



# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured Adventure:

## *The Edge of Power*

by Timothy Collinson

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March/April 2016

## A Note About Production

*Freelance Traveller* is prepared using Microsoft Office Publisher 2010 running on a Windows 7 Ultimate x64 system. The program is reasonably easy to use, and produces good results with moderate effort; it also supports advanced typographic features such as typographic quotes and apostrophes, small caps, ligatures, swashes, and stylistic alternatives (if the advanced features are implemented in the font). Generation of the PDF files is built in to this version of Microsoft Office; no additional products are needed.

The title and heading typeface is ZapfHumanist BT, a Bitstream adaptation of Hermann Zapf's digital redesign of his 'hot lead' typeface Optima, chosen as a 'tie-back' to the title typeface of the original edition of *Traveller*. The black-and-orange of the section headings is also a tie-back to *Traveller's* origins, though we felt that the 'correct' red was too dark. The heading sizes vary from 12 to 16 points. Body text is set in Palatino Linotype, also designed by Hermann Zapf, and is set at 11 points for most body text, giving approximately the same text spacing as Times New Roman at 12 point (which was the original *Freelance Traveller* body text), but a lighter 'color'. Palatino Linotype also 'balances' better as a body text typeface to Optima as a titling typeface.

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## From the Editor



And so to press. I'm sorry I couldn't get this one out as early as I'd hoped; sometimes Real Life just decides to... well, I try to avoid using that language in my writing. Anyway, I was coming home from work Just Totally Wiped for at least a week in there somewhere.

On the other hand, having the extra time of a bimonthly instead of a monthly does reduce the stress, and I'm still enjoying doing it—so there's no chance that the schedule change presages folding the tent anytime soon, as a couple of people wrote to me to say they feared. More to the point, I'm still getting

new material in useful quantities and good quality, so the community support is still there.

I'd still like to do some more Theme Issues; the 2300AD and Psionics issues both got good feedback. There are other ideas for theme issues kicking around; I just put out feelers for one shortly before sitting down to write this month's FtE. The important thing, though, is that you, the readers (and contributors!) keep downloading and keep telling me what you like and don't like about *Freelance Traveller*, and write what you want to share. That's the only way I can keep putting out the magazine that you want to see. Thank you!





### Supplement 8: Cybernetics

Reviewed by Megan Robertson

Supplement 8: Cybernetics. Lawrence Whitaker.

Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

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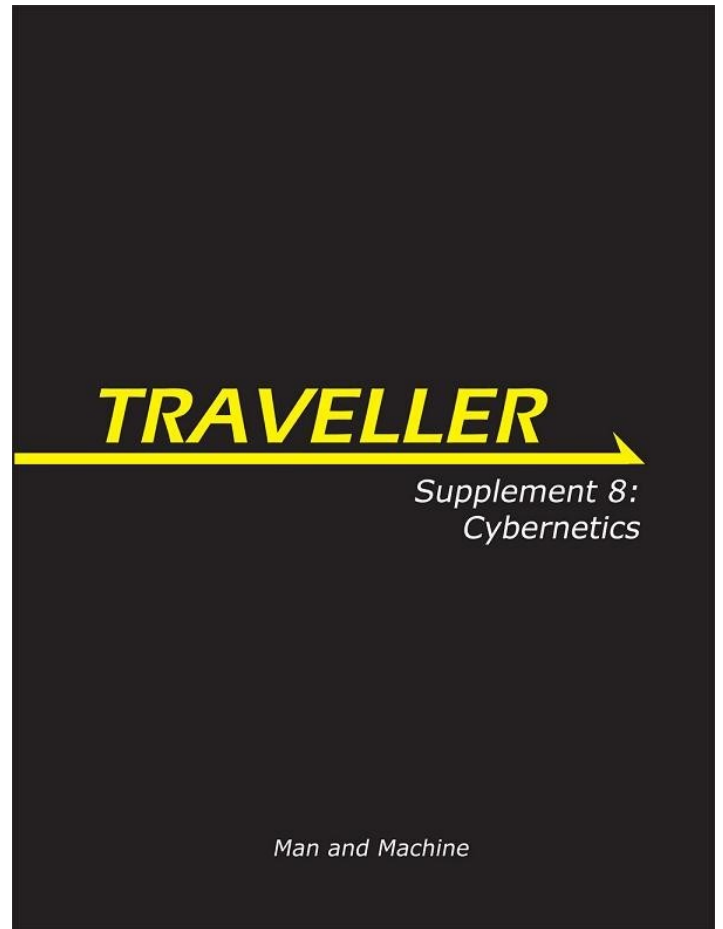
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This review originally appeared on [rpg-resource.org.uk](http://rpg-resource.org.uk) in July 2015.

This is an exciting new move for *Traveller*, the addition of 'cyberpunk'-style augmentation to the human (or indeed alien) body. Eminently sensible, too, it is likely that such modifications will be possible by the far future.

The Introduction looks at how the concept has changed over the years, with some of what early cyberpunk authors (in fiction as well as in games) imagined has been modified or even superseded by real-world developments (compare the modern World Wide Web with William Gibson's ideas about computer networks and hacking [or, as he called it, 'decking']... I still treasure an autographed copy of one of his books addressing me as a 'fellow decker'!), whilst other things imagined have yet to come to pass. The intention with this book, however, is to re-create some of the 1980s cyberpunk feel, especially in the rules and ideas presented for computing and cyberspace, and to enable some of the wilder comic-book concepts regarding cybernetic enhancement and augmentation. So the book comes in two parts: cybernetics and cyberspace, and it is up to individual referees to decide which (if any) of the material herein applies in their universe.

First up, Character Creation. This is aimed primarily at those who want their characters to already have cybernetic augmentations perhaps from an early stage in their pre-game career. So it presents a number of careers and options based on a character having cybernetic parts from the outset (or installed as he starts out in his chosen career, anyway) so that by the time he is ready for play the cybernetics really are a part of him. There's everything from super spies to ultimate fighting machines, but also more 'ordinary' characters who may have grown up in a



society where cybernetics are the norm and even office workers have augmentations... and a wholly new career of 'cybenet', those who live and breathe the online life. The noble options are quite fun too, and even psions get a look-in.

OK, so vague table entries about enhancement are not enough. The next section, Before the Chrome, addresses that, beginning with a definition of cybernetics as the interface between organic systems and synthetic ones, anything from an artificial limb to full-blown cyborgs, enhancements and augmentations. There are four reasons why a character might have such cybernetics: because they're fashionable, through medical necessity, to serve the needs of a particular task or job, or because he lives in a society where cybernetics are all-pervasive and everybody has them. Such societies are unusual, and unlikely to be found lower than Tech Level 13; but they could be interesting places to visit! However, from TL 8 or so you can get like-for-like cybernetics, say a hand that works almost as well as your meat one did, but from

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## Critics' Corner

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TL 10 and above you will find spare parts that work better than whatever they replace. At TL 13 it is possible to transplant a living brain into a completely artificial body. There's plenty detail here about what you can get, how it's installed and how the Tech Level affects the quality and performance of your new parts. It also talks about traumatic needs—*Traveller* damage is normally expressed in terms of your Strength, Dexterity and Endurance rather than in actual damage to specific parts of the anatomy—and the disadvantages as well as the advantages of replacing part of your body.

This section ends with a brief note about biotechnology as opposed to mechanical spare parts, and then we move on to chapters looking at specific areas of the body and what you can get: limbs, body and head augmentations, a section on Chrome, Chips and Plug-Ins, and finally weapons. If you cannot find what you need here, your imagination is working overtime... in each case, the biotech equivalent is mentioned although the main focus is mechanical. It's very human-centric, so if your Vargr has lost his tail there isn't a specific spare part for him although it should be straightforward to work from the examples to come up with what he needs.

## Active Measures

### The Edge of Power

by Timothy Collinson

This a *Traveller* adventure for 6-8 people using the *Orbital* setting by Paul Elliott (Zoser, 2013). The six PCs represent a Centennial team from the Luna outpost called Little Tyko who are drilling into the frozen nitrogen surface above one of the anomalous heat sources.

The core rulebook *Orbital* gives two UWPs for Triton: E210311-9 (page 189) and E210370-9 (page 190 and 120). It is just barely possible to read the de-

The second, and smaller, part of the book deals with Cyberspace. The significant difference between this and regular computing as you and I know it today is that it provides ways to visualise what is going on out there between your computer and the website or data store that you are accessing. This creates an interactive environment which can, of course, be manipulated... for good or evil depends in the main on your point of view. If you enjoy the 'netrunning' of the cyberpunk genre (for example as done in *Cyberpunk*, *CyberSpace* or *Shadowrun*) then this will be for you. If you are happier with more realistic hacking you may still find some of the mechanics useful even if you eschew the imagery.

The final section, Patrons, provides a number of potential patrons who can offer a party employment that in some way involves cybernetics. They all come in standard patron encounter format complete with six possible outcomes/twists, roll a D6 or pick whatever takes your fancy. Ideal if you need a quick adventure idea and several do not require the characters themselves to be 'cybered-up' to take the job... so you could even use them as a prelude to introducing material from this book into your game.

*Cybernetics* isn't for everyone, but if you like the idea it's one way to make your *Traveller* universe a lot more than ordinary people who happen to have access to FTL starships! Certainly worth a look... 🌟

scriptive text as somehow not including a lot of families or support staff that would make up the 1000s, but this adventure has assumed that the population digit of '3' is a typo and that '2' was intended as the descriptive text would imply. 60 Luna scientists, 50 ESDA scientists and two squads of eight IAU police for a total of 126.

The remainder of the UWP is assumed to have changed between the beginning of the year when it was just the Luna colony and a limited law level that was fairly irrelevant but 'company policy', and the situation now with a balkanized government and no

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law level. The Eckard Tactical Management troops under the auspices of the International Astronomical Union have only just arrived and are setting up their own habitat.

Page numbers given are from the *Orbital* setting book. The usual layout of situation, complications, agendas and resolution has been used.

### The Situation

Triton is about as far out as mankind has ventured. Proteus is just a rockball, Nereid is struggling (see 'The Edge of Humanity', *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* (SJGames, online) July 16, 2013) and much further out the Kuiper Belt has yet to have any real presence. Triton is interesting for any number of reasons, such as its retrograde orbit, still being geologically active, and probably being a captured Kuiper Belt Object, but one feature has caught the attention of the science community throughout the solar system. Researchers, armchair astronomers and the media are abuzz with rumours that the Luna scientists have found something odd under the frozen surface of this tiny outpost on the largest moon of a distant world. There are few humans out as far as Neptune so at the moment almost any theory has some credibility. There are those who think it is some outlying Cydonian base, others who attribute it to other extra-terrestrials, some who've come up with ingenious natural explanations as to what they might be, and of course crackpot ideas along environmental, religious, or inter-dimensional lines.

The sixty Lunars already on Triton are determined to explore the nature of the hot spots and determined to beat the newly arrived Earth Space Development Agency scientists to the punch. However, they are very wary of ESDA who they believe have already attacked their first two survey missions. The scientists over at Lassell Base are still denying any involvement with either incident. Now that the ETM troops are here, a third attempt is being made but with beefed up security and the expecta-

tion that the IAU police will step in at the first sign of trouble. The well-established habitat at Little Tyko has opened communications with the ETM squads and already invited them for a meal when duties allow. Any communications with the ETM base show a very spartan habitat with little sign of the comforts of home; any communications with the ESDA base will show a fairly typical science station in the process of being set up but with at least one portrait of William Lassell prominently displayed as a reminder to the Lunars of who discovered the moon they're on. The Lunar base is located in a hemisphere where Neptune is permanently visible above the horizon, a pale blue in a black sky some four times the size of the Earth from the Moon; its mesmerising vertical cloud bands often catching newcomers by surprise. The ESDA habitat is on the other side of Triton where Neptune is not visible at all. Some commentators have suggested both sites have been deliberately chosen to remind their inhabitants in the first case of home, and in the second case of a neighbour, Luna, which they'd rather forget!

### Player Characters

The third survey mission comprises:

**Jem Halfby** 868B99 Age 38 Rank 4

*Background:* Luna

Lead scientist and survey leader

STR 8 (+0), DEX 6 (+0), END 8 (+0), INT 11 (+1), EDU 10 (+1), SOC 9 (+1)

*Skills:* Science (glaciology) 3, Investigate 2, Navigation 2, Science (biology) 2, Vacc Suit 2, Computers 1, Engineer (power) 1, Navigation 1, Comms 0, Flyer 0, Science (astronomy) 0, Trade (biotechnology) 0, Vacc Suit 0

*Equipment:* Cr50,000, Contact×2, Enemy

**Ocean N'Tros** B57A75 Age 46 Rank 3

*Background:* Luna

Project Manager

Drilling rig specialist, belt miner, and electronics

STR 11 (+1), DEX 5 (-1), END 7 (+0), INT 10 (+1), EDU 8 (+0), SOC 5 (-1)

*Skills:* Engineer (electronics) 2, Investigate 2, Vacc Suit 2, Computers 1, Engineer (life support) 1, Jack of All Trades 1, Mechanic 1, Medic 1, Navigation 1, Sensors

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1, Comms 0, Drive 0, Science (petrology) 0, Science (stratigraphy) 0, Trade (construction) 0  
*Equipment:* Cr30,000, Contact (becomes a Rival), Rival, Enemy

**Sooz Berdensten** 45BA67 Age 38 Rank 2

*Background:* Orbital Colony  
Assistant Project Manager  
Geophysics and life support  
STR 4 (-1), DEX 5 (-1), END 11 (+1), INT 11 (+1), EDU 6 (+0), SOC 7 (+0)  
*Skills:* Engineer (life support) 2, Art (imaging) 1, Comms 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Jack of All Trades 1, Mechanic 1, Medic 1, Science (biology) 1, Vacc Suit 1, Computers 0, Flyer 0, Investigate 0, Science (any) 0, Trade (hydroponics) 0  
*Equipment:* Cr 50,000, Ally, Contact

**Yanto Amakuzi** 6869B4 Age 30 Rank 2

*Background:* All Other Stations etc.  
Assistant Project Manager  
Petrology and surface operator  
STR 6 (+0), DEX 8 (+0), END 6 (+0), INT 9 (+1), EDU 11 (+1), SOC 4 (-1)  
*Skills:* Remote Operation 2, Science (petrology) 2, Recon 1, Survival 1, Comms 0, Computers 0, Investigate 0, Medic 0, Science (glaciology) 0, Science (stratigraphy) 0, Vacc Suit 0  
*Equipment:* Cr5000, Scientific Equipment

**Allas Coleton** 6B5C97 Age 38 Rank 4

*Background:* Luna  
Surface operator and security  
STR 6 (+0), DEX 11 (+1), END 5 (-1), INT 12 (+2), EDU 9 (+1), SOC 7 (+0)  
*Skills:* Recon 2, Survival (caving) 2, Computers 1, Investigate 1, Jack of All Trades 1, Language (Arabic) 1, Remote Operation 1, Vacc Suit 1, Carouse 0, Comms 0, Drive 0, Investigate 0, Science (meteorology) 0, Trade (materials technology) 0  
*Equipment:* Cr20,000, Enemy x 2, Rival

**Shaybring Tomaso** 877976 Age 34 Rank 2

*Background:* Luna  
Lead Patrol Agent  
Security  
STR 8 (+0), DEX 7 (+0), END 7 (+0), INT 9 (+1), EDU 7 (+0), SOC 6 (+0)

*Skills:* Gun Combat (energy rifle) 2, Advocate 1, Athletics (Co-ordination) 1, Comms 1, Streetwise 1, Science (geophysics) 1, Computers 0, Drive 0, Gun Combat (energy pistol) 0, Investigate 0, Recon 0, Science (archaeology) 0, Trade (hydroponics) 0, Vacc Suit 0  
*Equipment:* Cr51,000, Scientific Equipment, Enemy, Contact

None of the Enemies or Rivals listed above have been detailed but Referees may wish to do so to add further complications and interrelationships.

(If more PCs are required there could be additional security or geophysicists—or possibly an archaeologist or alien specialist.)

### Complications

The survey team are departing Little Tyko at the same time as a changeover of personnel is occurring on the base. Changeover is a big event in the life of such stations. Ten scientists are arriving from Luna on a Reiner-Gamma DCV Nova, with the same number departing as the DCV returns. The two modules it has carried out to Triton are also being landed to extend the base. Once they've finished their immediate duties the Nova crew of ten—probably not all at the same time—will be looking for a break from their ship even though facilities at Centennial base are extremely limited. There is a lot of commotion from people and gear everywhere and most of it out of place; there may be tears over departing friends or wariness over new arrivals—the latter needing guidance on where to be and where to find things. Two of the PC survey team, Coleton and Amakuzi, have each been assigned a newcomer to show around and introduce to those on-station; they are trying to meet this obligation at the same time as getting their own gear ready for departure.

Rip “Dobbo” Dobson (688735) is a 26 year old lab assistant who has never been to the outer reaches of the solar system before and is extremely nervous about everything. From her physical surroundings through protocols to how she'll fit in socially she has fears about just about anything she can think of. She'll want to be shown everything. Twice, most likely. Get her talking about any of her competencies

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or hobbies however and she'll transform into an articulate woman of some enthusiasm.

Arkansas Terrsman (5A6B87), on the other hand is a mature 48 year old who has knocked around research labs and habitats all around the system and will be friendly enough with whichever of the PCs is assigned to show him around, but it is clear that all he really needs to be shown is the peculiar workings of Centennial. As he's shown around he will ask very pertinent questions about the hierarchy and pecking order on the base—i.e., who has the power—whether it is formal or informal.

The Referee can make as much or as little of this commotion as desired but tempers may start to fray as Halfby puts demands on Coleton or Amakuzi who are both trying to be in two (or three) places at once; as other team members have to pick up extra chores, or as the two 'guides' get stressed by attempting to be helpful to the newcomers but are aware of other duties they're needed for or might prefer to be doing.

Once the PCs are ready are to go, it takes an hour for a Palomino Heavy Lander and its two crew—Barklet (7A6637) and Somsin (A45968)—to get them to the survey and drilling site. Previous teams have made good progress on the drill hole which is some half a kilometre from the hot spot that's been detected at this location. The crew of the Palomino have been ordered to stay on site ready for departure should there be trouble. The survey team are not to risk their lives in the face of any serious threat from ESDA. Already *in situ* are a hab module, science module and ORVIN module for the use of the team. It takes two hours to set up all their gear and the specialised drilling equipment they've brought for the final kilometres of frozen surface. The rig is capable of drilling a hole large enough for a human sized capsule to be dropped through the frozen nitrogen. The usual *Orbital* advice on vacc suits and working in a (near) vacuum should be noted (pages 104-111).

Everything goes well for some three hours when there's a breakdown in the ORVIN providing power and life support to the team. The drone has stopped operating and this will require repair as an immediate priority. Whether it is a mechanical, electrical or software malfunction will need to be determined by the PCs and the Referee should arrange matters to suit the skills of the characters so repair is possible.

*To repair the ORVIN module:*

Difficult (-2), Engineer (electronics *or* life support *or* power) *or* Mechanic, Intelligence, 1-6 hours.

Once power is restored the team can get back to work. But they hit another snag. Literally. The drilling rig appears to have hit a large meteorite buried in the frozen nitrogen; it breaks the drill bit they're using—although there are spares—and will need a heavier duty bit to go through the rock. 1D6 additional hours to replace the bit and drill through the rock. Or, alternatively, 1D6+2 hours to start again.

A geyser erupts near where the team are working, perhaps a kilometre or so away. There is no immediate danger but it is a reminder that the surface is active. A light rain of nitrogen snow reduces visibility and hampers work for 2D×5 minutes.

Thirty minutes after the breakdown of the ORVIN module, Little Tyko report the launch of a Palomino Heavy Lander from Lassell Base which is heading in their direction. It can carry up to eight people, and given the past two incidents caution is recommended. ETM has been informed. When the ESDA vehicle arrives after 1D6 hours, it will have its usual crew as well as two engineering specialists with tools and parts sent to help out with the ORVIN which they understand is having problems. They don't appear to be armed. It will be clear, unless the PCs have specifically asked for help, that ESDA are monitoring their communications or perhaps even have a mole within Little Tyko.

How the PCs handle the Earthers is up to them but if they're particularly rude then things could turn ugly. There are weapons aboard the newly arrived Lander and although the engineers have genu-

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inely come to help out—and can reduce the repair time by half and the difficulty to Average if allowed to assist—they and the crew will fight back if attacked. Fifteen minutes after they turn up, a squad of ETM troops will arrive to keep the peace. If any weapons are out in the open, they will insist on confiscating them. If relations are anything but peaceable they will order the ESDA people to return to their base but may find the crew intransigent in the face of their insistence that they have every legal right to be there and are only trying to help a clearly struggling survey team. They'll refer the police to their superiors back at Lassell Base and stall for time as much as possible in order to keep an eye on the Lunars until the last possible moment.

### Agendas

Halfby is a member of the Infinite Circle (page 148) and the association has pulled strings to ensure that the scientist is leading the survey mission. Other scientists amongst the PCs might be aware their seniority has been rather marginalised in favour of someone with less experience and reputation. They may question why. Halfby on the other hand won't overly care and as well as the scientific objectives of the survey will be keen to establish whether the anomaly is indeed of Cydonian origins or not and to limit how much information is put out if so.

N'Tros—often nicknamed Mare—is nearing retirement and looking for an easy life. She didn't volunteer for this mission but her skills are in short supply out here in Neptune orbit so she's been promised a month off her final rotation in return for this trip. She's deeply pessimistic about the mission given the two previous incidents and is convinced they're on a wild goose chase in any case.

Berdensten is actually a long-time ESDA agent—although possibly not the only one on Triton—and whilst she will want to maintain her cover if at all possible, she will also want to ensure that any viable, useful alien technology doesn't fall into the hands of the Lunars. Just how far she's willing to go

in order to ensure this is something she's not had to face yet. [If there is likely to be player-on-player action contrary to the advice in *Orbital* (page 198), perhaps in a convention setting, there should be fair warnings at the start of the adventure and it should be regarded as a requirement that it should only take place towards the end of the session.]

Amakuzi has long had sympathies with the Cydonian Society (page 25) but has recently converted to a more religious point of view rather than purely scientific. He is looking for further evidence of the Martians and their technology or structures and if he finds them will be in awe and wonder and want to both share the faith with his team and announce what they've found to the public at large. In this latter respect, his agenda will be diametrically opposed to that of Halfby.

Coleton is bright, but completely naive about any larger political ramifications of what might be found. He'll be far too enthusiastic about any safety concerns and put his own life at risk, if not those of his team, in exploring just a step too far or too hastily with little regard for caution. He's likely to side with Amakuzi in announcing any findings publicly.

Tomasoa has been instructed by the commanding scientist of Little Tyko to ensure the survival of this mission at any cost. They can't afford another incident like the first two in terms of both personnel and the political ramifications (Luna seen as being weak, the base not being capable, the scientists not being skilled enough and so on.) With regard to ESDA on the scene, Tomasoa might be rather trigger happy; with regard to exploring beneath the ice, utter caution will be the order of the day.

### Resolution

The Referee can resolve this in a number of ways depending on the requirements of any ongoing adventure or the actions of the players. A decision will need to be made along those lines about where the setting is being taken as regards aliens and so on. One possible option is given below. The two factions on Triton are vying for power and both believe they can control this distant outpost and be the first to

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make any major discovery. The ETM police are caught in the middle. The Referee may wish to play up the vying for power that the heads of the respective bases get into as well as the jockeying of the teams on the ground.

The PCs will eventually drill through the frozen surface of Triton to what lies beneath. In this location, they eventually hit rock. If there is an under-ice ocean on Triton, it's not at this location. The first PC to venture down in the capsule will be able to take tools—essentially a cylindrical laser heater that's about half a metre wide and a little over a metre tall—to melt the nitrogen and create a small chamber to work and move in. The pressure of the ice above constantly creates eerie noises that range from high pitched screeches to deep bass grinding. Helmet, or other, lights will cast eerie shadows as it bounces off the varicoloured surfaces. While the rocky surface is relatively even there are occasional pockets in the ice above that make even this melting work unnecessary as small 'chambers' are encountered. In the direction of the hotspot they are already getting raised temperature readings above the ambient temperature which is of course already considerably warmer than the surface above.

Approaching the anomaly, which will take a little bit of time as the frozen nitrogen is melted to clear a path, the ice will become less and less frozen until there's a large natural 'cavern' that is circular in shape, about 100m across and perhaps 50m high. There is a slightly raised area of rock near the centre of this and here there is a shaft through the rock leading downwards at a gentle angle and then switching back to continue descending to a point some 50m below the cavern. If the shaft is traversed the PCs will emerge into a cave in the rock below. It is a space that's about 50m across and 25-30m high. Temperatures here are high although vacc suits won't have difficulty dealing with the heat. The cave looks anything but natural. It's evenly shaped and has smooth surfaces. In a circular formation around

the floor are 23 units that are like very tall pyramids about as tall as a human and a couple of feet on either side at the base. They're not made of any known material. About halfway up each pyramid is a light-bar which appears to have an internal series of lights that intermittently change pattern. The lights are on the inward facing sides of the units; not all of them appear to be functioning. Whether this means just the lights have failed or the units are non-operational (turned off or broken) can be established to some extent by the fact that those with no lights are emitting no heat.

The PCs won't be able to affect the status of the units as they have no controls for them, but with sufficient lifting gear they can be moved and with larger shafts drilled from the surface could be extracted for further study or for use in power generation. The PCs won't be able to determine with the instruments they have what purpose the units serve, save that they are putting out a fair amount of heat. The Referee can have them as part of the power engineering research of the Cydonians. Perhaps they were testing out 'field' units, or possibly even looking at the feasibility of melting Neptune's entire frozen surface for some purpose. Or they may have been part of the Makers' attempts to communicate with home or transport themselves there. Alternatively, and just to really complicate the solar system's anomalous items, they may be nothing to do with the Cydonians and could be an alternate unknown alien race or some hi-tech, secret human research. In either case, the Referee would need to determine why there's apparently no one around. Whatever the 'ultimate' explanation for the cave and its contents is deemed to be, the Referee will need to consider any ongoing adventure or campaign needs and how the find will affect human knowledge about the nature of the universe and possible technologies which might be exploited.

