

Stellar Reaches

A Fair Use Fanzine for Traveller



City 32 at Sunset by Jozlgaine 01-20-2006

A Samardan Press Publication

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The Stellar Reaches fanzine's website can currently be found at <http://stellarreaches.nwgamers.org>. Please feel free to browse the site for more information, as well as back issues and other downloads as they become available.

The **BITS Task System**, although modified to include Traveller T20 difficulty classes, has been provided with permission by **British Isles Traveller Support (BITS)**. Its presence here does not constitute any challenge to the rights for this system, and we gratefully acknowledge Dominic Mooney and Andy Lilly for their generosity in allowing our use of this system to allow future adventures to be written in such a manner as to be more useful to all published Traveller rules sets.

For more information on BITS, check out their website at <http://www.bits.org.uk/>

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Letter From The Editor

Greetings, Fellow Sophonts:

This issue of *Stellar Reaches* has undergone some format changes, mainly in typeface ('Calibri' rather than 'Times New Roman'). Civilized commentary, pro and con, is welcome, as there is always room for improvement.

This issue continues with the history of the Empty Quarter, bringing us through roughly 1400 years, from the post-Pillage Empty Quarter, through the rise of the Third Imperium, to the end of the Imperial Civil War. The focus here is on the Six Subsectors that are held by the Third Imperium. The rest of the sector – as well as alternate timelines – will be described over the next several issues, God willing. While the description could be cheerfully installed in your game *in toto*, it is my hope that the Referee will find some useful ideals for his own setting.

Don't read it as merely another story: instead, imagine what it would be like to be a trader, a soldier, an SDB captain, or a colonist during the events described. What situations would you face? What kind of problems would you have to solve? How could you get serious money... sector-wide fame... profound insights... your own personal system to rule... even something as simple as peace and safety, for you and yours... during these turbulent times described? That's where the adventure is!

(The pretty pictures can help spark a few ideals in the Referee's head, too.)

The second article is again, not a true adventure *per se*. Instead, it's a fairly routine Traveller setting: a poor, high-pop systems dominated by a single Imperial megacorporation. The difference is the level of detail used to describe the system. Fortunately, there are three separate adventures wrapped in the setting, geared for Travellers down on their luck, and looking for the credits to get back to space. One, the law enforcement section, gets the Travellers up close and personal with the local inhabitants, the regular visitors to the world, and the shifting boundaries between them. The second scenario involved putting off-world skills to work on a low-tech setting, while handling all sorts of opposition from the megacorporation that dominates the world. The third storyline puts the PCs in space, almost – but not quite able – to escape the system.

The possibilities here favour military, law enforcement, and drifter characters, rather than explorers or traders. Roleplaying possibilities are quite extensive, for those who are interested. On the military side of things, the system defense forces are reasonably sketched out, especially the ships and men of the WorldKing's Royal Space Force.

Ω

I enjoy anime, and I recommend *The Wings of Honneamise* (1987) for Referees: it's a good description of an alternate Earth's first venture into space. The *Ghost in the Shell* anime is not a good fit for the Traveller universe, despite the impressive amount of organized violence and high-tech professionalism: the level of cybertechnology involved would get quite a number of Imperials reaching for their sidearm. As a secret Ministry of Justice team, though, Section 9 does have possibilities, especially as depicted in the Japanese TV series.

I only recently watched *Apollo 13* (1995). Every Traveller should watch it, Referee and Player alike.

Another recent find is the hard sci-fi manga *Planetes*, translated here:
<http://www.mangafox.com/manga/planetes/c001/> It's definitely worth the read.

Reading ahead,
Alvin W. Plummer
Editor, *Stellar Reaches* fanzine

BITS Task System

From pg. 8, BITS Writers' Guidelines June 1999. Copyright ©1999, BITS. All Rights Reserved.

T20 Open Game Content from the article "Extending the Task Resolution System to T20" Copyright 2003, Jason Kemp.

MegaTraveller (MT), Traveller: The New Era (TNE) and Marc Miller's Traveller (T4) all use a graduated system of task difficulty ratings – Average, Difficult, Formidable, etc. 'Classic' Traveller (CT) and GURPS Traveller (GT) use modifiers to the task rolls instead. Traveller T20 (T20) uses difficulty classes (DCs) to define target numbers for skill checks. The BITS Task System provides a simplified common ground for all these rule sets, using difficulty ratings with corresponding task modifiers for CT and GT and DCs for T20 as shown in Table 1. The means by which spectacular (GT: critical) success or failure are achieved are defined by the rule set used. Similarly, the GM should apply the rules for special tasks – opposed, co-operative, hasty, cautious, etc. – according to the rule set used. As always, these are only guidelines – the GM may alter any task roll as appropriate to enhance the game.

TABLE 1: TASK DIFFICULTIES

BITS Task Difficulty	T4 Difficulty	T4.1 Difficulty	GT Target Modifier	TNE Difficulty	MT Difficulty	CT Target Modifier	T20 DC
Easy	Easy (Auto)	Easy (1D)	+6	Easy	Simple	-4	10
Average	Average (2D)	Average (2D)	+3	Average	Routine	-2	15
Difficult	Difficult (2.5D)	Difficult (2.5D)	0	Difficult	Difficult	0	20
Formidable	Formidable (3D)	Formidable (3D)	-3	Formidable	Difficult	+2	25
Staggering	Impossible (4D)	Staggering (4D)	-6	Impossible	Formidable	+4	30
Impossible	(5D)	Hopeless (5D)	-9	Impossible	Impossible	+6	35
Hopeless	(6D)	Impossible (6D)	-12	Impossible	Impossible	+8	40

Ex. Maria Charles is forging a complex document, which the GM rules is a Staggering task. Maria has Forgery-4 (GT: Forgery-16, T20: Forgery +18) and the relevant attribute (MT, T4) is INT 10 (TNE: INT 9, T20: 15).

CT: Task success is normally $2D + Skill \geq 8$. Maria requires $2D + Forgery \geq 12$ ($8 + 4$ for Staggering difficulty). Alternatively, the GM may prefer to apply the target modifier as a negative modifier on the dice roll, i.e. $2D + 4 - 4 \geq 8$.

MT: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to MT's Formidable (15+), thus the task is $2D + Skill + (Stat / 5) \geq 15$. For Maria this is: $2D + 4 + 2 \geq 15$.

TNE: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to TNE's Impossible, thus the task is $d20 \leq (Skill + Stat) \times \frac{1}{4}$. For Maria this is $d20 \leq 3$, i.e. $(9 + 4) / 4$ rounded down.

T4: Maria requires $4D \leq INT + Forgery$. (Note that T4's Staggering rating of 3.5D is ignored.)

GT: Maria requires $3D \leq Forgery + Target Modifier$, i.e. $3D \leq 16 - 6$.

T20: Maria requires $d20 + 18 \geq 30$. (Note that the INT modifier is already factored into the skill check.)

Task definitions should always be used sparingly – the GM should be able to define the difficulty and required skills and equipment for most tasks using common sense. Where strange skills or equipment are needed, these can usually be listed, without requiring a full task definition. Where a full task definition is required, use the following format (you don't need to use the bold or italics formatting; plain text is fine):

To find a boar:

Difficult Recon (GT: Tracking), or

Difficult Hunting (T20: P/Hunting), or

Formidable Survival

+1 Difficulty if riding at full gallop.

+1 Difficulty if lost.

-1 Difficulty if moving slowly.

Spectacular Success: They have surprised a boar and have one round to act before it reacts.

Success: They have found boar tracks and can begin following them.

Failure: No tracks found.

Spectacular Failure: They have become lost.

+1 Difficulty indicates a harder task (e.g. an Average task becomes Difficult) whereas -1 Difficulty is an easier task (e.g. Difficult would become Average).

NOTE: This system has been extensively play-tested but suggestions for refinements are always welcome.

Hegemony, Republic, Duchy: Part II

By Alvin W. Plummer



Sunrise at Dumkashga.

This graphic is titled "Titan's Dream" © Patrick Balue-Legault. See his portfolio at http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/browse.php?user_id=575829

Summary

This is the second part of "Hegemony, Republic, Duchy", a historical survey of the Empty Quarter. This issue focuses on the Six Subsectors of the Imperial Empty Quarter, from the pre-Dawn Era (-600 Imperial) to 640 Imperial, at the end of the Imperial Civil War.

We begin with the return of the Bwap to interstellar trade, and their efforts to recontact other Bwap crèches scattered across the territory of the two previous Imperia, eventually culminating with a grand reunion with their kin of the Sylean Federation. After briefly mentioning a few other worlds of Gamma Quadrant, our focus will shift to Hebrin and the birth of their Caliphate. With factional-c ramscoops instead of jumpships, they spread their religion to Lazisar – but their initial union soon broke apart.

What could have been a multi-century feud was overwhelmed by the rise of the Third Imperium: her absorption of the Bwap worlds went off without a hitch, and the Caliphate of Hebrin was successfully

assimilated: opposition to Imperial rule was weak and isolated. The Imperium continued to absorb territory until the Julian War: the aftermath insured that, unlike the previous Imperia, the Third Imperium would never expand to the coreward side of the Empty Quarter.

The False Dawn was sparked by the huge amount of money pouring in from the Imperial Core, to beef up the local defenses against any future Protectorate attack. When the money finally dried up, the Breakdown shattered the local economies, sparking hostilities between the Hindus and the Sunni Muslims that took centuries to simmer down. During the Imperial Civil War, the region was swamped by minor-league pretenders to the Iridium Throne and highly professional Ikonaz pirates: the only way a typical bystander could tell them apart was that the Ikonaz had a far larger Vargr membership. The insistence on taxes & tribute – and the willingness to use armed force to extract the desired wealth – was much the same. The pretenders faded with the rise of Arbellaatra, but the pirates took longer to break.

Before the Dawn: the Bwap Resurgence

Marhaban was never completely cut off from interstellar contact. Occasional visits from Bwap leaders, scouts, and traders within the Vargr Extents kept up interstellar trade and commerce throughout the Long Night. Moreover, after the last wave of the Pillaging faded away in the -1700s, the Bwaps began to rebuild their society, at first slowly and laboriously, then swiftly and industriously. By -1500, they had again regained tech level 10, but local humaniti – especially the Solomani – reacted to the increasing wealth of the aliens with increasing waves of fear, jealousy, suspicion, and hatred. This atavistic reaction led directly to the Bwap Retreat of the 31st – 38th centuries (-1500 to -800 Imperial). Instead of making a full recovery to tech level 11, the Atapas-atta-wapawab – a.k.a. the Grand Council of Crèches - shifted resources to their military to first defend, then evacuate Bwaps crèches from an array of local systems.

After the last of the Purges, the Atapas-atta-wapawab focuses their efforts on resettling the surviving evacuees in their new homes. The ‘war taxes’ were finally rescinded only around A.D. 3770 (-750 Imperial), and the technological recovery of the Bwap slowly

picked up from where it left off. The Bwaps finally returned to TL 11 at about A.D. 3880 (c. -640 Imperial). After finally regaining jump2, the Bwap decided to re-establish contact with as many Bwap societies as they could, to insure that they continued to follow the Wapawab philosophy that has governed Bwap life since time immemorial.

From A.D. 3880 onwards, several intrepid Bwap scouts and soldiers dared the endless dark to reconnect with their brethren. A few went on truly legendary epics, crossing the barrens of Imperial space: one, Watwapebpepaeb, crossed an amazing 140 parsecs in a 200-ton, Jump2 starship to bring the Bwap of the Old Expanses up-to-date on the last millennia of Atapas-atta-wapawab rulings. His meticulous journals regarding his 22-year travels (A.D. 4042 to 4064, -478 to -452 Imperial) are still valuable first-hand source material for Imperial historians today.

The World is a book,
and those who do not travel
read only a page.

Saint Augustine, -4125 to -4091 Imperial



CGSociety.org

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Previous: An armed farmer and his dog on Nulinad, overlooking Shynara, A.D. 3709 (-811 Imperial). Shynara, the capital city of the planet during the Rule of Man era a thousand years previous, was largely uninhabited by this time.

This graphic is titled "Apocalypse" ©Eric Persson. See his portfolio at <http://eeric85.cgsociety.org/gallery/> and <http://www.ericpersson.se> . Visit his blog at <http://www.ericpersson.blogspot.com>

An increasing number of contacts were also made coreward, with Bwap communities in Vargr-conquered space. Sporadic trade and communications were held with these Bwaps throughout the Long Night, but contacts increased markedly after the end of the Vargr Pillaging. The orderly Bwaps had a very difficult time adjusting to the chaos of Vargr rule, and many crèches died out. Others, though, managed to make the transition, especially in Amdukan Sector, but a few in Meshan and Mendan sectors as well. Moreover, the

Bwaps in Trenchan and Gashikan sectors thrived under the rigidity of Yilean rule, happily supporting the Gashikan quest to rid the universe of the law-breaking and disorderly Vargr. These coreward Bwap crèches kept up regular contact with the Atapas-atta-wapawab on Marhaban. While visitors were never on the predictable schedule the Bwaps would prefer, two or three dozen Bwap starships from far-flung systems would arrive at Marhaban every year, from c. A.D. 3900 (c. -600 Imperial) onwards.



A joint Bwap-Sylean exploration group, investigating the ruins of Kaanada, A.D. 4220 (-300 Imperial).

This graphic is titled "Hasta luego" © kanaan. See his work at http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1975308

Before the Dawn: Interstellar Trade

As Marhaban (and, to a lesser extent, Wesaswek) expanded into space, certain tenuous trade routes began to form. The most profitable trade routes proved to be the 26-parsec Marhaban-Antares Path (for

research, new technological goods, and scientific advances) and the 18-parsec Marhaban-Pamushgar Route (for industrial and capital goods). Following up on rumours from captured Vargr pirates, a distant link to the East Indian world of Yashodhan was also

established. The Yashodhani welcomed the Bwaps that they exiled over nine centuries ago: the intricacies of modern Yashodhan thought meshed well with Bwap ideas, and certain exotic goods and foodstuffs, delightful to the Bwap palette, were easily found at Yashodhan. Less adventuresome traders, sticking with Tap-a-wewaka-atapas (Bwap: "Guardians of Order") protected space, focused on the surviving Bwap colonies of Wesaswek, Perpethwe, and Ka-asa. Gudina was often visited for the sake of both her prosperous crèches and her extensive First & Second Imperium bureaucratic records (pure gold, if you knew how to datamine them). Nulinad was the home of a handful of traders, and was often worth a visit: the system itself was more welcoming of off-worlders than most, 'so long as they know their place'. Finally, Arakaad's well-trained soldiery were sometimes available for mercenary work – especially when entering Vargr space.

Marhaban benefited greatly from interstellar trade with Antares, Pamushgar, and Bwap crèches from the Vargr Extents. Earned profits were used to rebuild Bwap wealth and industry to a level approaching that of the late Rule of Man period. This level of wealth allowed the Atapas-atta-wapawab to expand the Bwap presence within The Empty Quarter. Between A.D. 3927 to 4749 (-593 to 229 Imperial), new Bwap colonies would be (re)founded on several systems. Small groups of Bwap settlers also migrated some of the wealthier human-dominated worlds as resident traders, perhaps retaking their bureaucratic niche in the local state. Interestingly, the Bwap-dominant worlds never formed a genuine interstellar state: Bwap governance focuses on the crèche and the detailed Bwap social codes, not on territory and borders. Even so, during this era every crèche and trading post has a contingent of the Tap-a-wewaka-atapas attached: the lessons of the Purges were not forgotten.

You have to stay in shape. My grandmother, she started walking five miles a day when she was 60. She's 97 today and we don't know where the hell she is.

