



STARBURST

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Issue: 16
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STARBURST is published irregularly by David Schneider under the umbrella of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG). STARBURST is distributed in New Zealand by Paul G. Ridgway, P.O. Box 262, Paraparaumu 6152. New Zealand.

Articles, comments and illustrations are gratefully accepted and should be sent to David Schneider, 5 East Avenue, Allenby Gardens, South Australia 5009. Donations of stamps and funds are welcome but are not tax deductible.

KNOW YOUR HIWGER



O'Grady, Paul 7979A7 Age:20 Cr: When's my next pay?
Solomani Confederation Army Rank: Lieutenant
Enlisted Infantry Branch then transferred to Artillery
after one term.

Enlisted in infantry at minimum age after several years in Solomani Youth Corps. Studying Genetic Engineering and Biochemistry at University of Terran Superiority.

Selected for officer training early into Army career and completed over 2½ years. Recently transferred to Artillery Branch.

Dedicated to Solomani Party and the Solomani Cause. Is looking forward to removing all Imperial presence from within 200 parsecs of Terra.

Has been reprimanded in recent times by superiors for consorting with enlisted personnel.

SKILLS: Combat Rifleman-3, Heavy Weapons-1, Tactics-2, Leadership-1, SMG/Handgun-0, Home brewing-1, Hunting-1, Wheeled Vehicle-0, Instruction-2, Unarmed Combat-1, Large blade-1, Survival-1, Genetics-2, Biology-2, Chemistry-1

POSSESSIONS: Assault Rifle (TL 6), 9mm Pistol (TL 6), Gaming stuff, Uniforms and equipment, IR goggles, Girlfriend

RELIGION IN THE IMPERIUM

By Steven Fernandez
Series Introduction

I start here a mini-series of articles dealing with a realistic picture of how religion is likely to persist in the 57th century AD.

I have decided on the mini-series format because that will break up each part into articles that will neatly fit into STARBURST.

In general, my focus will be on the overall forms that far future religions are likely to take, rather than worrying about specific descriptions of any specific set of religions (specific details are best left for referees, anyhow: so they can tailor the broad ideas to suit their own campaigns or preferences.) The only exception to this rule will be in a commentary of Michael Brown's "The Stellar Diocese" article in Dragon 101. I intend to dedicate an entire article on evaluating the likelihood of M. Brown's set of specific religions.

Now with the intro' aside, let me start the show proper...

Part I: Why Religion won't go away

There would be little point in me writing a mini-series about religion, if I seriously didn't believe that the human race, as a whole, will continue to hang on to some form of religion- or another - even in thirty seven hundred years time.

In making such a bold claim, let me be clear about what standpoint I am speaking from. I am not saying (repeat: NOT saying) that as humans progress to higher and higher planes of enlightenment, the truth about one religion or another will rise to rational focus. Far from it. I am, rather, speaking from the point of view of a realist that has observed a brute fact about most humans: Namely, that there exists an emotional (or at least a emotional) desire to appeal to some form of mysticism, or another. This desire exists for the overwhelming bulk of humanity today; and has always existed for all of recorded human history. If anyone doubts any of these assertions, they are welcome to refer to historical texts and/or world surveys of religion.

To further my argument, let me relay to you the following quote:
 "...God has conspicuously failed to die, and the survival of religion under oppressive and hostile regimes... has been one of the marvels of the age. Though organised churches in the West are in decay, there is probably more preoccupation with matters spiritual than at any other time in the last two centuries."
 (p231, An Illustrated Short History of the World; H.G. Wells & Philip Ziegler; Guild Publishing, London; 1987)

While I am by no means quoting any great authority on the subject, Mr Ziegler (whom wrote the above passage) is making a number of suggestions that should make the naive Traveller gamer stop and think before he or she automatically supposes that: "Aw, by Travellers time religion will only exist in backward planets. The first suggestion is that religion is made of hardy stuff. A suggestion that lends some credence to my earlier claim that religion will still persist as a common phenomenon, even in the 57th century. (Hopefully I've now said enough on this matter, for me not to belabour the point).

The second suggestion, however, gives us some insight on how to speculate about the nature of future religions. Specifically, I am referring to the claimed 'decay' of Western 'organised' churches. Now this claim should not be dismissed, as even the churches, themselves, admit that they are experiencing a net loss of members. More importantly for game purposes, however, is what this 'decay' may imply for the far future.