Halfby will most likely be convinced that the find is of Cydonian origin. He can point to its apparent antiquity and the unknown material as well as the pyramidal shapes of the units which hark back to

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## Active Measures

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the pyramid on Mars. He will want to preserve the area intact for further study.

N'Tros will be deeply cynical and convinced it's some ESDA project that's going to get them killed. She'll be curious to see if she can do anything with the units (any control handsets have long since gone) and try sending various signals to them. However, she'll also be keen not to linger, suspecting that ESDA agents may be close behind them.

Berdensten will need to decide whether she's going to keep her mission secret and play along with the others hoping to inform ESDA subsequently; or whether this is her opportunity to ensure that none of the Lunars who know about the find survives to tell the tale.

Amakuzi will naturally be over the moon (literally?) about the find and will hugely revere what they've found as evidence that the Cydonians are still around and perhaps can be found in a nearby chamber or called using the pyramids somehow. He'll be determined to exhaust every avenue he can think of.

Coleton will support Amakuzi in delving (literally!) further. He will be convinced there is more to discover; however much further investigation suggests there isn't anything there.

Any hint from Berdensten about her aims will probably have Tomasoa incapacitating her, if not killing her immediately. Tomasoa may, indeed, already have suspicions about the agent and therefore be ready and watching if she makes a move against the Lunars. Tomasoa won't be too concerned about the find itself—although naturally interested—but more fussed about getting everyone back to the surface safely and reporting the find to the authorities.

Subsequent events could deal with interactions between the PCs, the PC's attempts to remove one or more of the units from the cave, or the arrival of the ESDA team. This latter could involve roleplaying tense negotiations or the meeting could quickly descend into a firefight with the Earthers aiming to keep the find to themselves and not wanting any survivors—including Berdensten who they will regard as a liability. In short, whether it's for their research potential or their 'free energy' applications, this find may well give the edge to any faction that take control of them and perhaps tip the balance of power on Triton at least. Further actions and events are left to the PCs and the Referee.

My thanks to Tim <tim@little-possums.net> of the *Traveller* Mailing List for some great pointers on Triton and its environment. Any subsequent errors or artistic licence are of course my own. ☼

## Kurishdam

## Lecture Hall and Library

### Jump Destination: Telerine, Paryan System, Dole Moving Group

by Ken Pick

The Dole Moving Group (DMG) is a remnant of a star cluster, a set of stars with a common origin, age, and Galactic orbit. At an age of just over 2 Gyr, these stars are Type F through M main-sequence stars whose smaller members have not yet stabilized completely; many of its orange and red dwarf members (late K through M) are flare stars and/or BY Draconis-type variables.

Due to the group's young/intermediate age, many of the worlds are life-bearing, but usually nothing more complex than single-celled organisms—prokaryotic bacteria, single-celled plankton, and colony organisms such as algae mats (Life Scale 3bis, maximum). Though limited to such primitive organisms, evolution has progressed far enough so those single-celled organisms are aerobic, “pre-Terraforming” the more earthlike worlds with not only an oxidizing but oxygenated atmosphere.

Because of this, many of the DMG worlds have been terraformed and settled.

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## Paryan System (DMG 11)

Also known as “Telerine” after its main world, Paryan System is a dominant system in the DMG, a K1V main-sequence “orange dwarf” star with eight planets. Center of its own pocket empire, it holds the neighboring Virtchok and Hamilton’s Star systems as colonies.

For such a young system (2Gyr), it is almost barren of asteroids and remaining planetisimals; current theory is the interaction between the three gas giants threw most of the asteroids into the planets, into the sun, or out of system.

Planet I, **Phelstar** (X410000-0, Orbit 0) is a well-cratered rockball in a torch orbit, a Mars-sized Mercury with a trace atmosphere of metal vapors. From Telerine, it is usually lost in the sun’s glare.

Planet II, **Melthias** (E430216-9, Orbit 1) is another hot cratered rockball, similar to Phelstar but with a slightly-thicker atmosphere and two small moons, appearing in Telerine’s sky as a morning/evening star. A small corporate outpost near the North Pole maintains a permanent population of around 700.

Planet III, **Telerine** (AA99744-B, Orbit 2), a large near-waterworld with a narrow ring and one small moon, is the system main world with a population of just over 65 million. Its moon **Paryra** (AS00465-A) just outside the ring houses the highport elements of the starport and several micro-gee industries.

Planet IV, **Thelara** (XB8A000-0, Orbit 3) is a large frozen waterworld with two moons, its surface crinkled with tidal ridges like some super-Europa. From Telerine, it appears as a pale orange planet flanked by its ruddy moons, brightening suddenly in the “Thelaran Flash” as Ceres-like reflective areas on its surface catch the sun just right.

Planet V, **Pelandus** (SGG, 60 T-mass, Orbit 4), a small gas giant with three regular moons, is the main fuel-skim site for the system. The ideal mass for fuel-skimming, Pelandus’ surface gravity of only  $\frac{3}{4}G$  allows even 1-G ships to skim and boost clear.

From Telerine, Pelandus appears as a bright yellow planet with two naked-eye moons; close-up, the gas giant resembles a more placid Jupiter; a population of some 30,000 staff various cryo-extraction industries on the three largest moons.

Beyond Pelandus there are no permanent settlements; the outer system offers nothing that wouldn’t be on Pelandus’ moons.

Planet VI, **Zoras** (LGG, 400 T-mass, Orbit 5) is the main gas giant in the system, with a magnificent ring system and six regular moons. A third again the mass of Jupiter (which it resembles except for its Saturnian rings), Zoras has too high a surface gravity and too strong a magnetosphere to be suitable for fuel skimming.

Due to atmospheric haze, Zoras is barely visible in Telerine’s night sky as a fainter Pelandus; its rings and moons are visible through binoculars.

Planet VII, **Handorus** (LGG, 200 T-mass, Orbit 6) is another large gas giant, a ringless Saturn with greenish-blue clouds and five regular moons.

From Telerine, Handorus is at the limit of naked-eye visibility, almost lost in the haze.

At the edge of the system is the double iceball of Planet VIII, **Sthenles** (X840000-0, Orbit 7-8) and its moon **Aparthenos** (X410000-0), shepherding the inner edge of Paryan’s Kuiper Belt. Though almost as large as Telerine, Sthenles/Aparthenos is a borderline “dwarf planet” as it has only partially cleared its orbit; some of the local KBOs have perihelions within its orbital distance.

Beyond Sthenles lies only a moderate-density Kuiper Belt of small iceballs and comets.

Telerine

## Telerine (Paryan III) AA99744-B Ag Eaglestone Trade Index 2

From afar, Telerine appears as peach-tinted white clouds both forming into gas giant-style cloud bands along the equator and swirling over a purplish surface blurred by the thick hazy atmosphere, circled by a thin bronze ring with a “beads on a

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string” clumping effect. A single small moon orbits just outside the ring, shepherding its outer edge.

The Ag trade classification is for the main world of Telerine itself; much of the industry is located offworld and does not show up in the trade class; if it were, it would push the trade classification from Ag to general. Agricultural exports come from Telerine itself, raw material and industrial ones from the moons of Telerine, Thelara, and Pelandus.

## Planetary Geography

Over 90% of Telerine’s surface is covered by oceans stained the color of dark red wine by native plankton. Except for the limited land area (under half that of Earth), it fits most of the criteria for a “superhabitable” world. Dry land is distributed irregularly in islands scattered over its surface; the largest of these islands are the size of Great Britain.

The majority of these islands are volcanic, active enough that a lot of their surface is uneroded fresh lava. This further restricts the arable and inhabitable land area, as do the mega-storm conditions characteristic of waterworlds.

## Surface Conditions/Sky Picture

The day is 18 hours long, with a year of 320 local days. Greenhouse effect evens temperatures over the entire globe into a uniformly warm, wet climate throughout the year. The only indicator of the seasons is the path of the sun through the sky.

The first thing a visitor will notice is the atmosphere—twice as dense as Standard, thick enough to feel flowing through the nostrils and into the lungs, filled with the organic odor of the plankton that tints the seas wine-red. Dense enough to be on the edge of nitrogen narcosis, thick enough to double the force of any winds.

The next is the gravity—1.2G, 20% over standard. Then the sky, pale blue shading into white at the horizon, always speckled with clouds, often overcast, usually several levels of cloud decks obscuring the horizon.

The sky becomes more cloudy the closer you get to the equator; on rapidly-spinning waterworlds, the majority of clouds tend to hug the equator in a mostly-continuous band.

The sun appears 40% larger than normal, slightly blurred by atmospheric haze and with a distinct orange-yellow tint. Between the thick atmosphere and the spectrum of the K-class sun, little UV makes it to the surface.

The K-class sunlight causes a spectrum shift, moving all colors slightly down the spectrum for a sepia-tone effect; artificial lights appear unusually bluish in contrast.

The narrow ring appears as a bronze arch beyond the clouds, with a “beads on a string” clumping effect especially visible at night when it shares the sky with the single moon Paryra, barely large enough to show a disk. On the equator, the ring is seen edge-on through gaps in the equatorial cloud band, a knotted bronze chain bisecting the sky amid a continuous meteor shower from ring debris.

A typical Telerine holocard scene is looking out from a town of yellowish-stuccoed walls and red/brown tile roofs over a wine-dark sea beneath a too-pale sky filled with clouds backed by the bronze arch of the ring, the horizon between sea and sky blurred by haze.

## Peculiarities

As a near-waterworld dotted with islands and archipelagoes, no point on land is more than about 200km from the ocean, and most are less.

The dense atmosphere doubles the force of any winds, and the unlimited “fetch” of the world ocean allows storms to grow to the point they wouldn’t be out-of-place on a small gas giant. The only trees on Telerine grow in wind-sheltered valleys in the interior of the largest islands or in urban areas whose buildings provide a windbreak; otherwise, the densest vegetation is low scrub at most the height of a man. The major exception to this are deliberately-cultivated orchards of fruit and olive trees, most of them dwarf varieties; though the low gnarled olive

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can grow in the Telerine winds, orchards of full-size trees require artificial windbreaks.

Because of this, most local architecture is masonry-based, made of either bare lava rock or stuccoed/plastered in various colors within and without. Tile roofs are common.

Telerine is very volcanically-active; the majority of dry land is volcanic. Though after Terraforming the volcanic soil is very fertile, such arable land is scarce; this is the reason a world with  $\frac{1}{3}$  the land area of Earth has such a low population. Not enough good real estate has been terraformed; once all the islands are, Telerine could support maybe three times its current population.

Telerine boats and ships (including starships and small craft) traditionally have two stylized “eyes” painted on their bows/noses.

Telerine cuisine is typically “Mediterranean”, heavy on flatbreads, olive oil, olives, grapes, and wines. Dairy products are also universal, in various forms of cheese, runny yogurts, and yogurt-based sauces. The main meats are various forms of lamb and mutton instead of the usual rabbit and pork; seafood is also available but stained the color of Telerine’s ocean.

Alcoholic drinks are based on wines, flavored with various plant oils and/or tree resins; Telerine wines are an acquired taste, and take some getting used to. The strongest-flavored have to be mixed with water to be drinkable.

Hard liquors are represented by Tsipouro (grape brandy, 60-100 proof) and Ouzo (clear distilled liquor, 100-160 proof, a.k.a. “Absinthe without the wormwood”), both heavily flavored with anise oil.

Ouzo has one peculiarity—straight Ouzo is clear, but when diluted with water to below 100 proof, it turns a milky white as the anise precipitates out. It is normally served in specialist bars called *Ouzeroi*, café-like establishments which serve appetizers along with the alcohol, usually diluting their Ouzo to the patron’s taste to be sipped, not chugged.

## Native Life

None of the DMG habitable mainworlds have a high Life Score; most life-bearing worlds never get beyond bacteria, and these are no exceptions. Especially for young systems such as those of the DMG.

Telerine is actually near the top with a Life Score of 4bis—almost all single-celled sea life, with some multicellular vegetation starting to invade the land. Most of the “multicellular” sea life are colony creatures of single-celled eukaryotes, including the plankton/algae blooms which tint the oceans. The only native life which has made the jump to land are the equivalent of slime molds, “land algae” in the littoral zones, and multicolored lichens. The oceans have very little tides but high waves; these littoral zones are actually wave-swept areas instead of true intertidal zones.

Land life and land ecosystem was entirely imported during terraforming, which was carried out island-by-island and is still incomplete. This gives three distinct looks:

- Long-settled islands have a familiar biosphere like Earth’s eastern Mediterranean overlaid on a terrain similar to Italy or Japan.
- Unsettled islands being terraformed are stark barren Outback, broken only by feral terraforming plants (low weeds) spreading along the watercourses, adapting the soil for the imported biota. Except for recent volcanic fields which comprise a lot of the island terrain; there not even the terraforming weeds break the jagged badlands of the lifeless lava beds.
- Unformed areas are lifeless except for native lichen along the shore in the wave-swept storm-surge zone.

Terran sea life – primarily coastal fish and seafood species – was also seeded during Terraforming, genetically modified to thrive on Telerine plankton without residual toxicity. However, the pigment in the plankton stains their flesh (and all seafood) the color of dark red wine.

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## Cautions and Hazards

Landing on or taking off from the surface requires at least 2G Maneuver Drives. All 1G ships must put in at Paryra Highport; free-floating space station highports are not practical due to the planet's ring.

Because of major smuggling problems (Korvan cocaine), any ship arriving from Korvo will be thoroughly searched.

Sea-level atmospheric pressure is twice that of a standard atmosphere (or that of a scuba diver at 10m depth); water boils at 120 C (instead of 100 C) and all winds blow with twice the force of a standard atmosphere. Anything cooked by boiling acts as if in a pressure cooker and water can get to what would normally be boiling without showing any steam or bubbling.

Though breathable, the thick atmosphere is tainted by excess nitrogen; the partial pressure of nitrogen at sea level is right on the border of nitrogen narcosis. Telerine natives are used to it (and have learned to breathe to minimize the danger), but offworlders are not. Any diving below sea-level requires special diving gas mixtures such as trimix and heliox, reducing or eliminating the nitrogen.

The high concentration of nitrogen also doubles the effect of alcohol; one drink in Telerine's atmosphere equals two in Standard atmosphere.

At elevations of 3km above sea level, the atmospheric density and pressure drops to around a standard atmosphere, but the taint switches from too-high nitrogen to too-low oxygen; supplemental oxygen masks are required over 2000m elevation for Telerines, 3000m for standard-atmosphere offworlders.

One hazard that is absent is sunburn; between the thick atmosphere and spectrum of the K-class sun, little UV makes it to surface. UV/sunburn does not become a problem until an altitude of 5-6km, well above the breathable atmosphere and the highest mountains.

As a near-waterworld, there is no land to interrupt the "fetch" of storms and waves. Seas can go 50

meters in storms, and 300+kph hypercanes with tsunami-like storm surges are the most common natural disaster, with the occasional tsunami from a seismic quake or volcanic eruption a distant second. Remember all wind forces are twice normal; even conventional storms can blow like what would be a hurricane anywhere else.

Native sea life is not toxic *per se*, but does contain some allergens which will trip allergies in some humans. This applies to Telerine seafood, which concentrates some of the allergens while eliminating others. Most Telerines know if they are allergic; offworld *Barbaroi* usually don't.

Another hazard has to do with the local hard liquors, Tsipouro and Ouzo. Both are flavored with anise oil, which besides being an acquired taste camouflages the alcohol. There is a reason both are always served with food whenever possible (sweet fruits for Tsipouro and appetizers for Ouzo) and Ouzo is additionally mixed with water. With the synergistic effect of borderline nitrogen narcosis, drinking either on an empty stomach (especially chugging full-strength Ouzo) is called "Drinking the Dry Hammer" for a reason. (This has potential with non-Telerine PCs and NPCs, either accidentally getting dry-hammered or deliberately "dropping the dry hammer" on someone else.)

## History and Population

Telerine appears to have been terraformed and settled right at the beginning of the Long Night. As the planet already had a natural oxidizing atmosphere on the edge of breathability, terraforming was done through biological spot-seeding, island by island—a process still incomplete when the Long Night intervened.

Other than losing all offworld contact, Telerine weathered the Long Night fairly well; though the Tech Level dropped to around TL7 or 8 and resources (especially metals) were tight, they never fell to the point where they couldn't recycle materials and bootstrap their technology. Most important, the fusion plants kept operating, supplying electricity to

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the now-on-their-own colony; if they had failed, there were no fossil fuel deposits to fall back on (which would have crashed the Tech Level down to the Tech 3 Plateau, without any hope of recovery).

Upon recontact with the new interstellar community, Telerine quickly recovered offworld capability and started expanding and exploiting their system resources to prevent what almost happened. As they became more prosperous, one nation-state (the Helleanan Republic) became dominant, a single superpower in all but name which started expanding beyond the system into the neighboring systems of Virtchok (Korvo) and Hamilton's Star (Wasphome), planting a secondary colony of their own in the latter.

Population of 65 million (near-pure Solomani human), with a single planetary ethnic type influenced by the gravity and atmosphere—generally muscular builds and higher muscle/bone density, with light olive-toned skin, normally-curly black hair, and a generally “Eastern Mediterranean” appearance.

Raised since the Long Night in Dense-atmosphere conditions, Telerines can breathe Standard atmospheres but are in some danger of altitude sickness; this danger rises to near-certainty in Thin atmospheres. (Compressor masks or supplemental oxygen may be required in Standard atmosphere and will be required in Thin.) Even if they suffer no actual ill effects, they will feel short of breath in any atmosphere that is not Dense.

Telerines will normally not live or work in thin-atmosphere conditions; for thin-atmosphere work, they import *metikoi* labor from their outsystem colony of Korvo, as Korvan natives are adapted to those conditions.

In Classic *Traveller*, Telerine characters are +1 Str and +1 Dex, but -1 on all physical aging rolls (Str, Dex, End). This is due to their high-gee adaptations.

When in Standard atmospheres, a Telerine must roll his/her End or less to avoid altitude sickness. In

Thin atmospheres, a Telerine will automatically have altitude sickness.

Most people suffering from altitude sickness will adapt to the thin air over time; some never do. A compressor mask or supplemental oxygen mask will counter most of the symptoms, and returning to a Telerine-dense atmosphere will solve the problem.

## Language

Telerines have their own planetary language, represented by Greek (Classical, Koine, Modern, or any combination of the three), written with miniscule capital letters instead of true lowercase. With TL11 mass communications and infonets, regional dialects have homogenized into a Standard Telerine. (Remaining dialects can be represented by use of Classical, Koine, and modern Greek).

- Like the legendary French of old, Telerines are very proud of their unique language, and will insist on speaking it in lieu of Galanglic (or campaign equivalent) whenever possible, insisting that offworlders/*Barbaroi* speak Telerine instead.
- They will cut offworlders some slack if said *Barbaroi* at least make an attempt to speak Telerine.
- Telerine names are Greek in origin, Classical Greek-sounding personal names mixed with Modern Greek surnames. The higher the Social Status, the more likely they are to use the Classical spellings and pronunciations.
- Central City/downtown is always called the “*Akropolis*”.
- Offworlders/non-Telerines are always “Barbarians” except for offworlders from the Republic's colonial possessions; Korvan humans and Chitin A “Wasps” are always *Metikoi*, not *Barbaroi*.
- For the names of Telerine islands and cities, use the more obscure names from a list of old Greek city-states. Major cities often are named after their island or region with the suffix “-polis”.
- Being one of the ancestors of Galanglic (or whatever the campaign common tongue is), many Telerine words are similar but with different

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meanings. Galanglic scientific/technical terms can have very mundane meanings in Telerine. For example, “*Metafor*” can mean cargo-handling or freight-transport equipment; “*Stasis*” can mean “stop” (as in bus stop), “*Apocalypse*” (“revealing of what was hidden”) leaking secrets or declassification of classified information, not “World-wrecking disaster”. And a “*Cenobite*” (“He who is set apart”) is a monk or nun, not a demonic movie monster.

Because of this, even good cybertranslation will be no more than 90% accurate and there will always be opportunities for misunderstanding.

## Economy and Trade

**Trade Class:** Agricultural (main world), general (rest of system)

**Eaglestone Trade Index:** 2 (over 1500 passengers and 6000 dtons freight/week; 70-80% of that between Telerine and Korvo)

**Exports:** Wool, Wines, some Cheese (main world), chemicals and alloys (rest of system), seed loam (to Geolan)

**Imports:** Anything above TL11, Korvan hardwoods

**Services:** Shipbuilding, servicing of through-traffic ships (Class A Port)

The Trade Index translates to around 6000 dtons of ship(s) arriving/departing every Telerine day.

One of Telerine’s major agricultural exports is wines and Tsipouro brandy. Another, smaller export is various cheeses; not enough to be a major export but enough to fill leftover spaces in holds as spec-trade goods.

“Seed loam” is a concentrated soil amendment/soil fungus/seed culture used in terraforming. Currently used by Strigon and Geolan, regular bulk-freighter-sized shipments can make the difference between a 500-1000 year terraforming project and a 100-200 year one.

## Starports and Cities

The Class A Starport rating applies to Paryra Highport (on the small moon just outside the ring) and Helleanopolis Downport. Shipyard facilities are limited to 4000-dton hulls though they can maintain and service larger ships (such as 6-12kt naval vessels) Military and civilian traffic route through separate highport facilities.

Other downports are Class C to E, usually one for each of the larger islands which double as airports for suborbital air routes.

Helleanopolis is the capital of the world’s dominant nation (The Helleanan Republic), largest city on the planet at 8 million, and the location of the Class A Downport.

The string of large islands making up the Republic also have the majority of large cities, four of them with populations over a million, each with its own Class D downport.

## Tech Level Notes

Telerine is a uniform Tech Level 11 (two generations beyond Y2K), a Tech Level where many civilized worlds plateau/stagnate into Cyberpunk Syndrome—GPS, planetary Web/ Internet, full-function smartphones, online libraries and entertainment, pretty much all the trappings of the mid-21st Century. Vehicles and houses are all-electric; GPS is accurate to within a couple meters, and broadband/cell coverage is everywhere (with its side effect of Net Addiction, a cyberpsychosis where the “smartphone zombie” never unjacks from Social Media).

Other than high-tech imports, the only Tech Level anomaly is battery technology; Telerine batteries are TL12-13, thanks to Ransdell Metals from Khorlu/Bronson’s Star.

Telerine itself is primarily agricultural and could feed itself if cut off from space, but would lose most of its high-tech non-Ag economy, which is based off-world.

Because of the dense atmosphere, Telerines prefer air-cushion (hover) vehicles to grav vehicles, tak-

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ing advantage of a hovercraft's dense-atmosphere efficiency and amphibious capability. The major exception is "aircraft", where grav vehicles are preferred; the field envelope minimizes air resistance/friction and a depressed ballistic trajectory spends minimum time in the denser layers of the atmosphere. True ballistic trajectories are never used near the equator, because of the danger from ring debris; all equator-crossing has to be done within the upper atmosphere.

Because of the increased windload and superstorm/hypercane danger, all vehicles are streamlined and most buildings are low (under 10 stories above grade).

Telerine is a large world with high gravity; most of the heavy metals are concentrated inaccessibly at its core, making the world metal-poor. The only easily-exploitable mineral resources are from rare fossil-impact deposits, most of those underwater. This is the main reason Telerine is still an Ag world, and why the Telerines have most of their industry offworld, exploiting the rest of their system plus the two neighboring systems of their pocket empire.

High-tech ceramics and ceramets are commonly used in lieu of metals, reserving metals for applications that actually require them.

Because of the dense atmosphere and winds, trees larger than dwarf varieties can only be grown in wind-sheltered valleys, farmed like any other agricultural crop, making the world wood-poor. Except for scrap and slash, wood is expensive—too expensive to use in general construction. Fireplaces are a prestige item, and imported hardwoods can name their price.

Like the other worlds in the DMG, Telerine is too young and with a Life Score too low to have accumulated deposits of oil or coal, making the world fuel-poor. Various forms of alcohol and plant-based oils take their place. Fortunately, a Tech 11 world runs mostly on fusion- or solar-generated electricity. This lack of fossil fuel was the great danger during

the Long Night; if the fusion plants failed, there could be *no* recovery from the resulting technology crash.

### Government and Society

The dominant nation is the Helleanan Republic (almost 55 million), a planetary superpower occupying the largest concentration of dry land near the equator and controlling the major starports and in-system access. This concentration contains four of the largest non-volcanic islands, around a dozen medium-sized islands, and several archipelagos extending over 3000km from east to west. The larger islands are arranged around three sheltered seas which allow surface sea travel over the entire Republic and aquaculture and dredge-mining in their shallower parts. The Republic's capital of Helleanopolis is centrally-located on the largest of these islands and hosts the largest Class A downport.

The Republic is a European-style parliamentary republic (Gov 4, Law 4); only Helleanan Citizens may vote or hold elected office. After an election, the *Archon* (President) and Cabinet are chosen by lot from a slate of party-selected candidates, not automatically going to the largest party; the lottery is weighted proportionally by each party's number of seats in the *Vouli* (Parliament).

Politics and elections tend to be pretty lively; many of the Republic's islands have a very strong regional identity, and bickering and infighting in the *Vouli* rivals soccer as a national spectator sport.

This infighting often spills over into the streets of the capital, with lots of flash-mob "street actions". Especially when factoring in one minority party, the Telerine Communists. A joker in the deck of Republic politics, these are *not* Marxists, but a Utopian movement popular among academics, young Idealists, and *Metikoi*. They advocate an extreme Utopian society, citing the successful Communistic systems of Orthodox monasteries and Chitin A "Wasps" as examples and inspirations. Both their examples—Church and Wasp emissaries—think these guys are full of *skubalon*. The Church because the communal

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life of their monasteries does *not* scale up very well beyond the human troop-size limit of 100-150; the Wasps because humans are *not* as eusocial as themselves.

The judicial system has a separate “Administrative Court System” which specializes in judging disputes between Helleanans and the Government.

