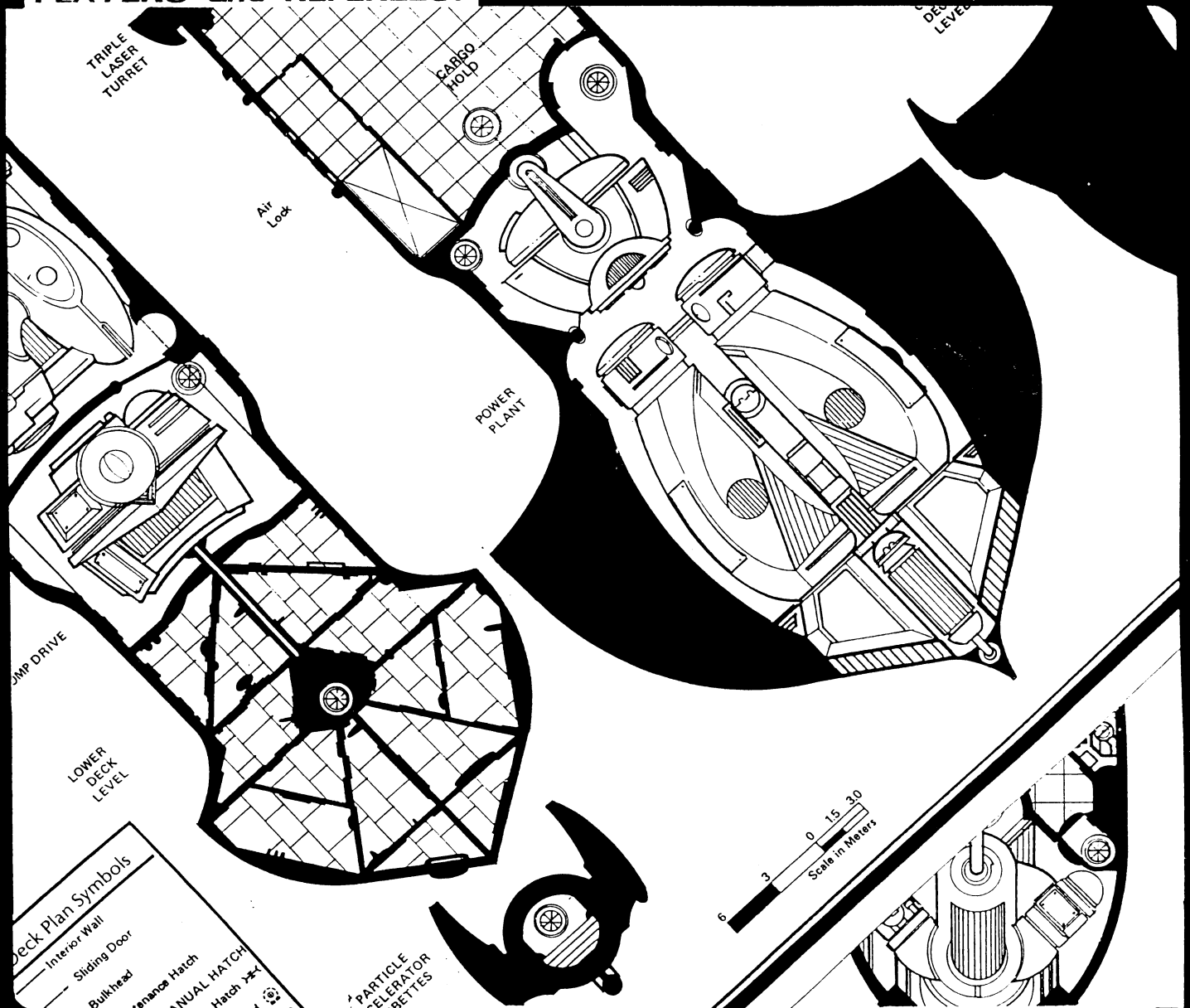


ARTICLES and EQUIPMENT,
RULES, HINTS and TIPS.

SIGNAL 7

BY and FOR TRAVELLER™
PLAYERS and REFEREES.



EDITED :
PRODUCED :

JAE CAMPBELL

ADVENTURE IN
DAGUDASHAAG

Acknowledgements

Although Signal-Gk is acknowledged by HIWG and GDW the data shown is not "official" - Players wishing to know the official status of any item or article should contact GDW or the Dagudashaag Sector Analyst, Duncan Law-Green, directly.

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The name Signal-GK is not intended to infringe upon the earlier GDW adventure of the same name. For review purposes, please refer to this fanzine as either 'GK', 'S-GK' or 'Signal-GK the fanzine'...

HIWG (History of the Imperium Working Group) is a fan organisation that was attempting to detail the official MegaTraveller universe. A UK branch exists and hopefully we will bring you details of how to renew/join next issue.

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SIGNAL-GK

A Distress Signal..

A Cry for Help..

A Call - to Adventure! !

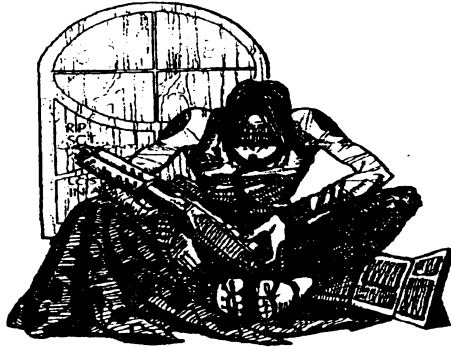
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SUPPLEMENTS

- Library Data** By The D.D.T. Dagudashaag Development Team : Leighton, Duncan, Nick, Adie, Jae and Django.
- Starship Designs** By John Tatman

EDITORIAL



T.O.

And its Goodbye from Him...

Yes, its finally happened folks, I'm leaving as editor and passing on the mantle to Leighton, effective as of the next issue. The last year has proved extremely difficult for me and, unfortunately, the signs are that its not going to improve a great deal in the foreseeable future. I just didn't seem to have the time and energy needed to keep S-GK coming out regular and to maintain the standard that we've come to expect. This doesn't mean that S-GK will disappear. Leighton is full of ideas as to how S-GK can keep on growing and progressing. I know I leave the editorial duties in extremely capable hands. I also hope to use some of my 'liberated' free time to work on a few new projects - **The Dagudashaag Encyclopedia** for one as well as the possibility of a UK based Superhero fanzine in the great tradition of Superhero UK (another love of my RPG life - comes from being an ex-copper, I like the good guys to win once in a while!) which still hasn't been given a working title. Some of you writers and artists may yet discover that 'the world will hear from me again' - or was that Fu Manchu?

As far as S-Gk is concerned I will still retain some involvement through the subscription and production side as well as the occasional article though I too must now face the possibility of my work facing editorial change in future. I'd like to say that I know Leighton will be an excellent editor and future Traveller Guru in his own lunch pail. The best is yet to come!

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the members of the DDT; Nick, Duncan, Adie, Leighton, Stuart as well as David Burden, Nick Piper, Dee Smith, John Tatman, Andrew Pickford, Tim Osborne and everyone else who has so willingly contributed to the legend that S-GK has become. Thank you! Finally a thank you to each of you who have continued to subscribe to this magazine.. What can I say except you are all scholars! Thank You..

A final word about subscriptions. Because of exchange rates I have always asked that foreign (i.e. non-UK subscriptions) be sent in either UK currency or as International Reply Coupons. This has not proved too popular and recently I was sent a renewal in US currency. At time of sending I am sure that it was worth £10 but when I received it exchange rates had made its value £8.90 however I then had to pay a further £2 for exchanging it. In this particular case I will honour the three issue sub but please, please either use UK currency or reply coupons as we really cannot afford to subsidise S-GK to that additional extent. May your God go with you as I hand you over to your once and future Editor for a few words.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-ELECT - LEIGHTON PIPER

Hello there! For those who don't know, I shall be taking over as Editor of 'Signal GK' from issue 8.

Hopefully I can do the job as well as Jae Campbell who has been excellent in the post since the magazine's inception. It has been Jae's enthusiasm and dedication that has seen S-GK last this far.

Although S-GK has been Jae's baby, he has decided to put it up for adoption so to speak and plans to start up a new fanzine. It is now up to myself to help nurse SGK forwards with all your help. If you've any comments, contributions or criticisms then send them to me at the address below.

Jae will not be leaving us completely for he will still be producing and distributing SGK. All money should still be sent to him as he will continue to look after the finances.

**Leighton Piper, 11 Skeffington
Road, Preston, Lancs., PR1
5UP, United Kingdom.**

The next issue will concentrate on **Laraa subsector** (Dagudashaag P) but we are now taking a wider perspective and I would like to see articles and adventures from all over the Imperium and Beyond, and at potentially any time. Hope to hear from you, and many thanks in anticipation of your continued support.

**Now, onward brave souls the
adventure has just begun!**

PORT OF CALL: SILK

Silk 2440 C354377-A S Lo Ni 703 IM M9 III

Primary: Khri, Spectral Class: M9 III, Mass: 9.20 Luminosity: 7.20 Sol.

Planetary System: 7 major bodies, one inhabited (Silk - orbit No. 9), three gas giants.

Silk: Mean Orbital Radius: 38.8AU, Period: 79.68 Std Yrs, Diameter: 4,960km, Mass: 0.053 Terra, Molten Core, Density: 1.02, Mean Surface Gravity: 0.381G, Rotational Period: 29h 24m 08s, Axial inclination 1° 44' 8.5", Energy Absorption 0.820. Surface Atmospheric Pressure: 0.631 Std, Composition: Oxygen-Nitrogen Mix, Hydrographic Percentage: 48.17%, Mean Surface Temperature 79.23°C, Native Life: Non-sentient Life (Hosking Rating: <06), Total System Population: 7,630¹.

Satellites: None.

Primary City: (No Orbitals), **Kheul-Doar-Rha**; 6,500 Starport C.

World Government: Balkanised. Overall planetary decisions are generally decided by a Council representing the five main land owners; The Lui Ch'en, Han Wu, Jin Qi, Qui'ndao and Hualiu Si clans. Law enforcement, which is run as a commercial concern, is primarily to prevent acts of crime being committed against the ruling classes and their visitors.

Population Breakdown: 1.35% Humaniti, Euroasian Ruling Class known as Lao, 96.12% Humaniti Mixed, known as Xiao, 1.26% Aslani, Alikasch, 1.27% other races.

(¹Note - The number of females on planet is unknown and are not counted as part of the Census; The actual population figure is based purely on the number of males as a result. Estimates possibly place the actual population as high as 18,000)

Social Outlook: Conservative, Stagnant, Competitive, Militant, Discordant.

Religious Profile: 969BC8-3

Law Profile: Personal 7-63566

Technology Profile: A9-99A9B-99AB-99-?

HISTORY

The early history of Silk is extremely patchy. There is some evidence to suggest that Silk was visited several times during the Rule of Man and the early part of the Long Night. Apparently for the purpose of open-cast mining but, seemingly no permanent settlements were ever established.

It is popularly believed that the first established settlement occurred with the crash of a slave transporter sometime during the early part of the Aakhri Expansion. According to legend, the Captain Qi Lui Ch'en, with the surviving members of his crew, established order amongst the freed slaves and marched them all into the more temperate polar regions where he established the first city, known only as Xi'ahan. The Aakhri worked alongside the former slaves to build Xi'ahan and were apparently recognised by them as their rulers. During the next thousand years some sort of disaster befell Xi'ahan, destroying it utterly and the survivors moved to the edge of the Q'habora Sea.

It was this colony, Kheul, that was discovered in -66 by ships from the Tai'pan Trading Houses of Argi. Despite initial distrust of the existing Aakhri rule, trade agreements were signed. Because of caste, the Aakhri descendants refused to recognise relations between themselves and their former slaves. Over the centuries this had resulted in severe inbreeding amidst the Aakhri. The Ruling members knew that if their world was to survive it needed a strong transfusion of both new blood and technology.

Given that the Tai'pan were also descended from Chinese and Asian nobility, it was natural to try and entice some of them to emigrate to Silk. Many concessions, in the form of land, livestock and servants, were made to encourage Tai'pan families to move. Eventually four Tai'pan clans emigrated to Silk and bought land from the Lui Ch'en clan as the descendants of the Aakhri now called themselves. The arrival of four new "noble" families allowed the Lui Ch'en to finally strengthen their bloodline and together the five families jointly financed the establishment of the starport and the building up of the area. This spirit of inter-clan co-operation was not to last, however. Within a generation feuding and lack of co-operation between the clans became the norm with only custom and tradition preventing it from escalating into outright hostility.

The arrival of the Imperium resulted in the abolition of the last traces of slavery but the Aakhri caste system and customs remained as strong as ever, adopted even by the Tai'pan trading clans. Inter-clan rivalry has always proved a major stumbling block in the planet's development. The only surviving attempt at joint clan co-operation is the STAS or Silk Travel Advisory Service which was formed in 975 to prevent excessive duplication of bureaucracy from killing the fledgling tourist trade. Today Silk is controlled and governed by each of the five clans independently, each of who attempt to control every aspect of life for those lower caste who have claimed allegiance.

STARPORT PROCEDURE

The Silk System is poorly developed with traffic primarily around Silk and its nearest Gas Giant neighbour, Ijei.

Landing Pattern

Traffic Control in the Silk System has been contracted out to MMSL who maintain an effective if somewhat limited service. Due to the limited resources of Kheul-Doar-Rha port, incoming ship's may have to wait up to two hours before being assigned approach vectors. All ships must land at the port and, wilderness landings, except in the case of dire emergency, are forbidden.

Port inspection will generally occur within three hours of landing and will be undertaken by representatives of the five clans who maintain checks on each other as well as the ship. Although ship safety regulations are poorly enforced the port enforcers take the Health inspection extremely seriously and poor health documentation or illegal importation of livestock can result in long delays and heavy fines.

Starport Facilities

Kheul-Doar-Rha is primarily a trade port with few concessions made for passengers yet, despite this, Kheul-Doar-Rha is in the process of becoming a prime, if rather exotic, tourist stop-over. It must be noted that there is **no** extralality and local laws apply as soon as a ship enters Silk airspace. There are 6 permanent berths with a further twelve temporary berths located alongside the landing field for "Tourist" trade.

Traffic does vary according to the stocks of Tao'l-Silk awaiting shipment off-planet and the seasonal tourist trade but generally stands at a reasonably steady 80% throughout the standard year.

Basic ship repair facilities to Tech Level A and limited Search and Rescue facilities do exist but are privately owned by the clans. Anyone wishing to use these

facilities must first approach the family concerned and gain permission.

Generally speaking only those who are affiliated and in good standing are even likely to be granted permission.

Port Costs

Refined Fuel: Cr.300 per Tonne, Unrefined Fuel: Cr.120 per Tonne, Berthing Costs: Cr.150 per first six days, Cr.250 per additional day (except the "Tourist" Berths which cost Cr.80 per additional day) Warehousing Costs: Free if affiliated; Cr.20 per Tonne if unaffiliated, Security Costs: Main Berth - Cr. 50 per week, "Tourist" Berth - Cr.120 per week, Shuttle Costs: by private charter only.

Regulations

Most regulations relate to the protection of either the Ruling Families and/or their property and are best summed up as "**Do nothing that might upset a member of the Five**".



T.O.

Due to the importance of genetic research to the Han Wu and Qui'ndao clans, there are severe punishments for breaches of the quarantine laws and, anyone found guilty of industrial espionage, faces the death penalty.

Silk's custom formalities have in the past tended to be rather exacting, with each traveller having to be passed by each Clan in turn. Since late 1004, however, the STAS (Silk Travel Advisory Service) has undertaken to carry out a combined customs check thereby helping to simplify procedures for short-term visitors.

There are four cardinal rules to observe with respect to customs procedures;

1. Declare **all** items required by the Baggage Declaration Form. All personal possessions declared upon entry must be taken out again. STAS officials at departure are likely to ask to see such items and time will be saved by having them readily available for inspection.

2. Do not attempt to bring in contraband or other illegal items (e.g. weapons, drugs).

3. Save all currency-exchange vouchers and all receipts for major purchases. If Exchange Certificates are presented for reconversion on departure, officials may ask to be shown proof that the amount to be reconverted was covered by the appropriate Clan's official exchange transactions. Upon departure the amount of money taken out must be noted on the original currency declaration form and should correlate with the amount spent on Silk. Local currency may not be taken off-planet except in the form of Exchange Certificates.

4. Items categorised as "cultural relics" may not be taken off-planet without evidence that they have been officially approved for export. Proof consists of a wax seal or an export certificate from the appropriate Clan's Cultural Relics Administration, accompanied by a receipt stamped "Foreign Exchange Purchase". Items covered by this regulation include fossils and all antiques - including old paintings, calligraphy, pottery and porcelain, coins, carvings, furniture and certain handicrafts.

Currency

While Silk is affiliated to the ICEM (Imperial Credit Exchange Mechanism), a local unit of currency, the Kuai, is used extensively on-planet. The Kuai is not traded on the interplanetary markets and can only be purchased or exchanged on Silk.

This unit of currency replaced the individual clan currency in the early 550's but is still extremely unstable and rates of exchange between it and the Imperial Credit fluctuate daily. The amount of Imperial Credit allowed on planet is unlimited but, it needs to be converted to Kuai for local purchases. Unused Kuai must then be reconverted back on departure.

Exchange Certificates. A new system of Exchange Certificates was introduced by STAS for use by visitors to Silk. This was intended to eliminate the direct use of Imperial Credits for purchases of imported goods. EC's (or Easy's as they are known by travellers) are also required for the purchase of restricted exports such as antiques. The certificates are sold at usual credit exchange outlets throughout the city at equivalent Credit-Kuai exchange rates. Unlike Kuai, EC's can be transferred off-planet. The certificates have met with uneven success since their introduction, mainly because of the inability of many smaller outlets to stock enough EC's to cover their transactions with visitors.

Languages

Galanglic is only spoken on Silk by Port staff. Primary languages are Cantonese and Galaach tradespeak. Though Aakhri is a major language spoken amongst the poorer people there are no translation facilities or translator programs provided on-planet for this particular language. Lao have a tendency to speak their own family tongue in public in an attempt to prevent others understanding their private conversations. Generally this is a Terran tongue long out of vogue, ie. the Lui Ch'en speak Pu'tonghua, the Qui'ndao speak Bai Hua, etc.

Health

Many visitors have commented on the extra-ordinary concern shown by the affiliated clan for their guests' health and have praised the excellent care provided by Clan hospitals and medical personnel.

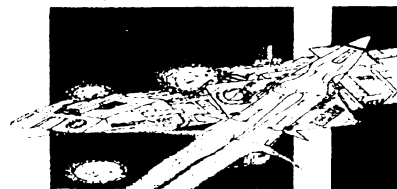
It should be noted that this facility is generally only available to affiliated "outsiders" who, whether they know it or not, automatically donate samples of their DNA for further genetic research as payment. Unaffiliated travellers will generally find that all Clan medical facilities are closed to them.

The most common maladies afflicting travellers to Silk are respiratory problems such as head cold's, bronchial conditions and sore throats. Stomach complaints may also cause problems and appropriate remedies should be taken on the prior advice of your physician. Standard antibiotics and medication are available but outsiders may have to spend a considerable amount of time and effort to obtain them as the Clan hospitals often prefer to test "new" or experimental remedies on their guests.

Sanitation outside of the Hotels and Clan Accommodation is generally acceptable. Hotel rooms supply boiled & sterilised water, ice is made from purified water and local beverages are safe.

Please note: The inhabitants of Silk do not have RH-negative blood and consequently their blood banks do not store it. Persons with this blood type should inform their tour operator prior to departure.

Some visitors are put off by the apparently primitive appearance of Silk medical facilities; there are no luxury hospitals, no carpeted waiting rooms and their diagnostic equipment is generally of unusual design. Such fears are unfounded since Clan physicians are all well trained geneers and their diagnostic techniques sophisticated and judicious.



Portside Facilities

Despite its small population size, the city of Kheul-Doar-Rha has an extensive transport system available as a result of its canals and it is relatively easy to travel around by private launch (hire desks in all hotels and hostels) for about Cr.20-50 a day depending on size and onboard facilities. Public ferries also run throughout the city and most trips will cost less than Cr.3. The City also boasts three top quality hotels, all 3 star; **The Jinglin** (affiliated to the Lui Ch'en Clan), **the Silken Rose** (affiliated to the Han Wu) and **the Jiangua** (affiliated to the Jin Qi). For most travellers, hotel accommodations are prearranged and preassigned by the Affiliating host clan. Not surprisingly space in these establishments is in great demand and many are booked at least two - three months in advance, especially during the peak months. For those not affiliated, or unable to afford the high prices of the three main hotels, accommodation is limited to the Tha's or Hostels. These are usually very reasonable and are open to all provided the traveller has been cleared in advance by the STAS (Silk Travel Advisory Service). Most offer excellent Asian food as well as Silk cuisine, including Clan specialities. STAS counters are frequently housed in these hotels and offer assistance in choosing Clan Affiliation and advice regarding the various services available and sights to visit during your visit. A popular Tha' for visiting merchants is the **Tian'xa Diyiguan** in the Doar region. Check out time at Tha's is always noon. Please note that if you stay beyond that there will be a half-day surcharge up to dusk and a full day's charge after that.

A VISITORS GUIDE TO SILK

Much of Silk is uninhabited and has been undisturbed for Centuries. Although safari's into the polar jungle regions are starting to become popular, few ever leave the Q'habora region.

Planetology/Ecology

Silk's primary obstacle, as far as human occupation is concerned, is that it suffers from excessively hot surface temperatures and minimal axial tilt. This, coupled with little surface water and no polar caps has resulted in much of the planet being too hot for comfortable colonisation. Despite a planetary hydrographic percentage of 48.17%, less than 15% is found on the surface and much of that exists in or around the Q'habora Sea. The rest of the water exists deep below the surface in massive caves formed eons ago by continental drift. At the equator, temperatures can get high enough to boil water. Only at the planetary poles is the temperature sufficiently lenient to allow permanent human habitation. There are almost no seasonal changes throughout the planetary year and temperatures remain reasonably constant from month to month. The Equatorial regions consist primarily of a world-girdling belt of desert which gives way eventually to an open savannah of sharp knife-like grass, thick-skinned thorn bushes and the deadly harpoon trees that form what is known as the Thorn barrier. Further North again this gives way to tropical and sub-tropical jungles in the regions surrounding the free-standing water.

