

# Signal-GK

## #5



US '52

A Cry for Help—  
A Call to Adventure!!

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# GUEST EDITORIAL

## GUEST EDITORIAL

It's Your (Dark) Future ....And You're Welcome To It!

Hello there! My name is Duncan Law-Green. I'm 22, and a graduate of the University of Manchester with a degree in Physics with Astrophysics (which should explain a few things about my previous articles in Signal GK!). I'll be starting a PhD in Radio Astronomy at Jodrell Bank in October. I'm a Classic Traveller at heart, having played and refereed the game since 1981. Writing about the future has always appealed to me, and I was naturally interested in HIWG when I heard about it in April 1989. (Gosh, was it that long ago...?!) I'm now HIWG Analyst for the Dagudashaag Sector. You could say that I am, at least indirectly, responsible for this series of fanzines, but I certainly don't deserve plaudits which Jae Campbell has showered upon me! "The master himself"? Not me! All credit should go to Jae, whose skill and dedication has made Signal GK into a publication which blows the socks off any other SFRPG fanzine!

Now, about the unusual title of this editorial. I thought that, since I had an opportunity to address a sizeable audience, I would discuss the present state and future development of Traveller, something about which I feel strongly. So strongly, in fact, that I thought it wise to include the following;

*DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed below are purely those of the Guest Editor, and are not necessarily shared by the Signal GK Distributor, or for that matter anyone else with a secure grip on reality...*

Let me start with a quote pulled from a fairly recent, major GDW Traveller release:

"Those brutes had killed every one - and everything - that moved. We found a little girl - couldn't have been more than five - clutching a little dog - both had been shot, not once, but repeatedly...some of the victims had been chainsawed .."

I've been an avid Traveller/MegaTraveller fan for over a decade now, and I never thought I would have to read something like that. It's symptomatic of an ethos which seems to be developing in the professional publishers, which is entirely alien to the Classic Traveller I know and love. I can think of various terms to describe it, but the only one which my spellchecker will accept is "sick". Please note that I have no religious or moral objections to the depiction of violence in role-playing games. Murder and mayhem has been a common feature of many of the games I have refereed, as my players will testify! However, I resent having conflict imposed as a precondition of the game background. As a referee, I reserve the right to decide if and when conflict will

occur, and its intensity. An inherently violent, "Dark Future" background, restricts those choices.

The product I've been referring to, is of course Hard Times, a graphic description of the collapse of Imperial space in the post-Rebellion era. This product has been claimed to widen the range of exciting adventuring opportunities for Traveller players. It does no such thing. Chaos is boring. There are a vast number of possible outwardly stable societies to adventure in, but destruction only comes in the one flavour. A "Hard Times" adventure can be set in the classic Traveller era, and a great many more besides. Remember Tim Brown's comment about "turning the chaos dial up to 9" in Challenge 41? That is such unmitigated bullshit that it's unworthy of consideration, but some of the GDW staff seem to have swallowed it. Although cogently argued, the speed of the Imperium's collapse gives cause for concern. Also, a nuclear capable civilisation which had reached the stage of anarchy depicted would destroy itself utterly in very short order (see "A Children's Story" - this issue). Hard Times appears to have been contrived to appeal to "survivalists". In the anarchy of Hard Times, starships are rarities in much of post-Imperial space, controlled by splinter governments or paramilitary units. When the players no longer have the freedom to roam, how can the game be called Traveller? In short, Hard Times is implausible, limited, and bloody depressing.

I am a fan of classic science fiction (Asimov, Niven, et al), a space enthusiast, and an all-round technophile. Traveller for me means gleaming starships exploring unknown space, encountering alien societies and new adventures. Wading through radioactive graveyards, picking over chainsawed corpses - that's not Traveller. That's perversion.

This brings me to the second subject of my article. The release of the new Traveller update, 'Traveller: The New Era' is scheduled for the end of this year. You would expect this event to be viewed with excitement and anticipation by the majority of Traveller fandom, however, the response to TTNE has been patchy, to say the least. Why? Because it shows uncomfortable signs of following in the Hard Times ethos.

GDW publicly admitted that players were unhappy with the way TTNE was developing, in the Challenge 59 editorial by Dave Nilsen. The editorial denied none of the accusations that TTNE would become a dark future game. In short, it said: "OK, so it will be dark future. But it'll be a nice dark future, and you'll like it, honest you will!" Yeah, right.

A few other choice items on the grapevine about TTNE: The task/combat system will be completely revised. The new system will be based on a D20 Twilight:2000 variant, to conform to GDW's new doctrine of

intercompatibility between its game systems. Me, I subscribe to the age-old principle - "if it ain't broke, don't try to fix it". The MegaTraveller task/combat system ain't broke (slightly cracked, in a few places, maybe...!). But I digress. My main worry is this: my spies tell me that the Twilight:2000 combat system is noticeably less lethal than the MegaTraveller system. If this carries over into TTNE, the inevitable conclusion is that it will be more conflict-oriented than the original.

What else? Apparently, a major postulate of TTNE is a "virus" (logical or biological wasn't specified) has by 1180 trashed the majority of computers in Charted Space! I'd really like to see them justify the epidemiology of that one! To me, that smells of getting rid of enough technology to turn Traveller into a science-fantasy game. As far as I know, this is now irrevocably official. Challenge 64 is catalogued as the "Traveller Virus Issue", and you may well have a copy by the time you read this...

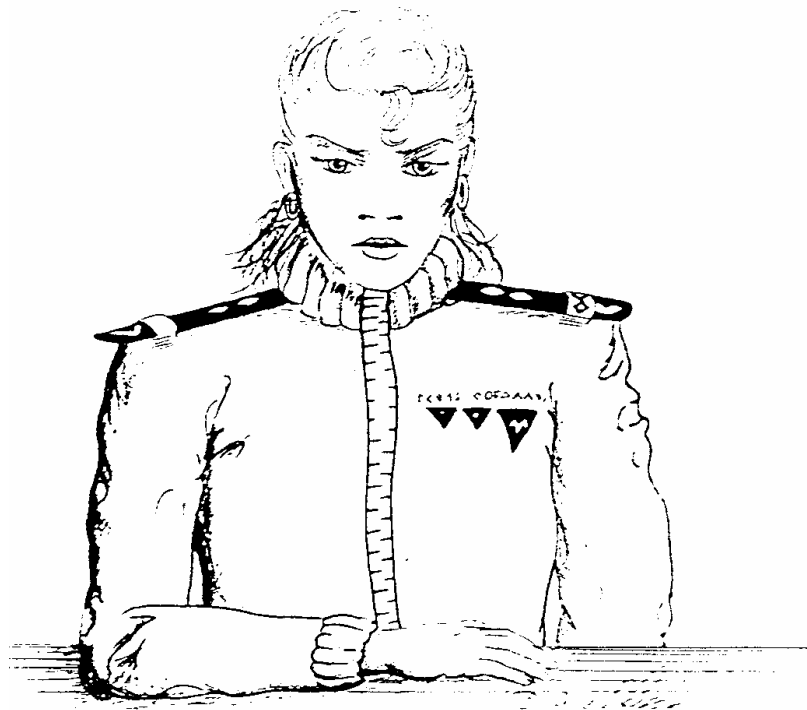
TTNE could be very, very good. GDW employs some highly talented writers who could really do the update justice. The New Era of 1180 could be a fine time to

adventure in: a New Dawn where diverse human and alien splinter states set out to explore and re-colonise the worlds abandoned in the Rebellion's aftermath. I'm not hopeful, though. So far, we've had Pirate-Killers, with Very Big Guns (Assignment: Vigilante). We've had impossibly lethal computer viruses. We've had chainsaw-wielding maniacs with military starships (Hard Times). We've even had Space Werewolves (TNS: Challenge 57). What next - Space Orks in Chaos Spiky Combat Armour Travel-hammer 40.000?? Ugh.

If, when you've bought your shiny new TTNE set you find that it bears out what I've said, do me a favour, won't you? Don't throw it straight in the trash. Take it to your local recycling centre - at least that way it'll do some good.

If these comments have offended anyone, I'm sorry (Well ...OK, I'm not!). They do represent my honest opinion of the situation, and I am willing to debate any of the points I've raised. I can be contacted via the Signal GK editorial address. In the meantime, you can be sure that GK's writers will remain true to the spirit of Classic Traveller. I hope you enjoy Signal-GK #5.

シロウチノカクシ



# A CHILDREN'S STORY FOR "HARD TIMES"

## A CHILDREN'S STORY FOR "HARD TIMES"

Are you sitting comfortably, children? Then I'll begin...

As you know, children, things are really rather unpleasant right now in what's left of the Imperium. A lot of nasty men with big guns are dashing around trying to kill each other. Yes, Billy, and anyone else who happens to be on the wrong end of the gun barrel. And do you know what makes these men happy? No, apart from that, Jenny! They're happiest when they have a bigger gun than the others, so that they can make them do what they want. Pretty soon, these nasty men got to wanting really big weapons. Nuclear ones.

Yes, I know what you're saying, Eddie. Back in the good old days, there weren't that many nuclear weapons around, and they all belonged to the Imperial Navy, which kept them safely under lock and key. So, when the war came and the Navy split up, only a few big nasty men, like the Murderers Lucan and Dulinor, got their hands on nuclear bombs. But there were lots and lots of little nasty men who wanted them too. They stole one or two from the Navy, and that was bad enough, but they wanted more. Then they thought. "Why don't we make them ourselves?"

But the little nasty men found they had a problem. To make nuclear fission bombs (that's "A-bombs" to you, children), they found that they needed large amounts of heavy metals like uranium and plutonium. These metals are really dangerous and really rare, and the big nasty men had taken all the stores of these metals and locked them away.

So then the little nasty men said, "We could make thermonuclear weapons instead! They make a bigger bang!" (That's "H-bombs" to you, children). But people told them that to make an H-bomb, you need an A-bomb inside it to make it go bang, and they couldn't make those, so they went off in a sulk.

But some of these little nasty people were smart, and they read their books. Do you know what they found, children? They found that you don't need an A-bomb to make an H-bomb go bang. You can do it with lasers, like in the laser-fusion power plant in your daddy's air/raft. They had lots of lasers, so they looked at what else they needed to make H-bombs.

The fusible material in an H-bomb (the stuff that makes the big bang) is called lithium deuteride - it's solid, and looks a bit like salt. The little nasty men had lots of lithium - they used something called lithium hydroxide in their starships to take the carbon dioxide out of the air. Deuterium is a common fuel for fusion reactors, so they had lots of that too. So they got their books out, and found out how to put the two together to make lithium

deuteride. It's quite easy, and they made lots and lots of it.

So they turned round to all the other people, and this is what they said: "Look at us! You don't need the resources of the Imperial Navy to produce H-bombs! You can do it with a medium-sized starship! Think about it. We've got lithium deuteride. We've got a gigawatt-output fusion reactor, and a powerful parallel-processing computer. We've got a high-throughput isotope separation system - the fuel purifiers, and automated engineering and electronics workshops with full CAD/CAM facilities. We've got large stocks of spare parts, including megawatt-output lasing elements, and last, but not least, a trained staff of nuclear engineers. We've got everything we need!"

So the little nasty men made lots and lots of H-bombs. Those who couldn't make them traded for the bombs themselves, or the knowledge of how to make them. Some of them didn't work, but that didn't matter, since they just made more. Even those really nasty Ripper people got their hands on home-brew thermonuclear ordnance, which is when things got really bad for everyone...

So that, children, is why we can't go up to the surface right now. Yes, Susie, I know it's cold here, but it's really, really hot on the surface, and we have to wait for it to cool down. No, Danny, I don't know how long. A long time. No. I don't know when your daddy will get here. I'm sorry. You'd better get some sleep now. Good-night' children. Sweet dreams...

# CONTACT: S'MRII

## INTRODUCTION

The sky's lighter than that you remember of your homeworld, almost a pastel shade, and yet the sunlight is bluer. Cascades of green-black vegetation cover the sloping sides of the ancient, weathered structures bordering the square. Richly-carved bas-reliefs adorn the lower levels of the buildings, and you long to study their exotic scenes but time does not permit.

The other figures in the square are far from human, you realise, as their crouched stances and unfamiliar physique show through their cowed robes. As they converse in high, sibilant tones, you catch sight of slender, scaled arms and delicate three-fingered hands performing complex gestures.

A gentle rush of air, and you turn round. Two large gravitic vehicles, their designs strangely reminiscent of predatory insects, have landed silently on the marbled plaza behind you. Their portals open, and more reptilians begin to disembark, some in robes and others in bodysuits with phylum insignia. All turn to stare at the huge ziggurat structure to the south of the plaza. A high, pure tone from the alien edifice matched by a keening hum, which arises almost spontaneously from the crowd.

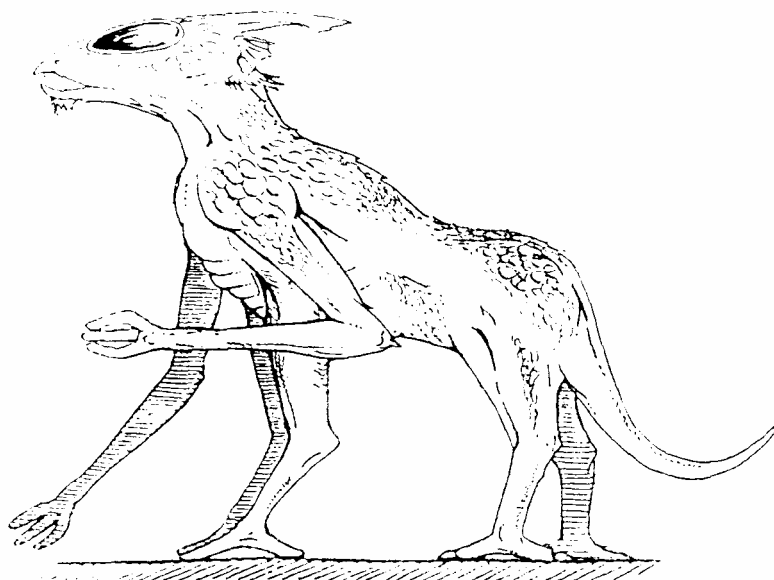
A silent pause, and the very peak of the ziggurat erupts into flame, leaping hundreds of metres into the cloudless sky. The spectacle is reflected from all the buildings surrounding the plaza as hidden holoprojectors spring to life. Huge doors slowly open at the base of the pyramid structure, revealing a blinding brilliance.

Your guide touches the translator at his neck. "Come. It is the time of Remembrance".

The following material is excerpted from 'Pillar of Dagudashaag: Physiology and Sophontology of the S'mrii Race', by Professor Kaskia Skui'lachasi of the University of Mimu, (published by Makila-Selwyn-Tobermory, 1114). Reproduced with permission rights reserved.

The S'mrii, a species of hexapedal pseudoreptiles native to Mimu (Dagudashaag/Mimu 0208 A583AC9-F Subsector Capital), participate widely in interstellar society, and yet are seen by many humans as enigmatic. It is true that the S'mrii are not an over assertive race - unlike certain other groups, they do not proudly proclaim their heritage. It however, a heritage to be proud of - the S'mrii were starfarers when the Vilani industrial revolution had barely begun. But for a truly unfortunate incident many millennia ago, the history of the Galaxy may have been very different. The S'mrii were "the major race that so nearly was".

The history of human-S'mrii interactions has been riddled with prejudice and misconceptions on both sides. We hope that this work will go some way towards bringing our species closer together.



ADULT MALE S'MRII

## S ' M R I I PHYSIOLOGY

Reliable S'mrii medical records span some twenty-six millennia -and our species has changed little in that time. The following general observations can be made about the physiology of our race.

**Height and Weight:** The typical S'mrii male measures about 1.9 meters

head-to-tail, and weighs about 60 kg. Females are slightly smaller, measuring 1.7 meters, and weighing 52 kg. Height at the shoulder is typically about 1m. Largely because our homeworld is a low-gravity planet, we have a comparatively light bone structure. We more than make up for our lack of physical strength, however, by our high degree of manual dexterity.

**Appearance:** The most comfortable gait for S'mrii is a "semi-erect" four-legged one, superficially similar to that of the K'kree, which leaves the forward pair of limbs free to manipulate objects. The centre pair of "clawhands" can be used to grasp or steady equipment, but less dextrously.

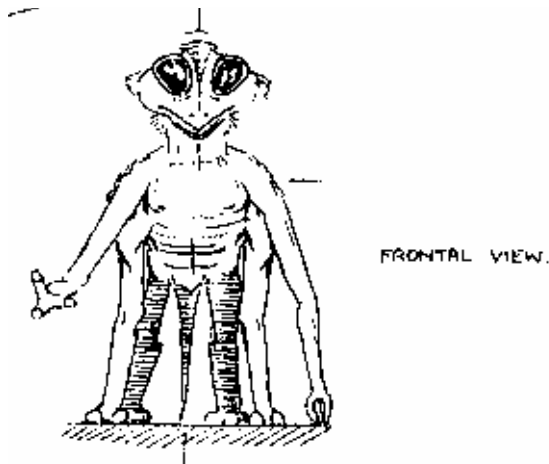
I would not be so immodest as to claim that S'mrii are a particularly attractive race, but many humans react

positively to our appearance. Males of our species have a dark green-scaled skin, shading to bluegreen on the underside, while females are a lighter “silvergreen” colour. The skins of many individuals also bear geometric designs in metallic silver, bronze, or gold. Some humans seem to believe that these designs are cosmetically applied - they are, in fact, genetically transmitted.

Cranial structure, and the detail of skin colouration, varies quite widely among members of our race. By no stretch of the imagination do we look alike!

Diet: We are basically carnivorous, preferring cooked meats rendered down into a thick paste, and mixed with a wide variety of spices and sauces. However, we do enjoy seeds, nuts, and similar plant-derived produce for variety.

Interestingly, human and S’mrii biochemistries are largely (though not completely) intercompatible. There are a number of foodstuffs which humans and S’mrii find mutually palatable and nutritious.



Rest: The S’mrii circadian rhythm has evolved to suit the thirty-hour rotation period of our homeworld Mimu, and like other sophonts, we spend one third of this time asleep. However, because of local conditions, we usually have two periods of sleep during the day: the first, a period of roughly three hours around local noon, and the second, a period of seven hours during the planetary night. Travellers to Mimu would do well to bear this in mind.

Reproduction: We are an oviparous (egg-laying) race. The eggs, once fertilised, are kept within the female’s body for approximately 11 months before being laid. The eggs are originally soft-shelled, but the shells of viable eggs harden rapidly on contact with air.

Clutches of three to five eggs are usually laid, but it is rare for more than three to be viable. It is possible for a female to lay eggs as frequently as once every four standard years - but in modern S’mrii society, she often lays, and only one, clutch of eggs.

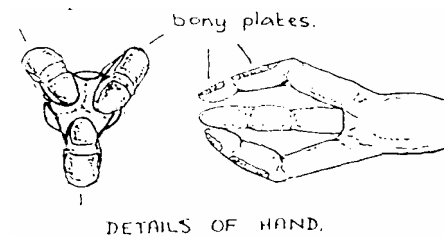
S’mrii juveniles develop slowly - maturity is reached at thirty-two standard years, and they require parental

attention for much of that time. The need to devote so much effort to caring for our children has shaped our society considerably.

Senses: S’mrii senses are quite acute when compared with those of humans. Our eyes are sensitive to shades from orange to near ultraviolet, and we are also sensitive to infrared - though we cannot form images in this band. What a human sees as a S’mrii’s “eyes” are actually just “corneas” - complex optical surfaces, each of which covers a medial and lateral “compound” eye, and two “true” eyes. The S’mrii cornea is a photochromic biopolymer as effective as many present-day synthetic materials. The complex structure of the S’mrii eye gives us excellent wide-angle vision.

S’mrii hearing extends somewhat further into the high-frequency domain than does humans. Our senses of smell and taste are roughly equivalent to human norms.

Anatomy: In common with other reptile-analogues, we are poikilothermic (sometimes wrongly termed “cold-blooded”) and are thus sensitive to rapid changes in



temperature. We usually overcome this with temperature-control “oversuits”. In the absence of such technological remedies, we tend to become sluggish in cold conditions (below about 8°C). The S’mrii cardiovascular system is similar to that of humans, but less efficient. The oxygen-chelating compound is haemoglobin, as in humans. We have four lung sacs, but these are relatively small - we experience discomfort when breathing “thin” atmospheres (type 4 or 5) and we use a filter/respirator combination under these conditions. Conversely, the S’mrii have a greater tolerance for higher pressures than do humans, and are less subject to nitrogen narcosis.

Lifespan: We are among the longest-lived of all motile sentient species. S’mrii typically live 250 to 270 standard years. Anagathics for S’mrii have never been developed - we do not possess a racial drive to lengthen our lifespans.

#### ZURA S’MRII

A rare mutation in the S’mrii genome gives rise to one of the most remarkable conditions among all known sophonts - the Zura, or “double-brained” syndrome. A S’mrii suffering from this genetic defect will develop with two pairs of cerebral hemispheres, one behind the other. Such S’mrii are immediately distinguishable because of the enlarged cranium. It is believed that in most Zura, the voluntary, or ‘higher’ neural functions of the secondary brain never develop, and that the “backbrains” is used by the primary brain as additional

information storage, giving the Zura truly remarkable powers of photographic recall.

However, in a very few cases, the backbrain has fully developed voluntary function, and consequently its own personality. Clearly, in order for such S'mrii to be able to function, the two personalities must come to some kind of "timesharing" agreement for sensory and motor systems. S'mrii authorities seem very reluctant to present any specimens for study by Imperial experts, and so information on this condition is still sadly lacking. Rumours continue about psionic powers possessed by the Zura, especially as regards their ability to detect and control levels of aggression in other sophonts...

## PSYCHOLOGY

Stability without stagnation, order without repression - these are our watchwords. An unstable society can only be damaging for both individuals and groups, yet a rigidly-enforced stability will destroy a society just as surely as war or revolution.

Radicalism of any description is to be avoided - we must seek a middle path, just as a physical system seeks its equilibrium position. Although leaders must be endowed with responsibility, a system of checks and balances is essential, to ensure that this responsibility is not abused.

A person should never occupy a position of authority which he does not possess the abilities for. Aptitude testing is an everyday part of life for those S'mrii in authority, so that those they lead may feel secure in placing their trust in them. The degree of trust which S'mrii show in their scientific and political leaders is often found disconcerting by humans, but you may rest assured that we do not give this trust lightly. A S'mrii leader will always defer to another's expertise in a particular field, even if he be of lower rank.

We have a strong appreciation of our own heritage, yet we do not let it blind us to the wonders of the Galaxy. We were spacefarers when all the major branches of Humaniti dressed in animal skins, and lived in caves, yet we are humbled before the chain of consciousness which links all sentient races. Sentient beings have been travelling between the stars of the Galaxy for over one billion years, a simple fact which makes the claims to antiquity of our friends to coreward seem rather feeble...

A great deal of time is spent caring for our children: their physical development is a lengthy and fragile process, and every effort is made to protect them from harm. Exploiting those who cannot defend themselves is anathema to us. If we see an individual or organisation offending in this manner, we feel ourselves bound to intervene. Though we have been described as "self-righteous", we seek simply to promote stability, order and well-being, for all.

The Dreams: The desire for creative self-expression is

## THE GUARDIAN RESPONSE

[See Legends and Lore: The Doomsday A.I.]

Those who have met the S'mrii, from tourists to Imperial sophontologist, have been struck by the apparent contradiction that these peaceable creatures are directly descended from carnivorous predators. In truth this simple fact of their genetic heritage is the single most important factor in the S'mrii psychology. In their "natural state", the S'mrii are at least as aggressive as Humaniti, and will fight to the death in defence of territory and family. However, it must be remembered that they suffered terribly as a result of the holocaust which was unleashed when their carnivore aggression, was given full rein. For the last fifteen thousand years, each S'mrii has been conditioned from birth to control these aggressive impulses by effort of will. With the development of the virtuality Dreams, to allow them to form self-confirming images of peaceful co-operation and vent their carnivore impulses in digital fantasies, this has been highly successful.

The wall between S'mrii societal conditioning and their genetic heritage is high, but it is not impenetrable. The S'mrii desire for fast and accurate combat is motivated by a deep-rooted psychological fear of what would occur if they were exposed to prolonged violence. That fear is well-founded.

Under extreme psychological pressure, S'mrii will crack. The failure of societal conditioning results in a transitory psychotic state called Skuaask'uiss, or Guardian Response. Very few outsiders have witnessed a S'mrii in Response and lived to tell of it. The change in an individual S'mrii Response is terrifying: a single-minded desire to kill everyone not identifiably of their own phylum. A S'mrii's intelligence is unaffected, and he will use any and every means at his disposal to annihilate his "enemies": tools, teeth and bare hands when ammunition is exhausted...

Like some fast-acting drug, the changes when coming out of Response are as devastating as those while in it. Each S'mrii remembers exactly what he has done whilst in Response, and most cannot live with that memory. Those who do not kill themselves immediately seek solace in the Net, in the desperate hope that the Dreams will provide relief from the living nightmares of nuclear hellfire which such murderous acts awaken...

common to all sophonts, and the S'mrii are no different. We have embraced the latest technology wholeheartedly in the search for new creative experiences, and have developed virtual reality systems to a level unknown anywhere else in Imperial Space. Virtuality systems replace many more primitive means of entertainment, creating a media environment which many Humans find totally alien.

The Virtuality Dreams, as they are known, fall into four basic categories: *Dream-of-Self*, an intensely private virtuality experience created by an individual S'mrii;



*Dream-of-Circle*, a virtuality entertainment shared by a group of friends; and *Dream-of-Phylum* and *Dream-of-Race*, public entertainment events which imbue a spirit of personal well-being, as well as dedication to one's phylum and loyalty to society as a whole.

## S'MRII SOCIETY AND CULTURE

"Pyramids within pyramids" - Dr. Eneri Giilaam, *Sophontology Review*

### THE PHYLA

S'mrii society is highly stratified, and monolithic in nature: the same basic social structure holds throughout Mimu and other S'mrii worlds. The S'mrii have no true nation states: their largest economic groups are the *Zuichee'* or "phyla", which embody aspects of both nations and corporations. Phyla vary widely in size, having anything between 50 thousand and 15 million members, making the largest of them equal in economic power to some Imperial sector-wide companies. Phyla are broadly delineated by function (electronics manufacturing, communications, transportation, etc.), and higher status phyla tend to have wider regions of authority, and greater administrative responsibility for a particular aspect of S'mrii industry. The lowest in status are the "contract labour phyla" which supply semi-skilled and unskilled labour to other phyla, and the highest are the "noble" phyla, descended from lak'Kiaskui and his immediate followers, which provide strategic direction for S'mrii industry and govern the S'mrii people. The overall result is a social-industrial system, which is very efficient, but also highly interdependent, as contractual and feudal ties bind the phyla very tightly to-ether. Conflict would be disastrous for all, and is almost unthinkable.



Within a phylum, the basic social unit is the Ka'usui or "family", consisting of a mated pair of S'mrii, their offspring, and attendant Kiakh'iee. Three or four Ka'usui make up a sk\*khua or "circle", a broader concept than the Human extended family, as it may include individuals with no blood ties. It should be emphasised that the family and circle bonds in S'mrii society are very strong. Loyalty to one's children and fellow circle members is what holds the fabric of S'mrii society together. Loyalty to the phylum governing council is also strongly imprinted in a S'mrii's education.

Any social system has its outsiders, and in the S'mrii case these are the Excludes, who have forsaken phylum allegiance, or had it stripped from them. Freelancers, criminals, and agents who must operate where the phyla may not go - all these are called Excludes, viewed with suspicion and contempt by those comfortable in the phylum hierarchy.

Note: S'mrii have two "social standing" statistics: Phylum Rank, which denotes the individual's rank within a certain phylum (and consequently how much respect he is accorded by members of his own phylum), and Phylum Status, the standing of the individual's phylum in S'mrii society

### Scientific Patronage:

The phylum system is definitely technocratic, and it is natural that the S'mrii show respect to their high-ranking scientific figures (who are, by the nature of S'mrii society, the most able ones). However, because of this, the overall direction of S'mrii scientific endeavour tends to be dictated by a few individuals. A junior researcher in a particular field would never contemplate questioning the pronouncements of more senior scientists, even if experiments suggest they are wrong. An ill-considered statement by a prominent scientist can stifle a line of research for decades, and even centuries. S'mrii technology has gone through long periods of "horizontal" progress, where existing designs are refined, but no new technology is introduced.

Responsible senior researchers thus do their best to assemble teams of the most promising students they can and encourage them to be assertive with their findings. The result is that S'mrii scientific research is usually carried out far more meticulously than that by Humans.

### S'MRII LANGUAGE

Research into the glottochronology of the S'mrii language is ongoing, but it is believed that they spoke a single, global language as early as -12,000. This language, Sfuizia, translated as "InterLanguage" (but usually referred to as "S'mrii") is particularly rich in sibilants and explosive consonants, and as such is decidedly difficult for humans to pronounce. S'mrii are, however, all fluent in Galanglic, so communications problems are rarely encountered.

