

Background

This adventure is an extension of early Traveller adventures that included "Shadows", "Research Station Gamma", and "Twilight's Peak". Familiarity with these adventures is unnecessary to run "Deep Shadows". However, a copy of "Shadows", last published in The Traveller Book (1982), could serve as a useful enhancement. Both "Shadows" and "Deep Shadows" involve exploration of ruins belonging to the same extinct race.

Although this adventure is designed for Zhodani explorers in a coreward sector, it's possible to alter the adventure for Imperial characters. The Zhodani core expeditions are guided by Ancient map projectors that also depict events. The referee could assume one showed the adventure setting where particular Imperials were also involved (the player characters). The Zhodani will go to great lengths to transport the characters to the expedition corridor. This is the same plot used in the adventure, "Vlezpridliashav," from Alien Module 4 - Zhodani (1985). The two adventures can be treated as the same except in perspective.

The only references required for play is the MegaTraveller rules set. Other recommended references are the World Builder's Handbook, Referee's Companion, and most especially MegaTraveller Aliens Book Vol. 3, The Psionic Races: Zhodani and Droyne. This last details the two races most actively used in this adventure.

Introduction (Preliminary Setup)

The player characters are crew members of a Zhodani Brazhdinisha class medium explorer named Vishhiquay (meaning "brave wanderer" in the language of a Consulate member world). The characters may take any post on the ship except that of ship's captain. They should be encouraged in their character selection so that they are well suited as members of the landing party assigned to the first pinnacle. Avoid letting them take positions with the second landing party as the second pinnacle is ill fated (see later).

The Vishhiquay itself is in very poor condition. Its approaching the time for its annual overhaul, and the previous two overhauls were either rushed or done at poorly equipped yards. Orders have directed the Vishhiquay to Bliedja Point Base for a complete overhaul before reassignment to Chtierabl Province coreward.

The ship's locker for the Vishhiquay is well stocked with equipment suited for exploration. However, in instances where equipment might replicate psionic talents, the item may be absent from the inventory. Neural activity sensors are a particular example. There is a very limited collection of military hardware. Although there are enough snub pistols to arm the entire ship's compliment, of other weapons there are only 3 laser carbines-13, 3 gauss rifles, and 4 shotguns. Weapon attachments, such as scopes and RAM grenade launchers, are not included. There is no armor other than TL 14 vacc suits and hostile environment suits.

Non-Player Characters (Referee Background Data)

The Vishhiquay will carry three senior consuls, nobles of the highest rank and among the most powerful individuals in the entire Consulate. Through an Ancient map projector, they also know of future events that are fated to happen, specifically events pertaining to this adventure. Millennia old policy has been for the Consulate to "assist" the events to occur, and the consuls are here to assure that they do occur. They will, however, keep their influences as subtle as possible.

Aveliashav (Senior Consul) 479BAF Age 50 8 terms Cr200,000

Admin-4, Liaison-2, Computer-1, Non-Verbal Communications-1, Laser Wpns-1, Psychology-1, Psi-10, Telepathy-10, Telekinesis-10, Awareness-10, Special-10

2 High Psg

Starport A, Medium, Thin, Wet World, Mod Pop, High Low, High Stellar (Zhodane)

Referee: Aveliashav's entire career was involved with the core expeditions, especially the initiation of the Eight Core Expedition. He is the most aloof of the consuls, although there are times of surprising reversals when he is quite conversant. Aveliashav is very attentive to customs and courtesies, and will not hesitate to correct others.

Niarziashav (Senior Consul) 897ACF Age 46 7 terms Cr64,000

Leader-2, Tactics-2, Admin-1, Combat Rifleman-1, Laser Wpns-1, Vacc Suit-1, Sword-2, Psi-10, Teleport-12, Telekinesis-12, Telepathy-12, Clairvoyance-12, Special-1

High Psg, Laser Pistol

Legion of Merit, Guard Hero Medal 4th Class, Guard Hero Medal 2nd Class, two Wound Badges
Starport B, Small, Standard, Desert World, Low Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Referee: Niarziashav's particular concern of the core expeditions are the potential threats to the Zhodani Consulate itself. He does not wish the expeditions be stopped. In fact, no consul does. But he does advise in favor of more fleets and more attention to security rather than scientific interests. He is very attentive to self discipline and tends to be brusque with people.

Chitsiashav (Senior Consul) 769BEF Age 47 7 terms Cr142,000

Computer-2, Medical-2, Linguistics-2 (Galanglic, Vilani), Liaison-1, Carousing-1, Admin-1, Psi-9, Awareness-9, Telepathy-9, Telekinesis-9

Hand Computer, Medallion of Scholarship

Starport A, Medium, Vacuum, Wet World, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar (Chronor)

Referee: Chitsiashav is a noted xenologist who is well acquainted with Imperial knowledge on the subject. He takes much pride in his academic achievements. Being from a frontier sector, though, he is not as "refined" as nobles from the interior. He is, however, the most open and amiable of the consuls.

Shechstebr (Navy Captain) 454A8C Age 42 6 terms Cr8,000

Admin-4, Leader-2, Pilot-1, Ship Tactics-1, Vacc Suit-1, Handgun-1, Psi-6, Telepathy-6

Snub Pistol, 2 High Passage

Starport A, Medium, Standard, Desert World, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Referee: Shechstebr is the mission commander. His philosophy of command is to let his subordinates do their jobs the best way they know how. He sees that discipline is maintained and that overall operations are smooth and efficient. But he keeps his interference to a minimum. Shechstebr relies heavily on the advice of his subordinates.

The commander can be left in the background, uninvolved in role-playing. He is available to give direction if and when the referee feels it is necessary, and also to at least postpone player characters from going in directions the referee is not yet prepared to run. But otherwise, most of the decision-making is left in the hands of the player characters.

Titans (Event 1)

Players' Impressions: Bliedja Point Base. The two gas giants, Obl and Eba, circle so close to one another they threatened to tear each other apart. The base orbits their common center positioned at the tip of an imaginary regular triangle with the planets at the opposing corners. The giants are identical in many ways, except in color. Obl is yellow and dead. Eba is green and full of life. Staring at the distorted orbs so near by is awesome, and sometimes terrifying. The station itself is not even a speck to these uncomfortably close titans.

But despite the view, the endless wait at the base was tedious and boring, especially after hearing stories of the Norma Arm colonial envoys for the thirtieth time. Your own explorer ship, Vishhiquay, put in to Bliedja for badly needed maintenance weeks ago. But as priority ships passed through, the Vishhiquay kept getting bumped for bay space.

The arrival of a sleek cruiser was not a welcomed sight. Rumor was that it carried an admiral or noble that would undoubtedly demand still higher priority. And indeed, you watch from the lounge window the big command cruiser that most recently bumped you, being dragged out of Bay 1. The hull plates and access hatches weren't even replaced, but attached to the ship in nets and tugged into space. Sometimes, waiting things out in a low berth can seem very attractive.

Referee's Summary: In a sudden shift, the player group is given overriding priority at the base. They discover they are being prepared for a mission of the highest importance to the Consulate to a world with an insidious atmosphere.

Tasks:

To learn why the Vishhiquay was given priority attention:

Routine, Carousing, Admin (confrontation, uncertain)

Referee: Refer to the Interpersonal Tasks section of the Referee's Manual. The crew is extended VIP treatment because the trio of consuls aboard the newly arrived council cruiser are arranging for the explorer ship's use in a mission of the highest priority to the Zhodani Consulate.

VIP treatment is not strictly necessary. If an administrator should turn "hostile" while characters are trying to attain information, the administrator will see to it that VIP status is revoked.

The characters cannot learn the purpose of their mission. Nor can they learn why they are being prepared for corrosive atmosphere operation or why the jump drive is not being serviced. They can learn that the recently arrived council cruiser ship, ZF-31, originated from Jادلapriants Province at the Consulate interior. But information on its VIP passenger is highly restricted.

To arrange servicing for the jump drive:

Difficult, Liaison, Admin (confrontation, uncertain)

Referee: This will not succeed no matter how good the rolls are, and persistence could cause the revocation of their VIP status. (The consuls know the drive must fail, so will not permit it.) Secret repairs are possible, but this is generally not in the Zhodani character.

Referee's Details: All the characters from the Vishhiquay are placed on the VIP list but without explanation. At first, the hints are subtle, and then become more obvious. Spread these hints among the characters. The groups' base staterooms are cleaned, whereas before they did not have maid service. In fact, many of furnishings are swapped for finer appointments. Service and attention to the characters is always fast and the best. There is no waiting at the clothier, barber, clinic, or restaurant. A running tab is soon arranged, so they no longer have to pay for anything directly.

By the time the characters learn of their new status, a maintenance officer, Lt Prinj, will contact the highest ranking player character assigned to engineering aboard the Vishhiquay. The Vishhiquay is schedule to move into Bay 1 as soon as preparations are completed. Ostensibly, he is calling to coordinate with them on any preliminary details that should be dealt with. In fact, he is trying to find out from the characters why they have such high priority. Prinj is not aware the characters don't know either. But he can suggest places they can inquire, such as the Logistics Center, Base Orders Office, and Communications Directorate.

Through interactions with Prinj, characters can learn that all of their specific requests for maintenance were approved. There were also some refits and marking changes ordered, including the installation of three command staterooms. The Chief of Maintenance without explanation, however, expressly denied requests for maintenance to the jump drive.

When the overhaul is complete, the crew of the Vishhiquay is ordered to proceed coreward for reassignment, carrying three passengers. Considering the priority they previously had, this should be no small surprise, especially since they are now fully outfitted for a corrosive atmosphere assignment. Their orders are quite mundane instructions to travel coreward to Chtierabl Province for routine rotation of assignments. Three passengers will accompany them to an outpost two jumps away. They must first land at Dletle (Driasera 2302 G755453-8), a moon of Obl and Eba, to pick them up.

Dletle Spaceport (Event 2)

Players' Impressions: Dletle is a beautiful, Zhdant-like world, but not from where you sit on the spaceport pad. Rain falls straight down from the low-lying overcast to batter on the windows of the Vishhiquay's pinnace. The port facilities were kept very simple. Two workmen and an officer ride out to your craft in a ground vehicle, getting soaked as they jump out to rush to your hatch.

While the workmen transfer luggage to the craft, the officer will report to whoever of the crew is there to meet him. Dripping, he will hand over a copy of the passenger and luggage manifest, and travel orders. "Lt Pliev reporting," he says, speaking about the rain. "I'm sorry, but your passengers aren't here. They went on a retreat not far from away, and were caught up there by these rains. We thought it best you just pick them up. Their beacon is set to 77.21."

Referee Summary: The pinnacle must divert to a prominent nearby hill to pick up three members of the Consulate Supreme Council (Qlomdlabr).

Tasks:

To navigate to the pick-up point for the consuls:

Routine, Navigation, Edu, 20 min

Referee: If the roll should fail, the applicable skill becomes Sensor Ops for all retries. A problem with the sensors threatens to disorient the boat causing a collision with a hill. If a crash should occur, this segment of the adventure could transform into a race against time to meet the visualized destiny.

Referee Details: A total of 300kg of fine luggage is transferred to the pinnacle. The emblems on each make it obvious they belong to nobility.

At this stage, the characters might well assume their passengers were from the council cruiser, ZF-31.

This is now obvious from the manifests and travel orders the characters have in hand. Their passengers to-be are Aveliashav, Niarziashav, and Chitsiashav. All are social standing 15, but let the players deduce this from their name suffixes. In fact, they are consuls from the Qlomdlabr Senior Council itself, and are the signers for their own orders.

Senior Consuls (Event 3)

Players' Impression: The pinnacle suddenly transits from gray surroundings to an open blue sky. Clouds stretch out in all directions like a vast white sea. As would an island, a green hilltop protrudes from the cloud layer ahead of you. Readouts tell you this is your destination.