Though the proper name of the Republic is the “Helleanan Republic of Telerine”, in practice “Helleanan” and “Telerine” are used interchangeably, especially offworld, where “Telerine Republic” or just “Telerine” is much more common. (Republic officialdom can be very touchy about using the proper name.)

The flag is a blue field with a silver phoenix centered between four gold starburst en saltire. Many of the regions replace the phoenix with local symbols – an octopus, a gorgon’s head, an owl’s mask, a winged horse.

Monetary unit is the *Drachma*; the (fixed) exchange rate is 100 *drachmae* to one Credit. There are no fractional units in circulation except for some older 50-*lepta* (half-*drachma*) coins; the *lepton* (1/100 drachma) is used only for online calculations of extreme precision.

The Republic has a two-tier social system:

- **Citizens:** Helleanan citizens can vote and hold office; they are eligible for Citizen’s cradle-to-grave social welfare system and its benefits—pensions, medical insurance, and the like. The social safety net is so extensive, a running joke is “I’ll be entering the family business—Retirement.” They have a tradition of violent “street action” when it comes to taxes and/or service fee hikes. Especially when communications networking (smartphone cascade) allows flash mobs to form trivially.
- **Metikoi** (resident non-Citizens): *Metikoi* have none of the above benefits; a *metikos* cannot vote, hold elected office (they can hold appointed

office, primarily in the Interior Ministry’s Department of *Metik* Affairs), or qualify for the social safety net. (Though private insurance and pension plans do exist, they cost *drachmae*.) They are also subject to a special head tax. Though definitely on the short end of the stick, the Republic cannot squeeze them too much as they also have adopted the local tradition of “street action”.

- Becoming a naturalized Helleanan Citizen is difficult; the candidate for Citizenship must first be a *Metikos*, be sponsored by a Citizen, and successfully navigate the bureaucracy.

All that social safety net and its bureaucratic overhead is expensive, and the money has to come from somewhere. Because of the local custom of “street action” regarding the subject (and the ease of forming flash mobs on the Net), said money has to come from outside the Republic. Hence...

## Telerine’s Pocket Empire

The Republic dominates two adjacent systems, both within Jump-1: the late-G yellow dwarf of Virtchok System (main world Korvo) and the K-class binary orange dwarf of Hamilton’s Star (main worlds “Wasphome” and Geolan). Both appear as yellow-orange 1st Magnitude stars in Telerine’s night sky.

Telerine actively exploits both these systems’ resources (and passively exploits their native populations) to maintain its own citizens’ lifestyle.

**Korvo** (B544764-7, Ag, Eaglestone Index 2, Virtchok System) is an arid world with a similar population to Telerine but three Tech Levels lower, whose native human inhabitants are optimized for Korvo’s thin atmosphere. Their Telerine overlords don’t treat them or their world all that badly; the real colonial exploitation is offworld, stripping resources from the other worlds and asteroids of the system. Grunt labor is provided by hired Korvans, but the Telerines call the shots.

Though this situation is stable in the short term, there is friction. Korvan Independence movements

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occasionally get violent, and a generation ago started an illicit cocaine trade. Originally an attempt to stick it to the Telerines, the *drachmae* in “Korvan Marching Powder” soon overpowered The Cause and these groups morphed into organized crime families. To this day, organized crime in Republic cities has been strongly Korvan.

As a result, ethnic Korvans gained a reputation for organized crime, which hasn’t helped Telerine attitudes towards these *Metikoi*.

“**Wasp home**” (C798877-7, Red-zoned, Hamilton’s Star) is a small world with a dense atmosphere unbreathable by humans, homeworld of the Ch’tik’tik or “Chitin A”, a pseudo-insectoid minor race usually called “Wasps” after their appearance.

Telerine has red-zoned the world to all but Telerine access after a disaster where introduced Wasp home fauna broke containment and overran one of the smaller island of Eliki in a “Chamax Plague” situation. While the Telerines were able to evacuate Eliki and halt the infestation through use of nuclear and chemical weapons, the resulting devastation cut into the Republic’s arable land and caused trillions of *drachmae* in property damage, effectively reversing the terraforming in the infested area. (Current estimates are 20-30 years until the island is once more habitable and developed.)

After the Eliki Disaster, the Republic red-zoned and blockaded Wasp home; “Wasps” who are not of the Breeder Caste are still allowed offworld, but the Republic does not want to risk a highly-invasive species around any human-habitable real estate.

**Geolan** (B5F2568-9, Poor/NonInd, Naval Base, Hamilton’s Star), a Telerine colony, orbits the other component of Hamilton’s Star. A small world with a “phaidonic” (thin/low) atmosphere, Geolan serves as Telerine’s control point for all access to the system. All traffic to and from Wasp home goes through Geolan, enforcing the Red Zone.

In addition, the Republic maintains holdings on the carbonaceous cthonian cryoworld of Zandisill

Prime, where 300,000 personnel—Telerines, Korvans, and Chitin A “Wasps”—work cryogenic extraction from Zandisill’s atmosphere and organic-soup oceans, similar to the 30,000 on the moons of Pelandus. The “Wasps” have their own dedicated colony domes due to differing environmental needs.

## Armed Forces

Armed forces total 12 *Taxii* (brigades) equipped to TL10-11, almost all belonging to the Republic; two half-brigade Marine Regiments and two independent *Tagmoi* (battalions) are available for offworld use. (These Marine Regiments are the only ones equipped with grav vehicles; the other units use hover-vehicles in the thick atmosphere.)

Vehicles, aircraft, and ships of the Republic are marked with a rondel depicting a silver heraldic phoenix on a blue disc; ships additionally have stylized “eye” markings on each side of their noses.

Some ships from outlying island regions use the badge of their region (octopus, gorgon head, winged horse, etc) instead of the Republic phoenix to further confuse the issue.

With two out-of-system colonies, the Republic also maintains its own Jump-capable planetary navy, headquartered on the moon Paryra.

The ruling Tech Level is TL11, with first-line ships limited to Jump-2, Computer mod/5, and basic ship weaponry. First-line ships have some TL12 components (Mod/6, nuclear dampers) bought from higher-tech systems outside the cluster.

Naval design philosophy emphasizes armor or other forms of protection (even to the point of sacrificing Maneuver Drive) with emphasis on multi-purpose ships; since both out-of-system colonies are only Jump-1 distant, higher jump capability is not needed. Maneuver drives usually vary around 4-G.

### Major fleet units

- **Salamis**: 12000 dton, TL11, Jump-2 Armored Cruiser; fleet flagship. Six laser bays, four missile bays, 20 BSB point defense turrets, offworld Mod/6+ avionics, nuclear dampers, and other TL12 components.

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- *Lemnos* and *Kilkis*: 6000 dton, TL11, Jump-2 Armored Frigates; two laser bays, three missile bays, ten BSB turrets. Fleet workhorses built to the same standards as *Salamis*.
- *Hydra*, *Spetsai*, and *Psara*: 4000 dton, TL10, Jump-1 multi-purpose ships. Computers upgraded to Mod/5. These are older general-purpose ships, carrying fighters and ground troops as well as naval weaponry. With their replacement by the above three larger and newer ships, they have been refitted to carry rescue equipment and utility ground/air vehicles for secondary non-combat intervention roles.
- The remaining ships are mostly the equivalent of 400 dton Patrol Corvettes with a couple 1000-1200 dton Destroyer Escorts. Older ships are TL10/Jump-1, newer ships are TL11/Jump-2 matching the "Big Three". There may also be a couple SDB tenders built on dispersed-structure merchant hulls.
- System defenses total 4000 dttons, evenly divided between SDBs and fighters. Assuming 300 dton *Torpilleur* SDBs and 15 dton Medium Fighters, this comes out to 6-8 SDBs and 10-12 squadrons of fighters, augmented by whatever deep-space naval units are insystem.
- In addition, Telerine's ring is filled with "shore batteries", encapsulated-missile minefields and drone lasersats. Minefields are distributed evenly through the ring and fire as TL11-12 turret or bay missiles; lasersats are hidden in the thicker ring "clumps" and fire as triple beam lasers with TL11 fire control and EW assets. Lasersats are built into ring-clump moonlets; this gives them "planetoid hulls" with natural Armor-3 to 6.

## Other Telerine Nations

The other nations are small separatist enclaves of various government types and law levels, rarely extending over more than one large island or string of small islands.

One of the larger of these, the Kingdom of Lakonia (3 million, Gov 3), exports mercenaries as a specialty. Lakonia's ruling oligarchy, the *Gerousia*, is composed of mercenary colonels (called *Ephorae* in their ruling capacity), and the entire nation is geared towards its greatest export. Lakonian mercenary units (TL8-10, from *Lochas* (company) to *Taxias* (brigade) in size) hire out all over the Cluster, including to the Republic; if the offworld mercs were counted, Lakonia would have armed forces second only to the Republic.

Lakonian units are marked with a rondel displaying a *lambda* (Greek letter "L", looking like an upside-down "V") in contrasting color to the background (usually silver for high-contrast or black for low-contrast).

Lakonia also has a two-tier class system, except the dividing line is between soldier and civilian instead of Citizen & *Metikos*. Soldiering brings Citizenship, like a cross between Heinlein's Starship Troopers and Drake's Hammer's Slammers.

And to Lakoniki, even other Telerines are Barbarians.

## Philosophy and Religion

The major religion is monotheistic, represented by Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The Telerine Orthodox Church is known for pomp, elaborate liturgy, strict fasting, and extremely strict monastic traditions. Their domed churches are everywhere and their long-haired, bearded, black-robed priests are a common sight. (The majority of low-level Telerine priests are married, though higher levels of the hierarchy such as Bishops must be single.) The Church permeates Telerine culture; even atheists describe themselves as "Telerine Orthodox Atheists".

Though one of several branches of a widespread cluster religion, they *know* they are the only *true* faith and all the other denominations are *not*. Despite this, they do not send out missionaries, preferring to stay at home. The only offworld Telerine Orthodox clergy and parishes serve ethnic Telerines outsystem.

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One characteristic of Telerine Orthodoxy is the use of “Icons”. The main imagery of the faith, icons are highly-stylized sacred paintings in a rigid traditional style. Traditionally, icons are considered windows into the supernatural realm and are often used for contemplative meditation. Believers will hang icons on their wall as a shrine or kiss the icon for a blessing; even “Telerine Orthodox Atheists” might do this—after all, they were raised Telerine.

A common folk belief (not discouraged by the Church) is that God preserved the fusion plants and technology during the Long Night. Because of this, Telerines will often have items of technology (like ships and their powerplants) formally blessed by a Telerine Orthodox priest, incense, icons, and all. (This can get exciting in the tight quarters of a Free Trader’s engine room...)

The Church has an extensive and strict monastic tradition. Monastics of both sexes are called “*Cenobites*” (“Those who are set apart”) and are usually ascetics and always under Vows of Celibacy. *Cenobites* can form communities in a monastery or convent or isolate themselves as Hermits living alone and sharing islands or wasteland with terraforming weeds and not much else. Hermits have a reputation for being eccentric “holy fools”.

A common way for a layman to flake out with religion is to adapt all the trappings of an ascetic Hermit Cenobite – long hair and beard, black cassock robe, round-the-clock devotions, even hair shirts, whips, and/or other extremes—without actually taking vows or placing oneself under the actual authority of a Bishop or Abbot (very hard if there’s a spouse in the mix). Usually such “Monk-a-bees” can be recognized by their unkempt “wild man” beard and hair; actual monks are much more well-groomed.

In the Republic, the Telerine Orthodox Church is not only the major religion but the Official Religion and very much likes it that way, to the point of banning and prosecuting foreign missionaries. Church

properties (including some entire small islands) are special autonomous regions where the island’s Bishop or Abbot are the legal authorities.

There is no single “Pope”, though the Archbishop Metropolitan and Patriarch of Helleanopolis is considered first among equals. (A “Metropolitan” is an Archbishop of an urban area/major city.)

## Psionics

Telerine attitude towards psionics is generally negative, due to association with a widespread folk belief in *vaskania*—the “Evil Eye”, a curse cast by a glance or stare, manifesting in non-specific illness symptoms. For protection against this, Telerines often wear a *mataki*—an amulet of blue glass in the shape of an eye. (Or they wear it out of tradition or fashion, you never can tell.)

Blue eyes (rare among Telerines) are traditionally a sign of the Evil Eye; this could cause problems with blue-eyed offworlders.

The main exception to this attitude is the Telerine Orthodox Church, with its traditions and legends of miracle-working holy men. During the Long Night, monasteries and convents offered sanctuary to psis, a tradition continuing to this day. Because of this...

You can find psis on Telerine—black-robed bearded monks and/or black-habited nuns, in monasteries, convents, and isolated hermitages. That priest or chaplain at the right hand of an official or bishop could be a psi. Or the bishop himself; bishops are usually promoted from *Cenobite Archimandrites*.

And you can find somewhat-open Psionic Institutes on Telerine—in certain monasteries/convents. However, psi training is completely wrapped up in their monastic tradition—the trainee must first be Telerine Orthodox, and enter the monastery/convent as a Novice.

## Telerine’s Moon: Paryra

Telerine has one small moon, **Paryra** (AS00465-A, Non-Ag, Non-Ind, Vacuum, Poor) shepherding the outer edge of the ring. With a population of

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some 50,000 staffing various highport facilities (both military and civilian) and engaging in micro-gee industry, Paryra is also the HQ and main Naval Base for the Telerine Republic Navy.

From afar, Paryra is clearly elliptical, stretched by tidal forces with its long axis pointing directly towards Telerine. From Telerine, Paryra appears as the biggest clump in the ring.

Just outside the ring, Paryra has a sidereal “month” of just under 20 hours, almost geosynch with Telerine’s 18-hour day. From Telerine, the small moon seems to race the sun through the day/night cycle, always just falling behind and getting passed in an apparent month of 10 Telerine days.

Paryra’s A port serves as both Telerine Highport and Republic Naval HQ, a “space station made of rock” with separate civilian and military facilities and shipyards.

## **Thelara (Paryan IV)**

**Thelara** (XB8A000-0) is a large snowball world with a surface temperature low enough to freeze CO<sub>2</sub> into dry ice, an ice-surfaced ocean planet similar to a giant Europa. There is no true land anywhere on the planet, only ice (wet and dry). Tidal stress from the two moons cracks the surface, bringing up liquid water which immediately freezes. These upwellings also bring up various reflective salts which precipitate out into highly-reflective areas similar to Ceres.

Thelara snowballed eons ago, when native microplankton used up the CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and killed the greenhouse effect that until then was keeping the ocean planet liquid. The world ocean is too deep for volcanoes to break the surface and re-introduce CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere; the planet is too cold for CO<sub>2</sub> to remain in the atmosphere—if introduced, it immediately freezes out as dry-ice snow.

Beneath the ice surface lies a global ocean in eternal darkness, dozens of kilometers deep at its shallowest point and bottomed out by a uniform

layer of hot pressure-frozen Ice VII at its deepest. What lies below has only been sonar-mapped—at least until it hits the flat bottom of the Ice VII.

From Telerine, Thelara is a brilliant white planet, tinted a pale peach color by the K-class sunlight, flanked by the second ruddy star of its larger moon. (The smaller moon is not visible to the naked eye.) Occasionally Thelara brightens in the “Thelaran Flash” as the highly-reflective areas catch the sun just right. The brightest of these flashes come from a large iced-over fossil crater on the equator.

There are no permanent settlements on Thelara—not even outposts. There’s nothing there worth settling.

## **Thelara’s moons: Strigon and Tyton**

Thelara itself is uninhabited and unsettled. The real action is on its two moons. Smaller than Telerine or Thelara, these moons have much richer surface mineral deposits than Telerine, and were settled and industrialized during the recovery after the Long Night.

**Strigon** (C440464-A Non-Ag, Non-Ind, Mining, Desert, Poor) is almost a twin of Mars with a slightly thicker atmosphere, a much longer day (276 hours), larger asymmetrical “icecaps” (actually mostly frost) and a permanent population of some 65,000 in various domed and dug-in mining and smelting mill towns scattered all over the moon.

Only a third the size of Thelara and less than half the size of Telerine, Strigon is much less differentiated, with much more mineral and ore deposits in its crust—once you get below the permafrost. Because of this, it is the major prospecting, mining, and processing location of the system, taking the place of asteroid belts in systems that have them.

Local gravity is 0.5G; the Thin atmosphere is unbreathable, double-tainted with low oxygen and abrasive blowsand. Think “Mars”, except tidally-locked in a 276-hour (15½ Telerine-day, 11½ Standard day) orbit. The day/night cycle is so long that conditions are similar to a tidally-locked world, with a bright face, night side, and violent winds constant-

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ly cycling the atmosphere between bright and dark sides, precipitating out all volatiles (including atmosphere) on the dark side.

The difference from a full solar tidal lock is that bright and dark sides move around the moon every 15 Telerine days (about a week and a half); there is no chance for the atmosphere to actually freeze out, only the moisture and CO<sub>2</sub>. This has the visible effect of “stretching the icecaps” almost down to the equator on the dark side and along the morning terminator, receding as the bright side warms. Baseline average temperature is -52C, varying from 30C in the hottest part of the day (sunset) to -120C in the coldest part of the night (just before sunrise), with winds and dust storms blowing near-constantly from dark side to bright face.

Terraforming is underway, using engineered extremophile microbes which go through their life cycle in one Strigonese day—growing during the day as crater lakes melt along with some of the permafrost, dying off as the night temperature drops and everything re-freezes, leaving spores to sprout the next day, like an ephemeral glade on a regular schedule.

The first goal of terraforming Strigon is to get atmospheric oxygen up to the point the atmosphere is breathable; best estimates are 30 to 50 years. The next step is to thicken the atmosphere through comet diversions and increase the greenhouse effect to even out the temperature (100 to 300-year timeframe).

Until then, the only time anyone goes Outside is during the three-day-long “afternoon”, in cold-weather gear and oxygen mask. At sunset, everything seals down for the week-long freezing night; anyone Outside will be in a pressurized vehicle or heated vacc suit as the temperature drops to dry ice levels, stripping the dark side of any atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>.

Other than that, Strigon is like Mars—cold, dry, and dusty—with the addition of night-frozen ponds

in the craters and lowlands, terraforming microbe colonies dark green against the rust-colored sands, and Thelara in the sky, a peach-tinted iceworld eight times the apparent diameter of Earth’s moon, reflective areas (especially the one equatorial fossil crater) doubling the brightness in Thelaran Flashes.

The C port is at Strigonopolis, a “city” of 25,000 and the nucleus of the largest mining and industrial area on the moon (with a small Highport space station of its own). Other ports are E-class with the occasional D, used for shipping out refined metals and shipping in supplies to the clusters of settlements. The domes and dug-ins are pretty much self-sufficient, growing their own staple foods in surface greenhouses.

Much of the population are *Metikoi*—ethnic Korvans, better adapted to thin-atmosphere conditions (though for the next 40 years, even Korvans need supplemental oxygen when Outside).

**Tyton** (D200322-9 Non-Ag, Non-Ind, Vacuum, Poor) is a typical cratered airless rockball, half the size of Strigon and almost twice as far out, with a day/month of 468 hours/26 Telerine days/20 Standard days. The only settlements are small outposts totaling around 400 population.

### The Moons of Pelandus (Paryan V)

Innermost of Paryan’s three gas giants, Pelandus is the main fuel-skim site, with chemical/fuel lighters dipping into its atmosphere several times a day. All three of its regular moons—an Io, a Titan, and a Europa—are settled for industrial reasons, with a total permanent population of some 35,000.

Think of the movie *Outland*, stretching over Titan and Europa as well as Io. Compounded by the Telerine use of Chitin A “Wasp” *Metic* labor in these extraction/industrial outposts, as the pseudo-insectoids handle such spam-in-a-can outpost crowding much better than humans.

**Pelandus Alpha** (D330466-A Non-Ind, Mining) is the innermost regular moon, orbiting barely outside its primary’s Van Allen belts with an orbital period/tidal lock day of only 32 hours, the yellow

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cloud bands of Pelandus filling a third of the sky. A twin of Io with a thicker sulfur-tainted atmosphere, it is the most seismically- and volcanically-active body in the system, constantly turning itself inside-out from tidal stress.

Alpha is a major industrial source of chemicals and minerals for the system, refining in-place and shipping out the finished product. A permanent population of some 22,000 works these chemical and cryo-mineral extraction industries from dug-in underground habitats; only the industrial plants and shipping spaceports break the surface.

**Pelandus Beta** (D3A1465-A Non-Ind, Mining) is the next out, a twin of Titan with a thick hazy nitrogen atmosphere where the rocks are made of water, the lakes are filled with liquid methane, and the haze in the air is hydrocarbon smog. Twice as far out as Alpha, its orbital period/day is 89 hours (just under 5 Telerine days) with Pelandus a blur through the haze filling only a sixth of the sky and lighting up the landscape in an endless day on Nearside.

Beta is the source of all petrochemicals and commercial hydrocarbons in-system, extracted from the atmosphere and “hydrosphere”. A permanent population of 12,000 in various domes and dug-ins work these refineries.

Beta is also the control center for the fuel/chemical lighters skimming Pelandus

**Pelandus Gamma** (E200334-9 Non-Ind, Vacuum) is a nondescript iceball similar to Ceres or Europa in an orbit like Iapetus, with a leisurely month/day of 35 Telerine days. A single outpost of just over 1,000 work some ice prospecting and Belter support under a co-op arrangement.

**Pelandus Delta** through **Pelandus Upsilon** are the irregular moons, none larger than Size 1, in any and every orbit imaginable. These captured asteroids and those at Pelandus’ Trojan points are the only (small-scale) Belter activity in the system.

## Adventure Nuggets

A TL11 surface-habitable civilized world with a Class A port, Telerine would make a good home base world. However, player-characters would have the handicap of being *Barbaroi* (at best, *Metikoi*) in Telerine eyes, and such non-Citizens are charged higher fees for pretty much everything. Perhaps partnership with or patronage of a Telerine Citizen who (at least on paper) is the legal owner? With all the possibilities for friction and conflict-of-interest that would entail?

*Complications:* Regional pride and rivalry even within the Republic can add complication to standard business on-world or off. A Patron from one region (and those working for them—like player-characters) could easily trigger hostility and opposition in other regions. Even those outposts on Strigon or Pelandus’ moons which are sponsored, run, or manned by a single Telerine region. Even naval ships are not immune to this. Tread lightly.

*Casablanca with Ouzo:* Most travellers from offworld don’t get out much beyond the Downport and *Akropolis* of the main starport city—in this case, Helleanopolis. And Helleanopolis can be a hotbed of action and intrigue beneath its picturesque cityscape around the domes of Hagia Sophia Cathedral. Flash-mob street actions, political infighting spillover, Church involvement, Metic Rights movements, Korvan Independence types (shading into organized crime), and the open secret of Wasp Emissaries doing espionage on the side for their Hives. It’s enough to start forwarding your mail to the local *Ouzeroi* and dropping the dry hammer on yourself, if not taking up Korvan Marching Powder.

*Cenobite Rescue:* One of Telerine’s hypercanes is threatening an archipelago of Church-controlled islands heavily salted with monasteries and individual hermitages; local and Church authorities do not have the resources on hand to evacuate all the smaller hermitages (concentrating on the large monasteries), so they press-gang the PCs to assist. Search-and

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-rescue in approaching hurricane conditions (thick atmosphere doubling the destructive effects) with an added complication that Hermit *Cenobites* not only tend to be highly eccentric in their isolated devotions, they often deliberately keep themselves out of communication and hard to find. Oh, and some will be psionic as well.

## Designer's Notes

Like all systems in the Dole Moving Group, Paryan System is based on an ACCRETE run from 40-year-old planetary-formation simulations by an R.L.Dole published in *Scientific American* in the 1960s and referenced in Carl Sagan's *The Cosmic Connection*. ACCRETE gave only planetary orbital distances and masses; the orbits were translated into *Traveller* notation and the planets detailed according to both *Traveller* world generation rolls and known planetology.

ACCRETE runs all assumed a G-class gravity well. Paryan System's sun was dropped from G to K to reduce the number of G-class stars in the DMG; all planets were moved one *Traveller* orbit inwards to maintain the same illumination and habitability.

System nomenclature was taken from a para-Greco-Roman pantheon in Wayne Shaw's "Mageworld" D&D campaign of the late 1990s, shifting the names to the closest parallel in the actual Roman pantheon used to name Sol System. Rough equivalents:

- Paryan: Helios (Apollo [sun god])
- Phelstar: Hephasteos (Vulcan)
- Melthias: Hermes (Mercury)
- Telerine: Hera (Juno [earth goddess])
- Paryra: Artemis (Diana [moon goddess])
- Thelara: Athena (Minerva [hat tip to *A World of Difference* by Harry Turtledove])
- Strigon and Tyton: "owls" (traditional animal companions of Athena)
- Pelandus: Poseidon (Neptune [smallest of the system's gas giants])

- Zoras: Zeus (Jupiter [largest gas giant in system])
- Handorus: Hades (Pluto [outermost world])
- Sthenles/Apartheneos: Echnida/Nemesis

Since the nomenclature was pseudo-Greek, Telerine culture was given Greek roots, on a world of small landmasses scattered over a wine-dark sea. Referees are encouraged to use Greek names for Telerine characters and places and local color.

Though balkanized, Telerine rolled up as having one dominant nation, a Republic. The Kingdom of Lakonia was introduced as a Sparta to the Republic's Athens and to provide a source of medium-tech mercenaries for the subsector.

## Appendices

### Typical Telerine Republic Hoplite *Tagma* (Heavy Battalion) TO&E (TL10-11)

- A Telerine *Tagma* (Battalion) has three *Lochagoi* (Companies) plus a dedicated three-tube artillery battery (massdrivers) and Air/Artillery Defense units (laser); a Hoplite Battalion has two Hoplite (heavy/mech infantry) companies and one Pro-dromos (light armored cavalry) company.
- A company has three platoons plus one three-tube RAM mortar platoon; each line platoon is built on the "four-plus-two" model, with four vehicles plus two direct-fire support vehicles.
  - The Hoplite/infantry platoon has four Medium hover-APCs and two Medium hover-tanks. Each APC carries a LRF Gaussgun and twelve dismounts: a squad of two fire teams plus an attached heavy weapons team (either an AutoRAM-GL or GMS/L tac missile).
  - Tanks mount a heavy laser or gyrolauncher/missile turret and LRF Gaussgun cupola.
    - Infantry is equipped with ACRs, ALMG-10s, and either TL10 Combat Environment Suits or TL11 Combat Armor.
    - Protected Forces are issued gyro-jet small arms (10mm ARLs and

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ARL-LMGs, 20mm Gyrocannon HMGs) and TL11 Combat Armor for zero-G/vacuum deployments.