One interesting point concerns the pronunciation of the S'mrii phoneme *iskaee*, usually rendered as an asterisk (\*) in Galanglic texts. The phoneme is properly pronounced as a rapidly frequency-modulated sound - *iiiiiu*. It is believed that the asterisk representation derives from the "phoneme untranslatable" error symbol produced by early Solomani computer language translation units.

Written S'mrii occurs in two primary forms. The first is Old Written InterLanguage, which has direct roots in the languages of pre-holocaust Mimu. Its use presently is primarily ceremonial - used for artistic inscription, and the text of official treaties, and so on.

New Written InterLanguage is a rationalised and simplified version of the earlier form, more suitable for computer data entry. Its use was reasonably universal by about -1400, during the early years of the S'mrii ConSentiency.

## S'MRII PREFERENCES

### S'MRII ARCHITECTURE

S'mrii architecture and environmental engineering are discussed in the accompanying article '*Port of Call: Mimu*'.

### S'MRII VEHICLES

Creatures with a lifespan approaching three centuries, and almost thirty thousand years of recorded history expect their manufactured artefacts to be enduring. S'mrii techniques use multiply redundant systems and components made to extremely high tolerances to produce the most reliable vehicles in all of known space. Visually, S'mrii vehicles betray a clean and aerodynamic efficiency. The S'mrii favour "sharp", wedge-shaped profiles - triangular winglets and hull fairings of parallel overlapping plates create a look which some human observers describe as "insectoid" and "unsettling", but which nonetheless has a beauty all its own.

### S'MRII SPACECRAFT

The primary S'mrii starship contractor, U'Chakzii SIA, holds a great many production licences for commercial craft from other imperial corporations. Thus a freighter built by U'Chakzii looks very much like a freighter built by Medurma AstroTech or General Products. However, they do produce their own designs: streamlined craft tend to be based on a wedge configuration, while unstreamlined vessels are usually of a modular type, consisting of a central tapered cylinder containing the power core and drive section, surrounded by rhomboidal and octahedral modules for cargo and crew. All S'mrii native designs share the same "clean", linear look and supreme reliability.

## HISTORY OF THE S'MRII RACE

The S'mrii have always been reluctant to follow detailed examination of their historical records by Imperial authorities. The following account was derived from the work of Professor Konstantin Andriseyev of the University of Ushra, and represents a "best guess" of S'mrii historical events.

### EVOLUTION

The S'mrii are descended from flying carnivore/pouncer stock native to Mimu (Dagudashaag 0208), which inhabited deeply eroded forested valleys common to the areas surrounding Mimu's small seas. Details of the evolution of the S'mrii are still somewhat sketchy but the key event is thought to be an unusual sequence of magnetic field reversals at around -1.6 million. The planet's magnetic field "flipped" polarity repeatedly over a period of about 10,000 years, which caused an increase in the amount of hard radiation reaching the surface.

This heightened radiation flux depleted much of the foliage in forested areas. The proto-S'mrii were forced to co-operate, in order to fend off other carnivores from

their increasingly rare herbivore prey. In addition, the increase in radiation accelerated the rate of genetic change. Older proto-S'mrii lost the ability to fly, and so had to prey on tree-climbing omnivore-gatherers. Proto-S'mrii "herded" these creatures, the Mikhiakh, as long ago as -800,000.

### BALKANIZATION

S'mrii history followed a similar course to that of many other sentient races, passing through hunter-gatherer and subsistence agriculture phases, leading to a system of primitive feudal states by about -33,000. The technological development of the S'mrii began to accelerate somewhat after -27,000: their Industrial Revolution is generally acknowledged to have occurred at about -26,300.

### HOLOCAUST

The most critical turning point ever in S'mrii history occurred in -25,790. According to the archaeological and geological evidence gathered by the S'mrii over subsequent millennia, this event was a thermonuclear holocaust, in which nuclear devices totalling some 4,100 megatons were detonated over major population centres. The holocaust is known in S'mrii literature as the Satkrsach\*m\*iasisk or "Day of Dying". Pre-"Day of Dying" historical information is fragmentary at best, but it is thought that S'mrii society was originally much closer to a system of nation states.

At about -25,835, three distinct superpowers had emerged, each with its own socioeconomic bloc. The High Common Tech Level on Mimu at this time was about TL7. By -25,800, two of these nations, the Ssiarkuku and the Iakzikhu, had manned orbital spaceflight capability, while the third, the Riachik, was well on the way to developing it. Ssiarkuku had already launched a number of soft-landing probes to nearby terrestrial planets, and plans were well advanced for longer-range missions.

By this point, the end was almost inevitable. Riachik used its launcher technology to develop a nuclear Fractional Orbit Bombardment System (FOBS), and then attempted to use this system in "nuclear blackmail", to resolve a long-standing territorial dispute. The other two "superpowers" panicked, and vied with each other to put nuclear missile systems, and laser Ballistic Missile Defences on Mimu's asteroidal moon, Suikhtreekh. Squabbles between these nations then degenerated into full-scale nuclear war.

### AFTERMATH

Needless to say, the effects were devastating. Some four-fifths of the planet's population of 2.05 billion S'mrii died in the five years following the holocaust. The Skak Kakchuassa, the most densely populated, technologically advanced, and agriculturally productive region on the planet was turned into a radioactive desert. The climatic changes triggered by the war were also severe. Changes in the planetary albedo caused

repeated “mini-Ice Ages”, each lasting one or two centuries, as Mimu’s mean surface temperature oscillated wildly. This phase of S’mrii history, “The Darkness”, was characterised by a simple fight for survival. No-one was interested in the rebuilding of civilisation.

Mimu’s climate finally reached a stable equilibrium at about -22,200, some three-and-a-half millennia after the original holocaust. By this time, original any memory of their previous civilisation had been all but erased. All that survived was a fear of technology - such city ruins as had survived the war, and subsequent glaciation, were declared taboo. The S’mrii rebuilt themselves into tribes, clans, and finally city-states, with an average tech level of 2. The S’mrii found a level of technology which gave them an acceptable standard of living, and they stagnated there.

Friction between neighbouring city-states was common, and most were in a constant state of low-key conflict. Such conflict, and the shifting nature of city-state allegiances, made any cultural development very difficult. Loose alliances of cities rose and fell during the millennia which followed.

#### THE REBIRTH

Races which have suffered some kind of interregnum in their history inevitably create some kind of racial myth to explain their recovery. The S’mrii are no exception.

The *Foils of Triskskiss*, one thousand pages of beaten gold encribed by Kiaskui artificers at about -14,000, tell of a huge gathering of disaffected refugees at an ancient devastated city site, and their subsequent arduous trek over the mountains to find a new land free of war and suffering.

In this verdant new land (believed by some authorities to be the Kiamuskeekik Basin) the travellers made a truly remarkable discovery. Rising from the jungle-choked plain was a single mountain peak, the Chamia Ssusku. Within its stony vastness were things the Foils describe as *Chaaka*: magical revelations of times long past. The Foils describe a near-godlike figure, lak’Kiaskui, who impressed on his followers the value of these items and ordered their systematic investigation, “to discover the nature of the world as it is.”

Once Kiaskui’s followers had regained much of the knowledge of the “elders”, they needed to carry this to the rest of the planet, which still lay in near-barbarism.

M\*tkrzia’m Kiaskui ordered that the leaders of all other realms on the world be brought to the Islands of the Winter Sunrise. There he proposed his view of a united technocratic global state.

To reinforce his point, he demonstrated what had destroyed the civilization of the “elders” millennia earlier. The collection of emperors, kings, oligarchs, and priests witnessed a ground-level nuclear explosion.

Palaeotechnological surveys by Imperial researchers indicate that a period of quite rapid technological development did take place on Mimu between -15,000 and -13,800, confined almost entirely to the Kiamuskeekik Basin, but the truth or otherwise of the Foils legend and the existence of the *Chaaka* remain unclear.



#### RETURN TO SPACE

The S’mrii Reborn had a truly rare opportunity: to build a global technological state from scratch, and they set about it with a will. Primitive castes and guilds were reorganised on a global scale as the phylum system, and the Kiaskui were established as hereditary leaders. The S’mrii returned to space in -13,610: Suikhtreekh Orbital Facility was rebuilt. They had equalled the achievements of their ancestors, but this time with a unified and peaceful world. They expanded slowly and methodically, first with

chemical rockets, and later with fusion propulsion further out into Mimu system, establishing colonies, and exploiting the rich resources of the system’s planetoid belt. In -12,230, they stood at the edge of their system, and gazed out at the stars.

#### THE ALLIANCE OF WORLDS

The scientific patronage system, which had served the S’mrii so well up to now, would prove to their detriment when they faced the stars. Iaru’azikua, the greatest physical scientist in a millennium, the harnesser of fusion energy, had stated that faster-than-light travel was impossible. So be it - all research in that area was frivolous, and the S’mrii would travel to the stars at a more stately pace.

The fusion rockets used for insystem travel were enlarged and adapted to produce Bussard ramjets. The designs were continuously refined: the ships were rugged, supremely reliable, and beautiful, but no fundamental advances in propulsion technology were made.

Between -11,900 and -10,900, multiple colonisation missions were made to worlds within six parsecs. The efficiency of the ramjets was increased: a one parsec journey could be made in fifteen years, making commerce possible for the long-lived S'mrii. The Alliance of Worlds, a trading association, was established, and sublight transport became regularly scheduled.

## CONTACT!

The S'mrii had discovered only semi-sentient animals on the worlds they had explored, and to believe that they were the Galaxy - so First Contact came as a complete surprise to them. The meeting occurred in -9,090, when a sublight colonisation transport from the S'mrii colony of Zuiar arrived in the Karrana'ch system (Dagudashaag 0302: Present UPP: C455541-9), a system already occupied by a Naarsirka frontier base. The S'mrii maintain that they initiated the formal contact, though the matter remains a subject of debate. Though both sides were initially disconcerted by the contact, they maintained cordial relations. The S'mrii seem to have been unable to comprehend how much space the Vilani already controlled - at first, they thought that the Vilani would be satisfied with Alliance membership. The Vilani were disconcerted that they had finally come across a high-technology alien race: one which posed a distinct threat, so they determined to dominate the S'mrii economically.

Initially, the S'mrii were confused by Vilani insistence that no examination of their ships was permitted, and S'mrii passengers would travel by low berth only, but they shrugged their scaly shoulders, and accepted. Naarsirka began regular freight runs along the Mimu branch of the Vilani Main by -9,020. Additional trade concessions were made conditional upon the dismantling of the Alliance administrative structure. In -8,932, the Alliance of Worlds ceased to exist, and power passed to the Vilani provincial governor.

## THE ZIRU SIRKA

The years -9,000 to -6,000 saw the S'mrii suffer gradual stagnation, as the Vilani thought their technocratic phylum society too dangerous to allow them complete freedom. However, neither were they completely restricted - trade and cultural links were developed with the Lancians, a minor race to spinward.

By about -6,200, the Vilani finally relaxed the travel restrictions on S'mrii: they were allowed to travel as middle or high passengers; they were also allowed to crew Jump-capable vessels. In fact, the Vilani were quite glad to hand over those nasty technical jobs to the S'mrii. In -6,143, Naarsirka allowed Phylum U'Chakzii-Ziask to build starships at its yards on Mimu and Zuiar, though Jump drive "black boxes" were still shipped in from Vland Sector. That was, from the Vilani point of view, ultimately a mistake, as it allowed the S'mrii to develop their phylum system into a true starfaring culture. S'mrii technological development began to pick up speed.

In -5,288, an incident occurred between the Vilani provincial governor, and Phylum Kiaskui, which led to the onset of the Laashuurarir or "Courtesy" War. The few surviving documents speak of a "breach in technology dissemination restrictions" by Phylum U'Chakzii-Ziask, which provoked an immediate and violent backlash from the Vilani. The S'mrii rapidly tried to arm the merchant vessels they possessed, and sought assistance from the Lancians, but they were no match for the Vilani Grand Fleet.

Several large cities on Mimu, including Zaa'mikh and Chak'm Zaak, were devastated by conventional and nuclear weapons. The outcry among other minor races in the region at the treatment of the S'mrii was a significant factor in the onset of the Consolidation Wars.

By the conclusion of the Wars, several colonies had been damaged or destroyed altogether. The S'mrii retreated to their "core" of six worlds (3208 Gushemege, Zukchurukh, Tscho, Mimu, Akimu, Zuiar). Vilani armies of occupation were placed on these worlds. The Vilani implemented re-education policies, attempting to model S'mrii society along Vilani lines. Any success was marginal, bearing in mind the monolithic nature of S'mrii society. The S'mrii retained sublight transport for communications between Mimu and its colonies, but any ships straying outside the "quarantine zone" were destroyed.

## LIBERATION

The first Solomani scout expeditions reached Mimu in -2,173. Once initial communication difficulties were overcome ("Yes, we are human, but not the same group of humans..."), they were hailed as liberating heroes. The new Solomani administrators of Dagudashaag felt insecure, so close to Vland sector - they needed a counterweight to the Vilani, and the S'mrii fitted the bill perfectly. The Solomani forced the Vilani to pay reparations for the damage they caused: U'Chakzii was thus able to become a major ship contractor for the Rule of Man military. S'mrii were promoted to senior posts in the sector administration, and they also served on scout vessels which travelled as far as Antares and Ley Sectors. The S'mrii outlying colonies were re-established, and S'mrii scientists assisted in the establishment of colonies on Medurma and Ushra.

## THE CONSETIENCY

The Solomani had provided the S'mrii with everything they required to form their own independent state: Jump technology, a revived industrial base, and the confidence to deal with other races on an equal basis. The S'mrii bided their time: after about -1,600, any interstellar trade in the Mimu region effectively depended on them. By -1,570 the last splinters claiming authority from the Rule of Man had destroyed themselves in internecine conflict, and the S'mrii declared the formation of the *Reeskia'mrassa*, or S'mrii ConSentiency, so named because they espoused principles of equal rights for all sophonts - remarkable in those darkest of days.

With the military forces they had salvaged from the Rule of Man, and those they had formed themselves, the S'mrii were able to defend themselves against almost all the threats of the Long Night. Their objective was never to expand: they consolidated, continued quietly trading between themselves, and shivered at the darkness beyond their borders.

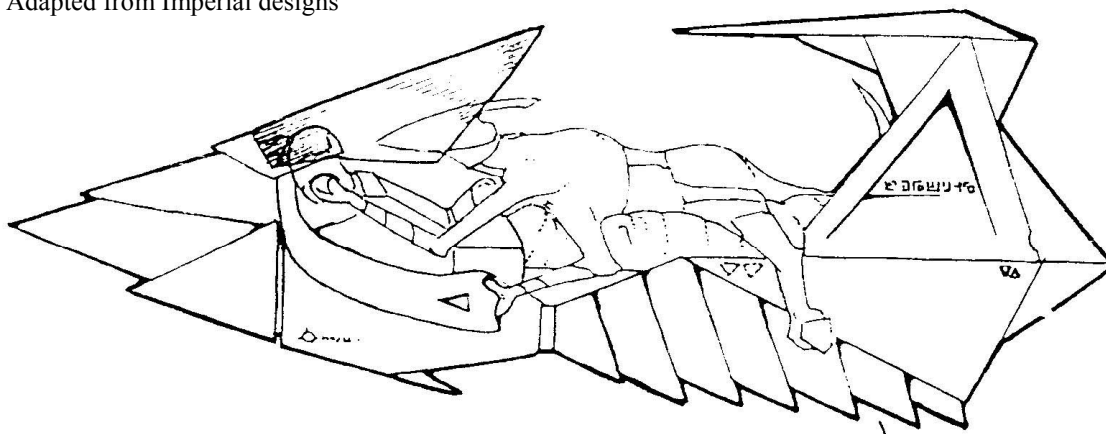
Although relatively recent, this era has still generated its share of enigmas. What were the Gates Of Zuiar, kilometre-long frameworks of metal in orbit above that colony world, long since "salavaged". Were they, as some suggest drydocks for huge sublight arks since departed for worlds beyond Charted Space? We may never know.

#### THE PACIFICATION CAMPAIGNS

Forward scouts of the expanding Sylean Federation reached the ConSentiency at about -30. The S'mrii responded rather coolly to their overtures, since they feared the submergence of their culture in another human-dominated state, and were quite happy trading independently with the Lancians to spinward. Some initial progress had been made by about 60, when, under Vilani pressure, the terms for entry were significantly changed, to the detriment of the S'mrii. The S'mrii rejected the proposals out of hand. This was presented to the Emperor as a direct snub to his authority. Much of the Mimu/Tansa region was already beginning to destabilise, and the Imperium was able to take several worlds on the trailward edge of the subsector by military intimidation. The Revolt of Shiramuunir from Lancian Confederation control (See Contact: The Lancians, issue 4) and stiffening resistance by the S'mrii led to full-scale war in 74.

Vilani strategic control over the attacks meant that they were bloody and uncompromising. Out of sight of Sylean units, many atrocities were committed against S'mrii civilians. Mass executions were commonplace on Zuiar and Tree'chuakh. Tae became a radioactive desert once more. The S'mrii resisted as best they could, but Mimu fell to Imperial forces by 108.

MILITARY SCOUTBIKE  
Adapted from Imperial designs



Overlapping plates  
—a common feature of S'mrii design

#### THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Vilani megacorporation Makhidkarun began a major settlement programme in the Mimu/Tansa region following the end of the Pacification Campaign, and the S'mrii had little choice but to bear its indignities. Like their comrades the Lancians, they, decided that apparent compliance with the Imperials would serve them best. The S'mrii would make themselves invaluable to the Third Imperium.

Rebuilt S'mrii military forces acquiesced to the Imperial sector command. Leading phyla restructured to cater for Human markets. Loyal service in the Ilelish Revolt and the First Civil War earned the gratitude of the Imperial government.

The creation of the Lancian Cultural Region by Empress Arbella in 639 benefited the S'mrii greatly. What they had given with one scaly hand they took with another - using a "broad" interpretation of the economic provisions of the Cultural Region charter, they re-established the ConSentiency as a loose trading association. The ConSentiency had no formal governmental ties - they didn't need any. The Kiaskui were securely in place as the hereditary Imperial Dukes of Mimu.

Vilani megacorporations have found themselves steadily forced out of the Lancian Region by resurgent S'mrii and Lancian companies. Cries of "unfair restraint of trade" have repeatedly been rejected, as the S'mrii have always adhered to the letter of the Imperial Charter ... just. To destroy the S'mrii now would tear the heart out of the Domain's economy, and they know it. For the time being, the S'mrii are where they want to be...

## S'MRII CHARACTER GENERATION

Due to the physiological differences between S'mrii and Humaniti, different ability scores and aging rolls are used for S'mrii. Tables are given below.

### Ability Scores:

Strength	1D+2	(Maximum A)
Dexterity	2D+1	(Maximum G)
Endurance	1D+3	(Maximum B)
Intelligence	2D+1	(Maximum G)
Education	2D	(Maximum G)
Phylum Status	2D	(see text)
Phylum Rank	(Int+Edu)/2 + (7D-3)	(see text)

Aging - See Above

S'mrii may follow many of the careers given in *MegaTraveller Player's Manual*, though certain DMs apply. These are shown in the table below:

Career	Enlistment	Survival	Comments
Navy	+1	+1	Imperial Navy
Marines	-4		Imperial Marines
Army	-1		SCS Ground Forces
Scouts	+2	+1	Imperial Scouts
Flyers	-1		
Law Enf	+1		
Doctors	+2	+1	
Diplomats	+2	+1	
Bureaucrats	+3		
Merchants	+1	-1	Trading phylum
Belters	+1		
Hunters	+1		
Scientists	+2	+1	Research phylum

There are no S'mrii Sailors (Wet Navy functions are carried out by the Unified Ground Forces), Pirates or Barbarians. The Other and Rogue career types are replaced by the Exclude character type. One new character type is given here, the Dreamweaver.

Note: S'mrii following a Human career structure with four-year terms often fare poorly in training, because of the "slapdash" Human approach to education. Apply a -2 DM to all rolls to gain skills in such situations. S'mrii careers with six-year terms suffer no penalty.

S'mrii are considered adults at age 32. Terms are 6 years long.

Terms:	25	27	29	31	33	35	36	37	38	39	40+
Years:	182	194	206	218	230	242	248	254	260	266	272
Strength		-1 (6+)				-1 (8+)				-1 (9+)	
Dexterity		-1 (5+)				-1 (6+)				-2 (8+)	
Endurance		-1 (6+)				-1 (6+)				-1 (9+)	
Intelligence				no effect before age 260					-1(9+)		
Education				unaffected by aging							
Phylum Status				unaffected by aging							

## THE KIAKH'IEE

The Kiakh'iee are mammalian omnivore/gatherers, domesticated by the S'mrii early in their history, and used by them for the care of their eggs and infant young. They share the same hexapedal body structure as the S'mrii, and are between half and two-thirds the size of an adult S'mrii when fully-grown. The fur colouration of Kiakh'iee varies between white, through golden yellow, to greyish black (very rare). There are some twenty recognised subspecies or "breeds" in existence.

The Kiakh'iee are remarkable in that they appear to be "nearly sentient", and as far as the Sophontology division of the IISS can tell, this was triggered by the process of selective breeding practised by the S'mrii. The discovery was made in 1059, and nearly caused civil war, as the IISS tried to obtain full protected status for the Kiakh'iee. Agreement was finally reached on a "guardianship" arrangement, whereby individual Kiakh'iee would be classed as minors, under the supervision of a S'mrii (or less commonly, a human).

## THE DREAMWEAVER

Dreamweaver is an artist in virtual reality, a creator of imaginary realms in cybernetic otherspace. Escapist fantasies, travelogues, historical dramas, "what if" alternative futures - all these are meat and drink to the dreamweaver. Because the Virtuality Dreams are so important to the S'mrii as entertainment, and spiritual uplift, the 'Weavers enjoy a very high status in S'mrii society. All the major phyla employ 'Weaver teams and individual consultants, but talented freelancers can make an excellent living.

Trainee 'Weavers may be assigned as datahunters to a team of more senior 'Weavers, roving researchers gathering information from many possible sources to ensure that the finished product is as realistic as possible. Datahunters may well venture where no sane S'mrii would ever go in search of a new experience to convey to a critical public...

## ROLEPLAYING THE S'MRII

What makes a S'mrii special? The physical differences between Humans and S'mrii are the most readily apparent. S'mrii may be weaker, but they are



considerably more dextrous, and the wide range and acuity of their senses make them sharply aware of their environment. The all encompassing phyla provide an environment, which is outwardly safe and stable, but political intrigues, trading of favours and subtle advantages abound. The S'mrii plan slowly, and attack quickly, and with devastating accuracy. If you're looking for something a little more, shall we say, cerebral than the run-of-the mill Traveller character, then the S'mrii may be the race for you.

To help you get an overall picture of the race, and help you "think S'mrii", here are a few pointers:-

*S'mrii abhor violence.* The legacy of the "Day of Dying", both physical and psychological, is always with the S'mrii. They appreciate more than any other race the futility of aggression, and they will avoid outright violence at all costs, unless their own existence is threatened. When violence is unavoidable, they plan it with utmost care, and execute it with astounding speed and accuracy, and a degree of finesse, which is often breathtaking.

S'mrii reserve their greatest contempt for those of other races who are habitually violent, and who inflict suffering on others for their own amusement. A S'mrii relishes exposing the basic absurdities of such attitudes: a thug's fate is typically humiliation and ridicule. A S'mrii in a PC party is the perfect antidote to that common affliction, the obstreperous Marine: "Oh dear, your Gauss Rifle seems to have fallen to pieces! Let, me help you with that...."

*S'mrii are sneaky.* The meticulous care which S'mrii use in preparation of their projects bestows on them a sometimes almost mythical ability to achieve success in the most difficult conditions. For the S'mrii data hunters, intelligence gathering and covert action are a way of life. S'mrii will never confront a powerful enemy directly, so long as other indirect methods to achieve their ends exist. Think laterally!

*S'mrii hate Vilani.* They hate them for the crimes committed against them in the past, for the Vilani treatment of non-combatants, for their arrogance, and their distortion of Galactic history. S'mrii have been victims of Vilani social and political policies for millennia, and they will seek a reckoning whenever an opportunity presents itself.

They will never, never attack Vilani directly, but if it is in the power of a S'mrii to thwart the plans of a Vilani individual or organisation through guile or deceit, then he will seize that opportunity with glee. S'mrii business-sophonts smile and say "thank you" when serving Vilani, but the smile is a fixed one...

*S'mrii are snobs.* While the S'mrii cannot be described as being truly xenophobic, they do exhibit a fair degree of cultural prejudice. Human institutions are ramshackle, short-lived affairs to a race, which was spacefaring twenty-six thousand years ago. The vast majority of S'mrii are convinced that their social system

is far more stable and efficient than anything produced by other races. What makes this truly galling for the average Human is that they may well be right.

#### ROLEPLAYING KIAKH'IEE

Kiakh'iee are small, furry and insufferably cute. They are also smarter than the IISS thinks - some individuals are almost as intelligent as the average human. They communicate with their "owners" in short phrases of InterLanguage in a "cute animal" voice, though the smarter ones are excellent mimics, and enjoy using this ability to cause mischief. This can be a REAL problem if they've been exposed to too much human holovision...

"Do YOU suffer from embarrassing flatulence? Take Preparation F..."

"Laydeeeez and gentlebeings! Welcome to the subsector's most popular game show ... That's My RAM Grenade."

"Traveller Party - Massacred in Crossfire - Film at 11..."

#### REFEREEING THE S'MRII

##### GUARDIAN RESPONSE

Guardian Response should only be triggered under the most extreme circumstances at the Referee's option. S'mrii are not mercurial, hair-trigger creatures like Vargr or Aslan. The task description below is given as a guideline only.

To avoid Guardian Response: [Difficulty], Determination, Instant

The task difficulty is dependent on the circumstances:

S'mrii witnesses-

Killing of unarmed sophonts: Simple

Killing of unarmed S'mrii: Routine

Use of weapons of mass destruction: Difficult

Another S'mrii (equal or higher Status) suffering

Guardian Response: Difficult

Injury to siblings or offspring: Formidable

The difficulty is increased one level if the attacking individual or unit is identifiably vilani.

Guardian Response typically lasts 10+2D minutes. The effects are as follows:

Strength increases 4 points and dexterity 6 points.

Movement speed becomes 3, with no Endurance penalty.

Immunity to morale checks.

Two attacks may be made per combat round (ref's discretion).

Upon withdrawal from Response, a S'mrii is unable to attack for any reason, including self-defence. Those unable to make a Net hookup within 1D minutes of withdrawal must make a Difficult, Determination roll, or suffer Suicidal impulse.

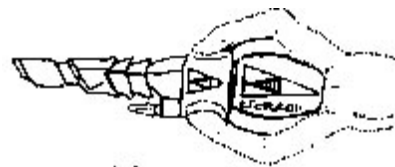
#### LARGE-SCALE COMBAT

"A S'mrii battlefield is littered with survivors..." --- Gen. Miara Riitkr.

ConSentiency Unified Ground Forces: The S'mrii share with the Vilani a reluctance to engage in warfare, and they also feel that when necessary, it should be conducted "efficiently". This is where the similarity ends. The crucial point is the definition of "efficient" warfare. To the S'mrii, this means a war which has been concluded to their advantage, and with the minimal possible loss of sentient life on either side. The S'mrii have a deep-seated loathing of holocaustic weapons systems, and those who would use them. The only value of nuclear weapons is their deterrent effect - first use simply triggers retaliation in kind, and mutual destruction.

The S'mrii favour a "surgical" approach to warfare, aimed at "decapitating" the enemy. Rapid, well-targeted strike missions, agitprop programmes, and guerrilla missions of all kinds characterise their war efforts. A force which attacks a group of S'mrii worlds may make quite rapid initial advances, and consider itself close to victory ... until it finds its admirals and generals dead, its logistics network shattered, its troops demoralised and dispersed. The S'mrii can be ruthless, but only with those who are themselves ruthless.

Because of their physiology, S'mrii are unable to cope with high-recoil weapons. They have made considerable strides in miniaturised gravitic recoil compensators, but their price is sometimes prohibitive: drone weapons platforms and semi-autonomous warbots are a common sight in S'mrii military forces. Lasers are the S'mrii weapon of choice because of their precision and penetration. Fire control systems, precision guided munitions and other "smartillery" systems produced by the S'mrii rival the best Hiver hardware.





# PORT OF CALL: MIMU

## MIMU 0208 A583AC9-F Hi 314Im F8V

**Primary:** Triss, Spectral Class: F8 V Mass: 1.144 sol. Luminosity: 2126 sol. Triss is a stable main sequence star.

**Mimu:** Mean Orbital Radius 1.65AU, Period 723.77 std. days; Diameter 8,528 km; Mass 0.2845 terra; Molten core; Density 0.98; Mean Surface Gravity 0.649G; Rotational Period 29h 54m 17s; Axial inclination 12° 39' 32.4"; Energy Absorption 0774.

Surface Atmospheric Pressure 2.05 standard; Composition oxygen-nitrogen mix; Hydrographic percentage 32-6%. Mean temperature 36.9°C.