Three lone figures stand side by side as if admiring the twin crescents of Obl and Eba. They take no notice as you circle to land. Only after the hatch hisses open do they turn to approach the craft. The first, Aveliashav, carries an intricately carved staff. The second, Niarziashav, wears the luxuriously jeweled broach on his turban and gold sash of the Legion of Merit. A laser pistol hangs from his belt. The third, Chitsiashav, wears a hat without brim and medallion of scholarship hanging from his neck. All file into the craft with an air of dignity.

Referee's Summary: The characters have their first contact with the consuls.

Tasks:

To achieve a favorable reaction with the consuls:

Routine, Steward, Soc, (uncertain, unskilled OK)

Referee: The results of this interpersonal task can affect each character's next roll for position or promotion, but not both. (See the end of the adventure.) This is rolled during each significant role-playing interaction. The general reaction is revealed if the results are an exceptional success or exceptional failure. Otherwise, the player may roll the following task.

To determine the consul's reaction to the interaction:

Routine, Psychology, Liaison, (unskilled OK)

Referee: On success, reveal the general reaction of the consul to the above interaction. On exceptional success, also reveal the character's current general standing with the consul.

Referee Details: All three consuls will behave in a very aloof manner, but never snobbish. They speak seldom, and least of all to one another. However, they are often in telepathic contact with each other. Present occasional hints to this effect.

Jump & Misjump (Event 4)

Referee's Synopsis: The Vishhiquay begins its travels which are largely uneventful. But the second jump is a misjump.

Tasks:

To avoid jump sickness as a result of a misjump:

Routine, End, (Hazardous, Fateful)

Referee: The mishap table is used to determine the duration of the illness instead of damage. Multiply the roll, normally applied as wounds, by 5 hours, and subtract the character's raw endurance score. Character's suffering from jump sickness have a DM-2 penalty to tasks, DM-4 if the original throw was a fumble.

Referee Details: During the first jump, the consuls maintain an aloofness, claiming they do not wish in any way to disturb the operations of the vessel. They stay predominantly to their quarters, only venturing out during ship's "night", to frequent the galley or lounge. An encounter with one or more of these individual in the dim "night lit" corridors should be described as disconcerting. They will be polite, but distant, as if in a permanent state of preoccupation.

The next system is Zdia (Zhiensh 2439 D300345-7). Its only gas giant orbits at the outer extreme of the red dwarf star system. It looks like a dull, ruddy orb through the view ports in light too dim to permit detailed viewing. Refueling will be uneventful. However, when the ship enters jump to make for a system at maximum range to a system at Zhiensh 2336, several crewmen experience waves a nausea indicating the Vishhiquay has misjumped.

Aveliashav (Personal Encounter)

Player's Impressions: (This could occur when characters are bringing a meal to the consul.) As you walk the ship's corridor, you see through the walls the image of the galaxy suspended in space. About 2 meters in diameter, the starry disk is fully detailed even to include colorful nebulae. The image seems to center on the stateroom occupied by Aveliashav.

(If the characters enter:) The room is dark with the walls of the stateroom having been dialed to a solid black. Aveliashav sits cross-legged on a mat. He wears the robes of his school of psi training. A large candle in a glass is to his right, the only light in room. His staff stands upright to his left without any visible support. The galaxy disk slowly changes orientation as it hovers directly before him. He stares at it, almost as if in a trance. "Beautiful, isn't it?" he says. "And the heart of that is our destiny."

A psi switch in the wall clicks. The lights come on and the galaxy fades. The staff topples to fall precisely into his hand which he uses it to help him stand.

Tasks:

To achieve a favorable reaction from Aveliashav:

Routine, Steward, Soc, DM+2, (uncertain, unskilled OK)

Referee: The DM+2 is a one time bonus for only this encounter with Aveliashav. If the roll fails, assume Aveliashav perceives (correctly or not) that the character does not share his enthusiasm or commitment to the endeavor of reaching the core.

Referee Details: The staff is a psionic artifact called the Atitlad. Its thought to have originally been a galactic cartography training aid. But the only thing the Zhodani have managed to do with it is to produce the standard image of the galaxy accurate to the current date. It was given to Aveliashav for custody. Any character within short range of the staff, whose mind is not shielded, can mentally "see" the image as if it were a visual hologram.

Aveliashav will take his place at the stateroom table so as to be served by the characters. As this goes on, he will speak to them in an open and light manner unusual for him. Part of his conversation might include the following. "I envy those that will be on the Eighth Core Expedition. I'd almost be willing to give up my status as consul to go and see those new wonders as they're discovered. But we all have our place in the endeavor, and mine is with the Qlomdlabr."

Niarziashav (Personal Encounter)

Player's Impressions: While in the corridor, you hear cries from Niarziashav's stateroom. "There's nothing we can do! ... Who are they? ... Who ARE they?! ... No! ... NOO!!! ... Help us! HELP!"

(If the characters enter:) The lighting in the stateroom is subdued. Niarziashav sits in a reclined chair wearing athletic clothing, his face pale as if awakened from a nightmare. Beside him is a chrtlzda, a style of sword that appeared during Zhdant's second dark age. An exercise mat is on the floor with a towel, lotion, and other accouterments adjacent to it.

Tasks:

To achieve a favorable reaction from Niarziashav:

Routine, Steward, Soc, DM+2, (uncertain, unskilled OK)

Referee: The DM+2 is a one time bonus for only this encounter with Niarziashav. If the reaction roll is successful, assume he is influenced by a sense of camaraderie. If it fails, the consul is upset that the character, who is his inferior, witnessed his weakness.

Referee Details: Niarziashav will act embarrassed and apologize for his disruptive behavior. But the nightmare has shaken him. He'd rather have human company for a few minutes and will delay the characters by asking for minor services, such as pouring him some tlienj (a fine Zhodani liquor).

The consul will not speak of his dreams. But in his conversation, he will say things along the lines of the following. "We seem so sure of ourselves, that we can handle what ever awaits us at the core. We forget there are things in this galaxy very different and many times older than our race. And there is no assurance they are benign."

Chitsiashav (Personal Encounter)

Player's Impressions: A gold medallion rests upon the floor. Inspecting it, you find an open link attached to the top. On the face is a symbol, triangles point to the right and down, with a six pointed star superimposed over them. Letters around the perimeter read, "University of Chronor - Medallion of Scholarship - 3465". The back displays a building, perhaps that of an academic institute. The letters there read, "For Excellence in Knowledge".

(If the characters take the medallion to Chitsiashav at his stateroom:) When the consul calls you to enter, you find him sitting at the desk. His computer terminal is removed to the floor. The desk is bare except for eight antique books. The one before him is open and illuminated by an old dielectric lamp, a type customarily used for philosophical readings.

Tasks:

To achieve a favorable reaction from Chitsiashav:

Simple, Steward, (uncertain, unskilled OK)

Referee: This interpersonal task is Simple instead of Routine, but the die modifier for social standing is eliminated. This task profile applies to only this one encounter with Chitsiashav. If the reaction roll is successful, he is most appreciative for the return of the medallion. Otherwise, he will sense (correctly or not) that the character is being judgemental of him.

Referee Details: The medallion is a source of great pride for Chitsiashav, almost as much as his status as consul. He will be pleased to have it returned to him.

Chitsiashav is the most open of the three consuls and will tend to interact longer with the characters. He will not speak of his advanced knowledge about the mission. But, he might lead the characters into a conversation by asking, "Why do you think we are striving to reach the core?" This question could take the discussion in many directions from Zhodani philosophy to theories of time and causality.

Regardless of to where the conversation wanders, he will remind the characters of the following. "Whether the core is our doom or destiny, those that have come before us have chosen that as our path. Our commitment to go to the core has become part of our being, part of what makes us, as a people, Zhodani. If we decided no longer to go, we'd become something else."

Savria Sector (Event 5)

Referee's Synopsis: The misjump carries the Vishhiquay to a wilderness world on which they find a single site with ruins. The site is marked with a radio beacon, and a clearing is nearby suitable for landings.

Tasks:

To diagnose the problem with the jump drive:

Routine, Engineering, Int, 20 min (uncertain)

Referee: The task becomes difficult if this is attempted while still in jump. If the result is Some Truth, reveal drive operation now involves a DM-1 to the jump success roll, and effectively needs the facilities of an A class starport for repairs. On Total Truth, reveal the DM-1 only applies to when the ship is attempting a jump at its full jump rating. A jump at one level less does not involve the penalty.

To attain details of the site from which the transmissions originate:

Difficult, Survey, Edu, 90 min

Referee: On exceptional failure, assume the operator cannot correlate the sensor signals into a comprehensible detailed image of the specific site. On failure, reveal the sensors indicate a grouping of collapsed artificial structures overgrown by the jungle-like vegetation that pervades the entire island. On success, reveal that an intact pyramid structure, almost 70m wide at its base, still stands near the transmitter. A paved area, possibly meant as a landing site for spacecraft, is within 100m of that to the south-south-east. The transmitter is within 50m west of the paved area. On exceptional success, automatically reveal the densitometer shows there are rounded chambers and hallows inside the pyramid, and that there are indications the structure has electrical power and a complex magnetic field.

Referee Details: The Vishhiquay will emerge from jump in subsector J of Savria Sector. This is over 20 parsecs trailing of their original location. Fortunately, they are in substellar range of a type K0 subdwarf star. Normal space travel time is merely several days and two gas giants are detectable. Currently, the outer gas giant is on the far side of the system, so the Vishhiquay will probably make for the inner one, which has moons and is in the star's habitable zone.

Unless the Vishhiquay is not transmitting any identification pulses or hailing messages, its signals will awaken a radio beacon, with far orbit range, on Beta Bee (see Star System Data - Kraahk). What it transmits is undecipherable suggesting it is of an alien nature. The transmitter is on the face of Bee away from Beta, so its signals will not be detectable while the Vishhiquay is inside the orbit of Bee.

A preliminary survey of the world will show that its somewhat volcanic and rather sparse of life. It has a dense, insidious atmosphere rich in sulfur compounds. Scanning the specific area of the transmission, an orbital survey will show that it originates from an equatorial island about 10km in diameter.

Capt Shechstebr will decide to send an exploration team to the world's surface. The first pinnacle (carrying player characters) will go down to explore while the second pinnacle will remain with the mothership on stand-by.

(Special note: The encounter site on the planet was designed with the limits of page space in mind. If the referee has access to a copy of the early Traveller adventure, "Shadows", he may prefer to exchange the ruins detailed there for that presented here.)

