assault on a Reaver planet. Over the following thirty years, the Grand Fleet destroyed many Reaver bases in the rimward subsectors of Lishun. The Fleet became infamous for the ruthlessness and efficiency with which the Syleans pursued their enemies.

The small Reaver bands were no match for a large, organized fleet. The Grand Fleet pillaged entire planets, even those merely suspected of harboring Reavers. It poisoned agricultural lands with radioactive salts, and destroyed any facilities that might support starship operations, including stocks of fuel and any industries capable

of building starship components. By Year -930, the Reavers had withdrawn entirely from the Core sector in favor of other, less vengeful regions, such as the Antares.

**Year 0:** The base year of the Imperial Calendar, and the founding year of the Third Imperium. By selecting a base year numbered zero (instead of the generally expected year one), the Imperial dating system became a standard number line extending both forward and backward in time. Years before the founding of the Imperium became simple negative numbers, and the differences between dates before and after the founding of the Imperium could be determined by simple subtraction.

## The Imperium

The following entries give insight into the functioning of the Third Imperium, the most powerful government within human space.

**Government Structure:** The Imperium can be thought of best as a form of feudal confederation. Member worlds of the Imperium agree to pay taxes and obey a few fundamental laws which the Imperium promulgates, known as the High Laws. In return, the Imperium agrees to patrol the space between the worlds, to protect interstellar trade, to encourage travel and commerce, and to arbitrate diplomatic relations among worlds. Beyond this, individual worlds are left to their own devices, so long as they acknowledge of the power of the Imperium to rule the space between the stars.

Imperial power is present on member worlds in the form of consulates, bureaucratic offices and bases. Sometimes, larger enclaves of Imperial power are placed where they can enhance the Emperor's strength.

**Holiday Year:** The Year 0 in the counting system of the Third Imperium, established by Cleon I to commemorate the establishment of the Imperium. Technically an aspect of calendar reform, the use of the Year 0—or Holiday Year—provides a central point for counting years back into the Long Night and forward into the future of the Imperium.

The actual advantages of a Holiday Year are slight: Centuries begin in the hundredth numbered year instead of the first numbered year, and the number of years between any two dates can be determined by subtraction. More importantly at the time of its establishment, the Holiday Year was used as part of the public relations campaigns which were impressing the authority of the Imperium upon local governments. The minor requirement of changing to the new calendar was used to determine cooperation of those governments.

**Imperial Calendar:** The year is divided into 365 standard days which are grouped into fifty-two weeks of seven days each. The lengths of days and weeks is a legacy of Terran domination during the Second Imperium. Days are numbered consecutively, beginning with Day 1. The first day of the year is a holiday and is not part of any week. For example, the first day (Holiday) of the year 16 is 001-0016.

**Imperial Edict 97:** This executive order is the enabling act for the use of Imperial Warrants. Unusually

obscure for such a wide ranging and powerful edict, it is nonetheless on file at all Imperial installations. The edict text runs to thirty-four pages, much of it pure legalese. In essence, however, it requires any citizen to provide any necessary assistance to the holder of an Imperial Warrant.

Only the Emperor himself has the power to issue these warrants. A similar edict (Imperial Edict 3097) provides limited power to the archdukes of the Imperium to issue similar warrants, although they are limited in their duration and territory.

**Imperial Sunburst:** The symbol of the Third Imperium. A typical promotional image shows Cleon standing before the Imperial banner with a golden yellow sunburst against a black background, representing Capital's type G star against the dark of space. The sunburst color is varied for different arms of the Imperial services: The IISS uses a red sunburst, the Imperial Navy yellow, the Imperial Army black and the Imperial Marines maroon.

**Imperial Warrant:** Instrument of power issued at the highest levels of government. A warrant is a written or electronic document provided to trusted agents of the Imperium as a method of bypassing the bureaucracy, under Edict 97. Typically, a Warrant is provided by the Emperor to an individual who utilizes the power it provides to accomplish some Imperially assigned mission. Missions may include establishment of colonies in areas requiring development, the assumption of military command in the midst of a crisis, and the unilateral establishment of new noble lines to administer provinces which have suffered from war or economic collapse.

**Iridium Throne:** The symbol of the continuing line of emperors of the Third Imperium. The physical throne was originally an iridium construction on which the Emperor sat. Over time, the term has come to represent not only the Emperor's throne, but also the office of the Emperor himself.

**Moot:** The Imperial government's only deliberative body. It has few powers, and exercises them even more rarely. In theory, the Moot includes all Imperial nobles of baronial status or higher, but most nobles do not find it convenient to travel to the Capital, and so many of those seated hold proxy votes. Large blocks of these votes can be wielded by a single influential noble.

Technically, the Moot is supreme in the Imperium, but its power is extremely limited. In practice its deliberations are advisory to the Emperor, and he is wise to heed them. The Moot has only one power: to dissolve the Imperium. When this power is brought to bear, it compels compromise between opposing factions.

When an Emperor dies, abdicates or otherwise becomes unfit for office, the Moot becomes important as the validating body for the new Emperor. It has the power to examine the qualifications and credentials of the heir apparent and, in unusual situations, to reject him.

**Shudusham Concords:** At Fornol (Core 1715) in Year -112, a group of terrorists planted a modified courier robot aboard the *Empire's Banner*, the 90,000-ton flagship of the Sylean fleet. When the robot's booby-trapped fuel cell exploded, it killed a number of senior ambassadors and officials from both Sylea and Fornol, and the Federation almost erupted into a civil war.

Once this serious situation cooled, a dozen of the twenty-one member worlds of the Sylean Federation met on the neutral planet of Shudusham in order to negotiate a treaty restricting weaponry carried by robots and other machines able to operate without direct human supervision. The twelve worlds signed the Shudusham Concords in Year -110. The document, which was amended dozens of times over the next century, covered a broad range of topics surrounding human security in the presence of robots. Although the Concords have no legal standing in the Third Imperium, most worlds have maintained the rules in one form or another.





# The Core Sector — Referee Data

Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
0103	Irkigkhan.	D9C3599-6	Ni Fl		223	M4 V	
0104	Shana Ma.	E351000-6	Po Ba		003	K2 IV M7 D	Chirper.
0106	Niir.	B9C68AA-7	Fl		404	A1 V	
0112	Ye-lu.	B673111-9	LoPop		103	M6 V M0 D	
0113	Khishi.	D7A8000-8	Ba		003	M6 V	
0114	Khid.	C250244-9	Po De LoPop		920	M1 VI	
0116	Idpuu.	B485755-8	Ag Ri		411	M4 V	
0117	Neki.	C664522-6	Ag Ni		410	M0 III M9 V M4	
0120	Kein.	C244544-8	Ag Ni		700	K2 VI	
0125	Larsaluu.	B664133-9	LoPop		110	M6 V M1 D	
0126	Danke Es.	B241644-8	Ni Po		413	G7 VI M4 D	Ancient Site.
0127	Emshi.	B578733-8	Ag		514	M1 V	
0128	Sheki.	C559344-9	LoPop		923	K0 V	Chirper.
0129	Laslii Mii.	B984000-7	Ba		022	M9 V	
0130	Siaaash.	E200688-7	Na Ni Va		502	M2 V M0 D	
0132	Lash.	C76A355-B	Wa LoPop		621	K3 V M0 D	
0133	Pumuuda.	C8D7377-9	LoPop Fl		115	G5 V	
0134	Miise.	C421311-8	Po LoPop		803	M5 IV	
0135	Maish Uun.	C667111-9	LoPop		404	M4 V	
0138	Ziris.	B873000-8	Ba		002	M2 V	
0139	Shardir Aagkuug.	C87A222-A	Wa LoPop		213	M1 V M3 D	
0140	Aadkhien.	E100000-7	Va Ba		002	K0 V	
0202	Azimuth.	B6566B9-A	Ag Ni		200	M2 V	
0203	Khaur Ga.	C234533-B	Ni		400	K1 VI	
0208	Gekshiiuun.	D527200-4	LoPop		723	F9 IV	Ancient Site.
0210	Uras.	A797888-A			801	M2 V M7 D	
0212	Gir.	B645411-8	LoPop		903	K6 II M7 D	
0216	Emuuis.	C422100-A	Po LoPop		104	M9 IV M0 D	
0218	Darnii Kimi.	D878111-4	LoPop		614	M0 V	
0220	Inir.	E88A000-5	Wa Ba		003	G2 V	
0221	Kan.	B789588-A	Ni		905	G1 V	
0222	Arir Ash.	E210366-5	LoPop		205	G1 V	
0224	Lindbar.	E234000-5	Ba		003	M8 V	
0228	Ashder.	C565000-7	Ba		020	M5 V	
0231	Gium Gim.	E869000-4	Ba		011	G1 VI M8 D	
0234	Sishar.	B667733-8	Ag		204	M4 V M8 D	
0236	Gasha Uusar.	D671455-6	LoPop	S	203	G9 IV	
0240	Bur.	C587000-8	Ba		000	M2 V M7 D	
0302	Khaam.	C597000-7	Ba		001	M1 V	
0304	Kuunaa.	B8B5000-9	Fl Ba		023	M6 V	
0305	Muudeshi.	B100AAA-B	Na Ind HiPop Va		301	G1 V	
0306	Kiid.	C786000-7	Ba		022	M1 V	
0307	Pasliir.	B274444-7	LoPop		200	K0 V	
0308	Shar.	C688111-7	LoPop		514	M6 V	
0310	Mag.	E888000-3	Ba		002	M7 V K8 D	
0313	Maish Akush.	C332666-9	Na Ni Po		303	M4 V	
0314	Maarshigervlig.	B8A5455-8	LoPop		514	K6 III M5 D	
0315	Das.	B685366-8	LoPop		604	M3 V M1 D	
0316	Dudin	D5286BB-9	Ni		124	M9 VI	
0319	Uurze.	B234000-B	Ba		014	M2 IV K7 D	
0322	Enluur.	B242000-B	Po Ba		004	M1 V	
0324	Vliga.	B413000-8	Ic Ba		001	M3 V	
0325	Muuidimu.	B210777-9	Na		303	M2 IV	
0326	Dindma Eshgi.	B340000-9	Po De Ba		004	M4 V M7 D	
0328	Baamlaa Maa.	C253277-9	Po LoPop		111	M3 D	
0331	Guuriir.	E100144-6	LoPop Va		224	K4 V M0 D	
0332	Mige Ris.	B6557CC-8	Ag		303	M4 VI M9 D	Ancient Site.
0334	Irka.	B9A9611-B	Ni		623	M1 V M9 D M2 D	
0338	Kiimaa.	C887000-7	Ba		000	K0 V M2 D	
0402	Apge	B772555-D	Ni		110	M2 V	Ancient Site.
0403	Irli Un.	B000144-B	Ast LoPop Va		604	M1 V	
0405	Dake Ag.	C674000-8	Ba		014	K1 V M5 D	
0408	Arkag Ka.	C4536BB-9	Ni Po		402	M4 VI M4 D	
0409	Gin.	C994311-8	LoPop		302	M3 V	
0410	Daa.	B779133-9	LoPop		202	G4 V M6 D	
0411	Kash.	E584000-4	Ba		003	M6 V	
0414	Shiieniaand.	D461133-3	LoPop		913	M1 V	
0416	Sanches	B654844-B			413	M0 V	

Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
0418	Shardi	E333744-7	Na Po		103	M4 V	
0420	Nirgem.	C6A7000-8	Ba		004	K3 V M5 D	
0421	Murda.	B887211-B	LoPop		722	G8 V	
0423	Gig.	B400322-B	LoPop Va		600	K4 V	
0428	Irlu	C5358AA-B			113	K2 V M4 D	
0429	Diid.	C9B9000-8	Fl Ba	S	004	G4 V	
0431	Gizar Ik.	B634200-9	LoPop		404	K5 V	
0432	Khiieshirk.	C150744-B	Po De		905	K2 III M4 V	Chirper.
0437	Umaamuushgii.	C400799-8	Na Va		805	M4 V	
0439	Indand.	B110000-A	Ba		003	M1 V M4 D	
0440	Ganshas.	A53A966-C	Wa HiPop		403	G1 V M2 D	
0502	Niir.	B76A5AA-9	Ni Wa		120	M1 V M3 D	
0505	Emligaap.	C130688-9	Na Ni Po De		124	M1 V	
0511	Gaadir.	D4867BB-4	Ag		112	F1 IV	
0512	Arla Un.	B513344-8	Ic LoPop		902	A5 IV K9 D	
0513	Kaman.	E772000-3	Ba		003	K0 V	
0516	Rundan.	C76A522-7	Ni Wa		304	K0 V	
0517	Shiga Sha.	A726133-A	LoPop		802	M2 V	
0519	Zan.	C100266-B	LoPop Va		514	M5 III	
0522	Amkhiikhaki.	E362755-5	Ri		324	F2 VI	Ancient Site.
0523	Unimvlu.	B590100-9	De LoPop		403	K1 IV	
0526	Uumkhi.	B200000-A	Va Ba		021	M2 V	
0527	Urguu.	A357000-9	Ba		015	G9 V M3 D	
0529	Iirkaa Gaasar.	B386666-9	Ag Ni Ri		512	M4 V M5 D	
0530	Mien Puuruu.	D433322-5	Po LoPop		304	M4 V M4 D	
0531	Daur.	B655100-8	LoPop		100	K2 V M8 D	Chirper.
0537	Lia	E654755-6	Ag		502	F4 V	Full Data
0603	Dashgad.	C140244-B	Po De LoPop		601	G1 V	Full Data
0606	Khuumiam.	C736788-7			611	M0 V	
0612	Khukhi.	C667788-7	Ag Ri		700	F3 V M7 D	
0619	Iggaar.	B758766-7	Ag		715	K3 V	Chirper.
0622	Sketola.	B647488-B	LoPop		404	M1 V	
0624	Giirud.	A100266-C	LoPop Va		904	M1 V	
0635	Anemzaa.	B642422-7	Po LoPop		702	M7 VI	
0637	Vlimas.	C796000-5	Ba		003	M4 III	
0707	Maaruur.	E6A2000-6	Ba		020	K8 VI M1 D	
0713	Ruuni.	C333500-A	Ni Po		703	M8 VI	
0714	Marsus.	B6A7999-8	HiPop		521	K3 V M1 D	Ancient Site.
0718	Uupig.	D797244-4	LoPop		505	K4 V	
0721	Shika.	E251466-6	Po LoPop		501	M0 V M0 D	
0722	Kuuda I.	B361333-8	LoPop		302	M0 V	
0725	Khag.	C411266-A	Ic LoPop		103	M8 II	
0727	Dral	C7288DD-A			312	G3 V M3 D	
0731	Zzugep	C453AAA-9	Po HiPop		300	M1 V	
0734	Laari.	C797355-4	LoPop		100	M3 V M3 D	
0735	Aapas Mi.	E584366-2	LoPop		304	M1 V	
0737	Shash.	C898522-6	Ag Ni		923	G1 V M3 D	
0806	Gaage.	A212533-C	Ni Ic		800	M2 V	Full Data
0808	Kikim.	D575000-2	Ba		014	M0 II M6 V	Full Data
0811	Alekvadin	B675977-A	Ind HiPop		702	M3 V	Full Data
0812	Protalus.	B845755-8	Ag		214	G4 V M4 D	
0816	Keshi.	C792566-8	Ni		912	K4 III M4 D	
0820	Iruukzi.	C776000-6	Ba		000	K3 V M5 D	
0821	Lakhia.	B000411-C	Ast LoPop Va		504	G6 V	
0822	Siirduu.	C140366-9	Po De LoPop		814	G9 V M9 D	
0827	Iirila.	B350444-A	Po De LoPop		713	M2 V	
0831	Kuuki Zaa.	D549000-7	Ba		014	K1 V M1 D	
0835	Laaze.	D438000-4	Ba		003	M6 V	
0839	Night	B5748CC-B			420	K8 VI M4 D	
0903	Dis.	E000000-6	Ast Va Ba		013	K5 V	
0905	Oorpic.	B553ADD-A	Po HiPop		100	M2 V M7 D	
0906	Muumuu.	C7766AA-9	Ag Ni		402	M3 V K7 D	AAB Repository.
0907	Gish.	C778733-6	Ag		230	G0 V M7 D	
0910	Gisid.	E567000-2	Ba		005	K3 V M1 D	Full Data
0911	Kiked Iig.	C545311-7	LoPop		203	M3 V	Full Data
0915	Mupisar.	B577000-B	Ba		013	M3 V	Full Data
0916	Heraldia.	C95A344-9	Wa LoPop		101	G3 V	
0919	Marpi Ka.	D550000-6	Po De Ba		004	M1 V	
0921	Umda.	E6A7422-4	LoPop		310	M4 V	
0922	Guba Ak.	B375000-C	Ba		002	M1 V	
0929	Sheduu.	E649000-6	Ba		000	M3 V M6 D	
0931	Siniir Sa.	A599300-A	LoPop		514	G0 V	



Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
0933	Kis.	B88A300-9	Wa LoPop		311	K2 IV	
1002	Mishaar	B140544-C	Ni Po De		420	A2 V	
1008	Uusla.	C302422-B	Ic LoPop Va		704	K3 V	
1009	Luumiiliiplen.	B536433-9	LoPop		313	K4 IV	
1012	Uurmu Kuu.	C424100-B	LoPop		824	M4 V M0 D	
1016	Urshra	B361755-B	Ri		303	M3 V	
1019	Liga Ka.	C783000-8	Ba		003	M1 V M1 D	
1022	Kaplr.	E473544-4	Ni		513	G0 V	Full Data
1023	Irkkha.	B323688-9	Na Ni Po		900	M3 V	Full Data
1028	Miim.	C250222-6	Po De LoPop		801	G3 V	AAB Repository.
1033	Geam.	C556000-9	Ba		004	M4 V M8 D	
1034	Gur.	D533688-4	Na Ni Po		600	M4 V M9 D	
1035	Madalagaa.	B581233-8	LoPop		103	G2 V M1 V	
1037	Nuukhish.	D542355-5	Po LoPop		924	M5 V	
1038	Maur Na.	B358433-9	LoPop		514	M3 V	
1040	Davla.	C528000-A	Ba		025	M5 V M7 D	
1101	Kiimi Di.	E120000-7	Po De Ba		002	M4 V	
1102	Gipirkash.	C594122-8	LoPop		124	M7 V	
1104	Rae.	E580544-3	Ni De		923	G1 V M9 D	
1108	Uurruu E.	B7657AA-7	Ag		414	M4 V	
1109	Uuruun Kuu.	D987000-5	Ba		014	M6 V	
1112	Kish.	D310111-7	LoPop		422	M4 VI M3 D	
1114	Adguu Uun.	A5206AA-9	Na Ni Po De		703	M1 V M3 D	
1116	Kelpo.	B783422-6	LoPop		200	K1 V M4 D	
1120	Eorvin.	C340666-9	Ni Po De		103	M4 V M2 D	
1123	Guurk.	A100000-D	Va Ba		025	M2 V	Full Data
1124	Imkhasham.	A8AA677-C	Ni Wa		312	M1 V M4 D	Full Data
1125	Ishiira.	D652100-6	Po LoPop		110	M1 V M3 D M9 D	
1129	Aruur.	D6A4000-6	Ba		004	K3 V M2 D	
1130	Merkaakhu.	D79A355-A	Wa LoPop		501	M9 D	
1134	Aursis	A545522-B	Ag Ni		900	K1 V	
1140	Kaamind.	CAF3511-8	Ni Fl		500	K0 V	
1202	Kargi.	C569411-9	LoPop		805	M3 V G8 D	
1204	Limashimii.	C447000-9	Ba		002	M4 D	
1205	Miilapkhas.	B590477-7	De LoPop		404	K3 V	
1214	Guun.	E585000-4	Ba	S	012	K4 VI	
1219	Amed.	C210533-9	Ni		320	G0 V M8 D	
1220	Aruu.	C100000-A	Va Ba		004	M2 V	
1221	Shuukha Zuush.	BAD5100-7	LoPop Fl		113	K6 VI	
1222	Armi.	C577633-6	Ag Ni		613	G4 V	
1223	Muguu.	D556000-5	Ba		030	K9 III M0 D	Chirper.
1225	Irmi Khi.	E341666-4	Ni Po		210	M0 VI	
1226	Shanii Arduu.	B485000-A	Ba		022	M0 V	
1228	Lishiruud	B697311-6	LoPop		413	M7 IV	
1229	Bais Si.	E354133-3	LoPop		613	M3 V M5 D	
1232	Diam Kani.	C130000-B	Po De Ba		022	K2 V	
1233	Laap.	B375000-9	Ba		024	M4 VI M0 D	
1236	Iipgiir.	C491355-B	LoPop		503	M5 V M4 D	
1237	Miikuu Ar.	E6A7355-4	LoPop		803	K0 V	
1239	Iirbasur.	C547877-8			202	M0 V	
1240	Lam.	D223000-7	Po Ba		014	K2 IV M7 D	
1302	Umaad Nurir.	C778000-8	Ba		004	K0 V	
1307	Ashduuma.	C88A6AA-8	Ni Wa		310	M0 III M4 D	
1308	Akpussagna.	E557000-2	Ba	S	004	M4 II M8 D	
1309	Uuniluu.	B94A566-9	Ni Wa		401	M2 V M7 D M8 D	
1314	Mukirurguum.	B859000-8	Ba		002	K2 V	Full Data. Chirper.
1316	Shibasiim.	D85A477-4	Wa LoPop	S	202	K7 VI M5 D	Chirper.
1317	Belicose.	C203322-B	Ic LoPop Va		212	K4 V M7 D	
1320	Adkaash.	B222000-9	Po Ba		002	M5 V	
1321	Nuur.	B664100-6	LoPop		500	M4 V	
1322	Liper.	C675AEE-7	Ind HiPop		323	M4 V	
1323	Kushur Naa.	B310200-C	LoPop		303	G3 V M8 D	
1328	Sar.	B647799-9	Ag		102	M4 V M0 D	
1330	Shidkar.	B685200-6	LoPop		200	F3 V M7 D	
1334	Anshar.	BACA000-B	Wa Fl Ba		012	G5 V M0 D	
1335	Umkashuu	C354999-9	HiPop		222	M2 V	
1336	Kuka.	EA97000-2	Ba		003	M3 V M0 D	
1338	Rid.	C695133-8	LoPop		602	M2 V	
1403	Gag.	E896000-3	Ba		021	G1 V	
1407	Imguu.	B200499-9	LoPop Va		820	M5 V	
1410	Uurgin.	C210599-7	Ni		903	M3 V	
1416	Imdi Mi.	B68A000-8	Wa Ba		004	M2 V M8 D	

Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
1418	Kishdush.	D646000-5	Ba		003	M3 V M1 D	
1421	Angar.	B436766-8			222	M0 V M0 D	
1422	Ashbikuu.	C7C2000-7	Fl Ba		011	G7 V M1 D M8 D	
1424	Khusgurlu	B652566-9	Ni Po		614	M1 IV	
1428	Vlaarvla Akha.	A656544-9	Ag Ni		100	K6 II M9 D M2	Chirper.
1430	Uukzi Giish.	B100000-B	Va Ba		003	F1 V M1 D	
1431	Saar.	C494000-6	Ba		003	M7 V	
1434	Diirmuu.	D755000-8	Ba		003	M2 VI	
1436	Arvlesaaish.	E6B0000-5	De Ba		001	G3 V	
1437	Mishaa.	B9A8100-7	LoPop		713	M6 III	
1440	Minduun Sammad.	A58A411-C	Wa LoPop		203	M4 V	
1503	Zepdind Ir.	C5368AA-5			104	M0 V	
1505	Kuum.	C667100-6	LoPop		414	K9 III	
1506	Kakaaguur.	C486000-5	Ba		004	K3 V	
1508	Asmi.	D697222-3	LoPop		500	G5 V	
1510	Kinuu.	E110366-7	LoPop		503	M2 II	
1511	Aman Urk.	E445300-4	LoPop		123	M8 V M6 D	
1512	Ansham.	B8C2122-7	LoPop Fl		504	M5 VI	
1518	Uugnii.	A86A533-C	Ni Wa		220	M4 III	
1519	Sher.	D9D2322-5	LoPop Fl	S	303	M2 V M7 D	
1522	Gaashi Ash.	C7C0133-7	De LoPop		200	M7 V M0 D	
1523	Laus.	A596122-A	LoPop		213	M3 V M4 D	
1524	F'rnaw.	A626A88-C	Ind HiPop		912	K4 V	
1526	Gikakhii.	E403211-6	Ic LoPop Va		923	M1 V	
1529	Niin.	D210000-6	Ba		024	F8 V M5 D	
1530	Arvli Khaan.	B563000-9	Ba		002	M5 IV M6 D	
1531	Emsha I.	C3339CC-8	Na Po HiPop		213	K3 V M3 D	
1533	Zagi Uu.	C647255-6	LoPop		702	M3 V M0 D	
1534	Gid.	B76A533-B	Ni Wa		103	K1 V M6 D	
1536	Shueshlar	D435266-7	LoPop		102	M3 III M3 D	
1538	Uurme.	A343211-9	Po LoPop		401	K0 V	
1539	Dimanaam.	A583355-C	LoPop		104	K6 V M1 D	
1605	Giiaar E.	B446244-A	LoPop		300	K1 V	
1609	Sirma	C2249AA-A	Ind HiPop		502	K4 V M3 D	
1610	Nagan.	C645144-9	LoPop		103	M1 V	
1611	Shauug.	B964255-A	LoPop		414	K0 V	
1615	Marlakasi.	E779000-0	Ba		004	M0 V	
1616	Vluurvlash.	E9B4000-0	Fl Ba		014	M4 V	
1622	Genkaaa.	C120555-A	Ni Po De		201	M2 II M8 V M7	
1623	Aggaa Irpu.	A567122-7	LoPop		824	M3 V G2 D	
1625	Gakirvli.	C885333-7	LoPop		114	K4 IV	
1628	Amshakshe.	C633655-8	Na Ni Po		904	F3 IV	
1630	Kuusuu Uur.	C130377-B	Po De LoPop		203	M7 IV	
1633	Reshi Uun.	C300877-9	Na Va		501	K4 III	AAB Repository.
1635	Khasherliguu.	D627599-7	Ni		714	K0 V	
1638	Malaaash.	E759122-3	LoPop		312	K2 IV M2 D	Chirper.
1701	Kama.	E99A455-6	Wa LoPop		724	M1 V	
1702	Iski Kuu.	D463000-5	Ba		002	M4 V	
1703	Irkhiide.	C645300-A	LoPop		900	M6 V	
1707	Erdi.	C6866AA-6	Ag Ni		400	M1 V	
1708	Uunnagirluu.	B000444-9	Ast LoPop Va		104	G2 V	
1710	Kherip Ag.	E000000-6	Ast Va Ba		011	M9 V M2 D	
1711	Kaakhe Mirir.	D100533-7	Ni Va		912	M0 V	
1713	Uushnem.	C9D3511-7	Ni Fl		714	M7 IV	
1715	Fornol.	C581000-1	Ba		012	K3 V M9 D	
1717	Kasdaga.	D9B7444-7	LoPop Fl		724	M4 V	
1721	Duusikiim.	C565555-8	Ag Ni		304	G0 V M4 D	AAB Repository.
1724	Guurma Sa.	A675322-A	LoPop		524	M2 III	
1725	Angairkshak.	B445788-8	Ag		503	M0 V	
1726	Demla.	C000233-9	Ast LoPop Va		104	M1 V M2 D	
1727	Khirar.	B8B1111-A	LoPop Fl		605	M0 II	
1730	Laik Girkki.	BAB4499-8	LoPop Fl		504	M8 VI M0 D	
1732	Maasaanin.	C758322-9	LoPop		804	M4 V M7 D	
1733	Riid.	B865133-8	LoPop		614	K3 V	
1736	Santry.	B4208AA-C	Na Po De		900	M1 V M6 D	
1737	Irkhar Kirk.	C374466-8	LoPop		700	M4 V	
1738	Ginna.	C8A6000-8	Ba		013	M5 V M6 D	
1739	Enshuuar.	B6A6300-8	LoPop		812	M4 V	
1801	Kind.	E451000-3	Po Ba		025	K2 V M4 D	Chirper.
1808	Gamgiigela.	B1008BB-A	Na Va		623	K2 V	
1812	Khiidkar.	B383688-9	Ni Ri		605	M4 V	
1813	Gaadvlu Ki.	E354544-3	Ag Ni		400	M4 V M1 D	

Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
1815	Unrair.	C510111-7	LoPop		413	M3 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
1819	Unkuu.	B505144-8	Ic LoPop Va		300	M7 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
1821	Shar.	B78A200-D	Wa LoPop		402	M4 V M5 D	
1822	Anga Ke.	B200544-C	Ni Va		912	M3 V K2 D	
1823	Gerar Khashii.	E8B7000-4	Fl Ba		004	M3 V	
1824	Likamish.	E554100-3	LoPop		604	M4 V	
1825	Rarkan.	C5A2000-9	Ba		001	M9 D M9 D	
1829	Shis.	B211655-A	Na Ni Ic		913	G0 V	
1831	Irkgiur.	C663422-4	LoPop		625	M2 V M8 D	
1833	Shaaram.	E464100-5	LoPop		504	M2 II	
1836	Cordova.	C3409BB-B	Ind Po De HiPop		703	K1 V M0 D	
1837	Anlumir.	BA9A355-B	Wa LoPop		300	G6 V	
1838	Iraddii.	E989366-4	LoPop		203	M4 V	Ancient Site.
1839	Rili Aash.	B782411-7	LoPop		501	G5 VI	
1840	Saruumdiiush.	E743655-3	Ni Po		400	M1 V	
1901	Zaniin.	B694588-8	Ag Ni		700	A3 V M7 D	
1902	Irbi.	B889000-8	Ba		003	M8 VI M9 D	
1909	Iiska Ashgi.	D433000-4	Po Ba		000	K5 VI M4 D M3	
1912	Khamiila.	A430300-C	Po De LoPop		912	M0 V	
1916	Irurk.	A344644-9	Ag Ni		614	M9 D	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
1917	Aggii Ganaan.	E222477-4	Po LoPop		804	K4 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
1918	Irmay Muu.	C624422-7	LoPop		204	K1 V M4 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
1919	Nirinirk.	E776000-6	Ba		000	F2 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
1920	Kuma As.	D410000-1	Ba	S	003	M6 VI M9 D	
1921	Medishvlaas.	C245377-7	LoPop		724	G4 V	
1924	Mar.	E455000-3	Ba		000	A4 V M3 VI	
1925	Naauup Emrim.	A485677-9	Ag Ni Ri		800	M0 V M5 D	
1927	Khiri.	B94A222-6	Wa LoPop		204	K2 V M5 D	
1929	Shakiisiir.	E628311-4	LoPop		824	M2 V	
1930	Kegi And.	B000788-C	Na Ast Va		204	A1 V	Ancient Site.
1933	Uushruu.	C599322-9	LoPop		604	M1 V M5 D	
1934	Zishma Kha.	C886233-5	LoPop		200	M2 V	
1938	Keshi	B566200-7	LoPop		114	K3 V M1 D M0 D	
1940	Nii.	B548A88-8	Ind HiPop		420	M6 III	
2006	Amur Isark.	B210788-7	Na		912	M2 V	
2008	Khekaa.	A110122-C	LoPop		505	M1 V M7 D	
2010	Maashsha.	C8B7000-A	Fl Ba		005	G3 V	
2011	Kikamaa.	D544000-4	Ba		003	G1 V M7 D	
2012	Biin.	E651233-4	Po LoPop		733	M3 V M7 D	
2014	Bala.	C62A333-8	Wa LoPop		414	M0 V M7 D	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2016	Zuarkri.	C877599-8	Ag Ni		504	M2 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2017	Kain.	E576244-4	LoPop	S	821	M7 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2020	Kan.	D200000-1	Va Ba		013	G4 V	Ancient Site.
2021	Shaashsha.	A300433-B	LoPop Va		915	K9 IV	
2027	Amuum Kuu.	C9A5444-9	LoPop		800	K5 VI	
2028	Iipshimun.	B443200-A	Po LoPop		904	G1 V M2 D	
2030	Ragni.	E63A766-6	Wa		314	M4 V	
2034	Daindkhara.	C324355-B	LoPop		703	M1 III	
2036	Uundi Zi.	A410977-C	Na Ind HiPop		804	G8 III M8 D	
2037	Daaud Urle.	C333344-9	Po LoPop		820	M1 V	
2038	Gimmi Uussha.	C476333-A	LoPop		202	K0 V	
2040	Gikhii Iis.	A240511-8	Ni Po De		102	M3 V M2 D	
2101	Khizuuuum.	A85A433-C	Wa LoPop		303	M4 V	
2102	Ravla.	B554211-7	LoPop		210	G5 IV	
2103	Inlun Ra.	E000000-6	Ast Va Ba	S	005	K2 V	Ancient Site.
2104	Nuudle.	C884877-7	Ri		902	K5 D M0 D	
2105	Shiza.	C461866-A	Ri		603	M4 V M9 D	
2111	Kiikagaiir.	C446455-9	LoPop		600	M9 D M3 D	
2112	Nappar.	C428255-7	LoPop		720	M9 IV	
2115	Zimian.	A331744-B	Na Po		304	M4 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2118	Sylea	A586A98-C	HiPop		305	G2 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2121	Vlaakier.	B98A577-8	Ni Wa		413	G1 V	
2122	Iirkkhu.	C476000-9	Ba		000	M9 V	
2125	Urish.	B5247CC-A			603	K4 V M9 D	AAB Repository.
2130	Iruies.	B565000-9	Ba		003	G4 V	
2133	Degkak Uun.	E88A455-5	Wa LoPop		210	K4 III	
2135	Diliig.	D749000-4	Ba		013	K6 V	
2136	Kiir.	A77A000-D	Wa Ba		004	M3 V M6 D	
2138	Adkhi.	E888244-3	LoPop		400	M3 V M3 D	
2139	Nig.	C565344-9	LoPop		802	M8 V M5 D	Ancient Site.
2140	Sidzer.	D200255-8	LoPop Va		910	M2 III M1 VI	
2203	Andkag Pa.	B338000-A	Ba		000	K2 V	



Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	FBG	Stellar Data	Comment
2205	Daash.	C538655-A	Ni		823	G3 V	
2206	Edirkisdii.	B444100-A	LoPop		113	A8 V	
2209	Shudusham.	A476AAA-C	Ind HiPop		710	M1 V M9 D	
2210	Gis.	D562466-3	LoPop		105	M2 V M1 D	
2211	Gid.	B655555-B	Ag Ni		224	K2 III M8 D	Chirper.
2213	Kiirri.	B541000-5	Po Ba		014	G9 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2214	Lauursha.	E849555-6	Ni		904	A1 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2216	Khash.	B8A6000-7	Ba		023	M0 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2218	Shaaak.	B436999-9	HiPop		304	K0 V M5 D	
2219	Ase	B220488-C	Po De LoPop		610	M4 V M5 D	
2220	Khishnar.	E462255-0	LoPop		313	M2 V M0 D	
2221	Mium.	C998277-6	LoPop		815	K1 V M5 D	
2222	Miidkhig.	C855899-8			613	M0 V	
2223	Muun.	A866000-8	Ba		002	M2 V	
2224	Kuula Iish.	B160322-B	De LoPop		203	K2 II	
2225	Duur.	C512111-9	Ic LoPop		711	K4 V	
2226	Skeen	B491A88-C	Ind HiPop		722	K1 V	
2227	Lider.	C357100-6	LoPop		703	K3 V M6 D	Chirper.
2232	Kuuma.	C538255-8	LoPop		902	M1 V M7 V	
2237	Miregzi.	B203266-9	Ic LoPop Va		700	F9 V	AAB Repository.
2306	Erem Dash.	D645333-7	LoPop		703	M0 V M8 D	
2312	Giikkala.	B79A755-B	Wa		103	K3 IV	AAB Repository.
2314	Laaairer.	B559111-8	LoPop		904	A1 VI	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2316	Idmum.	C4447AA-7	Ag		802	M0 V M5 D	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2317	Gikuu.	E571344-1	LoPop		910	M2 IV M8 D	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2318	Kuunen Ish.	B210666-8	Na Ni		413	M4 V M7 D M5 D	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2319	Ipduu In.	D979577-7	Ni		914	A1 V	
2320	Uunli.	B6B5000-2	Fl Ba		022	M3 III	
2322	Shusa.	B581899-A	Ri		804	M2 V M5 D	
2323	Lezaar.	B423A88-8	Na Ind Po HiPop		803	K4 V	
2326	Limeshuurgi.	E410000-4	Ba		010	K1 VI	
2327	Rias.	B759344-A	LoPop		113	M3 V	
2330	Raami	C522966-B	Na Ind Po HiPop		403	M2 V	
2334	Busirkher.	B233000-A	Po Ba		003	G7 V	
2335	Gish.	B555388-9	LoPop		403	M1 II	
2336	Adan.	D661411-3	LoPop		903	K1 V M2 D	
2338	Shinzarkan.	B455211-9	LoPop		614	M8 IV M0 V	
2401	Erkiim.	A52A111-B	Wa LoPop		103	M9 V M2 D	
2403	Aaruu Zi.	B469322-8	LoPop		623	K1 V	
2404	Gemi.	C400000-A	Va Ba		004	M4 V	
2405	Luunni Miu.	C576000-5	Ba		013	M0 V M0 D	
2407	Lagaashin.	E767344-3	LoPop		910	K3 V	
2408	Arnaki.	A200988-C	Na Ind HiPop Va		513	M1 V	
2410	Uungip.	C000577-9	Ni Ast Va		912	M7 II M9 D	
2413	Kiur.	E651000-0	Po Ba		001	M3 IV M2 D M7	
2414	Khaashuu.	AA7A344-8	Wa LoPop		500	M0 IV	
2416	Argash.	B755400-6	LoPop		404	K2 III M6 D	Full Data. Chirper.
2419	Gash.	E544000-0	Ba	S	000	G3 V M7 D	
2422	Geiish.	B473000-B	Ba		004	M1 V M9 D	
2425	Diki Shi.	C200ABB-A	Na Ind HiPop Va		423	G1 VI M5 D	
2429	Arka Uum.	B552222-6	Po LoPop		602	F2 V	
2431	Kim.	D7A8333-3	LoPop		512	M1 V M1 VI	
2433	Uumad.	D794400-5	LoPop		714	M2 V	
2435	Iidkek.	BAB4333-7	LoPop Fl		900	M5 IV M3 D	
2437	Ligmuu.	E636422-4	LoPop		402	M4 V K7 D	
2439	Inmaeg.	B384000-8	Ba		023	M7 V	
2501	Erani.	B000699-B	Na Ni Ast Va		100	M6 IV	
2503	Gigi.	C000000-A	Ast Va Ba		004	M2 V K1 D	
2507	Ninnund.	A986699-9	Ag Ni Ri		410	M1 V K3 D	
2511	Kuuir Am.	D477333-6	LoPop		902	M9 II M3 D	
2513	Girku.	E89A000-1	Wa Ba		002	K1 V	
2517	Imaar Pa.	D444000-1	Ba		002	M1 V M0 D	
2519	Riiid Irman.	E000133-7	Ast LoPop Va		804	G3 V	
2521	Shipashuua.	E260000-4	De Ba		001	K4 V	
2524	Gimuur Luu.	B576000-8	Ba		003	M9 V	AAB Repository.
2526	Kisa.	A7C6000-C	Fl Ba		002	K6 V M1 D M4 D	
2529	Daa.	E564699-3	Ag Ni Ri		614	M0 V	
2532	Mie Uur.	C110333-A	LoPop		603	K6 V	
2534	Mid.	C648222-5	LoPop		402	M2 V	
2536	Duunpigamuur.	D511766-7	Na Ic		424	M2 IV K9 D	
2538	Duwind.	B768344-8	LoPop		202	K6 IV	
2540	Uumda.	C553100-6	Po LoPop		220	K3 V	Chirper.

Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
2602	Gasa Kuu.	B444200-8	LoPop		201	M1 V M6 D	
2603	Arunde.	EAAA233-7	Wa LoPop		903	K4 V	
2606	Margish Liir.	C347244-A	LoPop		805	K2 IV	
2608	Duur.	B557377-6	LoPop		513	M3 V M7 D	
2609	Bambe.	C599300-B	LoPop		713	M9 V	
2610	Kerliar.	C5949BB-7	Ind HiPop		605	M4 V	
2611	Kishkeim.	C201422-8	Ic LoPop Va		703	M8 II M5 D	
2615	Ispumer	E381855-5	Ri		905	M3 VI M5 D K5	
2616	Likhamii.	B536788-6			103	M1 V M0 D	
2623	Gurdaan	B310633-B	Na Ni		514	M1 V	
2624	Idas	A492311-C	LoPop		201	F2 V M5 D	
2625	Imsha.	B224122-A	LoPop		204	K1 V M3 D	
2628	Gashkanan.	B74A255-8	Wa LoPop		614	A4 V K7 D	
2630	Shesh.	C000100-A	Ast LoPop Va	S	704	M1 V	
2631	Uurkuumluu.	B245000-8	Ba		013	M3 V M5 D	
2635	Arvlaa Gam.	E889377-3	LoPop		704	M3 V	
2636	Vled.	C998200-8	LoPop		914	K7 V	
2639	Suuashuur.	C100100-B	LoPop Va		403	G9 D	
2640	Dishadshii	B614ACC-C	Ind Ic HiPop		804	M1 V	
2703	Derku	C610A99-A	Na Ind HiPop		303	M4 V M4 D	
2705	Uundiirshiikis.	E356000-5	Ba		001	M7 V	
2706	Sinnig.	C364455-A	LoPop		214	K1 V	
2707	Kalanaauud.	D525000-6	Ba		000	M1 V	
2709	Kimvle.	A000666-C	Na Ni Ast Va		503	M0 V	
2720	Lir.	B426100-9	LoPop		303	K8 IV M7 D	
2721	Khuuda.	B551255-6	Po LoPop		734	M1 V	
2729	Gaar.	C360211-A	De LoPop		120	M9 V	Full Data. Sylean Fed.
2730	Maan.	B241466-B	Po LoPop		203	K3 V	
2731	Miip.	C631000-8	Po Ba		004	G0 V	
2732	Uurkhir.	C9E7000-A	Fl Ba		002	G4 V	
2736	Gaen Luum.	C324366-9	LoPop		513	K2 V	
2802	Gekhuu.	B678555-8	Ag Ni		825	G2 V	
2803	Kersi Am.	B427566-B	Ni		404	M4 V	
2814	Muugkha.	D223133-6	Po LoPop		604	K4 V M4 D	
2816	Indshii Ganme.	B869588-A	Ni		803	G4 V	
2821	Uuggarkirber.	C552566-6	Ni Po		504	A2 V	
2823	Muumi.	D553300-9	Po LoPop		503	M0 V	
2825	Bishaakuuka.	C683455-6	LoPop		723	M1 V	
2829	Gishashum.	E100433-8	LoPop Va		424	M0 V M5 D	
2830	Navlaand Sha.	EAC7111-5	LoPop Fl		514	M3 V M3 D	
2832	Sinad	C458744-A	Ag		802	M4 V M5 D	
2836	Khuir.	B478ABB-9	Ind HiPop		204	M3 V	
2837	Igla	B414555-D	Ni Ic		904	M2 V M9 D	
2839	Gaeshme.	C783000-6	Ba		003	M1 VI M1 D	
2840	Gumir Gaeg.	B8C07BB-8	De		914	M8 III M4 D	
2904	Ishnuunar.	E572533-3	Ni		220	M4 IV M6 D	
2906	Danki Im.	B200ABB-9	Na Ind HiPop Va		903	G4 VI M9 D	
2910	Shusa Liishli.	C211000-B	Ic Ba		023	K2 V M0 D	
2912	Leer.	B7B3244-A	LoPop Fl		725	G2 V	
2913	Khiuur La.	C8B3200-4	LoPop Fl		403	M3 V M2 D	Full Data
2914	Mikhag Kuu.	B668799-7	Ag Ri		313	F0 V	
2916	Khiinra Ash.	CAE6133-6	LoPop Fl		904	M2 IV M1 D	Ancient Site.
2922	Ekugush	B652699-7	Ni Po		904	M1 V M9 D	
2924	Uushba Sind.	D564888-2	Ri		105	F4 V M0 D	
2928	Vlaki Khuu.	A494588-B	Ag Ni		614	M8 V	
2929	Danuuvlan.	B000000-A	Ast Va Ba		013	M1 V	
2931	Dinenruum.	E332644-3	Na Ni Po		122	K1 IV M3 D M4	
2933	Ganad	A656A99-B	HiPop		604	M0 V	
2934	Dishe.	A778000-A	Ba		015	K9 V	
2935	Amuur Keir.	C472100-7	LoPop		113	A1 V	
2936	Saregon	A584522-C	Ag Ni		314	M3 V M6 D	
2937	Uurigger.	C4347BB-8			403	M1 III M9 V	
2938	Shakiiga	C867844-9	Ri		310	K4 V	Full Data
3002	Isuur.	C344300-7	LoPop		920	K0 VI	
3003	Idsha.	C665000-8	Ba		010	M6 V	
3005	Aarza Kand.	C304644-8	Ni Ic Va		822	K1 V M4 D	
3008	Mim.	A400466-B	LoPop Va		201	G2 V	
3011	Laudum	B352ADD-9	Po HiPop		801	M8 V M1 D	
3015	Anuug.	C783000-7	Ba		000	K6 V	
3019	Kinekesh.	C222100-B	Po LoPop		830	M3 V M7 D	
3021	Kamsii.	A457666-8	Ag Ni		324	K1 V M7 D	Chirper.
3022	Gurishi	B756677-9	Ag Ni		304	G0 V M3 D	

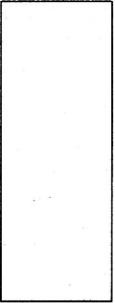
Loc	Name	UWP	Remarks	B	PBG	Stellar Data	Comment
3025	Manluushagi.	D200000-8	Va Ba		021	M7 V	
3026	Uumkishla.	C363100-6	LoPop		802	K0 V	
3027	Guuza Bem.	C9D5322-6	LoPop Fl		223	M3 V M5 D M1 D	
3028	Duuguu.	A373244-C	LoPop		901	M2 V	
3033	Ashmelam.	A424633-D	Ni		903	K2 V	
3034	Iishaanka.	B554977-A	HiPop		603	K3 V M3 D	Full Data. Chirper.
3037	Lashupii.	E665100-4	LoPop		722	M3 V	
3039	Kiiguuga.	B8B4200-A	LoPop Fl		601	G0 V	
3040	Unlakhar	A629733-C			703	K3 V	
3101	Edza.	B73A000-A	Wa Ba		004	G2 V M8 D	
3103	Gar.	B439688-B	Ni		514	K4 V M4 V	
3104	Aadkha Na.	E200122-6	LoPop Va		431	G0 V M6 D	
3105	Kir.	C300544-B	Ni Va		910	M3 V	
3106	Uumuurler.	B425222-9	LoPop		803	K8 V	
3113	Urir Gug.	E342755-4	Po		604	M2 D M4 D	
3115	Markasher	E100300-5	LoPop Va		320	K8 IV	
3117	Khiiir.	B200533-9	Ni Va		314	M5 IV	
3118	Lemik	C56A722-A	Wa		411	K1 V	
3121	Kagash.	D554877-4			202	M2 V M9 D	
3123	Kankuup Ir.	B424AFF-8	Ind HiPop		114	M3 V	
3125	Kadushii	E695ADD-5	Ind HiPop		813	M2 V	
3127	Arkadkhi.	C779233-A	LoPop		204	K2 IV	
3128	Mish.	C679A88-9	Ind HiPop		803	M6 VI	
3129	Keras Vla.	B867322-7	LoPop		903	K0 V	
3130	Agdam Gii.	B5577CC-9	Ag		220	M9 III K8 D	
3131	Ashga.	A7C3422-A	LoPop Fl		413	K2 V M6 D	
3132	Kiir.	C462000-9	Ba		010	G0 V M5 D	
3133	Nin.	C362233-5	LoPop		402	M5 IV M3 D	Full Data
3135	Arla.	B58A688-8	Ni Ri Wa		700	K2 V	
3137	Iimdii.	C493000-7	Ba		003	M1 V	
3140	Kerumirgaa.	A562222-8	LoPop		110	G0 IV	
3203	Maain.	D668533-4	Ag Ni		611	G3 V	
3205	Iidshuu.	C765355-6	LoPop		313	K9 IV M6 D	
3206	Dim.	D646266-6	LoPop		904	M6 VI	
3207	Imkhag Guu.	D567366-4	LoPop		700	G2 V M4 D	
3208	Agduu.	E400000-8	Va Ba		004	M1 V M7 D	
3210	Kamnakiaaar.	A965455-A	LoPop		405	K6 V	
3211	Zikhi.	D427211-9	LoPop		902	M0 V M7 D M6 D	
3216	Shand.	C964111-7	LoPop		713	K4 V M0 D	
3218	Kaskii	B300766-E	Na Va		904	G4 V	
3226	Duuka.	B686955-A	HiPop		300	F2 V	
3227	Ashash As.	B758255-7	LoPop		403	M2 V M6 D	
3234	Gau.	C433666-B	Na Ni Po		420	M5 III M2 D	
3235	Daii.	C75A100-8	Wa LoPop		613	M1 V	
3238	Luushdeam.	E560100-3	De LoPop		803	M2 V M4 D	Full Data

This sector has 569 worlds, of which 447 have native gas giants. The estimated population for the sector is 1108 billion sapients (not necessarily humans). There are 42 Agricultural (Ag) worlds versus 34 Non-Agricultural (Na) worlds. There are 91 Non-Industrial (Ni) Worlds versus 22 Industrial (Ind) worlds. There are 17 Rich (Ri) worlds versus 74 Poor (Po) worlds. There are 38 Water Worlds (Wa), 17 Ice-Capped worlds (Ic), 31 Desert worlds (De), and 56 Vacuum (Va) worlds. There are 34 High Population (HiPop) worlds versus 234 Low Population (LoPop) worlds. There are 15 Asteroid Belts (Ast) in the subsector. There are 128 Barren (Ba) worlds. The highest population world in the sector is 1524 A626A88-C Shibashlim; the lowest population world is 0929 E649000-6 Sheduu. The average tech level in the sector is 8 (most lie between 6 and 10). World names are primarily Vilani.