Three radically different families of native life exists on Silk; the equatorial desert is home to burrowing Echinoderms or spiny-skinned invertebrates. They are known to use the carcasses of their prey to store stocks of water from the underground sea's or the pools that occasional burst to the surface as hot geisers. All the creatures of this region have radial symmetry and are heavily armoured in heavy shells covered in poisonous spines. The Thorn barrier is home to a variety of invertebrates with the dominant species of the region being mollusc-like arthropods and armoured pill millipedes. The tropical regions around the Q'habora Sea are primarily

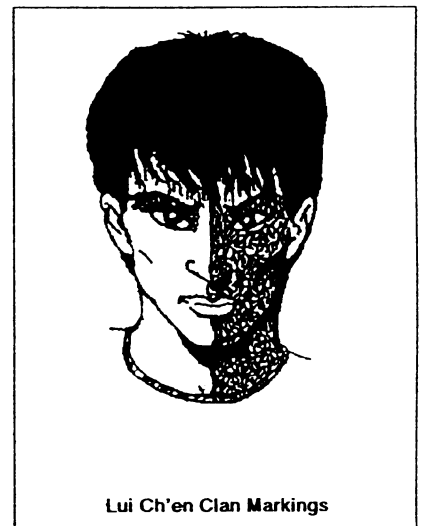
dominated by a variety of gigantic insects, specifically the beetle and arachnid families. No animals have ever evolved and the invertebrates have adapted to fill all aspects of the ecological niche.

Silk's only colony is based in the Q'habora region and generally few ever visit any other part of the planet except on day trips. It is therefore the ecology of this region that we will be concentrating on. Daytime temperatures are in the 30°-32°c range. Despite the tropical appearances, the nighttime lack of cloud cover can result in sub-zero temperatures away from the coast. Off-shore winds prevent actual rain from ever falling on the shore making the region appear extremely dry and rainless though the area is often drenched at night by moisture-laden fog as the cold, moist air moves inland. In addition, Silk's flora have developed extremely strong root systems that allow its plants to burrow deep to tap into underground water supplies. In the regions around the sea, humidity can be high. Agriculture is concentrated in the river valleys that feed the Q'habora Sea where both alluvial soil and water for irrigation are present. For most areas water transport has been the cheapest and often the only means of transporting goods. These rivers, flowing from the highlands of the North and west, are subject to excessive fluctuation and flooding as they carry a heavy load of silt along channels which, as a result of man-made levees and silting by the rivers, generally rise above the surrounding countryside and estates so that any breach in the dykes results in disastrous floods. The last major flooding of Kheul-Doar-Rha in 1106 resulted in the loss of 195 lives and resulted in Mcr. 18.5 of property damage.

Population

The local population is divided into two separate and distinct classes; the **Lao** (Venerated One's) who rule and the **Xiao** (Guided One's) who are ruled over.

The Lao are all descended from either members of the original Aakhri crew (now known as the Lui Ch'en) or the four Tai'pan families that emmigrated to Silk, the Han Wu, Jin Qi, Qui'ndao and Hualiu Si clans. According to tradition there can never be more than 100 adult, male Lao on Silk at any one time. The Xiao are primarily descended from the various slave races present at the time of the crash. All Xiao have formed allegiances to one or other of the five clans and are reliant on their clan for everything. Females of both classes are considered to be valuable property and are rarely seen by anyone except their husbands and immediate members of her husbands family.



Lui Ch'en Clan Markings

Culture

The Lao have a culture steeped in tradition. In addition to customs derived from their Aakhri/Tai'pan heritage, several traditions have evolved that are unique to silk. Perhaps the most important is that there must never be more than 100 adult Lao males on the planet at any one time. It is believed that this law evolved because of the shortage of females of appropriate caste. When the Tai'pan first emmigrated to Silk, the Aakhri did not realise that some of the males had a genetic tendency to breed only male offspring. This, coupled with Aakhri polygamous marriage practices and the falling birthrate due to excessive inbreeding meant that there would never be enough females of high birth for an ever-expanding male population.

The Clan Council had two choices, accept offspring born to lower caste females or restrict the number of male Lao. They chose the latter.

Under Clan law, a male becomes an adult at 16 when they are scarred with Clan markings to prove to the populace that they are indeed Lao. If there are already 100 Lao at this point the oldest (regardless of clan) is expected to either exile himself or commit suicide. However the would-be Lao has to prove their worth to the clans is greater than the person they would usurp. To this end, the week before the youth's birthday is considered open season for assassination of the youth. If he is killed or flees the planet then he has proved he wasn't worthy. A system of surrogates has also evolved whereby members of the youth's clan may voluntarily commit suicide so that the youth's assendancy will not be viewed as a threat by any member of the opposing clans. In the same way, should a youth survive, a member of the same clan as the oldest Lao may volunteer to commit suicide and thereby preserve their clan elder. In this enlightened age most Clan elders will pay the youth to go off-planet rather than stay and risk death by assassination.

Clan females must prove their fertility before they reach 18. To this end each female is "married" off as soon after their 13th birthday as possible to the first available suitor - that is, either the next 16 year old Lao or to the Clan of the eldest Lao (as a second or third wife to one of his clan) should the youth fail to survive the Hunt. Should the female by the age of 18 not yet have proved fertile she will be cast down to live amidst the Xiao and her father, or her brothers if her father has died, will have to pay compensation to the husband. Once a female has successfully proved her fertility by giving birth to a healthy child she too receives the Clan tattoo's of her husband.

The manhood ritual derives from an ancient custom lost in mists of time.

The youth is welcomed to his Clan's ancestral house and there, while drugged, his body and face are tattooed with the markings of his clan. The female receives her tattoo's in the Clan's Temple of Nû. It should be pointed out that Xiao have no such rituals.

Each clan seeks to become the most powerful through wealth and numbers. At time of writing the Lui Ch'en are the most wealthy clan but also the most inbred while the Han Wu and Jin Qi vie for control through physical numbers on the Council. To this end most Lao are inbred and utterly paranoid.

The Xiao, on the other hand, are a friendly, warm peaceful people and openly display a generous, co-operative manner. Clan allegiance will not hamper relations with a Xiao of another clan. Their culture is one of hardwork and festivals, with little thought for tomorrow. Xiao females are also married off young but they have a great deal more freedom in that, they generally work alongside their men, though most wear clothes that conceal all but the eyes from public view. Most prostitutes on Silk are married women and therefore will not remove their veils.

Silk has a rich cultural heritage in the performing arts. Further, since the formation of the STAS a renaissance has been underway. New plays, operas and tri-vee shows are blossoming. Although a high degree of stylisation (lots of posturing and broad gestures) still mark most presentations, performers freshness and enthusiasm are contagious. You may not understand everything, but you will certainly be entertained.

Psychology

Clan Members or Lao

In all contact situations with Lao, regardless of affiliation, visitors need to exercise extreme courtesy and patience. It is always best to relax and "flow" with the visit.

A willingness to experience Silk on its own terms will result in a more satisfying visit, whether its purpose is business or general travel.

Good Conduct.

The Clans expect their guests (and the guests of the other Clans as well) to behave as representatives of their own society and be respectful of cultural and racial differences. Visitors should feel free to be themselves, to speak openly about differing political, economic, religious or social beliefs. Spirited disagreements, however, should not be allowed to degenerate into remarks that are indiscreet or disrespectful towards aspects of Clan society or particularly its leaders, past or present.

While Imperial customs need not be abandoned, some restraint is advisable. Lao are generally sparing in their use of direct physical contact. Under no circumstances should you attempt to shake their hand. As you get to know particular Clan members greater familiarity becomes possible. Public displays of affection between guests are also regarded as unseemly. Likewise visitors should attempt to keep a pleasant demeanour and not show anger or hostility in public. Norms of etiquette do not differentiate between visiting men or women with both being treated equally. It should be noted that this is not reciprocated and under no circumstances should a Clan female be approached or talked to on pain of imprisonment and possible death.

Punctuality and Protocol.

Punctuality is expected for all business and social appointments. Except in extenuating circumstances, all planned activities and meetings should be attended. At many Clan institutions, especially schools, guests may be greeted upon arrival by applause. It is polite to return the gesture. It is important to be aware of protocol requirements whenever you are dealing with Lao.

The senior member of the party should enter first since their hosts will be lined up in order of importance. It is also appropriate to introduce group members individually after the Clan introductions, stating which have special expertise in the subject at hand.

Voicing Complaints.

Individuals should not be criticised or chastised openly. If complaints must be raised they should be broached first in private with a member of STAS.

Expressing Gratitude

Tipping is strictly prohibited by Silkian culture. To a Lao it would be seen as an insult worthy of a duel, even most Xiao would feel insulted or at least deeply embarrassed. The proper way to express gratitude for services rendered is to make mention to the person's superior of their efficiency and kindness.

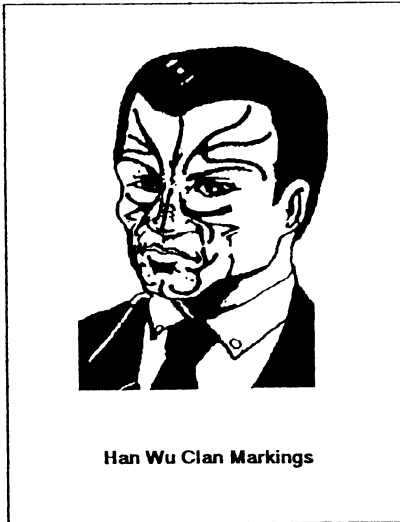
In the case of high ranking Lao the proper gesture of gratitude is to arrange a banquet in their honour at the end of the visit and, perhaps, to present his clan with a gift.

Xiao

Xiao decide allegiance to a clan at 16 and no-one will try and influence which clan is chosen. Generally speaking most will choose the same clan as their father and their grandfather's have chosen. Most Xiao prefer to get on with life and ignore the inter-clan tribulations unless they are directly dragged into it. For most, their life consists of eating, sleeping, work and entertainment. They seem to live for today. They are hard working, concienious and happy.

Entertainment

Silkian Opera offers the visitor an intricate display of song, pantomime, dance and acrobatics. The action generally centres round five characters representing the founder members of each of the Lao clans and, depending on which clan is hosting the performance, the action details the many twists and turns of Lao history.



Han Wu Clan Markings

PLACES TO VISIT

Kheul-Doar-Rha is an amalgamation of three different settlements that have gradually grown together over the centuries until it formed a single settlement. Much of it is built out into the sea on legs and even the areas on land are primarily built on the side of transport and irrigation canals. Due to its unusual nature of creation the starport is relatively central to the city rather than on the outskirts and entire farms exist within the city limits as the urban suburbs joined around them swallowing them up.

The oldest part of the city is the Kheul district where the Lui Ch'en have their estates. This area is considered by many the cultural centre. The Han Wu and Jin Qi built up the landbased Doar settlement. This left the Qui'ndao and Hualiu Si clans to settle the coastal Rha region.

Khuel

Places to visit: Kheul is a beautiful district to visit. Hundred's of ancient, two-storey palaces overhang the stone-lined canals, while nearby delicate wooden stores, on carved stilts, compete with thousands of houseboats for customers. Bridges built of carved wood span the many canals between. 75% of the city has been built either on the mudflats or actually over the shallow waters of the sea. Khuel's ancient architectural splendour is best summed up in one building, the **Regal Palace of the Lui Ch'en**. Most visitors are denied entrance to the Lao Palace of Lui Ch'en. Only a few honoured guests are ever granted the chance to see the great wealth within. For most, the best they can hope for is to buy a holo-tour through the Hall of Ancients, passed the thousands of mummified ancestors of the Lui Ch'en Clan: each corpse bedecked in jewels and gold. Beyond the long hall lies the Throne Room where the current elder of the Clan, Shaanxi Lui Ch'en, meets his guests in full ceremonial splendour.

It is helpful to obtain a copy of the plot synopsis beforehand. Theatre is also a popular entertainment and Clan music is heard everywhere.

Other popular entertainments consist of dance troupes, puppet shows and acrobatics. The people of Silk still value live entertainment over tri-vee and a local puppet show is a marvel to watch as the small robots twirl and gyrate to their controller's whim.

Silk went through a period of puritan prudishness in the 700's. The ubiquitous tisane houses and wineshops disappeared and only a few of the pleasure houses survived. While Silk today is unlikely to become known in the near future for its effervescent nightlife. However, since the formation of STAS, bars and cafes have begun to reappear in certain districts of the city. Sophisticates however may find them less than exciting.

A fairly recent entertainment on Silk is the introduction of gladiatorial games to keep the citizens happy. At first, the games consisted of Xiao fighting a variety of native wildlife or the occasional duel, but as palates have become jaded this has descended into a variety of vicious games, frequently to the death and many clans have taken up using genetically altered wildlife in an attempt to increase excitement. These contests are generally held every month increasing to two a month during the "Tourist" season.

The room is resplendent with the greatest treasures of the Clan. Here can be found some of the greatest works of Aakhri Calligraphy still in existence, as well as thousands of superb paintings, a king's ransom of statues made primarily of Platinum and Gold, beautiful tapestries and behind the throne itself, the Honour Blades of the Clan Lui Ch'en.

The Hunafeng Museum; to the South of the Palace, was primarily known for its collection of documents dealing with the founding of Khuel up to the arrival of the Tai'pan clans. Although the documents are still there most attention now focuses on the relics unearthed from an early transition camp found deep in the Thorn Barrier. Archaeologists believe that the camp may even pre-date the founding of Xi'ahan. Excavated in 972, the camp yielded two spectacular finds. The first was the perfectly preserved corpse of an Aakhri male about 50 years old, apparently an important personage. Details of his life have been deduced from medical evidence as well as the contents of his stomach. When unearthed, the body was wrapped in more than 20 layers of natural Tao'l-Silk. Draped over the inner coffin was the second major find; a silk painting depicting scenes from the crash and initial trek as well as the geneology of the Aakhri survivors. The painting has retained its brilliant colours and although badly damaged at both ends it is one of the best known examples of Aakhri art.

Yu'sha Precinct retains several tisane palaces overlooking the river where the local spring water is used to brew the now famous Yunlu ("Cloud & fog") Tisane. The Drum-Sounding Ridge is located beneath the Lushan Palace - if you stamp hard on the rock, it produces a drum-like sound. It is believed, by the local Xiao, that should the ridge not be sounded at least once every day, disaster will befall Khuel. The last time the ridge failed to be sounded was supposedly three days before the last great flood.

Fine Furs For Sale

On Silk it is possible to grow or clone replacement parts for medical surgery, in fact the technology first appears at around Tech Lev 9. By the time science has reached the Han Wu Genetix laboratories' imported Tech level of 15, it is not only common place but cheap!

While originally developed for medical uses, the process has other obvious commercial opportunities. Natural furs and real leathers, at a fraction of the price and with no problem from the Animal protection groups, and better still, grown to any size you need. Natural Oils (still the finest available) for the cosmetic and high grade lubricants industry. Or finest quality Caviar, straight from the surgeon with no sign of a sturgeon, and other rare meats for the rich of palate and purse.

Currently, there is a large amount of 'natural' fur waiting to cause trouble for someone. It will cause trouble because the fur is cloned from an Aslan, genetic sample.

The Alikasch Aslan will not be too concerned about this, in fact, go to any starport in Sapphyre Subsector and the chances are good of seeing an Alikasch Aslan with his Genetically coordinated luggage, complete with towing tail.

However the Aslan of Ya'uuyako or Eikhoifruah are certain to regard it as a slight to their honour, which will demand action on their part to first find out the exact person that the sample was taken from and who by. If it turns out to have come from a simple Alikasch barbarian, their actions will probably only cover financial pressure to ensure that HWG never repeat the run.

If the genetic sample is traced to an important member of the Aohalai Clan, (several Aohalai leaders have visted Silk over the years and at least two took ill while on-planet!) every single hair of the cloned fur must be recovered and destroyed, and the people responsible found, so that they can face a duel.

By John Tatman

The Duhan Shrine marks the site of the houseboat where the great poet, Cheng Duhan lived throughout his life. He composed over 22,000 poems here. During the Han Lui Ch'en Dynasty (660-979), a shrine was built on the canal where his houseboat used to be moored. A painting and calligraphy exhibition inside the shrine attempts to evoke the poet's moods and acts as a backdrop to his more famous poems.

Shopping: "All possessions under heaven are amassed in Khuel" was the proud boast of the Lui Ch'en in the 300's. Today Khuel still retains something of that reputation, at least as far as antiques and crafts are concerned. Distinctive Khuel craft goods include Ghu carvings (a stone similar in appearance to jade), carved chitan, laquerware, fine cloth and a variety of goods made from distinctive Tao'l-Silk. The small canal boats that roam the waterways also offer a wide range of Xiao crafts such as batik cloth, kites and figurines made of clay, glass or natural Tao'l-Silk. Antique and art collectors will find what they want in the specialist shops that flourish along the Liu'Chian canal. Regarding prices, it should be noted that similar items may be for sale at lower prices in the small shops that are located off the tourist beaten path. However, many of the items sold on Silk are handcrafted and particular designs may only be available through a specific clan, so it may be best to suppress the bargain-hunting instinct and "seize the moment". In all events, haggling is not generally acceptable though "friendly inquiries" about the price of antiques or high-priced items are advised. If there are serious qualms about cost, the best solution is not to buy.

Cuisine: Although Khuel is best known for its hot, spicy dishes it is also famous for its refined and varied flavours, often enhanced by the use of medical herbs and flower petals.

Among the better-known dishes are soft-fried Black Lotus, orchid-petals with Pada beetle strips, Tao'l Spider cooked with medicinal herbs and a variation on Mapo Dofu (bean curd cooked in a spicy-hot insect sauce). Like all the other districts of Silk, insects form 95% of the native's protein intake.

An interesting underwater restaurant is the **Huax Li**, 250m East of Duhan Shrine. Downstairs there are several rooms off a central corridor, so there is the choice of dining in privacy or with the local Xiao. The Huax Li is usually smoky, warm, and crowded but the food is inexpensive and good.

Doar

Places to Visit: Doar District is primarily landbased though it uses man-made canals for transport. Doar is the most important industrial and foreign trade section of the city. This steamy, metropolis with its grey-green hues, lush park and boisterous atmosphere has an aura that is unique. Whether deserved or not, Doar has acquired a negative reputation among foreign visitors. The congestion and poor air quality are certainly distractions but it is most likely the lack of deference shown to Off-Worlders - who are less of a novelty than in most districts - may be the greatest contributor to the district's image problem. Moreover, whether for reasons of its citizen's independent character or geographical location (the Starport is located at the heart of the district), ambition is very much alive. The hearty, practical Lao and Xiao of Clan's Han Wu and Jin Qi seem tense, driven and single-minded in ways that go against the the expectations of visitors. Much of the district is given over to estates breeding Tao'l Spiders though, in recent years, the Han Wu have invested heavily in top-of-the-line genetic research equipment and personnel, boasting facilities and training to Tech Level 15.

The Luihau Zoo, owned by the Han Wu, was opened in 858. It is the largest zoological gardens on Silk displaying over 30,000 local species from all over the world as well as various hybrids created in the HWG (Han Wu Genetix) laboratories. The Lao use the Zoo to primarily display their latest wares in genetic engineering. Although the research facilities were supposedly built in order to improve output from the Tao'l Spiders, HWG has recently branched out into creating new species for the arena. In addition, rumours have been circulating for several years now that the HWG labs were involved in illicit human engineering. The Han Wu claim that the only genetics involving human DNA they have undertaken was research into the genetic inbreeding of the Clan's and they have never been involved in the breeding of Android or hybrid Warriors.

The Jin Qi Clan Academy: known locally as the Jin Qi Family Temple. This 3rd Century compound is a well-preserved example of attempts to combine early Third Imperium style with Tai'pan architecture. Nearly every door, window, roof-beam and column is intricately carved, while terracotta sculptures and friezes grace the roof-ridges and walls. In Clan mentality, ancestors and descendants were inextricably connected: the superior virtue of previous generations provided the example and good reputation for later generations to live up to. Conversely achieving fame and success, particularly in the political arena of the Council, exalted one's ancestors. To this end the Jin Qi built this academy round their ancestral temple where the memorial tablets and "spirit seats" of the Clan's forebearers were preserved. Called the Central Hall, this inner sanctum is located at the back of the complex, where the altar and shrine can still be seen (although the memorial tablets have long since disappeared). Next door to the Academy is the Clan Palace which no outsider has ever entered in living history.

The Clan Jin Qi hold all its formal non-clan banquets within the Central Hall of the Academy.

Co'hua Hot Springs: located 81km from the Starport, are said to have a curative effect on certain chronic ailments. A total of eight springs supply mineral water with an average temperature of 45°C. The region where the springs are located is mountainous and scenic, with Li'hui orchards, tropical groves and flowering bushes. Overnight guests may stay at one of the pleasant villa's scattered around the area, many of which are equipped with small bathing pools fed by the local springs.

Five Star Crags consist of a dramatic grouping of Karst 'tower' mountains which form a pattern similar to that of the Quin Ling star constellation. They are connected by arched bridges and winding pathways adorned with traditional-style pavilions. At their base are seven small lakes and numerous caves containing underground streams and grotesquely shaped stalactites and stalagmites. The region became famous during the 500's when many famous painters and poets were attracted by its beauty and left their verses carved inside the caves.

White Cloud Preserve: based within the Centre of Doar, is both the traditional home of the Han Wu and a perfect example of a modern Tao'l Spider ranch. Unlike the other clan's, the Han Wu have moved all their business affairs to a modern corporate tower next to the Starport and have opened the doors to their ancestral estate to visitors. The ranch shows the latest methods of cultivating Tao'l Spiders, how the raw sheets of silk are gathered, cleaned and woven together to form the famous Tao'l-Silk. There is a display showing how the Spider was bred from the native 1 metre megapede complete with its poison sac's to the domestic 3 metre-long creature currently in use. The tour also shows how modern genetics has allowed the spiders to be bred for specific patterns and how the Spiders are artificially inseminated.

This prevents the need for the extremely savage male Tao'l to be kept in abundance. Working models show how the 'Spider' uses the spinnerettes on each of its 800 legs to spin the sheet of natural Tao'l-Silk and how they are able to defend themselves while they lie on their backs spinning.