[GO TO THE KRAAHK SECTION OF THIS ADVENTURE]

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SSURABREK SUBSECTOR

(') P Droyne Naval Base
(,) Q Droyne Mltry Garrison
(;) A Naval and Mltry Base
() No Base
(:) Gas Gnt and Water Prsnt
(') Gas Gnt Prsnt, No Water
(.) Water Prsnt, No Gas Gnt
() No Gas Giant, No Water

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Players' Star Chart

0927	M6III	1322	F8D	M7D
0930	F8V	1329	M8V	M6D
1022	M1V M1D	1421	M3D	M7D
1023	M0V M6D	M5D1425	F8D	M4D
1024	G4D M2D	1522	F6D	M9D
1025	F2D M9D	1523	F7VI	
1027	F3D	1524	K7V	M0D
1029	M7V M1D	1525	F2V	
1123	M1V M2VI	1528	K0VI	
1125	M3D M2D	1530	F9VI	M1D
1127	M6V	1621	F9VI	M7D
1128	G0V	1622	F2VI	
1222	M8 II	1628	F7V	
1223	F2 D	1630	F9V	

	0927	X000000-0	As Ba Lo Ni	024 -- M6III
	0930	X410000-0	Ba Lo Ni	004 -- F8 V
Ssrar	1022	E9A5000-0	Ba Lo Ni Fl	024 Hk M1V M1D
Hskuuhk	1023	X321000-0	Ba Lo Ni Po	024 Hk M0V M6D M5D
Nhurgaah	1024	E353000-0	Ba Lo Ni	003 Hk G4D M2D
Caaghukk	1025	X88A000-0	Ba Lo Ni Wa	024 Hk F2D M9D
Zakuuhk	1027	E545000-0	Ba Lo Ni	020 Hk F3D
Passuzk	1029	X89A000-0	Ba Lo Ni Wa	003 Hk M7V M1D
Aark'Brken	1123	X000000-0	As Ba Lo Ni	013 Hk M1V M2VI
Ghoohk	1125	X77A000-0	Ba Lo Ni Wa	035 Hk M3D M2D
	1127	X110000-0	Ba Lo Ni	023 -- M6V
	1128	X500000-0	Ba Lo Ni Va	013 -- G0V
	1222	X200000-0	Ba Lo Ni Va	023 -- M8 II
Iirhkus	1223	E675000-0	Ba Lo Ni	003 Hk F2 D
Twossay	1322	C6773X5-7	Lo Ni	624 Dr F8D M7D
Yhrahr	1329	E9C9000-0	Ba Fl Lo Ni	000 Hk M8V M6D
Moymuert	1421	B667676-B	P Ni Ri	304 Dr M3D M7D
Zaell (Urhku)	1425	E889000-0	Ba Lo Ni	020 Va F8 D M4 D
Ixri	1522	A4677XB-C	A Ag Cp	313 Dr F6 D M9 D
Unoyem	1523	B6665X8-9	Q Ni	400 Dr F7 VI
Apop	1524	E333166-B	Q Lo Ni Po	804 Dr K7V M0 D
Sibnut	1525	C4432X7-B	A Lo Ni Po	723 Dr F2V
Kraahk	1528	E7C8000-0	Ba Fl Lo Ni	002 Hk K0 VI
	1530	X775000-0	Ba Lo Ni	000 -- F9VI M1 D
Vuayl	1621	C555366-8	Q Lo Ni	724 Dr F9VI M7 D
Dadroyay	1622	D454477-6	Ni	633 Dr F2 VI
	1628	X535000-0	Ba Lo Ni	020 -- F7 V
	1630	X245000-0	Ba Lo Ni	023 -- F9 V

Ssurabrek Subsector (Event 6)

Referee's Synopsis: The subsector was originally occupied tens of thousands of years ago by a reptilian race called the Hhkar. They advanced to TL12, but without jump technology.

About 50,000 years ago, a race of Droyne in the subsector also rose to TL12. They did possess jump drive and began the systematic extermination of all Hhkar. The Droyne governments are xenophobic and will react with hostility toward visitors from outside the subsector.

Tasks:

To detect for gas giants at interstellar range:

Routine, Sensor Ops, Edu, 1 hour, (uncertain)

Referee: On total truth, reveal the number of gas giants in the system. On some truth, reveal whether or not gas giants are present, but not their exact number. On no truth, roll 1D. Regardless of the truth, on 4+, report the presence of at least one gas giant. On 3-, report no gas giants are detected.

Referee Details: Let the players examine the player star chart of the subsector. The star classifications are known from astronomical data, although system contents are unknown. The characters can search for gas giants out to interstellar range (2 parsecs).

Several routes back to the expedition corridor are possible. One of the most attractive of those routes happens to pass through the homeworld. The referee may let players examine the options for themselves. If the characters ask the consuls for advice, they will evade and not recommend anything. Yet, their interest in the homeworld will be obvious by their speculations in conversation over the returned information. And they speak nothing about anticipation of their return to a base. This should hint to the players the consuls are expecting the Vishhiquay will go to the homeworld.

If the characters decide to bypass the homeworld, the consuls will ultimately intervene. But they will delay their interference for as long as possible, stepping in directly only when the Vishhiquay is about to leave the subsector.

Once the route is decided, the referee should review the subsector information provided and create nuggets appropriate to the systems the characters visit. Basic nuggets for three systems they are likely to pass through follow. At other systems, its possible for them to encounter a substantial amount of space debris. The Hhkar were very active in space, perhaps leaving a reasonably intact space habitat to explore.

Urhku (Zaell) - Savria 1425 (System Information)

Referee's Synopsis: Ruins, similar to those on Kraahk, are found scattered on this world. There are also ruins of a very different nature that prove to be Vargr.

Tasks:

The referee is encouraged to play out the events that occur while the landing party is on the surface. Alternatively, he can just reduce this to broad tasks if there is need to move on.

To investigate the ruins around the starport:

Routine, Sensor Op, Edu, 1 hour, (uncertain)

Referee: Use the highest skill levels in the group. On Some Truth, the characters will find evidence in various forms (ID cards, clothing, poster advertizements, etc) that will make it certain the population was Vargr. On Total Truth, Vargr skeletons will be discovered. Enough material found to indicate the Vargr name for the world was Zaell. On exceptional success, a cache of literature is found. Once translated, it gives an accounting of their captivity by the enigmatic Droyne on Ixri (Savria 1522).

If a mishap is indicated, roll a character at random and have him throw the following task to avoid the mishap.

To avoid a mishap while exploring:

Difficult, Survival, Exp, (fateful, unskilled OK)

Referee: Exp (experience) is intelligence plus education divided by five rounded down. On a Superficial mishap, the character gets separated from the group and must be found. On a Minor mishap, the character is accidentally injured taking 1 hit. On a Major mishap, the character takes 2 hits and is trapped or pinned. The specific situation must be invented by the referee.

To search for sites of other ruins on the planet from orbit:

Routine, Survey, Computer, 1 day (uncertain)

Referee: There are 20 ruin sites on the planet left by the Hhkar, all destroyed long ago. On Total Truth, announce the discovery of 1D sites. On Some Truth, announce the discovery of 1D minus 1D sites (threat negative results as zero). On No Truth, no new discoveries are made. This task is repeatable each day. After the 20 sites are discovered, on an exceptional success, reveal that the character is confident there are no more.

Referee Details: Another beacon will be detect on the world's surface. Examining the area from orbit will show the site to have been a starport. Although not Zhodani, the layout is familiar enough for it to easily be recognized. However, there are no structures still intact. The area is covered by a meter of seasonal snow. A major Vargr colony established itself on this world 500 years ago. It prospered, but was attacked and became a captive world of the Droyne 400 years ago. The Droyne interest in the Vargr was to revitalize their own technology, which had grown stagnant and somewhat regressive after thousands of years. Once they had what they wanted, they destroyed the major centers of Vargr population with nuclear weapons. Droyne artillery and infantry mopped up the rest. Aided by psionics, the massacre was very thorough. If any Vargr survive on the planet, they'd be cautious to avoid detection, making their discovery by the player characters very difficult.

Sibnut - Savria 1525 (System Information)

Referee's Synopsis: This system is occupied by a Droyne naval base and garrison. Scout ships will be sent to destroy the Vishhiquay if its detected.

Tasks:

To determine if the scout ships are hostile:

Routine, skill, Edu, (uncertain, safe)

Referee: The unnamed skill can be Fleet Tactics, Ship Tactics, or Pilot minus 1. On Total Truth, reveal that the formation of approaching ships and radio patterns suggest the ships are hostile. On Some Truth, point out that a hostile intent cannot be ruled out.

Referee Details: Soon after emerging in this system, characters will detect communications suggestive of space traffic. And indeed there are about 20 ships in the neighborhood of the main world ranging from 100 to 1000 tons. Characters analyzing voiced signals can determine they are Droyne, although the language is not Oynprith, the common ceremonial language for that race.

If the characters are detected, four scouts ships will go out to engage them. The ships are 100 tons each, jump-2, 2-G, and armed with a triple laser turret. Attempts to communicate the Vishhiquay's peaceful intent will not be responded to. If the characters wish to withdraw, this should be made easy, perhaps by allowing the Vishhiquay enough time to refuel from a gas giant and jump out.

Irhkus - Savria 1223 (System Information)

Referee's Synopsis: The ruins of a Hhkar metropolis are detected from orbit. A massive crater sits in the middle of it. However, exploration is made very difficult by seasonal storms.

Tasks:

To land the pinnacle under stormy conditions:

Difficult, Ship's Boat, Sensor Ops, Dex, 5 min

To estimate when the local weather will break:

Difficult, Meteorology, Edu, 1 day, (uncertain)

Referee: The storms will break in 6D6 days. On Some Truth, reveal they will last from 1 to 6 weeks. On Total Truth, reveal they will clear in about 3 weeks. On exceptional success, roll the first 4 dice of the 6D6, then add 7 and announce that as the approximate day the storms will end.

Referee Details: As before, a beacon is at the outskirts of what was a city. However, the region is experiencing a season of storms. A landing will be risky in the buffeting winds, and the weather is likely to impede exploration. If characters do land, they are unlikely to discover anything new this visit without many days of somewhat risky exploration. There is no evidence of any kind of sophont activity.

From routine orbital studies, the characters will know the atmospheric taint is from sulfur compounds.

Conflict of Philosophy (Interpersonal Encounter)

Player's Impressions: Two consuls are in the ship lounge in preparation for a conference. Aveliashav reviews documents on a display. Niarziashav sits with a beverage in his hand. Neither speak. Chitsiashav arrives and seats himself, giving the other two a customary greeting. Aveliashav returns the greeting stiffly. Niarziashav says nothing.

Chitziashav studies his peers for a moment. "Is there something wrong?"

Niarziashav puts the glass down heavily and says, "The Qlomdlabr does not commit murder!" Aveliashav turns the display to Chitsiashav. "Your words, Chitziashav." Phrases in the document stand out, highlighted in glowing red. You are not close enough to read them.

The remainder of the conversation goes on in silence. Emotions play across their faces as evidence of the telepathic exchange. After a while, Aveliashav musters his calm and dismisses you from the room.

Referee's Summary: The three consuls have advanced knowledge of what is fated to occur at Ssrar through an Ancient map projector. The second pinnacle will be destroyed, killing all 12 people aboard, and the consuls are in strong disagreement over the treatment of the situation.

Referee Details: This occurs at any point during the flight from Kraahk to Ssrar with player characters in the capacity of stewards.

The Zhodani Consulate is committed to an almost religious quest to reach the galactic core with the guidance of the Ancient map projectors. The projectors, however, also reveal future events. Conventional wisdom is that the images visualized are destined to occur and cannot be altered.

Rather than resist the images, the Qlomdlabr decided long ago to actively work to make what was visualized come about. Although the belief was that the events would occur anyway, actively promoting the events was seen as demonstration of the Zhodani commitment to reach the core guided as much by their own free will.

Chitsiashav, however, dared to question the morality of cooperating with the images. Out of compassion for the dozen aboard the second pinnacle, he proposed it was the obligation of the Consulate to do everything in its power to interfere with that destiny, even if it were absolutely certain the crew would die anyway. By the same token, cooperation with that destiny was the same as being an accessory to their murder.

The reactions of Aveliashav and Niarziashav were to treat Chitsiashav's remarks as almost treasonous. The drive to reach the core was beyond question, something all consuls are in agreement with. Although whether or not to cooperate with the images was not the same thing, cooperation had become so tied to the Core Expeditions that it too rose above question.

[GO TO THE SSRAR SECTION OF THIS ADVENTURE]

Conclusion

Players' Impression: All of you stand in dress uniforms in the main ceremonial hall before an audience of hundreds. Aveliashav is at the podium delivering an account of the mission you just returned from and the death of Chitsiashav.

"Chitsiashav left a message behind that I will read publicly for the first time. In it he says, 'Comrades. I feel as you do that we must reach the galactic core. That is unswervingly the Zhodani destiny. But if those that build the path for us ever believe the way is callously being paved with their blood alone, our will as a people shall fail, and the goal will remain forever out of our grasp. By this gesture, I mean to demonstrate to our people that we of the Qlomdlabr know well the price of what we do. But we remain firm to the commitment and call on all Zhodani to do the same.'