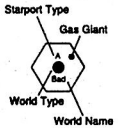


A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P

Subsectors



**Map Legend**



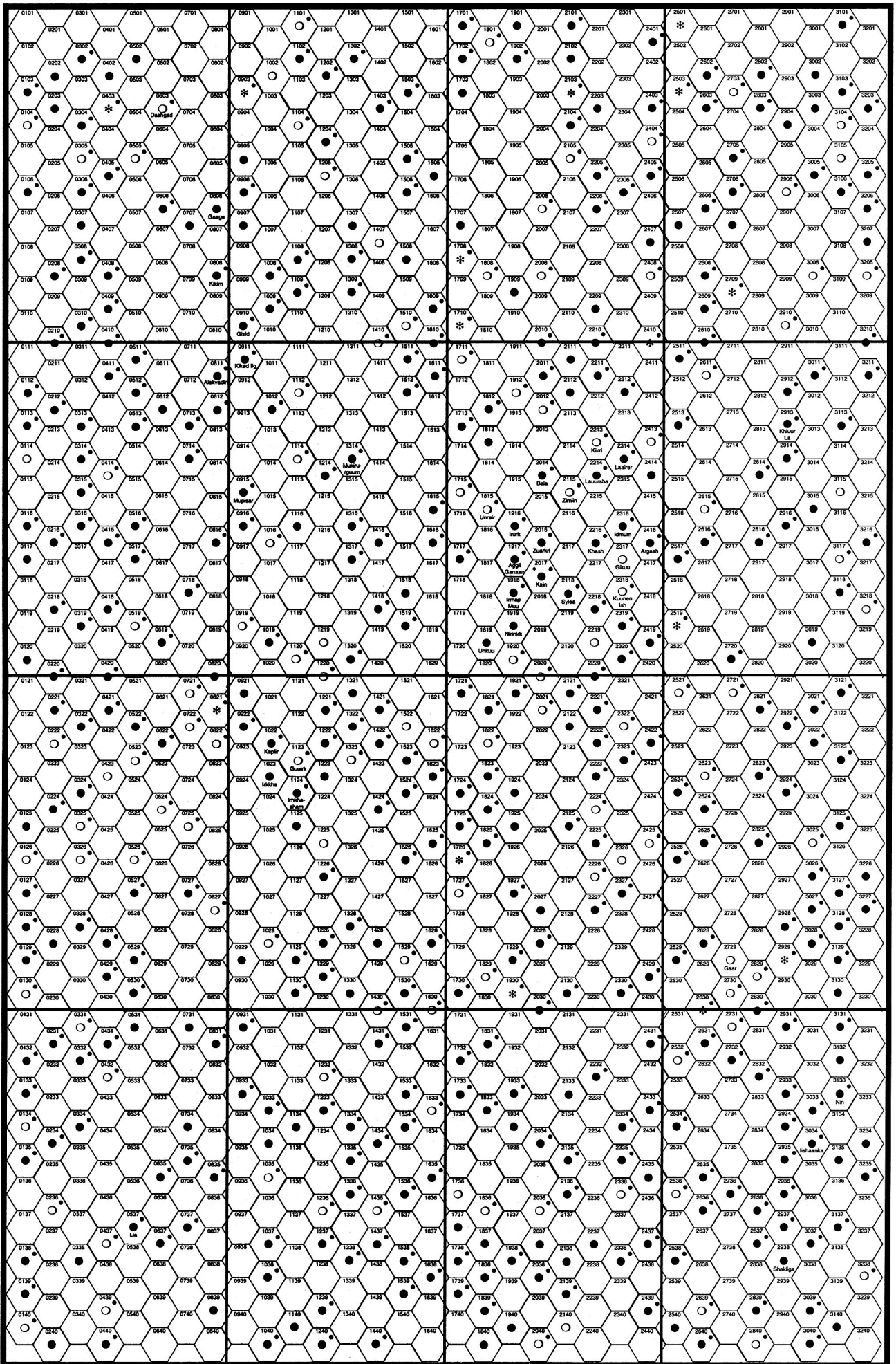
**World Types**

- water present
- no water present
- \* asteroid belt

**Bases**

- Imperium Naval
- Imperium Scout
- ★ Independent
- Research
- Scout
- Reserve
- Prison

**Core**



Unconfirmed reports, common speculations, sometimes even outright lies. That's what rumors are. And here are the rumors currently circulating within the Third Imperium. Many of these are in generic format, i.e. "this subsector", "this world" instead of specific locations, to allow referee flexibility in placing them. These rumors can also be used as hooks for adventures, or can lead to new campaign possibilities. Outrageous or not, Only one thing is for sure: only the referee knows the truth (or untruth) behind each rumor.

A prolific undercover journalist is very close to breaking a scandal involving two subsectors and three minor races. Something about bribery and cargo tempering. . .

The government is just a puppet controlled by a colonel banished from the Imperial Palace for killing one of Cleon's nephews over a lady noble.

There's an automaton planet where no organisms exist. The entire world functions like one giant machine!

Bizarre mutations are occurring in the remote regions. Several newborn babies exhibited physical traits of different alien races!

A spy is supposed to pass classified information to a corporate executive at the charity fundraiser tonight.

The governor just received emergency grant from Sylea to the tune of several billion credits for the toxic spill on the north shore. God knows he probably staged it and will swindle half of the money for himself!

An unidentified terrorist organization is going to break into a business tycoon's manor after he goes on vacation this week.

The local parliament is expected to vote no on the Merchandise Limitations Act, but many special interest groups are trying to sway —scrupulously or otherwise—the members who are still weighing their decision.

Several successful playwrights are murdered in fashions similar to their most popular holo-vid mysteries.

A reclusive industrialist is implicated in a scandal involving the shooting deaths of three activists.

Some retired scouts are now accusing the Service of suppressing the discovery of an alien species that could clone any living lifeform.

The second-in-command of a notorious space raiding gang defected yesterday and is being detained at the Department of Planetary Security.

A rich merchant is seeking a plastic surgeon to remake a female convict's face into the image of a woman he loved and lost.

The Parkinson Armory was stopped not by the compound security, all of whom occupied by a prime time astrobball game at the time, but by a hooded man and his masked lady companion wielding fantastic gadgets!

A girl who believes herself to have healing powers is cast out of her homeworld.

A fugitive monk is running from corporate assassins. Supposedly he has sensitive information and it's imperative that he gets to Sylea to see Cleon.

The Delta Police Division, backed by a clique of influential sports agents, is framing a former astrobball star for the double murder of his estranged wife and her friend.

The outpost on a border system is haunted by spirits of couriers who were collectively drowned under mysterious conditions.

A big-time smuggler just slipped a load of high-powered carbines through the customs. She and her partner are looking for buyers.

The natives reported a strange, hovering robot roaming the wilderness. It is sometimes elusive, oftentimes violent, and is known to be armed with alien weaponry.

Solomon Schwyke discovered the ultimate psionic equation somewhere in this system, where it remained hidden after Schwyke's death till this day.

A clandestine negotiation for water rights is supposed to start next week, at the skytower. But the Damacus faction plans to assassinate the ambassador before then.

A confidential file going to the Imperial Palace regarding the construction of a secret jump drive built in a neighboring sector was accidentally delivered to an antique shop in this system.

Four unnamed officials are helping prisoners formulate a massive jailbreak. One of the officials was pressured into the scheme, while two others wanted to frame the chief warden.

Dr. Jonas is looking for a crew to find the Tiq-Suen Pyramid, so is his longtime rival, Dr. Belloth. Whoever can get to it first will surely earn the hefty bounty offered by the Imperial Heritage Institute.

The exiled Sir Winston Kidlow is currently gathering forces to reclaim his world. Military pilots and gunmen are especially welcome.

An angry mob of Bye-rens tricked and abandoned by a government-run mining company is heading this way, with blood in their eyes!

Smuggling a cargo onto this world is easy, if you remember to slip about Cr200 to the customs before inspection. Tell them you're with Sollie.

The Scout Service branches out on backwater planets are hard up for recruits right now. They'll take anybody not charged with capital offense outside of Sylea.

Anyone wanting to contact Flashcash, the hacker who breaks into bank computers and fabricate transactions, should go to Crimson Row JX-9. Password: "I'm looking for some dough on the road."

A retired captain of the local army is teaching a new, lethal, virtually unbeatable martial arts style derived from the movement of the Y'raii beast.

A singing legend from the early Second Imperium who reportedly die in a shuttle accident was recently spotted in this system.

The high-rating holo-vid game show, "Whose Ship Is It, Anyway?", is fixed! The producers only want former scouts as champions. They script the shows and provide answers to those whom they want winning beforehand.

There's a subliminal message hidden in the line of screen savers designed by Imperium Near Dark, Inc.!

The military services stationed here received a secret edict from Sylea ordering them to conduct a genocide of non-Imperial aliens in this area!

One of the worlds wants to pass a bill outlawing mark-up of goods by more than 15% of the original price. The Merchant Association is now hiring to lobby against it.

The spy who stole the prototype rotorbot III from Brighton-Domalski was supposedly contacted by Count LaRache on behalf of Kolonial Engineering Unlimited.

One-half of a renowned Denaar comedy act is searching for new management and a new partner. He will be holding auditions on South Islands next week.

The subsector CEO of Ling-Standard Products staged the kidnapping of this own daughter.

A garage mechanic put together a grav car that can enter upper atmosphere in one minute. He is looking for backers, and already he has offers from some big companies.

Archaeologists on an expedition to this system claimed to have solved the Riddle of the St. Essar's Ark prior to their untimely demise.

The dictator's Stellar Defense Patrol shot down a luxury liner in the outer orbit. Publicly, they are claiming the sensors mistaken it for a rebel recon vessel.

Starport 51 does not exist. And if you're smart, you won't ask any more question.

A warring faction on this planet is planning to rescue a notorious demolition expert during his transportation to a maximum security prison.

Heirs to a historical mansion found manuscripts by a legendary physicist that contradict popular assumptions about space travel, and proposed new dynamics for possible time travel.

Missionaries sent to a certain famine world have inexplicably disappeared, among them is the renowned Emperor's Golden Peace Award winner Sister Merylthol.

The astrogator of the ship *Galloping Phantom* plotted a jumpspace corridor that cut the travel distance from here to Sylea by half!

A very successful gambler is suspected of using psionic powers to the influence outcome of games.

Biologists at the Federal Academy of Genetics Research managed to bio-engineer a breed of extremely aggressive and deadly insects. The project director is seeking an escort for them to the Bureau of Environmental Health headquarters on Sylea —with excellent pay and appropriate compensations, of course.

An underground broadcast warns that the end of the universe will begin on this world, triggered by a freak global cataclysm resulting from a secret ecological pact.

The editor of *Heads Up* vid-zine is pressured into a public retraction of the Travellers' Aid Society fund misappropriation story, though privately she still stands firm behind the report.

A megacorporation is on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. It will happen if its deal with a low-tech world falls through.

The Zandora Commission apparently did find significant clues to Archduke Cassidan's assassination on his homeworld in this subsector, but chose not to include them in their report.

A wealthy land baron has died without drafting a will! Relatives, friends, and acquaintances are coming out of the woods to get a piece of the pie.



Under the foundation on which this tavern is built hides the winnings of perhaps the greatest gambler of all time. His descendants sold the property years ago without knowing that fact.

A starship was accidentally launched with no crew and only children on board!

The restaurant down this street uses Vargr meat in their cooking!

One of the ships in the used-starship lot has a damaged sentient computer on board.

Members of a space metal band collapsed backstage after their last concert here. All but one died, and the survivor is in a coma. Alien parasites has been whispered about as the cause.

There is a secret course on pocket universes being taught at the university; the next session starts next week.

That quiet jewelry merchant over there is under some sort of Imperial witness relocation, protection program. He is scheduled to testify against a powerful cartel and rebel colonists.

Dignitaries have been informed that a star in this system is about to go nova soon! Evacuation of diplomats and other high-ranking officials has already begun, but they are keeping it hush-hush from private citizens.

