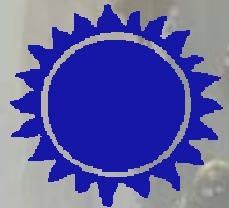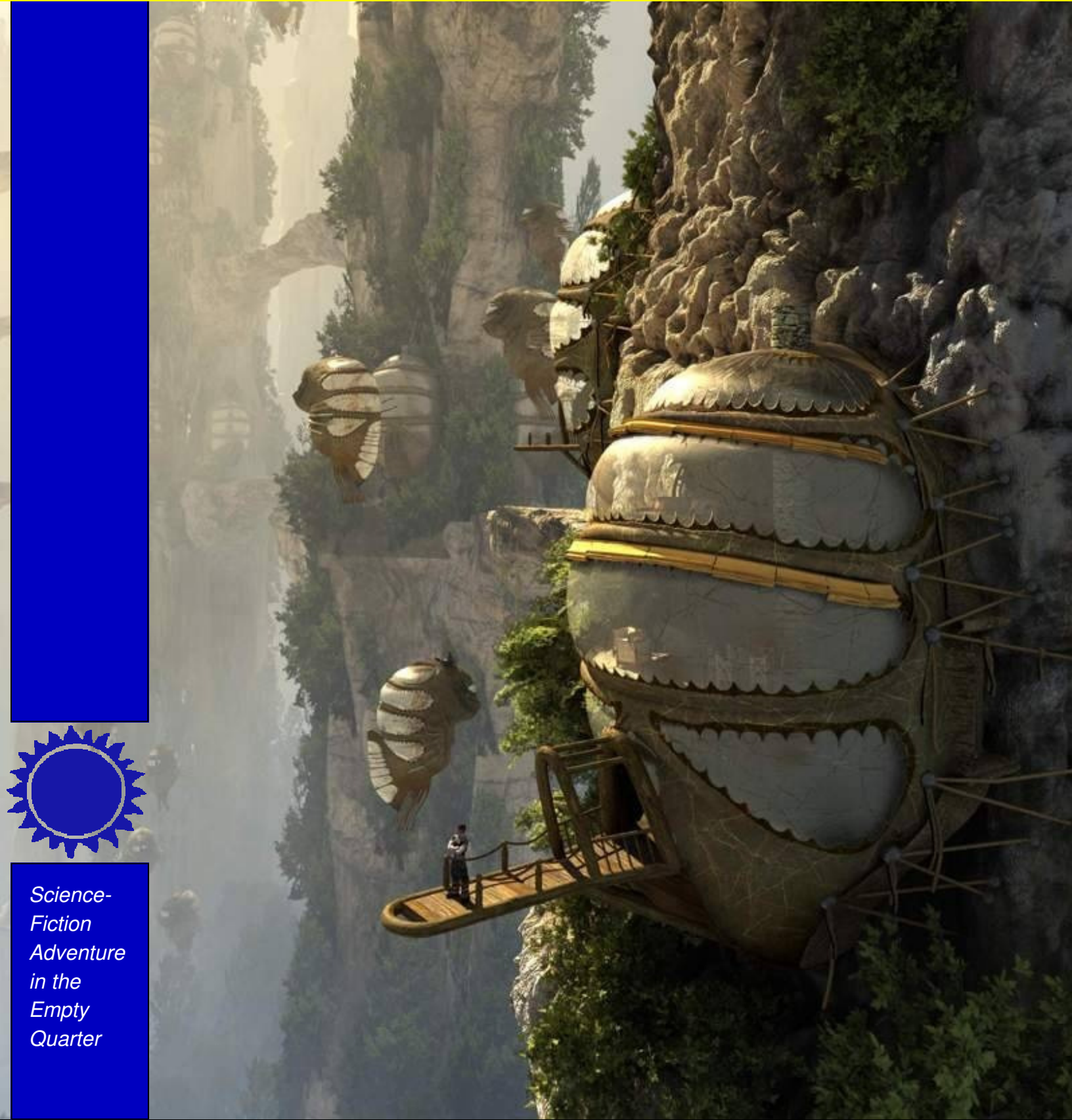# STELLAR REACHES

Science-Fiction Adventure in the Empty Quarter

STELLAR REACHES

A Fair Use Magazine for Traveller

Table of Contents

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/

Letter From The Editor

Greetings, Fellow Sophonts:

So I changed my mind: the **MegaTraveller** format will be used at least one more time. What can I say: it looks good, and I found one more large graphic for the cover page.

Ω

The first article covers the more notable nobles of the Empty Quarter. Not everyone reading Stellar Reaches is fluent in the official Imperial setting, so a few pointers were touched on regarding what a noble is, and what a noble does. The relationship between a noble and the planetary government varies greatly: the noble may be merely a diplomatic conduit between the world and the Emperor, flat-out own the world and everything on it (but not anybody: slavery is forbidden in the Imperium), or anything in between. Hopefully, the article is a useful framework that a Referee can use to further flesh out and develop into a noble-oriented campaign, if he so chooses.

The second article is a basic pirate adventure. The interesting thing about this adventure isn't really what happens there: finding a pirate base and blowing it up is one of the basic jobs of any PC naval officer. No, the goal here is to leverage all the detail and backstory already developed in the Official Traveller Universe and in earlier issues of **Stellar Reaches** into stepping into another's shoes, living and learning at a particular place, at a particular time, far from where I am now. To stretch the muscles of the imagination, and help others see and act and think like a man of the Far Future, working out details and having these detail fit and work well together is a crucial need.

"Distant Wars and Local Piracy" links the pirate situation in the Empty Quarter with the massive Solomani Rim War, and sketches out what exactly the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet has been doing for the last few years. It also gives a bird eye's view of the current situation, and the place the Shadow Cartel and the Ikonaz pirates holds in the current environment.

Finally, there is a very long journey into the Hegemony. Unlike earlier adventures, this time the PCs act as agents of the Muslim Brotherhood, the kind of paramilitary/political network Emptyheads specialize in, regardless of religion or ideology. The PCs are provided with a very valuable ship that is in great demand locally, to get to the bottom of the Tsosoe situation, and then report back. There are many opportunities for the PCs to follow other paths, but it's going to hurt the folks back home. And even if they find out the truth, will they ever get their ship back and let the Brotherhood leadership at Ababat know what's really happening?

Questions of allegiance, diplomacy, and trust also appear. And just what are the PCs willing to sacrifice to defeat a very powerful and successful oppressor, anyways? How far are they willing to do? Is it even possible to win?

Ω

In this issue, I was able to finally leave map generation behind, and get back to some proper storytelling. There are numerous pages devoted to ship listings, which couldn't be helped. I used Andrew Vallance's High Guard Shipyard http://www.downport.com/amv/software/hgs.html - the Alpha Release (v2.0.0.11). I have often used Google Translate for the Hindi, but Google doesn't provide Latin letters for Arabic. So I used a combination of Google Translate and the Arabic Converter, http://mylanguages.org/arabic_romanization.php, to get some decent pronunciations in. Pronouncing Arabic isn't easy: consider the 40+ spellings of Quaddafi (the late Libyan dictator) that has been in use since at least the 80's.

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

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 >= 8. Maria requires 2D + Forgery >= 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 >= 8.
MT: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to MT's Formidable (15+), thus the task is 2D + Skill + (Stat / 5) >= 15. For Maria this is: 2D + 4 + 2 >= 15.
TNE: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to TNE's Impossible, thus the task is d20 <= (Skill + Stat) X ¼. For Maria this is d20 <= 3, i.e. (9 + 4) / 4 rounded down.
T4: Maria requires 4D <= INT + Forgery. (Note that T4's Staggering rating of 3.5D is ignored.)
GT: Maria requires 3D <= Forgery + Target Modifier, i.e. 3D <= 16 – 6.
T20: Maria requires d20 + 18 >= 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.

The Peerage of the Empty Quarter
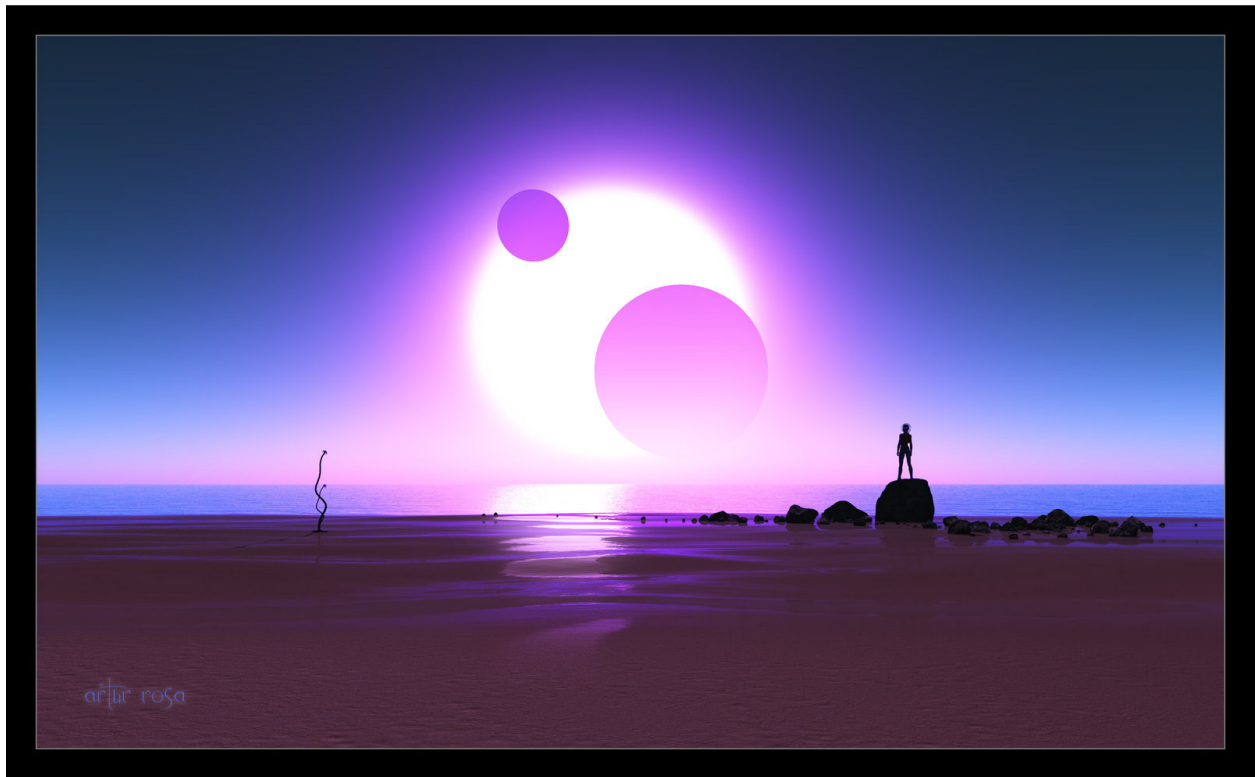
A woman stands on the beach of the Bwap-dominated world of Paweba, gazing beyond the edge of the Imperium. The double-eclipse of the two moons occurs once every 411 days, which makes it far closer to a T-year than the planetary orbit of 48 days. The symbolism of the three Imperia is unintentional. **The graphic is titled "Shores of Cygnus" © Artur Rosa. See his work at** http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/#/d568xh4

The Crowned Heads of the Quarter

In this article, the local Imperial Aristocracy will be covered, as of 993 Imperial. Rather than give a proper personality sketch of the local nobles, most will merely be tagged with their race and religion: human nobles will also be given a personality code, using the pseudo-scientific Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Hey, it's better than nothing![1]

The Empty Quarter has 134 systems: adding in the six duchies and the sector duchy, there are at **least** 141 Imperial nobles in the sector. Some individuals have more than one title: other titles have no claimant.

Baronets are awarded by the Archduke: but there is no Archduke that rules the Empty Quarter. Baronets from other Domains (such as Antares or Gateway) may visit the Empty Quarter, of course. While their title is inheritable (unlike the Imperial Knights), they are not part of the peerage.

Of course, Rank Barons exist within the Empty Quarter: there is no fief attached to these non-hereditary titles.

When there are multiple Barons in a world or a system, the leader among them is naturally called the Senior Baron, and is the head of the system hierarchy. A system moot may be created in system. It has no powers, excepting as a location for reasoned discussion and the lawful audience for a formal duel between local Barons.

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[1] The possibility that real human personalities can be shoe-horned into 16 boxes is unrealistic. But, for an analytical role-playing game known for its Universal XXXX Profiles, it's a pretty good fit.

The typical Imperial world has at least one Baron: while his fief is no larger than 100 square kilometers, he represents the system before the Imperial Moot.[2]

Just to get numbers to work with, I have decided that there are exactly 1014 Baronial titles tied to the sector, including notable cities, regions, continents & seas, important space instillations, minor worlds, and asteroid belts.

Some sectors have a Senate or similar meeting arena for the nobles of a given sector (a.k.a. the Oracle of Delphi Sector.) The Empty Quarter has no such location, due to long history of strife between the Hindu and Moslem Nobles, the Solomani Nobles vs. The Vilani Nobles, the Solomani Nobles vs. The Bwap Nobles, etc.

The Imperial system of government operates on two parallel "chains of command." Both chains pass from the Emperor, down through multiple layers of authority, ending with the billions of rank-and-file sophonts who do the everyday work of government. One chain is made up of the bulk of the Imperial civilian ministries and military organizations; the other consists only of the Imperium's high nobles.

These paired chains of command are intended to make the Imperial system both robust and flexible. The bureaucracy works according to procedure and precedent, keeping the Imperial government working smoothly during normal times. When an emergency arises, the high nobility has the authority to cut through the red tape and mobilize Imperial resources to meet the crisis.

In short, the Imperial bureaucracy and military manage Imperial government, but it is ultimately controlled by the high nobility in the name of the Emperor. The legal authority under which the high nobles exert this control is called the *Imperial Mandate.*
     – **GURPS Traveller: Nobles**, page 59

This strife has lessened dramatically since the Hebrin Rebellion of over a century ago. Over the last fifty years, there have been some faltering attempts to set up a Sector Moot, but they have all failed for one reason or another. The current Duke has not pressed the matter as he is still busy protecting his rule from humanist elements within the local Nobility.

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[2] Also, Barons tend to find ways to expand their rule over far greater areas than their formal land grant from the Emperor…

(For additional information on Imperial Nobility, see **GURPS Traveller: Nobility**)

It should be noted that – excluding the rank position of Sector Duke of the Empty Quarter – all the nobles listed below *inherited* their titles.

The Imperial Aristocracy, High Nobility, The Empty Quarter

High Nobility

The Emperor
     Gavin, of House Alkhalikoi
     ISTJ[3] ♂, 47 T-years old

The Sector Duke of the Empty Quarter
     Dethwabtakebwebwakawa,
     of the Peo-e-a-a-athwako-ep Crèche
     ESFJ ♂, 51 T-years old[4]

Duke Lentuli:
     Dethwabtakebwebwakawa,
     of the Peo-e-a-a-athwako-ep Crèche
     ESFJ ♂, 51 T-years old
     Only Bwap may rule this duchy (Panos Settlement[5], 873 Imperial) Enforced.

Duke Nulinad:
     Aved of House Kumuu
     ESFP ♂, 75 T-years old
     Only Vilani or Mixed Vilani may rule this duchy (Panos Settlement, 873)
     Superseded: East Indians, Vilani, or Mixed Vilani may rule (950)

Duke Yogesh:
     Anoop of House Dwivedi
     ISTP ♂, 62 T-years old
     Alternates between Bwap and Vilani/Mixed Vilani (Panos Settlement, 873)
     Annulled: No Racial or Religious limitations apply to this Ducal throne (932)

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[3] Use www.duckduckgo.com – the privacy people – to search for "Myers-Briggs Type Indicator"
[4] See **Stellar Reaches**, Issue #13, page 35 ff, for detailed profiles of Emperor Gavin and Sector Duke Dethwabtakebwebwakawa.
[5] For more on the Panos Settlement of 873, see **Stellar Reaches** #12, page 11.

Duke Gimushi:
>Piel of House Segundat
>ESFJ ♂, 53 T-years old
>Only native Lazisari may rule this duchy (Panos Settlement)
>Superseded: Should an opening present itself, a Pamushgari house may also be granted this Ducal demesne. (883)

Duke Hebrin:
>Saqr of House Temiz
>ISFP ♂, 36 T-years old
>Only Solomani Arabs may rule this duchy (Panos Settlement). Enforced.

Duchess Udusis:
>Ojal of House Chandratre
>ENFP ♀, 62 T-years old
>Only Solomani East Indians may rule this duchy (Panos Settlement). Enforced.

Count Marhaban
>Watwa-wabko of the Obesathwabfa Crèche
>ISTJ ♂, 59 T-years old

Count Hebrin
>Hadad of House Temiz
>ESFP ♂, 69 T-years old

Count Lazisar
>Otro of House Lesiiasi
>ESTJ ♂, 32 T-years old

Viscountess Irash
>Ojal of House Chandratre
>ENFP ♀, 62 T-years old

Marquis Pamushgar
>Akuushgu of House Isishamsadar
>ESTJ ♂, 121 T-years old
>(A pure Vilani, he looks and acts in his late 50s)

Commentary

Due to the cultural and historical importance of the system, the **County of Marhaban** was established in 661. This was a marker of the weakening of the power of the Solomani Party in the Imperial Court on Capital, but the Party's power was not decisively broken until 672. Count Watwa-wabko is debatably the most powerful Count of the Imperium, and certainly the most powerful Bwap[6], as his position involves truly

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[6] Count Watwa-wabko definitely outshines mere Admirals, Sector Dukes, and spy agencies in his power, regardless of species or race.

wide-ranging powers within the Imperial bureaucratic structure, and he sits on several senior tribunals and administrative courts on Capital. In addition to his extensive formal powers within the Imperial hierarchy, he has a lengthy range of inherited, traditional, and informal authority as well.

Due to the nature of his rank and duties, Count Watwa-wabko rarely leaves Capital: his duties within his demesne are typically handled by other members of his very powerful crèche. As the reader may guess, the n Obesathwabfa Crèche is the most powerful of its kind, in political affairs. (Outside of high-level Imperial politics and administration, there are about six or seven crèches that are of equal or greater power among the Bwap.)

Usually, a Marquis is not counted as High Nobility, as he has no responsibilities outside of his star system. However, the **Marquis of Pamushgar** has always looked for ways to position his family closer to Ducal authority: when the Sector Fleet left, he marshalled his forces to insure security for the rimward half of Gimushi subsector.

Duke Piel attempted to gain Imperial authority over the Sector Fleet, so he could lead it into battle in the Old Expanses. This was denied by the Emperor: but he (and several other glory-hungry high nobles) have been permitted to use their own money to finance a reinforced, high-tech Cruiser Squadron, and lead that force under the authority of the Sector Admiral in charge of the Old Expanses Front.