"I will take these words back to Zhdant and petition the Qlomdlabr to erect a memorial in his honor so that his sacrifice will never be forgotten."

Referee Details: Each character that has earned the active cooperation of a consul receives +1 on his next roll for promotion, and +3 for total cooperation. Similarly, if the character has earned a reaction from a consul that is actively uncooperative, the roll suffers a penalty of -1, and -2 for hostility. The bonuses and penalties are summed from those earned by the character from among all these consuls. This includes Chitsiashav who left much documentation of the mission for his subordinates.

Chitsiashav will go down as a Zhodani hero. The Qlomdlabr will direct that the main flagship for the Eight Core Expedition be named after him.

Follow-on Adventures

Many options for additional adventures are still open to the Vishhiquay crew. They can even return to Ssurabrek Subsector to further explore the ruins left by the Hhkar, or attempt to make peaceful contact with the Droyne at one of their systems. The civil populace is not necessarily actively hostile toward aliens, although the military forces always are.

For an extended campaign, the Vishhiquay can be assigned to search the Vargr Extents for a surviving colony of Hhkar.

KRAAHK

Star System Data (Kraahk)

Orbit	Name	UWP	Remarks
Primary	Savria 1528	K0 VI	Magnitude 0.117
0	Alpha	YS00000-0	
1	Beta	Large Gas Giant	
1	Beta Ay	YR00000-0	ring
5	Beta Bee	E7C8000-0	* beacon *
9	Beta See	Y200000-0	
20	Beta Dee	Y520000-0	
45	Beta Ee	Y200000-0	
2	Gamma	YS00000-0	
3	Delta	Small Gas Giant	no moons
4	Epsilon	Y510000-0	
10	Epsilon Ay	YS00000-0	

Kraahk (Referee and Player Information)

Players' Impressions: The sky is cloudless, but the pinnacle has descended into a deep yellow haze. Circling, you can see the island is clearly covered in dense jungle with an occasional glimpse of stony rubble. The only intact structure is a pyramid whose faces are soiled and streaked by rain. A statue stands on the flat at its top. To the south-south-east of the pyramid is a rectangular clearing, 100m long by 50m wide. Fifty meters to the west of that is an irregular pond.

Referee's Synopsis: The site is no longer inhabited. A mural inside the pyramid can be analyzed to provide a map of the aliens' original domain of space and the location of the homeworld.

Tasks:

Most tasks seem safe since they only involve examination or thought. In fact, a mishap is possible in this hostile environment as a result of distraction from maintaining suit discipline. This possibility is identified in the text for tasks to which this applies. When called for, roll for successful suit discipline using the following task.

(Suit discipline) To avoid a suit related accident:

Routine, Vacc suit, Int (fateful)

Referee: On failure, roll damage from the mishap table. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter and that there are no further repercussions. If the outside atmosphere invades the suit, describe it as chokingly acrid with a scent of sulfur.

When a suit fails from prolonged exposure to the insidious atmosphere, this task is hazardous. It must be repeated at intervals of approximately 10 minutes (15 for the hostile environment suit) until the character dies or makes it back to a habitable environment.

Referee Details: The suits the characters wear are well designed for use in an insidious atmosphere. They will still fail in 2-12 hours, as with any other vacc suit. However, their maintainability is very good. After each use, they can be easily serviced to be made fully ready again. Regular suits are assumed to take superficial damage during the course of exposure and require reconditioning. Any suit that actually fails because of prolonged exposure to atmospheric corrosion is regarded as having minor damage.

Characters may optionally wear hostile environment suits, affording an additional 4 hours on the average to the duration of exposure. However, wearing such a suit adds an encumbrance to the wearers' dexterity of -2. They may also carry video cameras so that player characters not in the party may kibitz from the pinnacle or ship.

It's important to keep careful track of the amount of time spent in the insidious environment. Secretly, roll in advance the duration of each character's suit, then keep a time ledger of their activities outside. Use the following as a guideline for the amounts of time spent.

- A. To move from one exterior encounter area to another -- 10 min
- B. To circle either the pond or pyramid -- 10 min
- C. To climb the pyramid -- 2-3 min
- D. To move from one interior location to an adjacent location -- 2-3 min
- E. To casually look into a location -- 2-3 min
- F. To carefully search a location -- 10 min

Encounters (Referee Information)

Referee Details: An encounter is rolled for, generally throwing 8+ on 2D, while the characters are in each area. When an encounter is indicated, refer to the table below. Throw 1D and apply the DM given in the referee details for each area.

Die	Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds & Weapons
0-	12 Amphibian Grazer	1kg	1/ 0	none	teeth-1 F8 A5 S2
1	8 Amphibian Grazer	3kg	1/ 1	jack	teeth-1 F7 A5 S2
2	24 Amphibian Grazer	3kg	2/ 0	jack	teeth+1 F6 A5 S2
3	Seismic Tremor-- The entire complex begins to shake and vibrate. Any open door will change its condition on 7+.				
4	4 Chasers	3kg	1/ 2	jack	claws A8 F6 S3
5	12 Chasers	6kg	2/ 1	mesh	claws A7 F9 S3
6	4 Flying Hunters	6kg	2/ 1	jack	teeth & claws A4 F9 S4
7	8 Flying Hunters	12kg	2/ 0	jack	teeth & claws A5 F8 S4
8+	4 Flying Hunters	12kg	3/ 0	jack	teeth & claws A5 F5 S4

The three animal types encountered appear to be distinct (though related) species; upon examination of specimen, they are discovered to be developmental stages in the life of a single species of animal. The amphibian grazer form hatches from eggs laid in the pools of fluid. The juveniles spend most of their time swimming, but venture out at intervals to feed upon the plant and fungal material of the type found in interior location 3. After an unknown period of growth (from the 3cm hatching length to the full size of 75 to 100 cm) the juvenile locates a protected place in which to enter a period of suspended animation, during which it metamorphosizes into one of the two adult forms, either the four-legged male or larger winged female. At irregular intervals through the year, the two sexes return to the pools from which they hatched, where they produce large quantities of eggs. The adults are carnivorous and feed on the juvenile form.

The juvenile form reaches a maximum length of 75 to 100 cm, and a maximum of 1 to 3 kg before maturing. The young are covered with a thick scaly skin which serves to protect them from the ravages of the insidious atmosphere. The juvenile, unlike the adult life forms, is toothless, but is equipped with a number of serrated structures along the edges of the mouth to aid in biting off sections of the fibrous plant material upon which the juveniles feed.

The male reaches a maximum size of about 40 cm, weighing from 3 to 6 kg. Like the juveniles, the males are covered with scales, but in mature forms, these are finer and covered with a thin, tough outer layer of skin.

Females are usually about 60 cm in length, with a wingspan of 100 to 120 cm. They typically weigh from 6 to 12 kg. The wings are formed from the thin outer skin stretched over a framework of thin bones, in a manner similar to the terran bat or the macropan screamer-in-the-darkness. This form, like the male, feeds on the juvenile, making his organism the only known case of an animal feeding solely off its own young.

Quakes occur on the encounter table. Before such a quake occurs, the predictors (lights in the dais pattern, location 1) will activate. Tampering with the power plant (location 6) will cause tremors to occur at intervals of about 10 minutes automatically with greater than normal force. (This is self correcting about a day.)

Tasks:

To discover the three animal types are one species:

Difficult, Biology, Edu

Referee: This is a preliminary analysis of specimens, and will probably be thrown when the characters have returned to the craft. This task assumes no aid from laboratory equipment, but that the character has examined the three types of animals.

To keep from falling during a tremor:

Routine, Dex, DM (fateful)

Referee: If the tremor is the result of tampering with the power plant, apply a DM-1. Otherwise there is no die modifier. On failure, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

Landing Area (Kraahk Event 1)

Players' Impressions: As you leave the pinnacle, you are greeted by a scream from the trees. Three bat-like aviforms drop from a high branch and fly away. Everything is still thereafter. The only sounds you hear come from the craft and your gear. The pinnacle sits in a large depression. Although mostly covered with dirt and debris, the surface is made of manufactured bricks. The area is surrounded by a retaining wall 1-2m high. Made of stacked rubble instead of brick, the slow corrosion of some of the material has fused it into a solid wall. The pyramid is visible over the trees. But the haze gives it the illusion of an enormous volcano off in the distance.

Referee's Synopsis: The characters step out onto the surface and prepare to venture forward.

Tasks:

To deduce additional information from examination of the landing site:

Routine, Archeology, Edu, 10 min (uncertain)

Referee: This may be rolled by characters observing through cameras on the pinnacle or ship. This is a safe task for them, since it does not risk a failure to maintain adequate suit discipline. However, they do have a DM-2 penalty for not being physically present.

Some Truth: The retaining wall is a much newer construct than the brick paving which continues under it. The wall is a clever mix and placement of materials by beings who knew how to use the chemical processes to advantage.

Total Truth: The brick surface is part of the original ruins between 10,000 and 100,000 years old, perhaps used for ceremonial mass formations. Stains and marks on the surface suggest it was repeatedly cleared and maintained perhaps over millennia. The newest segments of the retaining wall are less than 500 years old.

On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

Referee Details: Characters are expected to take pictures and samples along the way, not unlike the lunar astronauts did. Most analysis will be done after returning to the Vishhiquay. However characters may try to formulate conclusions as they go along. An example appears here as a task.

Most of the lifeforms on this island were transplanted from the homeworld of the pyramid architects. The only animals above the level of minor insects are here.

Pond Area (Optional Event)

Players' Impressions: The pond is dark and still, its bank is choked by vegetation. A thin mist lies just over its surface. Occasionally you see eddies in the fluid, evidence that small animals living under the surface. A rod protrudes from the center of the pond, extending about 3 meters into the air.

Referee's Synopsis: The alien transmitter is found and recovered. A bomb is discovered inside. The device is evidence that beings visited here perhaps less than 100 years ago. The booby trap is a suggestion that they may be hostile. Some internal components have indications they were made by Vargr.

Tasks:

The tasks to recover the transmitter should be formulated by the referee to suit the particular approach the player characters decide to take. The operation need not be overly difficult.

To open the transmitter, without damage, for examination:

Routine, Mechanical, Edu, 10 min (uncertain)

Referee: (This will likely take place once the transmitter is brought back to the pinnace or ship.) The task is actually certain; the referee's roll is fake. When the casing is open, whether the task caused damage or not, have the character make a Routine roll adding education only. If that fails, characters witnessing may make the same throw. When a roll succeeds, report that the character recognizes something that suspiciously looks like a bomb.

It is indeed a booby trap, installed by the xenophobic race that placed the transmitter. The charge is 5 kilograms of TL11 explosive. The referee should devise a short series of tasks to disarm/remove the bomb. However, the bomb will not go off except if a fumble is rolled at what the referee deems as the most critical step. Age or corrosion has caused it to fail, a fact that might completely escape notice.

Referee Details: Throw 8+ for a random animal encounter to occur while in this area. If so, throw 2D-2 on the encounter table.

Any character that enters the water will reduce the duration of his suit to corrosion by 1 hour.

The transmitter is a very simple design consisting of a submerged box with sloping faces, and an antenna. The whole affair weighs 25 kg, but is held under by stakes and cables to keep it from floating. It was not designed for operation in an insidious atmosphere. However, the brown pond scum growing over its entire surface provides a natural protective seal from corrosion.

Pyramid Exterior (Event 2)

Players' Impressions: The pyramid before you is a dingy gray, streaked with soil and the action of rain. Debris littered stairs lead to the flattened top where stands a statue. The statue is almost 6 meters tall, but so badly eroded that its impossible to determine the species.

Referee's Synopsis: The characters find a means of entering the pyramid. Entry is possible through a barred vent in the jungle, under the stairs, or under the statue.