Ellen DeGeneres, fl. -2590 Imperial

Hard evidence that Imperial Scouts existed before the birth of the Imperium.

Baron Besse, upon hearing the above
129 Imperial

When Bwap scouts from the Sylean Interstellar Scout Service recontacted the Marhaban homeworld in A.D. 4086 (-484 Imperial) – in an epic journey of incredible bravery and courage – they discovered a functional starport, a thin but steady stream of visiting starships (mainly from Antares and Mendan Sectors), and a steady beacon of Order and Propriety in a universe of darkness and chaos. Their celebrated return to Sylea in 4090 was one of the keystones of the Federation's history, softening the blow of Vland's earlier rejection of the Sylean Scouts.

However, because of the high level of danger and risk involved in such journeys, epic star treks such as running the Sylea-Marhaban route was a once-a-generation affair until *The Absaba-waketh we-bapaaes Charter* – a joint trading venture between Federation Bwap crèches and the Sylean government – was established in A.D. 4322 (-198 Imperial). The Federation set up, maintained, and defended two small starports on the Sylea-Marhaban route, deep in the wilds. Small groups of three to ten starships, consisting of Bwap and human traders, Federation scouts, and a Sylean naval escort made yearly runs between Sylea and Marhaban. While never as strong as Sylea/Vland trade flows, this arm of commerce also weakened the hold of the Long Night in Chartered Space.



The Abbey of Laagship, Pugaash. The technologically knowledgeable monks run the Abbey as a combination factory, fortress, ceremonial centre, and technological academy. The Abbey is shown here as it was in A.D. 3704 (-816 Imperial), when it was originally dedicated. The graphic is titled "Neo Mordor" © Philippe Bullot. See his other works at <http://www.darthmagus.com/index.html>

The technopriests of Pugaash, servants of the then-slowly decaying world theocracy, had their own view of trade. Colonized in A.D. 2324 (-2196 Imperial), very early in the Rule of Man, it was a heretical Vilani religious retreat, focused on the contemplation of, development of, and hunger for absolute *power*, instead of the usual Vilani obsession for absolute *stability*. Despite their power-lust, Pugaash's leaders never did build the pocket empire of their dreams: but they did adroitly navigated the turbulent times of the Vargr Pillaging, keeping the world's technological infrastructure largely intact. Military technology on Pugaash was as high as TL 10 during the early Dawn era. Visiting traders could make profitable export deals, if they could handle the demanding legalism and harsh bargaining tactics of the Pugaashi.

As interstellar trade developed, the local hierarchy maintained a covert network of agents and a handful of couriers to gather important secrets, uncover hidden knowledge and reveal long-lost technology. The Shushaginín – the 'Order of Watchers', Pugaash's

intelligence service - was quite efficient, existing from c. A.D. 4020 to 4719 (c. -500 to 199 Imperial), when a decade-long civil war tore apart the Pugaashi planetary government.

Despite her industrial abilities and reasonable tech level, Pamushgar never pressed her advantages in exploring and colonising her neighbours. Instead, the Pamushgar Tri-Bureaux reinvested her profits in building up her own planetary infrastructure and productive base. The major powers that ruled Antares, however, strove mightily to extend and strengthen her trade routes, and sent off as many explorers and adventure traders as she could afford. Her insistence on massive, well-built & well-armed starships pushed her jumpspace engineers to new discoveries, and helped insure that her starships routinely came back home. But there was a cost as well: the massive capital investments these behemoth vessels required meant that the rate of expansion – in trade, knowledge, and colonies – was substantially slower than at Sylea, Terra, Asimikigir (future capital of the Asimikigir

Confederation and the Julian Protectorate), or even Vland. Even so, Antares merchantmen did much to revitalise interstellar society in Antares Sector, and in neighbouring societies like the Bwap worlds.

As the example of Mikik reminds us, not all trade is invariably beneficial. Mikik, not far from Marhaban, was brutally enslaved by the stranded Vargr, who solidified their rule by planting hidden nuclear weapons in fifteen of her major cities, holding them hostage to Mikiki submission. During their rule, Mikik was a notable supplier of raw materials to both Bwap and Antarean worlds. A worldwide revolt in A.D. 3794 (-726 Imperial) destroyed Vargr rule, but increasingly frantic attempts to uncover and neutralise the gigaton bombs failed in all but three instances, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of millions. Even after the world recovered from this devastating blow, Vargr raiders in A.D. 4343 (-177 Imperial) infected the world with F-cap in an attempt to reduce resistance to their raids (and a planned re-invasion of the world): the Vargr used captured humans as disease vectors. The virulent plague killed more than half the population, but resistance to all outsiders – Vargr and humans alike – rose to a state of unthinking xenophobic hatred, where it remains today.

Before the Dawn: The March of Faith

The first major human world to push for the stars again was Hebrin, with the rise of a drive among the educated elite to spread the Islamic faith across the sector. Without jump technology, completely cut off from all interstellar trade, and without even Vargr pirates to break the silence of the stars, they built dozens of interstellar ramjets – maxing out at ~0.1 c./year – and launched them between c. A.D. 2981 and 3239 (about -1629 and -1281 Imperial) to transport missionaries and materials to worlds across the rimward Quarter. These journeys were quite risky: one-third failed to arrive at their destination, and another third arrived, but the radiation had killed all the crew & passengers. Factoring in other mishaps and disasters, only ten ramjets eventually arrived at their destination.

If the Gushgusi placed as much emphasis on business as they do on obscure religious controversies, they would be giving the corporate drones of Delphi a *serious* run for the money.

Archduke Nguz of Antares
to Sector Duchess Cuifen of Fornast
Capital, 659 Imperial

The most famous of these journeys was the mission to Lazisar. Launched in A.D. 3051 (-1469 Imperial), the starship *al-Iskandriyah* arrived in Lazisari orbit around A.D. 3263 (-1257 Imperial) after spending over two centuries crossing the stars. There was already a Vilani Muslim population on the world: the arrival of missionaries from within the Ummah (Arabic: ‘Universal Community/Nation of Islamic Believers’) energized them to become the intellectual elite of their world within a century. However, differences between local and Sunni doctrine eventually lead to heated arguments, clashes, and eventually a string of wars. Kikhushegi, a sect of Islam strongly influenced by Vilani ritualism & religious traditions, arose on Lazisar in A.D. 3347 (-1173 Imperial) as a response to the arguments. Taking the nova explosion of Beta Niobe in A.D. 3684 (-836 Imperial) as a sign from Allah, there was a major, popular push for planetary unification: by A.D. 3716 (-804 Imperial), the four dominant governments on the planet had all chosen to subscribe to its tenets. United, they soon crushed all opposition and created the Lazisar World Directorate (soon renamed the Lazisar System Directorate) in A.D. 3728 (-792 Imperial).

The sword is truer than the scriptures.
In its blade is the defining line
between the serious and the vain.
Arabian Proverb

The tenets of the new state religion were sent by interstellar radio to the Caliphate of Hebrin in -800, with a request to convert to Kikhushegi. When the doctrines were received in A.D. 3741 (-779 Imperial), the response from Hebrin was to issue a fatwa (religious ruling) demanding a jihad (a holy war) against the infidel Lazisari. Both societies used STL ramjet starships to fight an interstellar conflict that lasted about four centuries. The length of the war was more due to the length of time needed for STL ramjets to reach their destination, than to any other factor. Even so, the sheer expense of the conflict exhausted even the zealotry of the combatants. With their core worlds heavily defended with armed stations and ‘walls of snowflakes and pebbles’ – more than sufficient to destroy starships travelling at fractional-c. - and unable to do more than wrestle for the lightly-defended outer worlds of their respective starsystems, they agreed to end the Hebrin Jihad in a truce in A.D. 4148 (-372 Imperial), with all forces withdrawing to their home systems.

By the late 43rd century (late -300s Imperial), both systems had regained jumpdrive technology from Bwap traders, in return for permitting Bwap resettlement on

their worlds and a partial restoration of lost property and rights. Both worlds quickly rose to TL 9, and worked to spread their versions of Islam to human societies near their worlds. Both governments also kept a close eye on each other, but decided not to restart the war immediately, in favour of other objectives. Eventually, Hebrin's leadership decided in A.D. 4318 (-202 Imperial) to establish a multi-system Caliphate, while at approximately the same time Lazisar focused on raising their system's economic strength and tech level from TL 9.

Elsewhere, during the 44th century (-200s Imperial), the leaders of Irash and Yashodhan worked to build up their economic and cultural links, grounded in East Indian culture and the Hindu religion. But the two worlds never federated into an interstellar state, due to the displeasure of the pro-Vilani parties on Irash. Muslim and East Indian traders often crossed paths, and competed with each other for the same markets and customers. Despite a few clashes, the majority of both groups decided that conflict was an unnecessary business expense: a few traders even forged partnerships across the ethno-religious divide.

Despite the arrival of the jumpdrive, ramjet technology saw use one more time by the Caliphate. As part of a local political bargain, the Caliph exiled the more difficult & troublesome leaders of the Native Americans and Vargr minorities left on his world, to a distant location where they couldn't trouble his rule any longer, yet would protect his reputation from accusations of genocide. Surplus ramjet starships were

refurbished, and new ramjets were built for the journey to the 378-936 system. The starships left Hebrin in A.D. 4414 (-106 Imperial), and after four centuries arrived at the 378-936 system deep into the Lesser Rift, over 14 parsecs away and impossible to reach by jumpship at the time. Surprisingly, thanks to improvements in ramscoop and low berth technology, 37 of the 41 starships arrived at the system with most of their crews alive (one blew up in transit, one overshot the target and was lost in space, and two arrived sterile and dead). Arriving in A.D. 4880 (360 Imperial), the Native Americans renamed the system Chimalis, and, along with the Vargr, settled onto the garden world.

Dawn: Marhaban Returns to the Imperial Fold

By year 0, when the Warrant of Restoration officially proclaimed the return of Imperial Rule, Marhaban had become a minor trade nexus, with Sylean, Vargr, Vilani, and Menderes traders routinely making annual and semi-annual visits. Most of the traders were Bwaps from the Vargr Extents: Satha-a-atta-wapawab ("Elders of the crèche") from every Bwap society with sufficient resources visited Marhaban, to consult with the Atapas-atta-wapawab for legal rulings and counsel on various matters of protocol and policy. The military arm of the Bwaps, the Tap-a-wewaka-atapas, protected Marhaban - and a few nearby Bwap systems - from the now-rare Vargr pirate.



Two Noble Household servants, wearing House Lentuli livery, survey the construction of a planned city on the desert world of Sabira, 104 Imperial. Unfortunately, the city of Aiedo would later be razed by Star Legion bombardment during the Julian War (175-191 Imperial).

The graphic is titled "Overlook at Aiedo" © Nia Obidos Townsend.

See her work at <http://ultima.deviantart.com/>

On Sylea – now renamed Capital – it was felt that Marhaban membership in the Imperium would bring great legitimacy to Emperor Cleon’s claim to Imperial authority, helping to tie the allegiance of the widespread Bwap race to the Iridium Throne, and nicely supplementing the crucial ascension of Vland to Imperial rule. As soon as they were invited to do so, the Bwap crèches within Lentuli and Nulinad subsectors declared their allegiance to the Imperium in 208-015 Imperial. Marhaban (and other nearby Bwap systems) was not the first world in the sector to swear allegiance to Emperor Cleon and his lawful successors – that honour falls to Gagukam, in 77-004 Imperial. Even so,

the Grand Council’s decision carried great weight with detail-oriented bureaucrats across Charted Space.

One sign of its importance was the major Noble familial competition over the ducal seat of Lentuli subsector. An extremely powerful family, House Wettin, eventually won the demesne in 21 Imperial, changing their family name to Lentuli in celebration of their great victory (and to proclaim their ownership of this region of space). Note that – excluding the Vilani nobility of Vland Sector – all Imperial Nobles at this time were pure-blooded Solomani: the possibility of letting the non-human Bwap gain Noble authority over their own

worlds, never mind their subsector, simply didn't occur to these early Imperials.

While the Archon of House Lentuli ruled the subsector as Duke, it was a member of a cadet branch, Artemsus, who rose to the Iridium Throne as Emperor in 54 Imperial. Artemsus was originally the brilliant Imperial chancellor of Emperor Cleon II, but after Cleon abdicated, he hand-picked Artemsus as his successor. Artemsus is often seen as among the earliest and the greatest of the Emperors – as well as among the most long-lived, dying at the age of 166 in 183 Imperial. Due to his long life, rumours of long-lived Vilani blood in the supposedly 99.94% pure Solomani Lentuli line has never ceased, from the reign of Artemsus unto this very moment, almost a thousand years later. Relations between the 'senior' Lentuli line (which ruled the 17 systems of the subsector) and the 'junior' line (which ruled the 11,000 systems of the entire Third Imperium) were quite cordial, if occasionally comical when it came to matters of protocol and precedence.

Dawn: The Caliphate of Hebrin

<p>If power is for sale, sell your mother to buy it. You can always buy her back again. Arabic proverb</p>
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With the support of the Bwaps and Vland, Imperial absorption of the rimward half of The Empty Quarter was as smooth as silk. Outside of Lentuli and Nulinad subsectors, few worlds were even inhabited, never mind capable of challenging Imperial authority.

The only serious obstacle to Imperial power was Hebrin: with a population numbering in the billions, a TL of 9 and the largest group of trading and military starships in a radius of twelve parsecs, the Caliphate of Hebrin had the ability to make real trouble for the Imperium. The Caliphate was focused primarily of ridding local space of the (at the time, grossly exaggerated) Vargr menace: secondary goals included establishing trade links with populated human systems, spreading Sunni Islam, and planting colonies. By -20 Imperial, the first three goals were being met with various degrees of success, with trade delegations visiting from as far away as Antares, Sylea, and even the legendary system of Daramm in Ley Sector. However, the colonies were proving to be an expensive bust: they simply would not pay for themselves, no matter how much money was thrown at them for infrastructure & development. Shortly after contact with Sylean scouts in 2 Imperial, the counter-intuitive decision to abandon the costly colonies was made,

rolling back the Caliphate from 15 systems in year 5 to three non-contiguous systems by year 14 Imperial (four systems, if you include Hebrin.) With Caliphate forces spread over a smaller area, forcibly defending against possible Sylean aggression at any single point was far easier and patrolling needs less onerous. Financial savings from abandoning the colonies permitted both a slight easing in taxes and a moderate increase in TL 9/10 expeditionary forces and transports. At the time contact was made with Hebrin, the Sylean Scouts were unaware of the dissolution of the Sylean Federation and her replacement with the Third Imperium. This led to certain misconception on the part of the Caliphate government, which was corrected at 20 Imperial with the visit of a single Imperial warship, the 20,000-ton ISS *Logic of Empire*. Her captain invited the Caliph and his entourage on a tour of the vessel, and granting each of the respected visitors with a cheap TL 12 illustrated guide of the vessel, stuffed with unclassified information that – once you understand what the numbers mean - make clear the ship's ability to destroy the entire Caliphate navy without breaking a sweat.

After a few Imperial delegations made clear the Emperor's intent, the rewards of membership, and the pain of refusing him, Caliph Ahmed of the Temiz dynasty was willing to take a subordinate position to Emperor Cleon and dissolve the Caliphate. In return, one of his brothers was elevated to the ducal throne of Udusis subsector, while he himself became the first Duke of Hebrin subsector, as well as Sector Duke of The Empty Quarter. Additional horse trading gave another brother of the Caliph Imperial authority over the three Caliphate systems as the new Count of Hebrin. Of course, the old Caliphate naval base would be turned over to the Imperial Navy. After Imperial diplomats agreed to the deal, the Caliph insisted on journeying to Sylea, making his oath before Emperor Cleon and receiving his demesne in 35 Imperial.