In his absence, the Court of Gimushi is led by Duke Piel's younger sister, Baroness Zalletef (pronounced Zall-e-tef). Her official title in this capacity is Duchess Regent. As of 001-993, the Duke is not far from Gimushi subsector. He is overseeing the construction of the Cruiser squadron at Shamokin/Nightmare, in Ley Sector.[7] It will take roughly four years for the four 17,500-ton light cruisers to be built.

Should her elder brother die in battle, the Ducal title is inherited by Duke Piel's oldest grandson, Streztrak (14 years old). The Baroness would remain regent until Streztrak reaches 18 years of age.
The **County of Hebrin**, like the Ducal title, has been held by the Temiz family since the world joined the Imperium. However, the large non-Arab infidel minority of the world now want a non-Arab unbeliever

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[7] Note that "Shamokin" is the 993 name: following the 1105 map at www.travellermap.com, the system name is Didshep: Ley Sector 1105.

to gain that noble seat. The world is no longer powerful enough to deserve a count, but tradition is tradition, and the College of Arms is wary of angering the still-influential Temiz dynasty by annulling the fief.

Other Nobility

Below the High Nobles of the Empty Quarter, there are two Viscounts, two Marquis, and a vast number of Barons. The Viscounts, remaining Marquis and the few of the more notable Barons are noted below.

Viscount of Gudina: the Viscount rank is tied to this system's role as an Imperial Deposit of bureaucratic files. Similar ranks were held by the leading planetary nobles during the First and Second Imperia, making this one of the oldest titles in the Imperium.

Viscount of Tokitre: this is a rank title, not a true fiefdom, awarded to the commanding admiral of the Tokitre Flotilla. Its actual purpose is tied to diplomatic standing more than anything else. A majority of the population would love to have the title become a real fief, and their world a real Imperial system. That's a good way to spark the Second Julian War, though, and after that war's done, fighting among the local aristocracy over who gets the title will probably turn to an even worse bloodbath than the war would be.

Marquisate of Eninsish: this world was downgraded from a county over a century ago, but the loss still stings to these tradition-minded Vilani.

Marquisate of Ka-aswa: this is a very recent fief, only 39 years old. It was awarded to Ka-aswa due to its increasing prominence in the sector and the vigorous activity of her upper class in successfully reorganizing the sector bureaucracy. Her hand in building up a cadre of noble bureaucrats has not been overlooked, either.

Barony of Akiar: as discussed in "Seasons Change" (**Stellar Reaches** #5, page 26), this title currently has no claimant, as the local ruling house went extinct in 978. As of 993, an Imperial Viceroy is in charge of the system, working to end a tiresome civil conflict.

Barony of Charity: Baroness Yasmin of House Mai[8], head of both the planetary government and Charity LIC

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[8] House Mai is something of an outsider in aristocratic circles, as its founder, Yasmin herself, was originally a courtesan to the previous subsector Duke. Her house does have a recognized heir, the bastard son Neeraf, currently being educated in Antares system – in total defiance of off-world opinion (the folks on Charity *adore* The Fatima).

(the high-end medical services company) is a lot more influential than her small yet wealthy demesne would suggest. See **Stellar Reaches** #5, "Sand Castles" and "Empty Quarter Echo", and **Stellar Reaches** #9, "Against the Steel Fists", for more details.

Baroness Yasmin, the Fatima of Charity and CEO of Charity LIC, as of 993 Imperial. **The graphic is titled "Yukiko" © Andrew Hickinbottom. See his work at** http://andyh.cgsociety.org/gallery/997112

Barony of Daruka: Baroness Jaya of House Arunachalam is typically off-world, trying to bring in more money and aid to the poorer worlds of Hebrin subsector, not least her own. (**Stellar Reaches** #6, "Walking in the Air", page 14)

Barony of Gobi: Despite the fact that a large percentage of Gobi's population would rather have nothing to do with the rest of the Emptyheads (and refuse to consider themselves one, regardless of how many generations they have resided in the sector), Baron Actéon of House Georgeton is one the most kindest and most generous nobles of the Six Subsectors. His household servants are welcome anywhere in ten parsecs of Gobi, as they are well-known for their liberal nature and their liberal purse.

Barony of Indara: This was just another backward world of the Quarter until the arrival of the Bahadur family in 890. Able to trace their lineage to the Kolhapur princely state in the Britannic Imperium, this House used its' wealth to bring the world up three tech levels, and it's starport up three classes, in only a century. Agricultural and light industrial development con continues apace, and the system is expected to hit TL A in c. 1010 Imperial.

His Lordship Ravit of House Bahadur, Baron of Indara, as of 993 Imperial. **This graphic is titled "An Indian Prince" by Philip Alexius de László (1906). In the Public Domain. Please visit http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=55005**

Barony of Nulinad: this world has been prospering for the last few centuries, and the Senior Baron is petitioning the Imperial Court to be raised to a Marquis.

Barony of Rommel: House Müller's quest for a Marquisate is doomed for political reasons: despite the world's fairly decent amount of population and technology (for the Empty Quarter), its' just *way* too close to the Solomani Party to be granted an increase in rank. Rumours of secret Party membership among local elites continue to circulate in the Court of Nulinad, and the planetary government's educational systems continue to show Solomani ideology in a warm and

sympathetic light. Fortunately for the system and her family, Baroness Doris continues to support the Imperial war effort unstintingly, even as she presses for an armistice and a negotiated end to this destructive conflict.

Barony of Rasu: Baron Sallan – who calls himself "The Bright Golden Sallan!" is the highly melodramatic noble over this very totalitarian, very religious (for certain values of 'religion') system. His authority over the world is restricted to the starport and acting as an interface to the Imperial government, yet the puritanical government and the narcissistic noble somehow manage to work together rather well. Outside observers remain perplexed. (**Stellar Reaches** #7, page 29; **Stellar Reaches** #18, page 14)

Barony of Vipan: Baron Jatin of House Lurgadagig (**Stellar Reaches** #9, page 9, 16) is kind, but a bit dim. Fortunately, he has an elder sister, Lady Pratigya, who guides him in the right path.

Barony of Ushmigad: Most of the Vilani in the sector view Baroness Iggugakhis of House Uragshykhikhi to be the epitome of disorder in this universe. If it was discovered that by day her agents were infiltrating bureaucracies to destroy critical files, procedural manuals, and ritual texts, while her twisted soul hunted down and killed ancestral spirits in the otherworld every night, not one Vilani would be surprised.

As interstellar leader of the Ashi Gurlagili, the Vilani cult that dominates Ushmigad, she has a certain amount of interstellar fame among the very rare Vilani castes that deal with people like her – usually with extreme prejudice. (See **Stellar Reaches** #19, page 39-40 for details). To the religious Solomani that populate the Six Subsectors, though, she's just another infidel (Islam), prisoner of illusions (Hinduism), or sinner (Christian), nothing special. Odd, that she will always be far safer among the dismissive Solomani than on any orthodox Vilani world…

To the Imperium, she is a useful and productive Noble, whose repulsive nature means that she needs to be handled with care: a shame, but nothing the Imperium hasn't dealt with a million times before. Her house will informally (but no less firmly) barred from various positions, and her family will never be invited to certain functions, but she will be rewarded for the unique services she can provide to the Imperium; things that only *she* can do, precisely *because* she is so hated and feared among the Vilani.

Appendix: Population Trivia

I'm curious about the populations per noble, so I'm going to play with some spreadsheets from **Stellar Reaches #**19 here. (You can download the spreadsheets yourself at www.stellarreaches.com)

Within the Empty Quarter of 993, the total Imperial population is 151.9 billion, rounding to the nearest hundred million. As we are ignoring a few spare billion – is Gimushi's population 46 billion or 54 billion? – we can peg it at 150 Billion.

If you total it up for 1105, the total Imperial population is 76.6 billion. Even though there are slightly more high-pop Imperial systems in 1105 – 15 vs. 13 – the collapse of the population of Gimushi really hurt the sector. The average TL per world remained at about 8.4, and per billion (on the high pop systems) at about 7.4.

Recall that the average world of the Imperium is TL 12, even as most Gushgusi – with a bit of luck – are living technologically in the 1970s. "CD's? Internet? Cell phones? Genetic engineering? Desktop printing? Printers? Never heard of 'em." Of course, high-tech gizmos do exist, but are the preserve of the starfaring elite and only a select few systems can make them in substantial numbers.

Large mid-tech does exist as well – in the 1970s (TL 7), there are satellites, useful robotic arms, supersonic jets (i.e. the Concorde), and hand-held calculators. Computers were cheap enough to allow hobbyists to play with them as a very expensive and knowledge-intensive pastime. (Again, no Internet though – except between large universities and government instillations.) Air-to-air missiles as well as ballistic weaponry were around, as were ballistic submarines (something to surprise your players with one day.) No cruise missiles, though, never mind drones.

There is one serious issue regarding all of these things, though – they need metals, and much of the Emptyhead population lives on habitable but metal-poor worlds. (See: **Stellar Reaches** #10, page 17). Interstellar – or at least intrastellar – shipping is absolutely necessary to get anything done. Ceramics is something of an art form, even on the low-tech/high-pop systems, but it is no substitute.

If the population wasn't so reactionary, they could fight their way out of this astrographical trap: the Bwaps were technologically retarded due to their moist (i.e. anti-fire) environment, but they got up to speed soon after contact with the Vilani. But at the end of the day, blaming the environment (or genetics or history or religion or...) will only get you so far. People make choices, and choices have consequences.

Recall the human tribe that impresses me the most: the animistic Japanese. They have a religion that's far less sophisticated than Islam, but the people had the self-discipline to get the job done, 1850-1990, even though they live on a mountainous island only somewhat more friendly to agriculture than the blasted Saharan/Arabian desert.[9]

At 993, assuming 1014 Nobles (almost all Barons), then there's a Baron for roughly 149 million Imperial citizens. Other, wealthier sectors may have a rather smaller number of sophonts per Baron.

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[9] And yes, I know that by AD 3000 the Japanese will be gone, while the Arabs will still be around. (May, actually: the Arab reproduction rate is diving to the floor.) No matter: as God loved Jacob and hated Esau, I choose which culture I admire and which culture I distain. Discrimination, the right to choose some and reject others, is an aspect of freedom that God has given to all men, Christian and Islamic. The desires of enslaving egalitarians shall be dismissed out of hand.

That **still** doesn't give me the right to oppress people I don't care for, though: in the Christian conception of the universe, justice and law are separate from political convenience, tribal/national goals, personal attitudes and even the identity of the one charged. "You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I *am* the LORD your God."

This is completely different from oh-so-sophisticated attitudes of the ancient Greeks, of course. As always with them, the (City-)State is All, and woe unto you if you don't worship the state god!

Good thing the Compassionate Ones have no time for the pathetic superstitions of the distant past, and are thus free to gain as much unrestricted power as is politically expedient – so long as it is for the right reasons, of course. Ask Bushobama for details.

The Isle of Crowns, located on Nulinad, is one of the traditional locations for a nobleman's holiday in the Six Subsectors. An artificial creation, it was terraformed into existence and enriched with multiple rivers and life by Duchess Poorbi of House Ghandi, one of the largest and most successful Solomani dynasties within the Imperium. **The graphic is titled "The Island with a Thousand Rivers" © Artur Rosa. See his work at**
http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/?catpath=/&offset=24#/d4tbd0u

The ship below was designed with Andrew Vallance's High Guard Shipyard
Version 2.0 (Alpha).

```
Ship: Ilona                      Class: Arandol
Type: Light Cruiser              Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 14

USP
        CL-K444AHJ-090000-909G9-0  MCr 17,358.626    17.5 KTons
Bat Bear            6    4 214   Crew: 170           Agility 4 (3)*
Bat                 6    4 214   TL: 14              Fuel 8750

Cargo: 69 Crew Sections (as per JTAS): 18 of 10 EP: 1,750
Shipboard Security Detail: 18
Craft: 1 x 50T Modular Cutter
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 2 x Model/8fib Computers; 1 x Factor 2 Nuclear Damper;
1 x Factor 2 Meson Screen

* use of one or both of the "backup" – a.k.a. usually off-line – screens
lowers Agility to 3

Architects Fee: MCr 173.586   Cost in Quantity: MCr 13,886.901
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High Guard Design


HULL: 17,500 tons, 245,000 cubic meters, Close Structure Configuration
CREW: 25 Officers, 145 Ratings
(as per JTAS)
Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings; Engineering: 7 officers and 56 ratings;
Gunnery: 5 officers and 36 ratings (1 officer and 7 ratings are tied to
screens); Flight: 1 officer; Service: 4 officers and 31 ratings;
Medical: 1 officer; Ship's troops: 10, treated as ratings


ENGINEERING: Jump-4, 4G Maneuver, Power plant-10, 1,750 EP, Agility 4
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/8fib Computer; 2 Model/8fib Backup Computers
HARDPOINTS: Spinal Mount, 2 100-ton bays, 4 50-ton bays, 100 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
Meson Gun Spinal Mount (Factor-G),
2x 100-ton Particle Accelerator Bays (Factor-9),
4x 50-ton Missile Bays (Factor-9),
40x Triple Beam Laser Turrets organized into 4 Batteries (Factor-9)
DEFENSES:
60x Triple Sandcaster Turrets organized into 6 Batteries (Factor-9)
1x Nuclear Damper Backup (Factor-2),
1x Meson Screen Backup (Factor-2)
CRAFT:
1x 50-ton Modular Cutter (Crew of 0)
FUEL: 8,750 Tons Fuel (4 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant


MISCELLANEOUS: 88 Staterooms, 69 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 17,532.212 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 173.586),
MCr 13,886.901 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 170 Weeks Singly, 136 Weeks in Quantity


COMMENTS:
The Arandol Light Cruiser is designed the ship of the same name, found on
page 34 of Traveller20's Traveller Aide #7: Fighting Ships. It is a standard
Imperial design of the era.

The crew is determined as if the meson and nuclear dampers were always
active: however, these screens are usually off unless the ship captain
directly orders them powered up (and takes the hit to agility).

This light cruiser is a new class, built to provide general combat duties. It
isn't designed to serve on the main battle line, however ("Armour? Shields? I
ain't letting that slow me down!") The Arandol class has a dispersed power
supply, geared to saving fuel.

Design note: The T20 design has screens that can always be left on: this is
not possible in this Classic Traveller design, unless there is an agility
hit. I have decided to let the ship captain decide which problem to face,
given his tactical situation.
```

Noble notes: The Duke of Gimushi is responsible for the financing of one of the four light cruisers: while several billions of his own money has been used, most of the financing is from various corporations and wealthy individuals within Gimushi subsector.

The vessel and crew are answerable to the Duke, and are considered "Imperial Auxiliary naval vessels." For the duration of the Solomani Rim War, he and his squadron are under the direct orders of the Imperial Navy. After the war, though, the squadron will be dissolved, with the Ilona – should she survive the conflict – used to strengthen the security profile of Gimushi subsector. As a TL 14 vessel, she is likely to be the future flagship of the Gimushi Colonial Fleet.[10]

One of the more elegant and unique Noble Residences within the Empty Quarter: the Hall of Ivory, part of the Nautilus Complex which serves as the official residence of the Viscount of Gudina. **The graphic is titled "Forest Hallway" © Artur Rosa. See his work at http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/?#/d5fg95d**

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[10] Yes, yes, it's officially a "Reserve Fleet" and "Colonial Squadron", but I'm going to ignore that here.

Adventure: Looking for Trouble
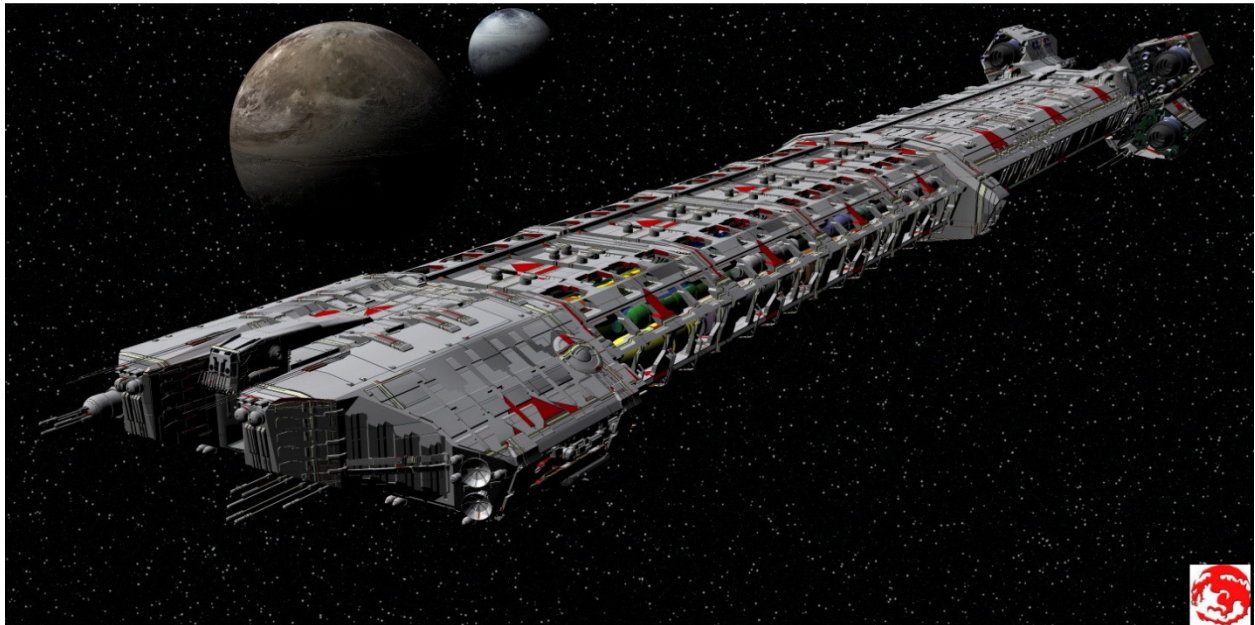
The Judy Hope*, a Steel Basket-class armed freighter, during her journey to Yogesh. 993 Imperial.*
The graphic is titled "Hauling Cargo Across the Void" © Richard Jeferies. See his work at
http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1779584

In Media Res

Just for fun, we'll be starting off with space combat first, and character creation second. (The starships involved are pre-made: see **Appendix: Battle Over Yogesh.**)

The PCs are in command of the *Ouagadougou,* a Type-T class (a.k.a. Vayu-class, a.k.a. Lurushaar Kilaalum-class) 400-ton Patrol Cruiser. They have to protect a 10,000-ton cargo ship, the *Judy Hope,* from an attack by six Vargr Corsairs. They are assisted by a System Defense Boat, the *Guard of Yogesh.*

Resolve the conflict as per usual. This should be a solid win for the PCs, as the freighter is well-armed, as she has to be to travel in the Imperial Empty Quarter. The PCs want to make sure that she docks safely, as she is carrying naval cargo and military supplies that will directly benefit them. See **Appendix: Battle Over Yogesh** for High Guard details. Assume the PCs have Ship Tactics-1.

Setting the stage

This adventure presents a pirate investigation within the Empty Quarter during the Solomani Rim War era. There is a heavy role-playing component to this adventure, as well as the violence **Traveller** players expect. The PCs will be interacting with wary Imperial Navy officers, disgruntled locals, and – eventually – unpleasant pirates. In this adventure, who you are is as important as what you do: choose your character with care. There will be an investigation; there will be political manoeuvring; and there will be blood.