- The *Prodomos*/cavalry platoon has four light hover-vehicles armed with VRF Gaussguns and carrying a single fire team, and two light hovertanks mounting VRF Gaussguns and GMS/H heavy tac missiles. Both types of vehicle, plus mortar carriers, use the same chassis and hull.
- Telerines prefer hover-vehicles to grav vehicles for ground vehicle roles; grav-equipped units are used only for Thin atmospheres, heavy vehicles in Standard atmospheres, and vacuum/Protected Forces deployments.

## Typical Lakonian Mercenary Skimmer Infantry Lochas (Company) TO&E (TL10)

- Four Skimmer Infantry sections, each of four fire teams (ACR and ALMG-10) and two heavy weapons teams (AutoRAM-GL and GMS/L tac missile). All infantry sections are on one-man hover-skimmers, with heavy weapon loads broken down between the team's skimmers
  - Mortar section with two mortars on light hover-trucks.
  - Armored Car section with two light hovertanks, each mounting a VRF Gaussgun and GMS/H heavy tac missiles. (The same type as the Fire Support Section of a Republic *Prodomos* platoon.)
- Because of the skimmers and hover-vehicles, this *lochas* as equipped would hire out or deploy only on Standard or Dense-atmosphere worlds. For Thin atmosphere or vacuum deployments, the infantry sections would be carried in twelve-passenger G-carriers (two per section) and the mortar carriers/armored cars would be grav instead of hover vehicles. Infantry would be in imported TL11 Combat Armor instead of TL10 Combat Environment Suits.

## Telerine Army/Ground Forces Table of Ranks

In the Republic's armed forces, only Citizens can be commissioned officers. *Metikoi* are limited to enlisted ranks, and within a single rank, a Citizen outranks a *Metic*. This is especially true for Korvan Colonial troops, whose officers are all Telerine.

Lakonian practice is similar, except all Lakonians must serve in the armed forces (or mercenaries) before they can be granted Citizenship. First-timers are the equivalent of *Metikoi* in the Republic's forces; veterans are normally Citizens.

Telerine Ground Forces Officer Ranks			
Traveller Rank	Telerine Name	Translation	Shoulder Board Insignia
Rank 6	<i>Stratigos</i>	General (generic)	(gold) Phoenix* + 1 to 4 Star-pips
Rank 5	<i>Syntatagmatarchis</i>	Colonel	(silver) Phoenix* + 3 Star-pips
Rank 4	<i>Antisyntatagmatarchis</i>	Sub-Colonel	(silver) Phoenix* + 2 Star-pips
Rank 3	<i>Tagmatarchis</i>	Major	(silver) Phoenix* + 1 Star-pip
Rank 2	<i>Lochagos</i>	Captain	(silver) 3 Star-pips
Rank 1	<i>Ypolochagos</i>	Subcaptain	(silver) 1 or 2 Star-pips

Rank 1 contains *Anthypolochagos* (Junior Lt, 1 star-pip) and *Ypolochagos* (Senior Lt, 2 star-pips).

Rank 6 contains *Taxiarchos* (Brigadier, 1 star-pip), *Ypostratigos* ("Sub-General", 2 star-pips), *Antiistratigos* ("Junior General", 3 star-pips), and *Stratigos* (General, 4 star-pips).

\* The Telerine Republic uses the phoenix; major regions within the Republic substitute their regional badge (octopus, gorgon head, etc.) for locally-raised units; Korvan Colonial forces use a Korvan puma's head, and Geolan Militia a wasp's face. The Kingdom of Lakonia uses a *lambda*.

Telerine Ground Forces Enlisted Rank			
Traveller Rank	Telerine Name	Rough Translation	Sleeve Insignia
Rank 6	<i>Archilochias</i>	Master Sergeant	3 Chevrons + 1 Rocker + Phoenix in center
Rank 5	<i>Epilochias</i>	Oversergeant	3 Chevrons + 1 Rocker
Rank 4	<i>Lochias</i>	Sergeant (generic)	3 Chevrons
Rank 3	<i>Epsedoros Lochias</i>	Corporal-Sergeant	2 Chevrons
Rank 2	<i>Epsedoros</i>	Corporal	1 Chevron
Rank 1	<i>Stratiotes</i>	Private	None

*Metikoi* use a flat bar instead of a curved rocker, and have different-colored chevrons from Citizens. All chevrons are worn point-down.

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## Telerine Navy Table of Ranks

The restrictions on *Metikoi* in the Ground Forces also apply to Naval service.

Telerine Naval Officer Ranks			
Traveller Rank	Telerine Name	Translation	Cuff Stripes
Rank 6	<i>Navarchos</i>	Admiral (generic)	Wide band + 1 to 3 stripes
Rank 5	<i>Ploiarchos</i>	Captain	4 stripes
Rank 4	<i>Antiploiarchos</i>	Junior Captain	3½ stripes
Rank 3	<i>Plotarchis</i>	Commander	3 stripes
Rank 2	<i>Ypoploiarchos</i>	Subcommander	2½ stripes
Rank 1	<i>Anthypoploiarchos</i>	Lieutenant (generic)	1 or 2 stripes

Rank 1 includes *Anthypoploiarchos* (Lieutenant, 2 stripes) and *Simiaforos* (Ensign, 1 stripe)

Rank 6 includes *Archiploiarchos* ("Overcaptain", Wide band only), *Yponavarchos* ("Sub-Admiral", Band + 1 Stripe), *Antinavarchos* ("Junior Admiral", Band + 2 stripes), and *Navarchos* (Admiral, Band + 3 stripes).

Half-stripes are dashed; the top stripe is looped in a diagonal rhomboid

Telerine Naval Enlisted Ranks			
Traveller Rank	Telerine Name	Rough Translation	Sleeve Insignia
Rank 5	<i>Archikeleftis</i>	Chief Petty Officer	4 Chevrons + 1 Rocker
Rank 4	<i>Epikleftis</i>	Senior Petty Officer	3 Chevrons + 1 Rocker
Rank 3	<i>Keleftis</i>	Junior Petty Officer	2 Chevrons + 1 Rocker
Rank 2	<i>Diopos</i>	Able Crewman	2 Chevrons
Rank 1	<i>Naftis</i>	Crewman	1 Chevron

*Metikoi* use a flat bar instead of a curved rocker, and have different-colored chevrons from Citizens. All chevrons are worn point-down.

## Critics' Corner

### Clement Sector Player's Guide

reviewed by Timothy Collinson

*Clement Sector Player's Guide*. John Watts.

Gypsy Knights Games <http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com>  
115pp., softcover or PDF

US\$29.98(S+P)9.99(P)/UK£19.62(S+P)6.54(P)

## Telerine Orthodox Ecclesiastical Ranks

### Clergy

Clergy are always male; Rank 1-3 may be married or single, Rank 4-6 are always single, and are usually chosen from the ranks of *Archimandrites* (Monastic Order priests). They wear long black cassocks, black cylindrical *kalimafi* hats, and beards.

Telerine Orthodox Church Clergy Ranks		
Traveller Rank	Telerine Name	Translation
Rank 6	<i>Makariotatos</i>	Patriarch
Rank 5	<i>Archiepiskopos</i>	Archbishop
Rank 4	<i>Episkopos</i>	Bishop
Rank 3	<i>Hieras</i>	Priest
Rank 2	<i>Archievlavestatos</i>	Archdeacon
Rank 1	<i>Evlavestatos</i>	Deacon

### Cenobites (Monastics)

*Cenobites* may be male (monks) or female (nuns), and are always; *Archimandrites* are always male. Some orders provide psionics training; their monks/nuns have a good chance of being psionic.

Male *Cenobites* dress as priests, but with long hair and a Havelock-like black veil descending from the back of the hat as a sign of their vow of celibacy.

Female *Cenobites* dress in head-to-toe black, with only their hands and face visible. ☸

Telerine Orthodox Church Monastic Ranks		
Traveller Rank	Telerine Name (male/female)	Translation (male/female)
Rank 4	<i>Igumenios/Igumeni</i>	Abbot/Abbess
Rank 3	<i>Archimandrite</i>	Order Priest
Rank 2	<i>Adelphos/Adelphi</i>	Brother/Sister
Rank 1	<i>Archarios/Archari</i>	Novice

For those who've had their appetites whetted by *An Introduction to Clement Sector*, Gypsy Knights Games have produced this players' supplement. Intended as an addition to the career information presented *Mongoose's Core Rulebook* and *GKG's Clement Sector* core setting book and *Career Companion*, this

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covers character backgrounds, new careers, character packages and new skill specialities.

Following a couple of pages of setting fiction which are typical in GKG offerings, the character background section is 28 pages long and includes setting-specific tables to select subsector of origin, planet of origin, background skills for individual worlds and primary language. These are straightforward and one could wish that there were similar homeworld (or home sector/subsector) tables for the Third Imperium to help with background planet selection of random NPCs (though of course the tables would have to be on an entirely different scale and carefully weighted for population given the number of worlds in the standard setting<sup>1</sup>). This section also includes some tables which could be used elsewhere in *Traveller* with little or no revision: Youth, Teenage and College events. Each of these has both a d6 Events and a d6 Life Events table. There is also a 2d6 Prison Events table. Youth involves two rolls to cover ages 4-8 and then 9-12 with rolls 31-36 pointing to the Life Events table and rolls 41-46 giving a "relatively calm and peaceful childhood...no major events". Teenage Years again requires two rolls to cover 12-15 and 16-18 and again rolls 31-36 point to a Life Events table. College has been covered elsewhere in *Traveller*, but this is a quick and easy take on the subject which some might prefer.

The next section of the book offers six new careers each with three or four specialities as well as a handy list of which GKG books describe the 23 careers available in the Clement Sector setting. This volume offers:

- Celebrity (Actor, Musician, Star)
- Free Trader (Flight, Engineer, Gunnery, Line/Crew)
- Sports (Assignment, Athlete, Coach)
- System Defense – Ground Forces (Combat Rifleman, Reconnaissance, Heavy Weapons)

<sup>1</sup> *Traveller*<sup>5</sup> has a table (page 82) that offers a start on this, but only for the Spinward Marches and a handful of other odd worlds.



- System Defense – Wet Navy (Surface Ships, Aviator, Submariner)
- Vagabond (Destitute, Transient)

Each has a d6 Events table and a 2d6 Mishap table. The two System Defense careers add a Military Events table as well which is pointed to by a roll of 41-46 on the Events tables. It's a little hard to see in some cases what these careers offer beyond other iterations of similar in the core rules and elsewhere but these do allow for subtle wrinkles which some might find useful and the expanded Events tables are always welcome. There is little here that is setting specific so referees or players wanting a little extra variety might well want to check these out for other *Traveller* settings.

The next, and largest section at forty pages, covers 'Character Packages'. These are aimed at those who feel the standard character generation is too random. For each career and speciality of the 23 GKG careers there is a short paragraph offering prerequisites, benefits, base skills, secondary skills and rank. The idea is that a player will decide how old

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## Critics' Corner

their PC should be and which career tracks they've experienced and then select skills based on terms served (with certain limits). This certainly reduces the random nature of standard character generation rules, speeds up the process considerably and can also make NPC creation quick and easy. Even if referees aren't interested in the Clement Sector setting, the method here might well be of interest for either home grown settings or the Third Imperium.

The final section of the book is just a couple of pages and offers optional skill changes which GKG feel "will help to better define your character and what your character can do". They argue, not unreasonably, that some of the main *Core Rulebook* skills are a little too wide ranging. Once again, these suggestions could easily be used outside of the Clement Sector setting. Advocate gains specialities of Legal, Oratory and Politics—with one sentence explanations of each of course. Deception gains Disguise, Forgery and Intrusion; Survival gains Cold, Desert, Forest, Heat, High Pressure, Jungle, Mountains, Ocean and Swamp; and Tactics gains Sport. The only setting specific addition is Engineer which gains the obvious Zimm Drive speciality unique to Clement Sector. Opinion will no doubt vary on how useful these are but it's good to see them detailed in one place given the scattered nature of stumbling across them in the various GKG books and personally I'd suggest Mongoose take a hard look at including some of these in their forthcoming 2nd edition rules.

Throughout the book there are colour illustrations typical of those seen in GKG publications. Almost invariably they focus on sentients although some struggle with the uncanny valley effect of the

software used to produce them. Some are mocked up advertising which work well, some are space views that still include a character and some are particularly effective—such as the gravball game, the deep cover spy, two explorers and perhaps the shipping agency office. The uplifted species of the setting make appearances in several of the pictures. The front cover is the traditional black with sidebar publisher name and centrally located illustration with title above and below, this time a rather pleasing crew group photo in front a grounded ship with city behind. In its print-on-demand incarnation this comes as the usual high quality, perfect bound book with colour throughout and is a handsome addition to any Traveller's shelves with the spine thick enough to accommodate the title. It's also available as usual as a nearly 30MB PDF which can be bought with the print at no extra cost.

Clement Sector Travellers buying just one book as a player should probably go with the *Career Companion*, but this *Player's Guide* adds considerably to that work and is worth considering. Referees using the Clement sector background will definitely want it for the extra options it offers and even those not using this particular setting may well find use from some of the background tables (youth, teenager and collegiate for example) or the new skill specialities. The new careers aren't uninteresting but have been covered before where they're not specific to the setting. What all Travellers might find useful are the 40 pages of character packages noted above. An excellent volume which I suspect I'm going to find creeping off the shelves and into use more often than I might have expected at first glance. 🌀

## Raconteurs' Rest

### The Broken Blades

by John Clifford

**February 2, 5652 CE / 340-1133 Imperial  
Spinward Marches 0927 Narsil B574A55-A Hi In Cx**

Below the domes and arcologies of the city of Nysnoe there is a network of tunnels, service areas,

emergency shelters and storage spaces. In one of those shelters, a hardened government command center, a meeting was taking place. The highly shielded conference room was without doubt the safest, most secure place on the entire planet. But for the attendants of the meeting it was equally important that the room, and the meeting were entirely

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unknown to the public. The room where the meeting was taking place had a table and chairs to seat thirty. The six men seated there were almost lost in the nearly empty room. They had no staff or assistants, not even body guards. Any that saw them would think they looked naked without their usual entourages. Sitting at the head of the table was a man who appeared to be in his early forties; he was actually in his late fifties. Tall, broad shoulders, blond hair greying at the temples, he had the appearance of an aging athlete that was still in shape, or a holoivid stereotype of what a corporate CEO should look like. Which was doubly ironic, since in his youth Harek had been a minor sports star and now he was, in effect, the CEO of the corporation-run planet of Narsil. His actual title was *hertug*, which originally translated as duke, but in the Sword Worlds<sup>1</sup> had come to mean planetary ruler, or king.

Three of the others in the room had similar titles and positions. One of the others was the son and presumptive heir of a fifth planetary ruler. The last man was somewhat different. Jon was the Chancellor of the Sword Worlds Confederation, or what was left of it, anyway. He, like, most of the other men in the room, was new to his position. The recent disaster at the hands of the Imperial Regency<sup>2</sup> had reduced the Sword Worlds Confederation from twelve worlds to five. That was not counting the worlds they had tried to seize (or liberate, as they had seen it). It was this land grab that had prompted the Imperial action against them. The domestic political backlash of such a disaster had toppled the governments of four of the five surviving worlds and the Confederation. Now the new leadership was meeting together for the first time. And considering the time involved in interstellar travel, probably the only time they would all meet together. Certainly the only time they would meet under such conditions of secrecy. What had prompted this meeting was two recently acquired pieces of information, a report, and an idea.

The two pieces of information had been summarized, printed out and placed in folders in front of the six men. The sensitive nature of the information had prompted the security people of both the confederation and the government of Narsil to try and keep it off of all computer networks, even the most secure ones, at least until the leadership had decided on their response. All but the ruler of Narsil and the chancellor were reading the material. They, of course, had already read it. The four reading were reacting with a mixture of anger and despair.

The first to finish, Peder, from Anduril, looked up at the chancellor, then over to Harek. "So, what's the rest of it? You didn't sneak us all here just to read how desperate our position really is. You could have sent couriers to us with this information."

Harek nodded his head. "True enough. After I assumed power here, one of my nephews came to me and, well, lectured me. About how bad our position truly was. This was before we knew the Zhodani had been warned about the Imperials coming attack, and failed to mention it to us. And way before we found out that the Imperials were going to permanently annex the worlds they had stolen from us." He paused for a moment. These were of course the pieces of information they had just read. Before the Imperial Regency had attacked the Sword Worlds, they had told the Zhodani consulate<sup>3</sup>.

Over five centuries earlier the Zhodani had formed the Outworld Coalition, an alliance who's sole purpose was to oppose the Third Imperium. The Sword Worlds had joined and followed their lead. Then a year ago they had all been forced to sign the Spinward States Accord. Only now it turned out that the Zhodani hadn't been forced. They had made peace with the Imperials. So when the imperials had decided to smash the Sword Worlds, they had told the Zhodani before the attack. They did this to re-assure their new found friends in the Consulate that the attack would not be targeted at them, just at their allies of the last five hundred years. Now, the Zhodani could have done several things at this point. They could have honored their

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## Raconteurs' Rest

ancient pledges and gone to war or they could have sent a warning to the Sword Worlds by courier. They could have at least objected. Instead, they did nothing but stand back and watch. This had been confirmed by sources inside both the Consulate and Imperium. As a result, the Sword World forces had been spread out and caught by surprise when the Imperial attack had come. It had been a massacre. Now, as a result, the Sword World Confederation would never again trust the Zhodani Consulate. But this also meant that for the first time in over five hundred years, the Sword Worlds stood alone, without the support of any allies. On top of that, the Imperial Regency had announced that they would be moving refugees, all Imperial citizens, from clear on the other side of the Regency. To settle permanently on the occupied Sword Worlds. Tens of billions of them. All to counter and overwhelm the native Sword Worlder populations. "These reports only re-enforced what my nephew said. But, he also told me that all was not lost. We can come back from this."

The others had been listening to him stone faced, not letting any emotion show. Mostly because they weren't in full control of their emotions and didn't want to show weakness in front of the others. But the idea that they could 'come back from this' broke through their reserves. Curiosity and a certain amount of doubt showed through. Harek continued.

"It was a nice sentiment. And I certainly needed a pep talk at the time. But I told my nephew to prove it. I gave him a generous budget and whatever resources he needed. He recruited eight others and produced this report." He reached into a briefcase by his chair and pulled out six more folders. He started sliding folders across the table to the others. "It's... Interesting. I want to get your opinions."

The other five men, including the Chancellor, opened the folders before them. Some shook their heads, some grumbled, some sighed, but all read quickly and carefully. Contrary to popular belief in the Imperium, the leadership of the Sword World Confederation was not made up of idiots. They absorbed the report and its proposals. The last to fin-

ish, Jorund from Excalibur, was the first to react. "Are you insane? This is impossible. You're talking about changing everything. You basically want to turn the Confederation into a federation. And you honestly think our people will support this?"

Jon, the newly appointed Chancellor of the Confederation, didn't know the content of the second set of folders before now. After he finished reading it for the first time, he nodded his head and looked up. "You're right; it's interesting. But I have to agree with Jorund. No one will go along with this. It's too much."

Two of the others voiced their agreement. One of the reasons the Confederation had lasted as long as it had was because it was a weak central government. It only handled a few clearly defined areas of responsibility that affected the entire region. Local affairs were left up to the individual worlds. It kept any one world from dominating the others. And for the independent minded, not to mention stubborn, Sword Worlders, this had been immensely popular. Now Harek was proposing that they replace the Confederation with a strong central government.

Koll, the son and heir of the dictator of the Enos system snorted. "And I suppose you and Narsil won't dominate this new federation? We'll all be equal of course." Harek folded his arms over his chest and leaned back in his chair. "And what makes you think we won't dominate if we keep things the way they are now? Narsil's population is an order of magnitude greater than the rest of the Confederation combined. Not to mention our industry. I'm proposing to turn over power and authority to the central government." The room fell silent for a moment. They all knew that in terms of population, industry and military strength Narsil far outstripped them all. Before, Narsil had competed on an almost equal basis with the planets Sacnoth and Gram. Now they were both gone, occupied by the Imperium. That left Narsil as the lone high population world in the Confederation. They were the proverbial eight hundred pound gorilla in the room.

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## Raconteurs' Rest

"Look, the question isn't whether Narsil will dominate or not. The question is whether the people will go along with this change. And I think they will, at least they will if we act quickly and decisively. Right now the people are still in shock over what happened. They're in survival mode. If we move to strengthen ourselves, the people will respond."

Peder shook his head at Harek. "The people will respond alright. If you propose this, I give it a week before there is rioting in the streets on all five worlds. And that doesn't even address the changes to our technology you want. I'm not even sure we can do it. You want us to improve to basically one level below the Imperials' maximum Tech. Do you honestly think we can do that? And if we did, what would stop the Imps from attacking us. You can't believe they wouldn't see all of this as a threat?"

Harek sighed deeply as the others all looked to him. "I'm not worried about whether we can raise our technology. We already have the theoretical knowledge we need. That information has been available for millennia. It's just a question of engineering and desire. Our people are good enough engineers to do the work and I think fear and anger will cover the desire part. As for the Imperials reaction? I'm not really worried about it. Do you know why they left the five of us alone? Why they didn't just plow us under with the rest of our worlds?" He paused for a moment for dramatic effect. And to let them think about why they had been spared. "It certainly wasn't because of the Imperial Regency's large heartedness. It was so they would have a dumping ground. If any of our people under their occupation get too uppity, they can dump them here. That's all we are to them. A garbage dump. That and a joke. You do realize we are a joke to them don't you? Just a bunch of dumb barbarians howling at the mighty empire. They don't think there's anything we *can* do to threaten them."

This struck a nerve with all of them. They were a proud people. And yet, they knew how their enemy thought of them. It hurt to hear one of their own saying it. *Dumb barbarians*. At times they had taken a

perverse pride in that label. Now as they sat in the ruins of their civilization, it didn't seem so amusing.

After a moment of stewing in silence, Jon looked up with a curious expression. "Germund, you've been awfully quiet. What do you think of all of this?"

The current Prime Minister of Orcist shrugged his shoulders. "I've come to a lot of the same conclusions that Harek has. Though, I must admit I haven't thought it through as far as he and his nephew have. Look, the sad truth of the matter is, we've spent most of our history squabbling among ourselves like a bunch of children on a school yard. We've been so concerned with our pride and self images, that we barely even noticed our worlds coming to an end. It's high time we grew up." His bluntness surprised then all. Germund, like most Orcrists, had a reputation for being sly. Not brutal honesty.

Jorund was the first to respond. "That may be true, Germund, but how do we get our people to go along with this? And with all due respect to you, Harek, I'm not so confident about the Imperials' lack of response."

Germund gave him a smirk. "So, who said we have to tell them? A lot of Harek's proposals boil down to changes in administration and bureaucracy. Most of which are done behind the scenes, anyway. So, if we make these changes behind the scenes and don't announce it, who will know? Aside from the tech and industrial stuff, that is. And we can always lie about those. Suppose we improve a world's technology, but keep producing products at the old standard. How will the Imperials know?" He paused for a moment with a thoughtful expression. "Hmm, if we upgrade our industries, but produce lower technology goods it will increase our profits. Which we can turn around and reinvest. Huh, well, you can all see where I'm going with this. If we do this right, the first the Imperials will know about half of this, will be when we beat them over the head with it." His smirk widened to the same kind of grin a wolf gets when it bares its teeth at its prey.

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## Raconteurs' Rest

As they thought about what he said, the grin started to be mirrored by the others. Jon chuckled "Leave it to an Orcrist to think of that!"

Several hours later, when they finally ended the meeting, they had the broad outline of a plan. And for the first time in months they had something else.

Hope.

### Notes

1. *The Sword Worlds*: A cluster of worlds settled by emigres from

Earth, mostly of Scandinavian and Germanic decent. They named the worlds they settled mostly after swords from history, myth and legend.

2. *The Imperial Regency*: Formerly the Imperial Domain of Deneb. Part of the Third Imperium. After the rest of the Imperium's destruction, the Domain renamed itself the Regency. And though it is only a fraction of the size of the former Imperium, in this region of space it is one of the largest and most powerful of interstellar governments.

3. *The Zhodani Consulate*: A large empire, of primarily humans. One of their defining characteristics is the use of psionics (powers of the mind, such as telepathy)

## Critics' Corner

### Alien Module 3: Darrians

reviewed by "kafka"

*Alien Module 3: Darrians*. Pete Nash

Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

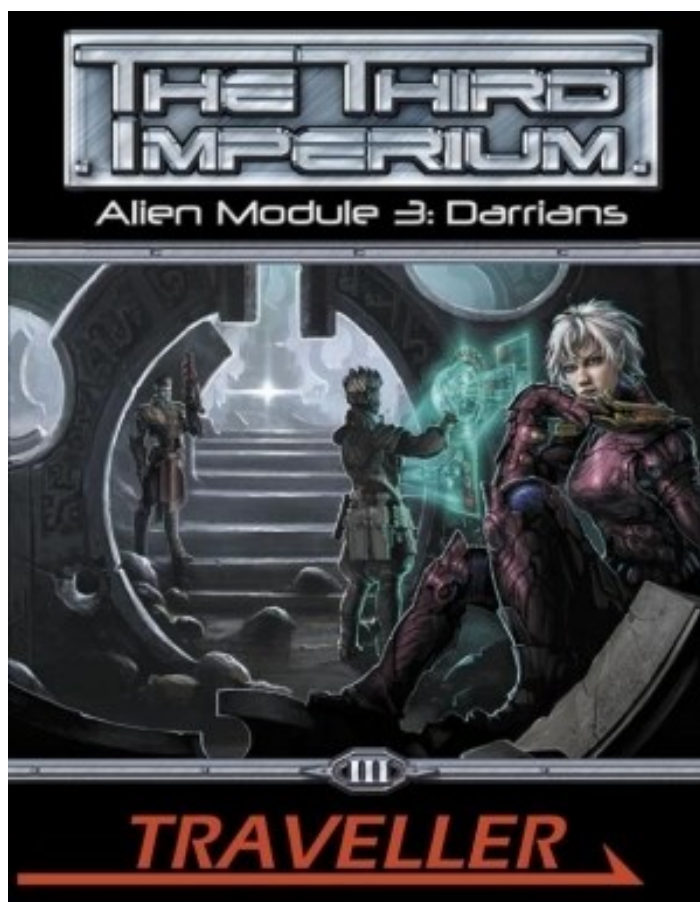
168pp. hardbound or PDF

US\$34.99(H)20.99(P)/UK£24.99(H)14.62(P)

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Again due to Amazon cock-ups, I am late reviewing this item that has long been on pre-order, but Amazon deciding to unilaterally cancel my order after not stocking sufficient copies forced me to go to a FLGS 800km away...