While restricted from taking direct action in spreading Islam or attacking his homeworlds' old adversary, Lazisar, the Duke was quite willing to indirectly restrict the spread of other religions, and to hinder Lazisari missionaries and interstellar concerns within the sector. The Emperors tolerated this behaviour until Sector Duke Gamal, the successor of Sector Duke Ahmed, decided in 60 Imperial to expand the restrictions to include all infidels, while also proclaiming that only Sunni Muslims could serve within the Empty Quarter military and scout forces. Archduke Charles of Antares swiftly rescinded this order: in two years Sector Duke Gamal was replaced by an Imperial Catholic (Antares Rite) from the Archduke's family, and the sector capital was relocated from Hebrin to

Nulinad. The title itself informally became a Rank Noble position, and not inheritable under any circumstances.

Sunburst Rising

The warmth and light of the regal Imperial Sunburst drives back the chill bite of the Long Night. And only by guarding the sacred fire can we guarantee peace and prosperity for our children, and our children's children.

Duke Dilip of Udusis subsector, 275 Imperial

While the rimward Empty Quarter could be considered unchallenged Imperial territory from 35 Imperial, a handful of minor worlds within the region resisted Imperial authority to various degrees. Yashodhan was the most successful resistor, after defeating an Imperial force; she was able to lead a small interstellar state for centuries, consisting of herself, Selka, and Niketan. Although the Yashodhan Democracy was eventually broken up, Yashodhan herself remained free, and never was brought under Imperial jurisdiction.

Mikik also led an effective resistance to Imperial power, if only on the planetary level. Several attempts to impose Imperial authority were made, most notably the Ematan Campaigns of 94-97 Imperial. After these efforts failed miserably, the Ducal House that ruled the subsector decided to just Red Zone it, placing a soft interdiction of the world (warning away all who attempt to land on the world, but not banning it outright). After abandoning the locals to their chosen fate, the Imperium focused on her strength: controlling 'the space between the stars'.

Another notable wayward system was Bravo Base. Bravo was actually located in Tokitre Subsector, a fair bit coreward from the Imperial border. Early Imperial strategists believed that her military fortifications and starship facilities – maintained across the centuries by sheer will and determination – would make Bravo Base a great stepping stone into the coreward Quarter. Finally, if the locals could be convinced that the Third Imperium was the Rule of Man's legitimate successor, they would make a solid base of support for the Emperor. However, getting there with the Jump3 limits of TL 12 technology available to the early Imperium was very chancy at best. Moreover, the lone scout that made it to the system (and returned to tell the tale) reported that the locals despised the Imperium as an impostor of the glorious Rule of Man. As a precautionary measure, the Imperium decided to

Yellow Zone the system in 68 until a course of action could be taken.

While Enola was as isolated as Bravo Base, it's path from Imperial rule to independence was quite different. Within the first century of the Imperial Era, there were only a few attempts to settle the abandoned and empty worlds in Imperial Space. The most notable of these, the Enola Venture, was a research/colony project funded by interests in Fornast sector. The starships of the Enola Venture made a remarkable crossing of six void parsecs in 50 Imperial. The names of the five major colonial vessels – *The Wanderer*, *Over the Top*, *Vapour Drawings*, *Cafayate*, and *Sagres* – is recited across the Imperial Empty Quarter even today.

However, the difficulty in maintaining regular contact (in a TL 12/jump3 era of poor knowledge of proper Void navigation procedures) caused the Imperium to renounce Imperial authority over Enola in 70 Imperial. This is among the few times the Imperium has ever done so willingly, especially in a time and place of rapid territorial expansion. In the end, however, the vague and uncertain benefits were outweighed by the hard, irrefutable cost in replacing lost ships and crewmen trying to reach or return from that system.

Lunatics settle new worlds. The kind of crackpots who attempt Void jumps to get to a new world? Well, let's just say that there is run-of-the-mill insanity, and there is industrial-grade madness!

Anonymous Ministry of Colonization
bureaucrat, 5 Imperial

Gudina also anchored her fierce resistance to her Imperial past, destroying all Vargr ships and imprisoning most human & Bwap visitors until 32 Imperial. In that year, an Imperial Task Force made a show of force in Gudina System, and the flotilla's commanding officer was able to gain the release of traders (or their surviving descendants). The clincher that sealed Gudina's readmittance to the Imperium was the offer to restore to her old place as a central repository of Imperial data. By 70 Imperial, the world's population was largely supportive of the Imperial throne. Suspicion and loathing of Vargr visitors, however, remained widespread. Local Vargr were held in higher regard, but sometimes received 'second-class citizen' treatment despite their comparatively peaceful attitudes.



Survivors of a failed landing await rescue. Enola System, 50 Imperial.
This graphic is titled "Crash Landing" © Sergey Skachkov. See his portfolio at <http://atris.cgsociety.org/gallery/393080/>

One of the jewels gained by the Imperium was Pamushgar, a high-population, heavily industrialized world in Subsector N of The Empty Quarter. At TL 10, the system was the wealthiest high-pop system in local Imperial Space during the first century, and was the host of the first Imperial base built in the sector, in 44 Imperial (note that the first Imperial base of any kind was the ex-Caliphate base at Hebrin, in 35 Imperial). Despite her evident industrial might, the leadership of Pamushgar never followed the Logic of Empire themselves, preferring profitable trade links to expensive empire-building. Of course, they had no qualms with benefiting from an Imperial peace paid for by someone else's blood and treasure, and the integration of the system into the Imperial economy was a snap, effective at 16 Imperial.

Another major Imperial success story of the era involved Udisis system. The less than 20,000 Vargr that survived the overthrow of Vargr rule has managed to multiply and multiply, despite their lowly social status. By year 0 Imperial, the Vargr numbering ~30% of the local population of 60 million, they threatened to set off a major civil war, disrupting long-term Imperial plans of building up the system into a centre of commerce and power. Noble negotiators had to deal with widespread xenophobia (among both Vargr and humaniti) as they hammered out a deal between

human and Vargr representatives. A set of power-sharing & autonomy agreements between the various parties was signed in 47 Imperial, which (with extensive modifications) remain the basis of Vargr-human relations as of today, almost a thousand years later. Despite this triumph in diplomacy, Udisis never fulfilled their Imperial destiny, preferring to keep their distance from interstellar society.

Ancient Ziru Sirka and Rule of Man records uncovered on Gudina led Imperial Scouts to rediscover the Pikii in 27 Imperial. The IISS decided to rename their homeworld Surogota – the name the natives themselves used – and the native inhabitants as Surogotans in Anglic. Fearing that settlers would enslave or destroy the low-tech insectoid species, the IISS advised Emperor Cleon to interdict the world in 30 Imperial. Scout fears were eventually proven to be unfounded: most the fauna of the system is quite dangerous, rendering the world unsuitable for settlement. The interdiction order was finally lifted in 51 Imperial.

The initial surveys of Exile system missed the native asteroid-mining inhabitants. However, in 86 entrepreneurial freelancers working in the asteroid belt were attacked by mysterious ships that packed a bigger punch, and had better and longer thrust than the

miners were prepared for. After they retreated from the system, the armed Imperial Scout *Seductressa* entered the system, and eventually contacted the xenophobic beltlers. After a very tense introduction, the Scouts managed to negotiate a tentative deal which did NOT include incorporating the system into the Imperium, but did include Red Zoning it – at the request of the natives. Getting Noble approval was an immense headache. Eventually, it required the intervention of very senior scouts to appeal over the heads of the Dukes, and win the approval of Emperor Artemus himself in 101 Imperial.

Empire is nothing more than the attempt to rule too many people, over too large a territory, under rules and laws that favor interest groups in league with the imperial state.

Lew Rockwell, -2515 Imperial

The major failure in the initial Imperial first contacts was the Imperial encounter with the Hindu systems of Irash and Yashodhan. Imperial ambassadors did a good job in convincing the government of Irash to peacefully join the Imperium in 62. However, the political

leadership of Yashodhan found the Imperial diplomats overbearing, arrogant, and threatening. They chose to create the interstellar Yashodhani Democracy in 63, compromising of Yashodhan and the then-uninhabited worlds of Niketan and Selka. War was formally declared against the Imperium, with the goal of gaining Irash and the lesser systems surrounding her for the Democracy.

The unprepared Imperium, with her attention focused on Antares, was ill-prepared for a conflict at the far end of The Empty Quarter. A hastily scratched together force was soundly defeated at the Battle of Yashodhan in 64, and Democratic raiders managed to enforce a blockade at Irash. Not willing to commit the forces needed to secure a victory, the Imperium sued for peace, ending the Yashodhan War at 67 Imperial. The Imperium kept Irash and her nearby systems, but agreed to recognize Yashodhani sovereignty and her rights to trade and communicate freely with her Imperial sister-world.

The Growth of the Church of the Stellar Divinity



The abandoned city of Avesnes, Riamlir System, as of 993 Imperial. During the 200s Imperial, this was the thriving centre of the Stellar Divinity religion in the Six Subsectors. Even after the Muslims and Hindus reasserted their dominance, Avesnes was still a centre of star worship as recently as 804 Imperial.

This graphic is titled "Dubai Ruins" © Jonad De Ro.

See his portfolio at <http://jenovah-art.deviantart.com/>

Our ancestors worshiped the Sun,
and they were far from foolish.
And yet the Sun is an ordinary, even a mediocre star.
If we must worship a power greater than ourselves,
does it not make sense to revere the Sun and stars?
Carl Sagan, -2587 to -2525

The nova of Beta Niobe was thought to be of great significance to the various congregations of the Church of the Stellar Divinity during the Long Night, but it was only after the foundation of the Third Imperium did it become possible for Star Diviners to investigate the phenomenon. The founding of the Stellar Divinity Monastery in the Beta Niobe Nebula marked the starting point of a major expansion of the Solomani religion into the region. Between 68 and 200 Imperial, over 10% of the Imperial Gushgusi population followed – in part or in whole – the doctrines of the star-worshipping religion, with a large number of notables going on pilgrimages to Aldebaran, where the Star Diviners originated.

The political prestige that they could lay claim to was also quite impressive. Star Diviners pointed out the similarity between Star Divinity symbols and the Imperial Sunburst, and the patronage of numerous successful & powerful Nobles. Large sectors of the population also agreed with the claims that believers can join the gods in their power, and liked the general lack of precepts and doctrine outside of pacifism, non-interference, and various prescribed rituals. The religion grew deep roots in the coreward Imperium, gaining numerous adherents in the Domain of Deneb and Antares Sector. The most striking Church success was in the Domain of Gateway, where they eventually became the dominant Solomani religion. Only the Zhodani State Cult has a similar level of interstellar power: and the Zhodani religion is a creation of the government, while the Star Diviners – while closely linked with Imperial Nobility – maintain a tradition of local autonomy and a distinct lack of formal church government above the system level: traditionally, each star has its own distinct flavour of worship, ceremony, and cultic beliefs.

However, the religion failed to spread successfully across the Lesser Rift into Vargr space. The difficulties involved in crossing the Rift, while important, was actually of lesser significance compared to the established beliefs of the area. The conformist nature of the three formal Ikonaz religio-ideologies – the Unity of Ikon Orders, and the Ceremonialist and Hidden Knowledge cults – proved resistant to Star Diviner missionaries trying to crack Alpha Quadrant, while the

Vargr blood cults that dominated Beta Quadrant simply ate the missionaries.

The Julian War

By the coronation of Emperor Artemsus in 54, half of Antares Sector and the rimward half of The Empty Quarter was already under the rule of the Third Imperium. The Antares Pacification Campaign (89-120) annexed the Antares Cluster, and eventually brought the rest of Antares Sector to heel. Anti-Imperial leadership within the sector fled, warning not only of the might of the Imperium, but of widespread Early Imperial loathing of the Vargr as well.

After the death of Artemsus, his eldest son Martin was chosen as the fourth Emperor. He immediately opened diplomatic negotiations with the dominant powers of Meshan, Mendan and Amdukan, to persuade them to accept Imperial rule. After nine years of solid diplomatic failure, Emperor Martin I launched the ill-fated Julian War (175-191), using force of arms to seize ‘what is mine by right.’

Created as a defensive alliance in 178, the Julian Protectorate enjoyed great success in defending the region from Imperial assault during the sixteen-year war, leading to its reconstitution as a permanent polity at the end of the conflict. During most the war, The Empty Quarter was a hive of naval activity, used largely as a basing and rallying point for operations in Meshan, Mendan, and Amdukan sectors.

A great war leaves the country with three armies –
an army of cripples,
an army of mourners,
and an army of thieves.
German Proverb

The prosperity that all this military spending bore turned to ash near the end of the war. From 185, Protectorate incursions into the Six Subsectors began to make their mark. First considered a nuisance, they had grown to a genuine threat to the supply lines of the Imperium by 189. At this year, the tide finally and definitively shifted to the favour of the Julian Protectorate, and the flood of raiders, corsairs, assault ships, had flooded local space by 190. Properly organized and well-equipped military units from the Star Legion and allied states arrived in 190, overrunning or isolating most Imperial units and forces. The Imperial Empty Quarter was thoroughly trashed with swirling blows of raids, incursions, and bombardments. Mass kidnappings and enslavement became routine

during those terrible years. It was the rare family that didn't lose someone at this time, due to hostile action, kidnapping, or the lack of necessities caused by the collapse of interstellar trade. There were certainly indications of some sort of methodology and planning

hidden within the violent chaos: for example, not one member of the local Ducal branch of House Lentuli, either child or adult, could be found alive after the end of the war.



Vilani Ikonaz scouts on a recon/harassment mission. Unsharshe System, 193 Imperial.

This graphic is titled "Faction" ©Geoffroy Thoorens. See his portfolio at <http://dijahal.cgsociety.org/gallery/760172/>

The smaller, weakly-defended systems paid the greater price: several of the fledgling settlements started up in the early years of the Third Imperium, like Saffron, met an untimely end during the ending stages of the Julian War. Over 95% of total Imperial casualties, military and civilian, were suffered in the last three years of the campaign as Protectorate forces surged into Antares (subsectors A, B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, and P), The Empty Quarter (subsectors I, J, M, N) and Ley sector (subsectors A, B, and F.) The various Imperial Clients bordering Ikonaz space (in The Empty Quarter subsectors A, B, E, F) were really hammered: only the major systems of Tokitre & Colony – and a handful of associated minor systems – avoided conquest and the expulsion/liquidation of the previous inhabitants.

The most beautiful things in the universe
are the starry heavens above us
and the feeling of duty within us.
East Indian Proverb

It should be noted that subsectors K and O of The Empty Quarter was passed over unharmed by the

Protectorate and associated pirate groups. Most scholars agree that this was due to the low priority the Protectorate war planners placed on that region of space, but a vocal minority insist that the valiant action of Admiral Sir Gurkaran Matoja Singh, a respected ancestor of the Singh Ruling House of Allyn (Snogsta/Fornast 3103), is what truly deterred Protectorate aggression against the region. A small group of sceptics claim that the exchange of Danesgeld from Singh corporate coffers to Vargr cargo holds is what really persuaded the enemy forces from striking against the region.

The False Dawn...