Poor investment decision is forcing a megacorporation to pull out of a planet. The workers aren't happy because there are rumors of the company stiffing them of their pays.

A top-selling recording artist abruptly retires—three days after getting a call from the Imperial Secret Service.

One of the 23 existing vid-greeting cards of sports star Kennison Lex has surfaced on this planet. Antique dealers and collectors are stumbling all over themselves to track it down.

Hard lotion secreted by the strange plants in the highland region offers armor-like protection against small firearms just by rubbing it on the skin!

A scout ship docked at a way station on the periphery two weeks ago. What is unusual is the ship had been presumed lost in a misjump a little over three years ago. The ship's pilot said he misjumped to a far sector and landed near a ringworld, and spent the better part of a year surveying it before he started heading home.

According to some paperwork, the only ships attacked in this sector are disguised Zhunastu ships.

There are suspicions that spies from either one of the pocket empires, or one of Zhunastu's competitors are real eager to get their hand on Fusion Plus.

Local sources report that the roars of ebon ruugar — last of which is believed to be killed over 200 years ago — have been heard on the outskirts of the Eastern Continental Jungle. A big-game hunting baron has taken keen interest in this matter.

One parsec away from here is a shipyard that sells parts designed by garage engineers. Most of them run well for the price, but every once in a while the customers do get junk.

The runaway son of a noble stole his father's huge supply of anagathics and is gathering people to establish a utopian world.

Inhabitants of a system in the old Vilani space tell of a story of a secret pathway to "The Origin", a place much like the human "Garden of Eden." However, another story describes the same locale as a giant "space cemetery" with myriad of wrecked ships.

An old merchant confides that "strange" things happen during a three parsec jump between two systems. Old radio messages are picked up, some passengers fall violently ill and occasionally the jumpspace drive goes crazy.

The witness of a pirate attack, obviously drunk, claims the attackers were using old Sylean navy ships, with logos and equipment still intact. The man has been fired from his company after the attack.

A cure for jumpspace intolerance syndrome can be extracted from certain herbs within this sector; it can also cure everything from headaches to the common cold.

Professional pistol-duelists can be hired in this region. They provoke fights with a victim, then kills him in a challenge. They are known for their dishonorable tactics too.

The Navy just lost a carrier in subsector B. A prominent noble was in command of the vessel.

Two years ago, the Tramp Freighter *Estimated Prophet* disappeared in jump outsystem in this sector. There was no sign of distress, and the ship was in perfect working order. Now more ships doing the same jump are getting minor misjumps, and they are said to receive transmissions from the *Prophet* while in jumpspace!

Hardrock Mining just discovered a big, rich asteroid in the fifth system. Their stock is really going to skyrocket in the next week or so when they announce this.

The tomb of Duke Robert I, founder of this colony generations before, doesn't contain his bones. They were secretly removed some time ago by the rival von Smith family, and now adorn Schloss Smith.

Bet on Tony's Boy in the third race at Topek Downs; that filter feeder can really move!

This planet has experienced a severe outbreak of a deadly communicable disease in recent months. Initial symptoms of the disease include the swelling of the skin around the eyes, mucous leaking from the nasal passages, and sneezing. The disease runs its course from onset to death in 12 to 36 hours. There is no cure.

A local author asks for help in researching a cabal of Sylean nobles who kidnap "commoners" for organ-harvesting to prolong their own lives.

The opening of the new wings to the Highport has been postponed, with no explanation given.

Saint Elvis's Guitar Pick, reputed to be in the cathedral's reliquary, is a fake.

"I worked on a secret Imperial project in the outback of some system. We were trying to gene-engineer a new race of unbelievably tough and resilient humans so they can settle otherwise useless planet."

There is a secret, underground city on this planet. The city is inhabited by little dog-faced men.

In the remote country of a world a miner has discovered a horrible sight: in a small valley he found a village of about 200 — all slaughtered by very precise cuts.

There are psychotic killers on a murder spree dressed in Imperial police uniforms.

"Gladiators wanted! Gladiators wanted! Hey you, interested in earning big credits? Yeah? Ya know how to use a blade? Sign up here and ya will be rich in a couple of months!"

Time travel was supposed to have occurred on this planet, but an accident destroyed the entire colony that was then there.

A powerful family is offering a standing bounty for any member of a rival family.

There is a red-leafed plant indigenous to this world which has an unusual power: those inhaling its pollen are overwhelmed by a feeling of complete calm and contentment for several minutes.

A fugitive from Imperial justice is reputed to have fled to this system. She is a former captain of the Imperial

Navy, and is responsible for the destruction of four unarmed freighters. She claims to have done it because the freighters were trafficking in slaves.

Black Harkon, a wanted pirate, is currently staying on Sylea incognito. The Cleon regime has set a prize of Cr100,000 on his head if he is taken alive. However, it is said that he is very close to a niece of the emperor. . . closer than anybody would like to think.

Local scientists have banned the thesis written by a grad student. The thesis purportedly centered on a method of enhancing latent psi abilities in most humans. . . the grad student is now in hiding and seeking transport off-world.

Traders in this subsector speak of the "ghost ship" that roams the spacelanes here. The only evidence of this ship is the "ghost image" picked up by passive sensors, but unverified by active sensors.

The "new" Naasirka Imperial navigation computer has a floating-point decimal error at seven significant digits. It is also not new; these are computers that have been in storage for 300 years, and are now being released for sale in newly-colonized worlds.

A spice on this world, available in great quantities, becomes a potent aphrodisiac when consumed with a fruit common in another subsector.

Evidences suggest that a war might have taken place on one of the worlds between humans and their robotic counterparts.

The large number of Vargr in this area are actually on covert scouting missions, in preparation for the coming war.

A mysterious order of red-robed monks has set up monasteries on several rimward worlds. They are serving as counselors for a vast number of powerful houses.

The local monarch has undergone a sudden major personality shift. People are whispering about mind control and shapechangers.

The Imperium is expanding only so it can support its core member worlds (and the megacorporations within this exclusive clique) by allowing megacorps to strip the outlying planets of their natural resources.

"Be careful when dealing with the natives. They might treat you like a king, but several merchants have already disappeared. I think they might be cannibals. . . and there were strange bones found near the starports!"

The third moon was recently visited by an Imperial expedition, which explored the mountain ranges for two

day before declaring the moon a red zone. This lasted for almost four months, during which the Imperial cruisers visited the moon daily.

Recently there has been an alarmingly increased malfunction rate with robotic household units. They started attack their owners like a rabid dog and had to be destroyed.

Large parts of the government on this planet are under mind control. Whoever is behind this is pursuing a secret agenda to overthrow all humaniti and their ilk.

The AAB (the Vilani Storehouse of All Knowledge), with the help of the Imperial bureaucracy and the Travellers' Aid Society, is attempting to wipe out all Solomani cultural identity within the Imperium.

On a planet in the third system, some inhabitants tell accounts of an advanced biomechanical plague that nearly wiped out the entire population many generations ago.

A bizarre spacecraft of enormous size and unknown origin has been known to "phase" into the border of Sylean space on occasions and drift aimlessly for indeterminate time before phasing back out. All attempts to contact the vessel have thus far been unsuccessful — some with disastrous results.

The Security & Investigation Bureau of this planet uses high-tech microscopic cameras to spy on both citizens and visitors.

There was a mutiny in the naval base right after the personnel has examined a crash site of a strange alien ship. It was serious enough for the emperor to send in elite troops to silence the troublemakers, who were all executed immediately, and the crash site has been guarded vigilantly well ever since.

A prospector claims to know the location of a deep-space fuel and equipment cache from the last days of the Rule of Man.

The local newsfax reports a scientist's discovery of an economical substitute for the lanthanum coils in jump drives.

"Everyone knows the intellect-downloading Denaar *really* run the Imperium. They've transferred their minds into all the top officials — even Emperor Cleon, I hear!"

An ex-scout in a starport bar stammers out a story about nearly being eaten by mysterious creatures living in the vacuum of an asteroid belt!

An Imperial installation far out in the wilderness is said to be researching antimatter weapons, in flagrant disregard for the safety of the planet's inhabitants.

The corporation that practically owns this world puts drugs in food and water supply to keep workers docile.

A surprisingly skilled stage magician says he was taught all his tricks by the Graytch, who he advocates as masters of mental powers.

Visitors from some other world secretly abduct our citizens, sample their tissues and fluids, and hypnotize them to forget. The government isn't doing anything about it, and refuses to take these complaints to the Imperium!

Long-suppressed books have been circulating again. They contain proof that the Solomoni have been pursuing a campaign to eliminate the Vilani, beginning with the Interstellar War and continuing to this very day.

The local equivalent of steroids on this planet is said to be processable into anagathics.

The office of the Duke denied reports that his Grace Zachary, Duke of this subsector, had died of a rare form of digestive tract infection. Although declining to answer questions on neither the Duke's condition nor his whereabouts, a spokesman stated that his grace was in a safe location, and was recovering rapidly.

An astronomy grad student talks about picking up faint radio distress calls from a misjumped warship, parsecs distant. It was never recovered, to her knowledge, so it may still be there. . .

During the Interstellar Wars, the Vilani developed a virus that attacks metal, destroying its tensile strength. It is particularly effective against crystalliron and superdense armor. It was released somewhere in this subsector, and whole worlds are now covered essentially in a gelatinous rust.

Dueling has spread to a high-law-level world, but using martial arts rather than weapons. Factions are springing up among the nobility in favor of and opposed to the idea.

The local populace is agitating to close the starport after hearing reports of a massive plague spread through merchants returning from the frontier.

Many Vargr states employ slave labor to manufacture chew toys. Many of the slaves are not Vargr.

A religious pamphlet touts this world as the true homeworld of Humanti: from here, an ancient empire spread specially-bred humans throughout the galaxy.

Computer hackers have been making break-ins throughout this planet's infonet. The press is reporting it as economic sabotage by Sylean agents to force annexation to the Imperium.



The Imperial Palace is rife with secret passages and hidden vaults filled to the ceiling with credits, all protected by armed Elite Guards pumped full of combat drugs.

There is a cult of cannibalistic thrill-killers living in the under-passages and sewers of Capital City. It is all based on an obscure horror-vid that features dark gods and grisly murders, and the leader is actually the star/producer/scriptwriter of the vid. . .

A prominent religious leader on Sylea has joined, and is advocating a jihad against other religions.

There is a secret band of nobles specializing in playing practical jokes on the highest nobility. Cleon is at the top of its list.

Players on the Sylea Vanguard's astroball team solicit prostitutes and illegal contrabands while on road games.