Within the beautiful, almost simplistic, halls of the Han Wu can be seen their preserved Ancestors. A holo shows how the Han Wu Elders are preserved for posterity through the ancient art of taxidermy. Many of the family treasurers have been moved and copies put on display but, the famous Hai Han Wu Necklace is still present in all its glory for all to see.

The Han Wu Museum of Natural History is located outside the Preserve and houses the largest collection of stuffed animals outside of the Solomani Sphere. No holo's are used, instead there are literally thousands of displays of actual dead animals from almost every world in the Sapphyre Subsector.

The Hepi'Jia Precinct is the 'home' of Silk's Pleasure Palaces, Tisane Houses and the more liberal Tha's. The most popular Tisane House, as far as visiting Merchants are concerned, is the Redelai's Mouth. This is an almost unique institution on Silk; an independent establishment where Lao, regardless of Clan, may meet with either each other or Offworlders in neutral territory. The House is named after a local legend about a fossilised Redelai Beetle's head found deep within the Thorn Barrier. It is claimed that people used to join hands through the mouth and swear allegiance to each other. Should they lie, the legend claimed that the mouth would close, severing the hand of he who was unfaithful. The owner of the Redelai's Mouth bought the head and had it mounted on his wall.

Today, however, visitors to the House use built in lie detector's in each of the seats to tell whether their guests are telling them the truth. Two lights may flash on the table, green if a statement was true, amber if it was a lie.

Shopping: Doar is the commercial centre of the city and as such, specialises in imported goods as well as antiques and Tao'l-Silk for export.

Cuisine: If there is one activity that threatens the Doar preoccupation with business, it is eating. Silkian chef's have fanned out throughout Dagudashaag over the centuries and have had to substitute local varieties of vegetables, spices and meats for Doar ingredients. Not surprisingly, their dishes sometimes bore little resemblance to the Doar originals. Little wonder Doar food gained a reputation as 'second-rate'. It should be said, however, that even the other districts admit that Doar cooking, so appealing to the eye and subtle in its flavours, is one of the gastronomic wonders of Dagudashaag.

In general, Doar cuisine is characterised by its variety, the freshness of its ingredients and its delicate sauces and seasonings. Because of Doar's location at the heart of a fertile delta near the sea, fruit, vegetables and seafood (they are the only chef's on Silk who know the secret of preparing the extremely poisonous local sea crustaceans) are mixed with the more common insect protein.

Typical Doar methods of cooking include:

Lacquer-roasting in which giant land beetles are marinated, hung in the oven, then basted and roasted until the tender meat inside the shell shines like lacquer.

'Explosive' stir-frying using extremely hot oils and steaming in which various pupae are first rubbed with Giau and salt, marinated in a mixture of wine, sugar and Q'henna Sauce then covered in vegetables and steamed for about twenty minutes.

Rha

The Rha region, on the coast, is considered by many the least scenic of the three districts; the region is divided physically, and in atmosphere, by the Wusoung Canal. The area to the North is the territory of the Qui'ndao and even their ranches appear to have been heavily industrialised. As a result, the entire region is frequently enveloped in a haze of industrial pollution. To the South is the territory of the Hualiu Si, the smallest, and it is said, the least tradition-bound of the Clans and this is reflected in its buildings and scenery.

Places to Visit: While Rha is a fascinating district, it is not overly endowed with historical monuments. The Northern segment is primarily filled with factory ranches and industrial works dedicated to improving the quality and end uses for both Tao'l-Silk and insect-based products. In the South a totally different lifestyle exists. This is personified by the traffic on the Wusoung; On the Northern side of the canal, people hurry along, darting in and out of office buildings and factories while on the Southern side people slowly drift by. In the evening, young couples, in the tradition of Ruan and Jui, walk hand in hand (with their chaperons a discrete distance behind) through Bunda Park whispering quietly to each other.

The Bunda Park is a narrow strip of land bordering the Southern edge of the Wusoung. It has lovely rock gardens, flower beds and shady trees - perfect for relaxing and taking in the changing canal scene on low pollution days. In the mornings, the Xiao flock there en masse to perform *Tai Ji Quan* and other morning exercises.

The People's Arena: West of Xizi Canal is an arena and sports stadium covering a full three square kilometres of land in the heart of the Hualiu Si territory.

The land was originally laid out in 681 by an offworlder who traced a large oval on Scabrah-back with his sword and then bought up everything within the area (including farmland and buildings) to build a park and race course. This has now been replaced with a four ring gladiatorial arena and training area which is used by all the Clan's for their games.

Blood Canal, still further to the West, was the heart of Rha's 'red-light' district until the puritanical policies of the 700's. In 721 it was estimated that there were over 35 publically known drug dens and over 1,000 imported prostitutes living on the canal. During the purge the brothels and drug dens were closed down and the prostitutes given new work (and both a new identity and citizenship if desired). In the last 50 years the brothels have been reopened (supposedly for offworlders) and prostitutes brought in from off-world.

Qui'ndao Hall: Located on Haneen Canal, next door to the Qui'ndao Palaces, this three storey museum houses one of the finest Tai'pan art collections on Silk. The first floor is devoted to early metallic artefacts. Objects on display include tools, weapons (including the Honour Blades of the Qui'ndao), instruments of torture, food and wine vessels, mirrors and silver statues. The second floor focuses on ceramics and includes examples of Hualiu Si 'Black Pottery' including two superb statues of early Hualiu Si Elders on Scabrah's. The third floor contains a collection of tools used in the art of painting and calligraphy as well as some magnificent early scrolls.

The Old Town: Once a rabbit-warren of festering slums and underground canals where few non-Xiao dared set foot, it has been transformed into a picturesque maze of canals where offworlders are viewed with innocent curiosity. The old shanties are white washed and reroofed, well-fed children swim in the oily waters and the local market is piled high with fresh produce. The canals are very narrow and visitors can easily lose their way. Don't worry however, as the local's are extremely friendly. In the centre of the maze is a bazaar which sells traditional Tai'pan handicrafts such as lanterns and ornate swords.

Garden of Happiness: Near the Hux'ting Tisane House is a marvellous garden built in 577 by a city official named Pai Yundau who sought to create an idyllic spot for his father's old age. Hidden behind high carved-brick walls decorated with huge stone dragons is a small lake surrounded by several small pavilions. The garden may seem somewhat familiar - it served as the basis for the famous 'Yu Yuan' pattern ceramics. During festivals, the trees and pavilions are strung with thousands of lanterns.



Qui'ndao Genetic Research Facility: on the edge of the district was established in 1078 as direct competition for HWG. Unlike HWG however, this facility is run totally by offworlders and no attempt has been made to train local's to take over at a later stage. The facility specialises in genetic manipulation of Tao'l Spiders and several other domestic species and refuses to get involved in 'novelty' creations for the more specialist market.

The facility itself is set within a large wildlife preserve where QGR keeps its extensive stock of basic domestic breeds.

Shopping: Rha is the district to visit for your everyday items; their fruit and meat markets are second to none. Tailors can turn the delicate, lightweight Tao'l-Silk into garments while you wait. Most of your shopping needs are best carried out in the small bazaars round the Old Town though several factory shops exist Northwards.

Cuisine: Rha boasts of being Silk's best and most distinctive cuisine. Influenced by its position on the coast, the region abounds in a selection of edible mudworms and shelled insects. Dishes from this region are lightly and delicately seasoned. Rha have a 'sweet tooth' and more honey and sugar is used in Rha than in any other district. The region is also famous for its Shao Wine, which is served warmed. The most popular method of cooking is 'yellow' cooking in which food is cooked in Shao wine, Zhenji sauce, sugar and insect sauce. It is called 'yellow' cooking because the effect is to lighten the food, to a dark yellow tinge. Cooking time is relatively long, during which time the sauce becomes thick and heavily flavoured.

This district has also produced a multitude of vegetarian meals and Rha chef's vie with each other to see who can produce the most imaginative creation. A great deal of thought goes into the physical appearance of each dish and it is not unusual to be served steaming soup in a bowl carved from a Khaguu. Other foods may be shaped to resemble miniature insects or flowers.

Rha has over 100 restaurants in addition to the hundreds of small food stands serving full meals through to candy, confectionery and such items as Tan'Tuan (dumplings made from flour, ground nuts and a selection of local seeds).

Perhaps the ultimate gastronomic delight is to rent the Yu Tai Yaun restaurant for an evening as a way of saying thank you to your hosts: up to 25 guests can be catered for but only as a private party. Private chef's are generally hired and a special feast prepared in your host's honour, including Clan specialities and even offworld cuisine if required.

Legends

The First ship

Legend has it that the Aakhri and Xiao arrived on Silk aboard a Slave transport that crashed, probably somewhere in the Thorn Barrier. While historians are agreed that this would appear to be the most likely solution to both the source of the colonisation, and the explanation for why so many different races were present amidst the Xiao, it does not explain why no trace of the ship have ever been discovered. Satellite scans of the planet have utterly failed to find any signs that a ship ever crashed. Lao of the Clan Lui Ch'en, have offered a reward of Mcr. 5 for information leading to either the original remains or substantive evidence that could substantiate the legend.

There is an additional legend regarding the first ship that circulates amidst the Xiao: a legend that the Lao refuse to even acknowledge. It is claimed by some that it was not Captain Lui Chen that led the survivors to safety and established the Lao but a former slave, Fang Yi, who guided the crew and slaves to safety and who later ruled over the first colony. It is even claimed that the Lao of Lui Ch'en are not in fact descended from the offspring of the Captain and his Second Officer and concubine, Xhu Yilin, but from Fang Yi and Xhu! Were this ever to be substantiated, it would mean that the Lui Ch'en's claims to being descended directly from pure (and it is claimed, superior) Aakhri stock are absolute nonsense and would result in a great deal of lost face amidst the Council. While none will admit it, it is believed that at least one of the Tai'pan Clans have offered a substantial reward to anyone able to collaborate the rumour.

Who killed the Lovers?

In 342, the Clan Hualui Si presented a youth, Ruan Enlai nahn Si, to the Council for ascendancy to the rank of Lao. The nearly 16 year-old youth was both handsome and a direct descendant of their Clan Elder. At this point he was introduced to his potential 'future' bride, the Lui Ch'en female, Jui Ghenhua nu Chen; a beautiful, talented 14 year-old.

Legend states they fell deeply in love at first glance. The problem lay in that it was Jui's great, great grandfather; the 231 year-old Clan Elder, Jiaksi nahn Lui Ch'en, who was due to be replaced by her 'future' husband. It is also now known that Jiaksi himself wished personally for the 'favours' of Jui.

As time approached for the period of Challenge, Ruan and Jui managed to conceive ways they could meet together. They became a common sight on the banks of the Wusoung Canal, walking in the dawn, arm-in-arm, utterly oblivious to everything except each other. All the Clan's were horrified at what they saw as an open assault on tradition.

Then came the week of Challenge and Jiaksi hired off-world mercenaries as well as pledging the entire resources of his Clan to the task of destroying this 'obnoxious' youth. Despite every effort, even down to threatening to harm his love, Jui, Ruan was not to be found.

Finally, at dusk on the seventh day, the challenge completed, Ruan appeared. He had been hiding beneath the Palace of Lui Chen. He rushed passed the Lui Ch'en guards who, by tradition, were pledged not to harm him now that the period of Challenge was completed, to the Bunda Park to await the arrival of his beloved Jui.

As he waited, Ruan was shot 53 times with a needle beam laser-rifle. The beams sliced through his arms, legs, chest and finally genitalia.

The wounds intended to cripple, not kill. His assassin openly tortured him with each successive sweep; the beam cauterising the wounds preventing death through blood loss. Finally Ruan died almost half an hour after the first shot, from shock. His mangled corpse was discovered a few minutes later by Jui. Ruan had survived his week of Challenge and won the right to marry his beloved Jui, only to have it stolen from him by an assassin! Jui, in grief, threw herself into the Canal and drowned.

The Council was in uproar. Had Clan Lui Ch'en allowed an assassin to kill Ruan? Was it an Offworlder who failed to understand the time limit? All Offworlders were questioned, but this line of enquiry failed to turn up any clues as to the identity of the assassin.

The Council judged that Jiaksi still had to undergo ritual suicide because Ruan had survived the Challenge. The Lui Ch'en were outraged but had to agree to carry out the decision. Jiaksi's final words was a proclamation of his innocence. To this day no-one knows who killed Ruan. Two days after the ritual suicide of Jiaksi nahn Lui Ch'en, a Xiao discovered the murder weapon and a gold coin near the site of Ruan's murder. A coin with the insignia of the Hualiu Si Clan. Had Ruan and Jui's behaviour upset members of Ruan's own Clan? Had this been some sort of ploy by the Lui Ch'en? Or was it, as many now believe an attempt by one of the other Clan's to discredit the Lui Ch'en and Hualui Si?

Ruan's diary revealed that Ruan and Jui had discussed, with their respective Clan Elders, going off-world immediately after the Challenge. A compromise which would have allowed Ruan to claim Jui as his bride while allowing Jiaksi to continue to live. Ruan and Jui had made no secret of these meetings and it is now believed that the reason behind Jiaksi's intense hatred of Ruan was nothing more than jealousy. The mystery remains to this day; who really killed the lovers?

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Send applications to: **Recruiting Officer, Import Controls Board, 39/487 Starport Towers.**

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Ecclesiastes 12:16.

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WANTED: A Cr. 10,000 reward will be paid to any citizen who provides information leading to the apprehension of Harrison Otis Trimble. Trimble is accused of bribery, importing fruit without a licence and theft of a ship's boat.

Information may be given anonymously by ringing (with video off) 09386-75389.

URGENT, If you have purchased any Ammunition regardless of source, in green boxes with the batch number A39422176/PFC, then please return it to Ling Standard Products who will replace it free of charge.

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Encephalo Six One

Encephalo Six One, is the latest designer drug on the streets of Medurma. Unlike many of its rivals, it has not been created or produced by the ethnic minority known as the Alikasch. This means it has no quality control, no dose limit compounds for safety and lacks an inert chemical "tag" to allow tracing of the manufacturer. Despite these draw backs and the high prices charged for it, Encephalo Six One has been benefiting from an increasing customer demand.

Meanwhile, the Alikasch (who are know to take an extremely offensive attitude to any one adulterating or "Cutting" their products), have yet to decide on their reaction to this new product in an already crowded market. What is certain is that in the few short months that Encephalo Six One has been available there have been several deaths among its users, some due to impurities, others due to accidents that occurred while under its effects and one or two as yet unexplained. This makes it extremely likely that the Alikasch will decide to take action against the dealers and producers. Thus it is certain that they are actively trying to find the names and bases of the group responsible, but there is little information currently available on the street.

The secret to the surprising success of Encephalo Six One, is a Bio-extract taken from the Symmonds Tree (See Medurma Special,Referee's Information & Pact Library Data, for more details). The Bio-extract acts as a psionic booster, which when combined with the more ordinary Hallucinogenic compounds of the designer drug gives a "trip" that is far more powerful and realistic than any rival.

Cont. Page 18

INDISS

'FIRST SHIP' HOAX UNCOVERED

Until six months ago, Silk had been the subject of an archaeological mystery. While legend stated that the original inhabitants had crash landed on the planet, all attempts to discover the crashed ship had ended in failure. Then, out of the blue, two visitors from Bakhuma announced that, while on a safari to the Equatorial desert, they had found several small metal fragments embedded into the side of a hill. Tests quickly verified that they were indeed of an age and manufacture to possibly be the 'First Ship'. The Clan Lui Ch'en immediately issued a statement stating that at long last, the First Ship had been discovered. The excitement was immense.

The two men, Emaki Shardis and Han Derar, agreed to take teams of investigators to the site provided they were registered for the outstanding MCr. 5 reward. This was agreed and several recognisable fragments of Aakhri ship's hull was discovered. Excavations were begun to uncover the rest of the ship. Meantime the two men were given the promised reward by the Elder of

the Lui Ch'en Clan in a special ceremony. The two men then attempted to sneak onboard a local freighter later that night and were caught. An immediate and extremely thorough investigation proved that the site had been deliberately 'peppered' with fragments taken not from the the First Ship but were in fact stolen from a another crashed Aakhri ship currently housed in the Sapphyre Museum of the Dawn.

At the last full meeting of the Council of Elders on Silk it was decided that the two offworlders that had perpetuated the hoax would be publically executed. Attempts by the Bakhuman government to have the sentence reduced have been rejected. A statesman for the Lui Ch'en Lao stated today that "These men attempted to steal that which is most precious to the Family, its pride: to try and deceive the Clan is a crime both hideous and stupid. They deserve nothing less than total extermination.."

THE TRIAL OF SIR REGINALD FITZ'URSE - DANTE.

The Trial of Sir Reginald finally ended today when he was found guilty and sentenced to ten years imprisonment for the murder of Karled T'Hagan, High Rector of the Church of The Stellar Deity Watchmen (Reformed) on Dante.

Argan T'montigu, Sir Reginald's lawyer, has already lodged an appeal against the sentence with the Subsector authorities on the grounds that Sir Reginald was :-

- 1, Obeying the orders of a noble superior who apparently asked him to "rid me of this turbulent priest" unquote.
- 2, On Sir Reginald's home world, assassination is considered an accepted form of political and religious argument. Because of Sir Reginald's age and the fact that he had only just arrived on the planet, he could not be expected to know about the difference in law here.
- 3, Since none of the jury are of the same faith as Sir Reginald, they can not be considered his peers.

COUNTESS KARLA TO MARRY - SABHAASH.

After weeks of speculation the Countess Karla, through her household has announced that she is to marry her long time companion and father of their three children ages four, two and three months. The wedding will take place in six weeks, during the local annual holidays here on Sabhaash. This announcement has been expected for several months by most of the Paparazzi and other Nobility Watchers here, although the timing of the event, during the local holidays, has caused some surprise as it is normal for events of this nature to be celebrated with an additional public holiday. The Countess, age thirty four, was delivered of a son only three months past, and has already declared that he is to be her successor and heir. The countess's two daughters are, as is traditional here, not in line for the title of countess as the current

holder of the title is female and the title must now pass to the countess's nearest male relative. Until Manuel's birth this had been a distant cousin, Sir Malforis (age 65) who currently works for Interstellar Arms LIC.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD ANNOUNCED - BOUNTIFUL.

Mr. Ikura Lutanic, CEO of Mezantic Industries was awarded the Blue Star Award for Mezantic's roll in clearing up the environment of Moloc Bay. The Bay, after four years intensive reclam-ation work is once again the wildlife haven that it was before this planet was settled.

Lutanic stated that it was Mezantic's belief that all local companies should help reclaim the environment for the greater good of the people and to this end Mezantic's next programme would be the reclamation of the Lloydogo swamps.

Shortly after the award ceremony a press release from the Son's of Earth, an illegal extremist Eco-terrorist group, stated that any attempt by big businesses to exploit the Lloydogo swamps in the same manner as Moloc Bay would be met with 'positive' action to prevent any desecration.

APPEAL FOR FUNDS - SHAAKHISH.

Today sees the launch of an appeal to raise funds for a life saving operation for a seven year old child. The organisers hope to raise the six million credits needed to send little Avram Cottingsly to the Zzardman hospital on DURGAARUUR. The Zzardman Hospital is the only centre in the subsector that is capable of performing the operation that could save Avram's life.

Surgeons at the Hospital stated that the operation needs to be carried out within the next six months if it is to have any hope of success at all. The longer the operation was delayed the less hope there would be for Avram.

WIN Mcr. 2 EACH AND EVERY DAY WITH INDISS BINGO

HISTORY REPEATED? - AMSHU.

The Imperial Civil War Society (Durgaarur), a re-enactment and living history group, dedicated to reproducing the way of life of our forbearers, will be staging the Battle of Amshu, 670. The society spokesman announced that zero casualties were expected in this repeat battle, unlike the 45,000 who were lost during the real thing. The refight will take place over the next two weeks on the uninhabited southern landmass, and will be shown on live TriVee for the duration of the action. Many of those taking part have come here for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, to get together with others from across the Subsector. A total of 25,000 people are expected to take part in what is believed to be one of the most complete reenactments to ever take place in the Sector.

UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR JAILED AS ACCESSORY TO SUICIDE - SAPPHYRE

At her trial today, Professor Miriam Stopwell, admitted that her experimental teaching methods may have been a prime cause in the mass suicide of three hundred and twenty eight students just prior to the graduating examinations.

Professor Stopwell, who teaches higher dimensional mathematics at the Sopphayo University of Sapphyre, placed her students on an experimental programme of studies last Autumn. Using subliminal learning she bombarded her students continuously with advanced theory through every aspect of their lives. Food contained RNA triggers to enhance learning, Tri-Vee was intercepted and reprogrammed with subliminal messages, their rooms were bombarded by subsonic messages, etc.

The scheme, initially seemed to be working as over 98% of her students gained extremely high pass marks in the first year exam's. As a result, five hundred were selected for a special accelerated course in which the full five year course would be compressed into a single year's study.

Then came the tragedy. Out of the five hundred students undergoing the new intensive study method, three hundred and twenty eight killed themselves as a result, the prosecution claimed, of continuous subliminal pressure. A further seventy four are still in hospital after failed suicide attempts. Apparently the massacre occurred, according to Forensic Psychology expert Dr. Suura Meagiis, because of an initial single suicide. Student, Ameena Ghagis (23) worried about the forthcoming final exam's, committed suicide in the public refectory by hanging herself. The problem lay in that each subsequent student who came in and saw her body took it as a subliminal message that they too should commit suicide. The effect escalated as more and more students killed themselves and their bodies were discovered by other students. By morning, most of the students were dead. The local Police pumped knockout gas into the dormitories to prevent any further students being effected.

Dr. Meagiis gave evidence that all the surviving students are now completely incapable of independent thought and appear to interpret everything they see or hear as a command. Doctors are confident that the programming can be overcome eventually.

In sentencing Professor Stopwell, Judge Amelia Dhagudis stated that this experimental teaching method should have been properly tested before exposing students to its uncontrolled effects. Had this been done properly these youth might still be alive. She sentenced Professor Stopwell to eighteen months of corrective imprisonment and stated that had it been up to her, Professor Stopwell would be facing the death penalty for mass murder.

Professor Stepwell stated afterwards that in her opinion the sentence was too harsh and that she would be appealing.

SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH - IRRIL.