Tasks:

To remove the protective metal bars blocking entry to the shaft:

Simple, skill, Dex, 10 min

Referee: The unnamed skill applies to the device used, which may be an energy weapon. If metalwork tools are used, apply Mechanical Skill. The task must be repeated a second time to remove the stubs in order to avoid cutting into the vacc suits when crawling through. On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To open the concealed entrance in the stairs from the outside:

Formidable, Mechanical, Int, 10 min

Referee: Success does not automatically mean that the entrance is open. Rather, the character has devised a method whereby the characters have leverage. Hereafter, see the task to open/close doors/entrances, below. On a mishap, treat the situation as if an accidental suit fault occurred. Roll damage to the character from the mishap table. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter and that there are no further repercussions.

To deduce that the statue pivots and how it is opened.

Difficult, Mechanical, Int, 5 min

Referee: On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To forcefully pivot the statue open or closed:

Simple, 1 min (fateful)

Referee: Multiple characters may apply themselves in the task roll, but the combined strength applied must be 13+. On a mishap, treat the situation as if an accidental suit fault occurred. Roll damage to the character from the mishap table. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter and that there are no further repercussions.

To descend the knobby pendulum cable.

Routine, Vacc suit, characteristic, 1 min (hazardous, fateful) Referee: This is thrown three times during the descent (for high, medium, and low heights). The unnamed characteristic differs with each throw. Use Str, Dex, and End in sequence. Remember to apply the penalties against dexterity for certain vacc suits. Also, character strength is effectively higher in the slightly reduced gravity (0.875 G). On a mishap, some of the damage can be regarded as a result of an accidental suit fault. However, assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter and that there are no further repercussions.

Referee Details: Throw 8+ for a random animal encounter to occur while in this area. If so, throw 1D+4 on the encounter table.

There are three possible entrances into the pyramid (short of brut force):

- 1) A hot air shaft can be found in the jungle about 5 meters from the northwest corner of the pyramid. Entry is blocked by protective metal bars. The shaft slopes downward at a 45 degree angle toward a point below the center of the pyramid.
- 2) There is a concealed entrance in the stairs. But discovery will not be possible without a portable densitometer. Finding a means of pulling the stairs open will be very difficult. However, pushing it open from the inside can be accomplished by a combined strength characteristic of 13+.
- 3) The figure atop the pyramid is constructed so as to pivot to reveal a mechanism mounted in a vertical shaft of great depth. A dim light glows at the bottom. The mechanism is not so large as to block descent. And from it is suspended a thick knobby cable that descends the full length. This cable appears taut, and is moving slightly, as if connected to a pendulum. In fact, the mechanism is a small kicker that occasionally supplies force to keep the pendulum swinging. The mechanism can also reel the cable up at least part way.

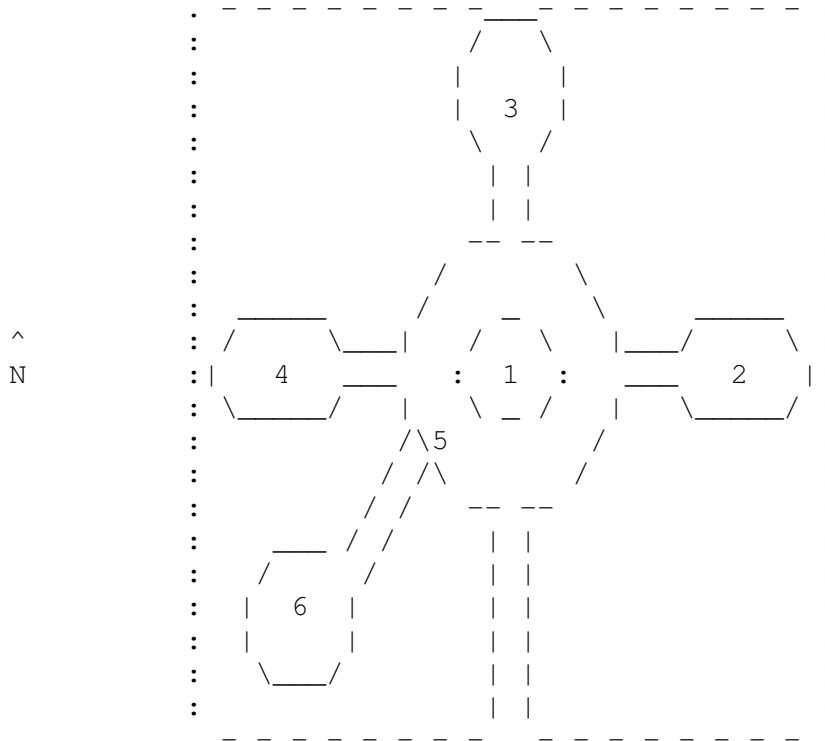
While characters are descending the cable, throw 8+ for an animal encounter to occur in the shaft. If so, throw 1D+4 on the encounter table.

Interior (Location 1 - Large Chamber)

Players' Impressions: A dais of stone, rubbed smooth from long use, dominates the center of this large hemispherical chamber. A pendulum weight slowly swings over it. Pinkish vapor wafts down from ceiling vents at the compass points of the room. It accumulates on the floor to exit through slots at the foot of the dais. Ceiling fixtures illuminate the chamber with a dull glow.

There are five obvious exits, passages north, east, south, and west, and a shaft through the ceiling to the top of the pyramid. A thick knobby cable, suspending the pendulum weigh, extends up through the length of the ceiling shaft. The east/west passages are about 3 meters up the wall, reached by climbing up a set of raised stair rungs.

Referee's Synopsis: An infrared wall mural identifies the home star system. Lights in a pattern on the dais come on as a 2 minute warning before a quake. Minor alien artifacts are inside the dais.



Tasks:

To carefully search dais area:
 Routine, Electronics, Int, 10 min (uncertain)
 Referee: Reveal information only on Total Truth. The character has discovered electronic controls disguised in the central pattern that will move the segments of the pattern out of the way to reveal the hidden compartments. On a mishap, the players involved must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To deduce that the flat metal fragment is a key:
 Routine, Int, 1 min (uncertain)
 Referee: On Some Truth, the character will recognize the shape suggests it is meant to be inserted into something. On Total Truth, also point out that depressions of about the right size were seen beside doors if they were examined earlier. On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault. The fragment has a complex magnetic field sensed by door systems to make them either open or close.

To carefully search the chamber perimeter (other than the dais):

Difficult, Exp, 10 min (uncertain)

Referee: Exp (experience) is intelligence plus education divided by five rounded down. On Some Truth, reveal that the wall is unevenly coated with paint using an inconsistent technique. On Total Truth, reveal the paint strokes are in patterns, one in particular being a star symbol. If the character is using infrared imagining, this task is Simple.

For Total Truth, also point out there is a small opening beside the concealed door. The discovery of the concealed door itself is automatic in any case.

On a mishap, the players involved must roll suit discipline to avoid a suit fault.

To recognize the significance of the mural:

Difficult, Navigation, Int, 1 min (uncertain)

Referee: On Some Truth, the character will recognize enough connections between the mural and charts of the local stars that important information can be gained from detailed analysis. On Total Truth, the character will already have deduced from the mural that the system at 1022 is the homeworld.

Referee Details: This chamber is the area entered from the shaft leading down from the statue atop the pyramid. Throw 8+ for a random animal encounter to occur while in this area. If so, throw 1D+2 on the encounter table.

On a casual search, reveal there are doors at the end of the north, east, and west passages. Throw 9+ for each door to be open. The south passage ends at the concealed door in the exterior stairway. Also reveal that the dais top appears to have been rubbed smooth from long use. Inscribed on the center is a complicated pattern. The pendulum weight is a half meter in diameter and masses 200 kg. It passes only centimeters over the pattern.

A successful careful search of the dais will show the pattern is inscribed on movable panels that can be displaced. Beneath the panels are a series of eight pie shaped compartments. Numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8 are empty. Number 2 contains a box (1 kg) and three small piles of dust. The inside of the box is contoured specifically for an object that looks very much like an fine smoking pipe. Number 5 is connected to drain pipes, and contains a flock of crawlers that will attack when exposed. Number 7 contains a flat metal fragment. The fragment can be deduced as a key (see tasks).

A successful careful search of the chamber perimeter (which may be conducted simultaneously by other characters) will reveal paint brush strokes suggesting the walls are painted with complicated designs, at least one recognizable as a star symbol. However, the paint all seems of the same hue with no appreciable contrast.

This is actually a very striking mural, but visible only in infrared. The use of some sort of infrared imaging system, such as infrared goggles, will reveal it for what it really is immediately. The mural shows a decorative pattern of stars and worlds intermixed with images of creatures in various poses. The creatures are vaguely reptilian, but of a species never before encountered. Compared to the star systems in this region of space, it is possible to deduce from the mural what at least was the interstellar realm of the aliens.

A search of the chamber perimeter will also reveal automatically a door to a passage (location 5), concealed as part of the structure. Note that if they miss the concealed passage during their first visit to this chamber, an animal will lie at the base of it on the second visit. Reference the key to location 5 for details.

Interior (Corridors)

Players' Impressions: Ahead of you is a round corridor, much like a large pipe. There are ceiling plates that provide light, and a flat iron-like platform at the bottom that provides a pathway for individuals.

Referee Details: Throw 8+ for a random animal encounter to occur while in one of these areas. If so, throw 1D-3 on the encounter table.

The platform is suspended by magnetism several centimeters above the bottom of the corridor. Individuals stepping onto the platform will cause it to settle slightly, but never enough to touch the corridor wall. Liquefied vapor settles to the bottom of the corridors, and accumulates below the platforms.

Interior (Location 2 - Small Chamber)

Players' Impressions: This hemispherical room has a metal floor. There is a gap, a few centimeters wide, between the floor and the wall. It travels the full circumference of the room. Set on the floor are stacks of boxes apparently made of a pressed board. All are collapsed and discolored from age.

Referee's Synopsis: A search of this room reveals alien artifacts. Most of the items are pieces to an alien hookah or water pipe. The organic components had turned to dust long ago. The other items (pots, a crucible, scoop, small tray), are associated with the pipe's use.

Tasks:

To carefully search through the boxes:

Routine, Archeology, Int, 10 min (uncertain, unskilled OK)

Referee: Allow a DM+2 if there are at least 3 others assisting. On Some Truth, the characters found the main components of the water pipe, but not all of the artifacts. On Total Truth, they found all of the artifacts. On a mishap, the players involved must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To enter the space below the floor to conduct a search:

Difficult, Vacc suit, Dex, [DM], 10 min

Referee: Two characters are required to counter-weight the platform to create a large enough opening. For every character in excess of two, allow the exploring characters an additional DM+1.

On a mishap, treat the situation as if the character was caught in trying to climb out, resulting in an accidental suit fault. Roll damage to the character from the mishap table. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter. The character was able to complete the search a climb out even on failure. However, on exceptional failure, assume he is still below the floor and must risk the roll again.

Disturbing the boxes will often cause them to break apart. A careful search can result in the discovery of a small collection of seemingly decorative metal and ceramic artifacts. Their function is not immediately obvious.

The room is more accurately described as spherical, rather than hemispherical. The floor plate is also suspended by magnetism and divides the top and bottom halves of the room. It's possible to access the space below the floor by having at least two characters stand on the extreme far edge of the plate. Their weight forcing that end down will cause the end near the door up, allowing a character to slip into that space.

Since the lower half is filled with the pinkish vapor, it is not possible to simply view the space below. A character must go down to search. Unfortunately, there is nothing there to find.

Interior (Location 3 - Small Chamber)

Players' Impressions: This spherical room has a high ceiling. The floor is covered with soil growing in which is a profusion of plants. They range in size, from the tiny knobs and balls at the perimeter to affairs with broad trunks and leafless branches in the center.

Referee's Synopsis: The characters have found a room of fungi cultivated by automation. This was originally placed here to provide food for the bred animals, and they still come here to feed.