The wealth – in the form of massive bases and military establishments – that poured into the sector during the aftermath of that conflict provided the only economic boom the Imperial Empty Quarter has ever known. During this period, it seemed that the Gushgusi were on their way to joining the rest of the Imperium in wealth and culture. The construction of the Imperial Depot over Lazisar (later reclassified as the naval

base/starcity known as Solariopolis), was the largest driver of the boom. Lazisar naturally prospered as a direct result of this, rising a tech level (to TL 10) and increasing her population ten-fold between 200 to 250. Even after the Depot's formal commissioning in 238, several major Imperial projects throughout the Imperial Empty Quarter kept 'Big Daddy's money spigot' wide open, from continuous upgrades of the new Depot for decades, to several massive terraforming initiatives, to a simultaneous overall of ALL Imperial Ports and bases within the sector during the last quarter of the century.

Other empires build huge palaces, massive cathedrals, enormous tombs, or turns cities into marble. Our beloved Imperium has a thing for gigantic naval bases which look like the earrings your mom tossed out years ago.

Commentator/Humourist Sir Bist van Nostrad
238 Imperial

Besides Lazisar, several other worlds benefited from the False Dawn:

- Pamushgar was another big winner after Lazisar, with a major increase in industry, population, and wealth – but at a cost of a permanent atmospheric taint,
- Eninsish was the third major winner, with unrelenting demand for her raw materials powering a TL zoom from 8 to 12 (c. 200 – 240), and a similar explosion in population,
- Wesaswek rose from TL 9 to TL 11, as her high-tech industry swiftly grew (200s),
- The Administrative Academy of Ka-aswa is founded in 277, quickly gaining sector-wide fame for her standards of excellence,
- Nulinad, as Sector Capital, undergoes major spending in public works and infrastructure, and several schools of architecture leave their greatest mark in her cities (c.240 to 280),
- Visitors from outside the sector, who love the sector's wildness but disliked the dominant cultures, build up Gobi as their personal sanctuary in c. 240,
- Yogesh's fledging robotics industry gets her first big break, providing an enormous amount of robots, waldos and mobile work-frames for the construction of Solariopolis in Lazisar system from c. 200 to 250.

Also worthy of note was the rise of the first nonhuman Imperial Nobles. Several Bwap warships, flotillas, and armies performed admirably in the defense of their homeworlds: this, coupled with the extinction of the local branch of House Lentuli, led to the very first nonhuman Imperial noble anywhere, Duke

Absabwabpaba-ke of Lentuli Subsector, ennobled in 198 Imperial. Several Bwap barons soon followed, but Solomani & Vilani pressure reduced the flow of nonhuman ennoblements to a trickle until the Imperial Civil War, and the eventual fall of the Solomani Party from Imperial favour.

Much of the Imperial Empty Quarter was rather sparsely populated in the 200s. In the search of cheap labour, certain worlds turned to lower-class Vargr workers from off-world to fill the gap. While not the most reliable of workers, they could be kept in line, and were cheaper than robots, making them fairly useful to the corporations and governments concerned. This had the general effect of spreading the Vargr presence more evenly across the sector, including systems no Vargr had laid a foodpad on in over seven centuries.

Solomani racial theory in the 3rd and 4th Imperial centuries was structured around the creation of idealized 'racial paragons' for the assorted branches of the Master Race. The 'New Man Circle', a group of influential Solomani philosophers, successfully convinced the Sector Duke to grant them a world in the then-booming Empty Quarter. Home to a failed Parsee colony, the world of Namabhai was resettled by a eugenically-minded culture in the 214 to 264 period, and renamed Rommel in 241. The specialised genetic expertise of the world has – among other things – made it the number one exporter of geneered foods and pets in the sector, providing a base for enduring prosperity.

The Bene Israel branch of East Indian Jewry can trace their heritage to the Bombay region of the Indian subcontinent of Terra, right back to -4600 Imperial (which actually pre-dates the foundation of the city by two thousand years). As financially successful Indian merchants and traders, they were able to purchase the Ashgiirkis system from a land speculation consortium in 246. Renaming the system Mordekai, they spent a considerable portion of their resources purifying the atmosphere. The long economic downturn in The Empty Quarter forced them to drastically slow the tempo of their terraforming plans, but they continued to fund their investment. The world's atmosphere was re-classified as Standard (breathable) in 711 Imperial, long after permanent settlements were founded. Pamushgar, on the other hand, finally gave up the fight to keep her air clean, and became resigned to a tainted atmosphere.

Cooke has always been something of an anomaly in its region. Quietly secularist in a religious neighbourhood, a white Anglo-Australian society in a thoroughly Arab

and East Indian subsector, its focus has always been on trade, and is an outpost of mainstream Imperial culture. Purchased from the Duke Hebrin in 225, renamed Cooke (from Al Kufrah), and settled by pro-Imperial traders and ex-soldiers during the boom years of the 300s, Cooke's locally-rooted economy, isolated from the interstellar boom, escaped much of the bust as well. The liberally inclined society has for centuries been a bastion of racial harmony between humans, Bwaps and Vargr.

Ushmigad was uninhabited until 266, when an exotic Vilani cult colonized the world. Driven out of Vland Sector for their fondness of innovative and groundbreaking research, the Ashi Gurlagili quickly drove roots into the world. They used their research to create new consumer goods, the profits of which were ploughed right back into the labs. Increasing technological know-how, coupled with Vilani corporate instincts, has led to a remarkably high standard of living - much to the disgust of other Vilani societies within The Empty Quarter. Certain dogmatic Vilani worlds - i.e. Pugaash - will kill Ashi Gurlagili members on sight.

Long ruled by the descendants of the Caliphate, an ugly incident of filicide (similar to that of the Nepalese royal family massacre of A.D. 2001) led to the eventual weakening of the Caliph's rule, and then on to its collapse in 268 Imperial. The political situation remained unsettled, with occasional civil wars and unpleasant terroristic incidents, for the next century as things slowly worked themselves out. Sadly, it was during this time period that the last of the natural underground reservoirs dried up. Distracted by local politics, pushed by desperate need to build a fleet of ice ships to keep her large population alive, and riven with conflicts that saw over half her population die of thirst during the 300s, Hebrin fell off her Dawn Era pedestal, never to return to her former state of greatness.

While Hebrin began her great fall, downtrodden Zukhisa finally managed to catch a break. Various Antarean industrial concerns began to use Zukhisai labour as an untapped resource, especially for cheap light manufacturing. Her disciplined workforce and pro-corporate society - especially when interacting with Vilani concerns - bought a measure of low-tech prosperity to the world.

...And The Breakdown

I have seen another evil under the sun,
and it weighs heavily on men:
God gives a man wealth,
possessions and honour,
so that he lacks nothing his heart desires,
but God does not enable him to enjoy them...
I say that a stillborn child
is better off than he...
even if he lives a thousand years twice over
but fails to enjoy his prosperity.
Do not all go to the same place?
Solomon, King of Israel
(c. -5570 to -5449 Imperial)

The False Dawn (c. 200 to 300) remains a legendary era in local history, but it was not to last: the Breakup that struck after the military money dried up led to a massive depletion of Gushgusi wealth and talent, as the cream of local interstellar society moved on to greener pastures - quickly followed by the technicians, traders, investors, and speculators that make interstellar society work.

In similar circumstances, other sectors like the Spinward Marches were able to use this wealth as a foundation for further development. Not the Empty Quarter, whose denizens would spend their money on arms, huge religious centres of worship, and luxuriant welfare states for the masses - with an even more fabulous lifestyle for the local Nobility. ('Any similarity between this behaviour and that of the Gulf Arabs between the 1970s and the rise of fusion power is completely coincidental.')

The disconnect that resulted from the collapse of interstellar society - even as other sectors continued to be knit ever-closer to Imperial culture - led to a permanent sociological shift in the Six Subsectors. Compared to the rest of the Imperium, there's a gnawing sense of failure, irrelevance, and alienation among the Emptyheads, regardless of race or religion. The Spinward Marches is actually a good deal fatter from Capital than The Empty Quarter, but 'the Imperial Fringe' is psychologically far more closer to the Imperial cultural mainstream than The Empty Quarter will ever be - and not just because the current Alkhalikoi dynasty hails from the sector, and maintains close relations with certain Marchman noble families. For centuries, it has become natural for promising Noble houses and ambitious Gushgusi individuals to abandon the Six Subsectors as quickly as they can: a drain of talent and vigour that has never been staunch.



Merchantmen of the Boom, abandoned in the Bust, rediscovered on Aandii, 993 Imperial.
The graphic is titled "Alien Derelict"© Christopher Gerber. See his work at
http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/browse.php?user_id=1123

If there's a bright center of the universe,
you're on the planet it's farthest from.

Luke Skywalker,
desertworld moisture farmer, *Star Wars*
-2544 Imperial

Begging the Imperial Court for more spending got nowhere: the Julian Threat has fallen from the scope of the chattering classes, and other issues now laid claim to the Emperor's eyes and purse – managing the rise of the senior Imperial systems to TL 13, soaring past all earlier technological accomplishments of mankind in all history (excluding the Darrians of the Spinward Marches). As the progressive noble families realized that no assistance would be sent, they pulled the strings necessary to abandon The Quarter as well, handing the region to the old, conservative, long-established families and their focus on stability over growth, and safety over change

The Breakup was rather unique, economically speaking. Most depressions only last a third of the length of the boom: but this Breakup lasted just as long as the False

Dawn did. More importantly, the worlds that most benefited from the boom largely escaped the immediate effects of the bust – but paid a different price, by falling behind the rest of the Imperium in terms of growth and technology. This enduring failure of the major local Imperial worlds has had a severe impact on the region. All human-dominated sectors have their share of euphoria and depression, but unlike the rest of the Imperium, the worlds of the Imperial Quarter never really recovered, even centuries after the Bust.

A man consists of his faith.
Whatever is his faith, even so is he.
Indian Proverb

The economic failure had a major religious impact as well: increased religious fervour for the 'real' religions of the Imperial Empty Quadrant – assorted variations of Hinduism, and the two local branches of Islam – led to a sharp decline in Gushgusi support for the Church of the Stellar Divinity. The religion would continue to grow in the Domain of Gateway, and later, Star Diviner

missionaries would build up strength in Antares Sector. Even so, support within the Quarter collapsed during the 300s, and would never recover. By 500 Imperial, most of those who did not convert to a resurgent Sunni or Kikhushegi Islam were absorbed into the more esoteric branches of Hinduism. The Beta Niobe Monastery would remain a point of pilgrimage, but most of the faithful would henceforth originate from outside The Empty Quarter.

While no world in Gamma Quadrant totally escaped the pain of the Breakup, some worlds suffered more than others. The consequences of the Breakup for Eninsish, Sashar, Kenrasda, Zukhisa, Dorado, Dharmendra and Askaath were especially harsh, as they faced waves of wars, tyrannies, die-offs, impoverishment, and technological collapses. Even the relatively prosperous world of Pamushgar, buffered from the tribulations elsewhere, went thru some difficulties (including the notorious 'Three Block War' in the megalopolis of Nazzei, in 358 Imperial).

Dream big dreams...
But remember to count the cost!
Native American trader proverb,
Empty Quarter

The most surprising casualty of the Bust was the Yashodhani Democracy. The leading financiers and commercial banks of that polity invested greatly in the boom: the losses stemming from the bust sent the Yashodhan government into a tailspin. Internecine conflict throughout the 300s weakened the democracy, until an Imperial Intervention was ordered 'to insure the security of Imperial borders.' Imperial Navy forces struck at the Democratic Navy, destroying most of it in a single battle over the homeworld in 390. A large number of missiles were then fired at the major planetary cities – which turned out to be illumination missiles, detonating harmlessly in the air. The Yashodhani took the hint, and the major factions agreed to dissolve the interstellar polity, in return for the independence of the home system.

Imperial Visit

Long after most of the economic damage was done, Emperor Anguistus (reigned 326-365) had a brief survey of the Six Subsectors done in the early 350s, in preparation for an Imperial tour of the area. The surprising discovery of the breathable layers of the gas giant Dagemi Vee spurred on the colony-minded Emperor to see the world for himself. While touring the Imperial Empty Quarter in 357, His Imperial Majesty finally got to see the world with his own two eyes, and breathe her air. Highly impressed, he proclaimed the discovery, terraforming (really, aeroforming) and colonization of such worlds to be the future of the Imperium, as breathable gas giants could hold hundreds of trillions of Imperial citizens in comfort. The Department of Gas Giant Colonization was created within the Ministry of Colonization: the numerous Scout activities around Dagemi Vee gave a badly needed shot in the arm to the local subsector economy.

However, the costs and unforeseen difficulties of this project just kept piling up. The priority of the project fell sharply after the death of Emperor Anguistus in 365, and funding shrunk year after year. By the early 400s, the entire department was seen as a boondoggle and closed, despite the pleas of the Sector Duke and the Duke of Nulinad. Only a single base was retained by the Imperial government, and transferred to the Imperial Scouts: several other scientific bases from various universities and institutes are also occupied, but only on an occasional basis.

Si fueris Romae, Romano vitito more;
si fueris alibi, vitito sicut ibi.

When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do;
when you are outside of Rome,
do as the Romans do outside of Rome.
Saint Augustine, -4125 to -4091



***His Imperial Majesty Anguistus, Eighth Emperor of the Third Imperium,
greet the Senior Baroness of Wesaswek at 124-357.***

The graphic is titled "The Arrival" © Chipp Walters. See his work at http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1449068

Even though reality failed to live up to his Imperial ambitions, Emperor Anguistus is still looked upon fondly by Gushgusi. He is generally seen as 'their' Emperor and the Lentuli Dynasty as 'their' ruling house. Assorted towns and cities, children, and starships are named after members of this dynasty, up to the present day. Visits by other members of High Nobility were restricted to Nulinad, Marhaban, and a few worlds in between, ignoring most of the comparatively worthless Six Subsectors.

As many systems are inordinately proud of the Emperor's visit, a list of the worlds he set foot on is provided below. Expect numerous bronze plaques with the inscription, "Emperor Anguistus of the Lentuli Dynasty Slept Here - ###-357" to take pride of place. Various tour groups, 'following in the footsteps of the Emperor', retrace the route of the Majestic Circuit on a regular basis.

The Emperor toured The Empty Quarter on the fast cruiser *Royalist*: the J4, 10,000-ton starship was sent to Nulinad as an orbiting museum after her decommissioning in 433 Imperial. *Royalist* was pressed

into service as an orbiting monitor during the desperate days of the Civil War era: having survived the period, the ~650-year-old ship is again serving as an Imperial museum. Most of the exhibits focus on the Lentuli Dynasty: a research centre, focusing on the person and times of Emperor Anguistus, is also maintained at the expense of the subsector Ducal house. He also dedicated a famous memorial to the 'senior' Ducal Lentuli family on the family holdings on Sabira: much later, this was joined with a larger memorial for the Imperial Lentuli Dynasty, as their line was extinguished during the Imperial Civil War. This larger memorial was dedicated by Grand Prince Zhakirov in 656 Imperial.

Emperor Anguistus was quite impressed with the orderly and peaceful nature of the Bwap-dominated worlds, compared with the rest of the Six Subsectors. After his return to Capital, he pushed for a well-respected Bwap family to rule over The Empty Quarter: despite the political difficulties, he got close to his objective, but he died at the ripe old age of 119 before making the investiture. His plans were soon pushed down the memory hole, over Bwap objections.