Astex LIC has reported a dramatic rescue. Late last month the asteroid mining ship, Bee Jae Two, detected a drifting wreck which it attempted to salvage. When the derelict was approached and boarded a sole survivor was recovered. The unidentified female is currently undergoing medical treatment at the home station. Apparently the survivor has not yet recovered consciousness.

Investigators examining the ship she was recovered from, stated that it had been drifting for sometime and had had the computer banks wiped as well as its transponder destroyed.

Back tracking of its course has shown only that it was cutting a path across the planetoid belt and intercepted no inhabited areas at either end of its projected course. From the state of the consumables on board it seems likely that the ship has had only one person on board, apparently for several months.

Doctors treating the unknown female have told this reporter that the survivor seems to be in reasonably good physical shape but is still in a coma.



SCOUT SERVICE GIVES WARNING - SHAAKHISH.

The Commander of the Scout Base today warned that unless action was taken very soon, the life support system of one of the three domed towns on Shaakhish was in danger of catastrophic failure. Repairs should have been made over forty years ago when initially detected but was put off due to cost. At the time these repairs would have cost Cr. 10,000, but now looks likely to cost over MCr. 1 as all the systems would now have to be realigned and / or replaced. The Town government has said that it can not afford to carry out the repairs however.

T.O.



Continued from Page 15

Encephalo Six One

For most people there are only the obvious risks of impurity and addiction connected with the use of Encephalo Six One, however due to the psionic stimulants of the Bio-extract, for a few unfortunate beings there is the possibility of a far more interesting/dangerous side affect.

While under the influence of Encephalo Six One, certain individuals with a high potential psionic strength, have unconsciously managed to project images and emotions over a distance of several hundred meters, which have been seen by other individuals of varying psionic strength.

A good example of this phenomena, is the case of Security Guard Jalcom Ward, who was on night patrol of an exclusive upcit apartment complex when he experienced the translucent figure of a young lady drifting towards him, overcome with an unnatural fear he ran through a plasti-glass door and fell down two flights of stairs, breaking eleven bones in his attempt to escape.

On later examination of security camera recordings, no trace of Wards Ghost Lady could be found. Security Guard Jalcom Ward is currently involved in legal action against his employers, over medical costs and disability allowance. His employers believe that he was not fit to work at the time of his accident.

Encephalo Six One has yet to be used by a trained psionic, at which time there will either be someone who realises the truth behind it, or the longest, most widely experienced case of mass hallucination in Medurma's history!

This could be approached from several directions, the party could be either Alikasch or police investigating the new drug and its source, or hired by insurance companies to gather information concerning the claims of Jalcom Ward and others like him. What ever happens the party should be given the chance to experience Encephalo Six One, first hand.

HubWorlds Special

TIMELINE: 1110 - 1200

- ❑ 011-1110 Future Count Eric Nolanar born on Kaggashus.
- ❑ -1116 Emperor Strephon assassinated.
- ❑ c.1117 Outbreak of factional fighting on Kaggashus, split along racial lines between vilani and solomani groups.
- ❑ 1121 - 1125 Rebellion enters 'Black War' phase. Economic stagnation.
- ❑ c.1126 Nobles expelled from the island of Arsanus by pro-Lucan government.
- ❑ 1126 - 1131 Series of coups, revolutions, counter-revolutions and mini-civil wars (again usually along racial lines) further damages the social infrastructure and destabilises the fragile economy.
- ❑ 316-1131 Count Nolanar heading a populist government of academics, industrialists and nobles.
- ❑ 044-1132 The government oversees the production of a new constitution. Count Nolanar proclaims his 'New Order'.
- ❑ c.1133 The Kaggashus Trade Commission is set-up, the fore-runner of the Hubworlds Trade Authority, to oversee the economic revitalisation of the world.
- ❑ 1134 - 1170 Nolanar begins a program of rebuilding the social and material infrastructure of Kaggashus, initially around the heavily populated regions of Arsanus.
- ❑ 221-1144 Nolanar marries Marianne de Souza-Iiinor, eldest daughter of Baron Corris de Souza-Iiinor, Count Nolanar's political confidant.
- ❑ 060-1161 The Countess gives birth to triplets, all identical daughters, named Thalia, Aula & Marianne.
- ❑ 116-1166 The Count has a male heir when his wife delivers a boy.
- ❑ 014-1168 The young son, also named Eric, dies following an outbreak of a rare neuropathic virus.
- ❑ 081-1169 Eric Nolanar succeeds as 114th Count of Kaggashus upon the death of his father, Count Nieri, following a brief illness.
- ❑ c.1170's Beginning of substantial economic growth.
- ❑ c.1181 Nolanar announces a starport rebuilding program.
- ❑ c.1185 The ability to manufacture jump-drives is regained.
- ❑ c.1188 First interstellar recontact missions undertaken.
- ❑ 181-1188 Contact with a ship at Color following the loss of the first scouting vessel under mysterious circumstances.
- ❑ 1190 - 1191 Discussions between worlds that have been recontacted through the efforts of the Exploratory Office of the Kaggashus Trade Commission with the Kaggashus government for the establishment of a loose trade and defence treaty.
- ❑ 007-1192 Further in-depth discussions and agreements held on Color lead to the Color Accords which set out the principles of the HubWorlds coalition.
- ❑ 001-1193 HubWorlds established as a unified political entity, with Kaggashus as the unofficial capital.
- ❑ c.1194 All the present members now have shipyard capacities of 5000 tons.
- ❑ c.1198 Kaggashus starport reclassified as class A.
- ❑ 233-1199 Kaggashus Orbital A completed.
- ❑ 331-1199 Count Eric Nolanar dies after a short illness at the age of 89.

The triplets were born 3 minutes apart, and so Thalia being the eldest inherited the title as Countess Tialina-Nolanar. Bitter sibling rivalry threatens to destabilise the noble position on Kaggashus, as the younger sisters contest the accession. Each sister has married a noble and has built up their own base of support.

THE MERCHANT-EXPLORERS

The collapse of the Cleon's (Third) Imperium was an inevitable outcome of the rebellion. Dulinor's assassination of Strepthon and his attempt to capture the Iridium Throne fueled the fractionation of an interstellar state that had become stagnant and inward looking. Throughout Imperial society from the noble classes, the megacorporations, the military to the ordinary people the ennui spread like a slow cancer. The empire was rotten from the core outwards and the brittle fabric that held it in one piece was liable to shatter and burn at the slightest push. Thus Dulinor's quest for power was the spark ignited the 11,000 worlds. Yet with hindsight this was not the cause of the conflagration.

From the ashes the devastated worlds attempted to rebuild. Many close to faction power bases were spared the excessive ravages of the 'Black War' period of 1121-1125. Yet many stranded between the 'safe' areas faced destruction from the various competing navies which tried to deny these worlds to their opponents. Many collapsed totally, denuded of large percentages of their populations, access to technology required to sustain their standard of living and life-support systems. Others scraped by, reduced to little more than a subsistence existence hoping to be saved by recontact with those societies able to support space travel and deliver the technology. More often than not all these worlds received were visits from pirates (who expanded alarmingly in number due to the disappearance of an interstellar navy) who took what precious resources remained.

Despite the 'Hard Times', some systems outside the core safe areas managed to hold onto a reasonable amount of their resources and rebuilt their worlds, their starports and technology base.

This then allowed them to repair their aging starships and build new vessels, and therefore reopen lines of contact and interstellar trade.

The emergence of the HubWorlds:

One such world was Kaggashus (Massilia 0402), the former capital of the Solomani (Second) Imperium, when it was known as Hub. An important world and prodigious exporter of high tech goods (TL 16 pre-Rebellion), Kaggashus survived the conflict relatively intact. Its starport classification didn't drop from its initial A rating despite numerous attempts by various factions thus it has been able to retain its starship building capacity (if only at a limited level). Thus Kaggashus has reinvested in its starport and has been at the forefront of recontact, exploration and development of nearby worlds.

The impetus for redevelopment and discovery came from Count Eric Nolanar who soon after inheriting his fief of Midakhashus on Kaggashus used his noble influence, political acumen and family wealth to promote his vision of a 'New Order'. His political agenda emphasized stability and a gradual economic growth. The promise of a restored Kaggashus appealed to many across the social classes. Coupled with a lack of any serious political rival his approach secured him the consensus required to set the world on a long-term plan of survival then expansion.

Kaggashus like many of the high tech populous worlds prior to the rebellion was host to many of the Imperium's megacorporations. Not least of which was the regional headquarters of Naasirka. But like other megacorporations the factional fighting saw a reassessment of their priorities (especially where the company supported a side that was about to

lose its influence) and a husbanding of their resources. In parallel with the other vilani bureaux Naasirka decided to shift their assets back to the Restored Vilani Empire. Everything that could be physically moved from the original sites was stripped and transported in huge merchant convoys. This still left much that could not be moved, much of the local infrastructure associated with the megacorporation e.g. buildings, certain heavy machinery whose value didn't justify its transportation cost, etc. Naasirka however still managed to take much of the starship fabrication equipment from its yards. What could not be moved was exchanged with or sold to local industrial concerns.

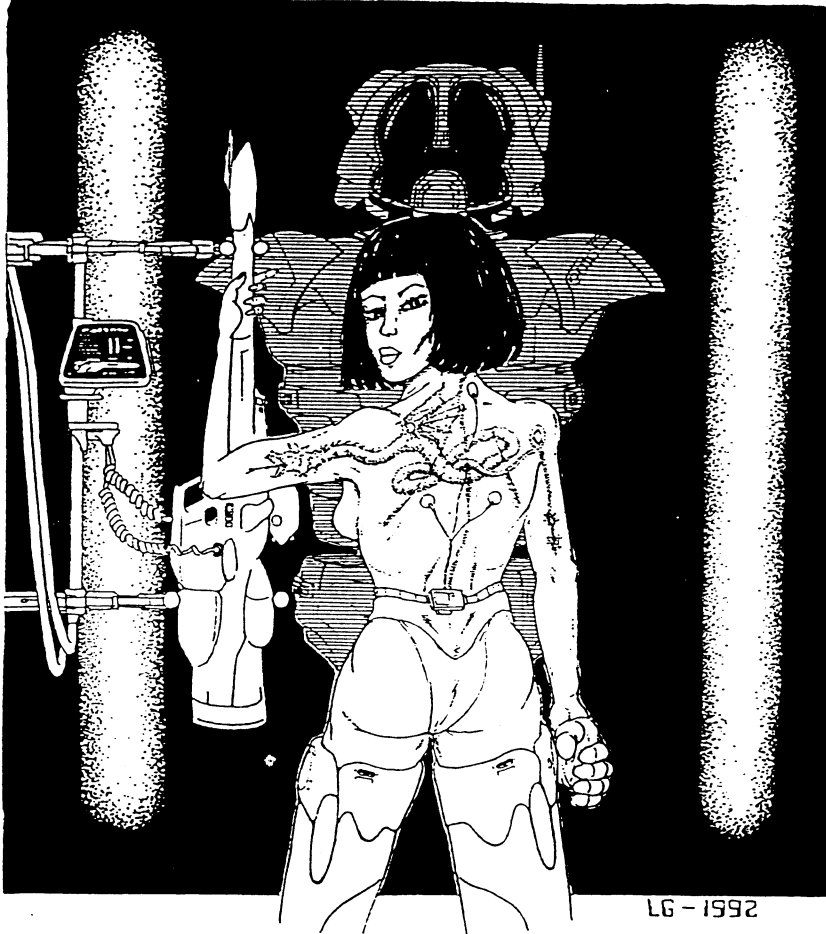
The immediate post-rebellion era saw a consolidation of resources with little in the way of industrial investment, thus the former megacorporation sites were in most cases abandoned. Some were utilized but nowhere near their original capacity. One former megacorporation that has survived although as a smaller, independent offshoot of its parent is Kaggashus Investment Services LIC (KISLIC), one time regional department of Hortalez et Cie. KISLIC operate much in the same way as their one-time parent but with an emphasis on supporting trade.

In 1127 Kaggashus abandoned the Imperial credit as the monetary unit and introduced the Miiril, an old vilani measure of gold equal to 5 grammes. In 1127 a Miiril was worth about Cr 50. In 1180 it was worth Cr 250.

It wasn't until the late 1170's that companies on Kaggashus could think of growth. Under the patronage of Count Nolanar (who had this time organised an coalition government of noble, business, scientific and people interests, the corporations) on the

ART GALLERY

J. Duncan Law-Green



LG-1992

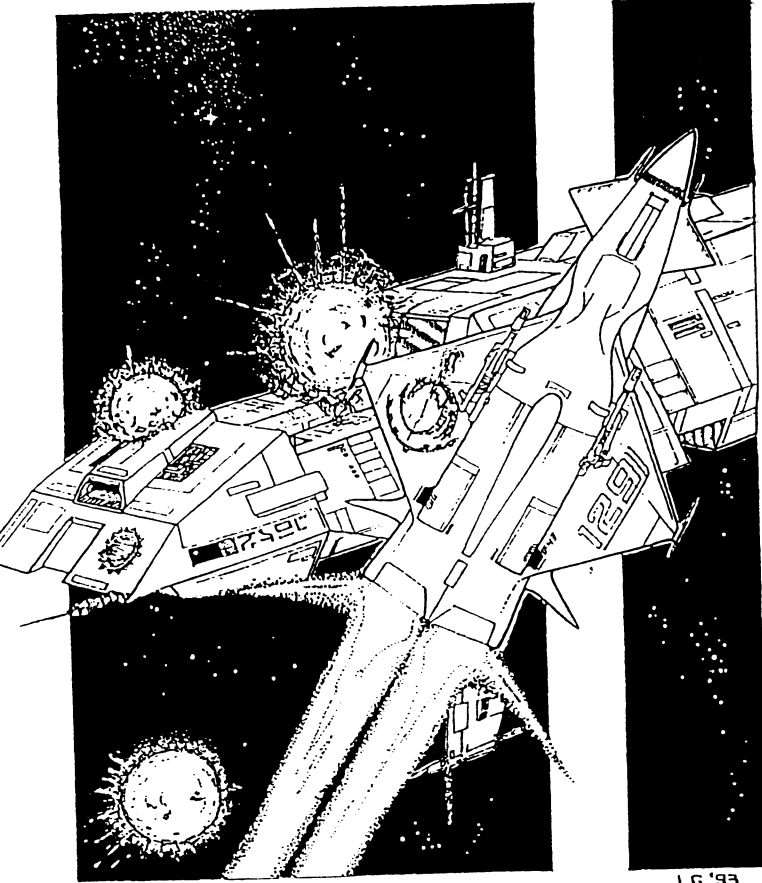


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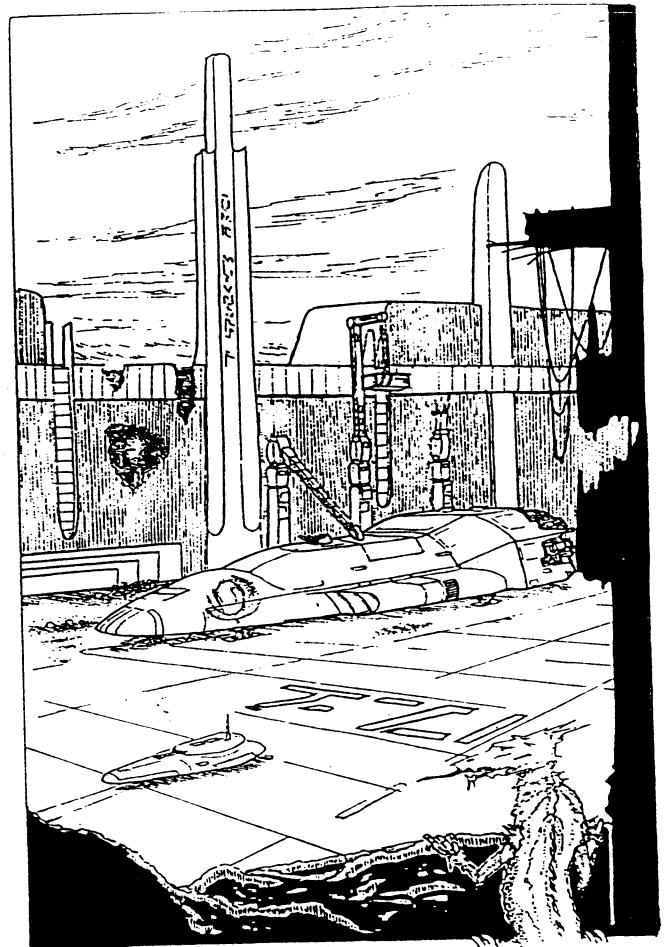