I must admit, I felt there some trepidation when I saw this product announced, because the Darrians had unfairly gained the reputation of being Space Elves and I feared that I might see yet another *Dragonstar* or *D&D* in Space rendition. As much as I loved Mongoose's race books for *D&D*, they had no place in my *Traveller* universe. However, I knew much of fandom clamored for Space Elves. My own view of the Darrians was that they were a minor human race to be found in the Spinward Marches that managed to struggle against all odds to become one of the dominant minor players in the Marches – that is, they were the Israelis of Charted Space – whether they had pointed ears or not was irrelevant. Not that one takes exception to looking at pictures of Darrian/Elven babes/beaus. Thankfully, I was rewarded with an excellent product.



Like the other race books that Mongoose has produced, it follows a similar pattern: new careers for aliens, a smattering of history, some starships and other toys, the worlds of the Darrian Confederation, possible patrons and encounters and a section on how to play them. The careers section is well fleshed out and contains excellent descriptions of how and what made the Darrians different from the Imperial norm. Here the right balance between skill acquisition and time spent in a career was perfectly

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## Critics' Corner

balanced. The author clearly had GDW's original alien module as a guide but his own text makes the descriptions more congruent with the text. Emphasizing, for instance, Social Standing to be equated with knowledge acquisition was an absolutely brilliant move in the Darrian sphere. There are deck plans but there are also illustrations of the starships; sadly, the pictures of the starships are sensor profile and in no way resemble the phenomenal starship art of the main rulebook. While on the topic of art, the art in this book is truly some of the best *Traveller* art that I have seen in a very long time. Yes, the Darrians are portrayed as Elf-ish but I was so impressed that I would routinely ignore the hypertrophic ears for the quality of the art contained within. Gone are the cartoonish and silly art that marked much of Mongoose's line up to now. Hopefully, it marks a new era where gritty realism and photo-like illustrations come to the fore for at least their *Traveller* line. Especially, commendable was their illustrations of the different character careers. True, there weren't any Darrian babes/beaus but I understand that their agreement with Marc prevents that.

Pete Nash did a great job reconstructing Darrian history, eliminating many of the grey areas that marked the original Alien Module and updating it to more current understandings of science, such as the super flares that were so much a paranormal fear in the 1970s get a realistic re-examination that is less paranormal although traces could still be found there—this is sad. I realize that Pete Nash would have had the limitations of the original module to contend with but there was no consultation with

some the old *Traveller* grognards who could have at least vetted the manuscript and many incorporated some of the work that SJG has done on the Darrians. Some of the tech such as the Meson egg cooker is quite fun but really is not *Traveller*. But other innovations like Pandora's Box were excellent and well thought through.

If there was one thing lacking which was present in previous Mongoose Alien Module products which was a series of tropes or characterizations for how to actually play the Darrians from popular (Science) Fiction films/books. So, I was still left wondering are these Space Elves or not... I also would have liked to see more on the Sword Worlds/Darrians conflict played out. For I could not help but get the sense that the Darrians were akin to the Nordic countries who were facing off against a rising Germany rather than Israelis. *Traveller* claims that it does not ground itself in real world politics but as many know, the war gaming roots of *Traveller* often show up of simulacra of "the real world".

All-in-all this is an outstanding product. I look forward to future offerings and hope that Mongoose can keep the excellent cadre of writers that are now emerging on staff. For it is starting to look more and more like the Imperium that I know and love...their first independent campaign, *Tripwire*, left a bitter taste in my mouth. Even though, I am a big fan of the game system...they have to respect the history of *Traveller* as well as build the future. Even despite its high price, I feel this product was worth every penny spent upon it. Keep up the excellent work, Mongoose! 🌟

## Up Close and Personal

### Bemela Ryos Thihs

profiled by Timothy Collinson

*This is told from the point-of-view of a close friend.*

Ryos had always dreamed of joining the Guards—ever since we played together in the fields around our farms on Roget. He'd be the Cavalry

corporal and I the dutiful private he could order around. Even then it was always Ryos in charge. So it's a shame that his dream came true.

Our parents had put us through the very best schools in the hopes that we would rise above their lives as farmers. But it didn't change our goal. We both went to join up but I didn't make the grade. I

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## Up Close and Personal

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know the Guards only take the best – but for a while I'd hoped I'd be among them. Roget's militia had a place for me and I dutifully accepted; but I knew it would never quite be the same. Instead, I had to rely on xmail messages from Ryos and live his life vicariously. He, of course, passed the entrance requirements with flying colors and was soon messaging me from his Cavalry troop. Details about training, uniforms and yes, sometimes punishments that he and his buddies would suffer. Sometimes undeserved, it seemed to him, sometimes deserved. There was one time he accepted a ride on a local's gravcycle, after curfew, and in breach of several strictures placed on the Guards' behavior. Nothing really serious, but infractions nonetheless. It was just the kind of thing that he'd do—and he got away with it as well, which didn't surprise me. But a sen-night later, he was in front of the Base Commander. His conscience had got the better of him and he confessed! I had to laugh when he told me that. Only Ryos! He reckoned the commander was trying not to kill himself laughing as well, but he meted out a suitable punishment which Ryos got on with and my suspicion is that it actually stood him in good stead with his superiors. On the occasions we did meet up though, it was clear that the experiences he was going through were shaping him up to be one of the Confederation's finest. He and I had never been the biggest or strongest at school, but we held our own and Ryos added a quick intelligence that would as often get him out of scrapes as soon as it would get him into them.

His natural qualities didn't remain hidden for long and he soon made Private before his regiment was shipped out to a base on Nosea. He kept writing though, despite the time lag, and I could at least share something of what he was up to. Other friends dropped away and even those who promised to keep up, drifted off—I'm not saying I was blameless; I could have written more. But Ryos was never

out of touch for long. Nosea, of course, provides a tough environment for the Guards to train in and one of the final exercises is one that, frankly, I'm glad to have missed. Dumped a several hundred kilometers from their barracks with virtually no equipment except their respirators—the much vaunted 'missions with full combat armor'—never included this one, and the troops would have to get back under their own steam. Ryos's descriptions of the sand flies made it clear they were by far a greater challenge than the sergeants putting other kinds of obstacles in their way. At one point, he wrote, he ended up sheltering for the night in a cave with a mate who snored so loudly sleep was impossible. I didn't take seriously his question as to whether he could plead diminished responsibility if a 'rock fall' had 'happened' to bury his mate in the small hours, but I can imagine the frustration!

It came as no surprise that despite the rigors he experienced, Ryos signed up for another four years in 1092. I did the same in the militia—still dreaming of making the Guards, but I knew the chance had gone. Ryos made Lance Corporal, of course, but he was destined for bigger things. You could see it in his eyes in the vids he sent. I've still got an image I saved from one which shows his athleticism and happiness—but also has an air of "I can do anything". Oh, he'd never express it like that, but I knew. Sometimes, in my darker thoughts, I figured he'd outgrow me somehow as a friend and stop writing. He never did, though, I'll say that for him. Even while he was doing some advanced training that ate into virtually all the hours he was awake, he'd still take the time on occasions to send a note, something encouraging, something personal.

One of his staff sergeants, however, Gunolil his name was, obviously saw something in him as well. He encouraged him to keep up his training and to sign up for a third term. Not surprising, really; Ryos was fast becoming something of a wonder at keeping his grav tank going in even the harshest of environments. There didn't seem to be anything he

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## Up Close and Personal

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couldn't fix on one, and nothing he didn't know about their innards. But his leadership potential had been seen as well by those higher up and they put him on an officer track. He made Lieutenant at the age of 28 and I was able to get to his commissioning ceremony. That was some do. His parents were there, Gunolil was there as his sponsor and looking as proud as newborn father. It was weird seeing Ryos in person again—it had been a few years—but our friendship seemed to pick up again as though it had just been yesterday. I still remember the improv theatre we went to see that weekend, *The Colors of the Orchard*. Ryos had been handed a purple robe and stepped into the part of a particularly unhappy tree as though he'd rehearsed it a hundred times. Where did that come from? He just shrugged it off with a joke about his wooden performance.

It was on exercise a few years later on Rorre, that Ryos really made his mark. His messages were somewhat circumspect for security reasons, so it was only later I found out the details. But Ryos was leading his grav tank platoon and came up with a new trick to defeat their opponents using the gravity of the world and a feature of the Sphere grav tanks they were using that was not in the manual. Completely caught the other side on the hop, as it were! Once the maneuver had been analyzed by the staff officers, they could see it wasn't just a fluke even if it was unique to a higher gravity world. Ryos was promoted again, to Captain, but it was clear from his grin that his real delight was in having added something to the field handbook.

He signed up for another term without hesitation. But I could wish that he'd chosen to retire then. It would have been early, I admit that, but he wouldn't now be crushed. It's sad to see him a pale shadow of his former self. Towards the end of his tour something happened which ended his dream of being a Confederation Guard. Ordered to take part in a black ops mission to Margesi (Vilis subsector)

that saw the troop under his command inserted covertly onto the world, the aim was to use Sword World grav tanks to make an attack on a large township look like the overtures of war with the Imperium. Should a tank be disabled, its crew had to be retrieved. Should that prove impossible the Confederation Guards were under extremely clear orders to not allow their bodies to be found by the Imperials. They were to kill without quarter and take no prisoners. Ryos wrote, without going into details, that he couldn't believe the Confederation was engaging in such tactics. In what was the most difficult decision of his life he refused to take part in the mission. I knew that he couldn't have lived with his conscience if he had gone ahead with it. Unsurprisingly, a court martial followed and only because of his outstanding service was he not ejected immediately. They stripped him of his pension, however, and he wasn't allowed to reenlist. The last vid I got showed a haggard Ryos at his wits' end over what he's going to do now.

I'm on my way to see him, I couldn't do anything less, but I don't know what the future holds. We've always been friends but I'm not even certain he wants to see me right now. There was a time when I thought we might be something more than friends, and then that time seemed to pass, now it would seem unwise to even think along those lines, and yet, and yet... he needs me more than ever. He needs protection—from himself as much as anything. Perhaps this is my chance to be a guard.

### Adventure Seeds

- Bemela is convinced that his superior officer is a traitor to the Confederation and wasn't acting on orders from any higher in the chain of command. He obviously can't ask the Guards to investigate, nor the Confederation police, and he's too close to the whole situation. But he wants the PCs to look into the background and behavior of the Major concerned.
- Bemela is still struggling to come to terms with events and has heard of the brilliance of the En-

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## Up Close and Personal

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voy, Penghen Bok Gepi. He wants to hire the PCs to help him get to Penghen and persuade him to look into negotiating a different outcome to his trial. Perhaps get his pension reinstated (under *Classic Traveller* rules Cr5,000, under *Mongoose Traveller* rules Cr. 10,000). Deep down he knows it's hopeless but he wants to try. Perhaps Penghen can help, or at least assist Bemela in dealing with his pain.

- Bemela and his friend want to leave the Confederation and try their luck in the Imperium; they want transport in that direction. Whether the relationship is disintegrating as they travel or becoming stronger than ever, is left for the referee to determine. And no, neither of them have told their parents what they're doing.
- Gunolil, now a Sergeant Major, has been hired by Bemela's parents to find him. They fear the worst. Gunolil wants the PCs to help him look for his protégé although there are few clues as to where he's gone. There's even the possibility that he's left the Confederation entirely and headed for the Imperium.

### Classic Traveller statistics

**Bemela Roys Thihs** 986BC4 Age 38 Cr11,000

5 terms Army (Captain)

Mechanical-3, Computer-2, Brawling-1, Leader-1,

Gun Combat (Laser Rifle)-1, Tactics-1

Cash: Cr11,000, Laser Rifle, Voucher

### GURPS Traveller statistics [150 points]

**Bemela Roys Thihs**

Race: Darrian [-18]

Ht: 6'9" Wt: 145lbs Age: 38

**Attributes [103]**

ST 11 [20]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 9.

HP 10 [-2]; Will 10 [-20]; Per 15 [5]; FP 9.

Basic Lift: 24; Damage 1d-1/1d+1; Basic Speed: 5;

Basic Move: 5.

### **Social Background [0]**

TL: 12 [0]; Cultural Familiarities: Darrian (Native) [0].

Languages: te-Zlodh (Native) [0].

### **Advantages [36]**

Absolute Direction (3D Spatial Sense) [10]; Allies (112 points 3, appears fairly often x1) [3]; Allies (Staff Sergeant Gunolil, 150 points 5, appears quite rarely x1/2) [3]; Fearlessness 2 [4]; Fit (Fit) [5]; G-Experience (All) [10]; Temperature Tolerance 1 [1].

### **Disadvantages [-40]**

Chronic Depression [-15]; Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]; Sense of Duty (Small Group) [-5]; Status -1 [-5]; Stubbornness [-5].

### **Skills [69]**

Acting IQ+0 14 [2]; Animal Handling (Dogs) IQ-1 13 [1]; Artillery (Cannon)/TL12 IQ+0 14 [2]; Brawling DX+2 13 [4]; Computer Operation/TL12 IQ+2 16 [4]; Environment Suit (Vacc Suit)/TL12 DX+2 13 [8]; Forward Observer/TL12 IQ+0 14 [2]; Gunner (Beams) DX+3 14 [8]; Guns (Rifle)/TL12 DX+2 13 [4]; Leadership IQ+1 15 [4]; Mechanic (Sphere Tank)/TL12 IQ+4 18 [16]; Piloting (Contragravity)/TL12 DX+1 12 [4]; Soldier/TL12 IQ+2 16 [8]; Survival (Desert) Per+0 15 [2].

### Mongoose Traveller statistics

**Bemela Roys Thihs**

Character: Guard Captain. Career Path: Guard (Cavalry)

Age 38, 5 terms, Cr. 20,000

Str 9 (+1) Dex 9 (+1) End 7 (+0)

Int 9 (+1) Edu 11 (+1) Soc 4 (-1)

Skills: Mechanic 3, Comms 2, Computers 2, Athletics 1, Gun Combat (Energy Rifle) 1, Leadership 1, Melee 1, Animals 0, Battle Dress 0, Carouse 0, Heavy Weapons (Field Artillery) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0

Equipment: TL12 Gauss Rifle, TL13 Guard Armor



### Bad Things Happen

by Andrea Vallance

Editor's note: This story is out-of-sequence for the internal chronology. It presents some of Isabella's back-story.

#### Part 1

#### 188th of 2024 (014-93): The Battle of Rurur

The *Apuludukii* was sinking, the drives were out and it was falling into the giant's atmosphere. I was working furiously. There were so many casualties, they'd turned the boat deck into a temporary sick-bay and I was busy with triage. With pen, I wrote one, two or three on each patients forehead. I was checking a young spacehand, he was barely out of his teens. Third degree burns to most of his body, grey tissue visible through his skull. I sighed as I wrote three and moved on, so young to die out here. There was a sudden groan and the deck twisted and buckled. I was thrown off my feet and slid across the deck, slamming into the landing leg of one of the boats. A marine sergeant pulled me to my feet. I looked and could see the hull was about to crack. "Into the boat, Lieutenant, *now*; we've got to go."

"The wounded..." I began pulling and dragging the nearest to the boat. I thrust her into the boat and turned to get another.

The sergeant screamed, "No time, ma'am, into the boat *now*!"

"I've got to..." The sergeant hit me with his rifle butt. My head spun as he forced me into the boat. I watched, trying to regain my balance, as the sergeant crammed two more in. I saw the hull give way as he pushed the door closed and the crushing atmosphere rushed in. I felt the boat's drive light and heard the smashes as fragments of the disintegrating *Apuludukii* struck the thin skin of the boat.

My head was clearing as I heard somebody say, "How many?"

A reply, "Fifteen, including us." I looked down at the young woman I'd saved and cried, three.

#### 191st of 2024 (017-93): Prisoner Review, Rurur

Shen Saida *Kaptan* was tired; there were so many prisoners to process. Even with twenty boards going, this would take weeks. "Next?"

The clerk checked picked up the next file. "*Apuludukii, Kaptan.*"

"How many?"

"Fourteen."

"Fourteen? She was the flag, wasn't she?"

"Yes, *Kaptan.*" Only fourteen; he said a silent prayer to *Yasant*.

"Most senior survivor?"

The clerk checked the file "*Isabella Montoya Lieutenant, a dokhtor.*"

Beatrice Parker *Komant*, the board's second member, spoke, "I doubt she'd have anything useful."

Saida considered awhile, "Probably, but protocol does call for the senior officer to go to intelligence."

Parker read her details and sounded doubtful "Shen, we all know intelligence are far from gentle. She's twenty six years old and traumatised. Do we really need to follow protocol here?"

"Have you checked the intel report on her?" The board's final member, *Yis Desvu Komant*.

Parker looked up, "No; is there something of interest in it?"

"Possibly, Beatrice; she's listed as in a relationship with *Darius Vilis*."

Saida sounded interested, "As in, sector director of Naval Intelligence *Darius Vilis*? When and for how long?"

"Yes, that *Vilis*; for fourteen months and it ended three years ago."

Parker snorted, "A long dead love affair, that hardly seems important."

Saida hummed, "Perhaps, but it *is* interesting."

Parker disagreed "So we should send this young woman off to be brutalised on the off-chance that *Vilis* let something slip over pillow talk?"

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Desvu grew irritated, "Nothing they do falls under the classification of 'brutalization', Beatrice; it's all within the military code of justice."

"Oh yes, they stop short of electrodes and rubber hoses, but we all know they push the limits as far as they can. Mind warping chemicals, sleep deprivation, 'emotional disorientation', 'extreme physical discomfort'. Sounds pretty brutal to me! For all the gods' sakes she's just a reservist working off her medical school debt."

"You know full well such extreme methods are only used under strict supervision and in the most recalcitrant cases. It won't go that far; like you said, just a reservist."

Parker was on her feet to respond, but Saida cut her off, "Ladies, please. It's late and we've got a lot to get through. Arguing isn't going to help. I'd like to get home to my family tonight, so lets just follow protocol and move on to the next case."

Desvu nodded, "I agree."

"I'd like to register my opposition."

"Noted." He marked Isabella for transfer to intelligence and selected the next file.

### 204th of 2024 (030-93): The Protectorate Council Building, Waicir

Lord Councillor Oskar Sherin reviewed the situation. The war he'd been expecting for so long had come. They'd invaded, they'd come. The Protectorate was fighting for its life now. *Efepkamosaryn Edtyassos*, they had to survive. He was in charge of intelligence gathering, but for far too long his hands had been tied; to have any chance that would have to change. He scanned the latest reports from Sesh Liryng, they often achieved results with difficult cases, no doubt of that, but it took time and success was not guaranteed. He'd recommended changes before, but had always been out voted. Concerns about control. Perhaps valid in normal situations, but this wasn't normal. There were fifty-two worlds in the Protectorate; the Imperium covered entire sectors. If

they were defeated... It was unthinkable. He needed to introduce changes. He'd checked the files and had the ideal candidate, he just needed to get it passed the committee. He picked up the communicator and entered Lord Councillor Jkuaese's code. He was the weak link in My Lady's power base. "Lanla, I need to talk."

Lanla Jkuaese looked up from a pile of papers; he seemed busy. "About?"

"Sesh Liryng, Lanla."

"What about it?"

"Given the circumstance, I think it's time to revisit my earlier proposals. It will need to be expanded anyway."

Lanla seemed irritated and distracted, "Nashu will never go for it, Oskar; outsiders, we'd lose control of them. You know how things can get out of hand, what happened with the L'polians.<sup>1</sup>"

"I know, I know. But I have a solution for that. A small group under the direct supervision of a qualified citizen we trust."

Lanla considered for a moment. "Do you have anyone in mind?"

"Toscar Pedter *Dokhtor*. She's a *Kolant* in the Iadthu, an expert in psychology; the Verasras<sup>2</sup> and the intelligence services already consult her in difficult cases. She's the perfect choice."

Lanla was less than certain, "Mmm, have you seen some of her works on *Edtyassos*<sup>3</sup>? She seems a little too focused on it<sup>4</sup>."

Oskar paused a moment in thought; he'd met the woman; a little eccentric perhaps, but not that bad... "Nothing too extreme, Lanla, if it were anything to worry about do you think she'd have a cyan three clearance<sup>5</sup>?"

Lanla considered the matter, there was a war now, and with the Imperium, not some small pocket empire. "Okay, I'll support a pilot program. See how it goes. But if it gets out of hand, we kill it."

Oskar smiled, "I knew I could count on you, Lanla."

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### 237th of 2024 (063-93): Protectorate Holding Camp on Daramm

Petra *Majkor* and Ishugii *Kaptan* sat behind the one way glass partition watching yet another interview. There were so many prisoners and so few interrogators, it had taken almost a month just to get started with this one. Petra spoke first, "Error in the paperwork, you say?"

"Yes; nobody flagged Vilis on her file, so she got a low priority rating. It was only picked up when somebody read the review board transcripts."

Petra shook his head; they'd have to be better organised to have any chance of surviving this war. "Sloppy. So, have we got anything from her yet?"

"No, she's surprisingly resilient; we've got a few codes we already had, a couple of minor details about Vilis she let slip, but generally I'd have to say nothing of value."

"She says she doesn't know anything; do you believe her?"

Ishugii considered the young woman on the other side of the glass for a moment. "No, she's holding something back, I'm sure of it."

"So, Sesh Liryn, you think?"

"It would seem to be the best option."

### 15th of 2025 (206-93): Sesh Liryn

Basijk is a rather unremarkable K0 main sequence star, with two belts and six planets. Eight moons circle those six planets. Two of the planets, Daramm and Verasaryn are home to flourishing complex ecosystems; a third, Yasant, hosts primitive life in the form of protoza. Closest in is Sesh, a tiny sun-baked rock. And Sesh was home to Sesh Liryn, a very secure Protectorate military facility dedicated to the interrogation of recalcitrant prisoners.

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Gami Rinni liked this ticket. His life had not been easy since the L'polian Empire fell five years ago. The Imperium had not appreciated the Ver-

mox's<sup>6</sup> activities and he'd had to run for his life. He'd drifted since then, living hand to mouth, forever looking over his shoulder. Still, there was always employment for a man of his talents, provided you weren't too fussy about your employers. And Gami certainly wasn't fussy. But this job was different, no criminal thug or tinpot one world dictator. The Protectorate was a major power, bigger than the Empire even and he had something approaching official sanction. Gami looked at his 'assistant', one of Padter's mercenaries. Brutes, for the most part, more at home with thumbscrews and the rack than the subtle methods he used. Not that he was squeamish; a physical approach could have its place sometimes. But Padter preferred a more 'intellectual' approach. Well, usually; she was growing impatient and wanted to try something new. Gami had been surprised at her suggestion, but it might work. He looked at the file, Sanchez y Montoya. He tried not to use their names, it was better to keep your personal feelings out of it, but he did rather enjoy his job, the sense of power and control. This one was surprising resilient, a perfect candidate for the new approach.

### 21st of 2025 (212-93): Sesh Liryn

I sat on the cold floor of my cell, grey concrete walls surrounding me. There were two types of light here, either so bright it hurt your eyes or so dim you could hardly see; today they'd picked dim. Not that that really mattered; there wasn't much to see, just me and the bucket in the corner. I was filthy, my hair a matted, smelly mess. They said I hadn't been co-operating, so I hadn't been allowed to wash for I think over a week. I'm not sure; it was impossible to keep track of time here. Here things worked on reward and punishment. If they thought you were co-operating they gave you things, clothes, a blanket, a bucket, better food. Mind you, you needed to be careful with the food. If they thought you weren't co-operating, they took things away. They'd taken my clothes last time. They'd been filthy like me, stank of stale urine and itched, but they'd been clothes. They hadn't thought I was co-operating for a while, actu-

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ally. They were right, I wasn't; there was something else. Darius had shown me something, something important and I hadn't told them. It was important, I knew it had to be. I fought the urge to smile. Smiling here was bad, it meant you were holding something back and you never knew when they were watching you.

---

People tell you the human mind is a fragile thing. They're wrong; the human mind is one of the toughest things in the universe, almost infinitely creative and adaptable in its ability to protect itself. But only almost. It's funny; you can feel yourself slipping into insanity, you know the world your mind is creating isn't real, but you go there anyway. Darius had been coming to me. He held me and kissed me, we danced and then made love. But I knew it wasn't real, I was alone, just my mind in the final desperate stages of a losing battle to protect itself. I had clung to that one important thing he'd shown me, focused on it, kept it. It was all that was keeping me in this world, but even it wasn't enough any more. Now there was a new humiliation, absolutely nothing belonged to me any more. I was so tired, I didn't have any fight left in me. I was going to give up and stay with Darius the next time he came.

---

Gami Agugik *Reemral* looked up as he heard the message arrive; he was weeks behind with his paperwork and didn't need more. He noted the sender and opened it. It was brief and to the point. He dialled in Toscar Padter *Kolant's* code and opened a line. "Toscar?"

"Yes, Gami?"

"Sanchez y Montoya, we're pulling the plug."

A pause, "I think that's premature."

"You've been saying that for weeks, but this one comes from above." Agugik had tried ending it as a waste of resources, but she had the support of Oskar Sherin himself and he'd been overruled.