Tasks:

To recognize the plants as fungi:

Routine, Survival, Edu, 1 min (unskilled OK)

Referee: Employ this task when a player shows specific interest in the plants. On success, the character will recognize the plants as fungi. On exception success, add that they appear to be nearing a ripe or mature stage. On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To carefully search among the plants:

Routine, Mechanical, Int, 10 min (uncertain, unskilled OK)

Referee: On Some Truth, point out that there are mechanical devices among the plants. On Total Truth, reveal there is machinery among the plants and below the soil for automated cultivation. Robotics may replace Mechanical at DM-1. On a mishap, the players involved must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

Referee Details: As noted earlier, throw 9+ for the door to initially be open. Throw 7+ for a random animal encounter to occur while in this area. If so, throw 1D-3 on the encounter table.

Interior (Location 4 - Small Chamber)

Players' Impressions: This hemispherical room has a metal floor. There is a gap, a few centimeters wide, between the floor and the wall. It travels the full circumference of the room. The place is empty except for dirt and debris on the floor.

Referee's Synopsis: This room was set aside as space for breeding animals to lair in.

Tasks:

To carefully search the area of the room:

Routine, Survival, Edu, 10 min (unskilled OK)

Referee: If successful, reveal that the dirt and debris is animal spoor, and that the area under the floor is emitting noises as if there were animals down there. On a mishap, the players involved must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To enter the space below the floor to conduct a search:

Difficult, Vacc suit, Dex, [DM], 10 min

Referee: Two characters are required to counter-weight the platform to create a large enough opening. For every character in excess of two, allow the exploring characters an additional DM+1.

On a mishap, treat the situation as if the character was caught in trying to climb out, resulting in an accidental suit fault. Roll damage to the character from the mishap table. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter. The character was able to complete the search a climb out even on failure. However, on exceptional failure, assume he is still below the floor and must risk the roll again.

Referee Details: As noted earlier, throw 9+ for the door to initially be open. Throw 6+ for a random animal encounter to occur while exploring the top of the floor. An encounter is automatic below. When an encounter occurs, throw 1D-3 on the encounter table.

For careful search, reveal that the dirt and debris is animal spoor, and that the area under the floor is emitting noises as if there are animals down there.

The room is more accurately described as spherical, rather than hemispherical. The floor plate is also suspended by magnetism and divides the top and bottom halves of the room. Its possible to access the space below the floor by having at least two characters stand on the extreme far edge of the plate. Their weight forcing that end down will cause the end near the door up, allowing a character to slip into that space.

Since the lower half is filled with the pinkish vapor, it is not possible to simply view the space below. A character must go down to search. If a character manages to get below the floor, a set of animal lairs will become apparent.

Interior (Location 5 - Concealed Door)

Players' Impressions: This door is coated to look like the walls and is disguised as part of the structure. Some of the floor vapor can be seen to disappear under it. A small opening is visible in the wall beside the door.

Referee's Synopsis: This is a concealed passage to the power plant and a possible combat encounter with flyers.

Tasks:

For the group to notice the animal in front of the concealed door:

Difficult, Leader, Recon (fateful, safe)

Referee: This is similar to a standard combat surprise roll, but is not a confrontation.

To forcefully open doors/entrances:

Simple, 1 min (fateful)

Referee: This is applied when the characters must force a door open, including the concealed door. Multiple characters may apply themselves in the task roll, but the combined strength applied must be 13+. Note that once opened, the door must be propped open with an object, such as a weapon. On a mishap, treat the situation as if an accidental suit fault occurred. Roll damage to the character from the mishap table. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter and that there are no further repercussions.

Referee Details: This doorway is revealed by careful search of chamber 1. If not found, when they come through the chamber a second time, the presence of an animal could suggest its location.

To descend the sloped passage:

Routine, Vacc suit, Dex, 2 min

Referee: If the initial roll fails, the character lost his footing. If a mishap occurs, the damage may be interpreted as from the fall itself or an accidental suit fault. Assume the suit fault is corrected immediately thereafter and that there are no further repercussions.

Because the seals on the concealed door have failed, smaller animals (3- kg) are able to pass through. If the characters fail to find the door on the first visit, assume a snake-like grazer is on the floor in front of it. The animal will freeze to escape notice. If missed, assume the characters have walked too close to it, and being momentarily cornered, it will attack on 5+ with surprise. Otherwise, it will slip back under the door, which it will do in any case in the next round. If caught or killed, examination will show very recent claw and teeth marks on the animal. Traces of blood will lead back under the concealed door.

Die	Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds & Weapons
7	8 Flying Hunters	12kg	2/ 0	jack	teeth & claws A5 F8 S4

Flying hunters use the passage beyond the door as a lair. They can sense the sounds of activity from the characters in chamber 1 and will be disturbed them. When the doorway is open, throw 7+ for the flock (die roll 7 on the animal encounter table) to erupt and attack. On 6-, they evacuated the passage. If they attack, each individual in location 1 will be forced to fight (three combat rounds) before retreating to the safety of another part of the pyramid.

The passage from 5 leads on a slant down to the power plant (location 6). The floor is strewn with animal spoor. There is no light.

Interior (Location 6 - Power Plant)

Players' Impression: There is no light here other than your own beams playing around the room. Large pieces of machinery occupy most of this chamber with unfamiliar meters and controls everywhere. Pinkish vapor fills the room to a depth of 1 meter. More of it rolls down from vents and the sloping passage. The ceiling light fixtures overhead hang in ruins. There is a loud hum in this room that makes communication difficult without turning up your earphone volume.

Referee's Synopsis: The characters find the outlines of two residents of the pyramid along with two corroded gauss guns. There is also a coyn imprinted with the image of a Vargr.

Tasks:

To determine the nature of the power plant: This is actually a geothermal system.

To establish a basic understanding of the machinery in this room:

Routine, Engineering, Edu, 10 min (uncertain)

Referee: Mechanical or Electronics may replace Engineering at DM-1. On Some Truth, reveal that the pyramid's ventilation system is also in this room with a distinct set of controls and dials. There are also controls for the power plant and still many others with no clear function. On Total Truth, reveal that the power plant is geothermal, bringing heat from deep below the planet's surface for energy. Also, the thick vapor on the floor is abnormal and can probably be cleared by attempting adjustment to the ventilation system.

If a mishap occurs, roll suit discipline to avoid.

To experiment with the ventilation system:

Routine, Mechanical or Engineering, Int, 10 min

Referee: On success, the character has at least found a means of clearing the vapor from the floor. On a mishap, if superficial, the level of vapor rises half a meter. On minor mishap, the room is filled with vapor. On major mishap, it begin filling the entire pyramid. On destroyed, the insidiousness of the atmosphere is also raised to where suit corrosion is 6 times faster.

When a mishap occurs, the player must also roll suit discipline.

To experiment with the power plant system:

Difficult, Engineering, Int, 20 min (fateful)

Referee: Mechanical or Electronics may replace Engineering at DM-1. On success, the character has at least found a means of turning the power plant off. But on any result other than extreme success, the quakes become more frequent and stronger.

On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

To experiment with the other controls:

Routine, Electronics or Engineering, Int, 10 min

Referee: On success, the character is able to adjust the various controls, however their affects will likely be in places of the pyramid where the characters are not observing.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 - operate exterior door | 16 - lighting, power plant |
| 2 - operate door to room 2 | 17 - lighting, room 2 corridor |
| 3 - operate door to room 3 | 18 - lighting, room 3 corridor |
| 4 - operate door to room 4 | 19 - lighting, room 4 corridor |
| 5 - operate concealed door | 20 - turn on/off pendulum kicker |
| 6 - operate statue atop pyramid | 21 - raise/lower pendulum |
| 7-10 - lighting, chamber 1 | 22 - subsonic signal panicking
all animals in the complex. |
| 12 - lighting, room 2 | 23-24 - quake detectors (which
activate 2 min before a
quake). |
| 13 - lighting, room 3 | 25-32 - inoperable/unidentifiable |
| 14 - lighting, room 4 | |
| 15 - lighting, exterior door
corridor. | |

On a mishap, the player must roll suit discipline to avoid an accidental suit fault.

Referee Details: Throw 6+ for a random animal encounter to occur while in this area. If so, throw 1D on the encounter table.

Visibility through the vapor does not go any further than close range, even in infrared. Because of the danger of hidden animals, they might rather find a means of getting rid of the vapor. One possibility is to use jets of air from their oxygen tanks. This will allow them to complete a casual search at the expense of 20 minutes on their air supply. An alternative is to have the room system flush out the vapor, and indeed, the building ventilation system is centered here.

A casual search with the vapor out of the way will reveal a few things. First, at the east and west sides of the room, there are large black stains on the floor in the shape of the beings depicted on the walls of chamber 1. Near each is what at first looks like a tool, but on closer examination will prove to be a gauss pistol of alien design. Age makes the weapons impossible to resort.

Second, a small disk lays in the middle of the floor. It bears the full body image of a Vargr and is made of a yellowish metal (gold). The Vargr is in profile on one side, and is face front on the other.

This is actually a Droyne coyn, and Droyne are responsible for the death of the inhabitants. However, the referee's presentation, while giving the information accurately, should implicate the Vargr instead of the Droyne. Describing the object as, "a disk with a Vargr on it" could get players to conclude its a Vargr "death card" of sorts. Describing it as a "gold coin", however, more readily invites the thought, "Droyne coyn".

Conclusion (Referee Information)

If the characters fail to find the infrared mural in chamber 1, later computer enhancement of the video images they took will reveal the presence of hidden designs, but not the details. This is important, otherwise the group will not know the location of the homeworld. Either the characters will have to return to investigate, or the NPC team in pinnace 2 will. If the coin in the power plant was not discovered, it may be better that the NPC team volunteers. This way, its discovery can be assured.

Analysis of the mural will allow the characters to map what systems the race colonized and invent from the labels names for each. The system at 1022 (Ssrar) is quite obviously the homeworld for the race.

Most of the overall construction of the transmitter follows a very unfamiliar design philosophy using uncustomary materials. However, some components have symbols that, under later analysis, are at least descendant of a Vargr alphabet. Others, however, are unidentifiably alien.

Analysis of the gold coyn will not be able to draw any conclusions about the "yellow disk". NPC scientists will do metal content tests, wear analyses, style classifications, and speculate about from what branch of the Vargr diaspora it could have come from. It will take a player character to clearly suggest that it's a Droyne coyn of an unfamiliar style. Once on the right track, the truth of that will soon be confirmed.

As already explained above, analysis of the animals will show that all three types are in fact that same species in different developmental stages. They are the most advanced lifeforms on the planet, but are not indigenous and are confined to that one island. The prolific plant life is not indigenous either.

SSRAR

Star System Data (Ssrar)

Orbit	Name	UWP	Remarks
Primary	Savria 1022	M1 V	Magnitude 8.64
0	Alpha	Large Gas	Giant
1	Alpha Ay	YR00000-0	heavy ring
2	Alpha Bee	YR00000-0	heavy ring
3	Alpha See	YR00000-0	heavy ring
4	Alpha Dee	E9A5000-0	* beacon *
8	Alpha Ee	Y410000-0	
10	Alpha Eff	Y843000-0	
11	Alpha Gee	Y300000-0	
20	Alpha Aitch	Y200000-0	
40	Alpha Eye	Y520000-0	
55	Alpha Jay	Y410000-0	
1	Beta	Large Gas	Giant
6	Beta Ay	Y400000-0	
7	Beta Bee	Y750000-0	
8	Beta See	YS00000-0	
12	Beta Dee	Y200000-0	
25	Beta Ee	Y620000-0	
45	Beta Eff	YS00000-0	
60	Beta Gee	Y300000-0	
2	Gamma	Small Gas	Giant
10	Gamma Ay	Y200000-0	
3	Delta	Y300000-0	
4	Planetoid Belt	Y000000-0	
5	Planetoid Belt	Y000000-0	
Companion		M1 D	Primary orbit 10
0	Alpha	YS00000-0	
1	Beta	YS00000-0	
2	Gamma	Small Gas	Giant
25	Gamma Ay	Y100000-0	
35	Gamma Bee	Y220000-0	
40	Gamma See	YS00000-0	

Ssrar - Savria 1022 (System Information)

Ssrar circles a large gas giant just outside a surprisingly broad gas giant ring. The ring is also extremely dense with material, possessing almost no features such as the expected ring divisions. A character with Planetology skill will know the ring was the result of an unnatural break up of at least one major satellite no later than a million years ago.