TWILIGHT FLIGHT

J. Duncan Law-Green



LG '93

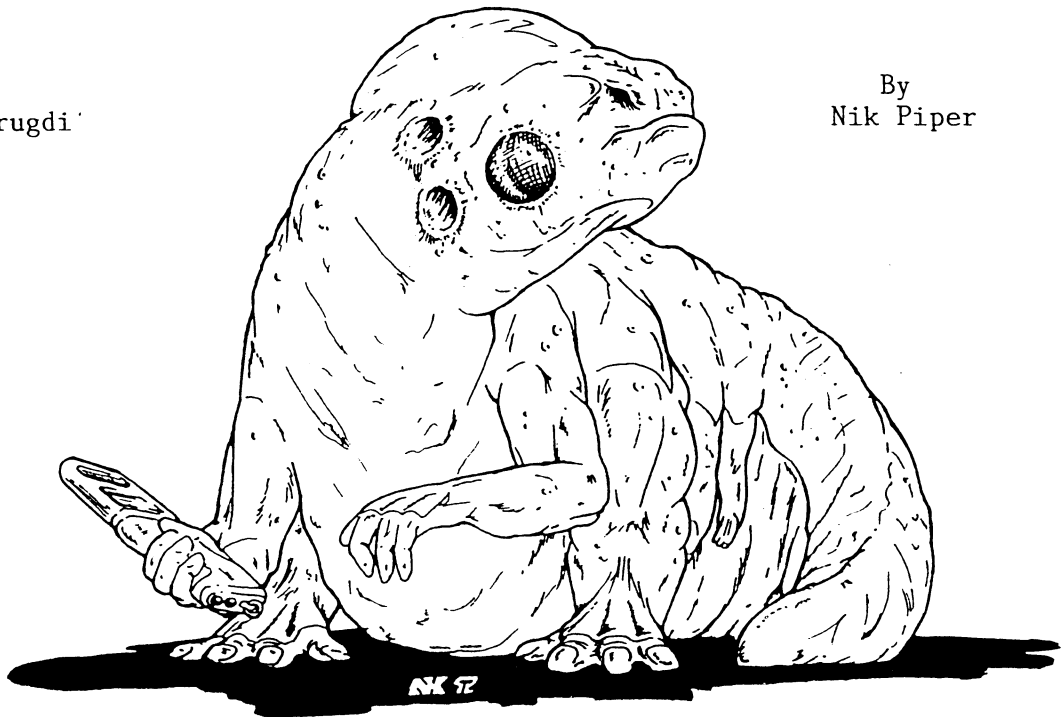


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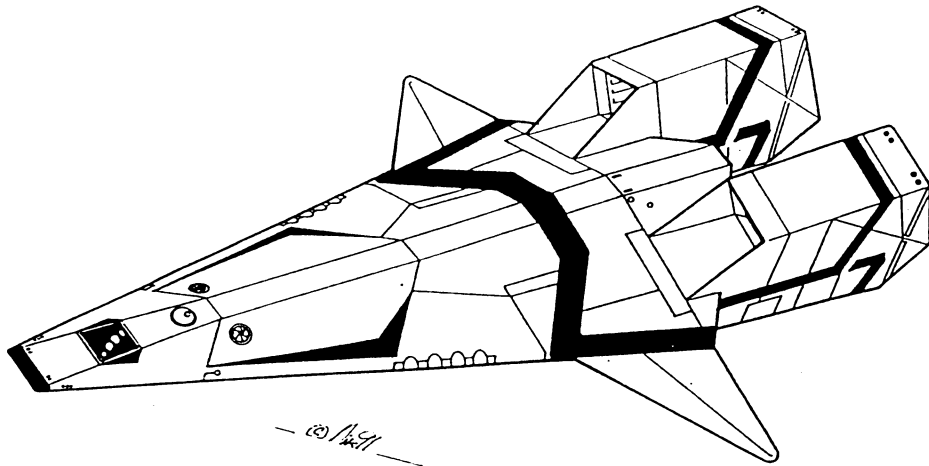
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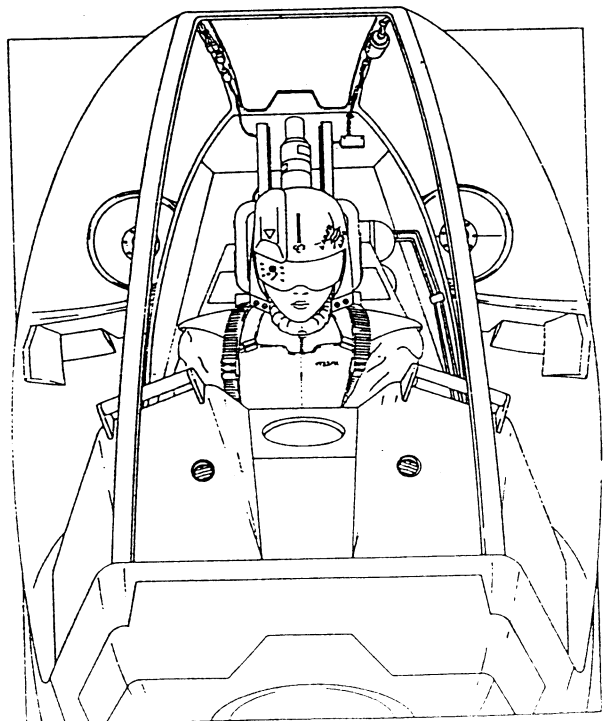
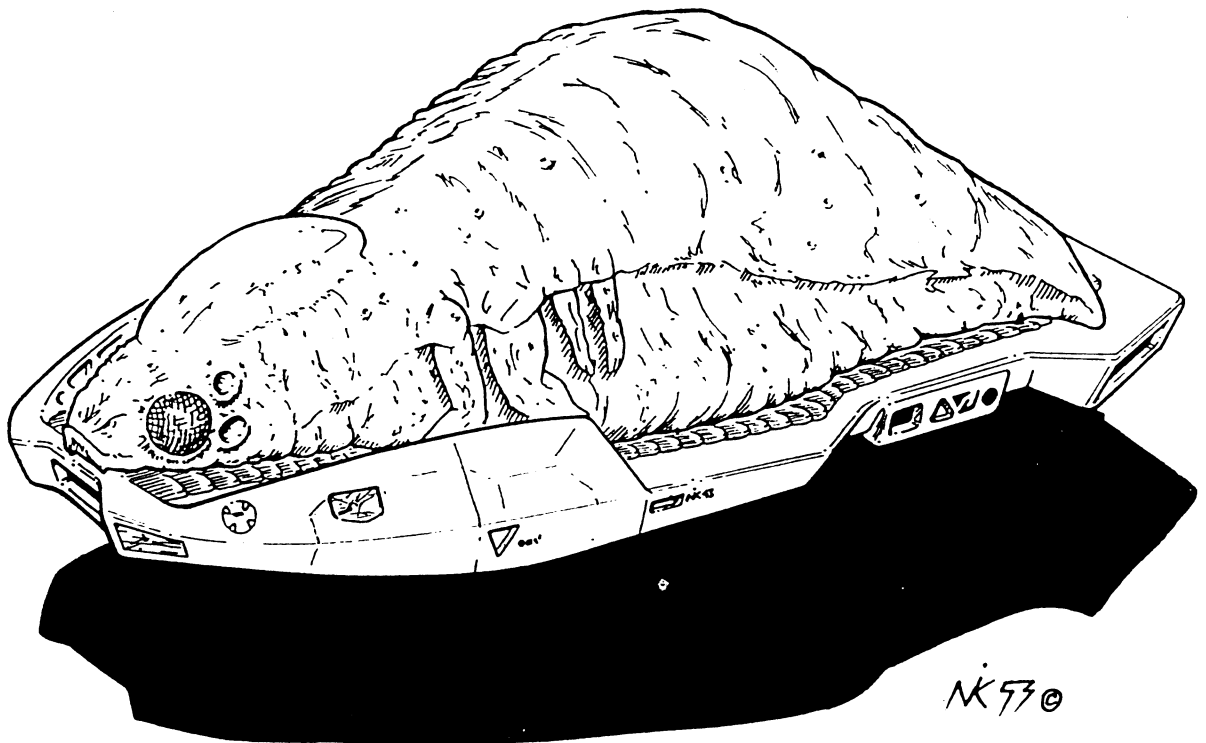
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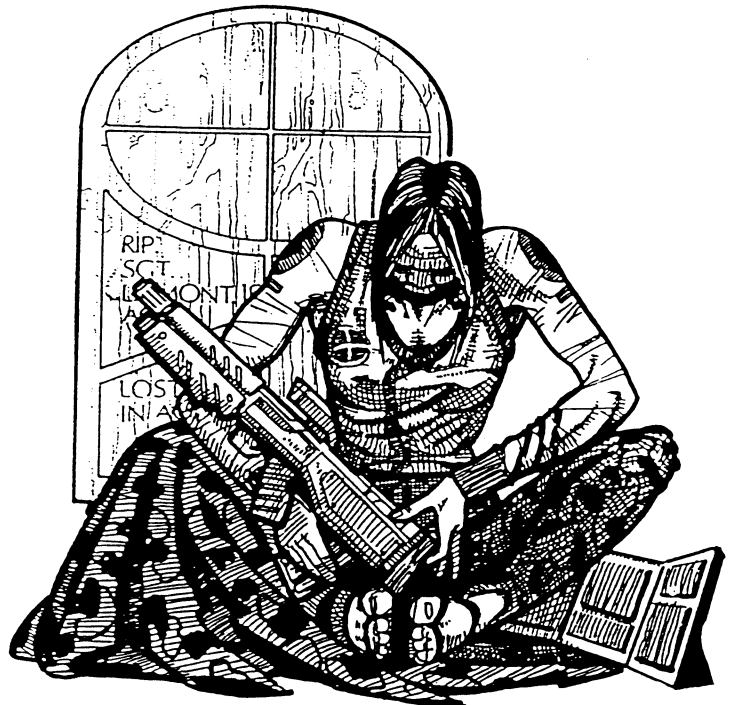
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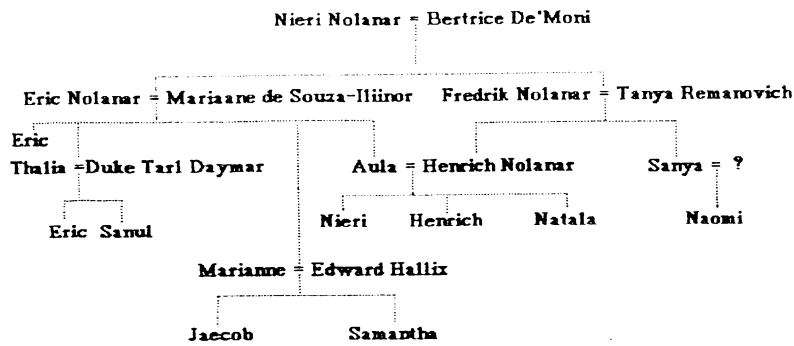


Nik Piper



Tim Osborne





world were invited to invest in the expansion of the starport and its shipbuilding capacity. In this action the corporations were able to found the new markets required to keep their profits high. Once the starship production was underway plans could be made to move out and reexplore. The 100 ton scout vessels based on the original 'Suleiman'-class design and were the first ships to built once jump-drive technology was redeveloped. In 1188 they were sent to the surrounding systems to gather information on the state of local space. Some were lost but a core returned from their missions to reveal that most neighbouring worlds had not fared as well as Kaggashus. Follow-up missions carried diplomats and trade representatives who successfully cemented a loose trade and political alliance by 1192. These new members of what has become known today as the Hubworlds were eager to join, hoping to redevelop their worlds with outside investment capital and resources.

By 1200 the shipyards on Kaggashus had built a small core of merchant and naval vessels with which to conduct this reexploration. A handful of starships dating from before the rebellion had survived and had performed the first recontact missions but were now in a poor state of repair. It is with these new starships that the Hubworlds have cemented their internal relationships and their commercial aspirations.

The small cadre of far traders have now taken on the most important role of finding new markets and new resources. The three large and two moderately sized transporters carry the bulk of the essential raw materials and supplies through the Hubworlds. Much of the cost of the far traders have been met by the emerging corporations on Kaggashus. Eight of the ten vessels in operation as of 1200 are owned by individual corporations or consortia of companies. These ships have been assigned the tasks of exploring for markets in systems beyond the HubWorlds' borders. The owning companies have been given operating licenses by the HubWorlds Trade Authority (HTA), division of the HubWorlds' government. These license set out the vessels operating procedures and areas, and require that a percentage of profits from trade openings goes towards the central administration to fund further development of starports, shipping, trade and exploration. It is successfully argued that a proportion of all benefits from these trade explorations should go towards the well-being of the whole HubWorlds rather than exclusively to commercial interests.

The crews of the far traders, the merchant-explorers have the task of implementing standing orders from their holding-companies: contact, converse and commercialise. The merchant-explorers are drawn from the most experienced starship operators and dirtside traders available.

They are a tough, mean lot, durable, innovative, quick-witted and quick to exploit an opportunity. And they pursue their remit with a passion.

The ships are beginning to move outward through their designated zones. Each consortium have been assigned one of the adjacent subsectors:

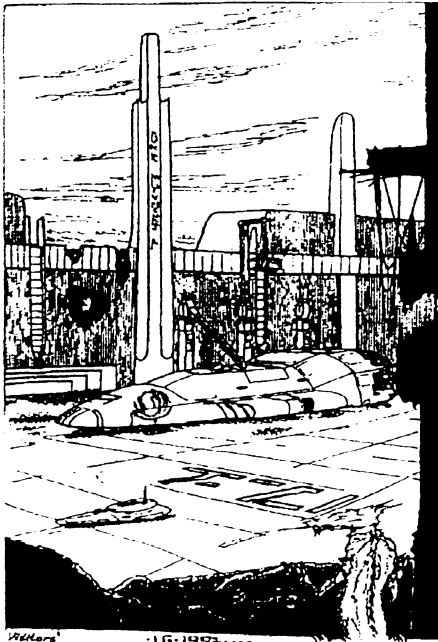
- Tamarindos-Color Industries - Laraa (Dagudashaag P)
- Lubeck-Aarkhalagur Combine - Cadion (Core M)
- Uliikagus LIC - Ch'naar (Core N)
- DeLoa-Diss-Umir Association - (Zarushagar D)
- Fournier Finances - (Zarushagar H)
- Kaggashus Investment Services LIC - Arar (Massilia B)
- Lismeon Advanced Technologies - Keum (Massilia E)
- Ershur Consortium - Vaait (Massilia F)

Although these regions are well-defined on the stellar maps, political, economic, cultural and sociological conditions overlap. One world in one subsector may have closer links to the world one parsec away in another subsector. Thus the various competing groups have run into conflict with each other when they have crossed over into regions not within their license. As the saying goes 'the grass is greener on the other side'. Although the trading arrangements governing the licenses have fallen against the transgressing side in every case brought to the Trading and Exploration Administrative Council, the rulings mean little in space beyond the HubWorlds. Although no actual fighting has yet occurred, things have got pretty heated at times with all sides prepared to employ all the range of business practices to oust their rivals. With large amounts of money and human resources invested in these exploratory trade missions they obviously want to see a healthy and rapid return.

It is amongst these new breed of merchant-explorers that a whole mythology is emerging; of wealth, of excitement and fame. A position with one of the far trader crews is a much sought-after post and there are no shortages of applications despite the deprivations and dangers that lie in

wait for an unlucky crew. It is the promise of rich rewards that has always fueled the desire to explore, for each crewmen takes a share of the profits, even in the face of hardship. But if the truth be told much of the time is spent in the tedium of jump-space or the routine of preparing for contact procedures.

The ships themselves are tech level 13 versions of the 'Ginaa'-class variant far traders which are equipped with a full range of TL13 electronics and sensors as well as pair of dual beam laser turrets. Also each ship carries collapsible fuel tanks to extend their endurance while on the exploration missions. What remains of the hold and all the unoccupied staterooms are filled with cargo, usually small, high-tech, valuable items. These are used for barter, exchanging the items for trade goods, services and contracts. The vessels are always kept in the highest order of repair for the best possible performance of the ship is the crews best hope of safety amongst the 'darkworlds' of the outlands and wilds. Each crew member has two or three specialities which allows them to fill-in for each other in any eventuality. As yet no merchant academy has been reestablished so all training is performed within the sponsoring companies.



Adventure Possibilities:

1) The PCs are part of a far trader crew sponsored by Lubeck-Aarkhalgur Combine. The ship's operators hold the license for exploration of Chadion subsector (Core M) and have a base on Towering. They are sent to explore and retrieve as much material/information as possible from Reference (Core 0140), the site of the old IISS Grand Survey data repository. The world possibly holds enormous riches, particularly in high tech starship and computer equipment, as well as valuable technical data. Three missions have been sent to the system in the last three years, but no ships have yet returned.

Referee: The reasons for the disappearances of the ships are related. During the Rebellion the Reference system was protected by a series of automated defence satellites. About half are still operational, but somewhat erratically. Two of the exploratory vessels were destroyed by these defence satellites - one ship was destroyed in an exchange of fire with one satellite and another ran into an asteroid when trying to pass a concentration of satellites. The final ship was destroyed by raiders who also had ventured into the Reference system in search of equipment. The site on reference itself has been abandoned and is in

a ruinous state. Most of the underground domes have lost their integrity, one or two are intact with environmental systems just ticking over. The site has been looted on several occasions but most of the machinery and equipment is undisturbed (although in varying states of repair). An added complication is the arrival on planet of a rival merchant-explorer

group from Tamarindos-Color Industries who will be competing with the PCs for the salvagable treasures.

2) The PCs have been charged with the transport of a high ranking diplomat who will be representing the HubWorlds League on a mission to Cluseret (Massilia 0510). This world has had a change in government since the Rebellion, now a religious autocracy. This government despite its dictatorial attitude and extreme law level is eager to expand and emerge from the darkness. First contacts with the HubWorlds via the scouts in 1183 indicated promising trade opportunities. Certain restrictions on those not members of the Cluseret state religion limited trade. The invitation to send a diplomat to Cluseret is seen as the first step to open up serious trade. Not all on Cluseret are keen on contacts with the HubWorlds.

Referee: the trip for the PCs and their passenger should go smoothly. It is when they arrive on Cluseret that the fun begins! A number of things will happen;

a) The PCs group will be threatened and harassed to leave the system.

b) The PCs will be embroiled in a bar-room brawl, not of their making, and are arrested. Things will be smoothed over but not without some lose of trust.

c) There will be an assassination attempt on the diplomats life (it is up to the referee to decide whether this attempt is successful).

d) Certain anti-trade elements frightened of losing power and influence are trying to disable these trade negotiations and will try to instigate a serious diplomatic incident by another means the referee can think of.

HUBWORLDS GOVERNMENT

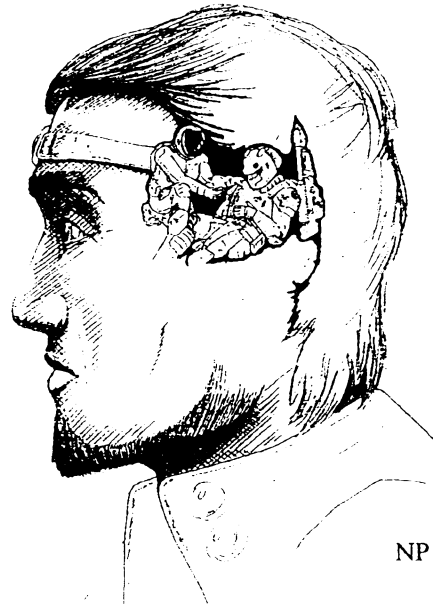
For the last 1127 years the Nolanar-Ahiiki line has taken the Kaggashus hereditary fief and ruled it with a benign but remote hand. The Count of Kaggashus has traditionally taken a close interest in the politics of the world, usually with deftness and tact, and acts as a well-informed 'Head of State'. The present incumbent, Count Eric Nolanar has taken on his appointed role with a great deal of vigour in his attempt to drag Kaggashus from the chaos of the post-Rebellion period.

The government that Count Nolanar oversees is much the same that has guided Kaggashus over the last millenium. It is organised around a single executive council which is hand picked by the count. It is a system which has been free of abuse despite the lack of in built constitutional control. This executive council is composed of representatives from the whole of Kaggashus society, educationalists, economists, scientists, artists, industrialists, etc. Below this council are a large number of committees which govern specific areas of policy such as trade and transport, education, health, law enforcement, defence and so on.

The committee members (twelve on each committee) are elected representatives, which are held every three years. The individuals are elected to a specific committee by the people of Kaggashus from amongst members of regional parliaments. Proportional representation is in effect for these regional parliaments thus the make-up of one of these parliaments closely shadows the major political divisions within a given area. The governmental committee members are elected via a multiple vote system where voters indicate their choices from amongst the candidates by selecting them in order of preference. Those candidates that get a number of votes (which are weighted according the preference indicated) that put them in the top 12 become new members of that particular committee. No more than three committee members can come from any single regional parliament.

The committees meet three times a week for eight-hour sessions for four weeks in five. This is subject to change in the event of crises/ emergencies. The other two working days during the standard week are spent researching and presenting information to the Executive council representatives, receiving deputations from the regional governments and visiting areas affected by government policy.

The governments of the members of the HubWorlds vary but each has a trio of representatives at the HubWorlds Assembly, the body that oversees the HubWorlds' trade, defence and 'foreign' policy. Those matters arising between two members of the HubWorlds that cannot be settled by the individual governments or their embassies can go to the HubWorlds Assembly for arbitration.



LAW AND ORDER, ANARCHY AND CHAOS

In most cases large interstellar governments evolve (?devolve) into federal states - individual worlds are left to govern and organise their own people. These governments are usually set within the overall aims and ambitions of the larger interstellar state. In the particular case of the Third Imperium, before the rebellion, for their taxes worlds were guaranteed markets, trade and protection through the auspices of the Imperial military. These forces however were not seen employed to maintain local cohesion of government (in most cases) and were predominantly concerned with the suppression or prevention of activities that may interfere with the security, peace, prosperity and integrity of the Imperium e.g. large scale incursions by alien states or commerce raiding by pirates.

As stated in many accounts on the role of the Imperial Navy, the IN forces are employed to protect the space between worlds. The Imperial Army and Marines are strategically placed to protect important systems i.e. high population, agricultural and industrial worlds. All the armed forces and the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service maintain security branches to assist in their primary functions. Each have their own sphere of influence (which occasionally overlap) but they generally do not involve themselves with the politics and policing of individual worlds unless there is a threat to the stability of a region.

Although this has changed with the onset of the rebellion and fragmentation of the Imperium, the maintenance of local law and order is still very much down to the individual governments and their security agencies.

The rebellion has left untouched many of the individual worlds that comprise the 'Shattered Imperium' despite the various assaults on strategic systems. The majority of serious consequences of the rebellion for worlds are due to the economic disruption. Military law has not become the norm.

The police are the 'wardens of the law', the agency designed to uphold the edicts of government, monitor the acquiescence of the population to the local rules and regulations and to protect the status quo. They have the power to investigate and arrest those who step beyond the boundaries of the law and those suspected of transgressing the law. In most instances the police are independent units, free of government control and politicking, yet bound by the same laws that they are there to protect. However, in certain cases, the police force have powers that extend beyond the law which bind the general populace. These situations are usually found where governments maintain their position of power by the introduction of a paramilitary or 'police' state, with rigid controls on the action of the populace.

The police are often seen in a neutral light, the populace they patrol regard them as a necessary evil. The police can be seen at both extremes as oppressors when there are unpopular laws to enforce (and they are taken to be supporters of unpopular governments) or defenders of freedom when they stand resolute against political interference and those who try and corrupt the government. In the majority of situations the police are themselves of bad policy as any other group.

The actual organisational structure of the multitude of police forces throughout the Shattered Imperium is roughly similar and has evolved along quasi-military lines. As stated most forces do not have a military outlook and are totally involved in their civil duties.

The law level (and the government) of any particular world is a basic function of its population: the greater the population the greater the need for a large cohesive security structure to be able to successfully monitor that population and its acquiescence to local laws. The police in these situations can have a great deal of difficulty in keeping an eye on everyone when trying to keep the peace. The problem is rendered more difficult at lower ends of the technological spectrum when there are fewer aids to policing i.e. advanced surveillance methods, well-developed forensic services, extensive databases of criminals' records, rapid transport, and the like. This problem is shared with police forces on low population worlds where wide dispersion of the populace i.e. frontier mining/agricultural systems means that resources are spread more thinly.



Usually the 'Law' extends only to moderate or large townships and so there is a degree of lawlessness in rural/frontier regions (a similar state existed in the western regions of the North American continent of Terra during the early part of the eighteenth century local calendar euphemistically known as the 'Wild West'). The best tool, however, in the police force arsenal is the officer in close contact with the ordinary citizen. Utilisation of manpower in this way can be most rewarding giving sharper insights into the life of a community. This personal contact yields the most beneficial information on criminal activity through fostering communication and co-operation.

With the Rebellion, co-operation between the police forces within a faction has increased. This spirit of co-operation has been sponsored by the various security agencies of the military (especially the naval forces) who want to keep track of their 'captive' citizens so as to monitor agitators, possible spies, insurgents, political opponents, critics and 'trouble makers'. Most citizens are required to carry ID cards with basic personal details. DNA profiles are kept in central databases. These databases are held on the more important worlds, generally in all systems with a class A or B starport, and class C worlds with a high population. These are updated through the use of the xboat networks and special security vessels which transmit the latest changes on all personal records. The information is passed to the police forces when their intervention is required. Despite the updates the databases are always a week or two out of date, longer in systems 'off the beaten track'. The collapse of the Imperium in the mid-1120's has made these databases virtually obsolete. The dry-up of interstellar traffic stopped the passage of information on criminals, yet the lack of travel stopped the movement of criminals. Instead the isolated systems received numerous visits from pirates.

An alternative that is taken up by some governments is the electronic tagging of criminals or those awaiting trial/sentencing by the implantation of a minute microchip at the base of the brain (this delicate position reduces the occurrence of illegal surgical removal). This carries details of the criminal's record and sentence, and other personal facts, as well as a means of keeping an accurate log of the whereabouts of the criminal (especially for those who have escaped from incarceration, a court or justice, broken parole or skipped bail). This practice has been extended for large sections of the population on certain worlds within the Imperium.

Within the HubWorlds the various law enforcement agencies of the individual systems are under an umbrella organisation - the HubWorlds Office of

Internal Security (HOIS). The grandiose and intimidating title belies its function as a coordinating and clearing house, dealing with criminal activity outside that of a military nature. Matters affecting state security is within its remit but in these fraught times it has developed close links with the Hubworlds Navy Intelligence (HNI) for these areas that have overlapped. There is surveillance of criminal movement and they have been given the task of bringing about the apprehension of those wanted on other worlds within the Hubworlds HubWorlds, and organising the successful extradition of them to the appropriate systems.

This organisation was set up by Count Nolanar in 1183 to achieve the above aims. It was principally an organisation to anticipate the transfer of data between security units monitoring the changes in the populations following the Color Accords in 1192 which laid the foundations of the present political organisation of the HubWorlds. The potential for trouble with the removal of trade barriers and the free passage of HubWorlds citizens meant that some sort of trans-system security organisation had to be in place.

The HOIS hasn't unlimited resources for the pursuit of criminals (only those wanted for serious charges are usually investigated) and have taken on the role of licensing and monitoring establishment for 'bounty hunters'. All bounty hunters that wish to operate within the HubWorlds must be registered with HOIS. Operation without the specific paperwork is illegal and carries heavy fines and imprisonment. The office circulates details to all interested parties and pays out the rewards when a criminal is apprehended (in lieu of payment from the issuing system). Some of the more persistent bounty hunters have pursued their quarry beyond the borders of the HubWorlds. Those worlds developing close ties with the HubWorlds usually agreed to extradition. Although there have been a few cases where wanted individuals have been snatched and forcibly brought back to HubWorlds space.

HOIS also serves as the 'internal investigation' organisation where corruption or breaches of security arise in individual police forces. The office also investigates complaints against police forces made by the general public. They have the power to seize documents, evidence and information in these investigations without requiring court orders on the particular world. HOIS are one of the few organisations that have the ability to circumvent local law. This ability is rarely used however, the threat of such powerful intervention is sufficient to bring about compliance by an unco-operative law agency.