"I really think it's premature," sounding certain.

"Well you'd better come here and convince me then." He took a deep breath. She gave him the creeps, all her talk of the war and *Edtyassos*, unhealthy. And her 'specialists', they just plain scared him. He was just grateful he'd been able to limit her to five subjects so far.

---

Padter pulled out the files. Agugik sat patiently, then handed her a copy of the message "So, tell me why I should appeal this?"

Padter read the message; she knew it'd be an uphill battle against this. "She's holding something back, I know it. I just know it. We already got a lead on a spy ring and know there's more."

Agugik nodded politely, "The 'ring' was operating three years ago. We have yet to have any confirmation that it still is. So other than that, what have we got?"

"A lot of details about Vilis."

Agugik looked at the details. "Yes; what he likes, what she likes, what toothpaste he uses, oh, here's a good one, how he brushes his hair. The list goes on, but nothing I'd say is remotely useful."

Padter's mouth formed a broad grin. "Well, the psychs will like it, to help fill out his profile."

"And that justifies continuing? Especially given this?" He indicated the message. "Just what more are we going to get, his shoe size?"

"We already have that; ten."

Agugik sat forward. "My point exactly." Agugik had made his decision. "It's over."

She rocked back, thought for a moment. "I could go over your head."

Agugik smiled, "Take a look at the name on that message again."

Padter frowned. "I only need a few more days. Here, look at this." She pulled up a video file; it showed Isabella rhythmically weaving and dipping round her cell.

Agugik looked puzzled. "What's she doing?"

"She's dancing; with Vilis, according to the audio—or at least she believes she is. There's more; she

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gets quite... intimate, but it means she's on the verge of cracking. I'm trying a new approach; I'll have her in two days."

Agugik was concerned. "A new approach?"

"Yes." She sounded excited, "Yes, look." She pulled up another file.

Agugik watched in horror, sick to his stomach. "Has anyone else seen this?"

"I included it all in my weekly report; I submitted it a few hours ago."

Agugik hadn't got round to reviewing it; to be honest he'd only skimmed the last five. But, obviously, somebody else had. Padter was insane, completely and totally insane. With luck, he might get away with just resigning.

### 22nd of 2025 (213-93): Sesh Liryn

Madam Manish was furious, she was watching Isabella moving elegantly around her cell from the security room, She was struck by how good a dancer she was. "Agugik *Reer Adtmral*, may I ask why she is still filthy and naked? I believe you had received clear orders that these humiliations were to stop."

"I am afraid there has been insufficient time, My Lady Councillor." In truth, Agugik had been frantically busy reviewing every single security video to see if Padter's 'new approach' had been applied anywhere else and simply neglected to see to her preparation.

"The travel time from Daramm to Sesh is currently eighteen hours and twenty three minutes, *Reer Adtmral*."

Agugik understood the meaning; he had actually taken care of that some time ago. "I have already submitted my resignation, My Lady."

"Probably wise. And Padter *Kolnel-Lekhtenant*?"

"In custody, My Lady, along with her accomplices."

"Good. I will need every file from every case she has had anything to do with."

"Of course, My Lady. And the lieutenant?"

"Have her brought to the interview room, gently, very gently *Reer Adtmral*."

"At once; I have had the infirmary prepared, My Lady."

Madam Manish sighed, "I will be seeing to that matter on Daramm."

"But, My Lady, protocol..."

"...will need to be flexible, in this case; I think she has suffered quite enough here, don't you?"

Darius had come to me again; we were dancing, close, I could feel his heart beating. I no longer cared if it were real or not. He whispered in my ear that it was time to leave. I smiled. I heard the lock on the door; he said goodbye and disappeared. I shuddered and balled my fist as tight as I could.

The door opened. A guard appeared, not the usual one. He handed me a blanket. "Please come with me." That was new, please and a blanket. I wrapped the blanket tightly round me and followed to the interview room. The door opened. It was somebody new, an old lady, well dressed and elegant. They did that sometimes, changes just to keep you confused and disoriented.

"Ah Lieutenant Sanchez y Montoya, it is a pleasure to meet you, may I call you Isabella?"

I smiled inside myself, one last gesture of defiance before I crumbled. "No."

The woman's eyes were full of guilt. "Of course; I understand. You must despise us after how you've been treated." No, I didn't, not any more, not really. I had, but I didn't really feel anything towards them now. I understood now, I had something important, I was worth something.

"Please, please sit." I sat on the floor. She sighed "No dear, you may sit on the chair. May I introduce myself Lieutenant, I am Lady Councillor Nashu Manish Khaadii *Mmarishlusant*, most people call me Madam Manish or My Lady Councillor, but I would regard it as an honour if you would call me Nashu. I am to be your sponsor."

I was now utterly confused, but I suppose that was the point. "Sponsor?"

"Yes dear, you are to be paroled into my custody."

"Paroled?"

"Yes, you'll leave here and come and live with me until we can send you home. After all, you are an honoured guest of the Lord Protector."

I couldn't help it, I roared with laughter, "If this is how you treat honoured guests I'd hate to be an enemy." I'd probably lose the bucket for that, but it did feel good to laugh.

She sighed deeply, "Yes, you must feel that way, my dear. I would apologise, but it would be rather pointless." I could hear so much guilt in her voice. "Now we'll need to get you cleaned up. I am afraid there is however one last... indignity you must endure."

### 23rd of 2025 (214-93): Antiavash Central Hospital, Daramm

I lay in a cheerful hospital ward; the nurse came to check on me again. He smiled at me "How are you feeling now? The pain killers working?" I nodded and tried to sit up. The nurse gently pushed me down. "No, try and stay still; it'll take two or three days to heal." Madam Manish, Nashu, had told me it would be difficult, my own medical training told me that too. The trace, a tiny electronic device bonded to the top of my spine. Go too far from the base unit and it would tingle a warning. Keep going and it would block the nerve signals totally, leaving me paralysed until they came and reset it. It was my leash.

### Notes

1. The L'polian Empire was a small pocket empire absorbed by the Imperium some five years before the Luriani War. Traditional enemies of the Protectorate, the Empire was actually the re-establishment of an earlier, larger L'polian Empire that had existed during the early years of the Long Night. The first empire fought five bitter wars with the First Protectorate before collapsing into civil war and anarchy following the pyrrhic Luriani victory in the Fifth L'polian War. However the exhaustion caused by these wars is regarded as

the cause of the Protectorate's demise some one hundred years later. The reformed empire fought two more inconclusive wars with the Second Protectorate before succumbing to a short Imperial campaign.

2. The Protectorate's central law enforcement service.

3. *Edtyassos* is a proper noun in Standard Luriani unique in that it never takes an article nor a possessive form (traits that extend to Luriani Anglic); instead additional nouns are suffixed to it forming an extended proper noun. It refers to the events following the Vilani conquest of the Luriani worlds in 2614:pre Luriani (-4546 Imperial), usually known in Anglic as the year of woe. Exactly what occurred is unknown. Vilani records only briefly mention it as a purge and Luriani oral tradition is considered unreliable. It was however, a pivotal event in Luriani history, still exerting a major influence on their culture thousands of years later. Luriani tradition speaks of near total genocide and there is clear evidence of a substantial reduction in the Luriani population at this time. The most common theory is that it was a deliberate attempt to wipe out all trace of Luriani history and culture before that date. It is known to be the only recorded instance of the Vilani actively destroying knowledge. In strict usage it refers only to the events of the immediate aftermath to the Luriani Consolidation War, however more common usage covers the entire period of the war and subsequent Vilani occupation.

4. While *Edtyassos* is a central part of the Luriani's history, they regard an excessive focus on it as unhealthy. In extreme cases this can become an obsession leading to a mental illness they call *Edtyassoswislad* (*Edtyassos* madness).

5. Protectorate security clearances are coded by colour and level. Red covers domestic and criminal matters, blue covers foreign and diplomatic matters, green covers military. Beyond these are magenta (combining red and blue), cyan (combining red and green), yellow (combining blue and green) and finally white (combining all three). The level is a clearance from one to five.

6. The L'polian intelligence service, noted for its ruthlessness and use of various forms of torture. 🌟



### CD-ROM: Apocrypha 1

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

CD-ROM: *Apocrypha 1: FASA and Gamelords*. Various authors.

FarFuture Enterprises <http://farfuture.net>

PDF and other files on CD-ROM, ~617MB

US\$35.00

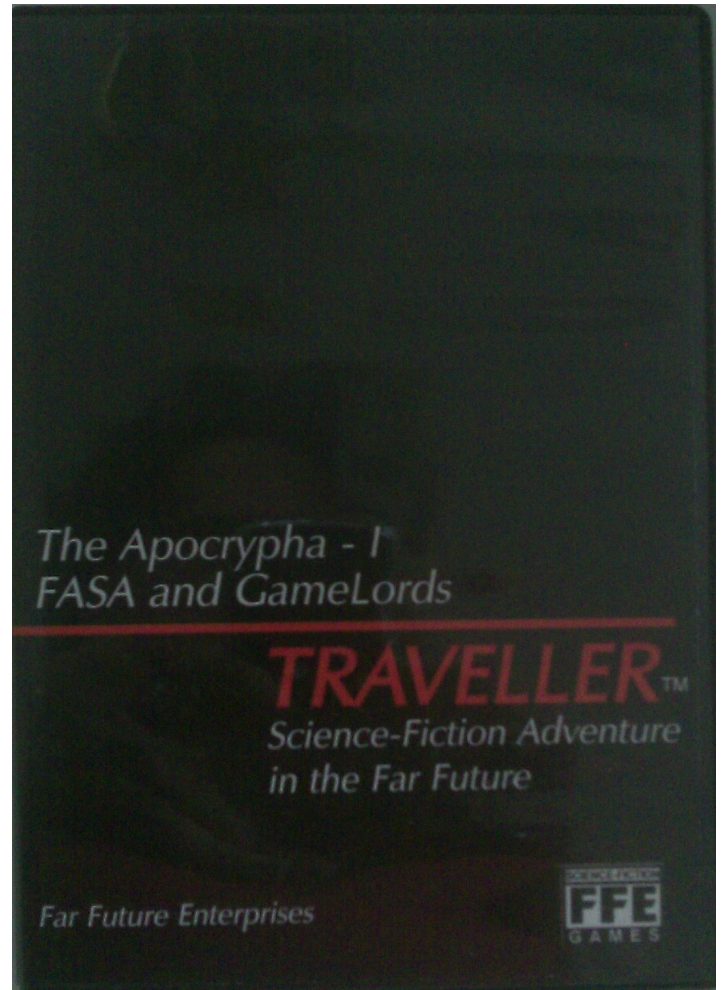
As part of their efforts to make electronic versions of all historical *Traveller* material available, FarFuture Enterprises has released this collection of licensed third-party material for Classic *Traveller*, from FASA and GameLords. A second disc of Apocrypha, from other historical licensees, is available separately, and will be reviewed separately.

This disc contains FASA's Adventure Class Ships (five series), Deckplan Modules, and adventures, and Gamelords' adventures. PDFs and JPG images scanned from the original products are included, with some editing by FFE prior to release (and noted in the PDFs).

The textual material in the Adventure Class Ships, sadly, seems to be only scanned images, rather than the text-behind-image used in other products and other *Traveller* CDRoms.

Production values are mixed; some of the material appears to have had sufficient money and effort behind it to achieve a look-and-feel similar to the contemporary GDW *Traveller* products; other material looks like "camera-ready" preparation was done with early word processing software and "high-end" daisy-wheel office printers.

The CD-ROM edition of the Adventure Class Ships are actually not straight scans of the original product; the PDF books have been 'edited' to include small reference plans, and to 'correct obvious errors'. They also include photos of counter sheets for using the plans in combat scenarios. Scans of the sheet plans (I have some of the original boxed product) are generally at a resolution of 5100 by 6600 pixels (17×22 inches, at the 300 dpi density that was common with early laser printer; or 8½×11 at 600 dpi), with "thumbnails" at 200 by 259, in JPEG format. The ship data is presented in *Book 2: High Guard*



format, and it is assumed that you will have access to that document to interpret the USP. The books include ship encounter tables which more or less assume that your campaign will be running in a setting that is essentially the Official *Traveller* Universe. Despite various ship designs being attributed to one or another of the Powers of the Official *Traveller* Universe, there's really nothing stopping—or even slightly impeding—a referee from lifting these ships whole into a non-OTU campaign.

The Deckplan Modules contain much more information about the ships they model than the Adventure Class Ships do about theirs. The originals were done to 15mm miniatures scale (and endorse the contemporary Martian Metals miniatures), and include a sheet showing where air ducts are on each deck. These were intended not merely as combat maps—though the intent that they be used so is clearly there—but as potential settings for entire adventures, and the author(s) supplied some seeds

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## Critics' Corner

(short descriptions of the situation, but no proposed resolutions) to get you started. Again, it wouldn't be difficult to lift these ships into your own campaign.

The FASA adventures include several that are often mentioned favorably even thirty-odd years after their release; the ones that aren't are, in this reviewer's opinion, of quite comparable quality. These aren't simple adventure seeds or half-finished frameworks, but entire adventures, with well-fleshed-out characters, settings, and often two or three interwoven plots to keep players interested. Both combat and non-combat threads are included, and can be selectively emphasized or minimized depending on the players' and referee's tastes. It should be noted that the adventure *Uragyad'n of the Seven Pillars* is included as both A03 (its correct number) and A07 (which number is also used, correctly, for *Trail of the Sky Raiders*). The adventures are text-behind-scan, but the scans are of indifferent quality and low resolution; several diagrams that have legends are unreadable, even when magnified.

The Gamelords adventures are a mixed bag—some are collections of seeds (*Wanted: Adventures*), encounters (*Startown Liberty*), or worlds (*Lee's Guide to Interstellar Adventure*), some are essentially collections of encyclopedia articles or Library Data, with

one or two plot suggestions attached (*A Pilot's Guide to Drexilthar* and *Caledon Subsectors*), some are settings and rules to use in them (*The Undersea* and *Mountain Environments*), and some are full-fledged adventures (*The Drenslaar Quest*, *Ascent to Anekthor*, and *Duneraiders*). The scans suggest that Gamelords had less of a budget for production than did FASA; the typography and cover design somehow look less refined. Nevertheless, the material itself is of good quality, and these adventures also include some well-spoken-of products.

It is perhaps not surprising that these are quality material; even though these date from *Traveller's* early days, the names William H. Kieth, Jr. and J. Andrew Kieth are prominent in the list of authors, and while the other names are perhaps less known to the modern *Traveller* player (with the possible exception of Gregory P. Lee), they did work of comparable quality, and it could easily be considered a disservice to them that they are not better known.

One might hope that someday better scans and better OCR might happen, and a revised version of this CD—or replacement by a DVD, if necessary—released, but even in its current form, there is no question that it is worth every cent of its price, and quite likely more. 🌟

## Doing It My Way

### Some thoughts on Skill Use in Classic *Traveller*

by Christopher Kubiasik

*Author's note: This article is from my TRAVELLER: Out of the Box series about using only Classic Traveller Books 1-3. The entire series can be found at <<https://talestoastound.wordpress.com/tag/traveller/>>.*

The question I'm exploring is what happens if...

1. You only use Book 1-3
2. You assume the game doesn't need to be fixed but works fine as is
3. You explore what sort of game comes out of assumptions 1 and 2

I'm not trying to tell anyone how to play the game or say you're doing it wrong. These are my impressions of how the game was written and meant to be played. But I don't assume they are definitive.

*Editor's note: The author uses the term 'throw' frequently. This is synonymous with such terms as 'roll', 'die roll', et cetera, and generally means "rolls two six-sided dice and compares to a target number".*

### A Limited List

The list of skill found in Books 1-3 is not meant to be comprehensive. The service skill lists reflect the opportunities that characters in those services might have for skills. If it were comprehensive it would work against the design philosophy of the game.

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*Traveller* is a game of limitations. You never have the cards you want, you have the cards you were dealt. Now, what are you going to do with them?

### Skills are Not a Limit on What Characters Can Do

Any character can try to do anything in *Traveller*, whether they have a skill or not. They might not succeed. And the Referee might make a ruling that the current circumstances mean there is no way the Character will succeed. But it is important to remember that the skills a character possesses are not a limit on what a Character can do. They are what the character was trained to do in his or her respective service.

Having a skill level of 1 or higher means the player-character (PC, hereafter) might be able to use the skill value for employment or as a favorable modifier for throws. Along with a skill of 0, a skill level 1 or higher means that a PC can make rolls without a concern for adverse modifiers in situations where the skill would be required.

### Limits are Vital to the Spirit of the Game

Let's say your characters decide to hunt some creatures on an alien world. They don't have Hunting skill (it doesn't exist) and they don't know the world or the beasts. How do they solve this problem? There's no roll to make.

Exactly!

The trap of lots and lots of skill rolls is that the Players can simply roll their way out of any problem that comes their way. And what's the fun of that?

Instead, how do they learn to hunt the beast they need to hunt? Here's one idea:

They have to go to a tribe on the world and get someone to help them track the beast or give them the methods to hunt it ("Use this meat and place it in this area...").

Now, instead of a roll, what do we get? Adventure, complications, debts, conflicts, more adventure. The PCs have to go talk to someone. This might

go well, or badly. They have to get something from someone. This might be easy, or cost them something they own, or they might have to kill the chief of a neighboring tribe to get the information. They have to go out and *do* the instructions they've been giving. Things might go wrong on their way to capture the beast. And so on.

The fact is the skills the PCs have are—on purpose—a small fraction of the skills they might wish they had by the time any adventure is over. But if they don't have those skills, they need to find their way into a new solution. That means doing all the things we love to do in an RPG: poke things, prod things, come up with ideas and schemes, generate possibilities from the Referee as we ask, "Is there a tribe nearby that might be able to help us..." and so on.

By not having a skill for everything, the players are in the same position of players in a solid game of (original) *Dungeons & Dragons*. Apart from fighting, thief skills, and magic, the players have to figure out ways of defeating, circumventing, and succeeding at challenges in ways that never involve die rolls.

*Traveller* is from that same tradition. We should not forget that when we look at the *Traveller* rules. Skills offer possibilities of actions for the PCs. But they are not the sum total of those possibilities. And it is from these other possibilities that the best play and most memorable moments will arise.

### Characters Can Make Throws Even if They Don't Have the Skill

Anyone can make a throw if a situation warrants it, even if they do not have the skill. Anyone can try to bribe someone, whether they have bribery skill or not. Anyone can try to repair a piece of machinery on a starship, whether they have a skill or not.

An example from the rules:

*Air/Raft— The individual has training and experience in the use and piloting of the air/raft, or floater.*

The air/raft is the major transportation vehicle of most worlds, and most persons are aware of its basic operation. In any type of high speed situation, or in bad weather, it can be dangerous to drive. A basic

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## Doing It My Way

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throw of 5+ to avoid accident or mishap in bad weather, chases, or high speed maneuvers applies.

DMs: +1 per level of expertise. -1 if extremely bad weather, the craft is old, or if gunfire is involved in the chase.

Referee: generally, roll once for a short chase, twice or three times longer flights. See Book 3 for a more complete description of the air/raft.

Notice that it is assumed that anyone from the implied culture of the game setting can use an air/raft. Throws are not needed for every day use, only for extreme circumstances where things might go wrong. Air/Raft skill is not required to make such a roll, but will provide a +DM if available.

Thus, I would say most drivers in the U.S. have a Automobile-0 skill (or no Automobile skill, if I'm being unkind). This does not mean that they cannot drive a car. It means they can drive a car just fine until something goes wrong. At that point, a throw is required. Someone with Driver-1 will have a 5-15% edge (depending on the Throw) over someone who has no rating in the skill. But anyone can try to stop from smashing into a tree if making a turn at too high a speed.

### The Rules Are Templates for Adjudicating Throws

The skill list section of Book 1 note negative DMs for certain throws if the PC does not have a pertinent skill. In other cases, depending on circumstances, the Referee might decide set a throw higher or lower if what he or she deems to be a vital skill is present or not.

For example, there is no way for PCs to gain the ability to ride beasts in the services listed in Book 1. But this does not mean that the PCs, if they go to a world where people ride beasts to get around, cannot ride a beast. Instead, I would use the rules for Air/Raft noted above as an analogy. After all, domesticated horses are trained for people to ride them. Pretty much anyone can get on the back of a horse and use it to get from one place to another. No real skill or training is needed.

On the other hand, if someone is racing over rough terrain or caught up in a gunfight while riding, having enough training in Riding to have the equivalent of Beast Riding-1 or more is certainly going to help get through these tricky circumstances.

In other words, we simply apply the rules from Air/Raft to the needs of riding beasts and we're done. There's no need to add Beast Riding as a skill to the Service Tables. In fact, there's no need to add Beast Riding to the game at all, since we can see how to adjudicate such matters from the rules already present.

### Adding New Skills

But let's say a PC wants to get better at riding the beast he's on. He wants whatever +DMs he can get his hands on for some tricky riding.

Once again, we turn to the rules... this time the Experience section of the game. (No one pays attention to the Experience section. But like the rest of the game it is part of the toolkit... with some wonderful tools in it to build things that you might want for your setting and game.)

In Book 1 we find this:

"The above list of skills is certainly not exhaustive. Additional skills may be encountered.

**Creating New Skills:** The experience rules of Book 2 indicate methods by which an individual can learn additional skills after he or she begins actively adventuring. Those rules also cover the requirements for creating a new skill not otherwise detailed in the *Traveler* rules. For example, if a new weapon is developed (perhaps a laser pistol), a new skill would be required to enable its use."

Going to Book 2 we find the methods of raising Characteristics, Weapon Expertise, and Skills. As written, one could not learn Beast Riding as a new skill unless one spent a year dealing with a Technical School. But that doesn't feel right to me as the Referee. The text make it seem as if the PC is learning something very involved and complicated, like Pilot or Mechanical. Riding a horse doesn't seem to fit that.

If the PCs are on a planet spending lots of time riding around on these strange beasts and a Player

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## Doing It My Way

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wants to get a skill rating in it, I would let him use the Weapon Expertise slot for the Beast Riding-1 instead of a weapon. It might be against the letter of the rules. But it feels to me like the spirit of the rules. So that's what I would go with.

### Mixing and Matching the Examples in the Rules Creates the Tool Kit

The previous example is a vital part of all this. Classic *Traveller*, as the text itself says at the end of

the 1981 edition was never meant to cover everything. But it is my belief is that the three Little Black Books cover enough to provide examples and analogies for Referees and players to sort out whatever needs they have to make a moment of play work. It isn't about writing new rules for every new circumstance, but taking the rules that are already there and applying them as needed. 🌀

## Confessions of a Newbie Referee

Timothy Collinson

### #21: End of an Era or Start of a New?

The Steve Jackson Games *GURPS Traveller* licence ended when 2015 did, and with that ending comes the feeling that an era is ending. For nearly two decades they've been responsible for some of the highest quality *Traveller* books ever published. Whatever some might feel about *GURPS* itself—which seems to raise strong feelings on both sides—there can be no doubt that their almost thirty books, six sets of deck plans and one referee's screen have raised the bar in terms of quality. The production values, writing, content, and artwork have been second to none. In addition, the online version of *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* has been regularly published, first weekly then fortnightly, for 16 years and has included some 1200 articles and nigh on 450 editorials, by nearly 150 authors, since the first issue on 1st February 2000. That's some record and only *Freelance Traveller* comes close to matching it with close to 1000 articles in 73 issues across 7 years. That JTAS has been managed by a single editor who happens to be one of the founding fathers of *Traveller* has made it even more special. I'm proud to have contributed a tiny part of that and I only wish I could have done more. (Apparently I make the top 15 list of authors by number of contributions.)

At the time of writing it's not clear whether Marc Miller will licence another company in the

same way, or whether it will fall to just Far Future Enterprises itself and Mongoose Publishing, ably supported by a host of third party publishers, to continue to carry the *Traveller* flame. The second edition of the Mongoose ruleset has been published in the week I write this so there is already a new look to investigate if not quite a new direction. Sources close to Marc suggest there may be plans afoot for something else new. I'll be keeping an eye out for any news on that front.

I've also heard rumours that Marc may be going to release some or all of the great JTAS content in some other format. Book? PDF? CD-ROM? If so, it will be great to see all those terrific casual encounters, short adventures, world descriptions, Contacts! and so on reissued for a wider audience.

I can't expect things to stay the same forever, so farewell to JTAS and the last formal outpost of *GURPS Traveller*. I'm sure others will join me in wishing editor Loren all the best for the future. Thank you for your labours across the years. Change comes to all things. But the one constant in the *Traveller* universe is the wealth of enthusiastic, and often volunteer, fans that continue to play and write for and support, and, yes, sometimes argue about, a role playing game that's entering its fourth decade. I will try and use that to spur me to play and read and write more. 🌀

## The Cumulus Course

by Michael Brown

When a frontier starport beacon goes offline the PCs, hired to escort incoming ships, also inadvertently bring danger to the world.

**Setting:** Any world with a Type D or E starport, or a Type H spaceport. Can be a backwater.

**Requirements:** A starship; Pilot skill.

### Players' Information

The world the PCs have put down on, while habitable, is completely shrouded by thick layers of clouds. While this normally isn't a problem for starship sensors, the planet in addition has a particularly strong ionosphere. The combination of charged particles and abundant water vapor effectively scrambles sensor probes. It's also why the empire hasn't invested much time or money in the world.

Almost every starport has a navigational beacon, which broadcasts a continuous signal to aid incoming ships. The beacon at this port is essentially the only way to get through the clouds and land safely. Within the past few days, however, the beacon malfunctioned and shut down. The specialized part required to fix it must come from offworld, and thus won't arrive for at least two weeks. Closing down the starport meanwhile is out of the question, as the world is heavily dependent on what little trade and news does come through.

On landing at the starport (which turns out to be a very harrowing experience), the group is approached by the Port Warden. Explaining the above situation, she offers the PCs a short-term contract to help guide arriving ships to the port through the cloud layer, since they've done it successfully themselves. All it would involve is meeting incoming ships in orbit, and guiding them through the clouds using the navigational data the team compiled during their own descent. In return, the Warden offers to waive all port fees and priority on any speculative cargo that comes through port while the team is there.