After the setting, the adventure proper is divided into Six Acts. Classic Traveller rules are used.

Who are you, anyways?
How people react to the PC is tied to their identity.

Due to the nature of the adventure, at least one of the PCs must be a high-caste Yogeshio: he is automatically the leader of the group.

The other PCs can choose from the following options:

Yogeshio, high-caste

Generate as per **Stellar Reaches,** #9, page 27-28.

Most characters are racially East Indian Solomani, and follow an Indian-flavored form of Vilani Ritualism. All PCs are literate (in both Imperial Anglic and Yogeshio), and have an awareness of the political situation of Yogesh and the systems nearby. These characters take pride in their technical abilities and their business know-how. While these characters are more closely related to the Archon than the low-caste crewmen, they aren't as loyal, as they tend to see him as a powerful master, patron, frenemy, or ally.

"I need this mission to succeed to improve my standing before the Duke: therefore, it **will** succeed."

Yogeshio, low-caste

Generate the character as **Stellar Reaches,** #9, page 27-28. If the PC is older than 40, apply a -2 modifier to Education, and limit literacy to computer glyphs, not a true ability to read the written Yogeshio[11] or Anglic script. Most characters are racially East Indian Solomani, and follow an Indian-flavored form of Vilani Ritualism. These characters take pride in their handiness and their loyalty to the Archon. They may even be distantly related to him: if so, they get a slight boost when dealing with other Yogeshio, the exact nature to be determined by the Referee.

"I get me rations 'cause I'm handy with tools, tools for fixin' or tools for killin'. I don't get nothin' for thinkin'!"

Playing a Bwap

It is possible that the Player will prefer to play a Bwap. There is a small community of Bwap residents on Yogesh, and an important Bwap world three parsecs from Yogesh – Ka-aswa – so it's a reasonable request. (Also, the Bwap tend to have better tech and be well-travelled, compared to other Imperial Gushgusi.)

This character should be played as a typically nit-picky, bureaucratic, law-abiding, routine-loving member of his race, unless a detailed background proves otherwise. This PC is a respected and valued member of Yogeshio society, but the dryness of the underground habitats makes it quite uncomfortable. This Bwap player must always wear moisturizing clothing, and whenever possible reside in the Bwap-friendly habitats of Yogesh and –when on a starship – his cabin (hot and very humid – 98%-100% humidity).

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[11] This script is a merger of the Hindi and Vilani alphabets.

Non-Yogeshio

Generate the character as per standard Traveller rules. Determine their homeworld: this is almost certainly within two parsecs of Yogesh. Using the maps on pages 6 and 18 of **Stellar Reaches** #19, determine race and religion. (These maps are broad generalizations: the player may insist on a different ethnicity and religion, but then must give a good background justification.)

If the PC wants to use a simple probability table to pick his origin, use the table below:

Result if rolled (2d6)	Name
2	Kharkhelud
3	Uthurrvon
4	Miinagi
5	Dumkashga
6	Basimah
7,8	Yogesh
9	Kasim
10	Riamlir
11	Coman
12	Urmair

Name	Race, Religion (typical)
Kharkhelud	Vilani, Kikhushegi
Uthurrvon	Ovaghoun Vargr, Ikonaz Ritualism
Miinagi	Mixed Vilani, Vilani Ritualist
Dumkashga	Vilani, Vilani Ritualist
Basimah	Vilani, Vilani Ritualist
Yogesh	East Indian, Vilani Ritualist
Kasim	Arab, Vilani Ritualist
Riamlir	Mixed Vilani, Vilani Ritualist
Coman	European, Kikhushegi
Urmair	Mixed Vilani, Kikhushegi

Playing a Vargr

The Referee may let a player play as a Vargr, but only if the player develops a cool back-story that shows in an impressive or highly amusing fashion how a Vargr came into the service of a wary Duke who leads an anti-Vargr culture.[12] No story that's good enough? "You're playing as an East Indian from Yogesh."

Warn the Vargr PC to expect a life of rampant discrimination and loathing on Yogesh. The Yogeshio PCs in the group will have to come to terms with the

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[12] Trained as a classic Imperial Noble, Duke Anoop bears no ill will to any race that serves the Emperor. His people, however, think differently, and he can't go too far from them, too fast. "Slowly, slowly, things will change."

Vargr PC, and deal with their natural hostility one way or another. It is assumed that this Vargr is Ovaghoun, and his culture is shaped by Vilani mores, so he feels closer to them than to the Solomani. Note that Yogeshio generally follows Vilani Ritualism (with some Hindu flavouring): this belief system is usually comfortable with non-humans, but there is some bad history between the locals and Vargr outsiders.

The fact that his sires from the Ikonaz Sphere *command* Vilani bears little weight on Imperial Ovaghoun Vargr PCs: most Vargr couldn't care less about distant ancestors or ancient history, and even this Vilani-influenced Vargr cares little about such things.

Who do you serve?

The PCs are currently subjects of the System Administration of Yogesh, regardless of their birthworld. The PCs are Household personnel, attached to House Dwivedi. Their oath is to the security and authority of the House: they only indirectly serve the Imperium, as one of the duties of House Dwivedi. (See: feudalism.[13])

Due to
- ➢ personal excellence (merit),
- ➢ political manoeuvring, or
- ➢ personal connections (blood or business),

they have been chosen to man one of the subsector Duke's personal warships, the *Ouagadougou*. This implies a great deal of earned trust on behalf of the Archon: if they blatantly violate this trust, the Referee should punish the PCs severely as a natural consequence of their actions.

(At the Referee's discretion, this can include being shot in the back by a NPC crewman of the starship. "Ain't no craven scoundrel stealin' MY Duke's ship!" "And you KNOW how he rewards his trusty friends!" *rubs three fingers together*)

Anoop Dwivedi wears three hats:
- ➢ Archon (family head) of House Dwivedi;
- ➢ Duke of Yogesh (Imperial);
- ➢ and First Administrator of Yogesh (the planetary government).

The PCs are serving him in his capacity of Archon, but he doesn't mind if they refer to him as Duke or Your

Grace. They should not refer to him as First Administrator, though – for political reasons, he wants to remind the PCs that they serve *him*, not the planetary government. But, he's happy to merge the Imperium and his Family in the minds of the PCs.

The PCs have a high rank among Duke Anoop's servants, as even an old and worn warship is a valuable and expensive asset for a family to own and maintain. They do not report directly to the Duke: but are given their orders by the House Marshal, Lord Saini.[14]

The Marshal has a fair number of personnel and ships under his command, including the *Ouagadougou*. The *Ouagadougou* ("Oua-ga-dou-gou") is an aging 400-ton Vayu-class (Type-T) Patrol Ship, and usually works with the Yogesh System Guard when not occupied with Ducal tasks. Her main duties involve pirate suppression and in-system patrols. With the absence of the Sector Fleet, patrolling the poorly-defended systems of the subsector is an important new duty; she even acts as a courier/x-boat messenger occasionally, as many Scout assets have been stripped to support the Rim War.

War and Piracy: the Ducal View

The distant Solomani Rim War started in 990, but the PCs first heard of it in 991[15]. Only a few months after they heard the war started, the Sector Fleet was ordered to deploy to the Old Expanses, at the other end of the Imperium. Since then, there hasn't been a lot of news, only rumours – all bad, some disastrous.

But thanks to the surge of pirate activity, the PCs haven't had a lot of time to think about the Rim War. All the best ships and crews are fighting hundreds of light years away, while you are left with obsolescent ships and eclectically trained crews. Fortunately, a lot of the pirate ships aren't warships, just retrofitted civilian ships. But it's just a matter of time before the high-tech Vargr professionals from across the Lesser Rift arrive to turn "tough but winnable" into "howling deathscape".

Orders are to fall back to the high-pop systems, and organize convoys to keep interstellar trade flowing 'at some level'. Yogesh isn't a high-pop system, but it is a

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[13] Locally feudal: despite the trappings, the (Official) Third Imperium itself is not a feudal society. All *Imperial Nobles* pay homage *directly* to the Emperor, and not through a secondary liege.

[14] Saini does not have an Imperial title, but does have a *Yogesh* noble title. As the PCs are locals, may use his title, Jagirdar Saini, off-duty.
[15] News only travels as fast as Jump4 publically, and even the secret network only goes to Jump5 at this time: it takes about 30 weeks for news of the war to reach the Empty Quarter, at best.

minor subsector capital, and the System Guard has weathered the first wave of the storm well enough – although they don't patrol the outer system anymore.

That's what the PC's have been ordered to change. The Duke has chosen not to ship out with the 86th Imperial subsector fleet (which joined the rest of the Sector Fleet in their long journey to the Solomani battle lines), instead sending his sons into battle. He remains with his daughters and his youngest sons back on Yogesh, leading the 1116th Colonial Fleet in his subsector.

Duke Anoop's resources are rather limited, though.

Ka-aswa is the wealthiest world in his demesne, but it is a Bwap world, and its resources are politically tied to the defense of Bwap systems. The Duke could challenge this, but the Bwaps are sure to hit back, with an astonishing amount of bureaucratic paperwork, consultative requirements, forgotten precedents, and detailed rebuttals: with each point of each rebuttal insisting on "due regard to all previously established guidelines."

With every Imperial bureaucracy in a hundred parsecs laced with Bwap bureaucrats – especially at Capital, and including his best form-fillers and most trusted administrative drones on Yogesh – challenging the Bwaps is a risky proposition, to say the least.[16]

Dumkashga is a loyal Vilani world, but her squadron of low-tech System Defense Boats is *just* enough to discourage the run-of-the-mill pirate or three. Weakening a fairly reliable strongpoint to try and put up a spotty resistance elsewhere isn't wise, unless you want to build up hatred against the Imperium. This *isn't* what Duke Anoop wants.

Yogesh, of course, is the subsector capital, and where there's a decent robot industry as well. Pirate attacks against the mainworld have been successfully broken... for now. But if the high-tech thieves of the Protectorate come a knocking, they will make a beeline for Yogesh, and – for the sake of the world he rules (as First Administrator), his wealth, his House, and his personal honour – he *has* to be ready for them. So, he can't spread out his forces *too* much.

And... that's it. All the other systems in the subsector either have enough problems

- ➢ keeping a few anti-ship missile launchers up and running to protect their starport and their one-and-only settlement, or
- ➢ using TL-6 or -7 (a.k.a. World War II or Cold War) fighters, howitzers, machine guns, and short range missiles to protect the starport and a few cities (forget about the rest of the planet)

(Hey... at least no one is actually throwing rocks and spears, unlike some subsectors I know...)

As Duke, he had to send most of the family men-at-arms to back his sons at the Solomani front lines, but he managed to hold back a few troopers, spacers and starships to protect the ranch back home. He's *very* glad that he did, since – as Duke Yogesh – he's privy to information the common folk don't have. And if his friends in various Imperial agencies are giving the straight goods, we're going to have a *long* war.[17]

With the Household forces he managed to hold on to, he can afford to be a bit aggressive in pirate hunting. His guts tell him to just hunker down on Yogesh and let the rest of the subsector go to pot, like the Duchess of Udusis. But at the end of the day, he's enough of a patriot to at least *try* to protect the weaker systems, and to prove that the Imperium means something other than distant wars against your Solomani kin.

Act One: On Yogesh

On the Job

The adventure proper starts at 140-993. The PCs are busy at the "Household Naval Base" – the Ducal section of Tampici Imperial Starport, closed to civilian ships – yelling at the techs and trying to chase down they equipment they need to keep the *Ouagadougou* up and running.[18] Some PC will have to chase down the ship captain or cargomaster of the *Judy Hope*, as well as the SPA[19] Cargo Superintendent, to get new supplies and spare equipment their ship needs, especially the desperately needed missiles. (No, they aren't waiting for the slacker Household Quartermaster to do his job.)

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[16] Tolerant, Compassionate, Power-hungry bureaucrats getting you down? I understand. Download "Tactics of Christian Resistance" here: http://entrewave.com/freebooks/docs/21e2_47e.htm

[17] Regarding 'friends helping friends', see **Stellar Reaches** #9, page 29.

[18] Vilani PCs pronounce the full name, always. Solomani PCs may use some amusing nickname instead. Mixed Vilani PCs get to choose which way they play. Vargr PCs give up, and just say 'the long pointy ship'.

[19] SPA = Starport Authority, the Imperial organization that manages all Imperial civilian starports and spaceports on behalf of His Majesty the Emperor.

Piracy in the system has ebbed enough to allow some regular supply and freighter runs to Yogesh to kick in again. (The PCs has a *personal* hand in that 'ebbing' bit.) However, there are still a pile of material that should be on site, but isn't. Scrounging for the nuts and bolts that keep their ship running takes up a good chunk of the PCs time. The PC engineers are in make-do, kludge, and 'there, I fixed it' mode.

In the meantime, the unofficial face/fast-talking agent of the team is tuning to the scuttlebutt of the port, keeping complicated mental notes on which ships have been attacked where, and with what. A 'barely-there' pirate, trying to intimidate civilians with a really strong flashlight they claim to be a laser, demands a different response than a system stakeout by three TL-B Vargr corsairs.

(Nobody talks about the cutting-edge, TL-E Vargr packs from Ikon. They haven't been spotted in the subsector, so there's no need to wave a flag at a wrathful God – or a quietly hostile universe – by talking about them too much. 'Ears in the walls, you know.')

It's the PC's choice if he wants to talk in our out of his house hold uniform. The uniform gives respect and authority, but no uniform puts the visiting captains and crew more at ease, with looser tongues. The respect for the PC has been earned by his ship's earlier actions against local pirates, so he has a basis to get some juicy information to his supervisors...

From His Grace's Lips to Your Ear

In the course of their duties, the PCs are informed by their captain that they are to meet Marshal Saini, their commanding officer, at 18:00 local time precisely. The PCs can grumble: Marshal Saini is something of a martinet, who loves rules, discipline, and obedience – and hates those who challenge his authority in any way, deliberately or not. A true pain to work with.

Especially if you're a Vargr.

But instead of seeing the Marshal sitting behind the desk, the PCs see the Duke instead. Now, seeing the ruler of the planet isn't as unlikely as it is in a world of billions: the total population of Yogesh is only about 300,000, after all. Still, it's definitely a surprise!

After some soothing words – and evading questions about the Marshal – the Duke asks the PCs to do a special favour for him. Some friends of his has informed him of a trouble-making group of Vargr on Uthurrvon, who might be feeding information to the pirates. As

trusted servants of his family, the Duke would like the PCs to investigate the matter. If they find nothing, verify it, and report back. If they find something, see if they can do something about it on the spot, or trace the problem to its root and kill it there. If it's too big for them to handle, get out and report back. More details will be sent to the PCs by messenger.

If there is a Vargr in the PC group, the Duke – who, unlike most Yogeshio, will talk to the Vargr directly, and address him by name – will say a few words. "If you provide particularly good service" the Duke says, "then you will be properly rewarded, as well."

Act Two: On to Uthurrvon

Old Grudges

The next local-morning (the PCs reside underground, so the day/night cycle is artificial), the PCs receive a messenger wearing House Dwivedi livery. After receiving the data chip, they find that their orders are to visit a particular warehouse on Uthurrvon within 20 days (by day 160, a Wonday).[20] They are to wear their Household field uniforms.

How the PCs prepare for the mission is up to them. Also, whenever they set out immediately for Uthurrvon, or stick around and prepare/laze about until the last possible moment (day 152, eight days before day 160, factoring in jump time) is up to them.

Serious consequences should be inflicted on the PCs if they are still in Yogesh system on day 153. One thing is for sure: this adventure is *over*.

The low-caste PCs know that Uthurrvon is a troublesome Vargr world that the Duke proudly keeps beaten down on behalf of the Imperium. "Keeps 'em from botherin' Decent Folk."

The high-caste PCs are aware that Uthurrvon was once a neighbouring world, inhabited by Yogeshio colonists, called Ariji. Ariji was invaded and conquered by the Vargr during the Imperial Civil War; they then either killed off or enslaved and shipped off the human population, and brought in their own packs to populate the world. Soon afterwards, the world was renamed

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[20] The crypto-official Imperial Anglic names for the days are Oneday, Twoday, Threeday, Fourday, Fiveday, Sixday, and Sevenday; over the centuries, they have been reshaped into Wonday, Tuday, Thriday, Forday, Fiday, Sixday, and Senday. Hey, at least some days are still recognizable after 4000 years!

Uthurrvon and was used as a base to invade Yogesh in 605 Imperial. The invasion was defeated, with difficulty.

Later, after Empress Arbellatra was solidly on the throne, Yogesh was permitted to provide the ground soldiers needed to retake the world. The pirates were broken in the Six Subsectors earlier, so sweeping the remnants corsairs from this system was fairly easy work (for once!). The ground fighting to retake the system was a good deal nastier: only *close* Imperial supervision, and the influence of the first Vargr Archduke in Imperial history, prevented an all-out holocaust from occurring.

As it is, the world was placed under the rule of the Yogesh System Administration, so long as 1) no genocide was conducted against the Vargr population, 2) no humans were permitted to settle the world, 3) the world was permitted to keep its Vargr name, and her inhabitants permitted to keep their culture 4) a representative of the Vargr Archduke's pack was permitted to reside on the world, to insure that the agreement was being kept.

Over three centuries later, the situation has remained largely frozen. Various attempts by the Yogeshio to resettle the world with their own people was detected by the Imperium (yet, mysteriously, never by the forces of the Duke of Yogesh), and the humans deported under the watchful eye of the Archduke's representative. Despite these transgressions, the system remains under the rule of Yogesh.

[**Referee**: Yes, the intellectual gap between the low-caste and high-caste Yogeshio *can* be as massive as you suspect.

But this is merely the broadly-accepted stereotype: in reality, it *is* certainly possible for the low-caste PC's intelligence to be higher than the high-caste PC's. How the high-intelligence, low social standing PC role-plays this is up to him. Smart low-caste PCs who make average-intelligence high-caste PC look good, while reminding him that this favour needs a reward, can do quite well for themselves.[21]]

Pirates?
The Referee determines if there is a pirate near Uthurrvon when the PCs arrive. Note that the

probability is higher than usual, as the Sector Fleet is absent as of 993.

If there is one, run the encounter as usual, with a typical TL 11, 400-ton Vargr pirate ship as the adversary. If the ship is defeated, and if the crew surrenders, the PCs may choose to arrest and interrogate them. If so, run a standard interrogation contest: if the PCs win, the PCs learn that there is a small resupply point on the world, where friendly Vargr provide a safe spot for quick repairs, medical care and R&R, and some small high-tech goods and light supplies could be had: all at a high markup.

If the crewman is an officer, or if security for the ship's computer is successfully broken (the PCs have TL 12 Naval equipment for this: more than enough for a TL 11 ship's computer), they can get the exact location, and pay the place a little visit. Go to **Act Four** of the adventure.