The HubWorlds Office of Internal Security is based on Kaggashus (Massilia 0402) where agency maintains a large facility. Here there are large computer networks involved in the support of an extensive criminal database. It is probably the largest collection of information outside the Kaggashus

Central Library. Also to be found are excellent forensic laboratories based in the old university Forensic Pathology department, and it is much in demand by civil and military authorities (the unit has been involved in the resolution of a number of notable art authentication cases i.e. the Kusheb sculpture forgery).

Forensic analyses performed by the HOIS laboratories include: full DNA profiling, retina- and hand-print analysis, computer enhanced facial mapping, radiothermoluminescence, radio-dating, etc. The forensic laboratories also include an extensive complement of criminologists and psychologists who provide valuable help in the analysis of crime and the criminal mind - the behaviour patterns and the effects on victims and society. Hypnotherapists are another group of essential personnel at the HubWorlds Office of Internal Security. They are used to retrieve valuable evidence that may exist deep within the individual subconscious as often the smallest details that are the most crucial in an investigation. The mind can be very selective in the information it puts into its conscious memory. The hypnotherapists travel with the Police Liaison Unit to the location of a crime, interview a witness and put them into a hypnotised state to pick out the extra details.

HOIS employees are drawn from security agencies within the HubWorlds who have served a minimum of two terms. All enter the organisation at the bottom of the ladder (like standard law enforcement agency policy throughout the old Imperium) as Security Operatives (SOs) and start an initial two year training period, with six months in the following areas: Field Operations, Police Liaison Unit, Information and Monitoring Unit, and Forensics. SOs usually choose at this point which department they want to work within but they regularly go on refresher courses within each unit.

There is a dark grey-blue dress uniform for HOIS operatives but wearing of this is restricted to special occasions as SOs in the field wear plain clothes. The standard issue firearm for Field Operatives and in the Police Liaison Unit is the Tenriinth 9mm autopistol. Larger weapons are seldom used as in those cases that require substantial firepower, tactical-assault teams from local police forces are seconded. Here the SOs act in an advisory capacity and coordinate action.

All SOs go through extensive training in the various interrogation techniques. The interviewing procedure of the HOIS is much feared, a daunting prospect for innocent and guilty alike, a testing time for the human will. The 'interviews' (the HOIS always use 'interview' instead of 'interrogation') are unparalleled examples of psychological assault; the object of the interviewer is to get the interviewee to unburden him- or herself [of the relevant details] with the subject feeling relieved in the confession. It is said that a good security operative can get a compliant interviewee's "tongue to dance".

REPO RUN

INTRODUCTION:

This adventure is based around the PCs attempt at repossessing a starship. The ideal number of players is five although any number between 3 and 8 can be used with a little adaption of the scenario. The setting of the scenario is open. The start can be on any world although the 'target' world should be at least three parsecs away and have a class C starport or better. A high law code/level for the target world could make the operation more interesting. Suitable worlds in Sapphyre are: Piileir (1833), Lamamni (1738), Riiya (2035), Ya'uiya-ko (2038), or E'khua (2339).

The scenario can be used on its own, modified to suit a particular background, be a part of a larger campaign inserted a low point in the proceedings or the starting point for a new campaign.

BACKGROUND:

A local finance company, Baronial Investments, have a large stake in the local funding of starship construction and purchasing. BI's continued financial viability and their 'sponsoring' of subsector travel/trade is based upon prompt payments from their debtors. At the moment the company have a problem with one of their mortgage holders, Kristoff Amundsson, who has the ownership papers of a subsidized liner, "The Skaggerak". The last monthly payment received was four months ago at a system three parsecs away. BI have become increasingly worried as their has been a growing trend of skipping (especially during the 'Rebellion'). Bad publicity could not only encourage other owners to skip but also upset the larger financial backers of the company who could withdraw their financial support if they perceive BI as a bad risk. To forestall any problems and reclaim the ship, Baronial Investments are seeking a small band of characters willing to undertake a covert repossession mission.

The PCs used in this scenario must have the right combination of skills to fly a starship, and it would also be helpful if the group had a member whose previous career was in a law enforcement agency.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION:

You have been stuck on this world for a couple of weeks now with little cash and little hope of finding some decent work to pay to get off this tedious planet. Just when you have given up hope for the day on the starport's job advertising vid-board you notice a rather cryptic message.....

**"SMALL GROUP OF EXPERIENCED
TROUBLESHOOTERS WANTED FOR
STARSHIP PICKUP.**

**MUST BE FLIGHT QUALIFIED. CONTACT
VID-COM: SYNOR 0834-9904-9945-BR.
COMPLETE DISCRETION IS REQUIRED."**

This sounds to you that certain something you have been waiting for. Eager to land yourself a job that may well pay for you to get off planet you dial the vid-com number (and get a voice link only) and are instructed to go to the 'Excelsior Regent Hotel' (directions given) where you are to book in to rooms already provided and await further instructions.

MISSION OUTLINE:

When the PCs arrive at the hotel they will be given an envelope in addition to their room keys. The letter inside will instruct them to go to room 46 the next morning. This will give the players an opportunity to explore the hotel, pick up on any rumours, etc.

The next morning the players will be ushered into the room once they knock on the door. Inside the ordinary hotel room are a man and a women. The women will introduce her colleague and then herself, as representatives of Baronial Investments Fraud Unit.

At this point the referee should relate the background piece to the players, inserting the appropriate location(s). The representatives will insist that the group keep a low profile, be discreet and try not to involve the local law enforcement agencies or press. This is to avoid publicity. To help will any local legal difficulties the PCs will be given a compulsory repossession order signed by a local judge which authorizes the characters to retrieve the "Skaggerak". As the legal authorities across the Imperium are charged with cooperation between the different member worlds, the civil powers on any world are honour-bound to investigate the legal claims from a co-member. Although the authorities are forced to respect these type of legal orders these claims are subject to the judicial procedures of a host world, and may take many forms and a considerable amount of time. As the local legal procedure may take weeks, months or even years and this may lead to bad publicity the PCs are encouraged to avoid its use.

To accomplish their mission the PCs will be given an electronic credit card each which is used to purchase up to six middle passages. The group will also be given Cr. 10,000 in operating expenses. All expenses must be documented, e.g hotel receipts, etc. Any unused cash and the cards must be returned on completion of the mission. Misuse, loss or damage of the cards will be met out of the players payment. As for payment the PCs will be given Cr.10,000 each and a open high passage ticket. If they bring in Amundsson with them they will each receive a bonus of a further Cr. 10,000. The wages are non-negotiable, but if the players are successful in their mission they may be used for other work and/or given a preferential interest rates on any starship purchase they may make in the future.

The "Skaggerak" will be found at the repair bays of the shipyards of the target world. The vessel was badly damaged on landing following a maneuver drive failure on approach to the starport. The ship has been laid up for five weeks and will be in the bays for another eight.

The ship will be under constant attention during the daylight hours for 5 1/2 days out of 7 by work crews. These men are not part of the ship's normal crew but belong to a local ship maintenance company. Amundsson will be aboard the ship the majority of the time (2-9 on 2D6) sorting out a variety of ship systems and administrative work. He will never be away from the vessel for more than an hour at a time. The regular ship's crew make occasional visits helping their captain in some of the work. They will be present during the daylight hours only. While aboard the ship Amundsson will always carry his 7mm autopistol in a shoulder holster. When unoccupied the ship will have its anti-hijack program activated.

Most of the above information can be gleaned from surveillance of the ship.

To observe a pattern to the coming and going about the ship:

Routine, Streetwise, Int, 1 week, (unskilled O.K.).

Referee: If the task fails then the watchers have been noticed. Randomly determine who actually notices being observed. Base the targets' reactions upon the level of mishap.

At a superficial level the targets shrug it off, at minor the targets post guards, at major the targets notify the starport security officials, and on a destroyed mishap the ship and crew will leave the world immediately (as long as the vessel is two weeks or less from its final repair completion date).

Once armed with knowledge of the pattern of visits to the ship the PCs may then be able to make a well-judged move to take the ship. There are several options in retrieving the ship:

1) Bluffing their way in; the PCs could pretend to be part of the ship repair crew,

To bluff the way into the ship as fake repairmen:

Difficult, Liason, Soc, 1 min (Unskilled O.K.).

Referee: The task is modified by the 'victim's' intelligence (-1 to the roll for each 5 int points). If the players confront Amundsson on trying to enter the ship the task becomes Formidable. One player should take on the talking role, the task difficulty can vary depending upon the plausibility of his/her story, his manner, and whether the player makes the use of any props, e.g. a flash of an official-looking identity badge/card or something similar.

2) Breaking into the ship,

To bypass an air-lock lock:

Difficult, Intrusion, Electronic or Dex, 5 min (fateful).

Referee: The task level assumes an electronic toolkit is being used, if not the task level climbs to Formidable. If a hand-computer is used then the task difficulty decreases one level.

On exceptional success the player attempting the task has discovered the anti-hijack/ intrusion circuit for the air-lock. Failure will be obvious, the door will not open, but the level of mishap will determine the severity of the consequences.

Superficial: no effect. **Minor:** the PCs are noticed hanging about the ship air-lock - security will arrive in 2D6 minutes time. **Major:** as minor but the individual noticing the group is an armed security officer. **Destroyed:** the alarms have been activated and a swarm of armed men begin to surround the PCs.

If the PCs managed to open the air-lock but haven't noticed the anti-hijack system or haven't bothered to look for and then try to deactivate it then upon cycling through the air-lock tranq gas will flood the compartment. Anyone breathing the gas will fall unconscious for 2D6 * 10 minutes. Of course anyone in a sealed vacc-suit should be safe from the effects of the gas.

To locate or deactivate the anti-hijack circuits: use task above.

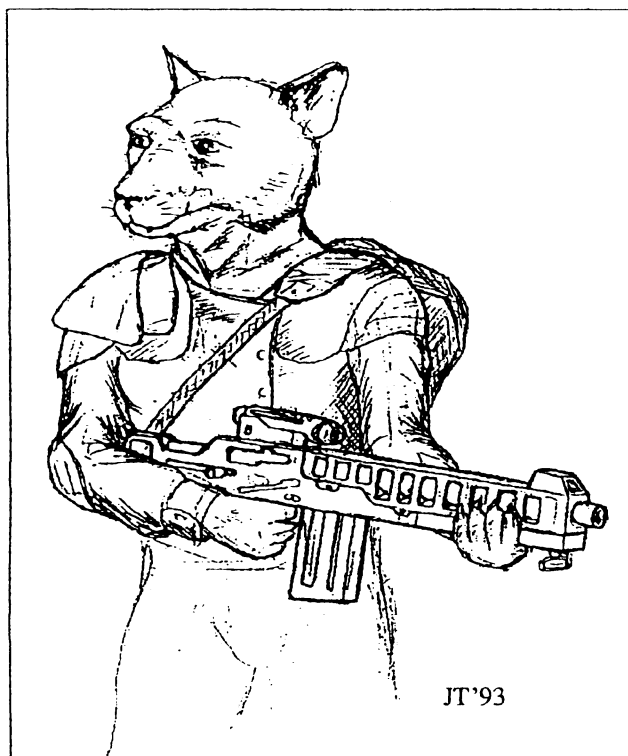
3) The PCs can force their way into the ship. This can mean either storming the vessel when there is open access to the ship, or physically 'breaking-into' the ship. It can involve elements from the above two methods of entering the ship. Use the tasks presented in the 'Referees' Handbook' to determine if the players have surprise if they try to take on the ship's crew or the repairmen. Amundsson will use force to repel any assault, and will try to depart with the ship. If things are going against him and his crew he will not risk all however, and try to flee. Gun-play within the starport will bring Starport Authority security rushing to the scene, unless the PCs are very careful and very, very lucky.

If "Skaggerak" leaves before the PCs can take command of it then they may well try to pursue it. If the ship has not been completely repaired then it will break down at its next destination requiring further repairs and maintenance. The time at this other world should be equal to two times the amount of time short of complete repairs before it jumped. Obviously if the crew of the "Skaggerak" are aware of the PCs trying to take 'their' ship then their mission will become more difficult to complete, the tasks associated with taking the ship are increased by one level

Once the characters are aboard the vessel then matters should be relatively simple from hereon. If things have been easy for the players then the referee should feel free to throw some spanners into the works; e.g.

a) snap custom inspection ("hey, your not the crew!?"). b) trouble getting the ship powered-up (security codes?, fuel?, poor repairs?). c) run-in with a system patrol boat (if the players are stopped with Amundsson or any of his crew aboard they will be charged with kidnapping irrespective of any repossession order for the ship). d) Adamsson and his crew try to board the vessel via a stolen cutter.

When (and if) the PCs are successful they will be given their agreed rewards. BI might even be persuaded to let the players take on the ship's mortgage, at a reduced interest rate (i.e. a monthly payment equivalent to 1/241th of the ship's new value). In any event if the PCs are successful then BI could become a useful source of work at a later date, maybe with similar repossession work or performing financial vetting operations on potential BI loan-holders.



A.K.A. ARRALAN CANARIS

Arralan Canaris is a drifter who has been blown across the Imperium by the rebellion, or could it be the chaos that follows in his wake. Born on Jesedipere in the Spinward Marches he spent the first few years of his career as an unskilled spacer on marginal merchant ships trading along the boarder, who found it an advantage to have a Vargr on the crew.

With the start of the rebellion the traders headed into the Marches taking Arralan with them, but after the Vargr incursions he encountered a fair amount of ill will and prejudice. Deciding against a return to Vargr territory he started his journey corewards.

People are most likely to run across Arralan Canaris in the dives around a planets Starport where he will either be trying to find passage or get support for some new, small time money making venture he has dreamed up.

They should be warned that his schemes tend to end up with complications, but Arralan has a confident manner and persuasive voice that convinces all but the most weary. Being a little bit of a con artist he also tends to bend the truth at times. (For example Arralan has a fake Imperial Edict 3097 for most of the factions in the Rebellion and points out that he has been chosen by that particular factions leader, for his current assignment because no one would expect a vagrant Vargr to be an important agent for the faction).

Arralan is always accompanied by a worn carpet bag which depending on the state of the G-Pack sewn into it is either slung over the back or dragged along the ground by two people.

Its contains various pieces of equipment including his Vacc Suit and weapons, a TL9 military style Auto shotgun with an under slung grenade launcher and an Ingrams Mac10 with the noise suppressor welded into place and a cut down Auto Shotgun fixed below, loaded with explosive shells.

While these sound like heavy pieces of hardware, Arralan's combat ability, or rather lack of combat ability must be considered. He has developed a unique reputation and combat style. The reputation, despite several fights he has never killed, or even hurt a single living creature. The combat style is to put as much fire power as possible into the direction of the enemy, then run away while they still have their heads down. Despite having never hurt a living creature he has managed to destroy large amounts of property. (The most well known example is the Mega Blast Recording Studio and Production Plant, where he managed to fire a full ten magazines, two hundred rounds of shotgun ammunition at an intruder, who survived and escaped unharmed, the Studio has never been reopened).

Having lived all his life in the Imperium, mostly in the company of Humans, Arralan is not always making moves to advance his charisma, this does not mean that it is not important to him and on occasion it can be noticed in his actions, for instance he will never admit that he is unable or that he is too unskilled, to do something. (This is how he developed his JOT talents).

There is only about one good thing that can be said about getting involved in a scheme with Arralan Canaris. While he may miss lead them and land them in all sorts of additional problems, he will not intentionally desert them to their fate or try to cheat them of their fair share of the take.

A.K.A. ARRALAN CANARIS

Resume:

Born: 153-1099 on Jesedipere/Spinward Marches, Starport C, Medium, Standard, Wet World, Low Pop, No Law, Pre-Stellar

Loner, 3 terms, UPP A89694

Skills: Bribery-1, Carousing-2, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Forgery-1, Gambling-1, Gun-Combat-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Infighting-1, Jack of Trades-2, Vacc Suit-1

Effects: 500Cr, TL12 Utility Vest crammed full of items useful to an adventurer or for use of JOT skill, Carpet bag containing Vacc Suit and weapons

Personal: Thin, average height, scruffy appearance but always has a slight grin on his face.

Status: Single (well this week at least).

An Involvement With Arralan

The planet on which the adventure takes place has a network of satellite and cable television. Many of the channels of which, are encoded and only available to paying subscribers.

On his travels Arralan has picked up a clever little programme on an Eprom chip that when plugged into a simple bread board decoder card will take the incoming signal, crack the code and send the now watchable picture on to the screen. This means that the owner can watch the subscriber only channels without paying for them. Apart from being illegal the system only has one draw back, most channels are part of an interactive system and the network's computer will register systems that are using subscription channels but are not subscribers, (a nasty surprise for anyone trying to cheat the system).

Arralan is either unaware or keeping quiet about the draw backs to his Eprom chip which he is using to raise funds.

On his arrival, Arralan first approached a chip manufacturer to arrange for the production of 2,000 copies of his original Eprom and then a small electronics company to produce the Decoder unit. He is now selling his product to the locals for 120Cr each or 80Cr for those who wish to act as Distributor's.

On the face of it, the deal seems an excellent way of raising some cash, unfortunately Arralan is involved and there are a few minor complications. To pay for the duplication of the chips, (a cash in advance deal to get fast, discreet service), Arralan raised money from a local underworld loan shark, which is now due for repayment.

Instead of paying the electronics company for the decoder units Arralan has made them a deal, he has given them 500 chips and the promise that they can continue to manufacture and sell once he has sold his 1500 units and moved on. This suited the electronic companies manager, who was happy with such a shady deal seeing a chance to make a good profit. However his research staff have been examining their new acquisition and discovered its draw back which destroy its long term commercial viability, (the draw backs will soon be advertised on the local media), thus he is feeling cheated and very angry.

Arralan has also been selling his decoder for several days and examples have fallen into the hands of the planetary police. Given the amount of power in the form of publicity a television network can wield, the police are very active in their investigation in to the racket. Alerted by the police the network is also beginning to notice a rise in the number of illegal users, (however the real scale of the fraud will not show up for a month or two).

When the players become involved with Arralan he has already sold approximately 400 units to individuals and Distributor's for roughly 36,000Cr, most of which has been traded for industrial gem stones.

The rest of his stock is kept in the back of an extremely unreliable old van, (which is untaxed, has no insurance, bald tires and a broken light. There is also half a dozen distress rockets wired under the seats by Arralan in case of car thieves).

He will start by trying to sell them a couple of units, if they show interest he will offer them the chance to distribute, cash in advance. (If they foolishly buy large numbers they may get stung when the Media announces their draw back and lands them with a large supply of unsalable & illegal stock to dispose of). On the other hand as he leads them back to his van to get their Decoder units, he may run into thugs, sent out by the money lender, giving the P.C a few rounds of combat until Arralan gets his shotgun from the van and joins in with his own particular style of combat. After which Arralan may offer them partnership in the deal, which could net them 55,000Cr and more problems than they could possibly imagine.

Apart from the extra entanglements already mentioned, Arralan is currently involved in a tear away young chick, whose straight laced old father is horrified at the prospects of a "dog" for a son in law. Also to get his carpet bag through customs unopened Arralan used an Imperial edict, unfortunately the officer contacted a journalist friend who is now desperately trying to keep up with Arralan with a full media team, sure that she will get a major story.

If the players agree to become partners with Arralan things will start out simple with them taking a couple of hundred units to sell. After they have sold a few they will be in the van when a police patrol try to pull them over (for having bald tires etc, after which they will start to investigate the contents of the vehicle), if the players try to shake the patrol car they may succeed, but the brakes on the van will go during the chase. Once identified by the police the van will have to be disposed of and a replacement found. Unfortunately the van is registered to Arralan and it will be necessary to remove the paper work from the rental office.

Arralan will make amends for the previous inconvenience by treating them to a slap up meal at a local high class restaurant. During the evening he will introduce them to his girl friend. They may also notice the obvious disapproval from the surrounding tables. All however is quiet until desert, when the father arrives with his brother's in law. After a little bit of shouting, Arralan will start a brawl (by throwing a baked Alaska into the lap of a large female dinner) and use the confusion to leg it out of the building via the kitchen. If the players survive the fight they will be meet in a back street by Arralan who appears to have found a bottle of very expensive brandy in his trip through the kitchen.

By now the players should start to get the feeling that they are being watched. With thoughts of the Police and the Money lender in their minds they may decide to investigate.

They will of course discover the media team.

Shortly afterwards the story of the decoder units and there short comings will be run on all the major network channels, with good descriptions of all those involved, (possibly even pictures). It is now time to leave town. Arralan will no be a real mixed blessing, as a vargr he does tend to be a little obvious and will insist on several side trips to say goodbye to his girl and pick up stashes of equipment and money. However he has many contacts and much experience in this sort of "time to leave" situation.