Now to understand those implications properly, we must be clear about why the Western churches are in decline in the late 20th century. Typically ex-church-goers abandon their public worship because they no longer regard the traditional beliefs and or practices as being 'relevant' to their modern lives. In this case, 'not being relevant' translates to mean either that church is no longer fashionable, or that other social groups are felt to be more important in dealing with contemporary issues. (These social groups may vary in significance from a Friday night cardplaying group, to political or quasi-political associations such as Greenpeace or feminist movements). These feelings are, of course, only amplified if the church that these people had once went to had conducted its activities in a manner that was highly dogmatic, ritualistic, formalise, or bound by centuries-old tradition.

One important thing should be now apparrent about the decline of Western Churches: the decline has had little to do (directly at least) with the advances of modern science. This is not to say that Science hasn't been viewed as a rival to religion (especially in the opinions of extreme atheists, and equally extreme theists). But, be that as it may, it is wrong to think that science has in any direct sense "mass produced" atheists in the twentieth century. The same is also true for Anglo-American philosophy - despite its overall secular temperament. (I am here referring to serious, academic, philosophy - not the loose and 'pop' versions of philosophy). Now the important consequence that should be inferred from these facts, is that the Western churches have not (repeat not) declined because the general populace has become thoroughly ratiocentric. Nor, for that matter, has the decline happened because the populace has switched their worship from crucifixes to retort stands.

But if you accept this analysis of contemporary spirituality, then you must concede that it is wrong to think that mainstream Imperials (as opposed to any Imperials whom may be members of fringe or cult faiths) will necessarily be too 'scientific', or too 'sophisticated', to believe in anything that even resembles religion. On the other hand, it will be equally wrong to presume that the western churches will maintain their current-day prevalence.

However, I want to delay, for now, any full discussion of what the decline of Western churches will mean to the nature of far future faith. In the next part of this mini-series, I will deal with the likely consequences of this decline. (As well as to argue that this decline will also occur to some of the Eastern religions as well).

But for now, let me emphasise the bottom line here: Namely, that it is unrealistic to presume that all mainstream Imperials would be too "scientific" to believe in any kind of religion. However, it is realistic to presume that 'churchy' religions will no longer be significant in the mainstream scene.

Next Episode: 'The Decline of Dogmatic Religions'.

JONES

Corran Webster has sent me some jokes, many thanks Corran.

Q. How does Dulinor change a light bulb?

A. He doesn't. He wants to be the light bulb.

Q. How does Margaret change a light bulb?

A. She declares the room a free-trade zone, sets up a favourable tariff system for trade with the light socket, and waits for free enterprise to solve the problem...

Q. How does the Real Strephon change a light bulb?

A. He doesn't need to. The one which is broken isn't the real light bulb; the real light bulb is in this room here and it's working fine...

Q. How does the Shadow Emperor change a light bulb?

A. He doesn't. He doesn't want anything to change. If no light bulbs were good enough 10,000 years ago then they're good enough now.

Q. How does Archduke Norris change a light bulb?

A. He keeps the light bulb safe and waits for the power to come back on.

Q. How many Solomani does it take to change a light bulb?

A. I'm sorry, but that information has been classified. Now if you wouldn't mind accompanying me to the local SolSec headquarters...