If there is no pirate encounter, the PCs head directly to the Imperial Downport.[22]

Landfall
The Referee should note down the day the PCs make landfall.

Uthurrvon is a smallish world, with next-to-no air and lots of ice. Most settlements are just grounded spacecraft and starships, with the occasional proper closed-cycle habitat, typically sustaining 10-20 Vargr residents. The planet can only do work at TL 6, so there is a lot of kludged, make-do repairs and substandard maintenance. The starport is at properly maintained, TL 12 specs, and the startown is also at TL 12, with maintenance conducted by off-world Yogeshio techs (instead of the usual Iper'mar tech tyrants).

The single town on the planet, Askfedhdho (pop. 800), the starport region, and the surrounding area remain under Yogeshio martial law – complete with tech bans, weapon bans, band of groups of five or more Vargr in the startown, and strict curfews. The rest of the world is only occasionally patrolled (on the ground or in the ~~air~~ vacuum) by heavily-armed TL 12 troops, on the lookout for military preparations, off-world technology, or other signs of assistance by friendly Vargr pirates.

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[21] The PC generation rules for Yogeshio characters ban low-intelligence, high-caste PCs. In reality, they *do* exist, but are not found in the service of the Duke.

[22] There *is* a small Highport, but without a regular naval presence, it has been abandoned, stripped of movable assets, and mothballed until the Sector Fleet returns.

The Class-B starport is kept in good shape by the Imperium (a.k.a. the Duke of Yogesh, who is the subsector head of the Imperial government, after all.) The PC's warship ship will get priority treatment: in this stellar neighbourhood, it is vital as both a tool against raiders, and a sign of Ducal (and Imperial) authority.

Imperial starports are unarmed by policy, but there are usually two Imperial Navy SDBs posted here: the place is a known watering hole for pirates, especially Vargr ones with friends dirtside. With the Imperial Navy gone, the PCs have been pulling guard duty themselves, more often than not. The planet has no native anti-ship weaponry, but the stellar-tech Yogeshio ground troops can tear apart a typical thug-based pirate landing party, if led with even middling competence.

Recently, pirate ships have been visiting Uthurrvon during gaps in the patrol schedule. Interestingly, the starport has been ignored.[23] Instead, the pirate ships drop into Vargr territory, and head back directly to the stars again. A fair number of the observational satellites have been shot up, so the exact location is unknown, but the starport staff can give an approximate location, based on what they can spot and some good guesses.

If the PCs go in search of the pirate touchdown point, go to **Act Four.**

If the PCs go directly to the warehouse, go to **Act Three**.

Act Three: At the Warehouse

If the PCs arrive at the warehouse, in their Household uniforms, at or before day 160.
The Referee rolls 1d6: this is the amount of time the PCs have to wait between the time they arrive, and when something happens.

During the wait period, nothing special happens. The place is an ordinary warehouse, storing typical civilian goods. It is largely empty: no new goods have been placed for a year now. If asked, the staff is not aware of anything or anyone waiting for the PCs. The remaining staff – all Yogeshio humans – are merely in maintenance mode, waiting and waiting. But at least the low-caste Yogeshio that are still on this sad little

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[23] Most pirates like to raid undefended ports, but there is a strong ground defense in *this* port: vehicular or man-portable plasma guns can whack an air/raft in a *very* satisfactory manner.

rock are paid (in decent food, medical care, and occasional entertainment), and the lights and heat are kept on: that's something!

The PCs are free to wander off if they wish, and return if they wish. If they miss the encounter, they miss it.

After the set number of hours has passed, and if the PCs are present, an old male Vargr, escorted by a young male Vargr, enters the warehouse. They are both tough Ovaghoun dogs, but the older one has endured a hard life in a grim environment, and the younger one walks and moves like a seasoned fighter.

A PC who passes a Difficult Intelligence test (Routine if the PC has military experience) knows that both Vargr bear laser pistols – in defiance of town law. At the start of the encounter, though, no effort is made to draw those pistols, and neither Vargr show signs of anger or aggression.

Determine surprise. If the Vargr are permitted to act, they move to the PCs first. Both speak Transform Anglic (the common language of the Empty Quarter: the PCs automatically speak it as well): the older one asks to talk to the lead PC.

If the PCs detected the laser pistols and order the Vargr to disarm, they will hesitate, and then do so grudgingly.

1) They may then be arrested if the PCs desires, and will eventually be punished with two years in low-berth. If arrested, they will not resist, but will not plea bargain, nor give any additional information, nor provide information on why they wanted to meet with the PCs in the first place. (So far as they are concerned, they have lost charisma for unjust reasons, and will prefer to act to get it back, rather than beg for human favours).
2) They may be negotiated with, and the pistols handed back afterwards, with a warning not to break the town's law again. The Vargr will respect this decision, and will abide by the law afterwards.
3) If the PCs make it clear that a) they know that the Vargr are bearing weapons and b) no action will be taken against them out of respect, the Vargr will be pleased. Further results will be provided later.

If the PCs decide to open fire, run the encounter as normal. The older Vargr will flee, and the younger Vargr will provide covering fire. The younger one, Ubrirraedkmgus, will die to guarantee the escape of

the older Vargr if necessary, but he will prefer to escape alive as well. Neither will press an attack against the PCs: the goal is escape and survival, nothing more. Most personnel within the town of Askfedhdho are Vargr: none will fight the PCs, but if they can they will help the two fleeing Vargr escape the PCs. The most likely outcome is the escapees reaching an air/raft while the PCs (and the squad of Yogeshio troops sent to assist the PCs) are delayed and distracted.

If he is allowed to speak, the older Vargr, by the name of Lazkoetzuu, intends to warn the PCs of a planned pirate-backed uprising against colonial Yogeshio government on Uthurrvon. He can point out the marshalling area for the rebels, but in return the Duke must release his world from the colonial government. In return for their freedom, he can persuade the Vargr population to work wholeheartedly for the Imperium and the Duke, giving troops and information that will help the Duke drive out the pirates that challenge his rule.

The PCs are Household troops, and have no authority to approve or reject this request. They are only expected to bring down the hammer on local pirates.

The high-caste PCs are more politically aware, though. They have access to the Ducal court, and might be able to make things happen. They may

1) Stick to the orders, and insist that Lazkoetzuu point out the pirates location without anything given in return, as per the law;
2) Promise to 'look into the matter' after the pirates' location is revealed;
3) Promise to 'push the Duke to release the world' after the pirate's rallying point is given.

If Choice 1 is made, the Vargr refuse to give anything voluntarily. They may well be interrogated, and perhaps the interrogation will get the information from them (this is a Difficult task). Of course, whenever they get the information or not, the possibility of any deal with the local Vargr is gone.

If Choice 1 is made, and the Vargr permitted to leave unmolested, the PCs are given another chance to select Choice 2 or 3, *if* they had made it clear that they knew of the hidden weapons, and didn't take them. (This action impressed Lazkoetzuu, so he will be willing to give them another chance.)

The lead high-caste PC must make a Difficult Liaison task if Choice 2 is made.
  ➤ Any Vargr PC may speak, and lower the difficulty for the high-caste negotiator.

Lowering the difficulty is an Average Liaison task.
  o Outstanding success lowers the lead PC difficulty by two levels, to Easy;
  o Success lowers the difficulty by one level, to Average;
  o Failure does not change the level of difficulty for the lead PC;
  o Outstanding failure increases the lead PC's difficulty by two levels, to Staggering.
  ➤ ONE non-Vargr PC may also speak, and lower the difficulty for the high-caste negotiator. But it will be harder for them to make an impact.
  o Outstanding success: lower the difficulty by one level for the lead PC, to Average;
  o Success does not change the level, but allows the lead PC to try again of he suffers a Failure (but not if he suffers an Outstanding failure);
  o Failure increases the lead PC difficulty by one, to Formidable;
  o Outstanding failure increases the difficulty to two levels, to Staggering.
  ➤ If more than one PC tries to support the lead PC, the negotiation stalls until the lead PC shuts up the other PCs. If he does not shut them up, the Vargr leave. The PCs may attempt to contact Lazkoetzuu again: it is an Average Liaison task to arrange another meeting, but this time with the lead PC *alone* (a silent bodyguard for the PC is permissible).

If Choice 3 is made, conduct the negotiations as per Choice 2, but lower the lower the base difficulty, from Difficult to Average. All the other task difficulties are lowered by one level, as well.

If the PCs miss the appointment
Nothing special happens. There is no meeting with Lazkoetzuu, and no deal is made.

The PCs may well find the pirate rallying point by other means. Private investigation of the local Vargr criminal elements, coupled with the fragmentary information from the starport and a personal bit of scouting (via starship or air/raft), can yield good results.

The Duke has assets watching the PCs and watching the warehouse, to see if the PCs visited the warehouse by day 160, in uniform. If they didn't, he will be informed, and will be very displeased. Neither he nor his hidden eyes on the ground will be aware of the importance of

the two Vargr who stopped by, although their visit will be noted.

Act Four: Busted Puppies

One way or another, the PCs will discover the rallying point of the planned insurrection. It is set at the edge of a frozen sea, a good 3000 km from Askfedhdho (on the other side of Uthurrvon!)

The Search

On the ground, it's an Average Recon skill (two hours) to pick out the four large camouflaged habitats and two light laser turrets (anti-personnel, not anti-ship) and a Difficult Recon skill to determine the size of opposing forces (60 Vargr, with light rifles and vac suits, no heavy equipment).

Roll 1d6: if the result is a 1, there is a pirate ship either arriving, refuelling at the sea, unloading more light arms and equipment, or departing. Otherwise, nothing.

If the PCs think of basic camouflage against orbiting ships, there is no chance that they will be spotted: otherwise, there is a possibility of the pirate spotting them when they take off or arrive (Average Recon for the PCs to pass: make it Difficult Recon if they left an air/raft or ground vehicle in open view nearby.)

In close orbit, with air/rafts or their starship, it's a Difficult Recon task to pick out the four large habitats. (The habitats are more carefully camouflaged against being spotted by the occasional passing Imperial patrol ship than against the rare ground patrol.)

This presumes that the PCs are looking at the right part of the right landmass in the first place. If they are starting from scratch – without any pointers or assistance, from the starport or the Vargr leader – increase difficulty to Staggering Recon (one attempt during the first week), then lower the difficulty to Formidable Recon (one attempt to locate the site per following week: all the newbie mistakes have been routed out, so it's a bit easier from now on.)

Roll standard random space encounters per week, modified by the Referee for fewer visitors overall, less civilian traffic of those who do show up, and more pirates (and no big Imperial warships). The pirates who do show up will not attempt to dock, but will attempt to flee instead. (For the regular pirate, fighting an Imperial patrol ship is touch-and-go, without a good payoff.)

If they wait long enough (four weeks) and still fail to detect the base, the insurgency will move against Askfedhdho: but with their supplies prematurely cut off by the PC's patrol vessel, the attack fails. While the attack is ongoing, the ground military will call for orbital support, which the PCs should be glad to provide. After the attack has been repulsed, the surviving Vargr melt back into the population: captured prisoners will finally point out the location of the now-abandoned rebel base.

The Fight: Close Orbit

Assuming the PCs manage to locate the base in time (they should be smart enough to have gotten assistance, and so lower the difficulty), it's rather easy for the PCs to use their two triple-laser turrets and two triple-missile turrets to make very short work of the base. If they ask the base to surrender first, they will do so quickly – even faster if the PCs choose to give a brief firing exercise first.

The base has no anti-ship weapons, not even a sandcaster, so they can't even pretend that they can fight a starship.

If the PCs catch a pirate ship on the ground or close to it (roll a 1 out of 1d6), the pirate reacts with a -2 DM for the first round of combat. A good gunner crew should be able to hammer the pirate ship fast so that it stays put on the ground, "the way the Duke likes it." The base surrenders very quickly afterwards.

The Fight: On the Ground

The Vargr insurgents have no saboteurs or allies in the starport, so they should have no way of preventing the PCs from using their starship in battle. There may be some odd reason for the PCs to prefer a ground-only assault, though, so it is outlined here.

I assume that the PCs are not crazy enough to attack the base on the ground, all by themselves. If they do plan on attacking 60 Vargr without support, they deserve what they are going to get.

Question: What forces are available?
Answer: The Yogesh System Administration maintains 40 troopers who provide security for both the starport and the town of Askfedhdho. (No Imperial Marines are available to provide security for the port.) The platoon is commanded by Subedar Tejomay Naik of the Yogeshio Expeditionary Forces.

His men are equipped with
- TL 12 Combat Armour with chameleon camouflage: treat as battle dress for protection. Plasma or fusion weapons may not be carried, as it isn't powered like true battle dress. Heat signatures are dampened. These suits are pressurized, and bear six hours of air.
- Laser Rifles **or** Gauss Rifles.

The PCs may debate the merits of these weapons. In this case, they don't have to pay for them, for once. Assume that for gauss rifles, each soldier carries two magazines.

Laser rifles have unlimited range, and give 100 shots per power pack, which is easily rechargeable with Expeditionary Forces vehicles. Rifle weight is 6 kg, power pack is 4 kg.

From **Book 1: Characters and Combat,** page 40
Required DEX/DM: 6- / -3
Advanced DEX/DM: 11+/+2

None +3, jack +3, Mesh +2, Cloth +2, Reflex -8, Ablative -7, Combat armour -6

Close range -4, Short +2, Medium +2, Long +2, Very Long +1. Wounds 5D

Gauss rifles weigh 3.9 kg loaded, and bear 40 round magazines. Each trigger pull shoots 1, 4, or 10 rounds, and can be reset quickly. Extreme range is 1260 m. Each rifle carries a sight: no grenade launchers are provided.

From **Book 4: Mercenary,** page 36
Required DEX/DM: 6- / -3
Advanced DEX/DM: 10+/+2

None +4/+7, jack +4/+7, Mesh +2/+5, Cloth +1/+3, Reflex +4/+7, Ablative +4/+7, Combat armour +2/0

Close range -4/-4, Short +1/+1, Medium +2/+4, Long +3/+5, Very Long0/+1. Wounds 4D
The Expeditionary Force has four open-topped air/rafts, and one sealed air/raft. All of these vehicles are unarmed, and can carry four men plus four tons of cargo.

Two small ground cars are also at hand, for ground perimeter patrols of the starport and the town. These vehicles are quite expensive, and will not be deployed far from the base lightly: they carry robot brains that can drive the vehicle itself, provide remote sensor information (infrared and visual) to the base, detect radio transmissions, and fire the mounted light machine gun. These wonder toys from Yogesh also carry four soldiers each, usually just as passengers. (There is an emergency override that requires a specific key to engage.)

I am proud to discover that **Classic Traveller** has rules for drones. (**Mercenaries**, page 42) Chadwick comes through for the team – he even got the TL right! Anyways, assume that the Force maintains a drone in constant observation patrol, and another is kept as a spare, should the first develop a problem or get shot down. These drones only provide visual and infrared information.

Question: How do I get my hands on these goodies?
Answer: The PCs are member of the Duke's household, but they aren't family: more to the point, they are NOT part of the planetary military hierarchy.

As Subedar Naik will quickly point out, the PCs have no legal remit to give a raw recruit of the Yogeshio Expeditionary a single solitary order.

Now, the Subedar is willing to assist the PCs in the destruction of an insurrection base, as he is responsible for keeping Uthurrvon secure. On the other hand, his priority is to first protect the starport, then the town of Askfedhdho. The rest of the planet is far below the list of priorities, unless they can be dealt with without compromising the security of the base.

It is a Formidable Liaison task to persuade the Subedar to loan four men and one open-top air/raft to support the attack on the rebel camp.

It is a Staggering Liaison task to get the Subedar to loan ten men – 25% of his force – and three open-top air/rafts to support the attack.

It is an Impossible Liaison task to get the Subedar to loan 20 men – 50% of his force – and all of his air/rafts to support the attack.

(All of these difficulties assume the PCs are NOT using their starship as orbital support. If they are, lower the difficulty by one level.)

Everything else is staying at home, unless the Confederation manages to fight its way right across the Imperium to this worthless rock on the ragged edge of nothingness. Not *too* unlikely, with the rumours he's picking up on...

In that case, none of the Vargr will be around much longer, and the PCs can just skedaddle back to Yogesh: Mission Accomplished.

Question: NOW can we get to the ground fight?
Answer: The PCs will be leading their assets – their crew and their ships – while Havildar Gajendra Verma will be leading the Yogeshio Expeditionary Forces assigned to support the PCs. The Havildar's duty is to, first, preserve his unit from Householder stupidity and second, to kill or capture any hostiles. He has been ordered to give the Ducal Household Forces (that is, the PCs) assistance when possible, but not if it puts his men in needless jeopardy.

The actual battle site is a hilly airless field. It will be very dark, and very cold, cold enough to chill the PCs flesh through their suits. The four habitats are where they were last spotted. 1d6 x 10 Vargr, in vac suits (cloth armour) and bearing regular rifles, can be seen near the habitats. There are two light anti-personnel, portable laser turrets, set on tripods, each manned by a Vargr.

(Use the stats for the regular laser rifle, but reset the Dex levels to: Required DEX/DM: 7- / -3
                Advanced DEX/DM: 10+/+2)

Of the 60 Vargr, 50 are raw recruits, 10 are Veterans. Morale for the recruits are set at Green, and Regular for the veterans. (Or 3- and 5-, if using **Mercenaries** page 29.)

The habitats are not armoured, and will be breached by laser or gauss rifle fire. Starship lasers and missiles are insane levels of overkill, not that *that* has ever stopped a rampaging PC group before.

Referee: give the PCs some kind of reward if they 'use force commensurate with the threat level' and get most of the Vargr to surrender without a one-sided slaughter: it isn't that easy to get resupplied with starship missiles (though it's better now than it was a few months ago), and the Duke would be pleased if his Householders build a reputation for *both* power and mercy: "It's the Imperial way!" But if the PCs just cuts the rebels down, no questions will be asked, and there isn't going to be an inquiry.

Act Five: Victory, and...?

With the destruction of the rebel strongpoint, the PCs have fulfilled their mission parameters, and are expected to return to Yogesh.

If the PCs never got to the warehouse, the Duke will be quite unhappy. "There is no excuse for disobeying orders!" The PCs skillset is too valuable to waste, but they will be taken off the jump-capable Patrol Ship, and assigned an in-system SDB instead. They will not be given another chance to man a jump-capable starship in the Duke's service, but there will be lots of action to be had, right in Yogesh system.

If the PCs got to the warehouse, and met Lazkoetzuu, they had three options:
1) Stick to the orders, and insist that Lazkoetzuu point out the pirates location without anything given in return, as per the law;
2) Promise to 'look into the matter' after the pirates' location is revealed;
3) Promise to 'push the Duke to release the world' after the pirate's rallying point is given.

If they chose option 1, there is no need to press the matter, as no deal was made.
If they chose option 2, the PCs have to decide if they really will look into the matter, or just forget the whole thing as the rebel base is destroyed.
If they chose option 3, again, the PCs have to decide if they really will push the Duke to release the world, and make it independent. Or again, just forget anything was said, as they got what they wanted.