COMMDOTS 10 - - Cr 100 - 1 meter range, contacts Communicator or Hand Computer; **COMMUNICATOR** 14 0.45 0.2 Cr 500 - 7 days duration, Range Regional (500 km); **COMBAT BLADE** 3 0.2 0.3 Cr 50; **COMPASS** 3 - - Cr 10; **COUNTER, RADIATION** 10 - - Cr 100 Card/Badge; **GAUSS PISTOL** 4mm 13 0.6 0.6 Cr 600; **CLIPS** x 4 13 0.8 0.8 Cr 80 - 3 clips standard, 1 clip Tranq; **FILTER RESPIRATOR** 5 1.0 0.5 Cr 150 - COMBINATION Very thin, tainted atmospheres; **FIRST AID KIT** 7 2.0 1.0 Cr 100 - Field dressings and minor wounds; **FLARE, PARACHUTE** 6 0.2 0.25 Cr 25, x3 0.6 0.75 Cr 75 - Disposable handle, fires flare up to 50 meters; **GILL, POWERED** 13 1.5 0.5 Cr 7,500 1 hour duration; **GRENADES, HEAP** 13 0.25 0.25 Cr -- x3 0.75 0.75 Cr --; **HIP FLASK** 4 0.25 0.1 Cr 50 - Filled with 100 Proof Old Demerara; **IGNITER** 6 - - Cr 10; **JACK OF TRADES KIT** 15 1.1 1.1 Cr --; **LANTERN, COLD LIGHT** 6 0.5 0.25 Cr 20 - Flashlight provides three days light; **LOCKPICK SET** 14 0.5 0.25 Cr 100; **SALT TABLETS** 4 - - Cr 10; **WATER PURIFICATION** 10 - - Cr 5 - 250 tablets, 1 tablet for 1 litre of water; **WELDER, HAND** 14 1.0 1.0 Cr 125, 11.75 8.6; **SUPER GLUE** x 2 Tubes; **FUSE WIRE & FUSES; SUPER LUBRICANT (CARBON 20)** x 3; **MAGNESIUM TAPE** x 3 Meters; **MAGNET; STRING** 5 Meters;

Equipment

TAILORED VACC SUIT 15 0.2 - Cr 9,000; **Soft Helmet** Self-sealing, Armor 7, Duration PLSS x 0.5; **AIR CHARGE** 14 0.75 - Cr 250 - Ultra High-Pressure, 20 min, carried in thigh pocket; **COMPUTER HAND** 16 0.1 0.1 Cr 1,000 - 12 Weeks Duration, 5,000 Mwords memory; **Translator memclips** for Galanglic & Gvegh; **GRAV BELT** 15 15.0 10.0 Cr 106,000 - 8 hours duration, 300kph top speed, 40kph N.O.E; **UTILITY VEST** 12 4.0 - Cr 600 - Ievanex Cloth, 12 litres of storage, 20.05 10.1; **PORTABLE LIFE SUPPORT** 14 7.0 3.5 Cr 8,000 - SYSTEM (PLSS C) 48Hrs / 24Hrs with Tailored suit, 1g accel for 60 Sec;

CARRIED IN VEST

BINOCULARS 12 0.5 0.5 Cr 10,000; **IMAGE CONVERTOR** IR, UV & Visible Light, x20, Rangefinder 10km;

TRADE ENHANCEMENTS

There have been many articles on trade and transport, many including very useful enhancements to the basic rules in the Referees' Handbook. The GDW publication 'Knightfall' has a very handy section which modifies the trade code effects on speculative cargo procedures. This article attempts to make further enhancements on the availability and pricing of passengers and freight.

The basic passenger and freight costs are rather inflexible, for instance the three types of passenger classes are set Cr 1000, Cr 8000 and Cr 10,000 for low, medium and high respectively. Both the high and middle passengers get the benefit of a single stateroom. The difference in price is supposedly the quality of the service provided to the passenger and the baggage allowance each is given, up to one tonne for the high passenger. I suspect that for real games these factors are probably ignored.

These restrictions on price (and the availability) for passengers and freight can have serious operational implications for merchants. Many ships are uneconomical to run even if all the available cargo space is filled with freight and the staterooms are filled with high passengers. These vessels need to be supplemented with speculative cargo to operate the ship at a small profit at best. This of course assumes that the those operating the ship are making repayments.

One useful modification to the passenger rules is the use of double occupancy for middle passengers. Double occupancy is a perfectly valid cost saving method for crew under the present system, and should be a valid option for use with middle passengers. After all, many contemporary ferries and cruise ships operate this procedure. Those that wish the extra luxury of space and privacy can fall back on the costlier high passage ticket. This need not be a single room occupied by two people but could be a half stateroom per person (not a small stateroom).

This double occupancy changes the revenue generated by the staterooms: for each middle passenger in a double occupancy stateroom or a half-stateroom the revenue obtained is Cr 6000. This means that for the same volume of occupied space middle passengers would generate more money than a high passenger. This fact is found throughout the hotel business, a single room supplement that most hotels charge does not usually make up for the potential revenue generated if two individuals shared the room. As high passengers are generally less hard to obtain it makes economic sense to maximise your revenue by filling up with middle passengers. The life-support costs per middle passenger should amount to Cr. 1,500.

So where's the benefit in taking high passengers you may well ask? Well for a start you may not be able to get enough middle passengers to fill up your vacant staterooms.

Each ship captain will need to keep a careful balance between all the available passenger classes to maximise his or her ships profit potential. Another major consideration is that by taking on extra middle passengers the ships [steward] crew requirement rises, thus increasing ship running costs through an increase in salaries and loss of available staterooms for passengers. This emphasizes the need for the correct mix of passenger classes.

The second modification to trade procedures involves the availability and price of passengers and freight. The prices stated in the 'Referees's Manual' and the 'Imperial Encyclopaedia' do not offer any variation. The availability

of passengers and freight are low considering that large operators supposedly shift over 90% of these valuable 'commodities'. Thus to some degree the range of availability stated in the 'Referees' Handbook' must represent only a small fraction of people and goods moving from world to world and are the overspill. Presumably the bigger operators have contracts, can offer special rates and have the funds to advertise widely.

There is scope for increasing availability by decreasing price and vice versa. i.e.

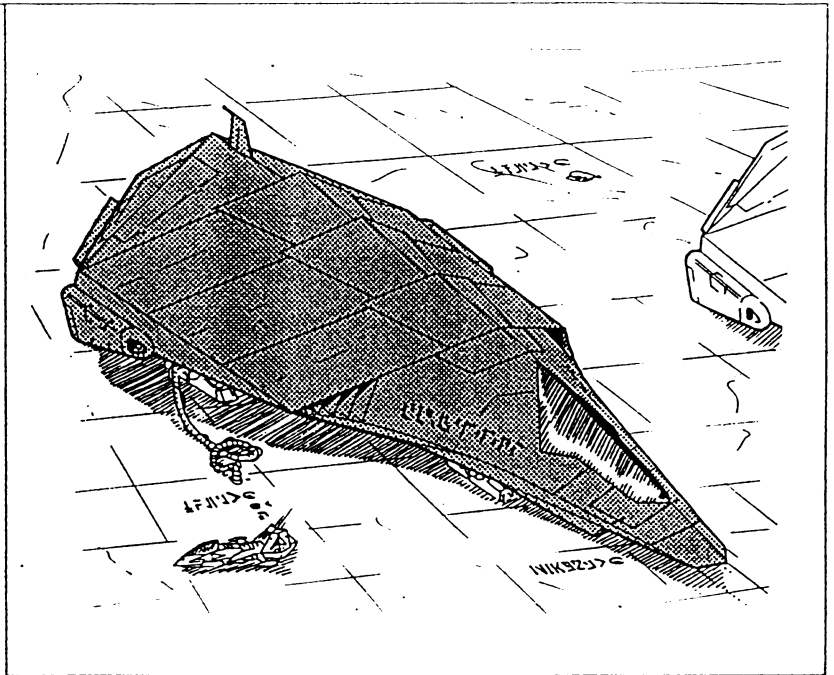
For each +/- 5% change in price offered to take passengers or freight, decrease/increase availability by -/+ 1. Thus by offering a 15% discount on passenger prices a DM of +3 is added to the availability of low, middle and high passengers. A 10% discount on freight would give a +2 for the roll for the number of incidental, minor and major lots. The converse is always possible, there is always someone willing to pay over the odds to secure a passage or get some freight moved, but there might be very few of them.

There is also scope for increasing availability of passengers and freight/cargo through advertising. i.e.

For each Cr. 10,000 spent on advertising additional passengers/freight there is an additional 1D6-2 for each type. A final minus result is applicable as it stands for negative effects of advertising are real. The Cr. 10,000 pays for a weeks advertising only. Further advertisements for the same ship and destination have a diminishing effect: 1D6-3 per Cr. 10,000 per week thereafter. Advertisements included publication in local newspapers/journals (paper or electronic), hordings, local TV and radio stations etc.

The problem with advertising this way as opposed to the normal method through the starport authority Commercial Agency is that it ties the starship to a particular destination and a time of departure (departure time is set at a minimum of one week from the date the ads were placed, each further week of advertising pushes back the departure time in order to gain the benefits in the increase in passenger/freight availability).

Players can of course combine the suggested methods above to secure the maximum financial benefits from their commercial activities.



First thoughts on TTNE:

"I thought I'd picked up 'Dark Conspiracy' in a new cover!"

- Ewan Spence.

Ewan's first comment reflects a few peoples' initial impression of TTNE in that it resembles its other GDW stablemates in style and layout. The same people who have expressed an opinion to me on the latest Traveller rules suggest that the product was possibly rushed to meet a slipping release date.

The main complaint has been that the whole package is 'dry' and rather disjointed. There seem to be a scarcity of good supporting artwork, although to be fair the earlier rules editions were hardly overflowing with illustrations. The text itself appears to be crammed onto the pages with a 'unsympathetic' looking typeface which makes reading the material harder work than it could be. Don't get me wrong, there is plenty of information in the 300 or so pages all very interesting to us die-hard Traveller fans but it can be difficult to read and assimilate.

Leighton

One of the aims of TTNE was to attract new players into the game and from that angle it is good.

SILENT RUNNING

A MegaTraveller Adventure

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed for a small group of traveller's with their own ship. The ship should have a small amount of cargo space and be Jump 3 capable.

Dates: All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date for this adventure is 218-1116, news of Strehphon's assassination will not reach Regina and The Spinward Marches for another 110 days.

Place: This adventure is set in the Spinward Marches. The story starts on the planet Yorbund in the Regina Subsector and will move on to the Spinward Marches.

Additional information can be found in the GDW supplements, "The Traveller Adventure", "The Spinward Marches Campaign", "Double Adventure 1" and "Vilani & Vargr".

It is based on an idea from the article "Lost Treasure Ships of the Abyss Rift" in Challenge, Issue 44.

NON PLAYER CHARACTERS

Urz Roukht

8A7AC7 age 34 4 terms Corsair

Handgun 3, Infighting 2, Large Blade 1, Leader 1, Navigation 2, Pilot 3, Ships Boat 1, Ship Tactics 1, Streetwise 1.

Gauss Pistol + 4 Clips, 61,000 Credits

Urz Roukht is Captain of the Vargr Corsair Rroers Nakhae and a member of the Kforuzeng, the strongest Corsair organisation to venture into the Marches. While able, He never really stood out and in recent months his grip on command has been slipping. This has been noted by his Junior officers who are waiting their chance. However an old dog know's some tricks and Urz Roukht is still certain of the Corsair and has the ability to maintain his place.

REFEREE'S SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

- 1.The adventure starts on the planet Yorbund, where the party are looking for Freight. they eventually agree to carry four tons of pharmaceutical's to Junidy for a fee of 20,000 credits.
- 2.The parties ship arrives in the Heya System to be greeted by Urz Roukht, captain of the Vargr Corsair Rroers Nakhae (Pirate Beast). Who informs them that the object is his !
- 3.This draws their attention to a small object travelling a reasonable speed into the system from deep space. Chance has placed their ship far closer to it than the Vargr Corsair.
- 4.The Characters then have the challenge of recovering or destroying the object, which as they get closer will turn out to be some form of space probe, before the vargr ship arrives in firing range.
- 5.Once the probe is on board it is time to leave the system as the Vargr are now firing. The players ship lacks the fuel to jump to Lablon so they must change their plans and head for either Corfu or return to Heya.
- 6.During the week in jump the characters investigate the probe and its data, to discover the existence of an X-43491 between Heya and lablon. The players must now try to investigate their discovery while trying to avoid Captain Urz Roukht and the Rroers Nakhae.
- 7.On arriving at their destination system the players have a chance to refuel and prepare for their investigation. They have scooped enough fuel but still have to finish its filtering/refueled but still on the planets surface, when the Vargr Corsair Rroers Nakhae arrives in the system and starts looking for the players ship.
- 8.Jumping to the recorded location of the lost X-Boat the party eventually find the drifting X-43491.
- 9.The next stage is to explore the vessel, try to explain what happened to it and then attempt its salvage.
- 10.Arriving back with the X-Boat the party once again meet the Vargr Corsair and for a few moments things look dark, then help arrives and the Vargr turn and run.
- 11.The players are now free to dispose of the X-Boat and deliver or explain the lose of their cargo.

1. OPENING SCENE

So we had decided to head back to the Aramis Subsector then perhaps on to Deneb. Now all we wanted was a cargo, its nice to go somewhere and get paid for it at the same time.

Took a couple of days but we came up with a nice little number, four tons of Herb Salve for Junidy. The Dandelions, sorry the Lllelewyloly use the stuff for a minor skin complaint they occasionally get.

Well the freight got loaded and customs had their snoop around so we're all ready for pastures new.

REF'S.

The players have no problem loading their cargo, after which they are inspected by customs and cleared for take off. On reaching One Hundred diameters they make the jump for Heya and may then spend an uneventful week in Jump space.

Yorbund Regina

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Yorbund is situated in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches. It has a diameter of approximately 7,000 miles, with an insidious corrosive atmosphere and seas of fluid that cover over sixty percent of its surface.

The planet has a population of 227,000 persons, with no established government. A generally accepted law level of three prohibits energy weapons and autorifles. Local technology is of tech level seven, equivalent to the Earth period of 1970 - 1980, with only limited manufacturing possible due to the low population.

Marion Starport, is classed as type C and located near the major population centre of the world.

Much of Yorbund is unexplored, with the population concentrated in a few underground complexes. Yorbund's major resource is fungi grown in caverns; it provides food, fibre for cloths, fuel and is exported as pharmaceuticals.

2. WELCOME TO HEYA

After a week of doing nothing coming out of jump is always a mad rush as in a few seconds a hundred and one things have to be done at once. This time it was complicated by the message which arrived at about the same time as the scanners began to pick up objects.

“Ilksangargh! Agedzllae, aerzraegh. Ekh Urz Roukht dzall Zhouderrogzou! Ekh vae fuenrag. Kfeva na roaella!”

Well it took several seconds to realise the language was Vargr of some sort, then we had to rig up the translator, all the while the blip on the scanner got bigger and bigger and more like trouble. Trouble in the form of a real live Vargr Corsair, accelerating at top whack and heading straight for us. Then after a couple of minutes we finally got the translator up and hit the switch.

“Stranger! Return home, to please a superior. I Urz Roukht Discovered the wanderer ship! I who will take to use. Depart or surrender!”

REF'S. When the parties ship leaves jump space they will be greeted by the Vargr Captain's message, they must realise what language it is and then translate it. At the same time they must identify the ship on the edges of their scanners.

Urz Roukht's corsair should be big enough that the party do not consider a straight fight as an option. "Vilani & Vargr", give details and deck plans of a typical 400ton Corsair.

Heya Regina

0802 B687745-5 Ag Ri

The Imperium has a good base on Heya with a class B Starport that has refined fuel and yards capable of maintenance overhaul.

The Planet itself is 6,000 miles in diameter, has a dense breathable atmosphere and nearly seventy percent of its surface covered by water.

The systems two stars are both relatively weak, but between them Heya has a generally warm climate with long daylight hours and short nights.

Heya has a population of 70,000,000 beings, mostly of Imperial decent, but also a sizeable Vargr minority. The Government is a Representative Democracy which enforces a law level of five, Personal concealable firearms are prohibited.

The local technology is around tech level five or Earth during the first half of the 1900's. Heya's main exports are food and minerals while in return it imports electronic's and other advanced equipment as it develops towards tech level six.

3. WELL WELL WELL, WHAT HAVE WE HEAR

The Vargr Captain's message about wanderer ship got us puzzled, however not for long, we soon spotted the second object on the scanners, it was only a couple of tons at best of a metallic composition. Travelling at 4 Gs from deep space, yet our scanners showed it was decelerating and would soon be down to 3 Gs.

With a slight alteration in our course we could intercept the object nearly ten minutes before the Corsair made firing range.

This raised the question did we dare steal it from under the Vargr's very muzzle? You could tell by the smiles, no bloody overgrown dog was going to tell us what was and what was not our property.

REF'S. The party now have a second object on their scanners to investigate and having realised that chance has placed them between it and the Corsair they must decide if they run or if they will try to recover it. In the unlikely chance that the players try to run away the Corsair will open fire on the players, just to give them a personal grudge against Captain Urz Roukht and his ship.

4. COLLECTION

NO EXTRA CHARGE

Getting that derelict space probe on board was no easy task, space salvage has always been recognised as a high risk job. However when you have a time limit and there's one real mad Vargr spitting curses over the comm, with both paws on the big red button, waiting to hit you with deadline penalties. Then you know the meaning of the word pressure.

REF'S. The details of how the party manage to salvage has been deliberately left vague. Any true party will quickly devise several plans and it seems only fair to use one of them, after all they are the ones taking the risks. The probe is small enough to fit in their ships cargo bay, however they may be forced to dump their cargo.

Alternately they may try to fasten it to the side of the ship which once again may work if their engineer makes sure that it doesn't interfere with the Jump Fields.

If the party do not have the skills for a space salvage operation the alternative is to hack into the probes computers and down load its data banks, then destroy the probe.

5. LETS GET OUT OF HERE

It was now most definitely time to leave, the problem was that we had intended to Jump for Lablon, but with all the unexpected fun we never got a chance to refuel and thus we only have a two Jump range which gave us a series of choices. Return to Yorbund which would require the trouble and expense of a planetary landing to refuel. Kinorb or Dentus which are both in the opposite direction to the way we were going, Corfu a red indicted planet or the Vargr Extents which considering our present situation would be suicide.

In normal situations the choice would have taken several hours, its a wonderful thing to see how a couple of blasts from a ships lasers can produce so much positive thinking.

REF'S. Once again the details have been left vague, in which direction the party run is entirely up to them. With all adventures, the further into a plot the more chance of variation, its the ref's job to keep things going. In this case it makes little difference were they run. However if they return to Yorbund, Kinorb or Dentus they will have to get past the Vargr Corsair.

If possible the Corsair should manage to score at least one hit on the players ship, just to keep the pressure up during the week the ship spends in jump.

6. PROBING THE PROBE

Once we were safe in Jump and after dealing with vital damage control we were all keen to investigation our prize. The probe itself was of no real value, a couple of thousand for scrap or the eternal thanks from any local museum. However there are other things worth more than mere physical value.

REF'S. Once safe in Jump space or if the players fastened the probe to the side of the ship, when safe in the next system they can examine their prize. Needless to say they should work for their information

NovaTrak Probe Beta

The second in a series of seven probes launched by the Lablon based venture company NovaTrak during the years 1105 to 1108. The probe is of tech level ten manufacture with tech thirteen scanners and guidance systems. It was designed to travel at sublight speeds to the Heya system and collect detailed information on its way.

Novatrak was formed after an incident in mid 1105 when a small group of individuals recovered an abandoned space vessel of alien manufacture in the Keng planetary system. (See Double Adventure 1 Annic Nova, for more details). The company launched a series of probes in the planetary systems around Heya, the location of the first contact with the alien vessel in an attempt to find the ships place of origin, all known planets having been discounted.

Novatrak went into voluntary liquidation in early 1109.

NovaTrak Probe Beta

Data Read Out

The following information has been encoded to protect against data thief and the party will first have to crack its protection, Once done they will find that the Beta Probe has failed in its mission to find any sign of the Annic Nova or the culture that built it. what they will find is detailed information on several asteroids the probe encountered with mineral break down, none of which are of any special value. One item is worth noting the probe logs the passing of a one hundred ton ship registration X-43491, the probes records class the vessel as drifting and log its position in section 0201 of the Aramis Subsector star chart.

X-43491

X-43491 is an Express Boat belonging to the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service - Communications Branch. It vanished en route from Ghandi to Dinomn in 1072. The pilot for X-35626, which next followed on the same route, had a strange report. He insisted he was besieged for days by something trying to get in from Jump space.

(See *Lost Treasure Ships of the Abyss Rift*, Challenge Issue 44).

7. HELLO AGAIN

We had so nearly finished refueling when our resident bad penny turned up again. It took some crafty tactic's to keep him out of firing range but some how we managed it and then we were off leaving old Urz Roukht to swear and curse.

Hopefully that would be the last we would see of him, he had a ship to refuel and could only guess at our destination. Not knowing about the X-43491 he'd have to assume we'd be making Jump 3 and leaving his slug behind for good.

REF'S. Once again the party run into their Vargr enemy. the party should have enough distance from the Corsair that they can avoid its guns until they are ready to Jump. Provided they are quick enough with their tactics.

Urz Roukht only had a passing interest in the probe he discovered entering the Heya system and is not to concerned with its lose. he is concerned with his lose of Charisma when he let the party steal it from under his very eyes. To fail a second time will place a grave danger on his ability to remain in command of his ship. This will show should he ever catch up with the players again.

8. INTO THE UNKNOWN

With a full tank we jumped to the location given by the NovaTrak Probe. We had a full week to speculate on what we would find when we arrived. Like most great adventures it is often the doing that is the greatest reward. The week was an expectant high.

On arrival our scanners found nothing but empty space and we did think that we had come to the end of our adventure.

however we soon realised that the X-Boat could have drifted a far distance in the four years since its encounter with the probe.

We had been searching the area for about six hours when it finally appeared on our screens.

REF'S. The players arrive at the location given by the probe to find nothing, a logical search pattern will eventually reveal the ship.

9, WELCOME BACK HALE

The is something scary about the space walk to a vessel that disappeared with out reason forty six years ago. We found the boat to be in perfect working order with no sign of any problem, not even a single vacc suit missing, yet no indication of any pilot or any clues in the log book, that just stops dead in a routine entry. The only thing we did find were a couple of marks on the door to the bridge, side by side and deep into the metal, just like something had been trying to force open the door!

Now comes the hard work of salvage, by transferring fuel we should have enough to let both ships make the Jump to either Heya or Corfu.

REF'S. Once the Express boat has been found the players will have the fun of exploring it and trying to find the reason for its disappearance. Things will point to a miss Jump. However the missing pilot and dead log should create a mystery and feeling of suspense.

Once explored the party should be encouraged to try to salvage the ship. Which after all is worth a fair amount (See Challenge Issue 38 for rules of salvage and remember the craft is forty six years old, at least).

10. NOT YOU AGAIN

Dropping out of Jump the first thing we did was check that the battered old X-Boat was still with us. Then we cursed at the rasping hatred that filled the comm. Every dog has its day but this one just didn't know when to leave alone. The worst thing was after coming so far it looked like the dog was going to win.

Then like angels from Heaven the cavalry arrived, sure was sweet to see the hunter turn and run for his life. Been dodging the thing for so long we kind of forgot their are people out here to uphold the law.

REF'S. When the party arrive back at either Heya or Corfu with their prize they will be meet by the waiting Vargr Corsair, which will try to intercept them. Things will look grim, out gunned and with not enough fuel to run any where and several members helpless on the X-Boat.