Q. How many Carillon does it take to change a light bulb?

A. About 1/36th. (See Carillon Working Doc)

Q. How does a HIG member change a light bulb?

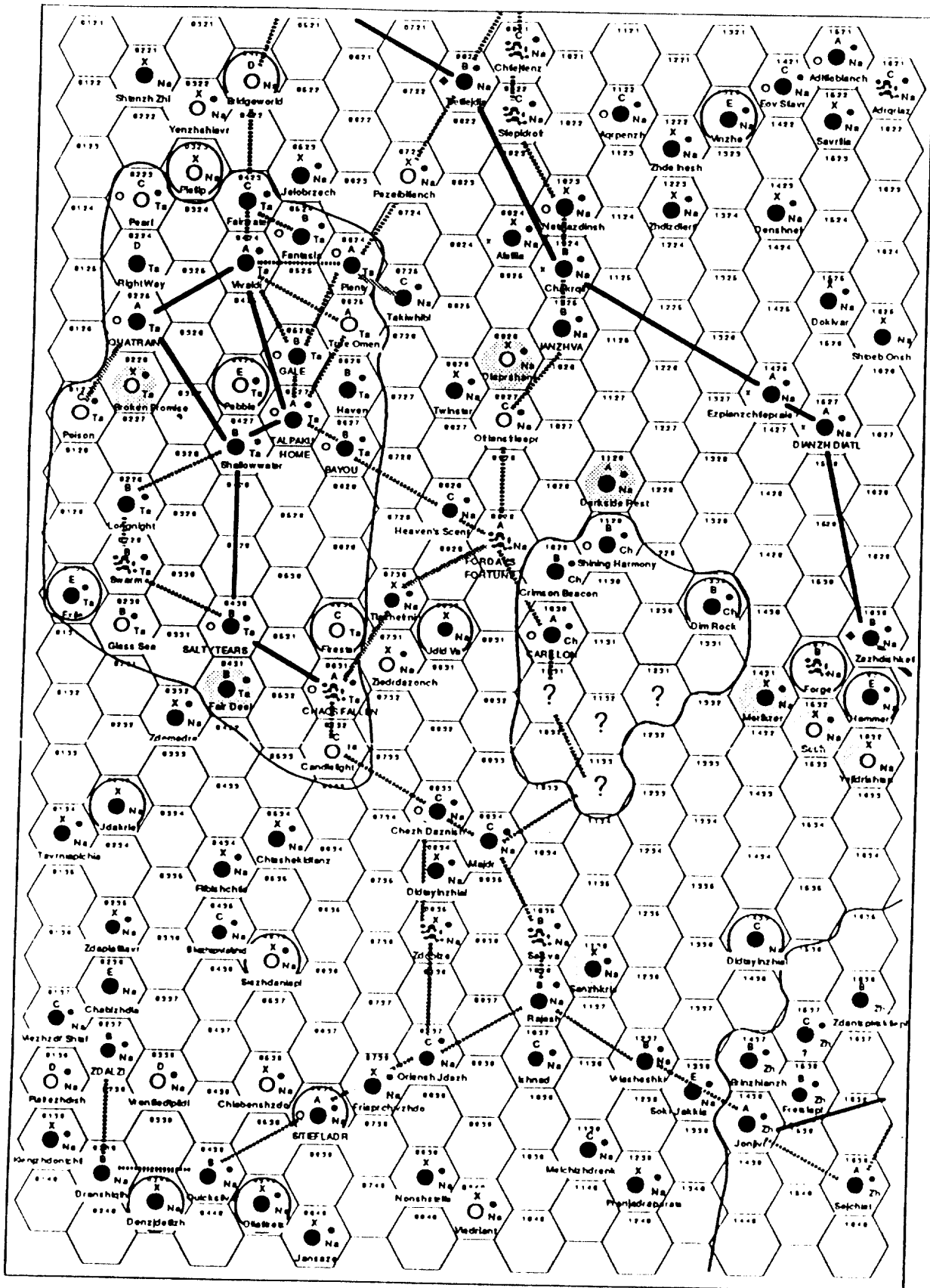
A. Where were the original rules on light bulbs?...JPAS 2 $\frac{1}{2}$...They're official? ...look, can we work around them somehow?...there's an old PASA module here which gives different rules...perhaps we should check with David about the role light bulbs play in Tiklerzianzh...

RELEASES

As everyone should be aware from AAD Proceedings HIGG is undergoing several changes and reorganisations. This state of affairs is partly a result of the impending 'Traveller The New Era' rules revision and the fact that people have lives apart from HIGG. While HIGG UK is in turmoil over its future HIGG Australia remains stable and remains loyal to Emperor Ed the Last. Eds last instruction as head of HIGG was to appoint Geo Gelinas as his replacement. So HIGG Australia now cheerfully awaits instructions from its new Emperor.