Itinerary of the Majestic Circuit of The Empty Quarter, 357 Imperial
(Enters The Empty Quarter)

Gagakam/0340	arrived at 039-357, departed on 041-357
Nulinad/0338	arrived at 050-357, departed on 065-357
Dagami/0738	arrived at 072-357, departed on 084-357
Sashar/0536	arrived at 091-357, departed on 094-357
Eninsish/0535	arrived at 101-357, departed on 108-357
Gudina/0334	arrived at 115-357, departed on 121-357
Surogota/0231	arrived at 128-357, departed on 130-357
Wesaswek/0229	arrived at 137-357, departed on 140-357
Marhaban/0426	arrived at 147-357, departed on 159-357
Sabira/0729	arrived at 166-357, departed on 190-357
Tapawa/0931	arrived at 196-357, departed on 197-357
Lazisar/1233	arrived at 204-357, departed on 208-357
Ka-aswa/1230	arrived at 215-357, departed on 217-357
Yogesh/1328	arrived at 225-357, departed on 227-357
Sibikliir/1430	arrived at 235-357, departed on 236-357
Gimushi/1431	arrived at 243-357, departed on 246-357
Aleshanee/1731	arrived at 253-357, departed on 253-357
Hebrin/1930	arrived at 260-357, departed on 268-357
Drago's Belt/2032	arrived at 275-357, departed on 275-357
Irash/2036	arrived at 281-357, departed on 288-357
Lakea/1738	arrived at 295-357, departed on 297-357
Pamushgar/1537	arrived at 305-357, departed on 309-357
Ardamashii/1237	arrived at 315-357, departed on 315-357
Indara/0837	arrived at 322-357, departed on 325-357
Ushmigad/0638	arrived at 333-357, departed on 334-357
Nulinad/0338	arrived at 341-357, departed on 345-357

(Leaves The Empty Quarter)

The Lions and the Sheiks

Do not tell a friend anything
you would conceal from an enemy.
Arabian Proverb

After the pain of Breakup, the Imperial Empty Quarter became a sinkhole of failure, with drastically greater poverty to any other part of Imperial Space. Many different reasons for the severity of the Breakup were offered:

- the tribalism and xenophobia of local cultures
- the large number of metal-poor worlds
- the dominance of high-pop desert worlds
- a tradition of endemic piracy, terrorism, and coups d'état
- bitter dynastic competition among the local Nobles
- corporate and megacorporate unwillingness to invest locally
- the lack of political pull the sector had in the Imperial Court

As the Breakup drew to an end in c. 400, 'The Bengali Lions', an alliance of wealthy East Indian industrialists centred on Irash and Nulinad pooled their forces, and worked in a semi-concerted manner to undermine and weaken Arab dominance in the Six Subsectors. 'The Stellar Sheiks' of the local Imperial aristocracy and military forces – especially those from Hebrin, Mugama, and Udisis – naturally resisted fiercely. Throughout the next two centuries (from c. 420 to the Imperial Civil War of the early 600s Imperial), the East Indian Hindus and the Sunni Moslem Arabs would clash and strike at each other in a struggle for dominance: sometimes directly using household or planetary forces, but often indirectly, using Imperial bureaucracy as a cloak, manipulating religious leaders or local grievances, or striking at each other's economic and corporate foundations. These skirmishes, especially the economic warfare, hindered development within the Imperial Quarter for two centuries until these hostilities were swamped by the large-scale dynastic struggles of the Imperial Civil War.



The Imperial Gardens of Hebrin, 990 Imperial. On a world where water is currency, the very existence of these Ducal rainforest gardens – one for Terra, one for Vland, one for Sylea – speaks of unimaginable wealth.

The graphic is titled “The last gardens” © Yann Souetre (Remain-Silent 2003-2010).

See his work at <http://remain-silent.cgsociety.org/gallery/504527/>

Also, visit his futuristic audio visual cycle Men-Machine-Souls available for free at <http://download.remain-silent.net>

The largest proxy war fought by the Bengali Lions was over Bravo Base. Bravo retained her hostility to the modern Imperium until c. 580, when civil strife on the issue of Imperial legitimacy began to tear apart her social fabric. Normally, the resulting struggle would have been a brief affair, but the Sheiks and the Lions backed the separate factions with money and weapons, allowing the war to blaze on long after it normally would have burnt itself off.

In war, three quarters turns on personal character and relations; the balance of manpower and materials counts only for the remaining quarter.

Napoleon Bonaparte, -2757 to -2700

The bitter, grinding war led to the death of over 95% of the world’s population, and ruined her infrastructure and centuries-old Rule of Man installations. After the devastation, most of the Sheik-backed faction relocated to nearby Corsabren in 587. The Indian-backed remnant on Bravo Base, while still revering the Rule of Man, were now dependent on off-world support and could no longer afford hostility to the modern Imperium. (They dropped the ‘Base’ from the world’s name at this time, as well.) Soon after, Corsabren was declared an Imperial Client, and the

Imperial Navy quickly established their long-desired ‘early-warning base’ in Corsabren system in 596 – despite strong Julian protests to both these actions.

Despite her isolated position, Corsabren (occasionally referred to as ‘Corsabren Base’ by some inhabitants) receives a good deal more than her fair share of ‘pirate attacks’ – especially since the ‘pirates’, given the choice to capture a big fat slow trader or take a whack at the naval base, prefer to hit the base more than half the time. The handover of the base to the local government in 600 – who hired Imperial starmercs to run the installation – hasn’t helped much. In time, it became the preferred battleground to bloody green starmerc & naval crews.

An aside: the Kikhushegi of Lazisar positioned themselves as an ‘unbiased pro-Imperial observer’ during these conflicts, gaining much Imperial favour and respect. They failed to cash in by taking the Sector Capital position, but did win benefits such as increased megacorporate investment and taking a central role in the sector Imperial forces, partially displacing the Sunni Muslims who had traditionally dominated the local Imperial military forces.



Imperial citizens fleeing a ravaged world. Marquis Iguushii Starport, Gimushi, 612 Imperial.

The graphic is titled "Last Ship Out" © Max V. Nimos.

See his work at http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=722792

The Imperial Civil War

During the Civil War, the dynastic hostilities were subsumed into the general chaos of pirate attacks, planetary governments 'evening up old scores' with their neighbours, and sporadic religious & racial conflicts across the sector. The poverty of the area discouraged major interstellar wars, invasions, and deployable armoured corps: nobody could afford them, and no arms merchant in his right mind would extend credit to this collection of deadbeat governments. Due to these restraints, raids, piracy, small-unit actions, and the occasional spectacular incident were the order of the day. Even after the end of the Civil War, this remains the trademark of the 'Gushgusi School of War': light, fast and cheap.

The military caste did not originate as a party of patriots, but as a party of bandits.
Henry Louis Mencken, -2641 to -2565 Imperial

In addition to interstellar neighbours with old grudges and no Imperial supervision, another danger was

renegade Noble/Imperial fleets and Ikonaz pirate fleets, who – oddly enough – generally behaved in a highly similar fashion. These organized forces would descend like exceedingly polite locusts on any undefended world. They preferred to avoid violence, and were careful to take only 'surplus' wealth. Worlds that were able to firmly resist were bypassed, to keep operating costs down and the fleet intact. The only real difference is that the leaders of renegade Noble/Imperial fleets, to strengthen their claim to the Imperial Throne or prove their loyalty to the Imperium, would occasionally do some 'good Samaritan work' to build up support from the populace.

However, the most destructive force during the Civil War were the Beta Quadrant pirate raids. These Vargr, desperate to tear at some Imperial flesh, set up a network of fuel dumps in the gaps of the Sangre – Cairne – Sahale systems, bypassing the Imperial bases at Corsabren and Neelamani. With this makeshift (but redundant) chain of jump3 fuel jumps, the pirates of Beta Quadrant swarmed into The Empty Quarter like swarms of ravaging locusts, devouring small shipping and poorly defended worlds like the killers they were.

For a while, it seemed that the bad old days of the Vargr Pillaging had returned.

To the great surprise of all, what put a stop to the Red Vargr invasion was not the divided and weakened Imperial Navy, but the organized Ikonaz hunting packs. The Ovaghoun Vargr grew more and more disgusted by the behaviour of the Red Vargr, and in 613, breaking all sorts of unspoken agreements and mutual understandings, turned their claws against their racial kin (with the enthusiastic agreement of their Ikonaz Vilani underlings.) A series of brutal encounters, referred to as the Year of Butchery, ended with the destruction of the last fuel dump in 353-613, but the now scattered Beta Quadrant pirates continued to endanger the unwary starship until the 620s. The hard feelings between the Ovaghoun and the Suedzuk Vargr remain unto today (993 Imperial.)

The dogs bark, but the caravan moves on.
Arabian Proverb

After the Year of Butchery, the Imperial fleets found that they could no longer be supported by the weakened local systems, and looked elsewhere to build up their base of support. The Ikonaz pirates relocated to Antares and Ley Sector, for similar reasons – and truly furious with the Suedzuk for ruining what could have been a profitable tax-farming operation. (Think ‘all the tax-monies of the Imperium, but without an ounce of the political responsibilities.’) The run-of-the-mill, small-time pirate gangs that followed in their wake were actually a welcomed alternative on many worlds, as they were not as powerful, as controlling, or as taxing as the big boys were.

Pirate’s Fight, Pirate’s Flight

A prince never lacks legitimate reasons
to break his promise.
Niccolo Machiavelli, -3052 to -2994 Imperial

Despite nominal local loyalty to the Imperium, distant controversies regarding the high and mighty meant little to either the pirates or the surviving noble lines. After Regent Arbellastra had addressed more significant matters – unifying the Imperial military and consolidating Noble loyalty around her and her search for a legitimate heir to the Iridium Throne – she had time to deal with lesser matters, such as the weakness of Imperial Authority within the unimportant region of The Empty Quarter. A small pool of naval resources was provided to Archduke Deidin of Antares to re-establish Imperial Rule within the Quarter – but they were

redirected for other purposes. In the end, the Regent had to bargain with the Archduke of Gateway, promising development funds in return for his release of sufficient Colonial warships to retake the rimward Empty Quarter.

Preparations to re-establish Imperial power began in early 625. The Bwap Tap-a-wewaka-atapas had managed to dampen pirate activity within Lentuli subsector, and freelance patriots from Ley and Fornast sectors had by c. 625 already regained Nulinad subsector from pirate domination. However, Gimushi was divided into a loyalist zone – led by Lazisar and Gimushi – and powerful pirate groups who had taken over much of Pamushgar’s industrial base for their own purposes. Yogesh, Hebrin, and Udisis subsectors had no Imperial presence in local space, and the minor systems – which couldn’t pay Danesgeld to the pirates or put up a decent defence – suffered greatly under their misrule.

Ley Sector Colonial forces first fought to drive out the corsairs from Irash Cluster, using Irash herself as their base of operations. After the immediate area was secured, the expeditionary group were again gathered over Irash, and then divided to push forward along two offensive axes. Task Force Lazisar, the larger jump2 force, was to move against Pamushgar, destroy the corsair establishments and force there, then split to occupy or destroy the major ports (A or B-class) within the subsector before reuniting in Lazisar. There, reinforced by the surviving jump-capable warships of the Depot at Lazisar, they would break up into small squadrons to chase down and destroy the surviving pirate groups. Task Force Hebrin, a collection of jump3 warships, was commanded to go to the key system of Shuiku. Once opposition there was destroyed, Drago’s Belt was to be secured, then Udisis, with the Force moving to Hebrin for repairs & rearmament.

Task Force Lazisar suffered moderate losses over Pamushgar before destroying the pirate ships in the Battle of Pamushgar in 265-626. However, they were unable to neutralise the world’s defences, and were forced to retreat to Irash. Task Force Hebrin was ensnared by hostiles within Drago’s Belt, and remained during the latter part of 626 to hunt down the swarm of corsairs infesting the system’s three asteroid belts. While the police action was successful, the level of ship damage and losses sustained by Imperial Ley forces was a good deal higher than expected. Instead of pushing on to Udisis, a small picket group was left in-system and the rest continued to Hebrin, skipping Udisis. Once there, they worked with Hebrin’s armed

services and spies to determine the nature of the enemy at Udisis.

The system was ruled by the 'Opie Corporation', essentially, a large group of thugs with starships and big guns. Local Nobility negotiated and co-operated with the pirates, limiting their use of violence and shielding the population somewhat. When covert contact with the Imperium was re-established, agents of the Regent asked for help in gathering information and undermining the authority of the Corporation. Local scepticism about the strength of the Imperium and the certainty of the extinction of their house if caught – both family and servants alike – meant that few cared to risk their lives on the promises of a secret agent.

All warfare is based on deception.
Hence, when able to attack,
we must seem unable;
when using our forces,
we must seem inactive;
when we are near, we must make the enemy
believe we are far away;
when far away, we must make him
believe we are near.
Hold out baits to entice the enemy.
Feign disorder,
and crush him.
Sun Tzu, -5065 to -5017 Imperial

Of the few, the most prominent and effective was House Layamon. At enormous personal risk, this Noble House violated their solemn oaths to the pirate lords, and provided the Imperium with "useful information, contacts, and stratagems on the most efficient way to take down the Corporation." Their crowning achievement was the bribery of a group of pirate captains: their unexpected betrayal during the Battle of Udisis (72-627) shifted the tide of battle from a likely defeat to a crushing victory for the Imperium, at the

cost of the orbital starport and the few space habitats that had survived over two decades of war.

Courage leads to heaven; fear to death.
Seneca, fl. -4470 imperial

Lessons learned from the Battle of Udisis led to a reworking of Imperial strategy on retaking Pamushgar. To conserve hulls, extensive intelligence was gathered and the smallest possible force was deployed. Local anti-pirate forces, supported by Imperial loyalist members of the planetary military establishment, succeeded in taking back the starport and surrounding installations. Synthetic evidence & sensor traces of a major Imperial fleet loitering in the outer system were laid down: this spooked the local corsairs into flight. Seeing this, the government turned against the pirates' lackeys & quislings, eventually forcing most to flee into the vast world-girding deserts of dry Pamushgar. By the time the small Imperial fleet arrived in 175-628, the majority of the surviving freebooters were more than willing to surrender to the Imperials rather than face the personality replacements the Pamushgar government had in store for them.

With the fall of Pamushgar, the pirates lacked the industrial and population base needed to mount a genuine challenge to Imperial power. All of Force Hebrin was withdrawn, as was two-thirds of Force Lazisar. The remainder of Force Lazisar was transferred to the Sector Fleet of The Empty Quarter, and used for sweep up remaining pirate forces and installations within the sector. This rather underequipped unit completed its mission by c. 633, thanks to regular infusions of men and material from the Lazisar System Directorate. In 640, Empress Arbella gave Lazisar system the title "Bulwark of the Imperium", something which the residents are inordinately proud of. From this time, it also became customary for the Count Lazisar to also be Duke Gimushi, as well – much to the chagrin of the Marquis Pamushgar.

This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. The Bagginses had lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him.

This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained – well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end.

From The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien,
-2629 to -2548 Imperial



Starships at rest. Marquis Iguushii Starport, Gimushi, 627 Imperial.

The graphic above, titled "Spaceport", was created by Max V. Nimos.

See his work at http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1077608

Zukhisa

By Alvin W. Plummer

Using Zukhisa

Zukhisa is primarily a setting for low-rung Travellers, either just starting out, working to get back on their feet after a string of bad luck, or trying to get by with their ship impounded – by the Law, by their enemies, or by their bankers. As usual, Classic Traveller rules and the BITS task system is used here. The starships, spacecraft, and the Highport were made using High Guard Shipyard 1.13, written by Andrew Moffatt-Vallance.

This article is focused on fleshing out the background of the world and system of Zukhisa, Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Starport (a Class B starport), and the typical forces protecting a mildly important world. This is not primarily an adventure, but a few ways to make ends meet are provided, which can lead to adventurous experiences. A way to ‘hit the jackpot’ is also provided, to get the PCs the money, the contacts, or the providential circumstances needed to get off this dirty rockball.