**Satellites:** One: Suikhtreekh, Diameter 47 km, Orbit 101,600 km.

Native life -- two native sentient species present:

Paraserpens sapiens galactis - S'mrii; Hosking Rating: 137. IISS Code: 9A (Independently developed fast sublight travel).

Ardemala domesticans mimae - Kiakh'iee; Hosking Rating est. 70. IISS Code: 0 (Evidence of tool use).

Total System Population: 38.245 billion.

Note: The Kiakh'iee were not included in the last Imperial Survey census, but are estimated to number between 9 and 15 billion.

**Primary Cities:** Triskskiss, 7 billion, Starport A; Chussria', 5.3 billion, Starport A; Isstrakh, 4.9 billion, Starport A; Kiarik, 4.2 billion; Zandervoort "Snakepit", 40 million, Starport A [Human enclave]-

**World Government:** Charismatic Oligarchy. Administrative and judicial functions are performed by Phylum Kiaskui, a quasi-corporate entity which has provided the world's feudal leadership for the past 16 millennia, and which enjoys the overwhelming confidence of the populace. The Interphylum Congress (Skai'i'uss), a standing conference of the world's leading phyla, enacts new legislation.

Social Outlook: Conservative, advancing, unaggressive, neutral, monolithic, aloof.

Law Profile: Personal (dependant on phylum allegiance) 9-A8876

Technology Profile: FF-FGGGF-EEEF-FG-G

**Population Breakdown** (excluding Kiakh'iee): 99.92% S'mrii, 0.06% Humaniti, mixed, Imperial, <0.02% other races.

## SYSTEM DATA

\* Primary Triss F8 V

1 Chazu Trakee F100338-F Research

2 Imiik F310768-E Mining. Colony.

3 Kiass A6B096A-E Hi Mining Colony.

4 Mimu A583AC9-F Hi S. Capital

12 Suikhtreekh FS00439-F Research

5 Aassrikh Small Gas Giant

8 Sfasku F4A4737-F Research.

6 Reechi' Sakh F00086A-F Mining Colony.

7 Makhuiss'ruk Large Gas Giant

2 Tra (Ring) HR00107-F Research-

30 Skiree F511537-E

8 Susstrui Su Small Gas Giant

9 Ssaskmia Small Gas Giant

## HISTORY

[The history of Mimu, the S'mrii homeworld, is discussed in the article Contact: The S'mrii, elsewhere in this issue]

**Ancient Sites:** Although Mimu is not a recognised Ancient site, there is fragmentary evidence (including transplanted flora on surrounding worlds in Mimu subsector) that it was visited by one or more starfaring races sometime between -400,000 and -320,000. No significant artifacts or sites have been found, but such concrete evidence is likely to have been obliterated in the millennia of settlement of the Triss system.

## STARPORT PROCEDURE

The Triss system is one of the most extensively developed in the entire Imperium, having been home to a race which has had a spacefaring capability continuously for over twelve thousand years.

All planetary bodies with any economic potential have long been settled, and all have excellent interface port facilities.

**Landing Pattern:** Interplanetary traffic in the Triss system is extremely heavy, and inbound Jump traffic is confined to rigidly- defined transit lanes at all times. It is **highly dangerous** to deviate from the assigned approach vector as the S'mrii make extensive use of high-gee fusion rocket transports for priority cargoes between the major insystem settlements. The "fast lanes" allocated to these vehicles are often close to those for standard traffic, particularly in cisMimuan space.

Traffic control (handled by the ISA ComCentre on Suikhtreekh) is highly efficient, but organised primarily for S'mrii interplanetary traffic. Human Jump vessels

often find their approach allocation slots “bumped” in ships, especially bulk transports in favour of native in the agroproduce otherwise known spaceways between Mimu and the outlying settlements. Incoming Human ships can expect to be “stacked” in high orbit for up to eight hours awaiting clearance to an orbital or surface port. Deviations from Traffic Control instructions are dealt with by Colonial Naval forces based at Kiass and Suikhtreekh.

Human traffic is usually directed to the massive interface facilities at Zandervoort and Triskskiss: clearance to land at another port usually requires advance arrangements with the Interphylum administration of the city concerned. Post-landing safety and customs checks are scrupulously thorough - little evades advanced S'mrii sensor systems.

**Starport Facilities:** The primary starport facilities on Mimu are operated by the Imperial Starports Authority, as the world is a subsector capital. Ports elsewhere the system are owned and operated by Reseskia'mrassa, otherwise known as the ConSentiency, a panphylum trading and social grouping formed from the shell of the S'mrii petty states which dominated the Mimu region the Long Night.

All major surface ports are of TAS class A1 standard, and have extralixity zones and Human-sized accommodation, but only Triskskiss and Zandervoort are routinely configured to accept Human traffic. These sprawling interface complexes have at least 175 berths each, 30 of which are dedicated bulk-cargo transfer bays. Traffic levels are relatively steady a between 105% and 115% of capacity.

Like all of S'mrii engineering, starship construction and repair at Mimu's ports are extremely expensive. However, the end results are always of superior quality. Vessels are constructed to Tech Level 15 standards, with certain components, including computers and fire control system at TL 16. Search And Rescue facilities cover the entire Triss system inside the orbit of Ssaskmia, and are highly efficient.

**Port Costs:** All port services are free to phylum-registered vessels. The following charges refer only to non-S'mrii traffic. Refined Fuel Cr.260/tonne. Unrefined Fuel Cr.28/tonne. Wilderness refuelling is not permitted except in emergencies. Berthing Costs Cr.400 for the first 5 days, Cr.100 per additional day. Warehousing Costs: Cr.8 per tonne per week Security Costs: Cr.50 flat tax per week at Zandervoort Down, free elsewhere. Shuttle Costs: Scheduled shuttle services for Humans are only available to Zandervoort Down and Triskskiss Down: Cr.12 per tonne of cargo Cr.80 per passenger. Transfers to other ports are by charter only.

**Regulations:** Because of the perceived fragility of Mimu's ecosphere, regulations regarding the imports of plants and animals are quite stringent. Traders are recommended to seek the appropriate ConSentiency documentation for their biocargoes at the point of departure, to speed inward clearance upon arrival at

Mimu. There are no limits on the import or export of Imperial Currency, but its usefulness is limited in most areas outside Zandervoort. The S'mrii have their own dedicated Electronic Credit Transfer system called PICTRA (See later).

**Languages:** The first language of Mimu is Sfuizia (“InterLanguage”), the S'mrii native tongue. Its guttural tones are quite difficult for Humans to master, and translator memclips are widely available throughout Dagudashaag. Communication is rarely a problem however, as the higher-status S'mrii who have most dealings with Humans are almost universally fluent in Galanglic. Kehuu (the language of the Lancian Cultural Region) is also widely spoken, by perhaps a third of all S'mrii. Visitors should note that Vilani is very poorly received among planetbound S'mrii.

**Portside Facilities:** All major port centres have Human Environment Sections, areas with comfortable human accommodation, but these are likely to be exclusively phylum-owned outside Zandervoort and Triskskiss. Both these cities boast five-star accommodation: ConStellar-Hilton operates three hotel complexes on planet. Outside a metroplex HES, finding accommodation is difficult to impossible, as the planetary infrastructure is totally geared to a race with a non-Human physiology.

Port security is provided by PanPhylum enforcers, backed up by Unified Ground Forces troops. Response is rapid and efficient. *You have been warned.*

S'mrii fare is broadly palatable to Humans (if a little mushy and heavy on the salt!), but a wide range of Human cuisine is available and inexpensive.

## A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO MIMU

This Visitor's Guide is divided into three sections: the first gives a general overview of Mimu's planetology and ecology, the second deals with the Human enclave of Zandervoort (known to its natives as “Snakepit”), and the third describes the S'mrii cities of Mimu.

### PLANETOLOGY/ECOLOGY

Mimu is outwardly an old world. There is little continuing tectonic activity, and the scars of millions of years of erosion by wind and water mark the globe. Even the central fires of the world have cooled (although the inner core is still molten) and huge sections of the mantle have contracted. This has given rise to Mimu's distinctive landforms: the surface is a patchwork of deeply sunken ocean basins, where millions of square kilometres of crust have simply subsided, surrounded by rugged mountain peaks, and the windblown desolation of the High Desert.

The flora and fauna of Mimu are carbon-based and use laevo- (left-handed) amino acids and are thus able to eat and be eaten by Terran life without excessive ill effects. The fauna are predominantly poikilotherms (cold-blooded) with a few homiotherms: the body pattern is commonly bilaterally symmetric and

hexapedal. Vegetation on Mimu is a dark green-blue shade to exploit the greater proportion of blue and ultraviolet in Trisslight. Mimu's ozone layer provides inadequate protection for non-native life -- UV barrier creams or sprays, or melanin tablets are advised for travellers who anticipate more than a half-hour's exposure each day. Temperatures at the low altitudes of most S'mrii settlements are best described as "tropical" (30°C+) even in mid-latitudes, and travellers venturing, outside should take appropriate steps to avoid heat exhaustion.

#### ZANDERVOORT/"SNAKEPIT":

*Not just another Startown! A remote sub-tropical paradise where anything is possible...*

- promotional holovideo.

The first S'mrii explorers in the Skiree Mar highlands of Mimu, one of the most lifeless and desolate of the world's High Desert regions, made a truly startling discovery. A haven of life, in the midst of a wasteland, a geological formation they called the Chee'mrskur Mikmui - The World's Navel. These first primitive travellers shielded their eyes against the wind-blown desert sand, to stare across a hole in the world, boiling with cloud, which reached to the opposite horizon.

The Chee'mrskur Mikmui is a tiny cousin of Mimu's ocean basins, a sinkhole over two kilometres deep and twenty wide with sheer cliffs on all sides, and a subtropical microclimate packed with unique plant and animal species.

Chee'mrskur's sheer remoteness limited its utility to the native S'mrii, and the sinkhole was only intermittently settled before the arrival of the Solomani. The region was now under the aegis of Humans positively inclined to the S'mrii, but there was a price to be paid. In return for bilateral trade agreements, Rydell-McRae Corporation, the Rule of Man megacorp, enforced a ten-thousand-year lease on Chee'mrskur for its regional headquarters. A shuttleport was constructed on the shores of the sinkhole's basal lake, and the World's Navel, a symbol of Mimu's "soul" for many spiritual S'mrii, soon echoed to the roar of Solomani engines.

Human institutions are sadly far less enduring than those of the S'mrii, and Rydell-McRae Inc. disintegrated with the collapse of the Rule of Man. With the help of the S'mrii, a tiny subsidiary, RMR Support Services Mimu, survived to administer the stranded human population of the port and the surrounding town of Zandervoort. Encircled by a world of enigmatic lizards, the rim Human enclave soon acquired moniker Snakepit. Zandervoort/Snakepit today is home to some forty million souls, a population density as high as the mountain cities of Medurma; indeed, most Medurmans would feel quite at home here, for Snakepit is a true melting pot of the Domain's peoples and cultures. The descendants of the original Rydell-McRae corporate elite, the "Ahmarr", rule with a languid, seemingly disinterested hand from their gravitic, garden-palace above an island reserve in the centre of Lake Rydell.

Seldom seen in public without their Alikasch bodyguards, the Ahmarr are tall, fine-featured humans who affect long, slicked hair and body tattoos in geometric, reptilian patterns, or "scale effect" skin cosmetics. With their mirrored anti-UV contact lenses, they seem a species apart from Humaniti - millennia of contact with a profoundly alien race has affected them deeply.

Snakepit is a freeport, a rough-and-tumble marketplace for all manner of wares, legal and otherwise. Whatever you purchase, you can be sure that it will be of the highest quality. The Ahmarr and their S'mrii patrons, who claim a fair tranche of the price of anything sold in the enclave, ensure just that. The hundreds of thousands of Imperial tourists who pass through immigration each year, slick with UV barrier cream and seemingly welded to their precious guidecomps and holocorders never see this side to the enclave. Zandervoort Proper, or "Northside" in local parlance, is a gleaming, high-tech luxury prison compound for the credit-heavy groundhoggars shepherded on their package tours of S'mrii "cultural sites" across Mimu, who ignore the adventure to be had a few kilometres away from their air-conditioned hotel rooms.

Across Lake Rydell, it is a world apart. On and within the shaded, foliage-draped south cliffs of the sinkhole, on the grav-suspended, flower-garlanded marketways and labyrinthine tunnels, S'mrii Excludes hawk cut-price neurogear. Lancian dreamweavers proffer untold delights on silicon. Alikasch cybermercs advertise their deadly services.

There is but one overriding rule which governs all of Snakepit's activities - *there will be no killing*. Slug throwers and energy weapons are prohibited within Snakepit/Zandervoort's confines. All residents and visitors wear "medidots", miniaturised monitor-transceivers which constantly check the wearer's heart and respiratory function. Ostensibly, these allow all to reap the benefits of extensive phylum-subsidised medical services in the case of an emergency, but they also trigger a rapid and overwhelming response from PanPhylum security (in extremis, backed up by Imperial Marines) if the medidot registers a violent death. It is Zandervoort's proud boast that it suffers less than one murder per year.

The Ahmarr, however recognise that Humans must vent their pent-up aggression, and to that end there are several large unarmed combat arenas within the Snakepit perimeter. The first and largest of these is the Valaskialf Arena on the shores of Lake Rydell, in the shadow of the Ahmarr Palace. Known humorously to the locals as "The Killing Field", the Arena stages numerous combats each day, with both individuals and groups, both duels between disputeres and organised sporting combats between professionals for rich prizes. The S'mrii, however, enforce their own rules Three Zura S'mrii seated above the centre of the arena monitor the aggression levels of the combatants. If these exceed predetermined limits and a competitor seems likely to be killed, the Zura activate preplaced tranqpads on the

combatants, instantly rendering them unconscious. Such an ending is humiliating for the competitor, and Arena fighters learn to hone their skills without giving in to blind aggression. Snakepit is home to some of the best unarmed combat experts in the Domain.

The moderating influence of the S'mrii makes Snakepit outwardly less dangerous than many starport towns across the sector. Appearances, however, can be misleading. The scaly fingers of the S'mrii phyla reach everywhere within Snakepit, and even a simple peddler of simstims may have powerful friends to call upon if wronged by foolish adventurers. The unwary may not lose their lives, but they may well lose their credits, their health, and their reputations. Step lightly in the streets of Snakepit.

#### THE CANYONS

Countless ages of weathering by wind and water have produced extensive canyon systems surrounding all of the world's major oceans. Stretching for thousands of kilometres, these humid, richly forested valleys are havens of life in a myriad of strange and wonderful forms. Most notably, they are the ancestral home of the S'mrii, who evolved from flying carnivores which nested in the canyon walls.

#### The Canyon Cities:

For the few Humans who have visited them, the Canyon Cities of Mimu are truly wondrous sights. These seemingly haphazard constructions of ancient crycrete retain much of the character of pre-sentient avian roosts, perched vertiginously on the most impossible outcrops of rock. In the mists of evening, when the Canyon S'mrii utter their haunting, high-pitched calls to Dreaming, and release their windborne glowglobes to mark the way, one can almost forget that Mimu is a mainstream Imperial world subsector capital.

Mua, Ska'i and other valley cities may be among the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the sector. Mua is particularly ancient: some of its weathered red-brown crycrete monuments date to the interregnum city-state of c.-17,000. Technology has made few and selective inroads here: the huge Zirmuik trees, which grow for hundreds of metres creeper-like up the canyon sides are still tapped for the water they draw up from the rivers below.

The Canyon Cities are isolated from the interstellar community. Few Canyon S'mrii have met Humans, and there is more than a passing undercurrent of xenophobia.

#### The Crystafalls:

Deep in a remote valley in the northern Uakhsia Highlands can be found another of the wonders of Mimu. Water from the S'ska Glacier flows over rich mineral deposits on its way to the Zussu Ziari ocean, and becomes saturated with mineral salts. When it reaches the Ukrik Falls, it drops an unbroken 400m to the pool below. In the tropical temperatures, much of the water evaporates, and beautiful, delicate crystals form in the few moments of free-fall.

For aeons, these jewels have survived only for an instant, to smash into dust on the rocks at the base of the falls. Only the most robust crystals can survive crude mechanical capture methods, and these jewels command prices of thousands of credits. The real prizes await those with advanced gravitic equipment. Chir Ak Ziask's LifeWeb is the greatest specimen yet known. a breathtaking natural crystal filigree fully thirty centimetres across. The LifeWeb is now on permanent display in the Interphylum Congress building in Triskskiss, in its own null-gravity capsule.

The Crystafalls are a major tourist site, but access to the crystal collecting points is strictly controlled. Only noted S'mrii artists are allowed direct access to the falls with their gravisculpture equipment, and PanPhylum security troops stand ready to prevent unauthorised collecting

#### THE PLAINS

Ever since the first great river barges drifted out into the fertile alluvial plains almost forty thousand years ago, these undulating, verdant lands have been a magnet to S'mrii settlement. The S'mrii have imposed their grid-like order of gravlev lines, robo-harvested Uichi fields and towering metroplexes over much of these lands, but hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of jungle and swamp survive, or have been restored to their native state.

Travellers flying over the coastal plains of Mimu are often presented with strange sights -- oddly circular lakes where none should be, glassy deserts of ethereal beauty. These are the scars of war - the fruits of an aggressive nature the S'mrii have learned to do without.

#### The Plains Cities:

The architecture of the Plains cities is as distinctively different as all the other aspects of the S'mrii homeworld. Although sometimes unfairly described by Human authorities as "variations on a ziggurat", S'mrii architecture does have a great deal of merit. The basic philosophy is to recreate many aspects of the original S'mrii canyon habitat - residential blocks are arranged parallel north-south, and both stepped and sloped back to admit maximum sunlight. The exteriors are usually quite heavily vegetated, and pools and waterfalls are a common feature in S'mrii buildings. Decorative bas-reliefs are common on both inner and outer walls. Commercial blocks tend to be taller, taking the form of either "ziggurats" or stacks of truncated pyramids. The tallest building in any city is usually the Phylum Centre of the dominant, or *Sfa* phylum in that area, which forms a spiritual centre for all the phyla in the city.

#### Ssiiku Mima: The InterPhylum World DataNet:

"I tell you they knew it all! ALL OF IT! I saw all of it on the Net! About the assassination, the war, everything! They knew about it before it happened! THE S'MRII CAN SEE THE FUTURE!!"

- 'Mad Mikey' Muradaz, netrunner, prior to his "protective hospitalisation" by PanPhylum medical staff.

of proto-Old Written. Although many Imperial scientists cried "fake!" at the time of the discovery, the articles have been positively dated at over twenty-six thousand years old, and many are now on display at the Museum of Discovery at Ias\*r. All but one of the languages have been translated at least partially, though a great deal of controversy remains. In particular one article written in what is believed to be some sort of dialect of Ssiarkuku appears to discuss a new type of rocket, which was to be tested later that year (-25,791). The language appears to have a unique base, but several palaeolinguists have claimed to be able to translate sections of the article. The most controversial claims have been made by Ishmaga Ershuk (of "Legends And Lore" fame), who proposes that the test probe was an experimental jump craft? This theory has however been rejected by all reputable scientists.

#### TELEPRESENCE

Although Mimu has an efficient global rapid transit system, it can be highly inconvenient to travel between widely-dispersed phylum installations. Although telecommunications solves this problem for most of Mimu's inhabitants, high-status S'mrii have adopted a novel approach. S'mrii higher in the phylum hierarchy seem to regard communicating with their equals in other phyla by vidphone or comlink as discourteous - many subtle nuances of gesture would be lost. To solve this, they make use of Z,:7 "stakh, or "telebots". teleoperated S'mriiform robots. The caller connects by comlink to a telebot in the destination city, which then makes its to the person to be contacted.

Although contact a Zia'sfakh may be disconcerting for first-time travellers to Mimu, they should be treated with appropriate respect, and not as simple robots!

#### "Urban Safari"

The S'mrii have suffered two major episodes of nuclear bombardment of their homeworld in the last thirty thousand years, and the effects on Mimu's biosphere have been devastating. Rapid climate shifts and the ensuing loss of habitat caused many major animal species to become extinct. In an effort to erase as much of the physical legacy of these holocausts as possible, S'mrii genetic engineers at the University of Mimu-Triskskiss have engaged in a vast programme to restore Mimu's biodiversity Through advanced geneering techniques, many "extinct" species have been restored though work on related species and preserved tissue.

Many of these species in pre-industrial times migrated for long distances in search of water, and the S'mrii felt that it was best that they were allowed freedom to roam. rather than being confined to wilderness parks\_ All specimens have been neurochipped to prevent them straying onto important locations like transportation lines, and the more dangerous species have pain triggers to prevent them approaching within '0 metres of a sentient The Ssaraass, a hexapedal carnivore fully eight metres lona to the tips of its three horns, is a truly starting sight in a main city thoroughfare!

#### Mikhss\*rii Virtuality Studios:

The Cultural Quarter of the Human Environment Section of Triskskiss City houses one of the best-known virtuality/multimedia production studios in the whole of the Domain. Mikhss\*rii Virtuality Studios SIA, although phylum-owned, has been highly successful at producing holovideo entertainment for the Human market. MVS Triskskiss records "Hoggareth, Traveller For Hire", one of the most widely syndicated soaps this century. Some 5,000 episodes have been made to date, with five different actors playing Hoggareth. Holoviewers from Antares to Zarushagar have enjoyed the adventures of ex-scout Dar Hoggareth and his two sidekicks, a Hamaran engineer called Boaz, and Ssri, a S'mrii navigator, as they adventure throughout "Known Space" in their dilapidated scoutship. There are filming sessions at the studios almost every day, and visitors are often allowed to observe. MV S runs a daily lottery among the studio's visitors, and the winner is offered a walk-on part in the next episode.

#### DreamPark:

Although the S'mrii have been using advanced virtuality technology for many years, they have only just begun to realise the massive commercial potential this has among the surrounding Human majority. MVS Virtuality Entertainment Centre, next to the sprawling studio complex is one of the S'mrii's first large-scale efforts to capture the Human market. The Centre has acquired a rather less unwieldy name from those who have experienced it: DeamPark. An astounding range of "total immersion" virtuality role-playing games can be played here, covering all historical periods and personal tastes. At somewhat greater expense, individuals or teams may design their own playing environment with the help of professional Dreamweavers. All players are constantly monitored by PanPhylum medical staff, and may enjoy their gaming in complete safety. DreamPark has become a "must visit" for many young travellers to Mimu.

#### THE TRISS SYSTEM:

The other planetary bodies in the Triss system are diverse, fascinating worlds in their own right. Suikhtreekh: The asteroidal moon of Mimu was the site of the first and only extraplanetary colony of the pre-Holocaust S'mrii, and was a prime target of the nuclear bombardment. The tiny moon, some twenty kilometres in length, was subjected to several direct fusion strikes and its surface was almost completely melted. Later explore,-, - described the moon as a "great glass bubble". Mimu's gravity had drawn much of the molten material towards the planetward "pole" of the moon, forming a translucent mountain of glass. Spacecraft crews docking at Suikhtreekh Orbital Port claim that they can make out "artificial" shapes within the glass mountain. but the S'mrii have restricted all access to that hemisphere of the moon.

Kiass: Originally cloaked in an insidious greenhouse atmosphere like Venus in the Terra system. Kiass is the subject of a sophisticated terraforming programme. begun in the earliest years of S'mrii post--Holocaust planetary exploration at about -13,000. Seeding by blue-

S'mrii computer engineers had an opportunity unparalleled by any other race - at the Rebirth, a single agency planned the elevation of Mimu's "barbarian" majority from TL2 to TL7, and an integrated global computer network formed a central part of their plans. Ssiiku Mima was in place by -13,620, a single Net spanning all the population centres on the planet, with common data storage and access protocols. Though greatly expanded and upgraded, the basic pattern of the Rebirth network survives. Ssiiku Mima underpins almost all of S'mrii society - all monetary transactions are dealt with by the Phylum Internal Credit Transfer System (PICTRA), an electronic credit system quite distinct from the Imperial Credit. The manifold Virtuality Dreams of Phyla and Race are stored on the Net for individuals to enjoy. Teleshopping via the Net is the predominant method of purchasing; shops are accessible only by Net, which allows the store owner to minimise his overheads, paying only for storage facilities and transportation. Ssiiku Mima shapes S'mrii cities at the most basic level - they appear to be almost entire]-, composed of offices and residences, with a generous scattering of "cultural" sites such as theatres and art galleries --giving the impression of being inhabited by aesthetes with a disdain for commerce.

Ssiiku Mima is also the domain of advanced pseudoreality personality constructs, the Ss'mitkr (a complex term broadly translated as 'ROM Constructs' - see "Legends and Lore: The Well of Souls"). The S'mrii attach a great deal of importance to knowledge and expertise, and seek any way they can to preserve it after an individual's demise. Phyla maintain libraries of such Constructs to provide advice on administrative and technical matters. In many ways, the Construct library is regarded as a "shadow council", and phylum members may vote for those Constructs they consider to be most skilled and useful.

For the technical secrets encoded in its labyrinthine networks and the billions of credits-equivalent which flow through it daily, Ssiiku Mima attracts hackers and netranners from far and wide. Mimu's Net presents special challenges to those seeking to penetrate it illegally operating systems are not of an Imperial standard, and direct neural interface is hazardous for non-S'mrii because of the difference in neural potentials. In the dark byways of Snakepit, crude neuroelectrical converters allowing Human netjocks to "hook up" to Ssiiku Mima change hands for vast sums. Those who experience the Net "in the raw" and survive with their life and sanity intact become netranning legends. Those who are not so lucky add to the rumours of "ravens, bloodsoaked horrors" in the deepest recesses of the Net, and even free-roaming artificial intelligences, outgrowths of the simple Constructs...

The most cynical 'Runners say that the all-powerful phyla permit only so much illegal netranning, in order to keep Snakepit's economy "ticking over". The InterPhylum Council has threatened to disconnect Snakepit from Ssiiku Mima on several occasions, but never gone through with its threat. Perhaps those who discover too much are swatted at once. It would accord with what we know about the S'mrii...

## REFEREE'S INFORMATION

### SSIIKU MIMA

The S'mrii disdain overt physical violence. Disputes over precedence and rights between phyla are resolved in "Net combat", where one phylum attempts to prove its intellectual superiority by penetrating the other's defences. The last global war on Mimu took place in 1109 between Phylum Kiaskui and Phylum Kiaatrutkr, the two most powerful on the planet. It lasted just over eight seconds, and its sole significant casualty was Kiaatrutkr's Director of Commercial Operations (Tansa), who got stuck in a lift when the power to their phylum headquarters in Chussria' mysteriously failed.

Pity the poor Human netranner who gets caught in the middle...

### The Weeping Spire of Zaa'mikh:

Two hundred kilometres north of the modern provincial city of Ias'r stands one of the most spectacular and moving monuments of the Vilani subjugation of Mimu, made more remarkable in that it was created by the Vilani themselves. In -5.287, a strike cruiser of the Ziru Sirka Grand Fleet launched a thermal-boosted nuclear weapon against the S'mrii city of Zaa'mikh. A horrific weapon intended to cause uncontrollable firestorms in Mimu's dense atmosphere, the thermalnuke produced an intense heat flash which laid waste to the city. An ancient city thronged with refugees from the Vilani landings further south was instantly converted into an undulating sea of radioactive glass.

This would have been little different from other atrocities during the Consolidation Wars. had it not been for a sheer fluke of nature. The thermalnuke detonated at an altitude of two kilometres, Precisely over the Kiarik Kiira ComRelay, a five hundred metre-high ferrocrete broadcasting tower. The surface of the tower was completely melted, but the structure somehow remained standing. : fused pinnacle of marbled glass seemingly organic to the holocaustic landscape around it, the Weeping Spire is so named because its very apex seems to resemble a S'mrii face turned towards the sky., weeping in pain.

For millennia, the Spire could only be viewed from the air in specially shielded vehicles, as the surface remained highly radioactive. Nuclear damper sleds provided by the Rule of Man military made Zaa'mikh safe once more. On the 244th day of the year -1947, the entire Executive Council of Phylum Kiaskui stood in the open air on the fused glass of Zaa'mikh and stared in silent reverence at the Weeping Spire. This day was of such intense spiritual significance to the S'mrii that the Kiaskui Phylum Date system takes it to be its zero date.

In 552, during engineering work to reinforce the Spire's structure, a densitometric scan disclosed a small cache ten metres underground, to the south of the Spire. Careful excavation revealed a time capsule from just before the First Holocaust, with many domestic items, including several newspapers in the original languages

green algae converted the carbon-dioxide atmosphere to an oxygen-based one. but the high atmospheric pressure and constant electrical storms create acidic conditions on the surface which are lethal to unprotected individuals. The climate changes have made exploitation of the world's massive mineral reserves economically practicable, however, and vast areas of the world have now been strip-mined by huge

phylum refinery vehicles to a depth of a kilometre or more.

This excavation reveals much about the geological history of the world: lava tunnels from a previous volcanic epoch have been uncovered at many locations on Kiass, and are only just being explore by S'mrii and Human investigators.