Elsewhere in the system, and circling Ssrar itself, is a substantial amount of artificial debris. Without making a special search, all of it will appear to have been destroyed. Many of the objects are quite large, originally begin part of orbital docks and space habitats.

The ruins of several metropolitan centers are detectable by ship sensors. Craters dominate the center of many, suggesting they were destroyed by nuclear attack. There is no indication of a surviving civilization anywhere on the planet.

Yet another beacon transmits from the world's surface. Examining the sensor information, its looks as though the site was once a spaceport of alien design. However, climate changes have submerged most of it under about a meter of water. The rubble and structures, characteristic of what was seen on the previous worlds, protrude above the water. Wild vegetation grows over the areas the water does not reach.

The expedition commander, Captain Shechstebr, will order the second pinnacle and crew to descend and explore first. The rationale is that the first pinnacle was usually first the last times, and its time to reverse the order. But, whatever the referee does, he should carefully manipulate events such that player characters are not on the second pinnacle when it leaves the world's surface, since its fated to be destroyed.

Vishhiquay Two (Ssrar Event 1)

Referee's Synopsis: A Droyne squad, unobtrusively stationed on the world, is aware of the Zhodani and has attacked the non-player character landing party. Communication is lost with them as the Droyne beacon becomes a radio jammer. The team is unconscious in the building and require rescue.

Tasks:

Telepathy, employed from the Vishhiquay, will reveal all characters belonging to the landing party are alive but unconscious. Clairvoyance will show their prone and scattered bodies, but will not readily show the Droyne elsewhere in the building. Assume the range is planetary unless the characters take the time to adjust the orbit bringing the ship into better range.

To locate the source of the jamming:

Difficult, Commo, Sensor Ops, 10 min

Referee: Two characters, one with Communications, the other with Sensor Ops, may combine their skills. On marginal success, the characters only know that the source of the jamming is within 500 meters of the Vishhiquay Two. On success, reveal that the source is indeed the beacon near the pinnacle.

To apply ship sensors to resolve an image of the landing site:

Difficult, Sensor Ops, Edu, 10 min

Referee: On marginal success, reveal there is an object, about 100kg laying within 5 meters of the beacon. On success, reveal that the object is the prone and suited figure of a human and that the pinnace hatch is open. On exceptional success, the image of the scene is clear enough to recognize that he is injured and to make a positive identification of the specific individual.

Note that although the typical task duration is about 10 minutes, the ship's orbit might not have brought the sensors in range of the site. Roll 2D-2 and multiply by 10. The result is how long the sensor operator must wait until the sensors can be brought to bear.

Referee Details: The departure of the Vishhiquay Two is unusually ceremonious. All three consuls are present to see the party off. Aveliashav gives a short speech ostensibly commemorating the homeworld landing as a historical event. The consuls extend honors to each member of the non-player character landing party as they board.

The landing of the Vishhiquay Two is uneventful. Since most of the clear areas are now covered with water, the pinnace lands on a blocky, flat topped building evidently designed to accommodate flying vehicles. The familiar Droyne beacon also sits atop it near a corner.

A lift is discovered in the center of the roof, the only above water entrance into the building. After scouts tested its operation, Lt Cmdr Ezsho, the commander of the Vishhiquay Two, leads the party down, leaving behind one man with the pinnace. The first two levels are empty. However, all communication is lost with the landing party while they explore the third. The last signal from Ezsho is, "Vishhiquay! We're in trouble! Some ..."

Up to this point, the player group in the mothership can have full knowledge of what the landing party knows. The pinnace and the explorers carry video cameras. The Vishhiquay keeps contact with them through communication relay satellites in high orbit. So as to give the players some involvement, they can advise or perhaps even control an exploration dumbot until communication is broken.

The truth of the matter is that the landing party has fallen into a trap. The Droyne understand the operation of the building. And when the group started exploring the third level down, they switched on ultrasonic projectors at their highest intensity, knocking them out.

Immediately after, the beacon on the top of the building was remotely switched to operate as a jammer. The radio signal that was transmitted to the beacon by the Droyne might be detected. However, the transmission was too brief to determine its specific location.

Within a few minutes of from when the jamming began, the crewman still aboard the pinnace, Advanced Spacer layapa, realized the beacon was the source. He left the pinnace to disable the antenna, but was hit by fire from an overlooking building. He is unconscious and dying.

Dream Center (Referee Setting Information)

Dreams and other states of consciousness were a very important aspect of Hhkar life. The building the pinnacle landed on was a center Hhkar visited to lounge in social groups. The chambers would differ in lighting, sounds, scents, temperature, atmospheric content, and even background electrostatic and magnetic fields. These helped promote different kinds of dream states in Hhkar.

Each level of the building is equipped with a slightly different array of features. The third level down from the roof also has concealed ultrasonic projectors, currently at maximum intensity. All characters on that level, other than in the lift chamber, take 4 hits of temporary damage per round. This is reduced by 1 hit for every 5 points of armor rounded down. Damage after unconsciousness is ignored. After 3D minutes, each character returns to consciousness and recovers his original hits value.

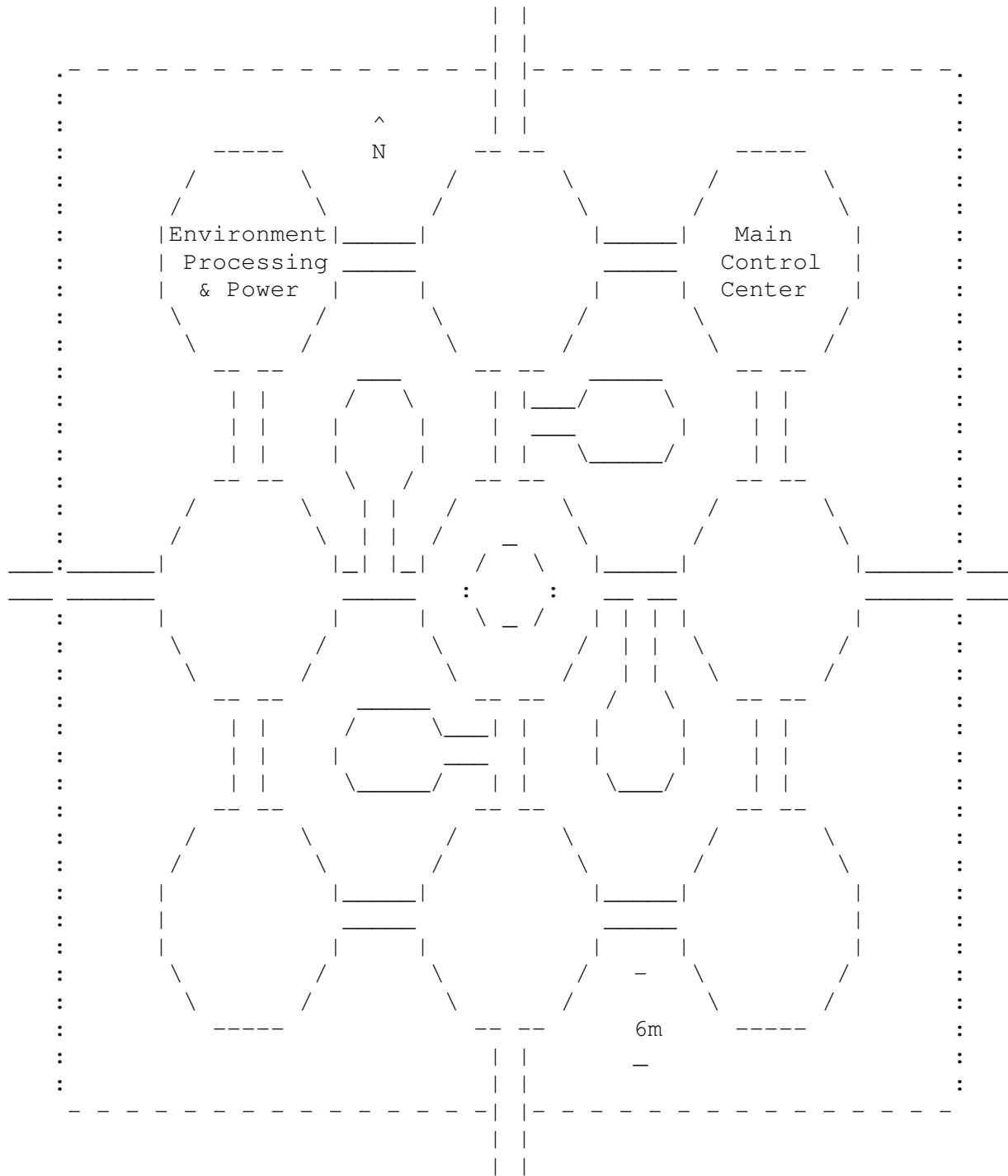
Nine large chambers are found on each level, along with four smaller chambers. These, and the corridors, are remarkably similar in design to those found in the pyramid at Kraahk and can be administered the same. The larger chambers also feature 20 "stone beds" each spread out arbitrarily. These have slightly rounded tops, rather than flat, and feel as if made of stone. However, the material deforms slightly over time. A heavy object, like a weapon, will leave a temporary impression.

All levels are virtually identical in arrangement, except the fourth level down, the basement. The only real difference is four subterranean entrances from each of the four cardinal points of the compass. All are closed off by metal doors, like those on Kraahk.

The northeast chamber contains all of the master controls for the building. The northwest chamber is the environmental center, which includes heating, cooling, atmospheric filtration and additives. External power also arrives here and is distributed through the building. The operation of the building can be shutdown from either center. Again, these have very similar equipment and controls as was found at Kraahk.

The first landing party is on the next level up. Four characters lay in the north central chamber. Seven lie in the northeast chamber, among them being Lt Cmdr Ezsho. They will remain unconscious until they are no longer under the influence of the ultrasonic projectors. They can be rescued by either turning the projectors off at either of the two centers on the basement level, or through the local controls in the small chamber in the northeast quadrant of the third level. However, to do so from the small chamber, a character must move 15 meters from the lift chamber and operate the controls while being subjected to the ultrasonic projectors.

The atmosphere still has sulfur compounds, but not at such toxic levels as was on Kraahk. A suit breach is not as serious a matter here. Repairs can be delayed for as long as 1 minute. Thereafter, however, the character will begin to choke. All tasks are one level more difficult. Unconsciousness comes in 1D minutes plus the character's endurance divided by 5 rounded down. Because, the atmosphere also contains oxygen, the character can survive for as long as 1D hours before respiratory failure.



The Droyne (Information)

On Ssrar is a squad on Droyne consisting of six warriors and three scouts supported by several Droyne of other castes. They are on station to watch for visitors to the planet. The intelligence they collect is stored in a computer at a well hidden subterranean base where are found the technicians, workers, and drone.

The Droyne will also attack visitors if they can. Even if they do not destroy those that land there, the combat will probably yield useful information. Attacks will be staged from a wheeled ATV equipped with a continental range radio communicator, regional range maser communicator, and a 3cm auto cannon.

	Ammo	Pen/ Attn	Dmg	Max Range	Auto Tgts	Dngr Spc	Sig	ROF
3cm Auto Cannon	3000	5/3	4	VLong (3.5)	4	---	M	200

Below are basic stats for the Droyne the characters are likely to encounter. All warrior and all scouts can be assumed to be the same for game purposes. However, the referee is encouraged to use the Droyne section of MegaTraveller Aliens Vol 3, The Psionic Races: Zhodani and Droyne to develop the characters more fully. The warriors could also be psionic as well. And the race has psionic abilities specific to the Droyne that can make the encounter more interesting.