[Of course, role-players may instead use the boon to dig deeper roots into the world, and interact more with the setting: finding friends and allies, righting wrongs (and making enemies), making money (and giving their enemies a bigger target), etc.]

An outline of planetary politics is provided at the beginning of the article. The law enforcement and construction sections give an interesting overview of Zukhisa society, when read between the lines. The ‘Space Patrol’ portion is meant to be a standard scenario for spacebased PCs working with a planetary government, as a baseline, it can and should be modified to fit other circumstances and stories. Finally, an organizational list of the Royal Space Navy is provided, with ships and missions. Again, this is meant primarily as a pseudo-generic outline, that Referees can adopt to suit their particular game.

Setting: In Local Orbit

The scenario starts out with said PCs in Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Highport (named after a **First** Imperium prince). It’s a good-sized port, dedicated primarily to the system spaceship fleet that keeps the low-energy¹ world of Zukhisa running along nicely. A

secondary function is in shipping out TL 6 semi-fabricated manufactured goods to Nulinad (a TL 9 world two parsecs trailing-coreward: UWP A556894-A) and Dini (a TL B world two parsecs spinward. In 993: Celebres/Antares 3139 C3828AB-B) for finishing and packaging. As such, about 100,000 dtons of cargo and 7,000 passengers pour thru this port a week (excluding traffic from other nearby systems). The interstellar starship traffic, joined with the controlled frenzy that makes up interplanetary spaceship traffic, makes for a very busy port, with dozens of large vessels present at any one moment.

Due to technological restrictions, the world is unable to defend itself. Normally, the 158th Colonial Fleet² maintains a squadron of two to three 2,000-ton destroyers and a few SDB squadrons to shepherd interstellar and interplanetary traffic, while the planetary government maintains a subsidised SDB group to protect the homeworld and starport.

However, with the regular Imperial fleet sent to the Old Expanses, the Colonial fleet has been dispersed to try and plug in all the gaps. The native Royal Space Force – consisting of a brand-spanking new 10,000-dton small carrier and several SDBs and Arrowhead scouts – now has to protect the homeworld, the starport, and the interplanetary trade lanes. An occasional visit from the Antares sector navy helps to relieve the pressure on the overextend forces.

Setting: On the World

Despite all this reasonably advanced hardware in orbit, Zukhisa remains a TL 6, high-pop, industrial world (UWP B5749B9-6). And by ‘Industrial’ we mean ‘Going outside? Don’t forget your filter mask!’ The world never had a native biosphere, which is just as well, as it certainly isn’t going to get one now. The ample minerals the world originally had have been exhausted for centuries, as the industrial hunger of nearby Antares has taken its toll. But the workforce and the factories remain, hungry for work – and work has been supplied by a large number of Emptyhead (and many Antarean) manufacturing concerns.

With the easy iron and nickel deposits long gone, portions of the planet’s surface were cracked up to

open up new deposits centuries ago: ultra-deep mines, plunging dozens of miles through the crust and into the mantle, were also excavated via meson tools to access the rarer and more valuable mineral deposits.³

Culturally, the world is very old-school, low-tech Vilani. Over 70% of the population are pure-blooded members of that race – but, thanks to the high level of pollution, they don't enjoy the blessings of long-life most pure Vilani get. The common tongue is either Modern Vilani (in the major cities) or Old High Vilani (in the countryside). Fortunately for the PCs, Anglic is spoken in all the major cities, and among most educated men in the countryside. As for the rest of the population, about 20% are Mixed Vilani, 5% are native Vargr, and the remaining 5% are off-worlders, mainly Vilani, Solomani Arab, and Solomani East Indians. (The few Bwaps here are always in hazmat suits – the airborne poisons here seep directly into their skins.)

Setting: Gii Daarusharsha

This brings us to Prince Ikupigushi Imperial **Downport**, which is located three kilometres from the startown/commercial centre of Gii Daarusharsha. There are no (civilian) roads connecting the Downport and the city, but there is a regular and frequent TL 6 rail service. To keep a pretty face for off-world visitors, industrial pollution is kept at a minimum: you can go out without a filter mask for almost half the year here! Imported soil, water trucks transporting purified H₂O, and clever TL 5/6 air filtration techniques allow sprawling TL 6 glass-enclosed parks and gardens to exist. The dim white-yellow sunlight from the ever-overcast sky leaves something to be desired, but with the new *electrical* lighting finally replacing the old gas & oil lamps, the park plant life is visibly perking up.

In this city, unique to the world, Anglic, Bwap, and the major Vargr Ovaghoun & Irilitok tongues are official languages, and non-humans make up a good 15% of the city's seven million residents. Off-world technology is fairly common, but – due to the world's low tech level – it is quite expensive to maintain.

For a provincial TL 6 culture, the Vilani treat the Ovaghoun (including Ikonaz) and Irilitok Vargr fairly well – but this is not surprising, once you realise that the Ovaghoun have adopted much of Vilani culture as their own, while the Irilitok Vargr were specifically bred to serve humans. (The observant PC can determine this by their friendly and cheerful disposition and their pleasing (to the human eye) physiognomy – big child-like eyes, short snouts, and a rather upright posture.) Other Vargr races are only allowed to temporarily visit

Gii Daarusharsha, and are barred from the rest of the world: this explicitly includes Archduke Koktso of Antares, as his family-pack is genetically and culturally Gvegh, the dominant Vargr race of the Spinward Marches. The Suedzuk Vargr – a.k.a. the Red Vargr – are specifically banned from leaving the starport, due to their well-known propensity for violence.

Note that most off-world technology is in the TL 9 – B range: air/rafts remain an uncommon sight, due to both rarity and the thick fog. Off-worlders should be sure to use radar-based navigation, until they become familiarly with all the steel & mason-type skyscrapers. They may be low-tech, but hitting one at speed will kill you right quick while barely leaving a scratch on the building. Robots are unusual enough to generate a crowd just by walking around. TL 9 computers are fabulous machines, but are too valuable to just carry around. It's difficult for non-corporate users to find a way to charge them up, and woe unto you if there's a hard disk crash – quite likely, with all the grime in the air... (The major corporate and government offices can afford to maintain Clean Rooms for their off-world portables.)

Setting: Politics

In general, individual cities on Zukhisa are dedicated to producing a particular consumer good or product: the labour force of Samgakhakir, for example, produces men's jackets exclusively, while Pin Iidilugir has done nothing but punch out light steel cases (for transport off-world, to eventually house hand-held electronic devices) for centuries untold. Each industrial centre is the fief of a separate King (currently, there are no ruling queens on patriarchal Zukhisa), with the WorldKing in charge of the starport and interstellar operations. The major mines are under the dominion of various Dukes (local-peerage Dukes, obviously, not Imperial Dukes), and the miscellaneous regions of the world are run by assorted Marquis, Earls, Baron, and Landholders of the planetary peerage.

As of 993, it is reasonable to consider the government a non-charismatic dictatorship, as the WorldKing and his allies rule because they have the guns, not because of tradition, religion/ideology, or technological expertise. However, the members of the Royal Circle of Zukhisa – the name of the planetary (and system) government – is working hard to build up justifications for their rule that don't rely on the display or promise of raw violence.

Of course, The Powers That Be already have comprehensive control over the military, crushed all

organized opposition to their rule, and have established extensive off-world corporate connections to insure the flow of money – especially with the megacorporation General Products, LIC. First things first, as always – but with the basics accomplished, it's now time to reshape the world into an image that they are comfortable with.

The Royal Circle is building up their respective bureaucracies, a planetary environmental movement (requiring planetary leadership and centralized regulation of all heavy industry and large corporations on the planet, as the WorldKing would quickly point out)⁴, and family & clan networks to shore up the foundations of their rule. In addition, by demanding the 'certification' of all academic staff and the 'licensing' of all newspapers and book publishers, the Royal Circle is moving to isolate the weakened intellectual opposition to their rule – or even the memory of earlier times.

Despite this flurry of political manoeuvring, the lives of the ordinary Vilani-dominant Zukhisai subject continue to revolve around clan and caste and corp. These institutions are what trains their children, determines their career, their mates, their housing, and their duties to the ancestors. The WorldKing sees no need to interfere with this – the Vilani react very, very badly to changes to their way of life.

Work: Law Enforcement in Gii Daarusharsha

The WorldKing's Watch of Gii Daarusharsha is interested in hiring off-worlders – even drifters and scoundrels – to help them solve several unsolved murders and thefts. The only real requirement is that the PCs

- 1) are well-versed with high technology,
- 2) are conversant with the Traveller starfaring culture,
- 3) has some need to stay on-world, at least long enough to give value for their salary

(If the PCs are working as some kind of 'community service' deal – if you give help us with this, we will drop charges on that – so much the better. If the work is good enough, the Watch may even pay the PCs properly, just to show their pleasure with good work.)

There has been a series of major thefts in the starport and in the distribution of off-world goods, culminating in a series of murders within the interstellar trading community. The WorldKing is not pleased at all: as the senior planetary Imperial Baron⁵, he will be held *personally* responsible for the safety of traders and the

protection of peaceable trade by the Imperial Hierarchy. Already, agents of the Ducal court are asking him uncomfortable questions. He wants the heat off, soonest.

The actual question of whom is doing what to whom and why is left for the Referee to decide. What I will do here is point out the restraints the PCs will work under:

1) The WorldKing's Watch has access only to TL 6/7 investigative equipment. This does include most modern investigative tools, includes polygraphs, finger printing, and photographs. But there's no DNA analysis, no electronic trails, and only weak, paper-based ID controls. Widespread surveillance is largely by informers: there is an expensive closed-circuit TV network to watch the public in Gii Daarusharsha (with lots and lots of gaps), but it's simply too expensive to roll-out in any other city.⁶

2) Most of the Watch is uninterested in what the PCs are up to, so long as it doesn't interfere with their main goal – making sure that the authority of the WorldKing is respected, and public order is upheld. The commoners and the masters of Gii Daarusharsha are quite aware that their (relatively) comfortable lifestyle is dependent on the favour of the WorldKing, so policing is generally trouble-free in this loyalist city.

3) The patriarchal and humanist order that dominates Zukhisa (and most of the Imperial Empty Quarter) is weaker at Gii Daarusharsha than anywhere else in on the planet – but even here, the all-male, all-Vilani Watch can expect trouble if they touch a woman (or even a Bwap or Vargr female) that doesn't belong to them. Family & clan authority has sharp, pointed teeth on this world, and can sometimes cow even the WorldKing.

4) 'Trouble' generally refers to beatings: neither the Watch nor the population has access to firearms, as this is reserved for the King's Army and the Royal Guard⁷. Even criminals avoid the things: the consequences of committing a crime with a gun are so severe, that practically everyone just uses truncheons (or, if they are really bad boys, knives) instead. Even the *handling* of a gun is worth your life on Zukhisa.

- a. The PCs may be able to get an exception for themselves, but it will take some good people skills. I would use two Difficulty tests using Liaison: one, with the PCs talking to their Watch supervising officer, and one for the officer talking with the King's Army.
- b. The old gun-smuggling networks have been gutted by aggressive work by the WorldKing's Watch. However, a PC smuggler with an entrepreneurial bend could rebuild them, with himself at the centre of the web. It would take a lot of work to a) sniff out the old customer base

and b) convince them to trust him. Those criminals and resistance forces that still have access to a few well-hidden guns do not trust off-world strangers with pretty words. Few locals do.

5) Like other planetary Watches, the WorldKing's Watch maintains an extensive network of informers, but this net is rather weak at the starport itself. A major problem is the lack of informers and allies among the stream of off-world visitors. This, more than anything else, is what the PCs are expected to remedy.

6) Actual law enforcement powers are technically quite expansive, especially when threats to the WorldKing's rule are involved. But as this generally does not come into play in this most loyal city, most Watch work involves grabbing thieves, hauling run-of-the-mill murderers to the courts for sentencing, enforcing Vilani morals and conformism, and networking with community leaders to identify and neutralize trouble spots.

a. Note that Vilani crime, as a rule, is fundamentally different than Solomani crime: it is more subtle and indirect, and is less driven by passion and more by careful thought and pre-planning. If the criminal has the complicit support of the community – when disposing of a troublesome innovator, for example – convicting him will prove nearly impossible. The Vilani are as systematic in organizing the proper, correct way to commit a crime as Vilani law enforcement is at solving the case.

7) Being composed of primarily Vilani men, the Watch has delegated a certain amount of authority to Vargr and Mixed Vilani 'Concerned Loyalist Groups', which punished most crime in their neighbourhoods. 'Family troubles' are first defused to reduce violence, and then referred to the authority of various Vilani clan and neighbourhood elders for a more enduring solution.

8) The WorldKing's Watch is generally honest, but some corruption does exist: shaking down unlicensed prostitutes, allowing criminal groups to maintain a monopoly in certain neighbourhoods in return for certain services, defiling evidence to get someone who 'they know is guilty of something', etc. There is an Internal Affairs department, composing of four respected officers and commanded by a very upright nephew of the WorldKing, who sniffs out and tracks down corrupt Watchers.

The Boon: It is possible that, in the course of their investigations of the off-world merchants, the PCs will gain information that can get them a lot of money or a valuable resource if played right. How they access it without tipping off their employers – who would prefer to seize it themselves, either for the departmental

budget or to line their own pockets – is a question left for the Referee to judge.

Contact: Shannash Linuuxsa, Esper Man: This gentleman has access to, and can use, an Esper machine⁸. An invention of the Ziru Sirka (a.k.a. the Vilani-dominated First Imperium), this clunky, "TL 7" machine can pull off stunts with pictures that even high-tech 21st police imaging labs simply cannot do. Mr. Linuuxsa is a former member of the WorldKing's Watch, and still retains several contacts with that organization.

Work: Construction Job in Pin lidilugir

Pin lidilugir, a metropolis of eight million set on the banks of the Pin River, is a central production centre of light metal cases used across the Imperial Empty Quarter and much of Antares sector, as well. After the bankruptcy of the Aetherian Multispecies production conglomerate, a sprawling complex of factories was left abandoned. Now, years later, Antares Holdings, LLC – a major shareholder of the General Products megacorporation, and therefore very rich and very influential – has decided to purchase the abandoned complex for redevelopment, via some shell companies.

The PCs have an opportunity to be hired by General Products agents to investigate why Antares Holdings is making a move here. However, they have a better-paying chance to work as construction workers for Antares Holdings, handling the high-tech artigrav construction platforms local TL 6 labour can't deal with or maintain. These 'construction platforms' are the grav plates of dead & abandoned starships, air/rafts, and G-carriers, recycled as floating platforms to ferry men & material to the construction site. PC engineers and experience grease-monkeys can earn quite a bundle, but they will have to bring their teammates up to speed.

If the PCs sign on with General Products:

They will find it very difficult to get any of the closed-mouthed locals to talk to them. As an example, just stepping into a Vilani Smoking Club and trying to 'hang out with the locals' will get you tossed right out without an invitation from a regular. Getting such an invitation is a Hopeless task for an off-world alien, Impossible for an off-world Solomani, Staggering for an off-world Vilani, and Formidable for a Zukhisai Vilani who's not from this town. The best way to get information is likely to be snooping and copying certain documents, and electronic eavesdropping (if the PCs can find something to eavesdrop!) High-tech bugs would be very useful, if the PCs could find a source...

If the PCs sign on with Antares Holdings:

While working, they will have to fend off agents (and perhaps saboteurs) from General Products: the planetary director of GP operations on Zukhisa is desperate to know what is going on, and believes that the PCs are the 'weak link' that can give him the clues he needs to react appropriately. The Referee should roll to determine how long the PCs are on the work site (2D6+3 months): attempts by GP to interfere with the PCs work range from red tape to bribery to nasty road accidents to unexpected labour strikes, but does not involve firearms or other forms of direct violence. (That would get the local King's Watch angry, and GP believes in good corporate-government relations.)