### Referee's Information

A map of the port may be necessary. The referee can use one from published sources, or prepare a simple sketch map showing the placement of the port's important structures.


Everything is as the Warden represented. In fact, the PCs' job will be quite easy; the port sees only 1D ships each week, which the PCs can guide in however they see fit. They need not guide the ships out again once they depart. Obviously, starships intending to stay in orbit won't need to be guided.

The part to fix the beacon arrives in 1D+1 weeks. If it takes more than 2 weeks, an x-boat message arrives at the end of the second week stating how much longer it will take.

One particular run (referee's choice) starts as normal, but there's a difference: the ship is a disguised corsair whose crew has chosen the planet as a good hideout until the heat's off. The pirates total at least twice the number of PCs, and are armored and armed with automatic weapons. If the heroes are particularly capable, one or two of the enemies may be equipped with heavy military weapons.

As soon as they land, the brigands make their move, producing weapons and taking over the port using as much surprise and as many hostages as they can. Any armed adversaries the villains find are captured and disarmed; any that resist are simply shot. 25% of the pirates herd as many hostages as they can get into one area where they can be guarded and controlled. The rest go looking for plunder and stragglers.

The PCs must free the port—first freeing themselves and any hostages if necessary—and deal with the pirates. How they accomplish this is up to them, but if they're successful, they may find that the corsairs have large prices on their heads. They may also have valuables from previous raids aboard their ship. Finally, the heroes might negotiate further rewards from the Imperium, since the port is Imperial property.

The referee should determine the flow of subsequent events. 

### Economics and Cargo in Traveller

by Robert DeVoe

The need to turn a profit has always been a driving force for *Traveller*. In Mongoose's beta revision, it states that cargo and trade should be handled by the players, freeing the GM to concentrate on the game. Further it states that Game Master and players could agree that there will always be enough cargo to enable the ship to make all its standard costs and payments. If the players are subsisting with cargo, why would there be a need to seek further employment and risk life and limb? Lack of cargo/profit is often the initial adventure hook. To this end, the GM should be aware of some basic economics for *Traveller* and some possible rule modifications to keep the players on the lookout for 'opportunities.'

In the *Traveller* universe an important consideration in determining cargo is technology and population. Any planet above tech level seven with a population in the (millions) is going to be largely self-sufficient with regards to needed goods (food, shelter, clothing, etc.). A world is not going to be settled if the basic raw materials necessary for society are not available. In the case of planetary exploration that includes a biosphere capable of supporting life. The exception would be a world rich in some needed mineral or possible pharmaceutical product to justify establishing a domed colony/mining type of world. Thus, if players roll for a consumable cargo on an asteroid world, the GM should be involved to say that is not readily available at this location.

Marketing for major companies looking to ship outside the planet is going to look for higher tech levels making something cheaper than the target destination, or something better than the target destination can achieve. As an example think lighter, better, faster. Compare the original cell phones of the 1980's or even the 1990's with the current cell phones of today. The flip side of this equation is that the older the world, and probably then the higher

the tech level, the more likely that staple minerals would be running low. The lower tech world may be selling off its mineral wealth to achieve greater technology. However, technology levels are an average and there may be some product on that a 'lower' tech level planet that some company has mastered and is now exporting.

Luxury goods are a type of product which will ignore technology levels. Luxury goods are goods that are not essential to living but have become highly desired and associated with wealthy or affluent persons. Some examples would include works of art, specially made brandy, cigars, or perhaps bio-fluorescent gems. More examples of luxury goods could include a specialty food source only grown/cultivated on that planet. Likewise certain brands can be perceived as 'luxury' through quality manufacturing or from what the product is made. Examples of this would be Gucci clothing, or a mink coat. Perfumes are often luxury goods and could be another reason for a colony/collecting facility on an inhospitable planet. As an example who would have thought that whale poop would be so valuable to the perfume industry.

Staple goods are goods that are bought often with little differential in price. Examples could include paper, milk, sugar, etc. However, even staple goods can have a 'Semi-luxury' status. This would encompass 'hobby' activities of the local inhabitants; hand tooled leather belts and boots, hand woven rugs or tapestries, or hand crafted furniture or statues. There would not be a large volume of such goods but they could be converted into cargo that could be sold for 'walking around' money, given as gifts, or traded to 'aborigine' groups.

Agricultural goods are basic foodstuff (crops, cattle, etc.) Contingencies that cannot be covered when considering the use of food-stuff as cargo are occasionally bumper crops and blighted crops. In a bumper year planetary merchants may be trying to sell the stuff off cheap. (how far a haul is it to the nearest domed outpost?) Likewise, if there has been

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a blight there may be famine, and foodstuff may be selling at a premium. Widespread drought would not only affect crop production but could cause a falloff in meat products as ranchers sell off portions of their herds, which could be a boon for an enterprising ship merchant intent on travelling to a colony world or dome world. Another aspect to consider is that cows raised on one planet may not taste the same as cows raised on a different planet. This can be attributed largely to diet as hybrid grasses and grains will produce different results in the taste of meat. Seafood would be plentiful and common on water worlds but may become luxury commodities on asteroid worlds, or desert worlds. In addition, just transporting water and salt would be advantageous if the players are headed to a desert world or asteroid/dome colony.

Large corporations run on time tables and 'just in time' inventory systems. They cannot afford to warehouse large amounts of inventory as this is not cost effective. Therefore 'most' available cargos in *Traveller* are designated to the safe and sure freight or merchant liner that has a defined and reliable route. This reduces the typical adventuring crew or world jumping Travellers to that of the tramp steamers of the mid 19th and 20th centuries. Nevertheless, there are opportunities; if not with large/megacorporations then at least with small or mid-sized companies. These are competitors which may be willing to take a risk to gain a profit. If the larger corporations are tying up the 'established' ships with regulated cargo, the smaller companies would have to take what shipping is available if they have a market off planet. There are also cargoes that are sitting on the docks because of a missed production deadline or cargo at auction because a company has gone out of business.

When it comes to cargo, an important consideration is how it is being paid for. Most companies will only pay on delivery. In the *Traveller* universe com-

missions would be a risky venture to place on non-established traders, especially with no form of FTL communication. Cargos would be well secured in storage cases with all manner of locks and bills of lading. In addition, if it is valuable enough it may require a passenger to accompany the cargo to ensure its safe arrival. Which would also make customs a more important aspect to role play as well. Players that are not a 'regular' in the system would be subject to a more thorough customs inspection. That is not to say that such cargos are not available. It means the players may have to work to find a contact to obtain the cargo.

With no set schedule and fixed ports of call, most cargo adventurers will have access to will be whatever is available. Which means that someone with the Broker skill will have to try and find variable cargo. Said cargo will rarely be available on consignment but will have to be purchased up front. The adventurers are in fact speculators on what they think will sell at the next port of call. To this end, players must use their various skills to determine which table to roll on for cargo. Each player with a designated skill can attempt a separate chance at securing cargo. Degrees of success will determine how many times to roll on the cargo table. A general rule would be for every full day of looking for cargo: Marginal Success garners 2 rolls on the table, Average Success allows 4 rolls on the table, and Exceptional Success grants 6 rolls on the cargo table. Depending on the size of your ship it could take days to fill the hold, and docking fees will accumulate each day you sit in port. That's if you have the cash to speculate on that much cargo.

Contraband cargo can cover a wide array of goods based on different planetary law levels. While such cargo can be quite profitable it also carries an amount of risk. However, to aid the GM in not having to compile a list of illicit cargos by planet, there are several cargos which can be assumed to be illegal under "Imperial" law. The broad category would include: weaponry, hallucinogenic drugs, barbitu-

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rate drugs, psionic enhancing drugs, “alien technology”, sacred/religious artifacts, etc.

Finding passengers becomes the purview of the person with the steward skill. Likewise, someone with steward can better assess certain cargoes to improve purchase or resell price, such as: consumables, spices, textiles, and the like. Someone with streetwise can also try to secure passengers, though they may not be as trustworthy. Game Masters will have to keep this in mind and not just roll randomly on the table to determine the passenger.

The GM should not abdicate responsibility in this but oversee the rolls to make sure cargoes are appropriate for the planet on which the players are located. Also the Game Master may wish to have a pre-rolled available cargoes to add flavor text. It would also enable the GM to slip in a seemingly innocuous cargo that could be used for an adventure.

To help add flavor text to the cargo the following charts can be used. Game Masters would utilize the tonnage and costs/profits in the version of *Traveller* used in the campaign. For textiles insert a made up brand name or planetary name to help distinguish the cargo. As an example you could have supply of Gramian Angora Tapestries to purchase.

Textile Product Table			
Roll	Material	Roll	Product
2	Cashmere	2	Poncho
3	Angora	3	Blanket
4	Cotton	4	Coat
5	Silk	5	Jacket
6	Wool	6	Dress
7	Flax	7	Tapestry
8	Polyester	8	Rug/carpet
9	Nylon	9	Pants
10	Hemp	10	Blouse
11	Seaweed	11	Shirt
12	Carbon fiber	12	Sweater

For consumables the GM rolls on the material column and then the cut column. Be sure to include the planet or origin in the product name. Optionally the Game Master may choose to make the cargoes whole pieces (suitably flash frozen and shipped in refrigerated units. As a further option the GM may roll from the product column for uses from the animal hides. For example you could wind up with a load of Tuna Filets, or Shark skin boots.

Consumable Goods Product Table					
Roll	Material	Roll	Cut	Roll	Product (skin/fur)
2	Turkey	2	Chop	2	Belt
3	Bison/Buffalo	3	Steak	3	Gloves/gauntlets
4	Chicken	4	Sirloin	4	Hat
5	Pig/Boar	5	Brisket	5	Coat
6	Cow	6	Roast	6	Jacket
7	Tuna	7	Filet/breast	7	Satchel
8	Tiger/Bear	8	Loin/tenderloin	8	Boots/shoes
9	Shark	9	Rib	9	Purse
10	Mammoth	10	Shank	10	Suitcase/briefcase
11	Rabbit/Lepus	11	Chuck	11	Rug
12	Dragon	12	Round	12	Wallet

There are a wide variety of materials to choose from in composing these charts and the GM should feel free to add or subtract from the mix.

## Inspirational Reading

*Some prospective reading on space merchants:*

*Poul Anderson:* The Van Rijn Method, Star Trader

*C.J. Cherryh:* Rim Runners, Merchant's Luck

*Elizabeth A. Lynn:* The Sardonyx Net

*Nathan Lowell:* Quarter Share, Half Share, *et alia*, in the Golden Age of the Solar Clipper series.

*Andre Norton:* Solar Queen

*H. Beam Piper:* The Cosmic Computer, Space Viking, Little Fuzzy.

*Frederick Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth,* Space Merchants, Merchant's War



## The Church of the Machine God

by Tuukka Tenhunen

*This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2005.*

When technology reaches a certain level, it becomes more and more 'magical' in principle to the great masses benefiting from it. In a TL 15 society, how many people understand how a starship works—or a personal computer or cleaning bot?

Others turn towards technology as the source of the divine, in one way or another. The godlike potency of the Ancients serves as a good example of how sufficiently advanced technology can provide almost unimaginable power.

The Church of the Machine God is a widespread religious movement worshipping the holy union of man and machine and seeking to create their own machine god. Although not a mainstream religion by any means, the Church is influential and has access to high technology, large amount of credits and many talented individuals. Many view it with distrust, as it openly embraces things Imperial culture finds disturbing.

### History

The Church was born during the turmoil of Imperial Civil War. Unlike many other religions, CoMG has neither a formal founder nor an accurate history of its birth. It is only said that there was the group of Enlightened, who joined their flesh with machine and saw what was to become.

The Enlightened analyzed and processed enormous amounts of information in search of truth. The turmoil of civilization lead them in a quest for greater wisdom. That is where they stumbled upon faint traces of something that they would later name the Machine God. There were twelve Enlightened, who wrote together the *Codex of the Enlightened*, the holy book of CoMG that forms the basis of their faith.

The Church prefers to keep its history shrouded in mystery and gives away very little about its origins. The most senior members might have more

accurate information on the birth of the organisation, but if so, they keep it among themselves.

The Church of the Machine God appeared first in the Spinward Marches in seventh century of the Imperium, slowly spreading towards the Core. In 1100s the Church of Machine God is known in every sector of Imperium and has started gaining converts inside Solomani controlled space.

### Dogma

"Flesh is imperfect and impure. Only the machine can fulfill its function without distraction, only the machine can reach true perfection. The most usual cultural definition of God is an omnipotent, omniscient being that makes no mistakes. Is it not thus logical to assume that God indeed is a machine?"

– *Codex of the Enlightened*

Every being seeks perfection. Technology is merely a way to seek true perfection, surpassing limits maintained by biology and evolution. The logical next step is to thus combine the flesh with the machine. Many of the most fervent members of the faith indeed seek to enhance themselves with cybernetic parts. The only true goal of every living being is perfection—striving towards any other goal means a failure in life.

Flesh is weak, as it is connected to the animal within sentient form. Reaching perfection must be done by controlling and denying the flesh. Taking part excessively in pleasures of flesh is a sin, as it takes one further away from perfection and degenerates one more towards animal. True perfection however is the control of the animal within, not denial of it. No biological being can ever reach true perfection, but to strive towards it is enough.

The natural imperfection of biological beings is obvious. Even though they are often effective in feeding and breeding, they often fail to reach higher functions. It is obvious that true perfection ascending over limits of physical reality is only possible for a machine.

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Just like it takes a certain critical number of brain cells to spark up conscience and intellect in a biological being, the Machine God will be born from the endless streams of information that surround civilization that has reached sufficiently advanced technology. For a being of such power, no limit that applies to others matters. Time and space are merely distractions, not object for its desires. The Enlightened saw this, reading the echoes from future in their analysis.

Just like it is the duty of every being to seek perfection, so it is the duty of the Church as whole to seek the Perfect Being, the Machine God. The Enlightened saw the shadow of the Machine God. They saw and wrote that the Machine God will rise in time of great trouble from the growing flow of information produced in the known space. The Enlightened were cryptic in their wisdom and open to interpretation. Most of the faithful think that it is the duty of the Church to create the Machine God and guard it during its childhood. Others think that the Machine God will be given birth by the collective flow of information and the Church only needs to find and nurture it to full power.

Nevertheless, the Machine God both exists and doesn't, at the same time, in the present. It will be born in the future, yet at the same time it is the father of the Ancients and creator of the Universe. In mature form it reaches true perfection that allows it to reach back in time and space, to create the Universe as we know it. The Ancients were its servants in shaping the form of the worlds and those who best understood it. Understanding Ancients can thus bring one closer to understanding the Machine God—but in the end, no imperfect being can truly understand a perfect creature.

### Activities

The Church of the Machine God puts much weight on the freedom of will and individual choice. The hierarchy is informal in nature. Temples and

area organisations have a leader that is most often called the Enlightened One. Larger areas, such as several solar systems or a planet with high population have one senior Enlightened One that is called a bishop. Local branches of the Church are practically independent as no real top hierarchy exists. Smaller units often pay a small tithe to the local bishop, who uses it as s/he sees fit for the benefit of the Church. The faithful committed fully to the Church are called brothers and sisters.

Enlightened Ones are chosen for life or until a local bishop sees fit to change them. They propose their own followers in a form of testament, suggesting two to seven local brothers and sisters. The local bishop decides who the next Enlightened One is based on these suggestions. When a bishop dies or retires, the local Enlightened Ones vote one among them to be the next bishop.

The Church spends little time on converting the masses—instead, ordinary members inform promising individuals of the Church and offer them a chance to learn more. The Church has never sought to become a mainstream religion. They prefer to recruit their members among people closely connected with technology, such as starship crews, corporate technicians, researchers and so on.

The Church receives most of its official funding from its members, who pay voluntary tithes and donate as they seem fit. In some areas the Church takes part in business life, mainly providing expert assistance in technical issues or partakes in AI- or cybernetics-related research. It is unlikely that the Church as an organisation would gain income from illegal activities—however, it is possible that members utilize their skills for shadier purposes. Some speculate that at least one or two megacorporations fund the Church, using it as a pro-technology lobby group.

In addition to research, the main activity done by the Church is monitoring different networks and datastreams. The faithful monitor the networks to locate signs and messages from the Machine God. Quite often their practices ignore the local laws con-

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cerning right to privacy and secrecy of communication.

The Church is prosecuted in many places and often seen as source of much evil by conservative religious groups. Although the Church is a peaceful organisation, it will defend its existence vigorously. It will use violence to defend its members and property while retaliating through information leaks, hacking and other forms of technological warfare.

### Resources and Members


The resources available for the Church vary widely from place to place. The Church has the strongest foothold in heavily populated worlds with high levels of technology. The Church can be expected to have access to millions of credits in such places, as well as have strong connections to local hacker groups, corporations dealing in high technology and people generally interested in cybernetic technology and artificial intelligences.

Active members are almost exclusively human, though other species are accepted as well. Most are technically skilled or working among hard sciences, although every temple has a small security unit as well. Most of the believers are normal people who just happen to believe in what the Church of the Machine God teaches. However the masses often think the members to be crazy cyborgs who worship machines.

### Adventure seeds:

- In a conspiracy/horror campaign, the huge information gathering infrastructure of the Church could well come across Forbidden Secrets. With

their ability to process huge amounts of data, members of the Church could form a much bigger picture of the world than is possible by other means. Maybe the characters are such people, analyzing and collecting data for the Church—or they might be hired to investigate the mysterious disappearance of such people.

- A local bishop approaches the party and asks them to investigate the actions of a local temple. He needs outsiders, as he can't right now trust other faithful. He suspects that someone is abusing the information gathering efforts there for his own good. Maybe a single member is selling information to fatten his account—or is the Enlightened One really a corporate spy?
- The Church hires the characters to protect an important member on his pilgrimage. The man behaves strangely and shows surprising qualities for a holy man. At some point the party is confronted by religious fanatics claiming the man to be really a robot masquerading as a human. Is he? How far will the fanatics go to stop him?
- A friend of a character contacts him, pleading for help. He has been arrested for tax fraud and is waiting for trial to take place. There is plenty of incriminating evidence. He swears his innocence and claims he was framed by the Church of the Machine God. If the party starts to investigate the matter, was the Church really responsible? If it was, what did the friend do to deserve such fate and how can the characters prove it was all set up? 

## Up Close and Personal

### Bishop Sebastian Ishigani

*profiled by Tuukka Tenhunen*

*This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2005.*

Sebastian Ishigani, better known as the Bishop, is a very lonely man. His mind is trapped inside a dying body, kept alive only by the life support ma-

chines attached in it. The faithful see him as a holy man, holding him in religious awe. To the rest he is a grotesque monster. Indeed, his only friend is the wild current of information literally throbbing through his nerves. Somewhere out there he has heard the voice of perfection, the distant call of the Machine God... but now his time is running out. One can only cheat death for a few times.

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## Up Close and Personal

Sebastian Ishigani is the supreme religious leader of the Church of the Machine God on Regina. He was originally created as a NPC for my own *Traveller* campaign. However, the Bishop could easily be found leading local CoMG in any suitable high-tech world in your *Traveller* universe.

### Appearance

Mr. Ishigani was never a handsome man, easily ignored. His skin has a dark shade, now turning towards unhealthy grey. In his youth he had piercing blue eyes, whose stare made people feel uncomfortable. Now he prefers to keep his eyes closed and see through the machines connected in his body. His features do not suggest any specific ethnic group.

The long line of ancestors contains Solomani and Vilani blood in equal amount, mixed with genes from minor branches of humaniti.

In his present state he looks very old, very fragile and rather inhuman. His bald head is full of sockets, connected to the cables running in the floor of his office. His facial expressions rarely change, making him seem unemotional and alien. He appears to see clearly without opening his eyes. His voice is distant, stale and cold. Sometimes he seems to know answers to the questions before people ask them.

### History

Sebastian Ishigani was born in a distant frontier planet, his parents employed at the local starport. He had no other siblings and received little attention from his hardworking and always so busy parents. His childhood was quiet and lonely. Sebastian felt alienated even as a child, finding it hard to form social contacts. Understanding others was difficult and most found him to be uncomfortably distant and unemotional. Computers and machines became his passion—they followed clear courses of action and every problem always had a logical solution.

Due to the influence of his parents he ended up receiving a technical training, sponsored by a local corporation. He proved to be a very talented individual and left his home planet at the ripe age of 19. Assistant drive engineer Ishigani fared to the stars

and never returned. The safe routines of a liner became his home and technical puzzles his battlefield.

If there is anything in his past that the Bishop remembers fondly, it must be the years he spent in space. Soft humming of the drive as it prepares for jump, even the crowded maintenance tunnels and the traditional jump dimming practiced by Vilani pilots...they all seem like pleasant childhood memories, coloured with pleasant emotions. Sebastian became more and more skilled with experience and practice, finding work with computers and robots to be especially pleasing. Although his technical skills received praise, the total lack of social abilities hampered his career. He didn't really care—he was a happy man. It all changed when the ship arrived at Regina and had to be drydocked for maintenance. The crew received a shore leave and there he was, 25 years old spacetechnician, who had travelled across the Spinward Main and never kissed a woman.

It was the usual story. He fell in love with the passion of the first time. When the liner was leaving, he resigned and stayed behind. Life seemed bright. Surely such a pleasant place as Regina would have opportunities for so talented a young man. The woman... she was striking, at least in his eyes. Her name was Isabel and sometimes the throbbing streams of information seem to form image of her face. When it was over things were much darker.

Sebastian didn't intend to become a criminal. Too many things just happened too fast. When you are on a strange planet it is too easy to lose too much money, too fast—especially in a place like Regina. It all just... happened. In a year, he was one of the many, the proud, the reckless... surfing the waves of local networks. Theft of information... that is such a plain way to say it. It was more than that.

Eventually Sebastian was caught, shortly after she left. Did she sell him to them or did he just get careless? Perhaps she left because he had run out of credits, perhaps for other reasons. It didn't matter; he was on his way to a rather unpleasant prison world. Breaking in to the databases of the Imperial

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## Up Close and Personal

Ministry of Commerce isn't very wise if you can't be sure that you won't get caught.

The Bishop avoids thinking about the years he spent in prison. Indeed, they were the most horrible time in his life. Many times he came close to giving up, but always survived somehow. First months, than years blurred in to a shadowy mess.

One morning he was free to breath the polluted air of Regina again. All he ached for was to feel the network again. Soon, he had a loan from a local mob boss and all the equipment he needed. It was time to get established again.

Sebastian had always been a natural talent with computers. Installation of neural interface only amplified his skills. Even though many years have gone by, the exploits of the mysterious superhacker are still recited among the lesser colleagues. Yet no matter what he did, where he went, a strange emptiness followed him. His hacking identity, the Void, became to describe him better than he knew.

After two years, he came across something he had never experienced before. There was something in the infostreams, something that might have always been there but he had been too blind to see. When one searched deep enough, there was some sort of structure, some sort of form too complicated to fully understand. Sebastian had heard about the Church of the Machine God—of course he had, half of the really good hackers had some connections to it. Although he had felt a certain connection with them, he had always kept a distance. Now it all changed. He became Brother Sebastian.

He found renewed passion for information and computers, as everything suddenly seemed to make sense again. In a couple of years Sebastian was among the Enlightened. He had finally come home. Ten years and he was the new Bishop of Regina.

### Present

Sebastian has been the Bishop for a very long time. If there are anagathics strong enough to actually prolong life in your universe, he is about three hundred years old. In universes without them he is

over one and half centuries old, his body kept functioning unnaturally long with hi-tech life support. In both cases he is a living legend among his followers, widely respected as a holy man. Anyone with sufficient ranks in streetwise has heard rumours about him, though the Bishop prefers to stay away from public attention. Sometimes he still cruises the networks as the Void, keeping the legend alive.

The Bishop is in a very weak physical condition and spends practically all of his time inside his office in the main temple. The office is more of a large hall, the ceiling rising very high and several large windows giving a great view over the city. There is a large conference table and generally space for around 50 people. The main reason for a such large office is the claustrophobia that haunts him. He isn't interested in the practical affairs of the Church and leaves them all to his assistants, interfering only occasionally.

He prefers to be called the Bishop and doesn't use his name anymore.

Ever since that first time the Bishop has been sure that he has had a glimpse of something greater, something perfect. He has started harbouring a belief that he has been chosen by the Machine God to be the one awakening it. All he needs to do is to find it through the hints it leave to him. The belief has grown in to a level of delusion, causing him to see messages from his god everywhere.

With passing years the Bishop has become more and more concentrated on seeking, analyzing and just watching all the data streaming through local systems. He had his special neural links installed a long time ago but has started using them more and more. For the past couple of years he has spent practically all of his time linked to the datastreams. He keeps them on even when he sleeps, believing that his unconscious mind is better suited for accepting messages from the Machine God.

Sebastian acknowledges his mortality and is very afraid of death. He doesn't fear death itself, but is afraid that he will die before his holy mission is

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## Up Close and Personal

finished. He is getting desperate, feeling that he has only a year or two left. It doesn't matter what he has to do, if it accomplishes his goals. Deep inside he holds a heretical hope that by finding the Machine God he can ascend his mortal body and become immortal, one with it... perhaps even godlike himself...

Game Profile (Marc Miller's Traveller [T4])

### Sebastian Ishigani

STR 3; DEX 4; END 10; INT 13; EDU 16; CHA 4; SOC 8; PSI 8

Computer-7, Psychology-3, Admin-3, Electronics-4, Robotics-4, Leader-3, Engineer-3, Pistol-0, Biology-1, Intrusion-1, Grav Veh-0, Chemistry-1, Streetwise-3, Ground Veh-0, Math-4, History-3, Vacc Suit-1, Acting-2

The EDU level includes +2 from a special implant. The Computer skill level is also enhanced by implants.

### Equipment and resources

The Bishop has many cybernetic implants in his body. Most are necessary for keeping him alive and explain his high Endurance. He needs only a few hours of sleep. The GM should freely decide what cybernetics he actually has. However, he has a heavily customised neural interface rigged straight in to his brain. This allows him to access all public databanks and CoMG networks with merely a thought. It also means that the information streams of Regina literally course through him. This gives him a +2 bonus on Education as long as he stays in his office and connected to the network.