# INDISS

## GES

Reports from this low population world state that a person or persons unknown are using high tech weapons (Tech level 8/9) to wipe out isolated bands of the nomadic herdsmen who inhabit this world. Not only are the herdsmen being lollid but also the herds of Dierbison that they follow are been systematically wiped out by these high tech killers-.

As yet the authorities of this pastoral world have no idea why the herdsmen and their herds have been targeted or who is doing the killing- Another mystery is how the weapons were acquired on planet since only weapons of local manufacture are allowed out of the starport.

## MIMU

Galvin Vormaniff, Controller of Imperial Estates Mimu, was today impeached on the charge of embezzling funds in excess c. Cr.1.5 Billion from the subsector government. Vormaniff was placed under house arrest by Duke Kiaskui who said "in these difficult times it behooves us all to behave impeccably, however some see it as an opportunity to line their own pockets at the expense of everyone else. This sort of behaviour will )ot be tolerated here or anywhere else n my subsector. When asked how Vormaniff was caught the Duke refused to answer the question, saying only that it would become dear when the sector auThorities start to investigate this matter.

## ZISHKU

Reports from COACC for this world have today requested all ships to be on the lookout for a rogue warship which overflew the starport early this morning. A review of the computer records shows the ship to have been an Atlantic-class Strike Cruiser 'INS 3794 CORTEZ' however a check of Naval records reveals that the Cortez was lost with all hands during the Solomani Rim War.

## MIMU

Bureaucrat's Nightmare (Early 1118) Unconfirmed reports have reached this office that several layers of the subsector government are being transferred to a new purpose built centre on Tree'chuakh. This surprise move by Duke Kiaskui, is seen by most commentators as a positive step towards better interspecies relations, and shows great faith in the continuing power of the Imperium. However some have questioned when was this centre built? And why was it kept so secret?

## ZUIAR

"Thousands dead" in blast at chemical plant. Last night the city of Dasfrag was rocked by a series of eruptions at the main factory of Gabudys LIC, which is the major employer here. The explosions released clouds of highly toxic chemicals into the atmosphere. The population of the suburbs downwind of the plant has been "seriously affected", and regional medical centres are unable to cope with the influx of casualties.

Emergency aid and supplies from both Human and S'mrii Blocs are flooding into the devastated region but observers have claimed that the relief effort is "too little too late" due to the nature of the gases released. As of this morning there are few indications of the cause of the explosions although investigations are continuing. Company spokespersons avoided any mention of sabotage, but stated that they were studying a possible cooling water system failure in one of the large reaction vessels.

# A GATHERING OF STRANGERS

## General Introduction

This scenario is designed to get the characters to interact on a personal basis with the S'mrii. It has been written so that it can be used in almost any star system: the chosen system must have at least one gas giant. Ideally the mainworld should have a starport of types C through E, a population level of between 3 and 7, and a tech level of between 7 and 12. There are ten systems within Mimu subsector alone that meet these criteria, so there is plenty of choice.

**General Background.** The S'mrii have maintained a small research station on Ziikhar, the third moon of the gas giant Zusikur, for almost fifty years. It is operated by the Phylum Miichi'zssur, an organisation dedicated to research into planetary, physics. About a week before the characters arrive in the system the research base's power plant suffers a breakdown (there are problems with the fuel pumping equipment) and the scientists begin repairs. Unknown to the scientists, hydrogen gas began leaking from the faulty fuel pumps: most of the life support systems were shut off during the repairs, so the environmental sensors failed to detect the gas. An electrical discharge from the power plant ignited the hydrogen.

The resulting explosion killed the two engineers repairing the reactor and debris from the blast severely damaged other areas of the base. Most of the personnel were in the main residential section and were saved by blast doors that sealed off the damaged areas. Three technicians, with the agreement of their S'mrii 'father', took the only vacc-suits in the residential section and went off to find the extent of the damage. They never returned: all three were killed when the part of the power plant roofing collapsed onto them.

With no power supply, no vacc suits, and the loss of their 'siblings' and 'children' the situation became very serious. The surviving S'mrii were trapped, with no means of repairing the damage. A supply ship was due in about a month but the air and emergency power would run out long before that. The S'mrii refused to give up. Using jury-rigged tools and components cannibalised from all over the residential section they rigged up an air purifier (although in reality it would only give a few extra days) and managed to construct a basic radio transmitter. Using valuable power they began transmitting a distress signal in the hope that it would be heard through the EM noise.

**Referee's Information:** The characters were the ones who answered the distress signal, but they weren't the only ones who heard it. Lurking in the atmosphere of the gas giant, shielded from detection by the intense EM radiation coming from both the star and the huge planet, is the Kiirshasu, a Nishemani class corsair. The ship has been raiding shipping along the borders of the

sector for some years, but since the outbreak of the Rebellion the crew have found slightly more legitimate work in the form of privateering. The corsair is presently operating under the flag of the restored Vilani Grand Empire of Stars.

A few weeks prior to the scenario in a neighbouring system, the Kiirshasu was damaged when two navy vessels ambushed it. Although it was able to jump clear the ship took substantial damage and is now in need of supplies and repairs. The crew detected the S'mrii emergency beacon when they first arrived in-system but ignored it, realising that the damaged base had little to offer. Instead they decided to wait. They intend to capture the first vessel that comes to the aid of the S'mrii and either use it themselves or cannibalise it for components for their own vessel. For most of the scenario it hides in the gas giant waiting for the opportunity to strike.

## Important Note

The idea of this scenario is to introduce the S'mrii, an alien race native to the Mimu system (0208 A583AC9-F Mimu). Initially the S'mrii are fairly helpless and rely on the characters, but as the action progresses they gradually become more self-sufficient and are able to bell themselves. The S'mrii are naturally self-reliant and will not sit idly while the characters do all the work: they will leap in and start giving orders) at the first opportunity. By the end of the adventure the characters should know a great deal the race. For further information, refer to 'Contact: S'mrii' in this issue. Feel free to improvise and improve.

## Nugget Summaries

### 1. Entering the System.

The characters arrive in the system and experience difficulties with background noise from the primary star. While attempting to compensate for the noise they detect a faint transmission, a distress signal. The signal includes navigational coordinates: when plotted they indicate a large gas giant located in the next orbit out from the mainworld.

### 2. Arrival at the Gas Giant.

After arriving at the gas giant a routine sensor sweep detects something hiding in the gas giant, although later scans fail to detect anything: any searches prove equally useless. Although background EM noise makes things difficult the characters eventually discover that the signal is coming from the gas giant's third satellite. The planetary data notes that it is the site of a research base.

### 3. Arrival at the Base.

The characters finally arrive at the research base and discover that it has been badly damaged. After landing



their ship they make their way inside and discover that there are survivors: five scientists are trapped in the residential section with dwindling supplies of food, water and air. And they aren't Human, they are S'mrii

#### 4. First Encounters.

After managing to get into the residential section without killing the survivors, the characters get to meet them. They discover a determined, arrogant, efficient and above all, a strange race and begin to interact with them on a personal level. Frustrated by their predicament the aliens appeal to the characters for help.

#### 5. Rescue and Repairs.

After discussing the S'mrii's predicament the best course of action is decided upon - either abandoning the base or assisting with temporary repairs. The S'mrii plump for the latter. Assuming the characters agree to help repairs commence, they will be working on their own, but as more repairs are completed the S'mrii will be able to help.

#### 6. Unwelcome Guests.

Midway through the repairs (or the evacuation) a corsair vessel that has been watching the unfolding events from within the gas giant makes its move. It accelerates out from the huge planet and heads towards the moon. The characters should be monitoring their sensors, and with skill and a little luck they detect the incoming vessel. It remains silent for the duration of its flight.

#### 7. Payback Time.

The pirates launch an attack in an attempt to capture the character's ship, and the characters try to defend both the research base and their vessel. The action builds to a thrilling finale, where it looks as though the pirates may win the day. At the last moment the S'mrii save the characters with their timely intervention.

#### 8. Wrapping It Up.

With the remaining pirates either captured or seen off, the characters finish their activities around the base. Eventually everything is ready and the party can depart for the mainworld of the system (or leave for another system altogether).

## 1. ENTERING THE SYSTEM.

### Introduction:

This nugget covers the character's arrival at their destination system, the problems they have with their sensors and communications, and the interception of a very faint distress signal. They are not obliged to respond, but life could become a little difficult if they choose to ignore it.

### Scene:

Your ship tumbles from jump and slips gently into normal space. The first act of any prudent captain is to deploy the passive sensor arrays and see who else is out there, but remarkably your scans seem to show that you are the only traffic in the system. There is a lot of interference which could be masking other ships. In fact

there is a lot of background noise on radio communications as well: it is muffling the routine messages from the port. Despite the problems a course is plotted to the mainworld and relayed through to the pilot's position. A few moments later there is a dull shudder as the manoeuvre drives power up. No-one relaxes. The communications and sensor problems seem to be getting worse.

### Actions:

Every few years the primary star of the system enters a period of intense activity. It throws off vast solar flares, sunspots speckle its surface and it produces EM noise over a wide range of frequencies. The interference is worst just as the star enters its active period, which is now. The noise can mess up both active and passive arrays and can even muddle such things as neutrino sensors or densitometers.

To reflect the many difficulties caused by the stellar activity make all sensor rolls uncertain, and in addition increase all ActObjScan, ActObjPin, and PasEngScan rolls by one difficulty level. It will also be necessary to constantly monitor communications in order to listen for incoming messages and signal. This is a task:

### To Pick Up In-System Communications-

Routine, Commo or Sensor Ops, Edu, 5 Mins, (Uncertain, Safe).

Referee: TOTAL TRUTH: The signals from the starport are for the most part clear and intelligible. On an EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS a faint repeating message can just be heard. It seems to be on the standard Imperial distress frequency-.SOME TRUTH: All incoming signals are fuzzy and difficult to make out. NO TRUTH: All that can be heard is the background static and white noise. (This task is repeatable.)

Assuming the characters detect the faint signal they can attempt to boost and clarify it. Because they have an idea where to look (the distress frequencies) the task is a little easier, but the signal is very faint. Clarifying the signal is a task:

### To Boost the Faint Signal.

Routine, Commo or Sensor Ops, Edu, 5 Mins, (Safe).

Referee: FAILURE: All that can be heard is a faint regular pulse above the background static and white noise. SUCCESS: After running the signal through computer enhancement it is still very faint, but can be made out as "Truakha'ra", followed by a series of navigational coordinates. This is the ConSentiency distress signal and is equivalent to the Solomani "Mayday" or the Vilani "Signal GK". It loosely translates as 'We Need Immediate Help'. (This task is repeatable.)

The ship's navigator can easily plot the coordinates given in the distress signal. They indicate a position close to the system's largest gas giant, which occupies the next orbit out from the mainworld. The characters have two clear choices. They can either ignore the signal (at least for now), and continue towards the mainworld, or they can plot a new course and head for the gas giant. It may be worth noting that ignoring a distress signal is an Imperial High Justice crime.

## 2. ARRIVAL AT THE GAS GIANT-

### Introduction-:

This nugget details the characters arrival at the gas giant and their activities when trying to locate the source of the distress signal. It also covers 'phantom' sensor traces from the gas giant.

### Scene:

You can now clearly see the green-yellow, sphere of the gas giant through the forward viewing windows, although the computer has been providing identical hologram images for the last couple of hours. Its rings circle it, and three of its six moons can be made out as white crescents against the blackness of space. Sensors and communications are still experiencing problems, although there is far less EM interference from the star this far out, the gas giant is also a transmitter and is making quite a bit of noise. Somewhere out there is the source of the emergency signal.

### Actions:

As the Rebellion slips towards Hard Times the fringes of a system are increasingly dangerous places, the haunts of corsairs and other less pleasant types. It is a good idea to continue detailed sensor sweeps of the area just in case there is anything out there.

REFEREE: While close to the gas giant use the sensor rules as detailed in the first nugget. On the first Successful sensor roll ONLY give the characters some or all of the info detailed below (if the characters don't have the appropriate sensors

or aren't using those sensors they cannot get the information). Any later sensor rolls will fail to show the trace.

NEUTRINO SENSORS pick up a momentary surge of neutrinos from the gas giant, perhaps indicating a fusion power plant. DENSITOMETERS detect a small but dense metallic body lying over a thousand clicks down in the gas giant's atmosphere. PASSIVE EMS detects a distinct hotspot a thousand clicks down in the gas giant's atmosphere. Using the image enhancement the trace can be cleaned up to show a regular cylindrical shape, indicative of a spacecraft's hull. ACTIVE EMS gives a single, very clear echo off of an object sitting in the atmosphere. The computer will keep a record of all the sensor traces.

### Locating the S'mrii Distress Signal.

There is an awful lot of background noise coming from both the star and the gas giant, and the distress signal seems to have got weaker. The navigation coordinates that the characters picked up only indicated the general area of the gas giant, so now detailed sensor scans are necessary. Locating the exact source of the

signal is a task:

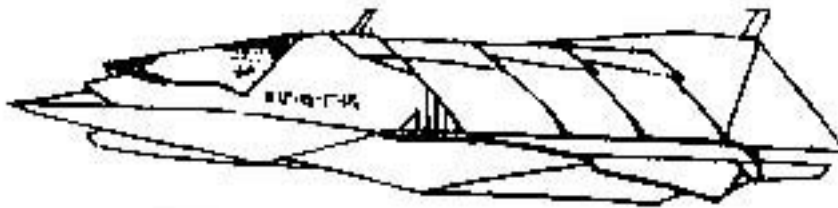
### To Pinpoint the source of the Distress Signal:

(Difficulty), Navig, sensor Ops or Survey, Edu, 5 Mins, (Uncertain').

Referee: TOTAL TRUTH: The source of the distress signal is a facility located on the third and largest moon of the gas giant. SOME TRUTH: The distress signal seems to be coming from one of the moons of the gas giant. NO TRUTH: The background static and noise is masking the signal, making it impossible to pinpoint its source. MIS-HAP: The referee should give a definite (and entirely wrong) source for the signal-.

With a little luck the characters will now know the source of the distress signal and will in all likelihood head off towards it. But they should also have detected some kind of spacecraft hiding in the upper reaches of the gas giant, and that should put them on their guard. After all, the whole thing could be an elaborate trap.

In theory the presence of the ship offers the characters a way out: they are obliged to respond to distress calls unless that response places them in severe danger. An unknown ship, during the Rebellion, could indeed be interpreted as severe danger.



S'mrii Shuttle

## 3. ARRIVING AT THE RESEARCH BASE.

### Introduction:

The characters arrive at Kiikhar, the gas giant moon where the base is located, and discover that

an accident has severely damaged part of the base. They also discover trapped survivors, who have a diminishing supply of food, water, and most importantly air. The characters land close to the complex and eventually work their way inside. Note that this nugget is designed to be used in conjunction with 'Within the Base', which covers moving around in the complex and also what the characters can expect to find there.

### Scene:

The true vastness and hostility of Ziikhar, the third moon of the gas giant, becomes apparent as you speed along high above its rugged surface. Razor sharp ridges and vast craters cast ink-dark shadows, contrasting with stark grey boulder plains strewn with debris. Finally, cresting a jagged bluff, you catch sight of the complex. It consists of clusters of pyramids, some pointed and some flat topped, linked to a central section by triangular corridors. Many of the pyramids are made up of overlapping plates, which gives them a strange, almost streamlined look. But the sleek styling is marred by the outermost cluster of buildings, which seem to have partially collapsed.

Actions:

The terrain around the base is mostly flat although it is rugged enough to cause the characters some problems when trying to land their ship. There is a landing pad but the base's navigational beacon is off-line, so there is no up to date information for plotting navigational coordinates. Landing safely is a task:

#### **To Safely Land at the Base Routine:**

Pilot, Edu, 1 Min

-Referee: On a failure the landing is rather bumpy. On a mishap the ship takes damage to some of its secondary systems (environment, fuel tankage etc.). This will warrant some minor repairs but should not seriously affect the vessel.

A close-up examination of the base will reveal some external damage. Most seems to be concentrated around a cluster of pyramids (the engineering section) linked to the rest of the complex by a long corridor. It appears that an explosion has blown out part of the largest pyramid: falling debris has smashed other areas causing, amongst other things, ruptures and pressure leaks. There are no windows, so the inside of the base can't be seen, and there is no power so things like airlocks don't work. The only way to discover what happened is to get inside. Gaining entry through one of the airlocks is a task:

#### **To cycle one of the airlocks:**

Difficult, Intrusion, Electronics, 5 Mins.

Referee: the airlocks are designed for S'mrii hands and tools so the characters could have some problems. In an EXCEPTIONAL FAILURE the door has jammed and cannot be moved, and on a MISHAP it opens but slams closed again just as someone is going through. The level of the mishap is the amount of damage the unlucky character takes.

Once the characters have gained entry to the complex refer to the module inside the base for details about moving around and for notes on the condition of various areas. Eventually the characters will get to the residential section, where unknown to them, the remaining S'mrii are trapped.

The characters will find that all the corridors into the section are blocked by sealed blast doors, and that the telltales on the control panels indicate that there is an atmosphere inside. Another readout on the same panel shows that the power from the emergency batteries in the section is half gone. The players may guess that there are survivors, but in the event that they don't have them roll the following task:

#### **To determine that the residential section is unusual:-** Routine, Int, Edu, Instant, (Safe).

Referee: Use the best Intelligence and Education bonus from the party. SUCCESS: The characters realise that the residential section could contain survivors. FAILURE: The characters also fail to realise the significance of the readouts. Allow the task to be retried after a suitable period of time. Details about gaining entry to the section are detailed in Nugget 4, First Encounters.

## 4. FIRST ENCOUNTERS.

Introduction:

This nugget covers the character's first meeting with the S'mrii. It is laid out in two distinct sections: i) 'Getting to the S'mrii' deals with the characters entering the residential areas of the base without injuring the Surviving S'mrii; ii) 'First Meeting' covers the S'mrii detailing the problems they have and the character's options. It is worth noting that the scene given below is for section ii) First Meeting.

Scene:

The inner door hisses gently open. You've heard all about the S'mrii. You've seen them on TriVee show, and on occasion you've even seen one from across a starport. But this is the first time you've ever seen them up close. There are three S'mrii in the middle of the room. They are smaller than you had imagined, coming up to a little over waist height. Each is clad in a one-piece black heatsuit that hides their patterned skins. The two closest rest on their haunches and hold out their long front arms so that you the can see the palms of their hands. The third has its four walking legs planted squarely on the floor while its front arms cradle what looks suspiciously like a laser rifle.

As you stand and stare one of the resting S'mrii tilts its thin streamlined head and regards you with its expressionless eyes. It snaps its jaws a few times, twitches its tail, and makes a noise that sounds just like someone clearing their throat, "Welcome, Humans" it says in perfect but high-pitched Galanglic. It snaps its jaws a few more times and bares all of its teeth. You can only hope its smiling.

Actions:

i) Getting to the S'mrii.

By now the characters should have realised that the residential areas of the complex contain survivors. The S'mrii are aware that the characters are in the base (they saw their ship land through the one-way windows) and have been waiting for them to arrive at the residential section since then. Nonetheless, they are being cautious just in case their visitors are more intent on salvage than rescue: they have a laser rifle and a few impromptu weapons (such as clubs and daggers) within easy reach if things should turn nasty. But there is still one problem: the air pressure in the central valley and the control centre is very low, and the S'mrii have no Vacc Suits. How do the two groups meet?

The sections of corridor connecting the residential areas to the control centre and the central valley have blast doors at both ends: the doors have an independent power supply (emergency batteries) and can act as airlocks. Moving between the pressurised and unpressurised areas of the complex using the corridors and blast doors as airlocks is a task. Note: this task works quite well if one roll is used to cover a whole days activities during quieter parts of the scenario, whereas an individual task should be used for every door during a more exciting section.

### To use the Corridors/Blast doors as airlocks:

Routine, Vacc Suit, Int, 10 Secs.

Referee: On a failure the emergency batteries are running down and the sequence to open the door must be rekeyed. Mishaps can be played for dramatic tension although it is best if they don't prove fatal. SUPERFICIAL: The door takes twice as long to open. MINOR: The door won't open at all. MAJOR: The door half opens (or half closes), then sticks. DESTROYED: As major but the second door forming the airlock begins to cycle through its opening sequence. It can be stopped by smashing its control panel.

#### ii) First Meeting.

Once the characters have managed to get into the residential areas they are greeted by a welcoming committee. Standing in the open, waiting for them, are two unarmed S'mrii and a third hefting a laser rifle. There are two other S'mrii in the residential area but, efficient as ever, they are boldly attempting to repair the air conditioning (this is the Scene, described above). If the characters react violently to the S'mrii they will attempt to flee back into the residential areas, talking out as many of the PCs as they can. Otherwise read on...

#### S'mrii Reactions to Vilani Characters.

If any of the characters are overtly Vilani or make a habit of speaking Vilani there could be problems. The S'mrii are extremely anti-Vilani but they are in desperate need of help: their lives depend on staying on good terms with the characters. They won't be friendly and will minimise their contact with the characters. They will only answer the most direct of questions and will only work alongside them when it is unavoidable. They will be unwilling to evacuate the base and won't offer anything other than the minimum required hospitality.

#### S'mrii Reactions to Other Characters.

The S'mrii introduce themselves and spend about ten minutes covering niceties and all the usual sort of is expected. They offer the characters refreshment, and as soon as everyone is ready they explain the situation, the problems they have and how the characters can help them out of trouble (rather than detailing the entire conversation use extracts from the Referee's Synopsis.) The S'mrii like to set tests to find the worth of characters: this is totally impractical given the situation, but they do probe the characters while they are talking. Realising that they are being asked leading questions is a task:

#### To understand the subtleties of the S'mrii's questions:

Difficult, (Interpersonal Skill), Int, 2 Mins, (Uncertain)-. Referee: Use appropriate conversational skills such as Liaison or Interview. TOTAL TRUTH: The characters realise they are being tested and are able, to a certain extent, to give the right answers. SOME TRUTH: The characters realise they are being tested but can't really do much about it. NO TRUTH: The characters are unaware that they are being tested. MISHAP: the characters manage to insult the S'mrii.

After analysing the situation it seems to boil down to two basic solutions.

#### a) Totally abandon the base.

The S'mrii have important unfinished work on the base, and besides it represents a considerable investment for their Phylum. In short the S'mrii are unwilling to do this. But if the characters can't or won't help them they will consider it. If it is decided to abandon the base the S'mrii will want to take some of their equipment with them: it is mostly scientific equipment and stacks of holocrystals containing their research data (Referee: it will occupy about a ton of cargo space). They also have to face the problem of getting to the characters' ship.

#### b) Help the S'mrii to repair the base.

The damage is fairly extensive but given some time and a little hard work it can be repaired. The S'mrii are expecting a supply ship within three weeks, so if they can stay alive until then their problems should be mostly solved. It will require the characters patching the central valley and the control centre, and making sure that the environmental controls are working. This is covered by Nugget 5, Rescue and Repairs.

## 5. RESCUE AND REPAIRS.

### Introduction:

This nugget deals with the characters' attempts to repair the complex and assist the S'mrii scientists and technical personnel. It basically consists of a number of repair tasks. Initially the characters will be on their own but as more repairs are affected the S'mrii are able to 'assist' them.

### Actions:

This nugget consists of a task library, each of which covers an aspect of repairing the base. If all of the tasks are successfully completed the complex will be largely operational, although the characters may only be able to get parts of the base back on-line. The S'mrii would be able to survive quite comfortably the supply ship arrives if the characters can fix the environmental systems in the central valley and the control centre and provide a reliable source of power (such as the generator in the laboratories).

If the characters are able to recover some (perhaps from engineering section) the scientists and technicians will immediately join them in making repairs. If not, the characters will be constantly called for meetings and discussions about the progress they are making, and their communicators will be jammed by advice and orders. Once environmental controls are working the S'mrii will be all over the base, mending, repairing, and generally getting under everyone's feet. There will always be S'mrii close by, constantly checking and assisting the characters as they work. They even go to the extent of taking apart items that have been repaired to check that it was done properly!

## TASK LIBRARY

Administering the repair tasks. Don't allow the players to roll for completion of the tasks until after the full time has passed. If the task takes longer than a day (and some will) make your players state their characters actions within that time, such as eating, sleeping and relaxing. Once this becomes natural you can have quicker tasks, often nothing to do with the ongoing task, occurring within the ongoing task.

These lesser tasks might include getting back to the ship in a Vacc Suit to take a break, or interacting with one of the S'mrii.

These tasks are only suggestions! Your players may have other methods of dealing with the problems, or you as the referee may prefer other ways of handling the situation. Many of the tasks rely, at least to a certain extent, on the successful completion of a previous task. For example the environmental systems can't be dealt with until all of the breaches in the skin of the complex are patched, although individual sections could have their own environments working before breaches have been patched in other places.

### **To use the Ship's power plant as the Base's power supply:**

Difficult, Engineering, Edu, 1 Hour, (Hazardous).

Conditions: None. Subtasks : Remodulating the ship's power output to match the base.

Referee : Using the ship's power plant as a power source is a stopgap solution to the bases problems, but nonetheless one that works. It does cause problems if the ship has to be disconnected for any reason. MISHAP: The character is injured while working on the power plant, and the level of the mishap indicates the amount of damage they suffer.

### **To reconnect the Power Grid:-**

Difficult, Engineering, Electronics, 2 Hours, (Hazardous).

Conditions: The base must have an operational power supply. Subtasks: Check and repair individual sections of the power grid.

Referee: The power grid (the cables and whatever) is what transmits power around the complex. It was designed to be resistant to damage and automatically isolates any areas that have problems. It also includes all of the emergency batteries that provide power for life support should a problem occur. MISHAP: The character is injured while working on the grid, and the level of the mishap indicates the amount of damage the character suffers.

### **To patch breaches in the Base.**

Routine, Mechanical, Dex, 30 Mins, (Uncertain).

Conditions: Both the interior and the exterior of the breach must be patched. Subtasks: Using Vacc Suits to move around outside the base.

Referee: When the power plant exploded debris caused breaches in some areas of the base (see the description of the base for further details). The time for the task is to patch one hole. Thus areas with more than one breach will require more than one patch. TOTAL TRUTH:

The breach is patched and pressure-tight. SOME TRUTH: The patch is pressure tight but may give out. NO TRUTH: The patch is not pressure tight.

### **To get the Control Centre operational:**

Difficult, Computer, Electronics, 2 Hours, (Uncertain), Conditions: The control centre must have an operational power supply. Subtasks: Bringing the main computer back on line.

Referee: Once the control centre is operational and the computer is back on-line the bases own diagnostic programs can assist the characters, pinpointing problems and advising on the best way to affect repairs. TOTAL TRUTH: The control centre is fully operational. SOME TRUTH:-: Some parts of the centre may still be off-line, requiring a second try at this task. NO TRUTH: The control centre is still not operational.

### **To get the Environmental Systems operational:**

Difficult, Mechanical, Electronics, 3 Hours, (Uncertain).

Conditions: The base must have an operational power supply and all breaches in the skin of the base must have been patched. Subtasks: Check and repair individual components of the life support. Referee : The base has adequate reserves of oxygen and other atmospheric gases. The air pressure, the temperature and the brightness of the lights will adjust to levels that the S'mrii find comfortable. This is far too warm, humid and bright for Humans to tolerate without artificial assistance. TOTAL TRUTH: The environment is perfect for tic S'mrii. SOME TRUTH: The environment is bearable but uncomfortable for both S'mrii and Humans. NO TRUTH: The environmental settings are entirely wrong for both races.

### **To repair the Power Plant:**

Difficult, Engineering, Edu, 4 Hours, (Hazardous).

Conditions: None. Subtasks: Repairing some of the fuel pumping and reactor subsystems.

Referee : This is probably the most difficult task and certainly the one that will take the longest. It is easier if the breaches in the skin of the power centre have been patched and the environmental systems are operational. A good part of the task will simply be clearing up the debris from the explosion, although getting a damaged fusion reactor back on line is certainly not a quick job. MISHAP: The character is injured while working on the power plant, and the level of the mishap indicates the amount of damage they suffer.

## 6. UNWELCOME GUESTS

Introduction:

Remember the phantom sensor trace? The interference on the sensors and comms systems becomes steadily worse as the moon reaches the position in its orbit where it lies directly between the gas giant and the star. At about the same time a damaged corsair vessel, hiding in the gas giant's atmosphere sees the chance to reach the S'mrii base without being detected. The Commander intends to assault the base and capture the character's ship. The corsairs have known about the trapped S'mrii scientists for some time but decided to use them as an unwitting lure.

Actions:

The vessel hiding in the atmosphere is the Kiiirshasu, a Nishemani-class corsair. For some months she vessel has been operating as a privateer under the flag of the Vilani Grand Empire of Stars, the Ziru Sirkaa. About a week ago it was caught by two gunboats in a neighbouring system and although it managed to jump out of the resulting battle it was badly damaged. It Stuttered out of jump around the gas giant which is the engineers found that the zuchai crystals in the jump capacitors had been damaged and were decomposing fast.