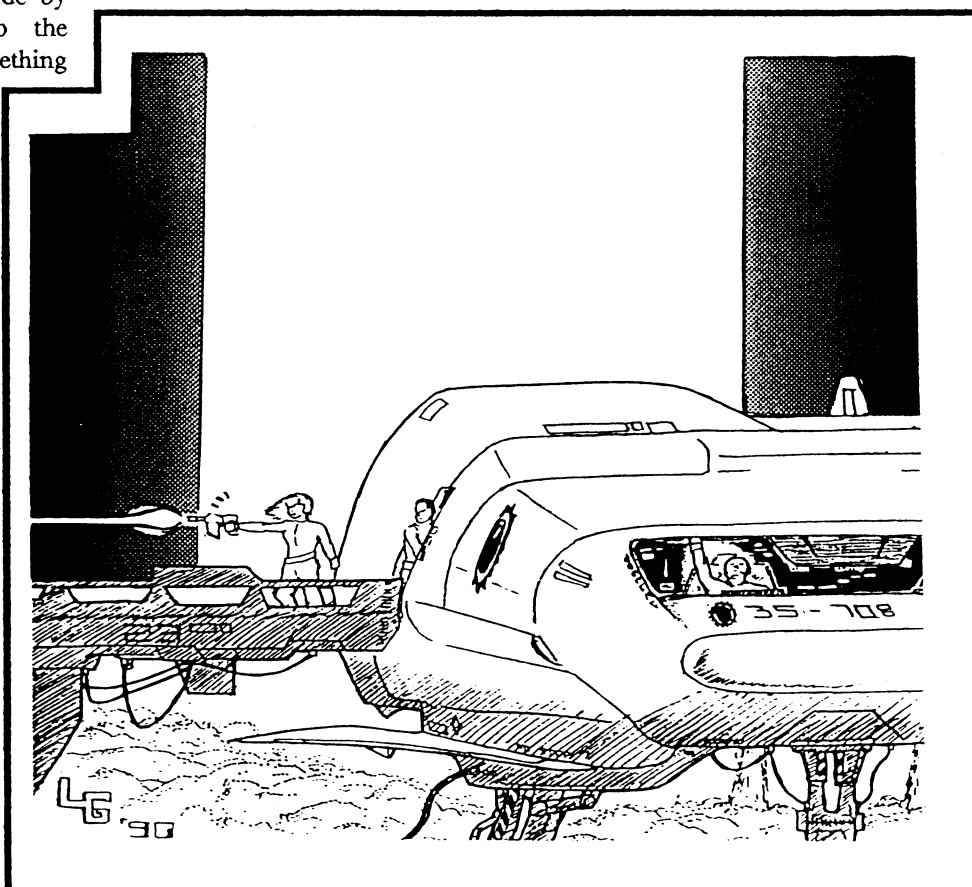
However the Corsair has stayed to long in the system waiting for the party and soon after it moves after the players two system defense boats will emerge from the shadows where they have been waiting on the Corsairs move and attack. Realising that it is now out gunned the Corsair will turn and flee. Just before hitting Jump a good Scanner Operator may notice it eject a form in a vacc suit. Urz Roukht has lost to much Charisma and the crew have chosen a more successful captain.

11. TIDYING UP

After that it was fairly simple to get the X-Boat to a civilised port, getting the salvage money was a bit more difficult, never seen so many people crawl out from under stones to claim their bit.

Now all we have to do is sort out are freight.

REF'S. Back in port all the party have to do is claim the salvage on the X-Boat, deal with the official and media enquiries into their find and sort out their cargo. They should soon be longing for the simple tasks of dodging a Vargr Corsair.



'HONEST ENERIS USED SHIP LOT'

- BUYING STARSHIPS AND SPACESHIPS

The space travel has been the central theme in Traveller since its inception. And the space-capable vessel is the means by which the humble player character can explore his/her universe. Most PCs that have access to their own ship usually acquire through mustering out, buying a new ship from a yard (with the associated wait) or through direct action - requisition/theft or relieving pirates of their means to raid.

For many reasons there are always surplus ships to be had, but not always in the right place! Some are repossessions, some are forfeited through illegal activity, some are stolen never to be reunited with the original owner(s) and some come onto the market through financial difficulties of the owners or they are wishing to trade-in for a 'better model'. Ships of all shapes, sizes, capabilities, age, states of repair may be available.

Ship Availability:

The availability of starships and spaceships is dependent on the tech code of the world upon which the individual makes a search modified by the starport/spaceport classification and an individual's streetwise skill.

To locate a vessel for sale:

[varies], [starport/spaceport DM], streetwise, 12 hrs (unskilled OK).

Reference: The basic task difficulty varies as follows, High stellar - simple Avg stellar - routine Early stellar - difficult Pre-stellar - formidable

Use as stated for spaceships (non-jump), increase one level for starships.

The starport/spaceport DMs are as follows, A = +2, B = +1, C/F no DM, D/G = -1, E/H = -3, X/Y = no ships available (alternatively apply a DM of at least -5). There are DM's based on population to apply, for a population level of 9 or greater apply a DM of +1, if the population is 3 or below there is a DM of -1.

On success there is a single ship available, for exceptional success (+2) there are 1D6 ships available, and for each +2 above this there is an additional 1D6 ships available (i.e for exceptional success +6 there are 3D6 ships available). A roll can be made for each jump and non-jump ship availability. Only one search per month can be made.

Ship Types Available:

For simplicity one can use the encounter tables found in Imperial Encyclopaedia (page 91).

Age and Quality/Condition: - Roll first on the age table, then make the condition roll (modified by the age based DM's).

Age Table (in years) (2D6)	Condition	
2 < 1	MINT	
3 1D6	EXCELLENT	
4 1D6+4	EXCELLENT	
5 1D6*2	GOOD	
6 1D6*4	GOOD	Age based DM's:
7 1D6*7	GOOD	If <10 years -2
8 1D6*9	FAIR	If 10-20 years -1
9 1D6*10	FAIR	If 50+ years +1
10 (1D6*10)+10	POOR	
11 (1D6*10)+20	POOR	
12 2D6*20	SCRAP	

A vessel rated as excellent will have some superficial problem, a vessel classed as being in good condition will have two superficial problems. Fair vessels have a single minor problem poor ships have a major fault, and scrap vessels are equivalent to destroyed.

Ship Sale Price:

Roll on the table below, using the Quality/Condition modifiers as well as broker skill. All prices are based on the cost of a newly laid down ship.

	Price (2D6)	
2 95%		
3 90%		Quality DM's:
4 80%	MINT -2	Broker skill DM's:
5 70%	EXCELLENT -1	+1 per 2 skill levels
6 60%	GOOD 0	(round down)
7 50%	FAIR +1	
8 40%	POOR +2	
9 30%	SCRAP +3	
10 20%		
11 10%		
12 5%		

An alternative to using broker skill is haggling. Each successful interpersonal/conversion task award a DM of +1 until unsuccessful, or a total DM of +3 is reached.

A Theta Borealis Sector Special

The Teluran Empire

The Telurans are descendents of European Solomani colonists who fled Terra following outbreak of hostilities with the Vilani. Fearing that the Terrans were set to lose the war a number of European corporations initiated a program to design and build a fleet of starships to allow the owners and their employees escape to a new world. The organising committee decided to head away far from local space and search for new worlds beyond the Great Rift.

The ships made use of the profusion of existing asteroids in the Sol system, and ice-rock-metal bodies were used. These ships were hollowed out with the ice/water and organics kept for use as fuel. Jump drive (one unit) were fitted along with fusion rockets. Electromagnetic hydrogen scoops as well as fuel shuttles were installed to allow them to collect much needed fuel on their journey. Extensive hydroponic farms were set up to provide much needed fresh food and environmental recycling potential. Many domesticated food animals were also carried.

In all construction of five ships were initiated but the end of the Nth Interstellar war came before completion of them all. As the threat of defeat by the Vilani diminished the need to leave the region was lost. However there were a hard core of dedicated workers who had invested much in the project and were not pleased with the contemporary political system. These people decided to leave and completed construction on three of the ships.

Three hundred and fifty years later the ships entered Theta Borealis sector, and a suitable earth-like world had been selected for colonisation: -

Telura (Theta Borealis 2116 A767A85-C).

Within fifty years numerous, thriving, vibrant townships had been established and a world government was installed to oversee the development of Telura. The settlers soon began to look outwards again in a bid to secure valuable industrial resources that the Telura system could not supply for the projected rapid expansion of the population (doubling roughly every 130 years from a starting base of 40,000 colonists). The explorations led to the major colonisation of Arborea (2216), Aliantha (2318) and Riaz (2417). It was also during these early years that the humans came across the Burugdi of Bur'vr'di,klr. Their primitive technological base (TL 1) and their extremely aggressive attitude persuaded the Teluran explorers to leave the world and its natives well alone.

The Teluran colonies steadily grew and each world developed into full world-states. Each system co-existed with each other quite happily, exchanging goods, ideas between their diverse vibrant cultures. The worlds were formed into a loose confederation, the Teluran Union. But there were fears with the influx of Zhodani, Aslan and other human cultures into the region and the systems became quite insular in nature, many of the colonies became unexpectedly xenophobic. There was open hostility to all off-worlders which led to a number of clashes. The incumbent government on Telura was ousted by a coup led by Alexander Beaufort, a colonel in the Teluran Army, who could trace his origins back to the English and French aristocracy of the twelfth century AD (Solomani dating). He set up the present imperial structure of the government and state with himself at the head as Emperor Alexander I.

Alexander set in motion a series of military campaigns to bring the worlds back into the fold. The Restoration Wars, as they have now become known, lasted between -600 and -120. At the end of this period all the Teluran worlds were back under the control of the Emperor, Louis II. This reunification came at some cost however with the technological level dropping to 10.

A further mission to the Burugdi system (in -400) revealed that they had progressed to TL4 but their apparent attitude had not changed. Thus the restriction on contact with the world was extended.

In -243 (Imperial dating), a conference was held to decide the political future of the colonies of the Teluran Union. Each world was politically semi-independent but owed allegiance to Telura and its Emperor. The political talks decided to extend the powers of the Emperor and form the Union into a coherent political state, with a single common set of aims, ideals, laws and a common defence policy/structure. Thus the Teluran Empire was born. The tech level steadily climbs to 14 by 398.

Internal strife within the Empire rears its ugly head once again when Emperor Alexander IV dies heirless. The ensuing power struggle develops into a fully-fledged civil war, known as the Succession War. It is nearly a hundred years before order is reestablished and once again the tech level falls (to 10) in the aftermath of the war.

The small Teluran colony on Gauma (2014) came in for a shock when a small scouting vessel occupied by the Burugdi appeared in the system in 790. The contact between the races was somewhat strained but without incident.

The Burugdi left but it was felt that they would probably return with conquest on their mind, knowing their aggressive nature.

An influx of zhodani colonists and then traders from the Third Imperium lessened the tension somewhat as it was felt that these new factors might put a restraining influence on any expansion the Burugdi had in mind. Indeed a short conflict with the zhodani at Vietshiel (2309) gave the Burugdi a bloody nose but only forced them to look towards the heart of their own subsector.

The Burugdi quickly extended their colonies in the systems adjacent to their own the and then made a political claim to Guama 978. The Telurans refused to abandon their colony and this provoked an immediate aggressive response with invasion of the world by the Burugdi. With surprise on the side of the Burugdi the world fell quickly. Since this date the world has changed hands a number of times.

In around 1050 the first aslan began entering the subsector from rimward and were welcomed enthusiastically by the Empire. In exchange for aid in fighting for the Empire land was guaranteed. This was the kind of deal the aslani enjoyed taking and immediately rallied to the Empire's cause.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TELURAN EMPIRE

The government of the Teluran Empire is split into two main sections. The imperial government is responsible for foreign policy, defence as well as a central coordinating body for other areas of government. The planetary governments are responsible for law and order, economic policies and any other area not controlled by the central imperial government. The central government is also responsible for setting minimum standards in economics, human rights and so on for each planetary government. These standards are rigorously enforced, including full scale military action by the Imperial Navy.

Imperial Government:

The head of the imperial government is the Emperor. He or she is also the head of the Teluran planetary government. The current Emperor is Phillip VI, 47. The heir to the throne is the oldest surviving child of the current Emperor, male or female or their heir if they die before the current Emperor. The heir to the throne is referred to as the Prince Imperial. The present Princess Imperial is Katherine, (22). All members of the imperial family retain their surname, Constantine, and pass it onto their children.

The emperor is advised by a number of advisers, collectively referred to as the cabinet. These are heads of the various imperial departments, such as war and foreign affairs, the emperor's spouse, his heir and a number of chosen retainers. These retainers include family friends, senators and anyone else the emperor wishes to be present.

The cabinet only deals with major issues and the setting of broad policy. The actual carrying out of these policies is done by the individual department. The departments are:

War, Foreign Affairs, Colonial, Finance, Planetary Affairs, Justice & Teluran Affairs.

The Colonial department is responsible for colonisation of new worlds and the governing of those worlds governed directly by the Imperial government.

The Finance department is only responsible for the area of the economy on an Empire wide scale, and the collection of imperial taxation (which is normally taken directly from the governments).

The Planetary Affairs department sets the basic standards which the various planetary governments must achieve, or face imperial intervention. These standards are rather indistinct and this is intentional as it gives the imperial government an effective "carte blanche" to intervene as it deems necessary.

The Justice department is responsible for inter-system extradition, and the prosecution of serious or "imperial" crimes (much like the American FBI).

The Teluran Affairs department is responsible for the government of Telura itself. As this is a minor department, it is not normally represented in the cabinet.

Each planet has a number of representatives in the imperial government. Each planet's government (or each separate government on balkanized worlds) chooses one representative for every 100 million people. If the planet or nation has a population less than this, they still have a senator. The choosing of the senator depends on the world. In some systems, they are directly elected. In others, they are chosen by the government without consultation with the populace, and in others, the populace choose one of several candidates selected by the government. The senators sit in the Imperial senate. It is their function to act as a watcher of the imperial departments and to ensure they are acting in the best interests of the Empire. They are also expected to act as an intermediary between the Imperial and the planetary governments. They are expected to give their world's views on imperial policy and on any actions taken by the imperial government and to advise the cabinet on any area of policy that affects their world. Some senators also serve in the cabinet.

Planetary Government:

Planetary governments are, outside of those areas considered above, free to conduct themselves as they wish, as long as they comply with the Department of Planetary Affairs guidelines, which are referred to as "the acts of responsible governments". Thus, the planetary governments are responsible for law and order, economics, population welfare, environmental control, intra-system transportation (inter-system transport (ie jump) is the responsibility of the Imperial government) and so on.

As long as these services and policies are within the limits of the imperial guidelines, the government is left alone. This means that there are a large variety of governmental systems within the Teluran Empire (like the Third Imperium).

This sort of two tiered system was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it was recognised that the form of government on a world must suit that world. If the Empire was to impose a sort of government on a world, it may revolt and seek to oppose the Empire. Under the current system, with the Empire's "acts of responsible governments" guidelines, each world knows its limits, and the population know that the Empire will respond to their situation if their planetary government does not follow the guidelines. Thus the Empire is held high by both governments (it gives them considerable independence) and by the population (it gives them the security that they will never be oppressed by their planetary government).

The Acts of a Responsible Government:

These guidelines, to which every world must accept if it is to become a full member of the Empire, place limits on how their governments may be conducted. Any world that refuses to follow these guidelines is normally taken over by the Colonial Department, with the assistance of the Imperial Navy and Legions. A number of the guidelines are given below. The actual guidelines themselves are very loose, with a binding statement covering the apparent loopholes "except when in the Empire's interests".

Slavery of any sophont is illegal, with the exception of those with which the Empire is at war.

Freedom of movement. Any citizen is free to move as they wish, as long as it does not impose where it would be prejudicial to the government. For example, a person may leave a system if they can afford it, but they can not go into military bases.

A government must do its utmost to prevent epidemics, disasters, famines and other catastrophes, except where they are extremely unlikely, and the prevention would not impose on the majority of the population, within the limits of local capabilities.

Freedom of information except when that information is of a private matter and does not effect their working lives, or has been classified by the government (within reason), or would effect the Empire's interests.

The economy must be run in a manner that will not adversely effect the majority to the benefit of a minority, although a corporation or government acting within these guidelines may retain profits made. Thus, technically, Marxist-Leninist command economies are "legal" if they are run correctly. However, such systems have been stated to "be against the Empire's interests". This phraseology has been used on a number of occasions where the governmental system was acting in a potentially anti-imperial manner.

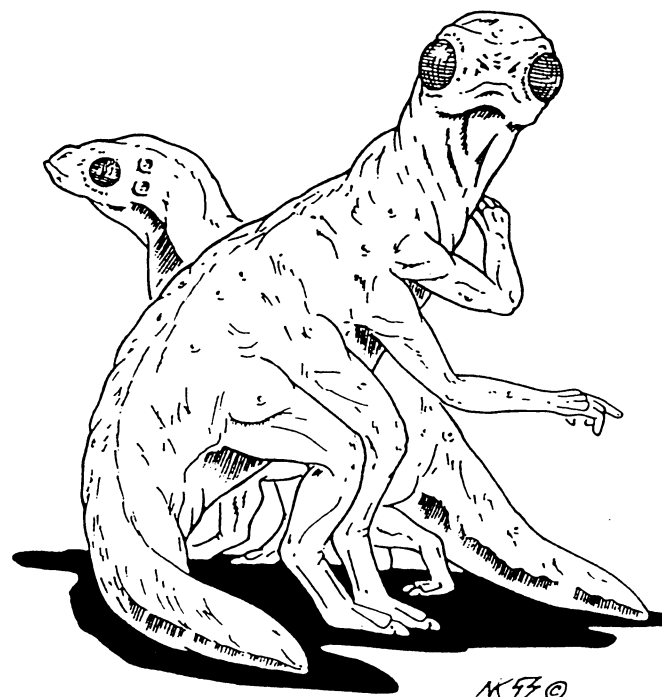
TELURA SUBSECTOR (G OF THETA BOREALIS)

The subsector was first explored by the Zhodani some 3500 years ago but never colonised. The first human colonists were solomani who travelled from Terra at the time of the vilani-solomani wars fearing that their homeworld was about to fall. The colonists picked an Earth-like world in the system at 2116 and named it Telura. The growth of the original colony led to expansion to nearby unoccupied worlds. Those worlds with an allegiance to the first colonists have formed a small but tight, independent interstellar state, the Teluran Union.

Further colonisation came from small numbers of those migrating from Imperial space and a minor human races in Theta Borealis and Far Frontiers sector, as well as a significant aslan minority.

The subsector is home to Burugdi, eight-limbed sophonts who originate on the world of Bur'vr'di'klr (2212). Expansionistic and single-minded in their pursuit of more worlds to cope with their rapidly growing population, they have plunged the subsector into a long, drawn out war with the Teluran Union.

Tarturus is the Teluran Empire's penal colony. All convicted criminals serving time are incarcerated on the world where many are employed in mines that produce heavy earth elements for the Telurian Navy vessel contracts.



TELURA**SUBSECTOR (G) OF THETA BOREALIS**

- Mordred 1714 C5657CH-6 Ag R 221 Bc F3V M4V M9D
- Tisiphone 1715 C200200-9 Ni Lo Va 103 Na K8V
- Domos 1718 C68659C-9 Ag Ni 502 Na G0V
- Temreq 1820 D455797-4 Ag 605 Na G7V
- Gula'br 2012 C755866-A Ag R 111 Bc K0V M3D
- Guama 2014 B462552-8 A 102 Te G9IV
- Alesia 2020 D66448D-5 Ni 412 Na F4V M2D
- Bur'vr'di'klr 2112 A675999-D Hi In R 813 Bc F8V
- Telura 2116 A767A85-C Hi Ct 323 Te G1V
- Pollux 2119 D320325-8 De Lo Ni Po 220 Na F4III
- Megarea 2120 C210456-C Ni 600 Na A0III
- Sengu'vr 2211 B577986-C Hi In R 221 Bc G3V
- Arborea 2216 B55455A-9 Ag Ni 301 Te F9V M6D
- Tarturus 2217 E7A1568-5 Fi Ni Pr R 200 Te M9V M1D
- Castor 2220 C320554-7 De Ni Po 103 Na A1III
- Aliantha 2318 B585941-A Hi 314 Te F9V
- Thyrm 2320 D313436-6 Ic Ni 410 Na K6V
- Kali 2414 E7B0100-6 De Lo Ni R 500 Bc M7V
- Riaz 2417 A676969-C F Hi In A1 604 Te F0V
- Gortela 2420 B000842-A As Na 103 Na K4V

Telura subsector contains 20 systems. The total population for Telura subsector is 56.3 billion. The highest population is A, at Telura (32 billion); the highest tech level is D, at Bur'vr'di'klr.

Codes:

- An = proportion of population that are aslan where $n = \% * 10$,
- Bc = member of Burugdi Collective,
- Ct = capital of Teluran Union,
- F = independent naval base,
- Na = non-aligned world,
- Pr = prison planet,
- Te = member of Teluran Union.

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I'd like to take this opportunity to publically thank GDW for listening to its audience and restoring Medurma to its rightful place (Pact Subsector) in TTNE. That single act has saved all the previous S-GK material from becoming an alternative history to those new players who will join as a result of TTNE - Thank you!

End Note:

There is no room for Transponder Alert in this issue, but it will be back in issue 8. I must apologise for the late arrival of this issue but I wanted so much for it to be **extra-special** given its my last as editor and for that reason kept it back until I felt really good about it. I've also enclosed ship's stat's for the Az Alrrak Intruder from last issue as per requests. I decided to try scanning artwork into this issue to see if it would help improve the overall contents but so as to give a comparison I have enclosed **FOUR** pages of artwork by two "classic" S-GK artists - Nik Piper and Duncan Law-Green and a newcomer Tim Osborne so that you can make a proper comparison. We also tried to give you as wide a diversity of articles as possible. I hope you like it. Regardless, keep those Feedback forms coming and write. We welcome artwork and articles on any aspect of the Traveller universe though, please, please make it your own work and not just a rewrite of an earlier article in Challenge etc. We also welcome reviews on all Traveller material - both old and new. If you feel you could give an **unbiased** review of Traveller - The New Era, Survival Margin or a Traveller Fanzine please get in touch.

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