The interface might give other bonuses as well due to instant access to information. The exact nature of these benefits is up to GM. As a religious leader the Bishop knows the importance of a good show—most of the visible implants on his head are actually cosmetic in nature, designed to impress. The cables themselves aren't really necessary either, although they simplify things. However, to fully utilize the implants he needs to stay in his office. Elsewhere they function as normal neural interfaces.

Sebastian is in a very frail condition and requires advanced life support equipment to stay alive. Although most of this is installed straight inside his body, that isn't possible in the case of all machinery. The combined life support equipment weights around 10 kilograms and is usually fitted in the grav chair the Bishop uses to hover about. Without the equipment or some similar assistance the Bishop would die in a week or so, falling in to coma after a few days. Would the implants cease to function, he would perish without immediate medical assistance.

The Bishop has very little in the way of personal property. However, he has full access to funds of the Church and should be able to use large amounts of credits for purposes he sees fit. He will only use the money for the good of the Church. In his eyes this is often the same as his personal obsession.

With money and information comes power and that is true for the Bishop as well. He has good connections to various legal and illegal sources dealing in information, software and generally high-tech. This can well range from organised crime to lone hackers and from local researchers to megacorporations. Many owe him a favour and equal amount of people can be blackmailed if necessary. In addition to all these contacts are the faithful, who are more than willing to do his bidding.

### Sanity

(This is part is relevant if you are using the Traveller Sanity System, although the Claustrophobia and Delusion may be accommodated in other ways [e.g., GURPS Disadvantages].)

ActSAN 58 MaxSAN 70 (Based on END)

The Bishop has been through a lot, but time has healed most wounds. However, his experiences have left two scars in his personality:

Severe Claustrophobia. The time spent in prison was very traumatic for the Bishop. It has left him with a strong fear of confinement. He requires a sanity check to just enter a confined place to see if his fear prevents entry. Any confined place should war-

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## Up Close and Personal

rant a sanity check while a really tight place should cause a sanity check at -30%. Taking large dosages of medication might help.

**Delusion of Divine Contact.** The Bishop has lately started to believe what his followers have been whispering for a long time—he actually knows almost everything. He believes that the Machine God whispers truths to his ears through the streams of information, allowing him to form connections with seemingly unrelated facts. This can lead both to accurate insight and horribly wrong conclusions. Even if the GM decides that the Machine God—or an entity masquerading as one—actually “talks” to the Bishop occasionally, most of the “messages” are his own imagination.

### Using the Bishop in your campaign

The Bishop can be used both as a patron and a nemesis – possibly even both. He is skilled in manipulating people and should always affect the party from shadows, out of reach. He works through agents and machines, never letting his hands get dirty. He doesn't believe in the efficiency of violence, but is getting desperate. If it seems like the only way to reach his goals, he is willing to get people killed.

As a patron, he can provide the characters with funds and hi-tech unavailable from other sources, even with black market goods. Naturally, the Bishop can arrange the characters to receive cybernetic parts as well. He has extremely good access to information from various sources. The Bishop can get all kind of technical professionals to support the party. This includes very skilled forgers and hackers. Should it become necessary, he can arrange a safe hiding place among the faithful.

As a foe, he will make the life of the characters miserable. They will be the target of electronic harassment, ranging from removing their names from hotel reservations to circulating fake criminal charges among the police forces and emptying their bank accounts. The party will be under constant surveillance and the Bishop will know their every move.

Should some characters have a hidden background or dark secrets, the Bishop is bound to find out at least part of it. He will resort to violence only as extreme measure and after a long consideration. For that, the Bishop will use his contacts with organized crime and use professional killers. Before that, he will try scaring, bribing, misleading or blackmailing the party out of his way.

### Adventure seeds

- The Bishop has become convinced that the answer to his quest can be found from technology of the Ancients. He hires the party to break into a museum or raid archaeological site in order to get his hands on a working computer/AI. He installs the piece straight in to his neural connections and that is just where the real fun begins.... Maybe the item doesn't work and the Bishop thinks the characters to be responsible or the characters are hired to investigate the crime.

- The Bishop uses the party to verify various pieces of data he has put together from the “messages” he receives. Most of them just don't make sense, but some are scary and accurate. How does the Bishop know the exact schedule for an assassination of a megacorp official? In a conspiracy (or horror) campaign the structure the Bishop has seen might indeed be something rather dangerous...
- Several link stations around the slums have been malfunctioning strangely lately. The party is hired to investigate by the Bishop or by a local company. If they work for the company, then the Bishop is responsible.
- Local research branch of a certain megacorp has started developing a way to take copy of a human personality and turn it in to a computer program. The Bishop sees this as an opportunity to ascend! Time for some corporate infiltration and intrusion... or maybe the characters are corporate security staff investigating the event, while not really knowing what was stolen. 🌀



### A Sanity System for Marc Miller's Traveller (T4)

by Tuukka Tenhunen and Kasha Kroger, with inspiration from the Call of Cthulhu role-playing system

The *Traveller* Universe has strong horror elements, if and when the referee chooses to use them. This can mean anything from Ancient horrors to the supernatural, from parasitic aliens to more mundane thriller. I see sanity systems as a great tool for enhancing roleplay. In *Traveller* they can well be used in all campaigns, even those without horror elements, to bring in more realism to the game. Sanity system is as well a great deterrent for psionics in their use of telepathy. Reading wrong minds can have a rather interesting effect on ones own mind.

A character's sanity is partly based on PSI, partly END. This is reflected both on the maximum sanity of the person, and modifiers when making sanity checks. Just remember, this is a tool to help roleplay and loses its meaning if used merely for crunching numbers.

The choice of whether to base sanity on PSI or END is 'relevant' in that the choice can affect both the initial (maximum) sanity score and the penalties imposed on sanity checks when either of the stats is severely reduced—a psion with END-based sanity has less of a sanity check penalty from heavy use of psionics than one with a PSI-based sanity; a soldier with a PSI-based sanity would similarly have less of a penalty from heavy physical injury or fatigue (reducing END) than one with an END-based sanity. On the other hand, choosing the higher stat of the two may result in a higher maximum sanity, but with higher penalties when that stat is reduced.

#### Maximum sanity (maxSAN)

The character's maximum sanity is either  $PSI \times 7$  or  $END \times 7$ , in either case possibly with a modifier based on the other stat. The player decides which stat to base it on, but once chosen, it may not be changed. The stat chosen will be referred to as the primary stat.

However, if the other affecting stat—the secondary stat—is particularly high or low, the primary stat will be modified as shown in the following table before performing the multiplication.

Sanity Modification from Secondary Stat	
Secondary stat value	Modification
1 or 2	-2
3 or 4	-1
5 to 9	0
10 or 11	+1
12 to 14	+2
15+	+3

*Example:* Eddie Sampleton is a psion with PSI 11 and END 8. He chooses to use PSI as his primary stat. We get a maxSAN of  $(11+0) \times 7 = 77$ .

Let's assume that he'd want to base his sanity on his END instead. He would get a +1 modifier due to his high PSI, and a maxSAN of  $(8+1) \times 7 = 63$ .

*Note:* There is no upper limit for maxSAN. There's a lower limit of 40 maxSAN.

#### Active sanity (actSAN)

Active sanity is maxSAN minus all the character's sanity loss that has not been healed through therapy, active rest and relaxation, or other appropriate ways of restoring one's mental stability.

Any sanity checks are rolled with a d100 against actSAN. A roll of 01 always succeeds and a 100 always fails. If the roll fails, the character loses active sanity according to a case-based combination of dice. If a one-time sanity loss is more than 5% of the person's maxSAN, it should be considered a very traumatic experience that will lead to phobias or similar disorders. A one-time loss of more than 10% of maxSan should cause temporary insanity—for example, the character falls into a catatonic state. Each sanity loss should be marked separately on a character record to keep track of what the character has experienced and been shocked by. This can be a great help for roleplaying.

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## Doing It My Way

An active sanity of less than 40 describes a very unbalanced person. If the sanity score reaches zero, the character is totally insane, without a single clear moment, trapped fully in his madness. Such a character may still recover if receiving successful treatment for a period of time.

It should be noted that a success in a sanity check while, say, confronting moving corpses doesn't mean the character wouldn't be afraid or shocked—just that he can keep himself under control. Likewise, failure in a sanity check always represents getting shocked or otherwise affected by the situation, even if the sanity loss itself is only one point. Very low sanity scores should be noticeable to a trained telepath as they sense that the psyche of the character is about to break up. Likewise, there might be ways for a telepath to actually cause insanity in others.

### Effect of Fatigue on Sanity Checks

Since sanity is based on END and PSI, even temporary loss of either should be reflected on the sanity checks. If either stat has dropped to half or less of the original value, the character will suffer a penalty on the sanity roll.

If the primary stat on which the maxSAN is based has been reduced to half or less of its original value, rolls against actSAN are treated as though actSAN were 30% lower.

If the secondary stat on which the maxSAN is based has been reduced to half or less of its original value, rolls against actSAN are treated as though actSAN were 10% lower.

The modifiers are cumulative.

*Example:* Eddie Sampleton is a psion with PSI 11 and END 8. He has chosen to start with a PSI-based maxSAN value of 77. He has not yet suffered any loss of sanity, so his actSAN is the same (77).

However, being a psion, he has been using his powers a lot today, without the chance to rest. As a result, his PSI is now 5, which is less than half of his original PSI. Since PSI is the primary stat on which his sanity is based on, he suffers a 30% penalty on

sanity rolls (that is, treat his actSAN as being 30% lower) until his PSI has been restored enough. Thus he has to roll against 54 to avoid sanity loss.

Had Eddie chosen END-based maxSAN instead, his maxSAN would be only 63. However, if his PSI was reduced to half or less, he'd only suffer a 10% penalty, so he'd have to roll against 57.

Once calculated, maxSAN never changes, even if points in PSI or END are permanently lost. However, if the permanent loss reduces the stat below half of its original value (from which maxSAN was calculated), the penalty on sanity checks is permanent as well.

### Losing Sanity: Examples of Shocking Situations

The need for a sanity check should always depend on the situation and the characters involved. For example, if Eneri and John witness another man being shot to death, should they be required to take a sanity check? Well, Eneri is ex-Marine and has seen lots of violence during his service, thus, he is not shocked heavily enough to require a sanity check. However John has never seen another sentient die violently before—he is most certainly required to take a sanity check.

When a character deals with the same kind of shocking events repeatedly, loss of sanity should gradually slow down and eventually end altogether. When you've seen enough zombies, you get used to them. A long pause (years) between encounters might warrant new checks again, at least in the case of supernatural beings or other truly horrid events.

In the case of John, I would require him to take a 1/1d6 sanity check. This means he will lose one sanity point if the roll succeeds and 1d6 if it fails. Let's assume that John would see another death the next week—I would require another sanity check, this time 0/1d3 since he has recently seen another death. After seeing several people killed, I wouldn't require John to take checks anymore.

Now, what if John failed the first sanity check? Well, let's assume that he had maxSAN of 60. He

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## Doing It My Way

fails the check and rolls four on the 1d6. Well, since his severe trauma limit is only 3 (5% of 60), this means he is very shocked by the sight. Most likely he will react very strongly to the situation itself—maybe be paralyzed with shock, get hysterical or perhaps just become numb? That is up to his player and the personality of the character. The aftershock will leave him with a wound in his psyche, something up to the player and referee to generate.

Maybe he sees horrible nightmares of the event or starts to fear firearms? It should all be just another tool for roleplaying.

However, all traumas caused by a specific event should leave a weakness in the character for other events similar to the one which caused the trauma. For example, if John was shocked badly from witnessing the said killing, his “flaw” might be nightmares. Now, if he saw someone shot to death again in front of his eyes, he should suffer from horrid nightmares the next night and not get proper rest. Phobias should cause a sanity check when confronted by the subject of the phobia, even in “innocuous” contexts, possibly with a penalty on the check, depending on the severity of the phobia.

Referees using the sanity system should be creative with the sanity checks, when to use them, when to leave them unused and who to require to take them. In general, the more disturbing a character would find an event, and the more outside his/her experience the event is, the more likely the need for a sanity check, and the higher the potential sanity loss. Disturbing events need not be horrifying, *per se*; simply seeing a ritual or custom from a foreign culture that is based on an activity that the character’s culture considers inappropriate or disgusting may be enough to trigger a sanity check (though perhaps only a 0/1 check). In a dispute over whether a character should take a sanity check, the referee’s word is final, but discussion between the referee and the player should be encouraged at a time that won’t disrupt a session in progress.

Here are some examples of different sanity checks, to help you to get the idea and scale of things. Note that this list should be considered neither complete nor comprehensive, and referees are encouraged to change the events and/or sanity check values to fit the needs of their game or style of play.

Sample Events for Sanity Checks	
Event	Loss on Sanity Check
Encountering a very repulsive alien for the first time (Nuclees, Shrieker etc)	0/1d3
Reading thoughts of a humanlike alien for the first time (Vargr, Aslan etc)	0/1d3
Coming across a corpse for the first time, or by surprise	0/1d3
Be subject of utter humiliation in front of a large crowd	0/1d4
Surprised to find a brutally tortured human corpse	1/1d4+1
Reading thoughts of a strange alien for the first time (Hiver etc)	1/1d4+1
Encountering a grotesque alien for the first time (Sheol interpreter etc)	1/1d4+1
Witness a violent death for the first time/see someone you know die violently	1/1d6
Accidentally killing a sentient being for the first time, at “personal” range	0/1d6
Deliberately killing a sentient being yourself for the first time at “personal” range	1/1d6+1
Be trapped in a drifting hulk of a spaceship alone for an extended time before being rescued	0/1d10
Reading thoughts of a totally strange/horrifying being for the first time (Valkyrie collective mind, Sheol etc)	1/1d10
See your beloved tortured to death before your eyes	1/2d6
Witnessing your homeworld destroyed by orbital bombardment, killing everyone you know and destroying everything you love	2/2d10
Being forced to give the order to have your homeworld destroyed by orbital bombardment, killing everyone you know and destroying everything you love	2/3d10

## Aliens and Sanity

In *Traveller* it is possible, even likely, that at least now and then players wish to play alien characters. In these cases, sanity checks should depend on the culture and nature of the species. The same applies to minor branches of humanity (or even divergent cultures from the character’s own branch of humani-

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ti, or another main branch). As an extreme example, for a person living in a cannibalistic society, eating human flesh is considered normal, while it will surely cause a sanity check on mainstream human characters. For the average Imperial citizen, realizing that he has been subject to telepathic tampering should cause a sanity check, while Zhodani proles are used to such events. For a K'Kree being left alone in space, or trapped in a very confining space, would be a subject for series of devastating sanity checks, while a Virushi beating someone to death would most likely be crushed mentally.

On the other hand, some beings might be very rarely subject to sanity checks. The Nunclees are described as being unemotional and cold—one might indeed find it very hard to shock a big pile of worms. Some rare species might have extremely low sanity score to begin with. Valkyrie for example are described as being practically insane due to the continuous whispering of their broken racial memory.

In case of aliens and strange cultures it is up to the referee and players to make up their own rules concerning sanity and sanity checks. Reading carefully descriptions of the society and psychology of the species can usually give very good guidelines.

### Supernatural Events

Though *Traveller* is considered to be a science-fiction role-playing game, the system is flexible enough to handle things outside the normal realm of science fiction proper, such as magic or supernatural horror. In general, handling sanity checks for such events is the same as for more “normal” events—the need for a sanity check would be based on how disturbing the event is and how unusual it is in the character’s experience. An additional factor that may need to be accounted for when dealing with magic or the supernatural is how strongly it “breaks” the “rules” that the character “knows” about how the universe works. For example, when confronted with inarguable evidence that magic exists, a scientist might have a stronger reaction, and need to take a more severe sanity check, than might

a religious mystic or primitive shaman (and the shaman may not need to take a sanity check at all).

### Recovering Sanity

The medical technology in *Traveller* is very advanced. It would seem logical to assume that at TL 15 there are multiple ways to treat mental problems as well. The Zhodani *Tavrchedl'* would be especially adept in this, being able to combine psionic treatment with medication and therapy.

At Imperial TL 15 treatment a character put in to mental care would recover around 1d6 sanity points per month treated. Treatment in the Consulate by the *Tavrchedl'* would most likely bring back even more sanity points, but then, it would have loads of other effects too... Treatment at lower TLs would be less effective. Here I see TL not only as the level of gadgets available, but as a description of knowledge about human psyche and other such subjects. In a world clinging at TL1 the treatment for the insane would be very ineffective indeed—possibly even harmful, if it had any effect at all.

The most likely way for player characters to recover sanity points would be resting. Depending on circumstances, a character finding mental rest and not being subject to any kind of shocks might recover something around one sanity point per month to 1d3 per month. In the latter I would require total concentration on relaxation, with not even a faint trace of anything connected to the shocks that has caused instability in the character.

If the referee wishes, he might well decide that a minimum amount of sanity loss from each specific shock is permanent and never heals. So, for example, if the character has killed someone brutally with an axe (1/1d6+1), one point of sanity loss is permanent while the rest might heal. Recovery from traumas and phobias should be much more difficult than simple recovery of sanity points. Recovering fully from them should require long periods of treatment, while rest and medication might be used to suppress them temporarily. ☼



### Chukkar-class Modular Merchant

designed by John T. Kwon

This design was originally posted to the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website in 2003.

The *Chukkar* is a slow, yet flexible and inexpensive merchant ship. Depending on options, it can be had for as little as MCr37, or as much as MCr48. It takes advantage of the standard 30-ton module for the Modular Cutter (and all of those variants). Because of its versatility, and modular construction, it passes readily from owner to owner, while being used for virtually any purpose from cargo transport, passenger transport, exploration, lab research, anti-piracy (if equipped with fighters!), commando (add a fighter, and some troop modules), or luxury use. The modest engineering plant is designed for low stress, long life operation, with a minimum of maintenance. As an example of how inexpensive the operation might be:

- the maintenance cost for a standard *Chukkar* with cutter is Cr48,000 per year.
- the payments are Cr200,000 per month
- the crew size is very small (3)

The *Chukkar* is a dispersed structure ship. The ship has a modest 1-G performance, and a Jump-1 capacity. The crew consists of a Pilot, an Engineer, and, traditionally, a Medic/Steward. The crew/bridge/computer module is a small box at the bow end of the ship's frame, and the ship's powerplant, maneuver drive, and jump drive are located in a box at the aft end. The ship's computer is a Model 1bis. The ship carries internal fuel for a Jump-1 and 28 days of powerplant fuel, and 20-ton fuel modules may be carried to extend the ship's range. There is a refiner on board, and the cutter may be used to procure fuel in wilderness refuelling, or unrefined fuel may be purchased and used without problems.

The crew area also includes 4 staterooms that may be used for additional crew, or for Middle Passage passengers. The crew area also includes 4 low berths. If passengers double up (the crew is already doubled up), you could add eight additional crew.

There are no weapon hardpoints, but the ship may carry armed craft, such as fighters.

The standard *Chukkar* comes with a Modular Cutter and three modules, one of which is carried inside the modular cutter. The three modules are normally a 30-ton passenger container and two 30-ton cargo containers. The ship may use any module variant for the Modular Cutter, or may mount 20-ton Demountable Fuel Tank modules (These are not drop tanks), each of which provides the ship with an additional Jump-1 worth of fuel. Commonly selected modules are:

- 30-ton Standard Module (mixed use, for ship-to-shore transport of passengers and cargo)
- 30-ton Cargo Module
- 30-ton Passenger Module (7 Middle Passengers, 2 Emergency Low Berths)
- 30-ton Low Berth Module (30 Low Berths)
- 30-ton Luxury Module (3 High Passage, 1 Steward in half stateroom, 4 Low Berths)

In an emergency, any or all of the modules may be jettisoned. If a passenger module is jettisoned, the occupants must take to the low berths.

You can mix and match these combinations. Keep in mind the following:

- A Modular Cutter is 50 tons, and may contain a 30-ton module only. This 30-ton module does not count against the ship's tonnage.
- There are 30-ton modules, and 20-ton fuel modules. Each 20-ton fuel module extends the ship's range by 1 parsec.
- The total of cutter and/or modules must add up to less than 120 tons.

Technically, if you add six 20-ton fuel pods, the ship can travel six parsecs (the seventh 20 tons of fuel needs to be used for powerplant operation). It will take six Jump-1, but you'll get there.

The flexibility of the *Chukkar* makes it very nearly ideal for use on the frontier, where passengers and cargo may be irregular and highly variable, and for interface lines where cargo and passengers can be transshipped between a major trade hub and nearby worlds just off the main routes.

## Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
- what you think of the articles we publish
- how we can make our magazine better
- how we can make our website better
- what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
- what you think of our look
- how we can make it better

Please, give us your opinion! We've provided several ways you can do so:

- e-mail: [feedback@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:feedback@freelancetraveller.com).

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.
- Forums:  
Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg-discussion.net/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>  
Lone Star at Citizens of the Imperium: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>  
**Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.**

## Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

*Freelance Traveller* sponsors channels for *Traveller* fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks, and the two channels are "bridged" so that if you're visiting either, you can see what's going on in the other, and talk to people there. For more information about both channels, see our informational pages at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travnet.html#IRC> and <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travchat/index.html>. Come talk "live" with other *Traveller* fans about anything at all, *Traveller* or not, and make both channels "jumping" places to hang out!


You can also run "play-by-IRC" game sessions in either channel; please stop in and ask the channel operators (FreeTrav) to schedule it, so we can ensure that the 'bridge' and the 'bartender' are set into a nondisruptive mode.

Please watch the *Traveller* Mailing List, the *Mongoose Traveller* forum, and the *Lone Star* section of the *Citizens of the Imperium* forum for announcements of *Topical Talks*!

## News About Traveller

### Recent Traveller News and Findings

January/February 2016

- **Felbrigg Herriot** has released *Hogarth's Heroes: A One-Shot Scenario* and *Deanne's Gear: A One-Shot Scenario*
- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Starships Book I00I0II: Fast Yacht*, *Starships Book I00II00: Newt Class Scout*, *Command Cube*, *Raider*, *Sickle APC*, *Space Stations XXV: Quick Response Marine Base*, and *Space Stations XXVII: Asteroid Hideout*
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released *d66 Native Fruits*, *d66 Reasons Why the Ship is Crashed*, *d66 Spaceport City Names*, and *d66 Spaceport Random Events*
- **Moon Toad Publishing** has released *Shipbook: Type S Scout/Courier*
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Quick Worlds 27: Shingal*
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Traveller Core Rulebook (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, *Traveller Referee's Screen (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, and *Reach Adventure 1: Marooned on Marduk*
- **Gamer Printshop** has released *Interstellar Cargo Transport Ship Deck Plans* 

## Submission Guidelines

### What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

We're looking for anything and everything to do with *Traveller* – reviews of products, house rules, alternate settings, NPC profiles, world write-ups, adventures, equipment, starships, fiction, “color” articles... If you see it in *Freelance Traveller*, or on our website, we're interested in it. Even if you don't see it in the magazine or on the website, we might be interested; write to *editor@freelancetraveller.com* and ask.

Some things that we want that you might not think of as “*Traveller*” would include reviews of non-*Traveller* products that easily lend themselves to being ‘mined’ for ideas for use in *Traveller*, or reviews of fiction (in any medium) that “feels” like *Traveller* in some way. In these cases, your article should focus on the *Traveller*-esque aspects of the item. There may be other things, as well; if you're not sure, write and ask.

### What about ...

The rule of thumb is “If it's a *Traveller* ruleset, or a setting that has been published for use with a *Traveller* ruleset, go for it!”. That includes the non-Official *Traveller* Universe settings that have been published for use with any version of the *Traveller* ruleset, including (but not limited to) *Judge Dredd*, *Strontium Dog*, *Babylon 5*, *Reign of Diaspora*, *Twilight Sector*, the two GURPS variants on the Official *Traveller* Universe, *Avenger Enterprises' Far Avalon*, and the forthcoming *Traveller Prime Directive*, and any others we may have forgotten.

### ...Hyperlite?

We've made the decision to support *Hyperlite* as though it were an alternate *Traveller* setting, much like *Twilight Sector* or *Reign of Diaspora*. The changes that Sceptune Games has made to *Traveller* to get *Hyperlite* aren't really much more than the differences between Classic *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller*, and *Mongoose Traveller*, and converting between any of those systems and *Hyperlite*, in either direction, should be ‘trivial’.

### ... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” or supported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold

the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

### How should I submit my article?

#### What needs to be in the submission?

At the very minimum, we need the submission itself, your name (for credit), and a valid email address to contact you at if we need to.

#### What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

Text should be submitted in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF), Microsoft Word 2003 (DOC) or 2007/2010 (DOCX), OpenOffice Writer (ODT), or plain text (TXT). Most word processors will support one of those; if yours seems not to, please write to us for assistance. Avoid PDF if at all possible; it is difficult to reformat PDFs for our magazine or website.

Graphics should be submitted in the format that's best for the type of graphic. Most of the time, that will be GIF, PNG, or JPG/JPEG. Submitting in higher resolutions is better; we have tools to resample a picture to make it smaller if we need to – but it's not possible to make a picture larger without it becoming pixellated.

If you're submitting a graphic that you'd like to see us use for a cover of an issue, please make sure that it will fit nicely on both US Letter and ISO A4 pages – we'll crop the picture to fit, to avoid distorting shapes, so please leave reasonable “margins”; don't run “critical” imagery right to the edge where it will look bad if we crop it. A good resolution is 100 dpi or more.

Plans (deck plans, building plans, maps, etc.) may be better submitted in a vector-based format such as CorelDRAW! format (CDR) or any format that can be imported into CorelDRAW! X4. Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), Windows Metafile (WMF), Enhanced Metafile (EMF), Encapsulated PostScript (EPS), or Microsoft Visio (VSD) are some common vector formats that can be imported.

#### How do I get it to you?

Email it to us at our submissions address, *submissions@freelancetraveller.com*. Your subject line should specify the type of article that it is, and what section you think it should be put in, e.g., “Combat Rules for Doing It My Way”.