If nothing is done, things remain peaceful for a year, and there are fewer pirate attacks against Yogesh. The PCs are held in higher esteem by the Duke, and there are no repercussions for forgetting Lazkoetzuu.

Then, in 994 Imperial (1d6 + 6 months), pirates will again start visiting the Vargr settlements on Uthurrvon, when there is no patrol ship to scare then off. They will find a warmer reception than last time, a determination to better hide their preparations, and train harder with better equipment to bring down the colonial government and take the starport. No mysterious warning will be given to the Duke before the assault kicks in...

If the PCs chose option 2, and really look into the o matter, they will find that the Duke is willing to free the world, if approached in the right way. "Don't talk about liberty for all; talk about freeing valuable men and resources from guarding a worthless rock to making a real difference somewhere else." Once they inform Lazkoetzuu of this, he is satisfied.

In 994, the pirates will visit the world when the PCs aren't around to intercept, but they won't find enough support to take out the colonial government.

In every year of play, the Referee should roll 2d6: if the result if 5 or less, Uthurrvon's Vargr inhabitants are given more home rule (but Uthurrvon remains property of the Yogesh System Administration), and the law level is reduced to 8. Tensions between the local Vargr and the Yogeshio are lowered.

If option 3 is chosen, and the PCs keep their promise to push for Uthurrvon's freedom, then the lead high-caste PC attempts to persuade Duke Anoop on the matter. This is a Formidable Liaison task: other PCs can give no support here.

If the PC succeeds, Uthurrvon becomes an independent Imperial world within the year: change the UWP to B534534-6. The PC (and his team) work closely with the Vargr of Uthurrvon to infiltrate the local Vargr networks, and bring them down. (The Vargr will want to prove their loyalty to the Imperium, and gain charisma in the eyes of the neighbouring human worlds.) Assuming PC success here, they have a clear shot at defeating the coming high-tech incursion of Vargr pirates.

If the PCs fail, nothing happens until 1d6 + 6 months, when an uprising on Uthurrvon occurs. The world is lost, then quickly regained, but the starport level falls to class D in the fighting. The Archducal representative from Antares demands a halt to the fighting, and has enough political muscle to make his words stick. The high-caste PC leader is chosen as an acceptable negotiator by both the Vargr (led by Lazkoetzuu and his general – and ex-bodyguard – Ubrirraedkmgus) and by the Ducal government.

Sir Errrousaekhu, a male Gvegh Vargr from Archduke Koktso's ruling line, is the Archducal representative, and he has ordered the subsector fleet admiral to send a fleet courier to Antares with an encrypted message, borne by his own Household servant. While waiting the 22 weeks for the jump4 craft to go to Antares and return, the knight presses for both sides to set aside their grievances, and form a united front against the pirates. The Yogeshio insist that the local Vargr are in league with Vargr pirates, while the Uthurrvon Vargr swear that they only want freedom from Yogeshio oppression.

I leave it to the PC to resolve this mess, and for the Referee to decide what message that fleet courier is carrying. In the meantime, the high-tech Ikonaz pirates from the Rukadukaz Republic should be ready to move in and take some big, chunky bites from all those soft and defenceless Imperial worlds...

Appendix: Household Organizations

As a functional group, families are organized in a hierarchy. Orders flow from top to bottom, responsibility and obedience flow from bottom to top. Thing get interesting when those lower on the scale feel that those above them aren't fulfilling their lawful obligations.

For the Solomani, the standard family hierarchy is: God -> (Emperor)[24] -> National government -> Local government -> (Clan Elders) -> Father -> Mother -> Children -> Servants, Pets, Robots, and Aliens (if any).

For the Vilani, the hierarchy is:
 Tradition -> Emperor -> Corporate CEO -> Corporate Hierarchy -> Local Manager -> Clan Elders -> Father & Mother, each position with its own jurisdiction -> Children

In both cases, family roles get more specialized, the more wealth and power it has to manage. Cadet lines for Noble lineages, older sons trained in war while older daughters manage inter-family relations, corporate vs. military specialists... all these factors come into play.

Certain children are tied to the functions of their servants, and – in the Empty Quarter, among the ruling Hindu families – their servants are usually grouped into 1st Class, 2nd Class, and 3rd Class Mansabdar[25]. (The PC Captain is a 2nd Class Mansabdar, in Household ranking: Marshall Saini is 1st Class.)

House functions (and their typical top rank in the Six Subsectors) include: military (Marshal); property (Steward), legal/political (Chancellor); Intelligence

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[24] There is furious debate on this part of the chain of command.
- Some Solomani families remove the brackets (and make obedience to the Emperor non-negotiable, as the Vilani supposedly do);
- others keep the brackets (and so make obedience to the Emperor contingent on whether he is beneficial or harmful to themselves and their homeworld);
- and quite a lot of Solomani have removed him altogether (see: the Solomani Rim War).

[25] "Rank holder" in Hindi. The greater nobles of the Imperium – Emperor to Subsector Duke – are referred to as Amir-i-Azam, with those between Baron and Count called lesser nobles, or Amir.

(usually split to two functions: Analyst and Spymaster); science (Academician); religious (Chaplain).

(The *duties* of a Seneschal, as described **in GURPS: Traveller Nobles**, page 41, are usually handled by the Marshal. The title of Seneschal is not used in the Empty Quarter.)

In Vilani families (and many Solomani families in more civilized sectors), there is a dedicated officer to handle megacorporate relations, the Shaashdeii, but it is not needed in the rather megacorporate-free Imperial Empty Quarter, so few local Solomani families have one.

In the Empty Quarter, many Solomani families don't have an Academician, but *all* has a Chaplain. Vilani houses have both: but the Vilani Academician exists to *restrict* "uncontrolled and unlicensed research and development" as much as possible. The Vilani Chaplain is focused, *not* on morality, ethics, or the commands of God, but on enforcing the proper and traditional way of doing things. "Proper ritual and proper actions lead to a proper life!"

There *are* atheistic houses in the rather religious Imperial Empty Quarter, tied to the Abadani philosophy. These ruling families should replace "Chaplain" with "Commissar", and replace the dictates of a religion with the dictates of the Abadani ideology.

Appendix: High-level Military Politics

Once upon a time, Colonel David Hackworth (look for his books at Amazon) referred to high-ranking military officers as 'Perfumed Princes'. Senior officers, especially in sprawling empires, naturally begin to accumulate political networks and responsibilities. Even in the Imperial Navy proper, where all authority is derived from the Iridium Throne, the officer corps (heavily intertwined with the noble families) gets to decide which orders are enforced first, how aggressively they are enforced (if at all), and how strictly discipline is upheld.

If the senior leaders of the Imperial Navy merely manage to hold military effectiveness as a greater priority than blood, corporate money or the old boys' network, they are doing well. And, to their credit, they were able to do well enough for a few centuries at a time. (That business about "Emperors of the Flag" still leaves the Throne uneasy, though.)

Other branches of the Imperial military obviously bears close watching, though. But even the recent coup, deposing Emperor Styryx, isn't *too* bad, as the military and the nobility quickly rallied around his son, the current Emperor Gavin, to rule in his stead.

Irregularities are bound to happen in politics, but if the Establishment is united, they can generally be finessed successfully.

The channels of command within the Imperial Navy are exceptionally clear at the lowest levels of the fleets, and exceptionally cloudy at the highest levels.

The captain of each ship has complete control of its crew and its operations; he or she answers only to the squadron commander. Each squadron commander controls every ship in the squadron, and answers only to the numbered fleet admiral.

Admirals, whenever they command numbered or named fleets, or work in the halls of Naval High Command, must consider more than simple naval strategy in their orders or decisions. Most admirals are nobles, and they must consider the twists and turns of the noble hierarchy and protocol when they act. Admirals must answer to several different authorities: the Duke of a subsector in which a fleet is located, the Duke of a sector in which a fleet operates, the Archduke of a domain in which the fleet is assigned. Technically, only higher ranking naval officers can give orders; as a practical matter, nobles insinuate themselves into the chain of command. A good admiral knows when to follow which order, and how to gracefully avoid the orders he shouldn't follow.

> – The **MegaTraveller Rebellion Sourcebook**
> page 27

Appendix: Roll Determination

How each system was assigned a roll result is sketched out below.

Name	Pop	TL	Port
Basimah	4	B	B
Dumkashga	7	A	A
Riamlir	8	8	B
Yogesh	5	C	A
Uthurrvon	5	6	B
Miinagi	4	C	A
Kharkhelud	6	7	C
Kasim	3	C	B
Urmair	2	8	D
Coman	3	A	B

Calculation:

PopValue = Pop

TLValue:
  TL <B, TLValue=0
  TL>=B, TLValue=5

PortValue:
  Port<B, PortValue=0
  Port>=B, PortValue=5

Yogesh value is doubled, as it is 1) where the adventure begins 2) the wealthiest and most important world in the list.

Value=PopVaue+TLValue+PortValue
TotalValue=all system Values, summed
Percentage = System's Value/TotalValue

Name	Value	Percentage (2d6)
Basimah	14	11 (6)
Dumkashga	12	10 (5)
Riamlir	13	10 (10)
Yogesh	30(15x2)	25 (7,8)
Uthurrvon	10	8 (3)
Miinagi	14	11 (4)
Kharkhelud	6	5 (2)
Kasim	13	10 (9)
Urmair	2	2 (12)
Coman	8	6 (11)
Total value	122	

Appendix: Battle Over Yogesh

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The PC Forces:
Their ship, the 400-ton Ouagadougou, a Ducal Household warship.
Their ally, the 200-ton Shivalik, a Yogesh System Administration warship.
The cargo ship, the 10,000-ton Judy Hope, a large armed freighter.

The Adversary Forces:
Ten 400-ton Vargr Corsairs, pack affiliation unknown, but definitely hostile.
Tagged as Corsair-A through Corsair-J until more information is available.

Even if the PCs characters are not generated before the fight, assume that
one PC has Ship Tactics-1. The Adversary forces enjoy no such advantage.

The ships below were designed (or were provided with) Andrew Vallance's High
Guard Shipyard Version 2.0 (Alpha).

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■

Ship: Ouagadougou       Class: Lurushaar Kilaalum (Type T)
Type: Patrol Cruiser    Architect: Standard
Tech Level: 12

USP
        CT-4134431-000000-30002-0 MCr 315.160        400 Tons
Bat Bear                    2    2   Crew: 11        Agility 2
Bat                         2    2   TL: 12          Fuel: 136

Cargo: 41 Tons    EP: 16;    Pgrs: 1;   Low: 4;
Craft: 1 x 30T Ships Boat, 1 x 8T G-Carrier
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops
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Architects Fee: MCr 3.152   Cost in Quantity: MCr 252.128


High Guard Design


HULL: 400 tons, 5,600 cubic meters, Needle/Wedge Configuration
CREW: Pilot, Navigator, 4 Engineers, Medic, 4 Gunners
ENGINEERING: Jump-3, 4G Maneuver, Power plant-4, 16 EP, Agility 2
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/3 Computer
HARDPOINTS: 4 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
2 Triple Missile Turrets organized into 2 Batteries (Factor-2),
2 Triple Beam Laser Turrets organized into 2 Batteries (Factor-3)
DEFENSES: None
CRAFT:
1x 30-ton Ships Boat (Crew of 0),
1x 8-ton G-Carrier (Crew of 0)
FUEL:
136 Tons Fuel (3 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
12 Staterooms, 4 Low Berths, 1 Middle Passenger, 4 Low Passengers,
41 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 318.312 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 3.152),
MCr 252.128 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME:
82 Weeks Singly, 65 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
This reliable workhorse is what the PCs have to work with. The Ouagadougou is
getting long in the tooth after decades in service, but she can still do the
job.

The PCs are still trying to figure how the ship got its name, and why the
Duke refused to rename it to something sensible.
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■■■

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Ship: Shivalik                      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          Agility 4
Bat                        1   1   TL: 12            Fuel 16

Cargo: 0 Tons      EP: 16 Agility: 4 Marines: 3
Backups: 1 x Model/6 Computer


Architects Fee: MCr 3.768   Cost in Quantity: MCr 301.400


Detailed Description
High Guard Design


HULL: 200-tons standard, 2,800 cubic meters, Cone Configuration
CREW: Pilot, 3 Engineers, 2 Gunners, 3 Marines, 1 Medic
ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 5G Maneuver, Power plant-8, 16 EP, Agility 4
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/6 Computer; 1 Model/6 Backup Computer
```

HARDPOINTS: 2 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
1 Triple Missile Turret organized into 1 Battery (Factor-2),
1 Triple Beam Laser Turret organized into 1 Battery (Factor-3)
DEFENSES:
Armoured Hull (Factor-12)
CRAFT: None
FUEL:
16 Tons Fuel (28 days endurance);
No Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS: 5 Staterooms, 0 Ton Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 380.517 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 3.768),
MCr 301.400 in Quantity

CONSTRUCTION TIME:
57 Weeks Singly, 46 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
(From **Stellar Reaches** #11, page 38)
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 subsidized 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
refurnish 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.)

(From **Stellar Reaches** #20, page 29)
Comparing this ship, the standard SDB of the Empty Quarter in 993 Imperial,
to the classic Type-T Patrol Ship is educational. The Battler is about 16%
more expensive, and half the size, yet only throws only half the punches of
the Type-T. On the other hand, having double the agility and serious armour
is a sweet, sweet deal: the backup computer doesn't hurt, either.

The thing is, the Type-T has a jump drive: she can actually patrol
interstellar space, which the Battler just can't, despite her powerful set of
thrusters. Also, as we will see, the patrol ship's natural enemies don't get
much armour either.

So, there are some good reasons why the system government has the SDB, and
the Imperial Noble - charged with the security of the subsector, not just a
world - has a patrol ship as part of his Household forces. (The fact that the
ship is personally loyal to him, not to the Imperium directly, has certain
interesting ramifications the Referee can explore at his leisure.)

```
Ship: Judy Hope                          Class: Steel Basket
Type: Armed Freighter                    Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12