There is no way that the crew can fabricate a new set of crystals, and without them it can't jump. If it travels to the mainworld it gives itself away and the first warship to come through the system goes looking for it, so it's stuck. The only way out is to capture another ship. That way the crew can either replace the Kiiirshasu's crystals with a set from their prize, or they can escape back to the Ziru Sirkaa. It was a real blessing to the crew to pick up the S'mrii distress signal. All they had to do was sit and for someone to respond and under the cover of the intense EM noise move in and capture the rescuer's vessel.

Referee: it is very much up to you to decide when the pirates make their move. If the characters and S'mrii decide to abandon the base they should already be on their way, but if the characters decide to do repairs and get the base working again it is a good idea to have the corsairs turn up just at the most inconvenient moment. That way the characters have to rely on the S'mrii as well as their own resources. The corsair's travel time from the gas giant to the moon depends on one thing: the gee rating of the CHARACTER'S ship (see nugget 7 for an explanation). Travel times are provided below:

1G Manoeuvre: 13 Hours 1 Minute.

2G Manoeuvre: 9 Hours 12 Minutes.

3G Manoeuvre: 7 Hours 31 Minutes.

The characters are very probably going to be nervous about sitting on the moon and if they have any sense they will monitor their sensors to try and keep track of any other traffic in the system. If they are careful (or lucky) they may detect the ship before it gets to the moon. Detecting the Kiiirshasu is a task.

#### **To detect the incoming Ship:**

(Difficulty), sensor Ops, Edu, 10 Mins, (Uncertain).

Referee: Ship descriptions include task difficulty ratings for their sensors: remember to increase the difficulty rating by one level to reflect the interference from the gas giant and the star. TOTAL TRUTH: A lull in the interference reveals the incoming ship. SOME TRUTH: The sensors have no clear image of the vessel. The traces could just be unusual effects of the background emissions. NO TRUTH: The sensors fail to detect the incoming vessel. Note that the task is repeatable.

Prudent characters may want to listen out for transponder signals, or if they detect the incoming vessel they may wish to try and open communications. The intense EM noise and background static make this diffi-

cult. Attempting to listen in on communications or open a channel is a task:

#### **To listen in or to communicate with the incoming ship** Difficult, Commo, Edn, t Min, (Uncertain, Safe).

Referee: TOTAL TRUTH: No signals can be detected and there are no replies to any of the character's hails. SOME TRUTH: The background interference is making it difficult to pick up communications, but despite this there don't seem to be any transmissions. NO TRUTH: A surge of interference is drowning out almost all signals. Note that this task is repeatable, but no matter what the result the vessel won't communicate.

The characters could elect to stay on the ground on the assumption that the ship is a friendly vessel responding to the S'mrii distress signal. On the other hand it always pays to be careful and the characters may wish to prepare their vessel for launch. This may be rather complicated if they have rigged up its power plant to serve as the power supply for the base. The following task assumes such a situation:

#### **To prepare the ship for launch:**

Routine, Engineering, Edu, 10 Mins.

Referee: Engineering is probably going to be a mess, with the drive covers off and tools and machinery loose. No spacer in their right mind would enter a potentially dangerous situation without the vital areas of the vessel secure. If the characters decide to cut corners to scramble [heir ship make sure they understand the dangers they face.

Should the grav plates or inertial comps cut out the entire aft end of the vessel will become a maze of floating, jagged, and potentially lethal debris.

## 7. PAYBACK TIME

Introduction:

This nugget details an attempt by pirates to capture the characters ship. Under normal circumstances it is very unlikely that the party would be able to defeat a Nishemani class corsair but the vessel they are up against has been damaged in a previous fight: there is a good chance they can disable and capture it.

Scene:

The corsair vessel isn't overly large (it has a mass of around four hundred tons) but it looks purposeful and menacing as it accelerates around to begin its attack run. It is constructed in two distinct sections: a sleek head and neck which joins a tapered body mounting two pairs of aerodynamic fins. The belly of the craft is dark grey while the upper surfaces are painted in a yellow and black splinter camouflage pattern. Each fin is adorned with both the Flaming Eye and flowing Vilani script that translates as Kiiirshasu, or 'Quiet Hunter'. The ship bears extensive battle damage, some of which has been patched over, while sections of hull plating are missing from around the drives.

Actions:

The characters are attacked by the Kiiirshasu, a dam-

aged Nishemani class corsair. It is assumed that the characters only possess a small craft (such as a far trader or a type-S scout, etc.) and that their ship is armed. A larger, more powerful vessel will tend to unbalance the scenario. The Corsair is identical to the one detailed on page 85 of the Imperial Encyclopaedia except that it is streamlined and has been fitted with a set of fuel scoops. Further notes on the vessel are given below.

#### i) The Kiiirshasu.

Originally the Kiiirshasu had four turrets, but when it was ambushed by the navy some were knocked out. It now has the same number of operational turrets as the character's ship, and these are fitted with the same weaponry. If the character's vessel has no offensive weapons the Kiiirshasu has a single working missile rack rigged up by the crew as a stop-gap defence.

The aft of the Kiiirshasu suffered severe damage (most of which was absorbed by the engineering section) and the crew have been forced to patch breaches in the hull. The power plant only took slight damage but the manoeuvre drives were disabled. The jump drives seemed unaffected but gave out after the ship emerged from jump. The engineers have managed to rig the thrusters to put out the same Gee rating as the character's ship, but they are unreliable and vulnerable to damage.

The Kiiirshasu has a full crew as well as a team of boarders equal to twice the number of player characters. The Captain doesn't want to get involved in another ship-to-ship fight and risk more damage to his vessel, but he will stand and fight if he is forced to. Instead he will try to work his way close enough to the characters ship to allow the boarders across. Despite the damage it has taken the Kiiirshasu is still an agile and dangerous opponent.

#### ii) Administering the Fight.

The way the referee administers a battle (or avoids a fight) between the two ships is entirely up to him, and very much depends on the way the players like their characters to fight. Some prefer ground battles (in which case the pirates launch an assault on the base from across the barren vacuum plain). Others prefer space battles while still others enjoy, for example, thrilling starship chases through the deep canyons on the moon.

Whatever the case battle is left in the capable hands of the referee and the players.

As has been stated the S'mrii dislike any unnecessary loss of life, but on the other hand they hate Vilani to the point of fanaticism. They also believe that all warfare should be carried out efficiently. These three key factors come into play during the battle against the pirates. Initially the S'mrii are unlikely to get involved in any fighting, although they will take an active interest in what is going on. They will spend most of their time using the bases sensors (if the control centre is working) trying to monitor the positions of the various combat-

ants.

The S'mrii, efficient as ever, decide to wait and see if the characters can deal with the situation on their own (they see no point in interfering where the characters have superior abilities, although they would never admit such a thing). If the party do end up getting into serious problems (which is almost a necessity) the S'mrii intervene. They decide to use the base's four survey probes as gigantic missiles. Because of the EM noise from the gas giant and the star it is difficult for the pirates to detect the launch, and thus they won't be expecting it.

#### iii) Creating a Spectacular Finale.

If the situation is bad (and it would have to be really bad for the S'mrii to expend millions of creds worth of equipment) they will launch all four probes. They will aim at least two at the corsair ship and the other two at any targets that are causing problems (for example a nest of pirates holed up in a crater and pinning characters down). Each probe can be guided with extreme precision and unless it is shot down it will severely damage whatever it hits (each probe weighs fifteen tons, is constructed from bonded superdense material, and can accelerate at 12Gs. Ker-bang!)

A direct hit from just one of the probes will ruin the repairs keeping the Kiiirshasu's manoeuvre drives running. Direct strikes from two or more could easily smash the vessel beyond repair: the S'mrii are unlikely to use all four probes if the first one does enough damage. But if there is still resistance the pirates won't be given the benefit of the doubt. If after all that the pirates still end up winning the conflict the referee could have a second vessel respond to the S'mrii distress signal, only the new arrival is a navy patrol cruiser.

Rather than relying on random dice rolls the best way to end the fight could be to use a 'deus et machina', where the Referee rolls the dice, ignores the results, and simply uses the outcome he prefers. Remember the key is to create an exciting, action-packed thriller. The players should above all else have a good time and that probably won't happen if they are captured or killed by the pirates minutes into the fight. Even if they don't beat the corsairs they should be able to see them off or inflict so much damage on them that they no longer present any sort of threat.

## 8. WRAPPING IT UP

### Introduction:

This nugget is little more than a few brief notes to assist the referee in ending the adventure. With the pirates seen off the characters can finish evacuating or repairing the base, and eventually they can depart for the mainworld of the system (or another system altogether).

### Actions:

Whatever the method the characters should eventually triumph against the pirates. The boarders will be seen off and the Kiiirshasu should be dead in the water, waiting to be captured by the characters. With a little luck they can take the pirate Captain alive (he has a substan-

tial price on his head from Lucan's Imperium) and perhaps even limp the Kiirshasu down to the surface of the moon, where it can serve as a power supply, a source of spare parts, or a prison for any captured corsairs. On the other hand the characters may wish to keep the vessel and repair it or their own use.

The referee should now look towards finishing the adventure, depending of course on the course of action that was chosen (either evacuation or repairs). If evacuation was seen as the best option the S'mrii eventually finish loading their equipment and data records and board the characters ship ready to leave. If the characters helped to repair the base all major repairs should be completed. Other minor tasks around the base should be wrapped up, and and necessary field repairs on their vessel should be carried out.

The S'mrii can offer little by of payment: they were after all just a research station performing a study of the gas giant. But they can offer the characters their gratitude and the benefit of influential friends within the ComSentiency. And with the approach of Hard Times that is worth a lot more than cash. If the characters really want some sort of large cash bonus they are going to have to take the pirate Captain back to Lucan's Imperium and claim the bounty out on him. Of course he has influential friends and is likely to pull a few strings once he is in custody there is a good chance that he will escape and come looking for revenge. There is also a chance that the Impies won't cough up the money. But all that's another adventure.

## APPENDICES

### Introduction

The appendices include useful information designed to help the referee run this scenario. The referee could easily generate much of the information himself, but it has been provided should he not have the time or the inclination to do so. Included is a look at the Gas giant and its moons, details about equipment found on the research base, and detailed notes about the NPCs who appear in the adventure.

### APPENDIX 1: ZUSKIKUR AND IT'S MOONS.

This appendix details the large Gas giant Zuskikur and its family of moons. The main body of the action takes place on Ziikhar, Zuskikur's third moon, which is the site of a small S'mrii research base. Note that the scenario has been designed so that the referee can locate it in the system of his choice. The "\*" under orbit represents the next orbit out from the mainworld. It is assumed that the mainworld is located in the system's habitable zone, if it has one.

O\* Zuskikur LGG Diam 183,000 km

- 1 Ring System YR00000
- 5 Atrur Y200000
- 8 Kiirsuraa Y400000
- 30 Ziikhar G512117 C Research Lab
- 35 Muzikhar H403000
- 50 Ikhurzi H301000
- 125 Aaru YS00000 0

The planetary system is centred on Zuskikur, a large gas giant located in the next orbit out from the mainworld. Zuskikur itself is a visually impressive world. Its atmosphere, consisting largely of hydrogen and helium, is coloured a deep green by chemical compounds. High speed winds whip the clouds into broad bands while vast storms create semi-permanent spots and marks. Zuskikur is a strong EM transmitter which can cause severe communications and sensor problems.

Zuskikur retains a spectacular ring system and a family of six large satellites. Aaru is the smallest and outermost of the six moons. It has a highly eccentric retrograde orbit that periodical brings it inside the orbit of Ikhurzi, Atrur and Kiirsuraa, the two innermost moons (that are cratered balls of rock offering little of interest to the casual traveller). Muzikhar and Ikhurzi both retain small polar caps. Landing beacons have been emplaced on their surfaces. Of the moons Ziikhar is the most interesting, retaining a trace methane-nitrogen atmosphere and small polar icecaps.

### APPENDIX II: EQUIPMENT LIST.

The following are vehicle statistics for what may prove to be the two most important pieces of equipment on the base. The first is a portable generator, while the second is a gravtic survey probe. Both are designed for the S'mrii to use, and characters who wish to try and utilise them may experience some problem. Other similar examples designed for Human use can be purchased across the Imperium.

#### Portable Generator.

CraftID: Portable Generator. TL15, Cr118,000. Hull: 1/1, Disp 0.067 Tons, Config 4UJL, Armor 4G. Unloaded Wt 1.287 Tons, Loaded Wt 1.291 Tons. Power: 1(2, Fusion: 2.255 Mw, Duration 9.5 Hours. Loco: 1;2, Std Grav, 1.3 Tons Thrust Max Speed 01 Kph. Control: 11x Holographic Linked Panels. Other: Fuel 0.044 Kl. ObjSize: Small, EM-Level: Moderate.

Design Notes: The portable generator is designed to provide power in inconvenient or inaccessible places- its size makes it easy to manoeuvre, and its grav modules provide just enough lift to make it easy to push around. The unit is standard equipment on both navy and scout vessels, is regularly seen around starports, and is often used by emergency response teams. It provides just under two megawatts of useable power.

#### Fast Survey Probe.

CraftID : Fast Survey Probe, TL15, Cr 5,976,000. Hull: 1/3, Disp 1,000 Tons, Config 3AF, Armour 40G, Unloaded Wt 15.153 Tons. Loaded Wt 15.153 Tons. Loco: 1/2, Fusion Rocket, 195 Tons Thrust. NOE: 190 KPH, AtmosCruise: 2835 Kph. AtmosTop: 3780 Kph, MaxAccel: 12G, Agility 0. Power: (Fusion Rocket), 3.500 Mw. Duration 275 Hours. Storage Batteries, 1.20 Mw, Duration 1 Hour. Commo: 1x System RadioCom, 1x System LaserCom. Sensors : 1 x FarOrbit Active Array, 1x Interplanetary Passive Array, 1x HiPen/1 Km Densitometer, 1x 10 Kw Neutrino Sensor. ActObjScan: Rout, ActObjPin: Rout, PasObjScan: Rout, PasObjPin: Rout, PasEngScan: Simp,



PasEngPin: Rout. Control: 1x Model/1 Computer, 50x Holographic Link Panels 1x Robot Brain (Int 9, Edu 6). Full Command and High Autonomous Logic Programs. Skills: Survey-4, Pilot-2, Navig-2, Commo-1. Other: Fuel 1.377 Kl, ObjSize: Small, EMLevel: Moderate.

Design Notes: The Fast Survey Probe is designed to accurately survey a star system. Its powerful fusion rocket can propel it at extremely high speeds and provides enough power to run all of the onboard systems. Because the fusion reaction may interfere with some sensor readings the probe is fitted with a supplementary set of batteries that can power it for around an hour. The onboard robot brain is designed to allow the probe to operate independently, while the model/1 computer serves as a backup. Probes similar to this one have been used aboard scout ships for years.

### APPENDIX III: NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS.

#### Introduction-

Characteristics for all of the major NPCs are given below. The S'mrii are examined in some detail, as is the Captain of the corsair, but only brief notes are given on the rest of the pirates. Referees are encouraged to refer to the article '*Contact: S'mrii*' to gain further insights into the race where necessary. The S'mrii Reaction Table is provided as a quick way for the referee to add some character to the S'mrii

#### i) The S'mrii.

The staff of the base form a Ka'usai or family although none are physically related and there are no Kiakh'iee. Raakzuisf and Ch\*tkrmiask have taken the roles of 'father and mother', while the rest of the staff are their 'children'. The deaths of the three technicians and the two engineers have left a deep sense of loss, which they are still coming to terms with. Despite this they are making every effort to ensure their own survival. The S'mrii are extremely resourceful and have come up with some ingenious solutions to the problems they have been facing.

Raakzuisf, Elder S'mrii Scientist.  
Scientist, 11.75 Terms, Age 104, Phylum Rank D.  
UPP 654CB7, Lifeforce 15, Hits 3/3, Determination 16 (+3).  
Physics-4, Chemistry-3, Computer-2, Electronics-1, Commo-2, Sensor Ops-1, Liaison-2, Linguistics (Galanglic)-1, Admin-1, Carousing-1, Artisan-1, Jack of T-2, Laser Weapons 1, Gray Vehicles-1.

Raakzuisf is the commander of the base and is the most moderate. He has had dealings with Humans in the past and is more patient with them, and on occasion may actually explain the reasons for his actions. He is, however, responsible for the base and its personnel and has little time to spend chatting. Raakzuisf has one peculiarity: he is the proud owner of a pair of half-moon spectacles, which he habitually wears.

Ch\*tkrmiask, S'mrii Scientist.  
Scientist, 6.5 Terms, Age 71, Phylum Rank B.

UPP 877986, Lifeforce 22, Hits 3/5, Determination 16 (+3).

Physics-3, Chemistry-1, Computer-2, Electronics-2, Jack of T-1, Linguistics(Galanglic)-1, Persuasion-1, Survival-1, Commo-1, Gray Vehicle-0, Handguns-0.

Ch\*tkrmiask is the least patient of the S'mrii on the base and will do whatever she feels is right, unless told otherwise by Raakzuisf. She has little time for Humans, who she sees as petty and irrational. The focus of her interest is the continued well being of the S'mrii, getting the base operational again and continuing with the research.

lakhsuak, Zucerza and Sa'mrtrecka, S'mrii Technicians Scientists, (On Average) 3 Terms, Age 50, Phylum Rank A,

UPP 585887, Lifeforce 18, Hits i/4, Determination 1 3 (+2).

Computer-2. Electronics-1, Mechanical-1, Physics-1, Survival-1, Jack of T-2, Laser Weapons-0, Gray Vehicles-0.

The three technicians are responsible for many of the ordinary duties around the base, which they carry out with care and diligence. They don't understand Human motives and can easily be confused by Human actions or reasoning.

#### S'mrii Reaction Table.

In order to help the referee deal with an unusual situation a S'mrii reaction table is presented below. It is best used when the characters try- to interact with the S'mrii or attempt to make a decision involving them. It can be used to add uncertainty to any situation but care must be taken to make sure it is not over-used.

Roll	Result
2-	Insulated.
3-4	Upset.
5-9	Indifferent.
10-11	Pleased.
12+	Delighted.

#### Modifiers.

A Vilani character, or speaking Vilani:	-4
Asking a deliberately prying question:	-2
Deliberately contrary or disagreeable:	-1
Complementing/agreeing with S'mrii:	+1
Being deliberately derogatory about the Vilani:	+2
Speaking Sfuizia (even through a translator):	+2
Per level of Liaison skill:	+1

Note: All modifiers are cumulative, and referees may add additional ones as they see fit. Note that if one of the characters is Vilani and also speaks Vilani he would a modifier of -8 on the reaction roll. The S'mrii 'really' hate the Vilani.

#### Explanation:

INSULTED: The S'mrii has been offended and tries to 'even the score'. It won't create a dangerous situation (now is not the time) but it will refuse to stay in the presence of the characters.

UPSET: The S'mrii's pride has been dented. It won't interact with the characters for some time and when it does relations will frosty.

INDIFFERENT: The S'mrii is confused by the irrational actions of the Humans and the characters may find themselves being humoured.

PLEASED: The S'mrii is more than happy to work with characters unless they are Vilani, in which case it tolerates them.

DELIGHTED: The S'mrii has taken to the characters and will -make some effort to explain its reasoning and its actions.

## ii) THE CREW OF THE CORSAIR 'KIIRSHASU'.

The entire crew of the Kiirshasu are Vilani in extraction and are working under a 'Letter of Marque' from the Ziru Sirkaa. Their vessel is damaged and their reason for attacking the base is to capture the character's ship. They are bloodthirsty and will shoot first and ask questions later. The Captain has a policy of taking hostages if they look wealthy or can be used to his advantage.

Eprim Guudaakhu, Captain of the Kiitshasu.

Pirate Leader, 5.25 Terms, Age 39.

UPP 8A7D86, Lifeforce 2-5, Hits 4/5. Determination 20 (+5).

Jack of T-1, Pilot-1, Navigation-1, Engineering-2, Turret Weapons-1, Handguns-3, Small Blades-1, Brawling-1, Tactics-1, Leader-2, Carousing-1, Gambling-1, Zero-G Env-1, Vacc-Suit-0, Computer-0, Grav Vehicles-0.

Guudaakhu is an adventurer at heart and has a fire and zeal around him that inspires others. He is roguishly handsome, is a born leader, and has unbelievably good luck. He is extremely charismatic and can work his way out of (or into) situations that seem totally hopeless. Despite this, Guudaakhu is a genuinely nasty character. His service with the corsairs has taught him to watch his back at all times: he is paranoid and overreacts to any perceived threats. He won't hesitate to rip off his friends and acquaintances and doesn't think twice about shooting to kill. The man has a Cr500,000 bounty on his head from Lucan's Imperium, but must be brought in alive.

### Typical Corsair Boarders.

Pirate Corporal, Age 30, 3 Terms.

UPP 978655, Lifeforce 24, Hits 4/5, Determination 14 (+2).

Laser Weapons-2, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Intrusion-1, Handguns-1, Brawling-1, Zero-G Env-1, Vacc Suit-1, Grav Vehicles -0.

Pirate Henchman, Age 26, 2 Terms.

UPP B7A653, Lifeforce 28, Hits 4/6, Determination 16 (+3).

Brawling-2, Laser Weapons-2, Large Blades-1, Zero-G Env-1, Vacc Suit-1, Computer-0, Grav Vehicles-0.

### Other Crewmembers.

Typical Lifeforce: 21, Typical Hits 3/5. Specialist Skills: Level-2, Other Skills: Level-1,

### Equipment.

All of the pirates that the characters meet will be simi-

larly equipped. Each wears a TL14 Vacc Suit fitted with a model A PLSS and a hard helmet. Ordinary crewmembers are armed with Laser Rifles and carry some sort of backup weapon, usually a cutlass or a snub pistol. Officers carry very much the same but their equipment is better quality. Individual specialists carry toolkits (for example one of the pirates is a medic and carries a first aid kit).

## INSIDE THE BASE.

This module is a detailed examination of the S'mrii research base. It is laid out rather differently to the other nuggets in this scenario. It consists of a series of descriptions detailing the S'mrii research base and ;: e problems that the characters will experience as they attempt to help S'mril scientists trapped inside.

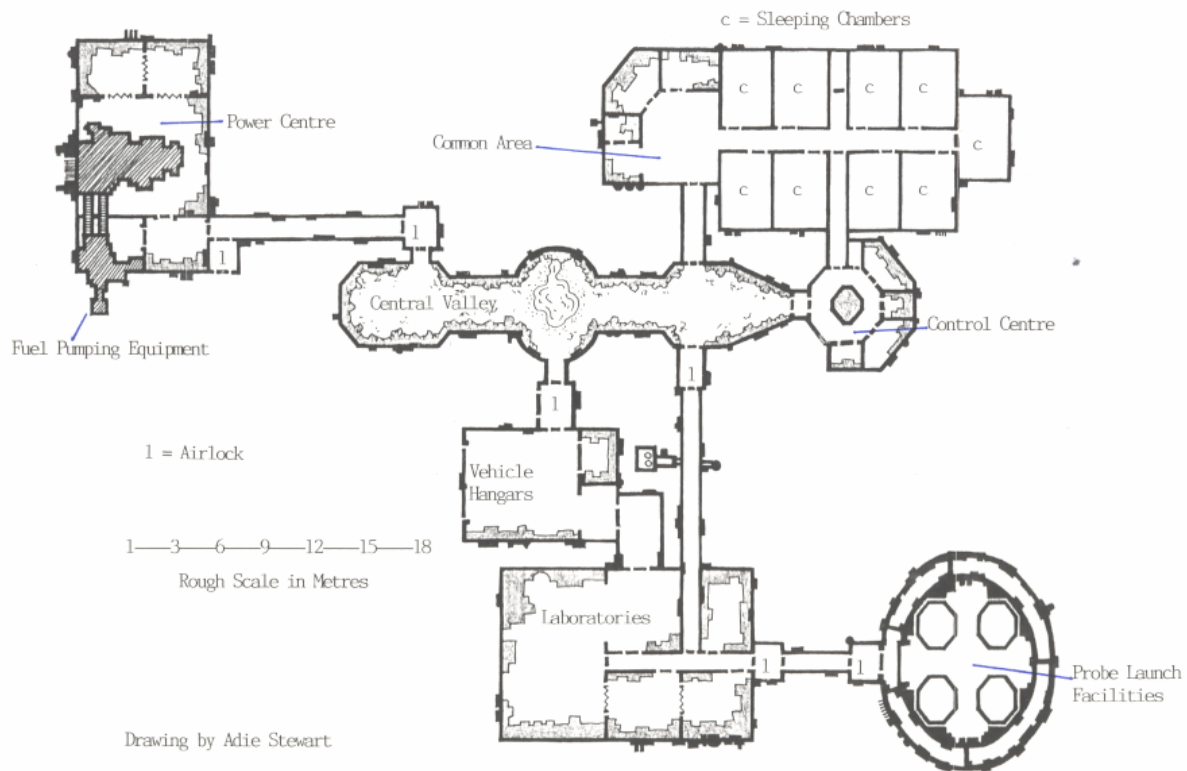
### The Environment:

It is important to remember that the base was designed for S'mrii, not Humans, and because of this Humans will find many things awkward or inconvenient. Even a short Human will have to stoop to get down the corridors, and while the rooms are slightly larger, only the east -west corridor offers any degree of comfort. Another consideration is the doorways which could cause the characters a great deal of inconvenience.

The environmental controls are also set to S'mrii preferences. The air is extremely hot and oppressively thick and dry. Humans who breathe it will quickly find themselves wheezing and gasping for breath. It also has a peculiar, sweet, almost metallic taste. The temperatures are far higher than Humans find comfortable, and anyone not wearing an environment suit is likely to end up collapsing from heatstroke. The lighting is far brighter than Humans prefer and if filtering goggles are not worn it will cause severe headaches. The base has no artificial gravity - the moon's gravity is close to that of Mimu, and the S'mrii find it quite comfortable.

### Using Things:

All of the control panels, levers and handholds throughout the base are designed for the S'mrii hand. Fortunately many of the control panels are reconfigurable and can be aligned for Humans to use. Almost all are between knee and waist height, perfect for the S'mrii but inconvenient for Humans. There are other problems: the computers on the base work in Sfuizia, the S'mrii language, and must be instructed to use Galanglic. Using the S'mrii freshers is inconvenient and uncomfortable, and the base's water and food supplies have the same metallic taste as the air. If they try to repair things the characters may encounter some difficulties. The heads of Imperial and S'mrii bolts are different, for example, and an Imperial wrench won't undo a S'mrii bolt. Using tools designed for S'mrii hands is awkward and can sometimes be dangerous, and converting some of their own tools to fit S'mrii equipment is very time consuming. There are also problems with differences in the designs of things. The S'mrii are known for their innovative, unusual designs, something that has made their products much sought after within the Domain of Vland. Unfortunately the characters have no familiarity



with the designs, which complicates repairs.

#### AREAS OF THE BASE.

##### 1. Central Valley.

The valley, where the S'mrii spend most of their time, is the heart of the complex. Its sloping walls resemble weathered stone, and plants native to Mimura trail from nooks and ledges. A stream flows into a pool of water and holographic images of wooded hills give a feeling of distance. Despite the very pastoral atmosphere the valley has a hard high-tech edge to it: workstations can be seen amongst the foliage, control panels and maintenance hatches dot the walls, and security sensors nestle in the undergrowth.

REFEREE: The central valley is dark and silent. Its outer surface has ruptured in the accident and the air pressure dropped. By the time the auto-sealing was able to plug the leak the pressure was less than 0.1 atmospheres. Although the internal temperatures are comfortable for Humans they are far too cold for the S'mrii to stand: the plants have died off in the cold. There is no power going to the valley although the emergency batteries hold a charge.

##### 2. Common Area.

The common area is centered on the main lounge, a spacious room with padded irregular walls. The centre of the room is dominated by a network of padded bars with platforms set at varying heights. There are computer workstations and holodisplays set around the walls. Adjacent to it is the galley. One wall is dominated by a food synthesiser while the rest of the room is used for storage. There is also a gymnasium and exercise area, a

well equipped medical station, and a large storage cupboard.

REFEREE: The common area was only slightly damaged in the accident and S sealed off from the rest of the base. The trapped technicians and scientists have cannibalised almost all of the machinery and devices in the common and sleeping areas to build an air purifier and a powerful transmitter.

##### 3. Sleeping Chambers.

The S'mrii prefer spacious, open-plan rooms, and the sleeping chambers reflect this. They are crossed by networks of cushioned bars with platforms set at varying heights. Hollows in the walls are filled with bedding, cushioned stalls provide seating, and areas of the floor and walls are padded for additional comfort. The rooms are quite spartan by Human standards, lacking ornamentation. They each have at least one computer terminal.

REFEREE: The sleeping areas were undamaged in the accident and are being used by the surviving S'mrii. Many of the control panels have been cannibalised for spare parts although the heating and lighting still works. The end chamber has been converted into a meeting room.

##### 4. Control Centre.

Spartan and business-like, the control room is the brain of the facility. In front of each of the five crew positions are the control panels and computer consoles needed to operate the base. The centre of the room is dominated by a large holodisplay that can provide detailed displays of, amongst other things, the base with the gas giant and its family of moons. Facing onto the control room is the central computer room, an office, a storeroom, and a

lounge equipped with galley facilities.