Besides GP actions, the general problems of working on a construction site brings up plenty of opportunities for industrial accidents: employee safety is not a major concern at the site (there is always another guy ready to take the job)⁹, TL 6 equipment and material handling leaves something to be desired, and fighting on-site corruption (via the local mafia) is an ongoing battle. The PCs will have to interact heavily with the local labour: mostly stalwart Vilani muscle, but some Vargr workers as well (the Vargr are not as strong as the men, but they are more daring, and have better agility – which comes in useful for certain specialist work.)

The Boon: It is possible that, as the new factory complex nears completion, GP will offer the PCs what they really need to get off-world – in return for either working as double agents for General Products, or not interfering as covert GP agents infiltrate the site and 'fix' certain high-tech platforms to shut down production good and hard. If the PCs don't go along, they miss out the boon – but the Referee may choose to give a different kind of reward to the PCs for not turning turn-coat on their employers.

Contact: Mister Mgoe (short for Mgoefiigroelloeng), an Irilitok/Ovaghoun Vargr scrounger. If the PCs need some impossible-to-find equipment, Mister Mgoe can find it, no matter how high-tech it is. (This goes up to and including guns & ammo, dangerous things to even handle on Zukhisa). Of course, it will take time to get the more rare goods. And as every Traveller knows, there is no free lunch: Mister Mgoe is good enough to name his price, and he knows it. However, if the PCs are good to the on-site Vargr labourers, Mister Mgoe is likely to look on the PCs with some favor. If the PCs treat the Vargr workers like trash, and then try to deal with Mister Mgoe, they will be sure to regret it.

Work: Space Protection over Khimshikha

[Referee: instead of treating this job as any other, you may use it as a 'secondary step', the job that gets the PCs off-world, but not out of the system.]

The Royal Space Force is a collection largely composed of spaceships (as opposed to jump-capable starships) built in the Highport for the planetary government. It is under the command of the WorldKing, who also claims ownership of all the other planets and asteroids of Zukhisa system – a claim recognized by the Imperium (and, almost as important, General Products). The Force itself is financed indirectly by General Products, to insure steady, uninterrupted production on Zukhisa. There is no way the planetary economy could have paid for it... and General Products feels that planetary governments are more reliable than mercenaries, when it comes to asset protection.

The PCs, being experienced space hands (or at least trained and familiar with the environment), are approached by a representative of the Royal Circle of Zukhisa to crew a vessel and/or train others to do so. As the system government does not trust mercenaries per se, they would prefer to have the PCs join the Force, and swear an oath to serve and obey the WorldKing for a four-year term of service. They will be paid at the contracted rate (NOT the standard rate of local troopers), and may take up an offer of planetary citizenship as well. (Yes, the offer is even extended to nonhumans – except Red Vargr, naturally.)

[Referee: local citizenship can be quite useful, if the PCs got in legal hot water elsewhere: Zukhisa has no extradition treaties with *anyone*. Even the Imperial government must negotiate on a case-by-case basis, if they want someone on Zukhisai soil – a request which will be denied, as often as not. However, Zukhisa does have several business agreements with General Products...]

The PCs won't be given the jump-capable ships, but could definitely command a SDB, or work with the S-soldiers as regular troopers or cadre. Most of the men they work with are the best of the best, who wanted to join the Royal Space Force since childhood, and have spent their entire lives fighting and working to get where they are. A few are members of multi-generational Space Force dynasties: this is especially true for the NCOs.¹⁰

[Referee: when generating NPC members of the Royal Space Force, no UWP attribute may be below 6, and at

least one attribute should be above 8. Roughly 0.5% of the Force are male nonhumans: the very fact that they wear the uniform is sufficient testament to their work ethic, tenacity, and character.

One (1), an Ovaghoun male Vargr, wears a single golden officers' scar on his face: Lieutenant Hfoekiigrudzr'troar ("Just Lt. Troar will do.") commands the troops onboard the Garden of Sakuntala. NCOs have their rank scars tinted red.]

The PCs service with the Royal Space Force should be standard Traveller fare, with a few quirks. The force has to handle quite a lot of in-system traffic. Pirate attacks are rare over Zukhisa, but can be expected over the Khimshikha gas giant. Protecting spaceship traffic to and from Khimshikha has always been difficult, but with the Imperial Navy gone for now, it's thrice as hard. Fortunately, the occasional Imperial Navy patrol squadron from nearby Antares sector has been known to pop in 'just to say hi to the neighbours', a very welcome event. Still, it's no piece of cake: good thing most merchantmen are armed...

(One good thing about attacks on interplanetary shipping is that, with a bit of luck, the pirates might lose too much liquid hydrogen in the fight and can't jump out. If that happens, there's a chance that they can be intercepted before they get to a local source of LHyd to refuel and bug out.)

Most raiders are standard TL B Vargr ships or the unarmoured civilian craft used by 'opportunity pirates', which are definitely no match for the SDBs or even the Nipa fighters (in large numbers). There are grim reports, however, of high-tech pirates from Ikon who are interested in a major heist of General Product wares. Such rumours would be worth the PCs time to follow up on, even if just to disprove them.

The Boon: A major victory by the PCs against great odds (multiple low-tech pirates, or one or two high-tech pirates from the Rukadukaz Republic) grants them great favour in the eyes of the WorldKing and General Product subsector executives. It would be a shame for the PCs to let such an opportunity slip past them, unexploited...

Contact: The commander of the Honnêamise, Captain Mazum Giinshiirnir, has a broad network of links with Vilani organizations. He knows a good fraction of leading Vilani movers and shakers across Nulinad subsector on a first name basis – especially those with an Imperial military connection. If a PC is Vilani (genetically or culturally) it wouldn't hurt at all to make

his acquaintance. An encyclopaedic knowledge of Imperial Navy traditions wouldn't hurt either, including 'the proper toasts for the proper occasion.'¹¹

Appendix: Rockets and Reactionless Engines

Zukhisa is a TL 6 world: so in regard to space, her technology is equivalent to that of the United States in the 1950s – she has the ability to use nuclear material (but no planetary radioactives to put the knowledge to work), and an understanding of rocketry (but no reliable ballistic missiles). If she was restricted to locally-developed technology, the Royal Circle of Zukhisa could put satellites in orbit... and that's it. She certainly can't build and maintain an orbiting starport, capable of building TL A-C spacecraft!

But that's exactly what that big chunk of metal in geostationary orbit over Gii Daarusharsha is doing. This has much more to do with the Imperium's desire to nurture interstellar trade than with the billions down below – although they do appreciate the Imperium's assistance in bringing in the trade that keeps everybody fed, clothed and housed.

Appendix: The Royal Space Force

Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Highport is primarily a cargo port, as not many people care to visit Zukhisa. There are extensive spacecraft construction and maintenance facilities, for the interstellar fuel and material trade. Only once in the last few months has shipping near the Highport been attacked, but the local System Defence Boats (SDBs) drove them off.

Currently, both Zukhisa and the spacelanes between Zukhisa and Khimshikha – the world that fuels most manufacturing on Zukhisa – are guarded by the Royal Space Force. This is not standard Imperial practice: worlds are supposed to protect their own space up to the 100-diameter mark, while the Imperium patrols everything else. But with the Solomani Rim War devouring ships like a hungry moviegoer crunching popcorn, alternate arrangements have to be made.

In addition to a small training academy in the Highport (leasing the space from the Imperial government), the Royal Space Force consists of:

"Ships of the Line"

One 10,000-ton, Ryuichi-class small carrier, the Honnêamise, carrying 30 10-ton Nipa fighters;
Eight 200-ton Battler-class SDBs:

Voices of the Anasazi, Spirit of the Quarter,
Andrea Doria, Battle Rattle, Martial Stance,

Gunga Din, Poetry in Motion, and Wind Seeker;

“Scouts”

Four 100-ton Arrowhead-class scouts:

The Rising Moon, October Moon, Pluto Pluton, and Sahara Moonrise;

One aging Suleiman-class 100-ton scout, used as a training vessel (and, unlike the above vessels, capable of making an FTL jump); Starfinder

“Royal Yacht”

One Lady of Shallot-class 200-ton yacht, for the use of the WorldKing, capable of Jump1: Autumn Interlude

“Transport & Rescue”

Five Beowulf-class 200-ton modified free traders (jump drives removed and resold: space used for additional fuel and life support)

Garden of Sakuntala – troop transport ship (lower turret replaced with TL 6 Gatling guns)

Gates of Morpheous – rescue/hospital ship (armed with sandcasters only)

Ghost of Cortana – rescue/hospital ship (armed with sandcasters only)

Astral Hope – resupply vessel/fueller

Pipi Longstockings – resupply vessel/fueller

“Black Ops”

One Beowulf-class 200-ton, jump-capable Q-ship

The Weaponized Mind (has an entire collection of ship names and registries.)

“Small Craft”

Five 50-ton Modular Cutters, used for customs and minor transportation duties.

“Space Soldiers”

About 300 S-soldiers in total, of which

- 90 are based on the Honnêamise,
- 24 are based on the SDB's (three per ship),
- 15 are attached to the Garden of Sakuntala,
- 8 on the other T&S ships (2 per spaceship),
- 10 on The Weaponized Mind (a plum assignment, as 'the best of the lot' are posted here)
- ~20 on Modular Cutter duty, deployed as needed
- ~100 in training, drills, and specialization courses
- ~40 are out of the system, working with the Imperium, other planetary militaries, or elite mercenary units. Some are on front line service, others are observes, and still others are gaining additional training. A few are

working with General Products corporate intelligence as analysts. (GP, being a producer of largely uncontroversial consumer products and starships, has few dedicated enemies; so it can afford to get by with minimal dedicated military/covert assets. 'The savings go directly to the bottom line!')

The Imperial government has the sole right to the term 'Marines' in Imperial space, which is just as well. The S-soldiers here are adequately trained for operations in Zero-G vacuum, and can hold their own against even well-armed pirates, but lack the training, operational flexibility, and equipment to handle more difficult operations, such as boarding a hostile warship defended by high-tech, well-trained troops. (The WorldKing is working to change this weakness, by having picked men serve outside the system.)

Serving forces are equipped to TL A levels, typically equipped with:

- a Combat Environmental Suit, worn under an armoured Vacc Suit (not true Combat Armour)
- an oxygen tank (6 hours of air)
- an ARL (Assault Rocket Launcher), a type of gyrojet rifle designed for low-recoil use in Zero-G conditions
- an autopistol
- fragmentary grenades
- several tangle-nets (for prisoners and annoying civilians)
- a combo suit repair kit/first aid pack
- a portable hand-jet (useful for moving quickly in Zero-G conditions)

Several individual soldiers are permitted to carry specialized weaponry and equipment, such as shotguns, hull patches, breaching explosives, patch-in kits (for hijacking ship security systems), etc.

In general, two SDBs are kept in orbit around Zukhisa, two loiter near Khimshikha, two are in transit between those worlds, and one or two SDBs patrol the commonly-mined asteroids of the system. Three of the Arrowhead scouts nose around areas of interest: a SDB may be sent with them for backup, if a ship can be spared. The Honnêamise, with one Arrowhead scout, is sent to whatever trouble-spots crop up. One hospital ship is kept near Zukhisa to support the starport, and the other loiters near Khimshikha to succour wounded vessels there. The resupply vessels exist to extend the time on-station of military vessels (onboard supplies only last 28 days). The Q-ship is built to entrap pirates: she carries extra troops and poisoned cargo (i.e. timed explosives, marked money, traceable electronics, virus-laden 'Navy-grade equipment', etc.) The captain of the

The Weaponized Mind works closely with the Imperial Navy and General Products to lure pirates to a sticky end.

(There are usually one or two vessels going thru her yearly overhaul. When this part of the adventure starts, the Poetry in Motion is the spaceship undergoing a month-long overhaul at the starport.)

Appendix: Starships and Spaceships of the Royal Space Force

Ship: Honnêamise Class: Ryuichi
Type: Small Carrier Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12

USP

CA-K603AE3-370100-50008-3 MCr 11,219.300 10 Ktons
Bat Bear 6 6 2 Crew: 267
Bat 6 6 2 TL: 12

Cargo: 3 tons Emergency Low: 9 Fuel: 3,000 EP: 1,000 Agility: 3 Marines: 90
Craft: 30 x 10T Fighters, 4 x 50T Marine Cutters, 1 10T Launch Tubes
Backups: 2 x Model/5fib Computers
Architects Fee: MCr 112.193 Cost in Quantity: MCr 8,975.440

HULL: 10,000 tons standard, Flattened Sphere Configuration
CREW: 18 Officers, 129 Ratings, 30 Pilots, 90 Marines
ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 3G Manoeuvre, Power plant-10, 1,000 EP, Agil 3
AVIONICS: Bridge, Mod/5fib Computer, 2x Mod/5fib Backup Comps
HARDPOINTS: 2 50-ton bays, 40 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT: 2x50-ton Missile Bays (Factor-8), 20 Triple Beam Laser Turrets organised into 6 Batteries (Factor-5)
DEFENCES: 20 Triple Sandcaster Turrets organised into 6 Batteries (Factor-7), Nuclear Damper (Factor-1), Armoured Hull (Factor-3)
CRAFT: 30 10-ton Fighters (Crew of 1), 4 50-ton Marine Cutters (Crew of 3), 1 10-ton Launch Tube
FUEL: 3,000 Tons Fuel (84 days endurance), No Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS: 267 Staterooms, 9 Emergency Low Berths, 3 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST: MCr 11,331.493 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 112.193), MCr 8,975.440 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 160 Weeks Singly, 128 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:

The Ryuichi-class warship is a small naval carrier class, designed to support SDB ships in the system defence and pirate suppression mission. She has ample fuel storage, and is able to remain on-station for three months (note that in practice, this fuel is used to support the fighters, so actual endurance is less.) While equipped with sharp teeth for a carrier, she is quite thin-skinned (despite her sandcasters), and is not suitable for the line of battle.

The vessel bears a complement of 30 10-ton fighters, and four 50-ton naval cutters for boarding actions. With an additional vessel providing supplies and consumables, the Honneamise's Space Soldiers are capable of operating a sustained ground engagement as well.

The class is purchased by those Emptyhead systems with the wealth and the technology dedicated to maintain her properly, most notably Pamushgar, Nulinad, and Lazisar. Her present in Zukhisa is an anomaly: while operated by the system government, the monies she needs and the training required by her

crew is actually paid for by an Imperial megacorporation, General Products, to protect their extensive investments in-system.

The Imperial Colonial fleets did maintain a few vessels for their own use, complete with interstellar transports to circulate them among the poorer high-pop systems. Unfortunately, these vessels have been requisitioned by the Imperial Navy for rear-echelon duties in the Solomani Rim War. Their presence is sorely missed by pirate-harassed civilian shipping within the Six Subsectors.