USP
        AF-K421253-340000-10001-0 MCr 6,074.047      10 KTons
Bat Bear             A    5    5   Crew: 90          Agility 1
Bat                  A    5    5   TL: 12            Fuel 2300 Tons
                                                     Pulse Lasers
```

Cargo: 4,266 Tons; EP: 200; Shipboard Security Detail: 10
Craft: 3 x 100T Shuttles, 2 x 50T Lifeboats, 2 x 4T Air/Rafts
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 1 x 1G Maneuver Drive 1 x Factor 1 Power Plant 1 x Model/4 Computer

Architects Fee: MCr 60.740   Cost in Quantity: MCr 4,859.238

Detailed Description
High Guard Design

HULL: 10,000-tons standard, 140,000 cubic meters,
Close Structure Configuration
CREW:
16 Officers, 74 Ratings. This is broken down as follows:
Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings; Engineering: 2 officers and 14 ratings;
Gunnery: 3 officers and 18 ratings; Flight: 1 officer and 10 ratings;
Service: 2 officers and 18 ratings; Medical: 1 officer, no ratings;
Shipboard Security Detail: 10 troopers, all counted as ratings.

ENGINEERING: Jump-2, 1G Maneuver, Power plant-2, 200 EP, Agility 1
11 G Maneuver Backup, 1 Power plant-1 Backup
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/5 Computer; 1 Model/4 Backup Computer
HARDPOINTS: 20 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
5 Single Missile Turrets organized into 5 Batteries (Factor-1),
5 Single Pulse Laser Turrets organized into 5 Batteries (Factor-1)
DEFENSES:
10 Triple Sandcaster Turrets organized into 10 Batteries (Factor-4),
Armoured Hull (Factor-3)
CRAFT:
3 100-ton Shuttles (Crew of 2),
2 50-ton Lifeboats (Crew of 0),
2 4-ton Air/Rafts (Crew of 0)
FUEL:
2,300 Tons Fuel (2 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance,
plus 100 tons of additional fuel)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS: 90 Staterooms, 4,266 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 6,134.788 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 60.740),
MCr 4,859.238 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 160 Weeks Singly, 128 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
This is a lightly armed and armoured freighter, built to resupply worlds and
bases threatened by run-of-the-mill pirates, thieves and corsairs. Most Steel
Baskets are used in space rimward of Capital, especially second-line and
third-line systems involved in the Solomani Rim War. The observant naval
architect will note the extra fuel, and backup power plant, drives, and

computers as well as the armour, and conclude that the ship was built to take a licking and keep on ticking. On the other hand, the weak offensive armament points to an expectation on weak threats – or just a desire to cheap out somewhere.

"'False economy', anyone? 'Hey, let's spend an extra 1,500 MCr on backup power plants and maneuver drives, but refuse to spend an extra 50 MCr or so on better firepower.'"
"But if we were better armed, we would be sent on more dangerous missions. In this no-tech corner of the Imperium, some cracked Colonial admiral would surely send this cargo-hauler into a situation as some kind of fourth-rate navy cruiser. NOT GOOD."

Several dozen vessels were reserved in sectors like Corridor, Vland, Lishun, Ley, and the Empty Quarter, areas which are known to be threatened by pirates when Imperial Navy assets are partially or fully redeployed from local patrols to front-line service elsewhere. This armed and armoured freighter was seen to be more cost-efficient than organizing proper convoys, which would suck up Navy assets.

(The Solomani Rim War was planned out at least a decade in advance, so substantial preparations were made. Too bad SolSec breached security…)

The Judy Hope is on a supply run, reinforcing Naval bases and subsector capital forces throughout the Imperial Empty Quarter. It can be hair-raising work in 993, with the Sector Fleet absent. This is a Colonial Imperial asset: when she was built in 982 she was immediately put in mothballs at the Sandardin Naval Base until the war kicked in at 990. Since then, she has been hard at work, either ferrying supplies to the main Imperial base in the sector at Lazisar, or distributing it from Hebrin to the rest of the sector.

While the ship is Imperial asset, her crew consists of draftees from across the local Imperial worlds. Their morale is reasonably good, but they are getting tired, and are looking forward to a break back at heavily-defended Lazisar.

Most of the pirates are either bad blood locals, or TL 11-12 Suedzuk or Suedzuk/Irilitok crews (bloody-minded, but they usually attack singly, so they aren't a major threat to the Judy Hope.) The officers of the Judy Hope believe that some of the indistinct "sensor glitches" they picked up were really those dreaded high-tech, ultra-organized Ikonaz pirates. If they are right, then those pirates, being governed by more Vilani caution and pragmatism than the Suedzuk, decided to let the Judy Hope pass unmolested because
> 1) the meal was too large to digest;
> 2) the risk-reward level was still too high; or
> 3) being the careful planners they are, the Ikonaz are just keeping an eye on the Judy Hope, marking out her routes, and watching her behavior while slowly building up forces near some obscure moon or uninhabited asteroid field…

Yep, it's definitely time for another all-hands drill again.

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Ship: Corsairs A through J          Class: Type P
Type: Corsair                       Architect: Standard
Tech Level: 11


USP
        PP-4423321-000000-30000-0 MCr 222.400        400 Tons
Bat Bear                    3       Crew: 9           Agility 0
Bat                         3       TL: 11            Fuel 102


Cargo: 142 EP: 12
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops


Architects Fee: MCr 2.224   Cost in Quantity: MCr 177.920


Detailed Description
High Guard Design


HULL: 400-tons, 5,600 cubic meters, Close Structure Configuration
CREW: Pilot, Navigator, 3 Engineers, Medic, 3 Gunners
ENGINEERING: Jump-2, 3G Maneuver, Power plant-3, 12 EP, Agility 0
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/2 Computer
HARDPOINTS: 4 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
3 Triple Beam Laser Turrets organized into 3 Batteries (Factor-3),
1 None (Empty Turret)
DEFENSES: None
CRAFT: None
FUEL:
102 Tons Fuel (2 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance,
plus 10 tons of additional fuel)
On Board Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
10 Staterooms, 20 Low Berths, 142 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 224.624 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 2.224),
MCr 177.920 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME:
82 Weeks Singly, 65 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
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This is a large wolf pack of Suedzuk Vargr, looking for fat prey. They have been trailing the Judy Hope, and calculated a jump into Yogesh system right when she's due.

The last time they tried this, the Judy Hope left the system mere hours before they arrived. They knew that she was headed to Yogesh, and that there's a dangerous SDB boat there. Given the choice of just breaking off the hunt and starting all over again, or rolling the dice for a seriously charismatic battle, their innate aggression pointed the way forward.

Their plans are to divide the pack into two squadrons. Five ships are to take out the system defence boat, and five are to deal with the freighter. Once the freighter has been commandeered, the pack will refuel at the gas giant and head out for parts unknown.

The pack did not factor in the PCs in their planning. It's the PC's job to make the pack pay dearly for this oversight.

If you really want to know, the ship names are

Mmi Goers	Irzang	Elesoakhine	Kfoghmmoukeetskhige
Aedhu	Astuakevee	Uarth	Fhiludzuuzoerngmmaigh
Llis Oglitsulkfuer		Oerneevrgaaletraakhthoa	

Award a prize to the first player who can pronounce all these names correctly.
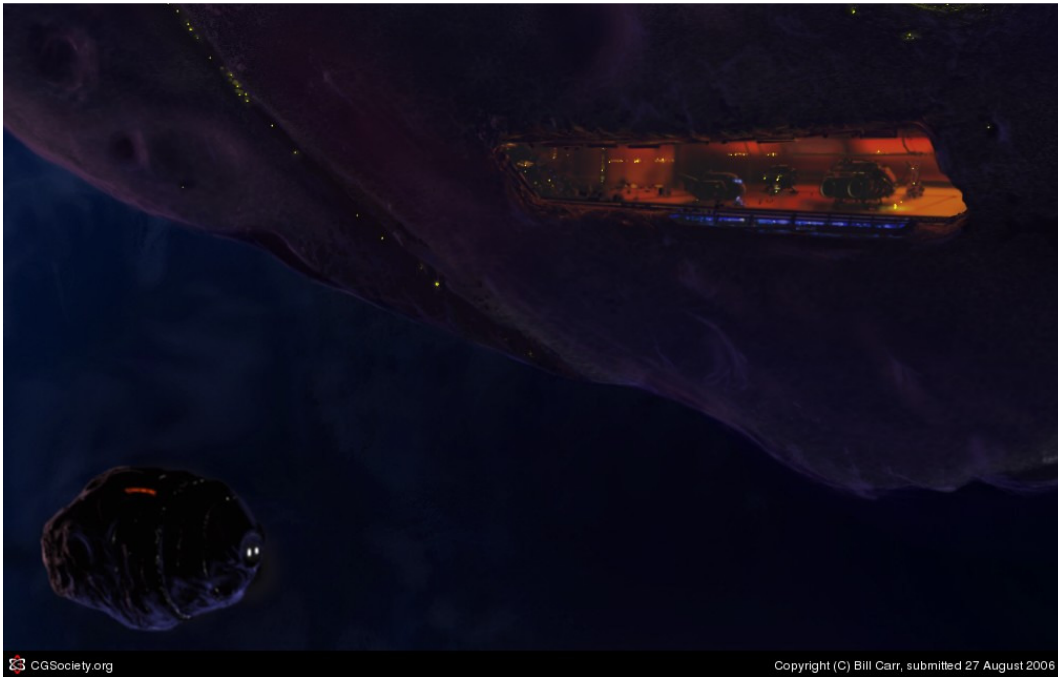
High-tech, deep-cover asteroid bases, originally built to support the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet in an aborted anti-pirate campaign, now en route to the Old Expanses to support a planned behind-the-lines insurgency. 992 Imperial. **This graphic is titled "New World – DETAIL" © Bill Carr. Please visit his gallery at**
http://bc1967.cgsociety.org/gallery/

No Plan…

The Third Imperium has been planning for this war for decades, with Emperor Styryx giving the formal order in 970. When the shooting finally started in 990, the Imperium was confident of victory. The Sillymany may well fight fanatically, but belief and self-sacrifice are no match for a sufficient amount of high explosives. Overall, Solomani forces were broadly inferior to Imperial forces, as was to be expected when one economy is only 25% of the size of the other. Finally, like totalitarian cultures throughout human history, the Solomani will fold after the central authority on Terra fell.

Emperor Styryx weakened the Imperial Army in 975, believing that naval strength would be sufficient to win the conflict, but this doctrine fell apart in the Third Frontier War (979-986) when the Zhodani leveraged their superior terrestrial forces to inflict significant losses to the relatively weak Imperial and loyal Planetary ground elements. The bloody consequences of this failure led to Styryx's highly involuntary

abdication on 989, and his replacement on the Iridium Throne by his son Gavin.

When war started in 990, the Daibei, Diaspora, and Old Expanses subsector fleets were expected to hold back the weak Solomani fleets well enough, as the major Reconquest and Restoration fleets drove to Terra, in the heart of the Solomani Sphere. Being navy-heavy, they were not expected to make many hostile landings on worlds: instead, they were to destroy the Confederation Navy and Confederation basing, and pave the way for Core fleet – reinforced with the largest Imperial Marine and Imperial Army contingent ever gathered in history – to arrive at Terra, and actually take control of the planet. From here, ground forces would radiate to the rest of the Sphere, conquering the major worlds by invasion (with the minor worlds intimidated into submission by selective bombardments.) By this time, most of the Solomani naval forces should have been either destroyed or in hiding, and should only be a painful nuisance, rather than a real threat to Imperial victory.

The Empty Quarter Sector Fleet

According to the original Imperial Battle Plan, the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet was to deploy to reinforce the Old Expanses fleet in 993, as it completed its sweep through the Old Expanses and enter the Neworld Sector.

If the rebellious 'Solomani Confederation' had chosen to surrender by this time, the Empty Quarter fleet would be laying down the foundations of an Imperial military government in the treasonous systems in the outlying regions of the sphere, in Spica and Langere sectors. Imperial diplomats attached to the fleet would begin contact with the neighbouring Hive Federation, insuring that Imperial territory was respected and rebuilding diplomatic contacts and treaty agreements. As violent opposition dwindled and weakened, Imperial nobles would arrive to set up a civilian government, which should be completed by 1000 Imperial. The Ley Sector Fleet would be rotated in-region by 996, permitting both the Empty Quarter and Old Expanses Sector Fleets to return to their home sectors by 997.

If the enemy was still capable of putting up significant resistance by 993, the Old Expanses fleet would be handling major engagements, reinforced by the Ley Sector Fleet. As Alpha Crucis was slowly reduced and the vice began to be applied to the center of Solomani strength, Terra, the Empty Quarter Fleet would be rolling up Solomani strongpoints and the surviving Confederation fleets, squadrons, and capital ships behind the lines. If the Solomani insisted on fighting even after the fall of Terra, the Empty Quarter fleet, reinforced by the Delphi Fleet and selected subsector fleets from Massilia, would 1) destroy all jump-capable opposition and 2) begin invasion operations against High-Pop/High-Tech, then High-Pop/Mid-tech systems.

The Empty Quarter fleet has limited organic troop transport, so only the most critical ground targets would be occupied before the arrival of the Delphi Fleet. After the arrival of the Delphi Fleet, the assets and personnel of the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet will be transferred to the re-constituted Alpha Crucis Sector Fleet: ¼ of the Fornast Sector Fleet will be used to rebuild the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet in the Six Subsectors.

…Survives Contact with the Enemy.

The Initial phase of the war went well for our Solomani forces. Although the Imperium maintained sizable fleets along the border, they were inferior to the massed naval elements of our Solomani Confederation. On most fronts, we regained the border worlds lost to the Imperium over the course of the previous five decades, and even occupied some worlds which were never part of the Solomani Sphere. However, in 993, we suffered a severe setback when our invasion force aimed at the Old Expanses was repulsed with heavy losses.

> Professor Albirto Majuan of Inerria/Aldebaran
> Sons of Earth: A Study of the Solomani People
> (AD 5580, 1071 Imperial)
> As found in **Solomani & Aslan**, page 25.

Things started to go bad weeks after the invasion started. Clashes on the border went badly for the Imperials after the first few weeks. Expected Solomani reinforcements were twice… four times… even (at one particularly disastrous engagement) **ten times** their projected size. As surviving Imperial scouts began to report on just how many Solomani warships were en route to the front, it dawned on the Imperial Admiralty that the war they had planned for the last twenty years was NOT going to be the war they were going to fight. The inferior Solomani fleets that pre-war intelligence had based their planning on were not even *half* the actual force they were actually going to face.[26]

As the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet arrives in 993, the Old Expanses Sector Fleet would be at only half strength, and still on the downtrend. Confederation probes into the Old Expanses will face weaker resistance and observe slower reaction times, suggesting to the Solomani High Command that the time was ripe for a full-power drive into the Old Expanses and her rich group of systems. Fearful of just such an offensive, the Sector Admiral has ordered the fresh ships and men of the Empty Quarter to deploy for

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[26] If the Referee suspects that Solomani Security had a big hand in shaping bad Imperial data, he's right. Imperial Intelligence would be utterly discredited by this fiasco, with several senior directors executed by the Emperor's Fury (the name of Gavin's *ceremonial* sword). Princess Elizabeth – see **Stellar Reaches** #13, page 36 and 38 for more on that rather interesting woman – will spend the rest of her life purging and reorganizing the Imperial secret services in the name of her brother. One result would be the birth of a new service, Imperial Naval Intelligence…

insurgent and supply line strikes against a probable Solomani offensive: several precautions are taken to shield their arrival from the prying SolSec eyes that are feared to still lurk among the Sector Admirals' command staff. In the meantime, the imminent arrival of the Ley Sector Fleet – rushing to the front to relieve the badly mauled Massilia Sector Fleet – gives the Sector Admiral the opportunity to prepare a Big Surprise for the Confederation fleets when they finally kick down the door to take the sector in force.

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch…

Originally, the Antares Sector Fleet was to deploy two to four subsector fleets, to reinforce the Empty Quarter. However, due to the assassination of Archduke Gvueneghz on 49-979 while touring the Julian Protectorate (**Stellar Reaches** #13, page 40; **Stellar Reaches** #18, page 74), this plan was scratched: all Antares Fleet warships will remain within Antares herself.[27]

Each of the three major interstellar states within the Empty Quarter has distinctive approaches to fighting piracy.

The Third Imperium: due to the endless level of Vargr raiders, the Imperial Navy works mainly at preventing planetary raids and guarding major shipping on the coreward frontiers. (Some of those 'raids' are more like 'invasions-lite'.[28]) The Navy also works to protect Imperial worlds from each other… when it's politically profitable to do so.

For example, if Planet Germany can make it 'worth the Duke's while' to look the other way while it pounds the snot out of Planet Poland, the Imperial Navy will only insure that the Imperial Rules of War are upheld.

"No genocide, pastiche-Germany, and you only get two to three planets!"
"Yes, Dad…" (pouts)

For shippers who don't go by the name of Tukera Lines, there are starmercs, in-house patrol ships, and the weapons you bolt on your own ship. Even Tukera Lines, who is teeth-to-lips close to High Nobility, maintains a fleet of Route Protectors for those more troublesome sectors of the Imperium.[29]

The Rukadukaz Republic: While pirates are actively fought by the Imperium[30], they are an integral part of the government of the Vargr-led Rukadukaz Republic. In return for legitimacy, though, they have to *behave*, and limit their greed to just a few choice picking. If they mess up, the Vilani-style bureaucracy that governs pirating in the Republic (yes, you read that right) starts to kick in: and what charismatically-driven Vargr wants to get involved in all that dreary paperwork?

On the other hand, there is public respect and substantial monetary prizes for pirates who show pizzazz, successfully balance the fine line between dangerous (breeding respect) and dangerous (breeding contempt), inspirationally charming and insipidly flashy.

If pirates need to be bought off or fought off in the Imperium, pirates need to be parried and played with in the Republic. Lose to them the right way, and you will gain your money back and earn plenty of respect, as well. Win the wrong way, and you won't get out of the Republic alive. Your language, your behaviour, and your reputation are just as important as your ship lasers and your agility – sometimes, more important.

Because of the nature of Ovaghoun culture, all local pirates really do follow the rules of pirating. Pirates who don't are outsiders (see: Suedzuk, "Blood Vargr") who will be killed by the Ovaghoun locals if the Star Legion doesn't get to them first.

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[27] The distaste the current Vargr Archduke, Koktso, has for the anti-Vargr Imperial Empty Quarter just *might* have something to do with this. As of 993, Archdukes do not command fleets or gather taxes: granting them these powers was the *brilliant* decision of Emperor Strephon in 1105 to re-empower the Archdukes with taxation and military powers (see "Strephon" **MegaTraveller: Imperial Encyclopedia**, page 51).

[28] The Corridor Fleet not only has double the amount of patrol ships, but also double the amount of cruisers and battleships. I will let you imagine the kind of 'pirate fleets' that requires the permanent posting of capital ships…

[29] I have always suspected that quite a number of those 'pirates' are really angry competitors, systems, and political groups who decided to go 'Old Vilani' on their enemies. That is certainly the case in the Empty Quarter…

[30] Yes, yes: if you look far back enough in the history of several Noble Houses – especially in the Quarter – you will find some rather shady history in just *how* they built their power base. But let's just set that aside…

The Hegemony of Lorean: As an experiment in the Interstellar Total State, the Hegemony has managed (with many bloody missteps) to gracefully fail, largely letting the worlds in Amdukan and the Empty Quarter govern themselves as they see fit, so long as they don't openly challenge the Hegemon. The Hegemonic systems of Arzul and Star's End really do follow the Word of the Hegemon, but that's because they *choose* to do so, not because of military force or compulsion.

But, as an experiment in the control of interstellar space, the Hegemony is quite successful. Pirating *does* exist within the Hegemonic Empty Quarter – more than in the Rukadukaz Republic, depending on your definition of 'piracy' – but the pirates tend to be few and wary compared to the truly lawless Ssilnthis Zone. A lot of epic-scale bloodshed, aggressively enforced cultural conformity among the Hegemony, and tight restrictions on starship ownership among the dissenting locals, stands behind all that (relative) peace and quiet among the stars.

Since the Fleet Left…

When the Sector Fleet was pulled out in 991 – and no Antares forces were deployed to take up the slack – there was a sharp expansion of piracy within the Empty Quarter. By 001-993, the Spinward regions of the Empty Quarter – led by the Tap-a-wewaka-atapas (Bwap Guardians of Order) and the Lazisar Directorate Navy – have managed to beat back the pirates.

Yogesh, Hebrin and Udusis subsectors are rather messier, though: the subsector capitals of Yogesh and Hebrin have problems controlling their own systems, and Irash is secure only because the local Colonial Navy has decided to abandon the rest of the subsector to fend for itself. Belumar, a mere three parsecs from the subsector capital, has been abandoned to pirates. The Udusis branch of the Hebrin main – with the Aleshanee, Udusis, Okori, and Drago's Belt systems – are occasionally patrolled thanks to the Duke of Hebrin's forces (and the two naval bases located in the area).

The local human pirates are being gathered into a single organization, the Shadow Cartel, that plans to dominate the region in a year, and cut deals with the local Nobility to insure its continued prosperity: "Take the silver or take the lead: the choice is yours." One day, the Fleet will return, and the shadowy leaders of the cartel plan to be on the fast track to noble fiefs when it returns – or at least living like lords in the Republic – and not hunted down like dogs across the stars. Whether they have the élan to pull off this political stunt remains to be seen.