**REFEREE:** The control room has no power going into it although the emergency batteries still have a full charge. The crew positions include two sensor stations, the computer controls, the environmental controls position (which includes the security systems), an engineering position, and a command point. The office includes secondary controls for the computer as well as a gun locker which contains laser pistols.

#### 5. Vehicle Hangar.

The vehicle hangar, along with the main personnel airlock, is the main entry point into the base. The structure is large enough to comfortably house two ATVs. The main personnel airlock connects it to the central valley while a second airlock links to the laboratory. At the rear is a workshop containing a wide variety of mechanical and electronic tools. Both airlocks have S'mrii vacc suits and PLSS units within them.

**REFEREE:** Despite the size of the hangar the base only has one ATV, which was half way through its routine overhaul when the accident occurred. At the moment the vehicle is inoperable. There is one complete vacc suit (including a hard helmet and a PLSS-B) in the laboratory airlock, but the main personnel airlock only contains two helmets and a single PLSS-A unit.

#### 6. Laboratories.

The main laboratory runs through into the secondary laboratory, the two areas can be separated by a screen. Both are fitted with independent life support and grav plates. Because dangerous experiments are carried out here both rooms can be sealed by blast doors. There is also a samples laboratory, an electronics bay and a general workshop. The labs contain large quantities of scientific equipment as well as a small portable generator, and the general workshop is equipped with a dedicated scientific computer. An airlock connects the labs to the vehicle hangars, a corridor leads to the central valley, and a second airlock leads to the probe launch facilities.

**REFEREE:** The laboratories were undamaged in the accident. The life support is intact and the emergency batteries still have a full charge. The generator is a portable TL15 fusion plant mounted on a small grav sled. For purists, stats for the generator are presented in the equipment section.

#### 7. Probe Launch Facilities.

The base's sensors are not always able to provide the detailed, in-depth information about the gas giant and its moons that the scientists need. Sometimes it is desirable to have a close-up examination of the subject world, and the probe launch facilities are designed to allow that. The large circular silo contains four sensor probes that can provide a wide range of detailed readings. The only access to the silo is from the laboratories, although the probes can be operated from the computer control position in the control centre.

**REFEREE:** All four of the probes are in position, fully fuelled and waiting to go. The silo cannot be accessed unless the correct code is entered into each door control, and the probes cannot be launched unless the cor-

rect codes are given during the launching sequence. All of the science personnel on the base have access to the codes. Stats for the probes are presented in the equipment section.

#### 8. Power Centre.

The base's fusion reactor is located in the power centre. The power plant is accessed through engineer's ready room, where most of the tools required to keep the reactor running are stored. Adjacent to the reactor is a fuel pumping room where hydrogen is transferred up from the underground fuel tanks. The power centre has a mechanical and an electronics workshop where small items can be manufactured or repaired. A corridor connects with the central valley and a small airlock to allow tools and equipment to be transferred to the outside of the base.

**REFEREE:** The power centre is a mess. The explosion damaged the fuel pumping room and blew out part of the wall: the engineers ready room and the reactor room have also been heavily damaged. Part of the external wall was blown out and the entire area is in vacuum. Collapsed ceiling beams and debris litter the area. There is also a rather more gruesome discovery to be made: the bodies of two engineers and three technicians who went to try, and rescue them lie amongst the rubble. Despite the destruction there is little damage to the fusion reactor itself and it could, with some work, be brought back on-line.

#### Other Corridors.

The smaller corridors are simply access-ways. They are lined with maintenance hatches and have computer terminals set at irregular intervals along them. Most still have a full charge in their emergency batteries.

#### Task Library.

Two useful tasks for moving around within the complex are given below. Use them to irritate the characters at every opportunity.

#### **Moving around within the Base:**

Routine, Stealth, Dex, 1 Min, (Hazardous, Unskilled OK).  
**Referee:** Stealth reflects the ability to move cautiously.  
**SUCCESS:** The character has no problems moving around. **FAILURE:** A door fails to work or the character is otherwise delayed: roll the task again. **EXCEPTIONAL FAILURE or MISHAP:** The character ends up in a potentially dangerous situation (perhaps an undiscovered pressure leak or a torn vacc snit). Further developments are up to the referee.

#### **Operating S'mrii devices:**

(Difficulty), Applicable Skill, Applicable Stat, Time Varies.

**Referee:** Base the difficulty on what the character is trying to do- For example using a food synthesiser is probably going to be Simple, whereas bringing the main computer back on Line may well be Difficult. Applicable skills and characteristics depend, of course, on what the characters are trying to do. Time increments of minutes generally seem reasonable, although more complicated tasks may take longer.

# A.K.A.

## Silornerch

Female Asian (ALIKASCH Sub-race).

Hits 4/5 Age 38 UPP : 979AA4

SKILLS: Close Cbt -2 Admin -1 Neural Weapons -1 Laser weapons -1 Linguistics -1 (NeoTrokh) Gray Vehicle -0 Computer -2 Streetwise -4 Bribery -1 Forgery -3 Intrusion -3 Disguise -1

Silornerch is a native of Medurma, where she spent her formative years, on the streets of HighPeak running with the tribe that her mother was a member of. At the age of 18 she went to college where she did reasonably well academically. but her home life started to suffer and she found that she had less and less in common with her tribe. She graduated from HighPeak college in 1103 whereupon she entered the Scout Service (Detached Duty Office). Silornerch had decided on the Scout Service as this would act her away from home where the atmosphere was becoming unbearable due to her practising xenorasty. Silornerch spent the next eight years working for the scouts in various undercover rolls. During this time she travelled widely in both Dagudashaag and V 1 and Sectors, where she made many good friends and contacts in both normal and criminal society. During this period she was responsible for the breakup of many pirate bands and foiling the attempts of several terrorist groups. Silornerch's name was now linked almost exclusively with undercover work. A job she was extremely good at, so good was she that in 11 12 she left the scouts and went to work for the Imperial Ministry of Justice as a special undercover agent. She was recruited for the IMJ by the head of the Dagudashaag section with whom she had a torrid affair which lasted for 3 years until his death at hands of a Ziadd pirate. Silornerch was instrumental in hunting down the pirate ha TIC', and killing 90% of its membership.

During the 16 years that Silornerch has worked in the intelligence field she has become more and more disenchanted with the constant betrayal and double crossing that such a life entails. About 3 years ago she decided that with the Imperium breaking up around her she might as well go and help herself to a pot of gold.

No matter where Silornerch is encountered she will be undercover to some extent or other, and her cover AU be very good and have great depth so as to be almost unbreakable. Regardless of what her cover job is she is getting paid by the following factions/sides all at the same time : Vilani, Using her contacts made during her wears in the scout service travelling in Vland Sector. she reports to the Ziru Sirkaa. As a MOJ agent for the past 6 years she is still reporting to her bosses in Core Sector. Strephon. Her contacts with the scout service have

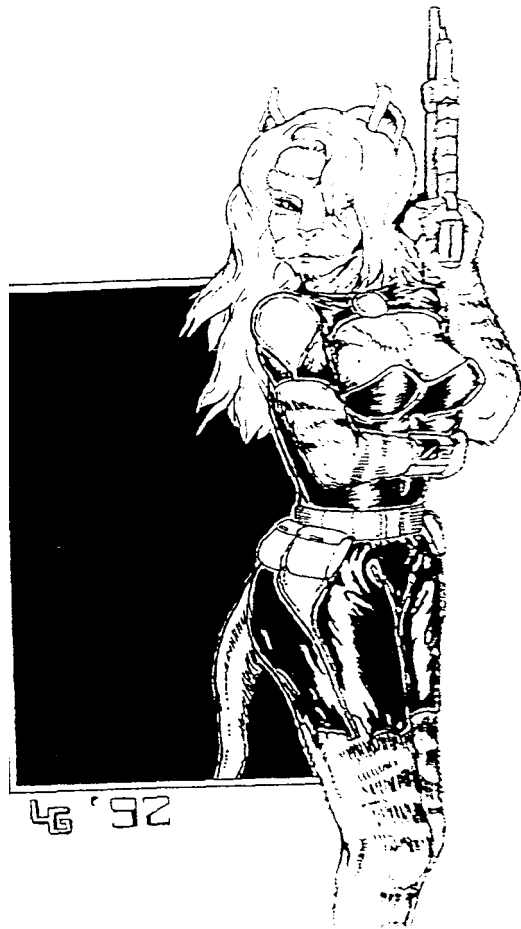
allowed her to "help" Strephon set up an intelligence network in Daoudashaag. FMF, as a native of Merdurma she claims to support the FMF, a claim that her forged papers and background support.

She now spends her time selling information to the above 4 factions and anybody else who is interested.

## Adventure Hooks

Silornerch often needs to hire help, mostly human males, for one of her intelligence operations which will gain information she can sell to one w more of her employers, and then steal back and sell to the rest of her contacts-.

Silornerch has a hatred of the Ziadd race and will do anything she can to make their lives a misery and the players get caught up either helping Silornerch or her chosen victim(s).



# Legends and Lore of Dagudashaag Sector

By Ishmaga Ershuk

Extracts from Chapter 3 - The Major Race that Never Was Published by Sherver Press, Ushra.

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## The Domsday A.I.

For centuries historians have been trying to discover how a race as unaggressive as the S'mrii could have succeeded in utterly butchering two full battalions of Vilani marines.

In -5,288, an incident occurred involving the Vilani provincial governor and Phylum Kiaskui which resulted in the Laashuurarir (or Courtesy) war. Despite attempts to defend themselves the S'mrii were no match for the Vilani Grand Fleet. Several cities were destroyed by tactical nuclear weapons and an occupation force placed on Mimu. The whole war was over in less than three months.

In most places, there was very little physical resistance though, absolutely no co-operation was shown either. Every opportunity was taken to hinder and sabotage the occupying forces and guerrilla warfare was commonplace. The occupying Governor, Shankir Daagkigadsu, decided to send in two battalions of marines to raze to the ground the rebel city of Chak\*m Zaak. Expecting very little physical resistance, the commanders were surprised when radio contact was lost within minutes of the attack. Ten minutes later a single, extremely garbled message was received. The message, although badly broken, told of the Vilani troops "being slaughtered by the S'mrii". There was also a reference to the attackers being like "killer war machines..."

Observers arriving at the scene discovered the Vilani troops hacked to pieces.

None had survived. Each had literally been torn limb from limb. They also noticed that several S'mrii had apparently committed suicide and the few that survived were linked into their computer net in a comatose state. They finally managed to resuscitate one, only to discover that whatever had occurred had driven the individual completely mad. Amidst his ravings he made frequent mention of "unleashing the floodwaters of Tr\*issa" (the S'mrii concept of hell) and claimed the consequence was too great for him to bear. He was found twenty minutes later dead in his cell: he'd killed himself by biting through the veins of his own circulatory system and literally "bled" to death.

Additional troops were sent in but as they went from house to house they, discovered a similar sight in each; parents locked into the net in a disturbed mental state, often cradling their young, and the house in disarray.

No-one could or would explain what had happened to the Vilani troops. Any questioned intensively either attempted suicide or entered a deep comatose state from which they never recovered. An autopsy of the Vilani dead only proved that they'd died from wounds inflicted by a variety of weapons and tools. Forensics verified that the weapons had been wielded by S'mrii but with such savagery and force that defied description. What could have caused such a change in the S'mrii?

One possible clue was that all the S'mrii that; were "responsible" the attack were found linked into the net. Each was suffering from some degree of mental illness.

Could the pacifist S'mrii have created some sort of Domsday weapon? An Artificial Intelligence that had resided within the Net and somehow overridden the normal S'mrii responses and causing them to become utter savages? What is known is that the S'mrii had destroyed all records in the Net of the incident as well as deleting large segments of data. Particularly a large section of psychology data in the main S'mrii medical database known only as Skuaask'uiss: "Guardian".

Had an AI resided there until released to turn a peaceful race into blood-thirsty savages? Did the S'mrii, in a final act of atonement at the atrocities they'd committed while under its control, destroy it utterly? We will never know. This is one incident that no S'mrii will ever comment on. The whole subject is so taboo that it's possible we will never know what really happened that day.

## The Well of Souls

As early as -12,500 the S'mrii were believed to be making use of Ss'mitkr, (ROM constructs) in their decision making. A Ss'mitkr is a chip-based construct of a real person, living or dead. It is not an Artificial Intelligence but rather a very large set of response patterns connected to an extensive database and a controlling "expert" program. They have a personality (responses based on the Expert program's set selection criteria) and memories (database) which give the Ss'mitkr the illusion of life. As far as the construct is concerned, it is "alive", but they are also aware that they are a computer program; a conflict which can cause personality corruption for any Ss'mitkr that is left on-line or is attached to a large RAM (Random Access Memory) bank for any length of time. Each personality is built into ROM modules (Read-Only Memory.). This is because the process that imitates the original personality and associated skills can be corrupted by the permanent introduction of "outside" data. A ROM construct is only capable of learning while it is actively linked into the Net. When switched off it retains only its

original programming and knowledge with no memory retention of its previous escapades. While it is possible to store information of previous “runs” for re-introduction to the construct once its on-line, such information cannot be accessed as “memories” or “experience” since the construct has no active memory of them. It’s like reading someone else’s autobiography, useful only as factual information. Rom constructs are also limited because, while they are built with an extensive library, they can only display a limited number of responses. For example asking a construct the same question several times will almost always result in the same replies and is thus extremely predictable.

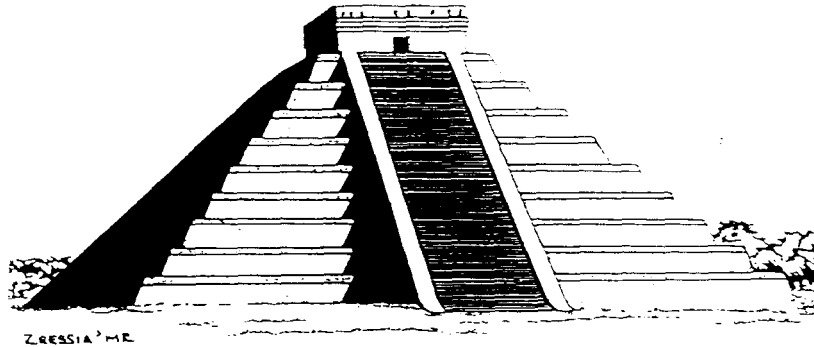
Until 422, the earliest known constructs believed to be still in existence were designed in -5,432. Then an archaeologist discovered the Triakikssi manuscript. The manuscript, in reality some ancient college records, told of the existence of a long-lost university construct collection which was moved to a storage facility at Zeessia’mr (Well of Souls) because of the Laashuurarir war. The location of the collection was lost until then, as the university city was destroyed during the war. Using the information in the manuscript scholars were able to pinpoint the location of the storage facility, which had been buried. Excavation began. Finally enough pyramid had been uncovered to allow access. The scientists went in only to discover the priceless construct collection had been stolen. The thieves, who had tunnelled in less than twenty years before, had left everything behind except the databanks. Massive rewards were offered but the constructs never surfaced. The pyramid, now the Zeessia’mr museum, still contained the original computers and ROM recorders in pristine condition as well as records of which constructs had been stored there. Constructs of some of the greatest minds of their time, perhaps lost forever. None of the constructs have ever surfaced to this day. It is still not known how the thieves discovered the Well of Souls nor what had happened to the constructs. It’s just another mystery.

## The Legend of the Lost Status

According to the AAB (Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin) a Major Race is defined as “any race which achieves interstellar travel through its own means”. This has been further clarified as meaning achieving inter-stellar travel by means of the jump drive. It is by this definition that the Droyne are classed as a major race despite the fact they seldom now build or use jump drives while the S’mrii who colonised several stars prior to their discovery are classed as a “minor” race. The

S’mrii had discovered the principles of space flight thousands of years before the Vilani, however they never discovered the principle of the Jump drive. Or did they? If we were now to discover that the S ‘mrii were. In reality, a major race it would cause all sorts of political upheaval. Not least because these facts hadn’t been discovered before now. It is my belief that certain Vilani governors carried out a cover-up of the very information I’m about to present. Possibly even committing murder. In the mind of this author, no other answer is possible.

The story starts at the famous Weeping Spire of Zaa’mikh on Mimu where a small time capsule was discovered in 552. Inside was a newsfax article written



in ancient Ssiarkuku. It showed diagrams of a S’mrii probe that was to be tested in -25,791. Unfortunately that was the year of the S’mrii holocaust war. The diagrams, while interesting, were mainly of the ship’s exterior except for one small

diagram which shows amazing similarities to early jump field generators. Without a translation of the text there was no way to know for certain. Then in 654 a Vilani clerk called Shenar Kuggukhe claimed to have discovered a Ssiarkuku to lakzikhhu dictionary in the Vilani embassy library. Here was a known language, a recognisable ancestor to New Interlanguage! At the conference he publicly translated several passages of the newspaper which proved to be a scientific review. His translated passages proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the probe contained a new prototype engine, one that we now know as a jump drive. Unfortunately before the conference had finished Kuggukhe took fright and ran from the news conference with the dictionary and his transcription notes. That was the last anyone ever saw of him or the dictionary. The Vilani Embassy immediately disavowed all knowledge of Kiggukhe and even went as far as to claim that he’d never worked for them despite the massive amount of documented proof to the contrary. The Imperium went to enormous lengths at the time to play the story down as a confidence trick. Then in 755 a S’mrii archaeologist produced documentary proof that the “Weeping Spire Probe” as it was known had actually been launched and had been scheduled to test its new prototype engines two days before the holocaust. The results of that test and what finally happened to the probe has never been discovered. The original newsfax now rests in the Zeessia’mr museum, still apparently untranslated and almost forgotten. A small piece of paper that could mean the difference between minor or major status for the whole S’mrii race...

## The Turren Treasures

Following the discovery of an ancient civilisation (the Corsettin), a team of Vilani archaeologists set up a base to unearth some of Karrana'ch's past history. The original race were non-human sophonts who apparently never progressed beyond tech level 3. The culture was based around sun-worship, a common phenomenon found throughout space amongst primitive societies. Fire was seen as the "earthly" son of god and was treated with equal reverence.

All funerals ended in cremation (or so it seemed) except criminals. Through fire one was believed to come into contact with the spirit of god - cleansed, purified and reborn free of sins. Criminals appear to have been mutilated at death, hence the lack of accurate anatomical detail of the race found at any of the archaeological sites. All the known details of the races exact features come from rough statues and crude wall paintings.

Gold covered caskets had been found presumably containing the ashes of the dead - albeit individuals important within the primitive society.

The Karrana'ch system is found well within the region claimed by the S'mrii and the world itself holds a significant S'mrii minority. At the time of the investigations this resulted in conflict when the Vilani teams tried to remove artefacts to Vland for further analysis and display. The S'mrii were against the removal of any items, however small, from the planet and put up a blockade to halt the departure of any ships from the surface. Within a few weeks the blockade had turned into a siege and finally outright hostilities ensued.

A major incident occurred five months after the blockade was initiated when a Vilani light escort vessel was leading a party of archaeologists off-planet back to Vland (sector). Information received by the S'mrii strongly indicated that a large number of valuable treasures were on board. When the escort refused to stop and prepare for a boarding party to search for the artefacts, the two patrolling S'mrii vessels opened fire. The damage from the first volley was light and the Vilani ship made for outer system in an attempt to reach jump point. Further fire resulted in more significant damage and the escort was forced to try and hide amongst the rocky moons of the Turren gas giant. The S'mrii vessels eventually caught up with the Vilani ship. When it refused to surrender, they attempted a pinpoint power plant hit to disable the Vilani vessel, but its fusion core detonated, killing all aboard. Salvage teams searching the relatively intact wreckage could find no trace of the valuable cargo. A number of search parties were sent to search the locale for signs of the material on the assumption that the crew had hidden it before their destruction.

Yet despite the searches at the time. and numerous attempts since, there has been no recorded success in the finding of the "Turren Treasures" as they have

become known. Their actual existence is now apparently in some doubt as documentary evidence from the archaeological site as well as the Escort Captain's log may have been tampered with. Both sets of records appeared to confirm that some sort of treasure had been loaded aboard the ship.

With no exact information on the type of treasures, and thus no real idea as to possible financial returns, few professional treasure hunters have undertaken serious expeditions to Turren. The costs, most have argued, will probably outweigh any gains. Yet many amateurs, fuelled by historian's claims that the treasure could have been worth multi-millions, have set out to search the moons of Turren for themselves.

## Referees Only:

### Turren Treasures

The artefacts were on board the vessel and still exist, undisturbed on Amuh'kar (or more accurately, in Amuh'kar), the fourth satellite out from Turren. The treasures are located in a natural cave, some 300 metres below the surface (access through a natural shaft). The items are in a remarkably good condition, thanks to the vacuum conditions on the satellite and protection from micro-meteorites.

The most significant item as far as archaeologists, palaeopathologists and historians are concerned is the presence of three well-preserved bodies of the now extinct Corsettin. As far as money-minded treasure hunters are concerned there is a metal casket inlaid with silver, gold and platinum with various precious gems. The casket is one metre long and about a metre wide. Its current value is possibly in excess of MCr.10 to the interested collector though its base value is probably only about Cr.1,750,000.

Yet there is a catch: the bodies and the casket are contained in an airtight unit. The bodies contain preserved bacterial spores which will germinate under warm and moist conditions. Once the unit is opened the spores will be released and lodge in the lungs and other exposed moist surfaces of all not in vacc suits. Standard decontamination procedures will destroy the spores. Contamination will result in a severe pulmonary disease (such as a Legionnaires'-like disease). Barrier nursing and most antibiotics will halt the spread of the disease.

Anyone trying to sell artefacts may run foul of the authorities - a license is required to sell them. If S'mrii officials get wind of the discovery, they may try to confiscate them as national treasures.



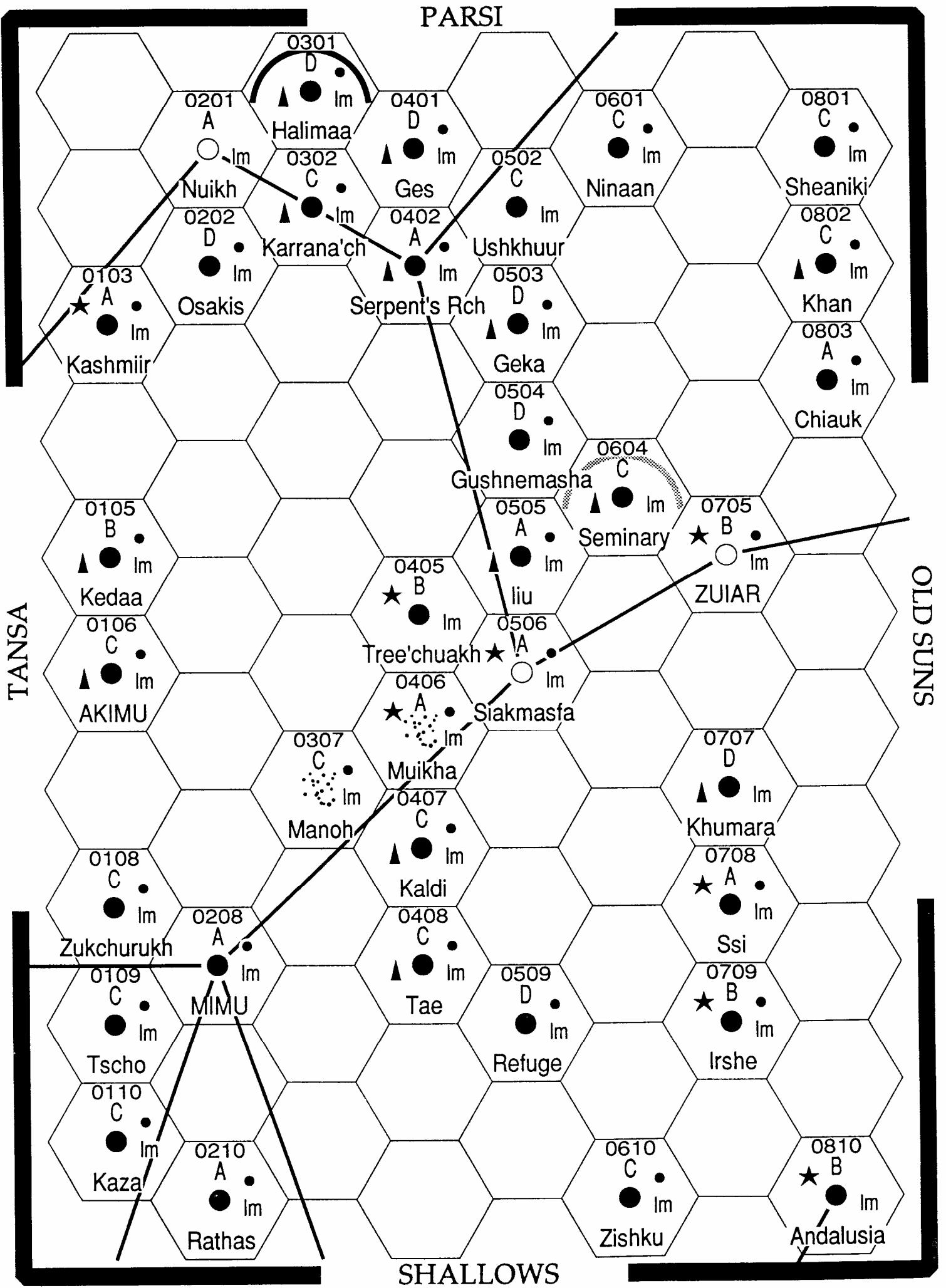
# LIBRARY DATA: MIMU

Duchy Capital: Mimu (0208 A583AC9-F)

ConSentiency Trailward

Mimu subsector is heavily agricultural (there are seven agricultural worlds in the subsector). The five major agrocombines in the Coreward-Spinward region (Akimu, Zuiar, Mimu, Upag, Unishpiir) export raw and processed foodstuffs to surrounding regions in Corridor, Vland and Gushemege. The S'mrii of Mimu (0208) had already created a thriving interstellar state of almost a dozen star systems, linked by efficient sublight ships, by about -11,000. First contact with the Vilani took place in -9,090, at a Naasirka prospecting base on Karrana'ch (0302). The subsector is now dominated by the S'mrii ConSentiency, an economic union covering Dagudashaag A, and parts of Gushemege D, which had its roots in the autonomous state formed by the S'mrii at the beginning of the Long Night. The majority of the systems in this subsector in this subsector lie on the Vland Jump-1 main.

Kashmiir	0103	A9687BB-D	N	Ag						313	Im	M1	V	M2	D
Kedaa	0105	B551410-A	S	Ni	Po					402	Im	M0	V		
AKIMU	0106	C9B69CC-9	S	Hi	Fl					303	Im	K9	IV		
Zukchurukh	0108	C582867-8		Ri						715	Im	M4	IV		
Tscho	0109	C685767-8		Ag	Ri					904	Im	K2	V	M3	D
Kaza	0110	C442510-B		Ni	Po					924	Im	G4	V		
Nuikh	0201	A310200-F		Lo	Ni					410	Im	K9	V		
Osakis	0202	D675723-7		Ag						503	Im	M4	V		
MIMU	0208	A583AC9-F		Hi						314	Im	F8	V		
Rathas	0210	A95A8DB-B		Wa						903	Im	M4	V	M6	D
Halimaa	0301	D3B85CA-D	S	Ni	Na	An		R	612	Im	F7	V			
Karrana'ch	0302	C455541-9	S	Ag	Ni				903	Im	M0	VI	M7	D	
Manoh	0307	C000667-A		Na	Ni	As			713	Im	M7	VI			
Ges	0401	D868431-4	S	Ni					703	Im	G4	V	M9	D	
Serpent's Reach	0402	A66975A-E	S	Ri					514	Im	K1	V	M0	D	
Tree'chuakh	0405	B789753-E	N	Ri					810	Im	M9	V	M1	D	
Muikha	0406	A000524-E	N	Ni	As				722	Im	K4	V	M0	D	
Kaldi	0407	C94736B-8	S	Lo	Ni				713	Im	M2	V	M0	D	
Tae	0408	C252664-9	S	Ni	Po				604	Im	M4	V	K0	D	
Ushkhuur	0502	CA7A774-9		Wa					510	Im	G2	V	M2	D	
Geka	0503	D311553-A	S	Ni	Ic				304	Im	M9	III	M0	VI	
Gushnemasha	0504	D888778-6		Ag	Ri				413	Im	M4	V			
Iju	0505	A5A689B-A	S	Fl					302	Im	M4	V	M5	D	
Siakmasfa	0506	A140233-D	N	Lo	Ni	Po	De		704	Im	K2	V			
Refuge	0509	D578664-3		Ag	Ni				224	Im	K1	V			
Ninaan	0601	C344543-A		Ag	Ni				235	Im	M2	V	M1	D	
Seminary	0604	C222425-B	S	Ni	Po	A			900	Im	M1	V			
Zishku	0610	C7A5776-B		Fl					524	Im	K0	V			
ZUIAR	0705	B450967-D	N	Hi	Po	De			323	Im	K0	V			
Khumara	0707	D561520-9	S	Ni					900	Im	M4	V	M1	D	
Ssi	0708	A75886A-D	N						803	Im	K6	D	M9	D	
Irshe	0709	B94A100-D	N	Lo	Ni	Wa			813	Im	M8	V	M6	D	
Shéaniki	0801	C612521-7		D2	Ni	Ic			604	Im	M4	V			
Khan	0802	C89A5A9-7	S	Ni	Wa				102	Im	K2	V	M1	D	M7
Chiauk	0803	A231557-G		Ni	Po	An			403	Im	M2	V	M4	D	
Andalusia	0810	B372348-B	N	Lo	Ni				100	Im	G4	VI			



PARSI

TANSA

OLD SUNS

SHALLOWS

0201  
A

0301  
D

0401  
D

0601  
C

0801  
C

0202  
D

0302  
C

0402  
A

0502  
C

0802  
C

0103  
A

0203  
Im

0303  
Im

0403  
Im

0503  
D

0803  
A

Kashmiir

Osakis

Karrana'ch

Serpent's Rch

Ushkhuur

Ninaan

Sheaniki

0105  
B

0205  
Im

0405  
B

0505  
A

0705  
B

Kedaa

Im

Im

Im

ZUIAR

0106  
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0206  
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0306  
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0506  
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Tree'chuakh

liu

AKIMU

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Siakmasfa

0307  
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0707  
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0708  
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Zukchurukh

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0209  
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0409  
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0509  
D

0709  
B

Tscho

Im

Im

Im

Irshe

0110  
C

0210  
A

0610  
C

0810  
B

Kaza

Im

Im

Im

Zishku

Rathas

Im

Im

Andalusia

#### **Akimu 0106 C9B69CC-9 S FI Hi 303 Im K9 IV**

Akimu has a high gravity, retains a hot atmosphere consisting of nitrogen, chlorine and carbon dioxide and is covered in oceans that are a noxious chemical brew closely related to the atmosphere. The vast majority of the population are S'mrii, although there are Human enclaves in most of the tunnel cities. The Miak'sh (the Grand Senate) is made up of Elders who have served in the government. New members are chosen for their abilities and wield considerable powers. On Akimu self-sufficiency is stressed above all else. Vast areas of the uplands (which receive more sunlight) are covered by hydroponic farms that grow the world's food. The lowlands are the site of chemical synthesis plants where complex compounds are extracted from the oceans and converted into plastics and fabrics. All rubbish is recycled and it is a criminal offence to waste or litter. The Kira, the local police force, rigidity enforce what offworlders call the Garbage Laws.