A specific ability all Droyne have, even those untrained, is invisibility. Characters within 400 meters of a Droyne using this power cannot see it. This is negated, however, by artificial or natural psionic shielding, or a means of indirect electronic imaging, such as an IR scope. They also all have mind shields as a natural ability. This prevents their being sensed through the Telepathic skill, Life Detection.

(Droyne Warrior) 666332 Age 20 2 Terms Hits 3/4

ACR-2, Hvy Wpns-1, Unarm Cbt-1, Vacc Suit-1, skill Combat armor-11, ACR (7mm), RAM-11 (4cm; 6 rnds), 2 Hand Grenade-11

Referee: The unnamed skill can be selected as desired. Possible skills are Tactics, Reconnaissance, Weapon-2, or Demolition.

(Droyne Scout) 433665 Age 32 5 Terms Hits 2/2

Handgun-2, Unarm Cbt-1, Recon-1, Flying-1, Vacc Suit-1, Jack-o-T-1, Demolition-1, Psi-6, Telepathy-6, psi-skill

Vacc Suit-11, Powered Wings, Autopistol (7mm), 2 Hand Grenade-11

Referee: The unnamed psionic skill may be Clairvoyance, Telekinesis, or Awareness. Each of the three scouts has a different power. The powered wings are an early application of technology leading to battle dress. Droyne with Flying may fly indefinitely without rest at speeds of 50 khp.

Upsso (Droyne Leader) 333A96 Age 40 7 Terms Hits 2/2

Tactics-3, Leader-2, Handgun-2, Hvy Wpns-1, Unarm Cbt-1, Liaison-1, Vacc Suit-1, Appeal-1, Psi-9, Telepathy-9, Clairvoyance-9,

Telekinesis-9, Awareness-9, Teleportation-9

Vacc Suit-11, Autopistol (7mm), Wheeled ATV, Psi Drugs

Starport A, Small, Standard, Wet World, Mod Pop, Ext Law, Avg Stellar

Referee: Upsso is a military leader in a pure sense. The Zhodani are treated as an enemy race. He will see to it that intelligence is collected of their arrival, and will engage them in combat. Upsso will not make peaceful contact with the Zhodani unless he is forced to negotiate. However, he will sooner withdraw from conflict to assure the protection of gathered information, which is his primary objective.

Landing (Ssrar Event 2)

Players' Impressions: A steamy, white haze lies over the city of blocky and angular buildings. The shadows they cast are visible as lines through the air. Bat winged aviforms fly among the pyramidal structures, and sometimes swoop to the jungle below. Others skim over the shallow lake that once was the spaceport. An animal scream echoes from the distance.

Suddenly, you are hammered by an explosion adjacent to you.

Referee's Synopsis: The characters land the Vishhiquay One with a consul on board. They must attempt to rescue the wounded man on the roof, while contending with a Droyne sniper.

Tasks:

To spot the concealed Droyne warrior:

Difficult, Recon, 1 combat round, (absolute)

Referee: Apply the best Recon skill from among the group with a potential line of sight to the warrior. Only if characters expressly state they are examining other directions as well, allow them to roll this task a second time. If they succeed, reveal they've spotted an airborne object among the buildings at distant range. It flies using wing beats, like the aviforms, but is larger and has an artificial aspect.

An additional roll, using a scope or binoculars, will identify the object as a Droyne using powered wings. He is coming closer, using buildings as cover where he can. The scout will eventually land on a protective perch at long range.

Referee Details: Chitsiashav is aboard the pinnacle on this trip, overruling the objections of his fellow consuls. He has with him a hand computer and holorecorder, both of Imperial make. The holocrystal he is particularly studying contains Imperial travel literature. Characters that know Galanglic can read the label which says, "Sakuun, Lar. WONDER PYRAMIDS OF THE MARCHES. Starshield Books (Rhylanor: 1107)". If asked why he came along on this trip, he will say he wants to check on an idea he had about the race himself, but does not want to announce his theory as yet. Chitsiashav plans to remain aboard the Vishhiquay One until the other landing team is rescued.

The wounded character laying near the beacon, Advanced Spacer layapa, has physical stats of 77A when uninjured. If the player characters waste little time in flying down to aid the first team, they will find him at minor wounds with injured stats of 306. If they delay, such as to do a sensor scan from orbit, layapa will be at major wounds with injured stats of 003. Because of a high penetration suit breach, he is breathing the atmosphere which was keeping him unconscious.

Characters emerging from Vishhiquay One will have to contend with sniper firing HEAP RAM grenades from an overlooking building. The signature is medium and the warrior is at long range. He has 5 HEAP rounds remaining. When he has spent 3, he will withdraw to take up a new firing position and wait to support a scout's attack (see next event). Once all grenade rounds are spent, he will enter the building via subterranean tunnels.

Lift (Ssrar Event 3)

Players' Impressions: The lift slides gracefully downward. There are no vibrations at all as you descend slowly through a tube 9 meters in diameter. The iris valve overhead closes off the daylight, leaving you in darkness for several moments until the platform breaks into a chamber illuminated with a dull light.

Unexpectedly, there is again daylight as the roof panels above open once more. A small object, massing about 1 kilogram, drops onto the platform amongst you with a metallic thud.

Referee's Synopsis: A Droyne drops a HEAP hand grenade-11 onto the party as they descend the building's lift.

Tasks:

For a character to throw himself onto the grenade from an adjacent square:

Difficult, Dex, Instant, (safe, no retry)

Referee: Treat the difficulty level as Routine if the character is in the target square. If the character succeeds in the action, treat the HEAP hand grenade-11 as having twice normal penetration. Resolve the damage as if the attack was an 8+ exceptional success. No other characters are harmed. On a fumble, the grenade is knocked to a different part of the lift surface. Reroll the locations of all characters, relative to the grenade, as described in the referee details. On a failure, resolve the attack as if the character did not change squares. This task cannot be used to jump out of the way far enough to avoid damage.

To knock the grenade off the lift:

Difficult, Dex, Instant, (fateful)

Referee: This task is open only to characters in the target square of the grenade. On any mishap, the grenade is knocked to a different part of the lift surface. Reroll the locations of all characters, relative to the grenade, as described in the referee details. On success, the grenade is knocked harmlessly into the chamber the lift is entering.

Referee Details: The characters already know how to use the lift controls as a result of experimentation conducted by the first team. Their operation is virtually identical to a conventional elevator. The control to summon the lift from the roof is beside the lift opening, flush with the roof top. It only includes a small display indicating the current level the lift is on and a push pad.

When the characters arrive, the lift platform is on the third level down and an iris valve covers the opening. It will open automatically as the lift approaches. The iris valve also has separate controls, allowing it to be opened without the lift being present.

The lift is an impressive example of magnetic technology. As it descends, it makes no contact with the sides, being fully supported by magnetic forces. When it stops, mechanical breaks engage to lock it in place. It's essentially a platform some 9 meters in diameter. Spars extend downward from it forming a stabilizing structure some 12 meters long. Characters clinging to this are treated as having cover. The separation of each building level is 18 meters.

At an opportune time, a Droyne scout will make a hit-and-run attack. As an example of what it could do, it could fly in from a blind direction as the iris valve closes over the descending party, land, open the iris valve, drop a hand grenade, and fly off. This assumes characters with the pinnacle cannot respond in time. The referee is free to create a variation to this as the situation dictates. For instance, if a character is simply standing in the shelter of the open airlock, the Droyne might toss the grenade in from atop the pinnacle.

Assuming the characters are on the lift, and the players have not specified their location as on a lift template, have the players roll 2D for each character. On 9+, a character is close enough to attempt to throw himself onto the grenade. (He is also in the danger space of the grenade.) On 12+, the character is in the target square. He can either try dropping onto the grenade or kicking it off the platform. Once possible actions are resolved, complete the grenade attack normally.

When the characters arrive at the second level down, they will find a knife obviously of alien manufacture. The object is in plain site, and would have been discovered by the first party had it been there before. This was actually dropped by one of the warriors and is a hint that the characters should be on their guard.

Order of Battle (Referee Information)

Four Droyne warriors and the leader will initially be in the building when the characters arrive. One warrior is in the main control center with Upsso. Another is in the environment/power center. Two more will be on the second level, one in the west corridor, the other in the south. If the sniper is in the building, his post is the room between the two centers. A Droyne scout will remain at the ATV hidden a little under 500 meters away. The sixth warrior, a technician, and worker, will also be there.

The actual events that unfold will dictate what actions the Droyne take. This is difficult to predict, especially where psionics are involved. However, some suggested actions to the referee follow.

If the characters come down the lift shaft, the warriors will keep out of sight until characters are on the third level. Then they will attack to best effect. If the characters manage to neutralize the ultrasonic projectors, Upsso, in the main control center, will know from the displays there. His skills, however, will not allow him to attempt to override anything from the center.

Instead, he will attempt to summon the lift. Once its on the lower level, he will shut off the power to the building. The warriors will then fire up at any non-Droyne attempting to climb up or down the shaft.

If the characters try to enter through the subterranean passages from other buildings, they will find the entrance blocked by metal doors. They can be forced open by a combined strength of 13+. The warriors on the second level will descend to the basement level, by lift or rope, to join the combat.

Communication among the Droyne will be very limited. However, when combat begins, Upsso will telepathically order those in the ATV to silence the beacon from jamming. No further radio signal will come from the ATV so as to avoid detection. Thereafter, the Droyne in the building will break radio silence. The leader will add his Tactics skill to the Droyne tactical points pool.

Upsso, however, will not risk himself in combat. If forced to do so, he will Teleport to the ATV. He is not cowardly, but is aware he is the only Droyne leader on the world and will not risk himself needlessly.

Chitsiashav's Gesture (Ssrar Closing Event)

Players' Impressions: Chitsiashav greets you as you reboard the pinnacle. The consul smiles, but his eyes reflect something other than joy. He says to you, "The race that sprang from this world may yet be alive. I found pictures of ruins in Imperial travel literature. There is no doubt they once had a colony on a world called Yorbund, almost 200 parsecs away. If they travelled that far, there might yet be survivors that escaped the massacres."

Chitsiashav begins to seal his vacc suit. "I will go back up to the mothership with the comrades you rescued. But, I'll leave my equipment here in your trust. See to it that no harm comes to it. You've all done well today. The Consulate stands in appreciation of your efforts. And never for a moment should be believe that what you did here was in vain." The consul enters the airlock without saying anything more. He walks to the other pinnacle with measured steps and boards.

Minutes later, it rises into the hazy white skies and accelerates for space, leaving a trail of condensation behind. But, that graceful line is disrupted at the head by a flash and billowing white clouds. The Vishhiquay Two has exploded.

Referee's Synopsis: As was fated by the images through the Ancient map projector, the second pinnacle is destroyed. However, the consul, Chitsiashav, willingly sacrificed himself in the disaster as a gesture to fortify the Zhodani will in its commitment to reach the galactic core.

Referee Details: The consuls know that 12 people will be aboard the pinnacle when it is destroyed (although some may already be dead when it explodes). If there are already 12 when Chitsiashav boards the Vishhiquay Two, he will send a character to the other pinnacle taking his seat. He will first select a player character if there are any, then Advanced Spacer layapa if he still lives, then any living character except one required to operate the pinnacle.

The Vishhiquay Two may be destroyed by a demo charge planted at a critical location on the pinnacle by the Droyne before the arrival of the player characters. If the charge is discovered, assume the pinnacle is instead destroyed by an energy blast from the ground. The original starport was equipped with defensive weapons the Droyne learned to operate. Each is equivalent to a particle accelerator with a UCP of 3 and computer model 6.