The Suedzuk pirates continue to cross the Lesser Rift and plague the region. Some of these bloody killers have chosen to work with the Cartel; others remain independent. As the independents get squeezed out or blown up by the intensifying competition, the temporary wolf packs get more permanent, and grow larger over time. A few daring Imperial patrol ships has spotted packs of over thirty ships gathering for a few days, before breaking up into smaller groups in search of new prey.

In the meantime, the highly professional, very well-equipped Ikonaz pirates are planning to get some Imperial booty of their own. Local Imperial and local commanders have been dreading this possibility, as most local forces – small and medium combatants, of TL 11 or 12 – are no match for TL 14 opposition.

A sufficiently large rampage will cause the Sector Duke to cry out to the Emperor, who will then flat-out command the Duke of Antares Sector to dispatch forces to relieve the situation. The Ikonaz are a politically sophisticated people: they will attempt to inflict just enough pain to get the maximum amount of stolen wealth, while showing just enough mercy and respect to prevent the locals from asking the Emperor to send help from Antares Sector.[31]

There is another possibility: that the high-tech Ikonaz will actually attempt to cause great pain to the local Imperial worlds, so a large fleet will be sent to smash the high-tech pirates good and hard. This will only be intentionally done for one reason: to weaken Antares in preparation for the Second Julian War. Such a war is unlikely, but there are those who would like to provoke it: see the Red Death Band of **Stellar Reaches** #18, page 74, and the Solomani Party agent of **Stellar Reaches** #14, page 69.

Maps:
- Naval (not military) bases in the Empty Quarter, with a four-parsec radius of the typical naval patrol.[32]
- Map of pirate activity within the Empty Quarter, as of 001-993 Imperial.

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[31] The wealthy, Vargr-ruled sector is held in *very* low esteem in the Quarter. Envious Emptyheads can make good sport – but watch for flying fists!

[32] Note that the Hegemony prefers to use motherships as opposed to static bases. Motherships are not as vulnerable to Suedzuk sudden strikes, while providing the Hegemon with substantial strategic flexibility.

Odzsouu, Knaekiril, Surrvok, BYEGH AENGZ, Raklug, Aenalla, Aelraek, Gnorre, Zare, Aghurtuekh, Angour, Ueksang, Llongnarr, Aezill, Taegzoer, Abuish

Sekhthodu, Suezkha, Kaekhaenae, Ourskadh, Gousong, Gengath, Kaethkfang, Osaerr, Kulloerr, Dzorrgae, Pramas, Kfueraer, Guelan, Kfarror, Thuellrue, Uzola, TSOSOE

Roenksu, Aekhfe, Bha Kakharkh, Tsahrroek, Aerzorak, Oloe, Oesae, SSILNTHIS, Aghets, Ukoen, Rhoe, JUSTICE, RESHKHUDA, Soksosoer, Irrkhun, Vozak

Varkh Bhargra, Vekhaetak, Ghungzon, Aetsoek, Larraez, Kourae, Rrekoth, Daerrdha, Gaeko, Vigil, Lakuusa, Uenkakh, ZUETHUN, Aerren

IKON, Gvurrdakh, Khebha, Sudvoukh, Threythkhe, Ksuel, Dhaeknorz, Gidhae, Ghazko, Taetha, Unang, Aellon, FLANGE, Ghothu, Giiluush, Aeradh, Kharo, Engaell, Reshiigani

Akgakhong, Aeghzivik, Daalii, Irilikhokh, Mikhail, Odzagh, Maarluan, Shaliin, Sprocket, MANAGA, Naerrsuel, Gaelor, Tindhakh, Dhungvadha, Ersuk, Thisuel

Kfueng, Aerrogh, Tsai, Guezdhe, Byeggra, Khastok, Irikrough, Uedzoen, Uku, Tsuellae, TOKITRE, Libertad, Khinisdaa, Usdaki, Ragidlam, Cotan, Sharleda, Dakamii, Athuerr, Zuerouk, Orchard, Khuvoeru

Thaeallikh, Saerrogh, Ghuekvar, Zoukhe, Aerrvok, Unaeng, Iluumiin, Edi, Diagemi, Irkong, Maarkhuda, Orae

KAKHASAEK, Khebreyth, Bhastoum, Gueddzouukh, Halla, En Passante, CHIKATRA, Iksoe, Rakhael, Dharo, Ughoko, NISAGA, Llusega

Laenthataek, Vuensoe, Sutedvok, Vreskegh, OUTPOST, Bishop, Sangre, Urshaiir, Kholok, Turakne, Gueghaen

Sambra, Corsabren, Bravo, Saeghvung, Asoekh, Riiakea, Nakhkol

Cairne, Turley, Exile, Chimalis

Faiza, Marhaban, Upkugi, Basimah, Neelamani, Jansing, Sahale, Camilla

Ababat, Lukaau, Hadiya, MIKIK, Wabeab, Khalidah, Perpethwe, Paweba, Dumkashga, Riamlir, Mugama, Prakesh, Liamea, Lawinger

Saffron, Weeaswek, Sabira, Zada, Uthurrvon, Kharkhelud, Kasim, Hernant, Gauri, Manendra

Surogota, Karsaka, Shika, Charlly, Patrana, Ka'aswa, Milnagi, Coman, Muna, Miigaki, HEBRIN, Iridia, Cooke, Daruka, Rajan, Kislishga

Shardduaan, Tapawa, Kawatas, Gobi, GIMUSHI, Sibiklin, Nuri, Aleshanee, Amata, UDUSIS, Okori, Enola

Rommel, GUDINA, Barindra, Omprakash, Kewepah, Woswaab, Nakhukh, Mihirkiram, Kirluan, Drago's Belt, Shuiku, Niketan

ENINSISH, Datawo, Ebwathwa, ARAKAAD, Abseeb, Sundardin, Mordekai, Dyani, Corcoran, Sakari, Yashodhan, Selka, Miramon

Gingesh, SASHAR, Rakesh, Aklar, Fathwaas, Askaath, Gasadim, Aisha, Iisdirrii

Pugaash, Khinumi, Unsharshe, Nazirah, Dharmendra, KENRASDA, Takoda, IRASH, Guudagi, Wapeka, Faust

Guukerrii, Kali, Rasu, Indara, Ikkimam, Agnakhong, Ankbeal, PAMUSHGAR, Lakea, Belumar, Ebrahim

ZUKHISA, Harshad, Ushmigad, Bagemi, Ardamashii, Vipan, Praveer, Janardan, Urduaan, Tapendra

Ishkhigu, Nulinad, Jinendra, Gagukam, Gasali, Shuura, Aardimash, Dheeraj, Dorado, Sibikaar, Kaanada, Jaleel, Aandii

Pirate Activity, 001-993 Imperial

Very Heavy	(red)
Heavy	(yellow)
Medium	(white)
Light	(green)
Very Light	(blue)

A Haji for the Fallen

The Jawhl'adel Osar (جوحلة الحجر, "Rounded Stone") of Ababat. In several of the Islamic systems of the coreward Imperium – but especially within the Imperial Empty Quarter – it was found too difficult to locate and pray directly to Mecca, especially when the actual location of Terra was lost during the Long Night. So instead, it was deemed permissible to pray to the Jawh'adel Osar, a representation of Terra which would redirect the prayers of the faithful to Mecca. These high-tech representations of Terra are still common on many Islamic worlds, some of which were destroyed and rebuilt in the centuries of turbulence since that distant era.
This graphic is titled "Faculty xsk" © Glenn Antins. See his work at
http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=2361685

Introduction

In this adventure, the PCs will take on the role of Muslim Brotherhood agents, investigating the status of Islam in the Beta Quadrant of the Empty Quarter. They will be doing so under the aegis of Baronet Mohammad Metawea, a friend of the Brotherhood from the world of Pakistan, (in 993: Cirqa/Fornast A302977-D). A young man from a wealthy and successful background (his family and his world), he had originally planned to go on Haji to Mecca, but the Solomani Rim War has put the kibosh on that plan. Instead, following his pious inclinations, the Baronet has decided to see for himself the state of the Ummah in the Empty Quarter.

PC Generation
The PCs will be generated as usual, but their homeworlds will be limited to either Ababat or Hebrin.

The PCs from Ababat will have a more cheerful, go-getter attitude, able to work well with both Vargr and Bwap. "They might not have souls, but their money is still good!" The Ababatans, much like the infidel Sandardins, have a large settler population of ex-Imperial servicemen, and are rather more pro-Imperial than the Hebrinites.[33] They are also closer to the politically powerful Antares Sector, and have a better feel for mainstream Imperial attitudes than the Hebrinites do.

Ababat has a substantial population of Vargr. Unlike most Moslem worlds, relations between the local Arabs

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[33] Remember, the Brotherhood decided to place their huge, high-tech base on Ababat (**Stellar Reaches** #19, page 29) – which was already home to an Imperial Naval base. Not a wise choice if you are planning a rebellion: but that is *not* their long range plan…

and the Vargr are good, if formal and distant. "We live with us, and they live with them." Joint activity is limited to business and joint military operations against raiders and pirates. It *is* possible that a Vargr PC may be employed by the Muslim Brotherhood as a go-between and a translator – especially if he has Hegemony experience. He will be paid, and will not be abused: but of course, he will never be a Brother.

For charismatic and racial pride reasons, Vargr dislike serving any human: but if a Vargr must do so within the Six Subsectors, the Vilani are the first choice, followed by the Lazisair and other Mixed Vilani races. Serving Solomani is unwise, but a truly down-in-the-dumps Vargr may consider serving the East Indians, or a non-Christian American Indian Animist or Hindu.

Only because of the peaceful relations on Ababat would the Vargr consider employment by the Brotherhood: no sane Vargr would even consider being under the rule of a Muslim anywhere else. Arab culture is rather comfortable with mistreating Muslim servants, wives, and children, never mind infidel servants. (Readers who have experienced otherwise benefit from their white skins and expensive expertise, unlike, say, Pilipino maids or Black African labourers.)

Nonhuman sophonts can expect a short life of suffering, if forced to serve most Muslims for any length of time. "Pay you? PAY YOU? Look, I let you live, didn't I? *That's* your payment!"

American Indian Christians and the Vargr do *not* get along. Even now, American Indians are weak compared to the other human tribes of the Empty Quarter, and the Vargr love to steal from and kill the weak. Local Christian cultures that have survived the onslaught despise the Vargr. Vargr corsairs take care not to be captured alive by the various local Brave societies.

While the Ababatans grew up in a culture that supported a robust and outgoing Islam, **the Hebrinites PCs** had a rougher go of it. Being religious Moslems in a largely secular Moslem culture, they still grieve over the failure of their rebellion over a century ago, and are psychologically beaten by their inability to defend their land from an Imperial-backed population invasion. Now, they are strangers in their own land.

The PCs heard the call to protect and expand the Ummah, but their parents disagreed, and possibly disowned them. Their friends back on Hebrin laugh at them, seeing the PCs are "still fighting battles that were lost for good a century ago!" Allah is just a word to most Hebrinites, and Mohammad is only a man who

has been dead for a *very* long time now. What fascinate the Hebrinite young today include socialist politics, making money, and equality for cyborgs.

(Yes, the first two are contradictory. So what? Young people are not famous for their logical consistency.)

As a free gift, all PCs will be able to speak and read Classical Arabic, and all will have Vac Suit-1 as a skill.

The typical party includes fighter, scientist, scout/face, a pilot, and an engineer. It would be wise if a player or two decided to be a field agent/spy (not an analyst). If the PCs generate Imperial Moslem characters who have been in the Hegemony for a few years – picking up some of the language and culture – all the better.

The PCs, in consultation with the Referee, should determine which, if any, are **spies and agents** of
1) The Imperium: who want to keep an eye on the Brotherhood-connected Baronet;
2) The Hegemony: who want to pull the wool over the eyes of the PCs; or, failing that, keep them from alarming the Imperial Moslems and worsening Imperial-Hegemony relations
3) A Planetary government or a Noble House: motives are to be determines by the Referee and the Player.

The Moslem Brotherhood in the Empty Quarter
Within the Quarter, the Brotherhood has been hustling to create a proper anti-pirate response to help protect believing traders in Hebrin subsector.[34] They also do other endeavors, such as medical work for believers (See "Chief Physician Farid bin Anas Sharif, M.D." page 84 of **Stellar Reaches** #14).

The PCs have a starship they command in the name of the Brotherhood, the irreplaceable, high-tech إضراب الفضاء ("Edrab Alfda'", Space Strike). By and large, they have been on escort duty rather than aggressive patrols and offensive strikes: the Brotherhood can't risk losing ships nosing around suspicious places until they have enough ships and men to actually *afford* to take a loss: this is especially true of the impossible-to-replace *Edrab Alfda'*. The PCs have been chafing under these restrictions, but they have obeyed their orders – with a lot of grumbling, but obedience is obedience.

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[34] You thought that they are going to cry out to the Bwap Sector Duke to save them? If so, then you don't know the Imperial Empty Quarter very well, do you? "We take care of our own. Always."

This structure, a massive Vilani ritual centre of the early First Imperium, is referred to as the Suud Ernumiliidiishiim. Made of solid granite and standing over 80 meters tall – not including the grove trees at the top – this ancient Vilani complex is the oldest man-made structure in the sector, dating at -4600 Imperial. Naturally, it is found at Ababat, the first world in the sector inhabited by men, from -4913 Imperial until today. This graphic is titled "Celos Pahts survey crew - Point 0223-Tau-JC-12D" © Glenn Antins. See his work at **http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1620891**

Why We Go...

The adventure starts with the PCs wandering around the TL 14 Cairo Complex on Ababat. The PCs are rich and sophisticated compared to most Emptyheads (...just because they got off-world, never mind crewing a starship!...), but wandering around the magical complex reminds them of just how far being the Six Subsectors are, compared to the leading worlds of the Imperium. In one way, it's quite depressing. But in another, it's comforting to know that there are fellow believers who remember you, and are willing to give you a hand.

While wandering through the huge complex and the 200,000 mainly foreign Moslems who live and work there (a substantial percentage of the planetary population), you are introduced to one of the Complex's benefactors, Baronet Mohammed. After a brief interruption for prayers, the PCs and the Baronet sit down for a light lunch. (If the Hebrinite PCs indulges in a little alcohol from his personal flask, the Baronet will frown, but won't say anything.)[35] The Baronet has read quite a lot about the Quarter, back at his homeworld 40 parsecs away, and he has seen a good deal of the Imperial stars of the region in his previous travels.

But now, he wants to make the long journey to Tsosoe. When he was young, his grandmother would read him wondrous stories from that far off world. She even showed him a *hand-written* letter an ancestor once wrote to a friend there – and the reply! But, around the same time of the disastrous rebellion of the faithful of

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[35] Even fairly devout Hebrinites drink alcohol nowadays. "Hey, at least I show up at the mosque more often than not!" Still, alcohol is not served at the Complex – but many other delicious drinks are available.

Hebrin, a great tragedy struck the believers of Tsosoe. Tsosoe, like so many of her sister worlds, fought valiantly for their freedom against the Hegemon... and were crushed by his forces.

After a few months on Ababat, one of the first things the Baronet did was visit Hebrin himself on his fast yacht. He was gladdened to see that things had improved from the time his elder cousins visited in 975, but the depth of unbelief was saddening, and there seemed no way Islam could once again rule the world without a war his people would lose. The Baronet still holds an unspoken grudge against the Duke of Hebrin in how cavalierly he treated matters of religion. Still, nothing can be done in Hebrin. But there has been no word from any visitors to Tsosoe for a long time: perhaps the believers there only need a little help to break the chains of oppression...

What We Do

It's up to the PCs (with the input of Baronet Mohammed, as played by the Referee) to determine the route their jump-4 starship will take from Ababat to Tsosoe. Before crossing the Lesser Rift, the Baronet wants to handle some financial issues on Gobi, get in touch with an old Lorean expert on Ka-aswa, and link up with Brotherhood assets on Tokitre while on the other side of the Reft.

Note that their ship a jump4 craft. While this makes it miles better than most Gushgusi starships, it still isn't enough to cross the Lesser Reft. They will need to use the Deep Space Station network, as detailed in **Stellar Reaches** #2, page 19-21.

Here are some considerations:
- Do they want to go there quickly, or spend more time and gather more useful intelligence for the Brotherhood?
- How much should they fear pirates? The *Edrab Alfda'* should be able to deal with single pirates handily, but packs are a different matter. If they enter Republican space, how should they deal with pirates that are part of the government? What kind of bargains and deals should they agree to, and what offers are better to fight over?
  - The ship will be carrying a lot of money to finance their lives and expenses there. How should they store it? How can they protect it from ordinary thieves? Thieves with uniforms, badges and guns?

- What kind of information are they looking for at Tsosoe? Will they be planting new agents and networks? How can they hide their activity from the Hegemony, who is sure to plant a set of eyes on their every move?
- The Baronet's Imperial rank is a useful asset. How can they leverage it for the greatest effect?
- What about Imperial interests? When it is known that the Baronet is going to cross the Rift, the Imperium may well hand him some extra duties to do while in the area. As a Baronet, he wants to stay in the good graces of the Imperial government while pushing towards his own goals.
- If the local Tsosoea Moslems do want to revolt, what can they do? What should they do? Even if they could smuggle in hundreds of tons of equipment and dozens of agents in two or three years – a very difficult undertaking – that just isn't going to be enough to fight the Hegemony with. And frankly, they could use those sort of assets to fight the pirates closer at home...
  - If the PCs are really into the setting, they could well convince the Baronet to set aside the journey to another time, and just lead the fight against the local pirates. The *Edrab Alfda'* is a major asset, and will be missed on her journey to Tsosoe. If so, the Referee should permit it... but the pirates will remain a menace until the return of the Imperial Sector Fleet, which will be around 1003-1005 in the official timeline. That is 10-12 years from now: it is likely that the PCs won't live to see the end of the war and see Tsosoe with their own eyes.
- What if the Tsosoea have truly given up the faith? How can they restore it? Can they restore it? Should they restore it? After all, shoring up believers on Imperial Hebrin is a lot easier and would have a bigger bang for the jump than trying to do the same in the anti-religious and deeply foreign Hegemony. Perhaps a defeat should just be called a loss, and set aside for a stronger generation of believers to deal with.
- Tsosoe is the major Islamic world in Beta Quadrant, but there are others. (See **Stellar Reaches** #19, pages 18-19.) Should they visit them? Why should they – some of these

systems are in the Ssilnthis Gap, where far too many clawed killers roam the night. What's the use of making a long journey, risking life and limb to help the brothers, to get killed over some no-name world?

- While in the area, the Brotherhood agents are sure to hear of a new local religion being formed, the "Bright Path" or "The Lit Way". (**Stellar Reaches** #19, page 21). Should they investigate? Should they try to convince the leaders to heed the words of the Prophet instead?
- Time is of importance here. Once again, the *Edrab Alfda'* is a very useful asset for anti-pirate activities in the Six Subsectors. But some effort should be made to help the faithful in the Hegemony. How much time should be spent in the Beta Quadrant? How much are these foreign believers truly worth, in the eyes of the PCs? Compared to the safety of the believers in the Six Subsectors?

Here We Go! Random Encounters

The PCs plot out their course, and set off. While in transit within Imperial Space, **roll 2d6** whenever they exit jumpspace.

For additional detail, use the pirate activity map in this issue of **Stellar Reaches** to modify the likelihood of pirates, for the better or for the worse. For more role-playing detail, use the Religion map on **Stellar Reaches** #19. In some systems, it's an asset to be seen as a Brotherhood man, but in other systems, it's a liability. The wise PC knows when to open his mouth, and when to keep it shut.

In Lentuli, Nulinad and Gimushi subsectors:
On a **roll of 2**, the ship is in genuine distress – Emptyheaded ships tend to be poorly maintained – and requires assistance. It is part of the spacers code to help anyone who needs it: in the Empty Quarter, this is especially important if the one in need is 'one of us' – a Vilani calling for help from another Vilani, for example. Note that sometimes, encounter 9 & 12 – pirates – also fake distress calls.

On a **roll of 3-7,** there is no encounter. In the Empty Quarter, interstellar trade is on the thin side.

On a **roll of 8-9**, there is a local civilian ship in transit, landing, arriving, or perhaps mining an asteroid or conducting a survey. They are a bit cagey at first, but

once they know it's the *Edrab Alfda'* they will warm up: "When the *Edrab's* here, pirates disappear."

In these sectors, the chance of a naval encounter is pretty high: on a **roll of 10**, the ship is a Tap-a-wewaka-atapas (Bwap Guardian of Order), Lazisar Directorate Navy, or Ducal (Colonial Navy) patrol ship. Major warships are a rarity, and are only found in system navies of high-pop systems.

On a **roll of 11**, there is a minor mission request. Since starships are valuable in the Six Subsectors, a planet may request a visitor to do a mercy mission (transport the sick, or send out/bring in medicine) or transport mail (the X-boats are few and far between now, as the Imperial Navy grabbed most of them to support the war effort.) A planetary government, corporation, or wealthy man may offer some big bucks to do a quick chore.