#### **Andalusia 0810 B372348-B N Lo Ni 100 Im G4 VI**

Andalusia is a world with only one thing in its favour, it has water present on the surface, if it was not for that fact and the absence of any other sources of fuel in the system then this world would be uninhabited. The entire population live and work at the starport leaving the rest of the world an uninhabited wasteland covered in thick jungle filled only by the numerous venomous animals native to Andalusia.

#### **Chiauk 0803 A231557-G Ni Po An 403 Im M2V M4D**

Chiauk's arid surface is a true wonder when seen from space - its desert sands are streaked with a multitude of vivid colours as deposits of rare metal salts are eroded by the relentless winds. The origin of the tenuous oxygen atmosphere is a mystery, as no life has ever been detected on the world.

The world's sole starport and major population centre is built atop a mesa in the centre of the one of the few highly saline equatorial lakes. The complex of ground-based and grav-supported buildings comprises the S'mrii ConSentiency PanPhylum Research Facility, a huge multidisciplinary science centre conducting cutting-edge research into a wide range of endeavours. The infrastructure is devoted to serving S'mrii phylum researchers, but Human academics are able to use the facilities on a 'first come, first served' basis. The PPRF's facilities for physical, biological and behavioural sciences are among the best in the entire Domain, and non-S'mrii researchers often have to wait years for the privilege of testing their theories in Chiauk's laboratories.

Palaeotechnologists visiting Chiauk have a unique opportunity: in addition to the superior research facilities on planet, there is a significant Ancient site 500 kilometres north of the PPRF site.

The Pavement occupies almost 250 square kilometres of

barren high desert. A field of ten-metre wide hexagonal columns laid out in precise interlocking geometrical pattern, the Pavement's purpose is unknown. The passage between the columns once carried some kind of equipment, long since removed.

#### **Dierbison**

Dierbison, large herbivores native to Ges, apart from having six legs this beast resembles the Bison of Terra. They stand 2.5 metres tall at the shoulder and average 6,000 kg weight. The Dierbison have been partially domesticated by the natives and some are used to pull the wagons in which the natives live there following the herds of Dierbison on their wanderings around the single continent.

#### **Fifth Fleet, The**

The Imperial Fifth Fleet is one of the most famous units of the empire's naval forces. Given its prestige designation by Emperor Martin III following superlative service by S'mrii starfaring units in quelling the Illelish Revolt of 418 to 435, the Fifth Fleet is a symbol of the Imperial trust placed in S'mrii stability and good intentions - and its existence also silences those critics who accuse the Imperium of humanocentrism, and poor treatment of 'minor' races. A Reinforced Strike Fleet of significant greater offensive power than the surrounding subsector fleets, the Fifth has often been deployed on 'flg-flying' missions elsewhere in Vland Domain.

The present Fifth Fleet under Admiral Chii'ekak is a miracle of interracial cooperation and organisation. A mixed-race fleet crewed by sentients with differing environmental needs is fully as effective as its single-race counterparts.

#### **Gabudys LIC**

Gabudys LIC, a small chemical manufacturing company based solely on the world of Zuiar. The company was taken over by the Vilani megacorporation, Naasirka in 1114, and this has boosted the company's manufacturing facilities by providing capital expansion.

#### **Geka 0503 D311553-A S Ni Ic 304 Im M9 III MOV I**

Geka is a small ice-capped world. The population live in cities cut into the ice, the roofs of the ice caves held up by grav plates. According to custom the cities are only expanded by cutting and digging through the ice by hand.

#### **Ges 0401 D868431-4 S Ni 703 Im G4 V M9 D**

Ges is an oddity in that it is a long settled world that regardless of imperial society and the technological advances it has made, the local population has settled

for a tech level of 4 and this has not changed for at least 1,000 years. This would not be surprising if the people of Ges were Vilani in descent but is in fact mostly Solomani. The 70,000 or so people live as nomadic herdsman on the single, equatorial continent of the world.

Until recent years Gesian tribes would remain apart calling only at the starport of there was anything they might need that the herd did not produce. The world is presently restricted to (Imperial) travellers and is currently awaiting official classification as a red zone.

The planet is currently gripped by intense anti-government guerrilla activity - three small ferocious groups are not only battling what passes as a government on Ges but each other, thus the world has become a gold mine for those trading in illegal arms (providing added impetus for a red zone rating). Local naval elements are in the process of establishing a blockade to prevent arms and mercenaries reaching the surface but due to lack of resources small quantities of both appear to be getting through. The reason for the fighting is not known to outsiders.

#### **Gushnemasha 0504 D888778-6 Ag Ri 413 Im M4 V**

Gushnemasha is the outer satellite of a large gas giant orbiting many AU distant from the system primary. Because it lies deep in the outer zone the planet receives almost no energy from the star, it is permanently dark and frigidly cold. Eighty percent of world's surface is covered in dense, ice-sheets, which lowers temperatures still further by reflecting solar radiation. The only reason Gushnemasha is inhabited is because it is volcanic. The southern hemisphere of the planet is dominated by a vast volcanic crater surrounded by a ring of mountains. Lining the edges of the crater are independent cities, some housing many thousands, others home to just a few hundred. Geothermal heat warms the atmosphere within the crater and thaws some of the ice, providing breathable air and fresh water, and a rich environment to power their extensive greenhouse-based agricultural system. The first settlers on the world were Vilani isolationists who expounded the virtues of a slower, more primitive way of life. To this day the population dislike advanced technology, but despite this life on Gushnemasha is comfortable, pleasant and productive.

#### **Haaman Anani Bilaau <HAB>**

HAB are a transport company serving the coreward border of Gushemege, extending into Dagudashaag, Vland and Corridor. The company has proved popular and become prosperous in Dagudashaag despite having Vilani ownership.

#### **Halimaa 0301 D3B85CA-D S Ni Na An R 612 Im F7 V**

Halimaa is unique in that not only is it the only planet in Dagudashaag to remain a Red Zone for over a thousand years but no-one really knows why the planet has been so classified. What is known is that the interdiction force have standing orders to use deadly force to prevent any ship landing or leaving the system. Halimaa was established as a Vilani mining colony during the First Imperium. Several empty underground bases had been discovered during the initial colonisation phase which had apparently been abandoned by the race known as the Ancients. After intensive investigation, which consequently failed to uncover any thing of value, the colonists were allowed to move in and establish their cities within the massive artificial caverns. There are no further records concerning Halimaa until near the end of the Long Night when traders began to bring back stories of the Halimaanian Magi; descendants of the original settlers who had apparently developed awesome psychic abilities. The tales told of the Magi were incredible. The more so because, with very few exceptions, all Halimaanians apparently had these abilities. In addition the Magi were supposed to each have a wide range of psychic abilities in common.

It should be noted that those Magi who were subsequently tested and filmed off-planet failed to exhibit any psychic ability whatsoever, the 'power' apparently only occurred on Halimaa. It should also be noted that those scientists who later settled on the planet failed to develop any psychic talents. The cause of the abilities were a mystery.

Then in 113 an incident occurred which, while still shrouded in secrecy, is believed to have involved the utter destruction of three cruisers in orbit around the planet. The planet was immediately classified as a Red Zone and has been heavily blockaded ever since. It is believed that the Imperial Scout Service continues to maintain contact with the Halimaanians and that some trade occurs though exactly what the Halimmaanians trade is a closely guarded secret.

#### **la'mruk SIA**

la'mruk SIA is the ConSentiency interface shipping line. This company originally ran cargoes between the ConSentiency and the Lancian cultural region. But with the onset of the rebellion the line has expanded to trade with all friendly factions and other interstellar neighbours.

#### **Iiu 0505 A5A689B-A S FI 302 Im M4 V M5 D**

The primary of the Iiu system is a tiny red main sequence star barely luminous enough to light or heat the world. Although Iiu's atmosphere is rated as Exotic it resembles Terra's: the main constituents are nitrogen and oxygen but it retains high levels of carbon dioxide, creating an extreme greenhouse effect. This raises the temperatures on the surface to levels that Humans can

endure and S'mrii find comfortable. The presence of gases such as carbon monoxide and sulphur compounds serve to make the air unbreathable without artificial aid. Iliu was settled by S'mrii using sublight ships long before the First Imperium and even today the bulk of the population are S'mrii. The small colony survived the Long Night and was even able to maintain some contact with other worlds. The remains of the original S'mrii cities make Iliu a popular spot for those who enjoy amateur archaeology, although all digs are closely monitored by the rather repressive government.

#### **Irshe 0709 B94A100-D N Lo Ni Wa 813 Im M8 V M6 D**

Irshe was once a major centre of commerce and had a population in excess of seven million sentients all living in floating cities. The major employer was SuSAG who had several chemical and biological manufacturing plants on the surface. Although many believed that SuSAG were involved in biological warfare there was no proof until in 443 an industrial accident caused by an earthquake released a deadly spore into the atmosphere.

It rapidly mutated killing thousands and severely crippling millions more. The entire planet had to be evacuated. SuSAG immediately closed down all their plants and removed them lock, stock and barrel to uninhabited planets in the system. An enquiry into the disaster chastised SuSAG for removing potential evidence from the scene before an independent investigation had been able to examine it but still returned a verdict of an industrial accident due to an 'act of God'. SuSAG donated MCr. 250 to the injured and relatives of the dead but refused to accept responsibility or admit that they had been manufacturing biological warfare agents.

Many relatives tried to sue but found themselves tied up in expensive litigation. Eventually all were dropped. Today the virus is still present in the atmosphere and still as virulent. Irshe remains uninhabited though seasonal workers do come to undersea camps to harvest food and water for the SuSAG bases in the system. The orbital starport is also maintained by SuSAG as a link to their other bases in the system.

#### **Kaldi 0407 C94736B-8 S Lo Ni 713 Im M2 V M0 D**

The system of Kaldi has been the subject of intensive scientific and pseudo-scientific investigations over the last three years. This has been due to strange anomalies in the local space-time fields. The boundary between normal and jump space appears to be very tenuous - natural jump-space portals of varying sizes appear spontaneously. The 'holes' usually disappear with seconds though on rare occasions they may linger for several minutes. Due to their random and unpredictable nature, Kaldi has established a series of warning stations close to all regular jump entry and exit points to notify vessels of the potential danger. To date, four vessels - a cutter, two free traders and a long liner - have been

lost within the system, apparently sucked into rogue jump portals. No information as to their origin or pattern has yet surfaced.

#### **Karrana'ch 0302 C455541-9 S Ag Ni 903 Im M7 VI**

The world is doubly famed: as the home of an extinct minor race, the Corsettin, and the current production of high quality beverages. Of particular note are the fine wines and liquors, all products of an extensive and rich natural flora. Large agrocombines, as well as small independent producers, make an excellent living trading these ever-valuable commodities to the rest of the sector. Grants have been freely available (up to recent times) to those wishing to set up business on the rich land. Many retired military veterans, bureaucrats and nobles have taken the chance to retreat and settle on Karrana'ch. Many have invested their pensions in a bid to start a new and quieter life.

#### **Kashmiir 0103 A9687BB-D N Ag 313 Im M1 V M2 D**

Colonised in -9230 by the Vilani megacorporation Naarsirka, Kashmiirians have always been more Vilani than Lancian in its outlook. Its primarily been known for its many and varied crops, in particular the green Dirgaisu berry that is one of the main ingredients in the production of Shidiu Akir, a delicate liquor that has become much in demand over the last two centuries and Disgiim, the shredded leaves of the Gaakhammish shrub which is used as meat flavouring and tenderiser. Kashmiir has expanded its cities both deep underground and upwards as tall tower-like structures reaching into the skies. The bases are covered in soil so that the towers appear to spring forth out of crop-covered hills. Indeed, Kashmiirians have cultivated every inch of the planet, even the seas. The Kashmiirians themselves are a passive hard working people with an intense work ethic. Over the centuries the concept of leisure has vanished from their culture and most Kashmiirians find the concept of non-productive enjoyment impossible to comprehend. This has been immortalised in the Dagudashaagian saying 'as hard working as a Kashmiirian and just as much fun.'

#### **Kaza 0110 C442510-B Ni Po 924 Im G4 V**

Kaza is a hot world that retains small brackish seas at both poles. There is no native life although a number of accidentally imported species have colonised the temperate polar regions and are thriving. This artificial ecosystem is reasonably stable and is beginning to expand out into the deserts. The world is ruled by a Management Committee appointed by KazaHoriSuns LLC, a mining corporation that owns the entire surface of the planet as well as the four gas giants in the system. Government policy and local laws are decided at board meetings and are enforced by corporate security. In reality security ignore virtually all crime outside of company buildings, but when the law is enforced the force used is swift, overwhelming and brutal.

**Kedaa 0105 B551410-A S Ni Po 402 Im M1 V M2 D**

The world has recently been purchased by a consortium led by DagMet, a leading ore extraction and processing conglomerate. The original colonists have been forcibly expelled as squatters and the current population now consists of DagMet prospectors, extraction technicians, construction workers and administrative personnel. In addition a small cadre of scouts is also present as part of a subsector-wide investigation into the cultural development of the region with a brief to investigate the culture of the late squatters.

**Kenatuu & Kenatuu Advertising SIA.**

The top advertising firm in the sector, Kenatuu & Kenatuu deal only in multi-million accounts, especially political campaigns having helped to elect some of the top politicians in the sector. They will, however, take on major holovideo advertising assignments and are responsible for dreaming up some of the best promotional gimmicks ever. Who can ever forget when K&K 'blew out' the ten thousand-year old storm of Jhalku (a gas giant in the Ninaan system) as a publicity stunt for Andreu's Indigestion Tablets? They are probably better known for their political PR, especially their dirty tricks division which specialise in finding the 'dirt' on opposition politicians..

**Khan 0802 C89A5A9-7 S Ni Wa 102 Im K2 V M1 D M7 D**

Khan is a water world, but only just. If this had been a normal planet with mountains of any size then dry land would cover most of the surface. However Khan is almost perfectly flat and so the surface is covered to a depth of 3 metres on average with water. The single city is built surrounded by dikes 5 metres in height which have allowed the water to be pumped away and a 'normal' city and starport to be constructed.

**Khumara 0707 D561520-9 S Ni 900 Im M4 V M1 D**

Khumara is a desert wildlife reserve established initially by the S'mrii but currently run and funded by the Pan Galactic Friends of Life. A single city has been established near the north pole called Kamamosku, Kehuu for Sanctuary. The planet itself has been divided into several regions using sonic barriers to allow planetary species to reside next to each other while maintaining a balanced ecology. Khumara itself has only one macroscopic native species, the Lemmitah, a primitive flatworm that can grow up to ten metres in length.

Today Khumara has recreated over 18 ecosystems on its surface and is home to thousands of desert species including several species that have died out on their own planets, and the sanctuary is currently in the process of re-introducing them back to their native environments. Although Khumara does not encourage tourists to visit they do have a highly profitable business

selling educational holoprograms throughout the Imperium.

**Kiaatrutkr SIA**

A major S'mrii producer of computer and communications technology, wholly owned by Phylum Kiaatrutkr (ranked number two in economic output after Kiaskui/U'Chakzii-Ziask). The corporation is recognised as being highly innovative, and its range of lightweight meson comlink systems are rated as among the Imperium's best.

The corporation's reputation was severely damaged, however, in the Manasharlu-Vines incident of 1077, when two prominent Ushran researchers claimed to have demonstrated a faster-than-light communications system. Kiaatrutkr rushed to secure exclusive rights to this development, but it rapidly transpired that the researchers were guilty of misrepresenting faulty and incomplete experimental data. Manasharlu and Vines resigned from the University of Ushra in disgrace, and Kiaatrutkr retreated to lick its wounds.

**Liberty Press**

The largest hardtext/video publishing group on Tae (Mimu 0408), Liberty is reknowned for its anti-Vilani stance. Liberty has long been protected from the wrath of the Vilani administration by the S'mrii-dominated subsector government, and has done much to refute the Vilani view of history as propagated by the AAB. Bernhardt Hecht's Sophont Rights Abuses in the Ziru Sirka (Liberty, 794) was one of the most widely read texts by Solomani intellectuals in the early 800's. However, of recent years, Liberty has become steadily more extreme to the point of being racist, and may soon be more of a liability than an asset to its S'mrii patrons. Its long-term future is uncertain.

**Manoh 0307 C000667-A Na Ni As 713 Im M7 VI**

By the time of the Rule of Man this asteroid belt was exhausted of all exploitable reserves. All the inhabitants of this system work for the Imperial Navy or the Scout Service. Starships are allowed to refuel from the outermost Gas Giant and call at the 2 main asteroid bases only. All other insystem travel is strictly prohibited.

**MIMU 0208 A583AC9-F Hi 314 Im F8 V**

Subsector capital and homeworld of the S'mrii, an influential minor race. Although Mimu was the site of a devastating nuclear war in -25,790 which almost annihilated the S'mrii, the world has long since been terraformed to its original verdant state. Thirty-six billion S'mrii live in huge metroplexes on the forested margins of the world's deeply-eroded ocean basins.

The Human presence on Mimu is primarily limited to the Human-owned port of Zandervoort (known as 'Snakepit' to the locals), a wild and lawless city-state in the highlands, where the atmosphere is thinner, and the temperature sufficiently low for Humans to be comfortable.

[See 'Port of Call: Mimu']

#### **Muikha 0406 A000524-E N Ni As 722 Im K4 V M0 D**

This asteroid belt was one of the twelve original S'mrii colonies. The belt itself has been successfully mined for millenia and still shows little sign of running down though most finds now are of the baser metals though occasional finds of more valuable minerals, particularly lanthanum, are still found even up to the present day. Most miners live within the hollowed out Skr\*maku or Ria'urtri asteroids though the racial mix has altered significantly over the last 500 years so that the majority of miners are either human or Hamaran rather than S'mrii. The cities are primarily refineries and supply depots and as such still have a frontier-like feel about them.

#### **Neurotechnology <See also: Cybertechnology>**

The science of interfacing electronic/cybernetic systems to a sophont's central nervous systems. At lower tech levels, neurotech uses 'hardwired' techniques which involve surgical implantation of interface sockets on the sophont, and organometallic links spliced directly into nerve tissue, with all its associated hazards. The latest S'mrii neurotech uses advanced 'non-invasive' techniques, based on the Becklin-Sikia'mr Effect, an obscure quantum mechanical effect which allows neural signals to be induced very precisely from a distance of several centimetres. The neural inductor apparatus (or neurocoupler) may be worn outside the body (usually in the form of a 'helmet' or 'crown') and the need for surgery is eliminated. Human neurocouplers are believed to exist, but are not yet commercially available.

#### **Ninaan 0601 C344543-A Ag Ni 235 Im M2 V M1 D**

Ninaan is an agricultural backwater of a planet producing a selection of genetically tailored crops for mass consumption. Its tainted atmosphere is a result of year-round pollen contamination, which can block even the most hardy of equipment and is found everywhere in up to 30cm high pollen drifts. The colonists have adjusted by wearing sealed masks outdoors and installing blowers at all entrances. Despite this, pollen still manages to get everywhere. One of the more common pollens has left a permanent reminder on all who live on Ninaan for any length of time: it permanently stains any exposed skin yellow. Certain Ninaans have turned this trait into an artwork using it to create permanent patterns on their skin. For some as yet unexplained reason about 12% of all S'mrii born on

Ninaan have bifurcated corneas (the so-called 'double-eye' syndrome). These function normally and although disconcerting, this causes no actual disability except slightly blurred vision. While this problem can be corrected by surgery it does carry a significant probability of total blindness, which is why so many S'mrii from Ninaan have elected to retain their distinctive double-eye structure.

#### **Nuikh 0201 A310200-F Lo Ni 410 Im K9 V**

Nuikh is owned by Frederick Dela Rarchiikka. This is where he set up his sports training centre. This covers about 200 square kilometres of the planet adjacent to the starport and is a recognised centre of excellence for sporting achievement in this and adjoining subsectors. Teams of athletes from far and wide come to train in the first class facilities made available to all for very modest fees.

#### **Osakis 0202 D675723-7 Ag 503 Im M4 V**

One of the main grain producing planets in Dagudashaag, the Osaki are renowned as a nomadic people always on the move. This is not totally true as many of the richer families have their own strip of land to maintain and work. Most others however, do spend their entire lives travelling from farm to farm and from seasonal crop to seasonal crop as migratory workers. Most of the land under cultivation is actually owned by co-operatives who pay its workers a dividend of the overall profit. These workers, who make up the largest segment of the population, reside in their large caravan convoys or in the free hostels that have been established throughout the land, constantly travelling back and forth between the farms along narrow roads that run along side the massive fields. Initial genetic manipulation of the grain seed has allowed the crops to mature at different times throughout the year.

#### **Rarchiikka, Frederick Dela**

One of the richest men in the sector, who is not a noble. He inherited his hundred billion credit fortune from his father who made his cash on Ushra where he discovered and held patents on a design of TL16 EMS Active Array, which he sold to LSP. Frederick has attempted to spend the entire fortune on encouraging sporting excellence.

#### **Rathas 0210 A95A8DB-B Wa 903 Im M4 V M6 D**

When initially discovered the S'mrii thought they'd discovered an intelligent albeit primitive race in the aquatic Cat-like Ratha. The Ratha resembled in outward appearance, massive terran panthers except they had fins instead of feet and four tentacle-like appendages that sprout from their front shoulders. These, they used to manipulate primitive stone tools and appeared to have a comprehensive language. For almost five

hundred years the planet was left uncolonised though under close observation but the Ratha never showed any signs of evolving. By this time the S'mrii had made contact with the Vilani, and through them several other minor races, and had begun to realise that what they'd discovered was an intelligent animal rather than a primitive sentient race. Eventually the S'mrii agreed to open the planet for colonisation though only in the colder polar seas that are not inhabited by the Ratha. In 105 a scientist discovered what appeared to be the remnants of a giant stone wall which ran for 20 kilometres before stopping suddenly in the shallow seas of Chukhzui. Extensive excavations in the area and landsat scans have revealed no other signs of civilisation on the planet and it is still unclear whether this is some sort of natural phenomenon, something left by a visiting race or the last remnant of a once mighty Rathas civilisation. There are still some who believe the Rathas may be the devolved remnant of a once sentient race but this view is not supported by the majority of sophontologists.

### **Refuge 0509 D578664-3 Ag Ni 224 Im K1 V**

A rugged, but reasonably earth-like world, Refuge escaped colonisation during the Ziru Sirka as a result of the heavy metal taint in the planet's soil - traces of copper and selenium accumulated in settlers' bodies and inevitably proved lethal. Vilani medical science was unable to cope with Refuge's biosphere, but to the Solomani, the prospect of a near-earthlike world in S'mrii space was impossible to resist.

A Solomani geneering company was commissioned by the Rule of Man administration to produce colonists able to tolerate the higher levels of heavy metals. The project was judged a success, and the start-up colony (originally named Cochrane) was in place by -2014. The onset of the Long Night severed Refuge's ties with the outside universe, and the world regressed to preindustrial levels. The ConSentiency ignored the world, as the heavy metal contamination was equally lethal to S'mrii.

After the region's incorporation into the Third Imperium, Refuge was originally slated by the IISS for protective interdiction. This was opposed by a number of Dagudashaag corporations, anxious to develop the world, and the Navy, which needed base facilities in the Siakmasfa cluster. The IISS reluctantly agreed, and in 704 a port was established on the unpopulated western continent.

To ensure that the native population would not suffer epidemics from foreign pathogens when the immigration started, the IISS hired Braddock GenoTechnics to perform a covert biosurvey of the natives. Braddock reported the alarming fact that the Solomani adaptations appeared to be 'breeding out' of the population, and that symptoms of 'selenium sickness' seemed to be increasing. Without seeking IISS permission, Braddock went ahead and developed a 'booster' retrovirus to correct the perceived deficiency.

Both the observations, and the manufactured retrovirus were faulty. During a secret field trial, the retrovirus escaped into Refuge's biosphere. Instead of the intended effect, it eliminated the heavy metal tolerance of as many as 25% of those it infected. Countless thousands of Refuge natives died from selenium poisoning, despite the best efforts of the IISS. The final death rate was estimated at 'over fifteen percent', and the Braddock Plague shattered several of the larger native nations.

Braddock was immediately charged with causing death by gross negligence, and gross breaches of the IISS biosphere integrity regulations. The case was heard in the Mimu subsector court, infamous for its labyrinthine bureaucracy. Although Braddock GenoTechnics only survives as a near-bankrupt shell, the legal wranglings have lasted over three hundred years to the present day.

Refuge remains under the administration of the Mimu subsector court, and all corporate land claims are held in abeyance until the settlement of the court case. The surviving natives exhibit varying degrees of xenophobia, and the IISS describes contact as 'inadvisable'. As of 1110, it is reported that wildcat miners and squatters have breached the court settlement restrictions, and reopened the semi-derelict Scout port.

### **Rooner (n.)**

A specialized smuggler/thief/plunderer. A Rooner deals in artifacts from (mostly) extinct civilizations, a thriving and lucrative quasi-legal profession. There are innumerable 'unclaimed' ruins about and even more collectors avid for new acquisitions.

### **Seminary 0604 C222425-B S Ni Po A 900 Im M1 V**

Seminary is the spiritual home and training ground for a small religious movement known as the 'Host of the Holy Union'. The group is a militant evangelical organisation which has sent numerous missionaries sector-wide to convert the local populace. Their zealous approach and questionable activities have led to a number of serious, violent clashes with various populations and local police. The world has very little to offer the traveller, whether trader or tourist.

[Not a good place to be stranded, believe me! The only thing freely available on Seminary is a conversion! - CyJac '13]

### **Serpent's Reach 0402 A66975A-E S Ri 514 Im K1V M0 D**

An idyllic, earth-like world, Serpent's Reach is an important joint Human-S'mrii colony. When the system was undergoing heavy expansion under the auspices of the Imperial Ministry of Colonisation in the early 300's, it was found that the population growth rates were falling well below their targets. An IISS investigation



discovered that a trace organic compound, Retroviral HCG, present in the local flora, was suppressing Human fertility. When it transpired that the search for an antidote would take too long to meet the Ministry's needs, they authorised the use of a wide-scale cloning programme to boost the population. That programme continues to the present day: gleaming high-tech metroplexes stand empty, waiting the day when they will be populated. Present Ministry targets call for a population of 270 million by the year 1190.

The primary provider of clones on Serpent's Reach is the S'mrii biomedical services phylum Zia'zak. Their contract is directly with the Imperial government, and they are forbidden by law to sell clones or cloning services to individuals or independent organisations. However, although nothing has ever been proved, rumours persist that clones and 'nonstandard genoproducts' (i.e. androids) are available 'for the right price'.

Zia'zak SIA and LaForge BioTechnology of Medurma harvest the flora of Serpent's Reach to extract the RHCG. This is processed to form Ovonil, a widely-used long-duration Human contraceptive.