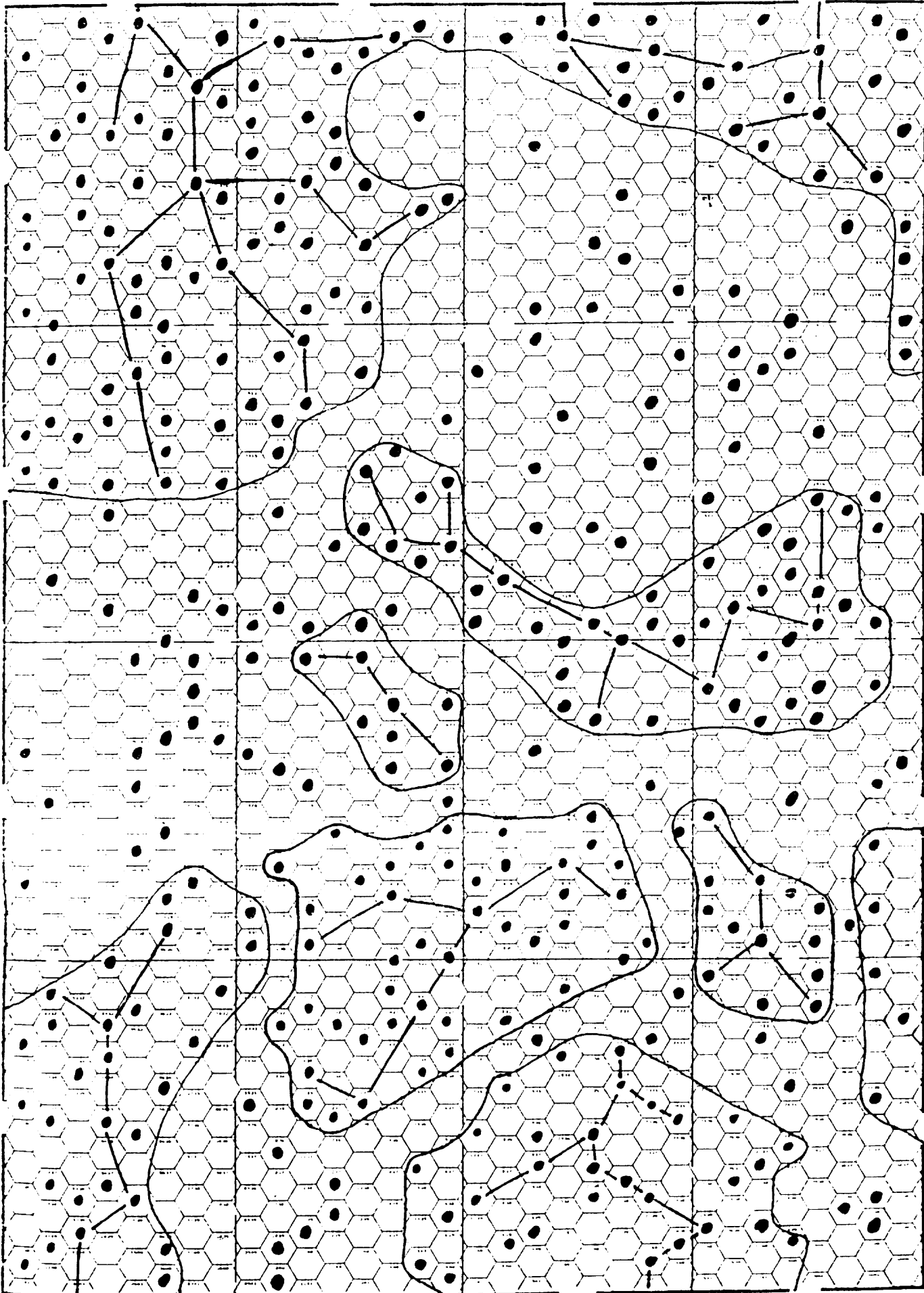
Long live HIGG.

Yiklerdzanzh Subsectors J, K, M and N - Trade Routes



- X-boat and Freighter Routes (normally jump-4; Jump-3 in regions where TL precludes jump-4, such as Talpaku space). These routes also indicate jump-2 traffic when they happen to be only 1 or 2 pc for some reason.
- - - - -** Major Jump-2 Routes (routes well-travelled by vessels capable of jump 2; includes 1 pc jumps where profitable or astrographically necessary). Weekly service or better?
-** Minor Jump-2 Routes (routes travelled less frequently but still of note)

FAR FRONTIERS



A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P

SUBSECTORS WITHIN A SECTOR

MAP LEGEND

Station Type
 Base
 Travel Zone
 World Characteristics

WORLD CHARACTERISTICS

- No. 10000 Property
- Water Property
- ▲ Atomic Base

BASES

- Major New Base
- Major Secret Base
- Primary Base
- Secondary Base
- Research Station
- Scout Way Station
- Imperial Reserve
- Imperial Prison
- Head Camp