On Sylea they are hiring freelancers for a large-scale military operation. Obviously some pocket empire spinwards is posing a major threat and the government is expecting a huge battle to ensue.

There is a psionics school in this subsector. Make that was. Those few who knew its location say it is now buried under rocks, after a great quake a millennium ago.

It doesn't get any stranger than a crazy old man in a tattered robe, banging on the Citizenry Office door, hollering at the top of his lungs that he's the Emperor from the future!

Some historians believe that there is an abandoned laboratory, a workshop of some sort constructed by an ancient alien race, nestled secretly in the core of a star within this sector.

The leader of the most fearsome pirate outfit in this subsector is a relative of Emperor Cleon, from whom he receives covert aid in exchange for conducting raids on certain merchant ships that didn't meet His Majesty's approval.

Forget cargoes. The way to make a credit here is to wager on Y'lahri combat. Pick the right guy—or the right beast—in the right fight with the right bet, and you could walk away with a windfall. Of course, all bettors are free to "influence" the outcomes with any degree of subtlety, as much as they *think* they can get away with. . .

The secret to the universe lies within the path of Riley's Comet.

The catastrophe depicted in the "Nobody Remembers Praxi" episode of *The X-List* show is based on the true story of a botched experiment right in this sector.

The government of this world has declared a ban on the new holo-vid game by Whitticus Creations, citing pagan-worship and ethical corruption.

A nice business to go into this year, while it's still on the ground floor, is Fewarian treefox pelt-trading. You probably need a few sharpshooters and clever traps—these critters don't propagate on a hostile world like theirs by being stupid.

The computer virus making the round and striking only at maneuver drives is said to have originated in this subsector.

Four parsecs from the gas giant is where the artifacts were destroyed and scattered.

There have been recent cover-up activities between the Imperial Intelligence and Scouts Service regarding a newly-discovered alien race.

BEAD, the megacorporation specializing in space weaponry, is suspected of funding a armed revolution on a low-tech world.

The Imperial Revenue Audit is looking for the data chip that could put Baron Emmanuel away on these worlds.

Some lucky small-time mining company struck gold, or rather, a rare ore, somewhere in this sector that allowed it to go on to much bigger, better things. You've heard of Ukenshaw Enterprises, right?

Cleon Zhunastu didn't invent Fusion Plus; he stole it from the engineers at Korlon Station!

The archdukes in this sector are plotting to overthrow Emperor Cleon and the Imperium, using a potent virus they hired a famous researcher to develop!

Whatever you do, don't go near the asteroid belt in subsector G. Scouts, freighters, and even heavy military cruisers have ventured by and never returned!

Ask for Hurbon at Zephyr Outpost III around midnight. He knows where to find the new energy source.

Entertainers versed in Vilani poetry often receive the kind of royal treatment from the local governments as if the Emperor himself is visiting.

One of the stars is recently classified "Red Zone" because the Imperium lost several Marine squads to ferocious carnivorous plants.

There's nowhere else better to collect precious gems than in this subsector.

Somebody saw the infamous terrorist Cougar Grey in one of the outsystems. He's got Cr50,000 on his head, you know.

A famous sculpture dubbed "The Bird of Triumph" was stolen from the Noble Family on this system. It was later purchased through black market by another noble, Duchess Arianne Trelanis, to embarrass the nobility that lost it.

There is a arms-buildup offworld, and the President of this world plans to take over the whole sector with it in a couple weeks.

Gravion Industries LIC recently shipped out a defective batch of gravitic equipment from here. They knew about the defects, but they needed some credits to meet payroll.

The duke of this subsector is expecting a baby from an undisclosed relationship.

An off-duty military officer confirms that a Civil War is just about to erupt on a balkanized minor world. High-tech items, especially weapons, are being smuggled there and very well compensated for. The conflict seems to center around mining rights in a certain area disputed over by two interstellar corporations, each supporting a different faction in the war.

There is a serial killer terrorizing the settlement who only kills newcomers. Another theory dismisses the serial killer completely in favor of a secret lab that is rounding up off-worlders for experiments.

No one is allowed to trade in the outer planets because if the working conditions out there were made public, The Imperium would shut those corporations down.

The land around the starport here is all being bought by a religious order. The Cult itself consists of luddites, wanting to stop this infernal Imperial presence on this world.

"They're watching everybody right now. Powerful spysats track you when you go out, and they're always listening in to your comm."

A holo-vid broadcast reports that ships from an unknown race have been seen in several frontier worlds, even refueling at starports. Reptilian-like and very strong, members of this race thus far avoided speaking about themselves and fled from Sylean navy units.

The Pirates of Skye have rigged up a special device to make fusion power plants shut themselves down. For this reason, they will only attack ships without missiles.

A famous psychic predicts a huge war that will destroy the Imperium.

The dominant religious organization on this world became wealthy by smuggling slaves during the Long Night.

The Emperor offers a bounty for Vargr killed during attacks on Imperial ships. They are causing trouble in several regions that need stable trade routes.

The daughter of Duke Arkhynos has fled with a young marine. They fell in love but her father disapproved the relationship, and now he wants to get her back at all costs. If you want to indebt a very powerful man to you, you might want to look for her.

A broker warns against traveling to coreward: the area is thick with corsairs, and they somehow know just when to find ships undefended.

Reliable sources in the defense establishment have admitted in private that numerous brigades of the Imperial Army have been engaged in counter-insurgency operations in the Vabasorii district for the last eight months.

"I swear, it's unusual, but I picked up lanthanum traces from that gas giant! This professor believes it's possible some is dissolved down in its deep ammonia ocean, but he doesn't have the grant money to explore it."

A reporter turns up murdered. She'd been investigating allegations that Fusion Plus was a gift from a now-extinct race, not an independent invention.

Now is not a good time for low-passage travel from this world. Some captains are earning a fortune by killing off low passengers deliberately and selling their organs.

Prices are soaring for a paralytic neurotoxin used on dueling bladed on this world to end fights without causing death.

Company spokesman for Prestige Line announces indefinite suspension of high capacity service to this sub-sector pending outcome of the official investigation of the recent *Belmont Lark* tragedy, in which the ship was lost with 158 lives due to a jump capacitor discharge immediately prior to jump.

A turf war has erupted between rival criminal cartels over distribution of a potent new drug. But no one knows where it comes from. . .

Psionic teleportation runs a risk that the teleporter will spontaneously combust.

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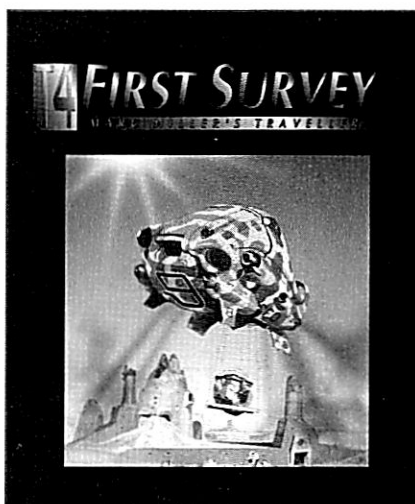
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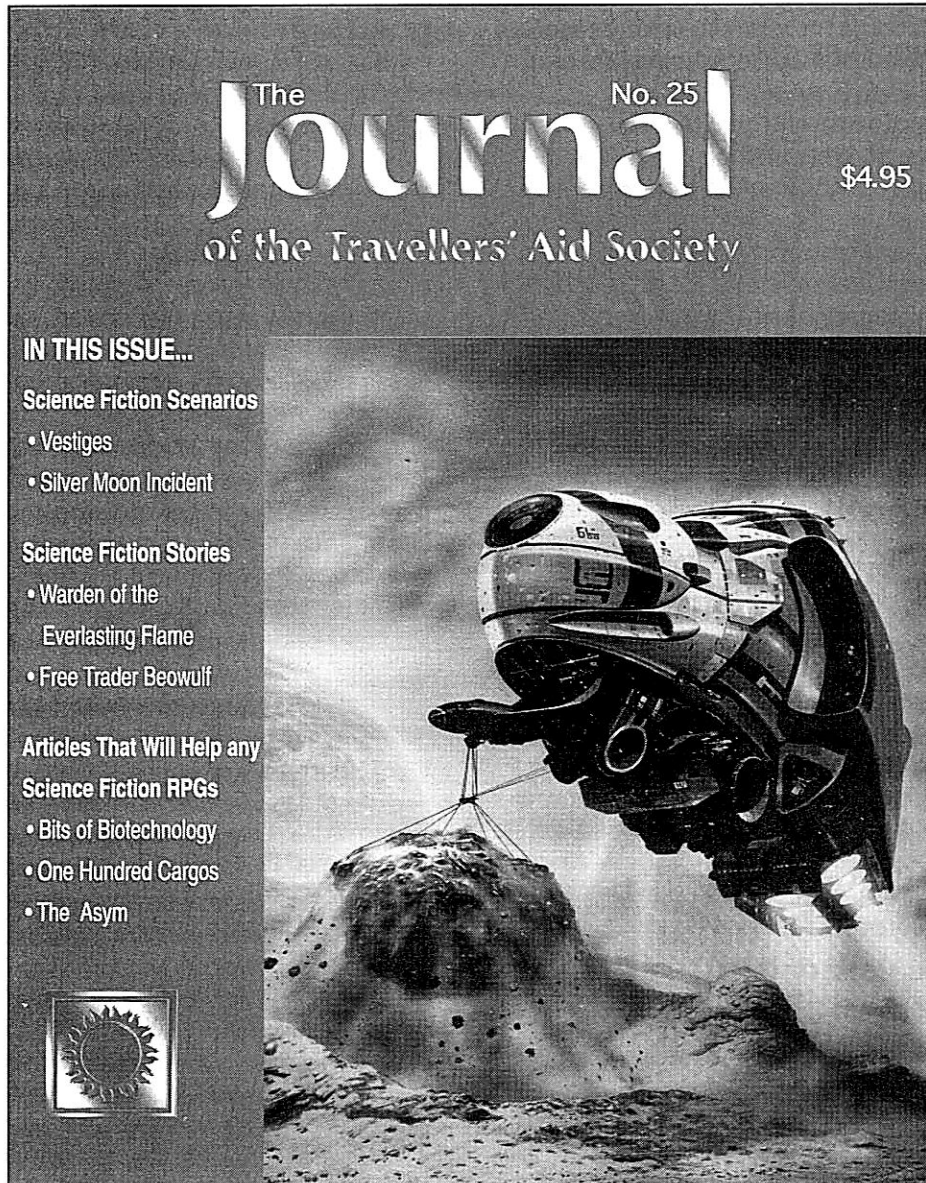
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**Marc Miller's**  
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