Ship: Voices of the Anasazi Class: Battler
Type: System Defence Boat Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12

USP

SD-2205862-C00000-30002-0 MCr 376.750 200 Tons
Bat Bear 1 1 Crew: 10
Bat 1 1 TL: 12

Cargo: 0 Fuel: 16 EP: 16 Agility: 4 Marines: 3
Backups: 1 x Model/6 Computer
Architects Fee: MCr 3.768 Cost in Quantity: MCr 301.400

HULL: 200 tons standard, Cone Configuration

CREW: Pilot, 3 Engineers, Medic, 2 Gunners, 3 Marines

ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 5G Manoeuvre, PP-8, 16 EP, Agility 4

AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/6 Computer, 1 Model/6 Backup Computer

HARDPOINTS: 2 Hardpoints

ARMAMENT: 1 Triple Missile Turret organised into 1 Battery (Factor-2),

1 Triple Beam Laser Turret organised into 1 Battery (Factor-3)

DEFENCES: Armoured Hull (Factor-12)

CRAFT: None

FUEL: 16 Tons Fuel (0 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)

No Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant

MISCELLANEOUS: 5 Staterooms, 0 Ton Cargo

USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None

COST: MCr 380.518 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 3.768),
MCr 301.400 in Quantity

CONSTRUCTION TIME:

57 Weeks Singly, 46 Weeks in Quantity

COMMENTS:

The Battler is the most common system defence boat in the Empty Quarter, as of 993 Imperial. The workhorse of the Colonial Imperial Navy, it is well-armoured, well-armed, and highly agile for its size and Average Stellar tech level. Three marines are part of the standard complement. Note that to board a vessel, the SDB has no secondary vessels, and must physically draw close & match vectors to permit her Marine team to board the target.

Due to their expense, their purchase is heavily subsidised by the Imperium. For many worlds, their Imperial Tax Charters direct all their money to go directly into paying off their local Imperial System Defense Boat, a process that can take decades, and will continue even if the vessel is lost in action.

(Naturally, this means that it's often more cost-effective to resurrect and refurbish even a partly-destroyed SDB than risk going even deeper in debt trying to obtain a new one. Once again, as most jump-capable Navy ships are engaged elsewhere, a system that loses its SDB is often defenseless, unless

they can persuade a passing Traveller to pinch-hit as system defender, or retrieve and repair (and perhaps man) the lost vessel.)

Ship: The Rising Moon Class: Arrowhead
Type: Scout Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12

USP

 SS-11049A1-000000-30000-0 MCr 113.000 100 Tons
Bat Bear 1 Crew: 5
Bat 1 TL: 12

Cargo: 1 ton Fuel: 18 EP: 9 Agility: 4
Backups: 2 x Model/1fib Computers

Architects Fee: MCr 1.130 Cost in Quantity: MCr 90.400

HULL: 100 tons standard, Needle/Wedge Configuration
CREW: Pilot, Gunner, 3 Other Crewmen
ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 4G Manoeuvre, Power plant-9, 9 EP, Agility 4
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/1fib Computer, 2 Model/1fib Backup Computers
HARDPOINTS: 1 Hardpoint
ARMAMENT: 1 Triple Beam Laser Turret organised into 1 Battery (Factor-3)
DEFENCES: None
CRAFT: None
FUEL: 18 Tons Fuel (0 parsecs jump and 56 days endurance)
No Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS: 4 Staterooms, 1 Ton Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST: MCr 114.130 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 1.130),
MCr 90.400 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 38 Weeks Singly, 30 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:

Arrowhead scouts are refurbished Suleiman scouts: the jump engines and fuel capacity have been removed, the computers, electronics, and wiring replaced, and the manoeuvre drives drastically muscled up for in-system duties. The external shell is nearly identical, except for the expanded reactionless engine exhaust.

Should a system suffer the catastrophe of losing her SDBs, this is what she often turns to as a substitute. It is better than nothing - barely - and, most importantly, it's dirt cheap compared to the alternatives.

When used as intended - as a scout ship, not as a poor man's SDB - the Arrowhead has everything a system navy needs: speed, endurance (a.k.a. range) and disposability.

Ship: MA-12 Class: Nipa
Type: Fighter Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12

USP

 MA-0301211-000000-00002-0 MCr 11.850 10 Tons
Bat Bear 1 Crew: 1
Bat 1 TL: 12

Cargo: 0 Fuel: 1 EP: 0.200 Agility: 1
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops
Backups: 1 x Model/1 Computer

Architects Fee: MCr 0.119 Cost in Quantity: MCr 9.480

HULL: 10-tons standard, Cylinder Configuration

CREW: Pilot

ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 1G Manoeuvre, PP-2, 0.200 EP, Agility 1

AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/1 Computer, 1 Model/1 Backup Computer

HARDPOINTS: 1 Hardpoint

ARMAMENT: 1 Triple Missile Turret organised into 1 Battery (Factor-2)

DEFENCES: None

CRAFT: None

FUEL: 0.200 Tons Fuel (0 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)

On Board Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant

MISCELLANEOUS: 2 Acceleration Couches, 0 Ton Cargo

USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None

COST: MCr 11.969 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 0.119),

MCr 9.480 in Quantity

CONSTRUCTION TIME: 5 Weeks Singly, 4 Weeks in Quantity

COMMENTS: The Nipa-class fighter is the standard colonial fleet fighter within the Imperial Empty Quarter. It is a poor combatant compared to higher-tech or larger alternatives, but it is cheap and easy for a low-tech region like the Six Subsectors to maintain. Moreover, it's small size and agility - however weak - helps Nipa-class fighters to be a threat to pirates and the run-of-the-mill starmerc ship.

To compensate for their weaknesses, Nipa-class fighters are deployed in flights of four, five, and ten.

[The Referee is permitted to make swooshing TIE-fighter noises when roleplaying these combatants.]

Astonishingly, these fighters are being increasingly pressed into service by the poorest worlds as combatants against the pirate plague. Most naval professionals agree that operating these vessels singly is a simple waste of money: hiring a passing merchantman as a makeshift SDB is a better bet, as it can at least take a few hits before going down (and usually has better weaponry and agility, to boot!) Planetary governments point out that a disturbing percentage of these merchantmen have unsavoury histories: and even if they don't turn on you, their jumpdrives allow them to abandon a world to the wolves the minute the battle gets hot. On the other hand, a system-bound fighter is bound to defend the world 'for the duration of the conflict'.

Ship: Prince Ikupigushi
Type: Highport
Tech Level: 12

Class: Class B Highport
Architect: Alvin Plummer

USP

S-U3002F4-291100-00000-0 MCr 223,982.735 430 Ktons
Bat Bear 6 Crew: 1851
Bat A TL: 12

Cargo: 7,703 Tons Passengers: 1010 Emergency Low: 500
Fuel: 136,000 EP: 8,600 Agility: 0 Marines: 100

Craft: 2 x 2000T Ship Berth, 8 x 5000T Ship Berth,

40 x 800T Ship Berth, 150 x 100T Ship Berth,
30 x 50T Highport Cutter, 5 x 100T Highport Passenger Shuttle,
3 x 100T Highport Rescue, 10 x 200T Naval SDB berth
Fuel Treatment: On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 1 x Factor 2 Power Plant 2 x Model/6fib Computers 4 x Bridges
2 x Factor 1 Nuclear Dampers 2 x Factor 1 Meson Screens
Architects Fee: MCr 2,239.827 Cost in Quantity: MCr 179,186.188

HULL: 430,000 tons standard, Cylinder Configuration

CREW: 137 Officers, 1614 Ratings, 100 Marines

ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 0G Manoeuvre, PP-2, 8,600 EP, Agility 0
1 Power plant-2 Backup

AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/6fib Computer, 4x Backup Bridges,
2x Model/6fib Backup Computers

HARDPOINTS: 100 Hardpoints

ARMAMENT: None

DEFENCES: 100 Triple Sandcaster Turrets organised into 10 Batteries
(Factor-9), Nuclear Damper (Factor-1), Meson Screen (Factor-1),
Armoured Hull (Factor-2); 2x Nuclear Damper Backups (Factor-1),
2x Meson Screen Backups (Factor-1)

CRAFT:

2x 20,000-ton Ship Berths 8x 5,000-ton Ship Berths
40x800-ton Ship Berths 150x 100-ton Ship Berths
30x 50-ton Port Cutters 5x 100x ton Port Passenger Shuttles
3x 100-ton Port Rescue ships 10x 200-ton Naval SDB berths

FUEL: 136,000 Tons Fuel (0 parsecs jump and 280 days endurance,
plus 50,000 tons of additional fuel for visiting starships)

No Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant

MISCELLANEOUS: 3,000 Staterooms, 50 Low Berths, 500 Emergency Low Berths,
10 High Passengers, 1,000 Middle Passengers, 7,703 Tons Cargo

USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: 1 Merchant concourse (1,000 tons), 1 complex of
Imperial Navy offices (1,000 tons), 1 Royal Space Force Academy (1,000 tons),
1 complex of General Product offices (1,000 tons)

COST: MCr 226,222.562 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 2,239.827),
MCr 179,186.188 in Quantity

CONSTRUCTION TIME: 225 Weeks Singly, 180 Weeks in Quantity

COMMENTS:

This is the Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Highport, currently over Zukhisa. It is primarily built as a major cargo port, to support interstellar and interplanetary trade. The port also contains offices for the General Products megacorporation. Space is leased for the use of the Royal Space Force Academy. As per standard Imperial practice, it is unarmed except for sandcasters and defensive screens.

The Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Downport is located three kilometres from the planetary (and system) capital of Gii Daarusharsha. There are no civilian roads connecting the Downport and the city, but there is a regular and frequent TL 6 rail service. There are military roads, for the use of the WorldKing's garrison based at First Barracks.

The Downport has: 1x 5,000-ton ship berths, 6x 800-ton ship berths, and 45x 100-ton ship berths. For starport services, 4x 5,000-ton ship berths are maintained (to house large refuellers for the Highport: the Downport can directly pipe in water for refining.) The Downport also houses 2x 200-ton SDB berths, 4x 100-ton Port Shuttles, 1x 100-ton Port Rescue ships, and 10x 50-ton Port Modular Cutters.

Note that the Imperial Marines of Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Starport have been redeployed elsewhere. Both Highport and Downport starport security is

currently maintained by an elite company of TL D mercenaries & support staff from Antares Sector.

Footnotes

¹Low-energy, here, refers to the lack of hydrocarbons or radioactives available on the mainworld. Fortunately, there are useful hydrocarbons available at Khimshikha, which extraction & transport – in addition to in-system ore mining & processing – is the purpose of all the local spaceships (excluding the system SDBs).

²From the Rebellion Sourcebook (whose fleet numbers are dated for 1116 Imperial, not 993): Lentuli – 53rd fleet; Yogesh – 86th fleet; Hebrin – 161st fleet; Nulinad – 158th fleet; Gimushi – 306th fleet; Udusis – 307th fleet. These numbers are probably incorrect for 993, but it's good enough for my purposes. Note that, per canon, each fleet consists of a Numbered and a Numbered Reserve fleet; the Numbered fleet have Regular Squadrons, while Numbered Reserve fleets have Colonial Squadrons. Our use of 'Colonial Fleet' is technically incorrect, but adds colour and is a reminder of Imperial hierarchies. In the Imperium, there are winners and there are losers, and not everybody is going to get a prize.

³The high-tech tools which did the initial crust-cracking are long gone, but most of the impressively huge (but technologically simple) mining machinery still in use can be maintained using TL 6 knowledge. Some of the intense heat from the heart of the planet is captured and put to use in the on-site mines and drills, and nearby factories, refineries and forges.

For political/engineering reasons, there is a cap on how much electricity can be moved from the scarred earth to the population centres, so portable fuel extracted from the Khimshikha gas giant provides the low-TL fuel that is required by the city industries. This fuel (mainly forms of artificial coal and refined petrochemicals, derived from the local gas giant of Khimshikha) is not as profoundly poisonous as high-tech waste material from higher-tech nuclear power-plants or highly processed materials. The PCs need only fight their way thru the pea-soup, Old London-style fog and watch out for old-fashioned mercury poisoning in the local food marts.

If the PCs can get far away from the cities and the old-school sprawling industrial compounds, it is possible to breathe fresh air. The waters remain polluted – especially the major rivers and oceans – and acid rain is a commonplace, so don't expect a lot of healthy forests and woodlands. Those that do exist are transplanted

lifeforms, geneered for hardiness to survive in a filthy environment. These walled-in oases' of life are the preserve of the WorldKing (and Imperial Baron), and are not for public viewing. The Environmental Security guards are not armed with lethal weapons, but if the PCs are caught on the Baron's land, you will be spending years in a re-education camp.

⁴For more information on the latest pretext for power on this world, please see these articles by Gary North: Libertarian Vacationers Demand Their Subsidies <http://www.lewrockwell.com/north/north767.html> It's Not Just That Global Warming Is Fake. What Matters Is Why This Fakery Is Being Promoted <http://www.lewrockwell.com/north/north727.html>

⁵Zukhisa has a population in the billions, and it is important as an interstellar manufacturing centre, but the world is so low-tech and her population so poor, it just doesn't have the interstellar pull needed to rate a Marquis.

⁶For more thoughts about police work in a low-tech setting, please read 'The Film Noir Moment' by Jeffrey A. Tucker - <http://www.lewrockwell.com/tucker/tucker164.html>

⁷The armies of the various city-kings are quite small, with each King's Army massing between 500 and 3,000 men (with each city having a population between one and ten million). These soldiers are armed to TL 5-6 standards.

The WorldKing has the best local military force. He has at his disposal

- the Royal Space Force (detailed above: a ground detachment maintains about a dozen air/rafts and G-carriers for Royal Guard use.)
- the Royal Guard of 20,000 soldiers (equipped to TL 7 standards: an elite battalion is equipped to TL A levels, excepting the TL 8 combat armour.)
- the Royal Navy of 11,000 sailors (equipped to TL 6 standards: no wet navy ship is larger than 200 dtons)
- the Royal Air Force of 6000 airmen (maintaining a fleet of TL 6 prop fighters, scouts, transports, and bombers)

All forces are based near Gii Daarusharsha, at the First Barracks. (This force replaces the usual King's Army for

the city). Incidentally, the Imperial Marines of Prince Ikupigushi Imperial Starport have been deemed too valuable to remain idle, and have been redeployed elsewhere. Both Highport and Downport starport security is currently maintained by an elite team of TL D mercenaries & support staff from Antares Sector.

⁸“Enhance 224 to 176. Enhance, stop. Move in, stop. Pull out, track right, stop. Center in, pull back. Stop. Track 45 right. Stop. Center and stop. Enhance 34 to 36. Pan right and pull back. Stop. Enhance 34 to 46. Pull back. Wait a minute, go right, stop. Enhance 57 to 19. Track 45 left. Stop. Enhance 15 to 23. Give me a hard copy right there.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkcU0gwZUdg>

⁹See <http://www.firstmediation.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/construction-workers-lunching.bmp> for details (“Construction Workers Lunching on a Crossbeam, 1932”)

(for another perspective, see both pictures here: <http://oana-dobre.blogspot.com/2007/06/fotografii-legendare-si-povestea-din.html#links>)

¹⁰The Officer Corps had a purge ten years ago, as a large-scale conspiracy against the WorldKing was prematurely revealed. The rebuilt officer class are back

on their feet, and have rebuilt most of their institutional know-how, but a few survivors of that era still – very quietly – recall the Old Days...

¹¹From the Wiki, for the record:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toast_%28honor%29

“In the British Navy, the officers' noon mess typically began with the loyal toast (see below), followed by a toast distinctive for the day of the week:

- **Monday:** Our ships at sea.
- **Tuesday:** Our men.
- **Wednesday:** Ourselves.
(“As no-one else is likely to concern themselves with our welfare,” is often the retort and not part of the toast)
- **Thursday:** A bloody war or a sickly season.
(meaning the desire and likelihood of being promoted when many people die: during war or sickness.)
- **Friday:** A willing foe and sea room.
(meaning the payment of prize money after a successful engagement)
- **Saturday:** Sweethearts and wives.
(“may they never meet,” is often the retort and not part of the toast)
- **Sunday:** Absent friends.”

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