TRAVEL ZONES

- Major Zone
- Minor Zone

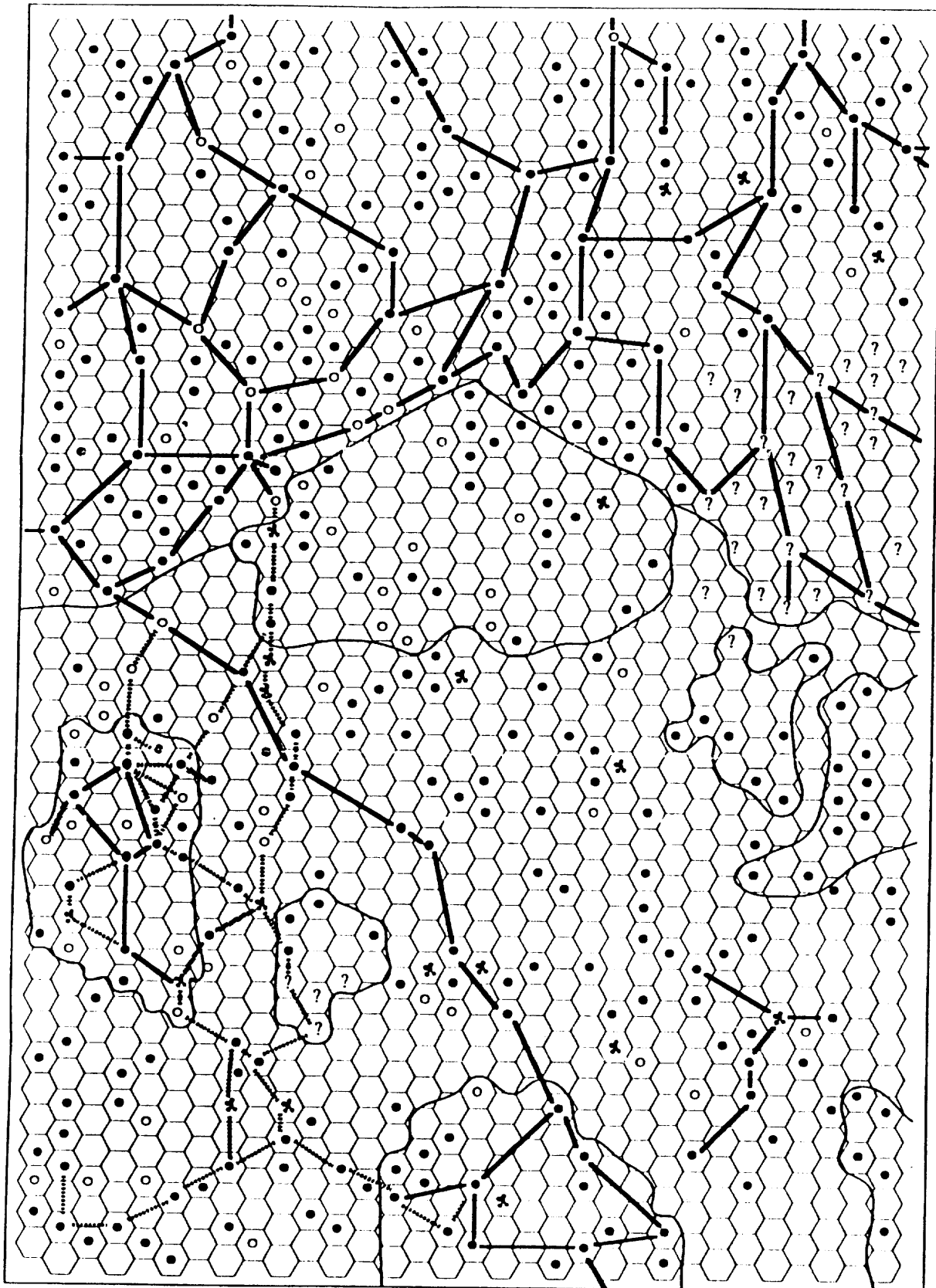
POPULATION

Population Density

PRIMACY

Area of Control

Transport Routes in Yiklerzdanzh Sector (draft)



- X-boat and Freighter Routes (normally jump-4; Jump-3 in regions where TL precludes jump-4, such as Talpaku space). These routes also indicate jump-1 or 2 traffic when they happen to be only 1 or 2 pc for some reason.
- Major Jump-2 Routes (routes well-travelled by vessels capable of jump-2; includes 1 pc jumps where profitable or astrographically necessary). Weekly service or better?
- Minor Jump-2 Routes (routes travelled less frequently but still of note)