<NOTES>(Acknowledgements and apologies to Carolyn Cherryh).

#### **Shéaniki 0801 C612521-7 D2 Ic Ni 604 Im M4 V**

Shéaniki is the outer moon of Pelmarlu, the system's innermost gas giant. It is a frigidly cold world retaining a trace atmosphere of helium and ammonia, thrown off by the gas giant. Shéaniki displays an impressive degree of volcanism, but when the world is in alignment with Pelmarlu and the star seismic activity reaches a peak. Around half a million Humans live in a city fusion-tunnelled into a mountain, located in one of the geologically quieter areas. The remainder of the population are Droyne, who live in the unstable equatorial lowlands. Fragmentary records dating from the First Imperium indicate that a Droyne oynprith was present on Shéaniki when it was first explored by Vilani scouts. While the Droyne maintain a stable and sustainable tech seven society the Humans have an artificial tech level of around ten, but have to import everything they need, including maintenance personnel to keep their city running.

#### **Shimmerstone**

Some types of stone, after they have been exposed to Akimu's chemical oceans, gain a shimmering, iridescent quality that has made them popular as a building material. The iridescence gradually fades unless the rock is carefully prepared and the way the stone is 'fixed' is a closely guarded secret. Quarrying the correct stone, which only occurs on Akimu, is dangerous and time consuming and the exorbitant prices charged for the finished product reflect this. Nonetheless

Shimmerstone is highly sought after for up-market building projects throughout the Domain.

#### **S.I.A.**

<S'mrii Incorporated Association>

A legal device created by the Imperial Government to allow S'mrii 'pseudocorporate' phyla to trade on an equal regulatory footing with Human companies.

#### **Siakmasfa 0506 A140233-D N Lo Ni Po De 704 Im K2 V**

Siakmasfa was the location of a S'mrii base from before the Long Night. A team of archaeologists from Mimu are now in the process of excavating the base here. So far they say they have discovered nothing of interest to anyone. However the Navy seems to be supplying a large number of technical support staff for such an uninteresting site.

#### **SMK**

<Sk\*akia, Muisk'mii & Kkaskuama>

Sk\*akia, Muisk'mii & Kkaskuama (better known as SMK) while a fairly small firm (only three main partners) is among the most respected law firms in Dagudashaag, their main offices are based on Kashmiir. SMK is renowned for specialising in taking on Governments and megacorporations on behalf of the 'little man' and winning. While unorthodox in their approach they do have an unusually high success rate and attract some of the best young lawyers in the sector.

#### **Ssi 0708 A75886A-D N 803 Im K6 D M9 D**

Ssi is a long inhabited S'mrii world whose government is run by the ConSentiency from Mimu. After ten thousand years it seems that the S'mrii of Ssi have no wish to pick up the actual government of their world themselves. When asked why they do not wish to govern themselves the S'mrii reply 'why should we do something that others are willing to do for us?' This attitude runs through all of society on Ssi, if you want something doing then you must do it yourself because no-one else will do it for you.

#### **Tae 0408 C252664-9 S Ni Po 604 Im M4 V K0 D**

Originally colonised by the S'mrii by sublight vessels at about -11,700, Tae developed rapidly under the aegis of the Alliance of Worlds, and later under the Ziru Sirka. It soon developed an important industrial base, supplying precision components to the spacecraft manufacturer U'Chakzii-Ziask. Its population grew steadily to reach the high tens of millions by -6,000.

All this came to an end in the first spasms of the Vilani Consolidation Wars. The Vilani intended to punish the S'mrii for their presumption in developing an advanced technological base, and threatening Vilani megacorporate monopolies. Tae was a prime target. In -5,287, the world was systematically depopulated by orbital nuclear bombardment, and subsequently interdicted.

The S'mrii regained possession of the world in -2,155, by which time the Solomani had securely established their control over the region. With technical assistance from the Solomani Rydell-McRae Corporation, the S'mrii set about decontaminating and terraforming Tae. The collapse of the Rule of Man meant that the S'mrii had to devote their energies to maintaining their own interstellar civilisation, and the Tae terraforming effort was progressively turned over to automated systems. The world became safely habitable at about -400, at which point the ConSentiency established a start-up mining and manufacturing colony.

Tae once again saw conflict during the Vilani Pacification Campaigns. In 77, the colony was damaged by a near-miss nuclear strike by Vilani-dominated Imperial Naval units, and subsequently evacuated. The Imperial military inherited a deserted, mildly radioactive dustbowl of a world, and proceeded to ignore it for three centuries.

In 398, Phylum Kiaskui, supported by the Duke of Mimou, purchased land rights for much of the surface from the Imperial government. Cleanup operations were completed in short order, but the S'mrii did not reoccupy the world. Instead, Tae was advertised as open to settlement by all, with precedence given to refugees from conflicts in the Vilani sphere. Immigrants streamed in from all over the Vilani domain, and were greeted with open arms by the S'mrii, who had ensured that there was an extensive infrastructure already in place. Government was lax, and the S'mrii encouraged the new residents to express themselves freely. Strangely enough, the population seemed to include a high proportion of anti-Vilani political dissidents...

Tae is now recognised as a "writers' colony", and hardtext and video publishers form the world's most productive industry. A fair proportion of Tae's literary output is strongly anti-Vilani: political critiques, historical essays on Vilani subjugation of minor races (including the S'mrii) and so on. The Imperial government is in the embarrassing position of owning a world which is intensely annoying to the Vilani, but being unable to do anything about it, short of direct military intervention, because of the terms of the land grant to Phylum Kiaskui.

Tae is outwardly a desolate world, with jagged ochre cliffs surrounding the few small, intensely blue mineral-rich seas. The encroaching deserts conceal many unexplored S'mrii ruins dating back to the Ziru Sirka and before.

## **Tree'chuakh 0405 B789753-E N Ri 810 CS M9 V M1 D**

Tree'chuakh (a broad translation would be 'Pitchdark'), a tidally-locked world circling a close pair of dim red stars, is a major S'mrii colony, and member of the original Alliance of Worlds. The world's primary stars, Si'is A and B, emit primarily in the deep red and near infra-red, and the S'mrii are effectively blind in Tree'chuakh's environment. The world's 'twilight zone' is home to a wide range of highly active native flora and fauna (described by human explorers as a 'seething mass of teeth and tendrils'), and only the bravest (or most foolhardy) venture into the Tree'chuakh wilds ill-prepared.

The S'mrii colonists treated Tree'chuakh's threats with characteristic disdain, meeting claws and fangs with fusion fire. Six 'arcology zones' have been cleared, equally spaced along the terminator, and drawing energy from the world's core, now glow so brightly with UV-rich light that this 'world-necklace' is a spectacle to rival the primary stars for ships arriving insystem. The native fauna have been proved to be an important source of pharmaceuticals (a fact which certainly saved them from annihilation), and S'mrii corporations often hire Human collectors to obtain specimens in conditions where even their most advanced robots have failed.

The star Si'is A is a subject of continuing study, as it is at least fifty times more luminous than conventional astrophysical theories would predict. The best explanation is that a naturally-occurring miniature black hole has become lodged in the centre of the star, causing its core to contract. Probes are regularly launched into the star's outer envelope.

## **Tscho 0109 C685767-8 Ag Ri 904 CS K2 V M3 D**

Tscho is a privately owned planet belonging to the Akui Miasksk\*k corporation. Although originally a mining colony the planet was extensively terraformed into a garden paradise in 788. As well as being a major agricultural exporter of exotic fruits it is also a major holiday site and caters for millions who come to enjoy the adventure safari's or lay around in the domed paradise villages that are scattered throughout the equatorial belt. Akui Miasksk\*k have been extensively refurbishing the starport and is in the process of applying for B status.

## **U'Chakzii-Ziask SIA**

Phylum U'Chakzii-Ziask have been building starships since -12,000, and although they have long since diversified into heavy equipment production, they still remain at the core of S'mrii interstellar civilisation. U'Chakzii-Ziask built the first Bussard ramjets which carried S'mrii to the stars when the Vilani were discarding their bronze axeheads for new-fangled iron ones, and fusion rocketry remains their speciality. They produce a wide range of high-gee interceptors, fast

transports and courier vehicles which leave gravitic vessels standing.

U'Chakzii-Ziask allied itself with the ruling Kiaskui phylum in -2,000, a move which benefitted both phyla greatly. The Kiaskui phylum was becoming too small to be an economically viable entity on its own, and may otherwise have been toppled by an ambitious competitor such as Kiaatruk. Kiaskui has subsequently grown rich from its holdings in the neurotech industry, but would certainly be 'looking over its shoulder' without the protection of U'Chakzii-Ziask.

#### **Ushkhuur 0502 CA7A774-9 Wa 510 Im G2 V M2 D**

Ushkhuur is a chilly world entirely covered in oceans of liquid water. The poles are covered by small icecaps and only the equator avoids the year-round drift ice. Weather patterns are unpredictable and often violent and can range from huge electric storms and violent rains right through to dense sea-mists and even, on occasion, gloriously sunny days. The planet has an extremely high gravity: the world is twice as dense as Terra and has a surface gravity of almost 2.5 gees. The local population live in large seabed metropolises, each of which is self-governing and are protected from the local climate and gravity. Most of the population have little interest in their world and some can claim to have never been outside of the cities. For those who do venture into the wilds of Ushkhuur there are rich rewards: the local lifeforms are intriguing and varied and a well organised underwater expedition can find spectacular vistas.

#### **Zishku 0610 C7A5776-B FI 524 Im K0 V**

Zishku is a high gravity world with an exotic atmosphere consisting mainly of nitrogen gas. There is a minimal percentage of oxygen, roughly equalled by the combined mix of other more exotic atmospheric gases. The surface temperatures are close to normal but unusual pressures and environmental conditions create nitric acids, which fall as rain on some areas of the world. The shallow oceans are made up of liquid water and the poles are covered by small icecaps. The population is almost entirely Human and comes from a wide variety of backgrounds. Zishku is divided into a bewildering mixture of ethnic and religious groups, many of whom are further divided by differences in their language. Some of the more powerful have staked out countries for themselves while the smaller groups live in their shadow. Tension in such an environment is inevitable and brushfire wars on the world are common.

#### **ZUIAR 0705 B450967-D N Hi Po De 323 CS K0 V**

A major S'mrii colony, and member of the original Alliance of Worlds. Zuiar has a large industrial base, concentrating on electronics, vehicle and heavy equipment manufacturing. During the Pacification Campaigns, the Vilani recognised that Zuiar was too

valuable a target to depopulate completely, and so the world was occupied and Makhidkarun began a major settlement programme. In many cases S'mrii urban centres were simply bulldozed to make way for the Vilani, and their populations forced out into the deserts.

At present, Humans (mainly Vilani) form about sixty percent of the world's population, and tensions between the Human and S'mrii communities run high. The S'mrii seem intent on regaining their lost territory by any means short of actual violence. The future seems bleak for the Human community, as their ancient S'mrii-built aquifers and irrigation systems break down and cannot be repaired (without outside help...) Water riots are becoming increasingly common, especially in the mixed-race

#### **Zukchurukh 0108 C582867-8 Ri 715 CS M4 IV**

Zukchurukh has a majority S'mrii population, first settled around -11,300 with sublight Ramships. The name is S'mrii for 'navigational error' as the initial scoutship believed initially that they had in some way come full circle and arrived back at Mimmu, so alike did Zukchurukh initially appear to the home world. The illusion was shattered when it was realised that Zukchurukh was a tidally-locked world. It was still a prime S'mrii site. The Twilight band is much cooler at 185° Kelvin and the S'mrii have to live more towards the centre of the brightside. There are human settlements in the system, mainly in the mining bases of the Ckur-ka belt and the Khu Trade Centre in orbit round the Vivka gas giant. The main world derives its wealth from production and research into medicine, genetics and cybertech, particularly in regard to climatic adaptation. There are drugs to overcome low oxygen atmospheres (aka altitude sickness), gene therapy for modifying sweat glands to become more effective (in high temperature environments) and cybertech implants/hardening of body parts. Half the human population and nearly a third of the S'mrii are followers of the Lancian culture.

# WAR ZONE: MIMU

## 1116

Mimu is perhaps one of the most important subsectors in Dagudashaag, Vland Domain, and in fact the entire Imperium. The Fifth Fleet under Admiral Chii'ekak is one of the most powerful of the Imperium starfleets. The Fifth Fleet is a Reinforced Strike Fleet jointly crewed by humans and S'mrii (a "reptilian" minor race from Mimu). An important economic force in this region is the S'mrii ConSentiency (SCS), a trading association with member worlds in Mimu subsector and the adjoining Tansa subsector in Gushemege. The subsector as part of the Lancian Cultural District, has long enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from central Imperial rule.

The news of the assassination of Strephon reached the political and leaders of Mimu in 206 by Naval and Imperial couriers, and the general population in 243 by X-boat. Duke Skuissch\*r Kiaskui and the ConSentiency leading council, the Skai'l'uss, foresaw a number of problems. Duke Kiaskui had met Lucan only a few months before the assassination, and knew that he would be willing to use absolutely any means to obtain his desires. The prospect of someone with "paranoid-schizophrenic tendencies" on the Imperial Throne was terrifying. The Skai'l'uss formulated Ikriiss U'mra likh\*, 'Project Dawn'.

Project Dawn was an all-encompassing programme to ensure that the S'mrii would survive the Rebellion. Among the projects involved were the "Construx"-class starships - modular long-range high endurance starships for covert operations and relief work. S'mrii chemical and engineering phyla joined in. Project Dawn work often took priority over regular contracts and those relying on S'mrii industry began to have their business turned away even before the end of the year. For those who were unable to renegotiate their contracts, the S'mrii became increasingly unpopular outside their own worlds.

Mimu was too far away from any of the factions to see any military action.

## 1117

By the middle of 1117, some of the scouts from the leading elements of Dulinor's fleets had entered the subsector. The oversized Fifth Fleet easily repelled these efforts. As part of Project Dawn, several shipments of were sent to Usdiki/Gushemege, including a personality overlay machine.

On 245-1117, the SCS formed the Federal Galactic Rescue Services, or Zaskskaii'sii'kask (ZKK), in order to relieve civilian suffering caused by the now widespread

warfare in Dagudashaag. The ZKK also assumed responsibility for the "Construx" project from the intelligence division of the Fifth Fleet Command.

Faced by the opposition of the 188<sup>th</sup> Fleet in Ushra, Lucan called for the Fifth Fleet to destroy the 188<sup>th</sup>. This message was "lost in transit", and indeed the ZKK raided Lucan's forward base on Kimilad, delaying the advance of the Corridor Fleet into Dagudashaag. Lucan was furious. On 347-1117, the Fifth Fleet and associated S'mrii colonial naval units were renamed the ConSentiency Unified StarFleet (CUSF).

Forward elements of the Corridor Salient One (30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 59<sup>th</sup>, and 213<sup>th</sup> Fleets) entered just spinward of Mimu on 300-1117, resulting in clashes with Fifth Fleet forward elements. The main force itself entered Tansa subsector (Gushemege D) just as they were beginning to receive the news of "Strephon's" reappearance. These forces: enough to totally overwhelm the Fifth Fleet, would never strike in their full entirety due to this news. The agitprop programmes of Stage Two of Project Dawn had been a success.

Mimu had only seen very minor fighting, and at the end of the year, all worlds were still members of the SCS.

## 1118

On 004-1118, CUSF elements were engaged in now regular skirmishes with Dulinor's scouting forces at Kukhun/Gushege. At the same time, however, the 30<sup>th</sup> Fleet entered the system, and mistakenly assumed at the CUSF ships were escorting the Ilelish scouts. The CUSF and Ilelish ships alike were obliterated by spinal mount fire. The 30<sup>th</sup> Fleet commander and Salient Commander, Akalmir Duuashmin, had been appointed by Lucan over Sector Admiral Marsh's objections. He ordered the devastation of Kukhun for "providing succour to rebels and traitors". Eighty million people died in half an hour.

Admiral Duuashmin ordered attacks on civilian targets be carried out wherever his ships encountered resistance. By 015, this had begun to be unpopular with many squadron and ship commanders. When the existence of the "Real" Strephon reached the fleets, they began to fragment almost immediately. Some defected to the CUSF, joined Strephon, or fought each other.

On 019-1118, Duke Kiaskui declared the ConSentiency to be independent, and enacted a Declaration of Common Intent with Strephon's forces. An SCS government structure was already in place, and the transition took place smoothly. A steady trickle of ex-Corridor Fleet

vessels continued to join the CUSF. ZKK rapid response units began to be deployed.

A handful of neighbour worlds reacted well to the independent ConSentiency. The high-population world of Upag/Shallows completed a transfer to the S'mrii electronic currency system, PICTRA, and was accepted as full member of the SCS. Other worlds reacted poorly, some preferring to join the FMF. On Zuiar, Lucan had managed to insert loyalists into the Human population, and this important high population world fell into anarchy. Also, in early 1115, the Ziru Sirkaa was declared. This forced valuable CUSF ships to be redeployed to face this new threat. ZKK covert operations vessels began intelligence gathering operations in Vland Sector.

In mid-1118, those Corridor ships in Tansa and Old Suns still loyal to Lucan were organised into an offensive against Strephon. Those in Gushemege were badly damaged after their own mini-Rebellion, and those remaining forces were wiped out.

However, the ships used to destroy those forces in the rear regions of the faction's space left gaps in the trailing defensive lines, for Lucan's thrusts from Old Suns. The SCS was forced to evacuate from several worlds, and Lucan's forces were happy to capture a number of forward bases. To trailing the important research base on Chiuak was evacuated. Phylum transports took only S'mrii and their sealed cargoes to an unknown destination. The news of this open racism led to more SCS members leaving, and claiming allegiance to the FMF.

Lucan's offensive in Mimu was limited, however. This was because of the growing chaos on Old Suns and because Mimu is on the extreme coreward edge of Strephon's factional territory. Hence, Lucan's admirals sought to better use their resources, which they saw disappearing at an alarming rate. Commerce raids extended several times right to Mimu itself.

Mimu was spared major attacks like those seen in Pact and Argi. Similarly, they had escaped the attacks like those on Shankida, where massive nuclear weapon strikes were made against civilian targets. Indeed, ZKK efforts to reduce suffering earned the SCS a lot of goodwill throughout the sector. Despite a few unexpected attacks, like the anti-S'mrii reaction on some worlds and secession of Vland. Stage Three of Project Dawn was running to schedule.

### 1119

Lucan's forces had more pressing problems in 1119 than those experienced in Mimu. Dulinor had launched his stellar blitzkrieg, and Lucan's admirals were busy trying to collect reserves from anywhere they could get them in order to blunt the offensive before it reached Capital. Those ships that were not in time to blunt the attack were sucked into the "pursuit" of Dulinor's fleets, and many were destroyed by Dulinor's masterful double envelopment.

Mimu had other concerns though. Vland was beginning to flex its muscles. A number of heavy clashes occurred between CUSF and Ziru Sirkaa forces in the coreward regions of the subsector. Ninaan was reduced to radioactive slag as battleships and cruisers clashed overhead in vicious, no holds-barred conflict.

Some worlds actually rejoined the SCS as they feared Lucan's nuclear weapons more than S'mrii cultural prejudice. Project Dawn was continuing. However, the presence of the Vilani continued to be a thorn in the side of the S'mrii. The S'mrii were working to correct this .....

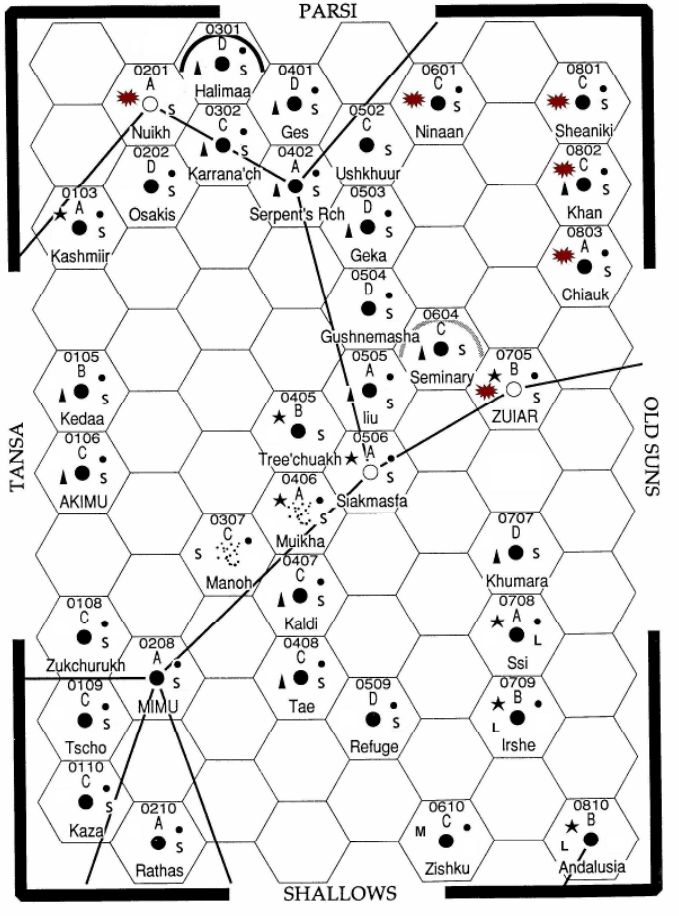
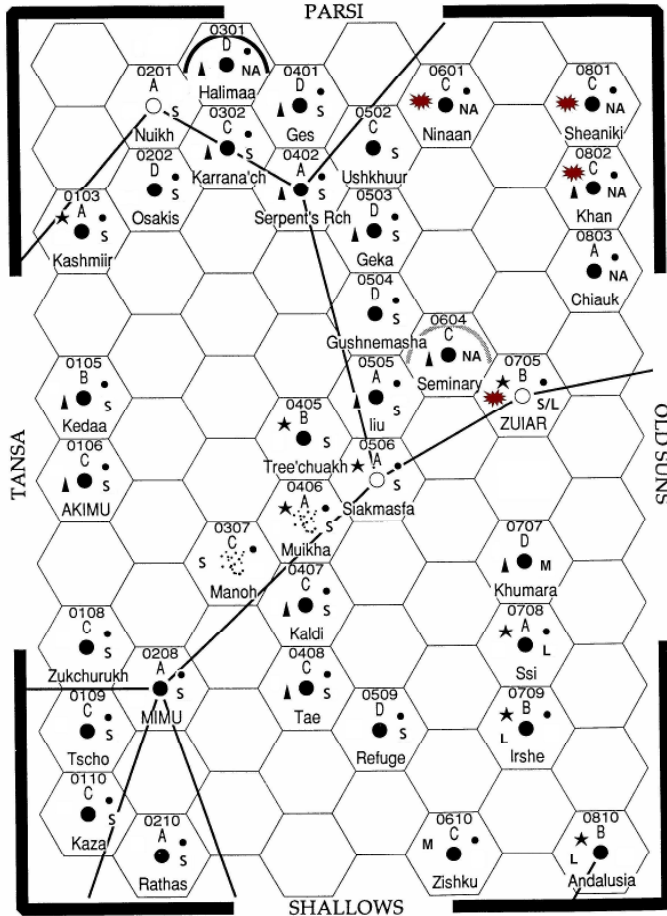
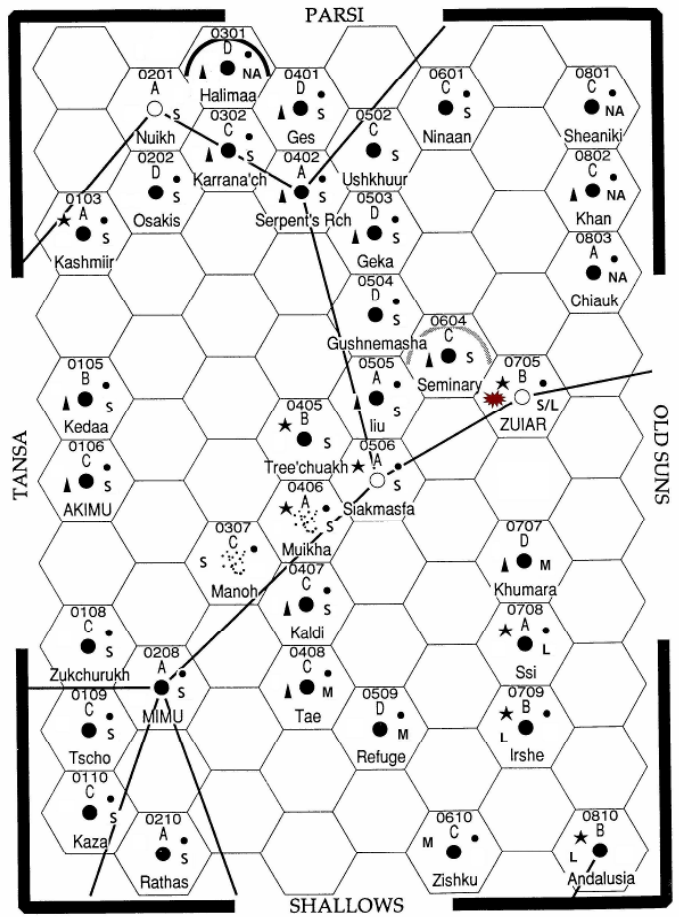
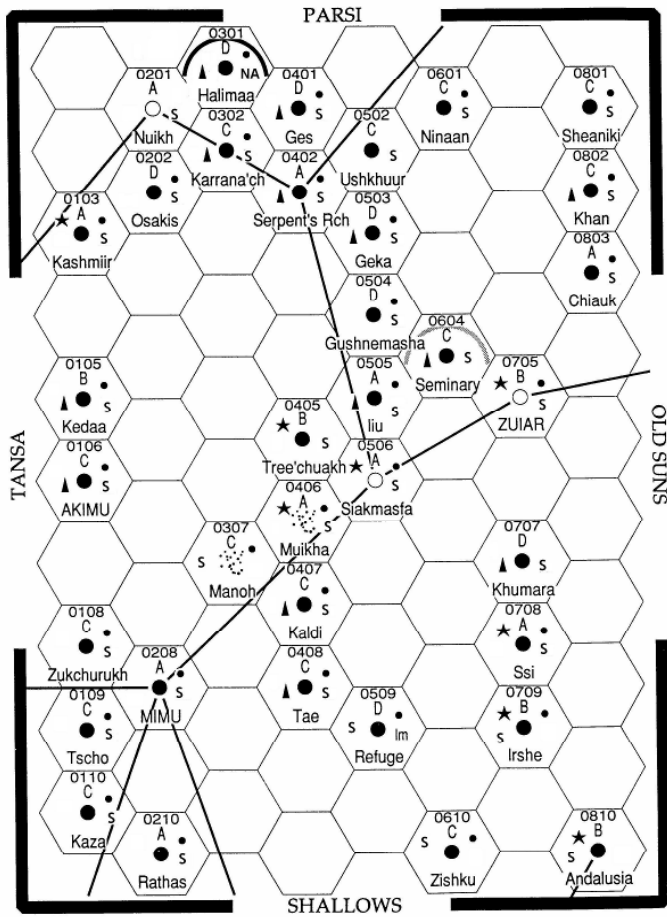
### 1120

The SCS discovered a plan by Strephon's high command to attack Old Suns, with the intention of obtaining large amounts of specialist equipment there. This left the SCS in a quandry. Firstly they did not want Strephon's Imperium to become a major state, as that would upset their own plans. However, if that offensive did take place, more worlds would come under S'mrii control. A two part plan was created. First of all it was suggested that diversionary attacks should be launched against the Ziru Sirkaa. As Strephon's admirals were already considering this, S'mrii support was invaluable. Secondly, SCS intelligence operatives had discovered a spy in the StarFleet's technical support division. This spy was fed details of what was on Ikiir, and Strephon's plans.

As the offensive was launched and began to experience almost immediate setbacks in Old Suns, SCS forces were experiencing many successes against the Ziru Sirkaa and the Vilani were forced back several parsecs. In Old Suns, when Strephon's forces were on the verge of victory, SCS forces were pulled out due to "damage", "threats to rear areas" and so on. In Mimu subsector itself, several systems returned to SCS control. Most importantly, CUSF ships and marines ended the civil war on Zuiar conclusively in the favour of the SCS. However, the key bases on Ssi, Irshe and Andalusia remained in Lucan's hands.

1120 saw the SCS's power increase further. Strephon's credibility had been damaged by his failed offensive in Old Suns. Also, Vilani expansion to rimward had been slowed and likely stopped totally. Project Dawn was continuing.

But what is Project Dawn? It is nothing less than the S'mrii domination of this region of space! The existence of Strephon's faction and the FMF assists the fracturing of Human space. The only problem was the Ziru Sirkaa. Like the SCS, this racially motivated group have their own plans for the future. However, the S'mrii used Strephon's forces to battle the Vilani. The only fear for the SCS is that posed by Lucan. As their power increases, the paranoid emperor will fear them more and more. In the past this has meant planetary bombardment and the death of billions. The future of Mimu and the SCS could be either dark or bright.



Key to Allegiances: NA—Non-aligned, L—Lucan’s Imperium, M—Free Medurman Federation, S—Strephon’s Imperium  
 \* Site of major battle