The chance of piracy is low in these parts of space, as they are heavily patrolled compared to the other Imperial subsectors. Only on a **roll of 12** is the encounter a pirate. (This is the typical probability for an Imperial subsector in peacetime.) In general, these thieves just want the cargo, or a grav vehicle. When the pirates determine the identity of the *Edrab Alfda'*, they will flee: not only does the ship easily outclass all the scruffy TL 9-12 pirates in the area, she recently acted as an anti-pirate patrol ship in this same area!

In Yogesh, Hebrin, and Udusis subsectors:
On a **roll of 2-3**, there is a ship, space station, or settlement in distress. There is little trade in most of this area, and a star traveller who isn't interested in robbing you is as good a friend as you're going to find. The aid required is not always transport services: as spacers, the PCs and their crew have technical skills that could mean the difference between life and death. Even the fact that they have a Baronet onboard is useful: perhaps he can pull a few strings with the local Duke to get badly-needed help…

On a **roll of 4-8**, there is no encounter. A looted and dead hulk floats by, perhaps, or a radio cry for help received weeks or months too late. Nearby worlds don't like unknown visitors, and would rather you just keep on moving out of the system. (If the PCs press, though, the Imperial starport will let you land, grudgingly. Since they are strangers, though, expect suspicious treatment by armed port personnel.)

On a **roll of 9**, there is an ordinary pirate, looking for an involuntary donation from you. Kill him.

On a **roll of 10**, there is a gutsy solitary civilian ship in the system, typically a canny trader or a pirate 'off-duty', so to speak. Typically, this ship immediately warns the *Edrab Alfda'* to keep their distance, so there won't be any problems. Nobody likes strangers here.

On a **roll of 11**, there is a convoy of 2D12+2 civilian ships, running a circuit among the local stars. There may be 1-3 local naval craft as well, almost always from the Duchy of Hebrin. Take a good look: when the *Edrab Alfda'* returns from her journey to Tsosoe, she'll be the lead escort for many of these convoys.

On a **roll of 12**, the PCs encounter a group of 1d6+2 pirates. In Yogesh or Hebrin subsectors, this is a Suedzuk wolf pack. In Udusis subsector, this is the major human pirate flotilla. Estimating the TL is crucial: most Suedzuk corsairs are at TL 11, while most human pirates are at TL 10. Using Classic Traveller rules, the PCs starship should be able to handle both flotillas alone, but there are no guarantees…

While on Ka-aswa…

Ka-aswa is an important Bwap system, and her scores of tough little SDBs make it an oasis of peace among the turbulent stars. Order and bureaucracy is very important here, but in truth the rules are usually limited in scope, reasonable, and easy to obey.

The major cities of the world – and the starport – are located in areas of stifling humidity and near-continuous rainfall, drizzle, or fog. The man they are looking for, Baha Udeen bin Ra'ed, resides in one of the drier climes near the equator, about 130 km south of the minor city of Popa- Wae-pe.

As this is a pure Bwap world (except for a few off-world students and businessmen), the PCs will need to speak Bwap to get anywhere – or buy a few handy, inexpensive translators available at the starport and most major cities. There are rooms for rent, but outside of the major cities and their expensive alien-environment (read: human/Vargr-use) hotels, everything is built for the Bwaps, by the Bwaps. Nothing is dry – not even paper or electronics - everything drips, and slipping is a constant hazard.

[**Referee**: Roll 2d6 once a day: if the result is 2-4, the PCs get a minor illness that weakens concentration and gives sniffles and headaches for 2d6 days. Constitution of 10+ gives a DM +1 to the roll.]

They may contact him by datalink beforehand for some assistance – after they figure out the Bwap inscriptions and technique for their electronic devices. Just dialing on your off-world cell phone isn't going to cut it.

After figuring out the local flight schedule or monorail network, the PCs finally arrive at bin Ra'ed's location. It's not continuously humid, so it's near-uninhabitable for Bwaps without their moisturizing cloths, and they prefer to stay away. Bin Ra'eed will meet the PCs in an abandoned Bwap temple, set within a huge cavern. For a man, this region is one of the more comfortable places on the planet – if he can live without most of the amenities of civilization.

Baha Udeen bin Ra'ed, 58 years
Retired Merchant, 5 terms
475A8A
Gunnery-2, Medical-1, Pilot-1, Steward-1, Streetwise-1, Vacc Suit-1
Has a Dagger and a Revolver
Homeworld: Hebrin

Description: Light stripped Arab dress, with a hip bag, sandals, Hebrin headgear, and an electronic headpiece with a rectangular monocle-display and earpiece. [See: Data Display Headpiece, **MegaTraveller World Builder's Handbook**, page 33] An older man, with strong laugh lines.

He won't invite the guests to his fairly distant home, as his wife and daughters are not to be seen with foreign men. (His motorbike is discreetly hidden behind a boulder.) However, he is a good host, and has some tea prepared using a portable hot plate.

Initially, he and the Baronet will have a private discussion for 20-30 minutes on Brotherhood business. Then, the PCs will be invited into the discussion: bin Ra'ed is more than happy to chat about his experiences.

Average Liaison task: Good pointers are provided that will make things easier for Imperial travellers in Hegemonic space. Allow the PCs to **reroll one task involving contact with the Hegemonic military forces per day**. This includes a few basic phrases in Arzula-A and Arzula-B, common languages used among the major military cultures of the Hegemony.

Difficult Streetwise: As above, but this time dealing with the average Muslim citizen on a Hegemonic world. These include pointers on how to set them at ease, certain vocabulary differences between Hebrin Arabic and Tsosoea Arabic, and local customs. Some notes regarding religious adherence (or, more precisely, the lack of same) and enduring opposition to the Arzula are provided. Gives the PCs **a +1 bonus in shifting the initial attitude** of the locals (i.e. from neutral to friendly, or from hostile to suspicious).

Formidable Gunnery & Difficult Education: To pass the test, the PC must already have Gunnery-1, then pass a Difficult Education test, then pass a Formidable Gunnery. If he pulls it off, then bin Ra'ed gives some very useful techniques and guidelines for shooting down Vargr pirates. **The successful student receives a +1 to hit any Suedzuk pirate**: these are the most common pirate in Imperial space, Hegemony space, or the Ssilnthis Gap.

Note: if the PC has the minor local illness described earlier, he can't concentrate and cannot pick up the bonus.

While on Gobi...

Referee Background: Money, Money, Money

While Ka-aswa was visited for hard-to-find information, the landing on Gobi is needed for financial reasons. Financial accounts and transfers across the Imperium are handled by actual transfer of physical currency: electronic transfers across interstellar space have proven to be impractical, and too vulnerable to sophisticated assault.

Most interstellar banking in Yogesh subsector is handled on Yogesh herself, with some notable branch offices on Ka-aswa, benefiting on the Bwap love of order and proper procedure. However, the expatriates who reside on Gobi (newcomers and long-settled families) have enough out-of-sector wealth for a few sector-wide banks of Antares, Fornast, and Ley to maintain branch offices on that world. "Faster service, fewer regulations, and less oversight than on Ka-aswa? Works for me!"

The Silent Ones, Gobi, 980 Imperial. These are the only surviving remains of a Minor Human Race on Gobi: they date to around -15,000 Imperial, 10,000 years before the arrival of the Vilani. Long a complete mystery, it is now felt that Gobi was a colony world of the "Stille". Extensive ruins of this race were found on Urmair a mere 35 years ago, and are the focus of an Imperial Scout Base there. It is believed that both the Gobi colony and the Urmair homeworld died due to the lack of water, coupled with a failed transition to a space-borne economy. After the Rim War is over, the IISS plans to comb both systems for relics of this extinct STL-capable species, looking for ancient spacecraft, satellites, and abandoned moon bases. **This graphic is titled "Picnic on Procyon"**
© Artur Rosa. See his work at **http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/26214944#/d2wal39**

Baronet Mohammed prefers to keep his liquid assets in the Empty Quarter/Fornast/Ley Sector *hawala* network of informal money transfer, handed by trusted agents and families dating back to medieval times. This network endured even after the Second Imperia financial networks failed when the central Rule of Man treasury at Hub/Ershur "refused to honour a monetary issue of the branch treasury at Antares." Throughout its history, the Imperium – eager to gain control of *all* interstellar money flows – have worked to undermine and destroy this Islamic financial network, especially after the Solomani Party was banned. However, due to the lack of Party support within the Empty Quarter – and the desperate local need for anything that

promotes trade – the Imperium has decided 'not to notice' *hawala* financial networks within the sector.

[The Bwap Sector Duke plans to change this, but this does not affect the characters in this adventure.]

In Play: From the Elites to the People

When the *Edrab Alfda'* comes out of jumpspace, they emerge near a cloud of shattered pirate ships. A high-tech Ikonaz band attempted to hijack an Imperial monetary shipment, but failed thanks to two ships, the Imperial Navy escorts *Sareshnig* and *Giish*, the attack failed. The escorts suffered worse damage than properly-build warships would have, though, and will

be returning to the Imperial naval base at Lazisar within a day for repairs, before returning to the Imperial Core. (For more on the largest naval base of the Empty Quarter, see **Stellar Reaches** #8, "Until Sheep May Safely Graze", page 32 ff.)

The *Edrab Alfda'* docks without a problem: she is known as 'one of the good guys', whacking pirates in Lentuli and Nulinad subsectors. Docking fees and charges are waved off. The PCs are dressed as (and are assumed to be in this adventure) believing Arabic Muslims: this marks them off as one of the locals most of the expatriate population of Gobi naturally dislikes. However, the PCs can ease the concerns of the Gobians by pointing out their fine record of anti-pirate activity, which can be verified by a casual search of the local databases. Local distaste of Sunni Islam is out-weighted by local hatred of pirate raiders.

While the masters, rulers, and respectable types of the planet are solidly secularist, the common workers and servants follow Kikhushegi. The Kikhushegi/Secularist relationship is a *lot* more mellow than the Kikhushegi/Sunni Islam relationship. There is a history of bad blood between these two monotheistic religions, and the Sunni Islam players are very heavily outnumbered. However, so long as the PCs are careful, respectful, and avoid the subject of religion, things should work out ok. If not... well, 'death by stupidity' is a common enough end for PC parties.

[**Referee**: the Kikhushi will be able to identify the PCs religion merely by their names, how they speak, their body language, and their dress.]

The Baronet will desire to visit the city of Sabt. Now a devoutly Kikhushegi city, it was originally a Sunni Moslem holy site. Quite a lot of blood has been shed over the centuries for the ownership of this distant city. In Sabt, one minaret stands for every system in the sector, symbolizing the conquest of the Believers over the entire Empty Quarter. As the Sunni are naturally hostile to infidels while the Kikhushi go out of their way to be gracious to them, the secular overlords of Gobi granted the Kikhushi authority over the site. Sunni Moslems are specifically forbidden from going there.

Which is why Baronet Mohammed of the Moslem Brotherhood insists on stepping foot in the wondrous city himself.

It is not so hard to visit the desert city, by G-carrier or by grav rail. Security vetting of visitors is fairly good, but if the PCs spend a week poking around and have a decent recon rating, they should be able to sniff the

holes in the local security procedure. The major issue is that the Kikhushi insist that all who enter the walled city must swear that Mohammed is the last and the least of the prophets. How the Moslem PCs evade taking this oath is up to them.

If the PCs simply go to the checkpoint dressed as Sunni Moslems and refuse to take the anti-Moslem oath, the crowd jeers and mocks as they are rejected, but otherwise they come to no harm.

If a PC makes an effort to dresses like an infidel, and makes a basic effort to drop Moslem mannerisms (a.k.a. no "Inshallahs", no Arabic) the Referee makes an Average Intelligence test to fool the guards. Also, acting skill is used as an additional modifier, if it is available.

If they are caught by the guards, they are arrested and beaten in the prison, and not released until a fine of 1000 Cr is paid per lying PC. If their deception holds, they are let into the holy city of Sabt, and are free to take pictures, etc.

If the PCs are so idiotic as to try to shoot their way in, the Referee is instructed to bring down the hurt. This is a law level 4 world, where about 10% carry concealable weapons, and 80% of men (and 40% of women) carry personal sidearms and/or knives openly. Perhaps 5% of the general population, including the guards, are wearing light, TL 12 bulletproof vests under their garments. Only the guards are bearing proper automatic rifles, but there's the occasional man or older boy with a regular hunting rifle in the crowd.

The City of Sabt
The brick wall of the city is more ceremonial than anything: it is meant for crowd control and as a symbol, not as an actual military defensive fortification. The practiced military eye can spot anti-air laser and missile turrets, and a few observation bots and drones in the sky. Despite the absence of the Imperial fleet, the run-of-the-mill pirates avoid the well-armed world as a rule, and this hardened target of a city in particular.

In the city, there is a lot of chanting and celebration. The streets are well-kept; prayer rugs and religious paraphernalia is everywhere. Knots of visiting Gobian secularists can be spotted everywhere, happy to enjoy the bright colours, spicy foods and amusing rituals of the local religious festivals, without taking part in them themselves. Off-worlder Lazisari can be spotted here and there, a bit awed: the Lazisari are usually wealthier than the other Emptyheads, but here it is the reverse. The TL 12 trappings, signage, and conveniences are everywhere, especially holograms and robots.

The low gravity of Gobi allowed a truly magnificent collection of minarets to be built in the old religious centre of Sabt. One minaret was built for each of the 313 systems of the Empty Quarter. **This graphic is titled "Babel" © Sergey Skachkov. Visit his site at http://atris.cgsociety.org/gallery/294170/**

If the PC knows something about civil defense, he has an Average chance to spot the air raid shelters and the unmanned guard posts. It's been a long time since the Sunni Moslems attacked this Kikhushi city of 800,000, so the alert level is low.

The outer area is built on TL10-12 standards: there are a few floating buildings, and a lot of antigrav buses and G-carriers on their business. This is a holy city, but also a real place where real people live, work, and play. Ground cars are common, but they are all controlled by an onboard computer and directed by a central traffic network. Any attempt to hack the computer and take manual control of the vehicle will be taken as a preamble for a terrorist attack, and the PCs will face lethal force very quickly.

(There are warning stickers on the window regarding this, in Imperial Anglic, Indian Anglic, Modern Vilani, Classical Arabic, and Lazisari. There was no space for the various forms of Hindi of the Quarter.)

In many modern religions, the temple is often set on a floating platform or an ultralight tower, but Kikhushegi follows the older religions in having their mosques solidly rooted in the soil. The calls to prayer are everywhere, and can be heard five times a day: but the words that are being cried out are very different from the *adhan* (Islamic call to prayer). For one thing, it's in Old High Vilani, not Classical Arabic...

As the PCs journey to the centre of the city – by foot, by artigrav bus, or by Skyrail – the Minarets of Sabt rise above them. Every single one is crafted differently, and the outer surfaces are decorated with a multitude of lively, bright, and interesting designs. In this inner zone of the city, many of the women wear pure white dresses, and have dyed their hair white in imitation of the White Lady (see the cover of **Stellar Reaches** #18). These are devotees who will spend their lives praying in this part of the city.

Kikhushi teachers are found here as well, in yellow or red robes. Unlike patriarchal Islam, Kikhushegi – like many Vilani religions – endorses a two-to-one track, where a less formal feminine priesthood and a more formal masculine priesthood merge into one hierarchy.

Baronet Mohammed will climb up the many steps of the famed Hebrin minaret: with its pale white stone set with gold, silver, and red highlights, it is debatably the most beautiful of the minarets. As the Kikhushi believers worship their One God – as revealed by the First Prophet Shiindii – the Baronet will silently

meditate, then quietly recite the modified *Shahada* under his breath: "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammad is the greatest of the prophets."
Note the modification: the proper *Shahada* ends "...and Mohammad is his prophet." But, as Kikhushegi has claimed Mohammad as the last and least of the prophets, the local Sunni Moslems have modified it to restore Mohammad to the position of prominence.

The Referee will now roll 2d6: on a roll of 3-12, the Kikhushegi do not hear the Baronet's prayer, and all can leave freely. On a result of 2, the Kikhushegi **DO** hear: the lives of the PCs and the Baronet are in immediate peril, and they are unlikely to exit the minaret alive. In the first minute or so, when accusations begin to fly, a very silver-tongued PC just might be able to calm things down. This is a Difficult Liaison or Streetwise task, whichever skill is higher. Otherwise, the guards signal the alarm; unarmed civilians flee, and 4D12 armed men – guards and armed civilians alike – move to kill the PCs and the Baronet. In 1d6 minutes, four air/rafts with armed soldiers bearing TL C combat armour and gauss rifles will arrive, and things just get worse from there.

If the PCs survive the Baronet's quiet act of defiance, he will pull out a simple pager that somehow dropped into his pocket, type a few numbers, and remain silent for the rest of the tour. Note that Islam insists that all lands that were under Islamic rule, then lost, must be restored to Islamic authority. This definitely applies to Sabt. It isn't the right time to retake it, but the Brotherhood can afford to be patient.

Immediately after crossing the city walls on his way out, a well-dressed Arab will greet him, and invite him to one of the restaurants of the outer wall. There will be a discreet room in the back where the Baronet will enter alone. A few minutes later, he will emerge with a large briefcase handcuffed to his person. He and the PCs will then head immediately to the starport, where the Baronet will use his noble rank and his ship's reputation as a patriotic pirate killer to elegantly (and legally) circumvent inspection of his person or his baggage, as any sufficiently connected official can wave aside a TSA inspection.

Across the Void and Into the Hegemony

After Gobi, the PCs head off to fun-loving Sahale (described in **Stellar Reaches** #2, page 16), then head across the Rift to Saeghvung. Sahale has her share of pirate problems, and Saeghvung is worse, but the PC's should be able to handle these issues well.
The journey across Beta Quadrant should be uneventful. The region is well-patrolled by Star Legion ships, with the occasional Hegemonic military vessel. The lone wolf pirates here are crewed by Suedzuk and Suedzuk/Irilitok mixes, but at the moment they're looking for stuff, not blood. Again, a comparison between the *Edrab Alfda'* and the stock TL 11 Corsair suggests that the PCs should not need to pay a thin centicredit to these fanged thugs.

[**Referee**: Pirate encounters in Nisaga subsector should be re-rolled if it occurs far from the mainworld, especially near a gas giant. Roll 1d6: if the result is 1-2, the single pirate ship is actually a wolf pack of 1d6+2 pirates, on its way to the poorly-defended Imperial Empty Quarter. The PCs have a good chance of winning a battle, but a bad set of dice rolls would end their adventure very quickly.

These Suedzuk packs would prefer to avoid an encounter: they want to eat soft civilian targets in undefended Imperial space, not grab Star Legion attention by attacking local civilian ships.]

"A Fine Meal with Interesting Company!"

On the last system before arriving at Tsosoe, the Baronet will be invited to dinner by the local Governor, the man politically responsible for the security situation of the planet to the Hegemon (The Marshal actually commands local forces in system). Unlike most governors, Governor Leom Sargon is a jolly and good-natured Damlaerite, not a cold and emotionless Arzula.

As his wife serves some very good food, Governor Sargon will press for the Baronet's and the invited PC's opinion on what they have seen, and for news from the Imperium, especially regarding the famous Solomani Rim War. He will also be curious as to the purpose of the *Edrab Alfda's* visit: she does not seem to be engaged in trading, and there has to be some important reason why an Imperial Baronet is coming for a visit.

The Governor knows about the Baronet's Brotherhood connections, but will not let on that he knows. Instead, he will subtly, indirectly probe on the Brotherhood interest in Tsosoe. He will claim that the world is quietly prospering under Hegemonio rule, and that the only people who still resist are "a few hotheads in the outback regions of the planet."

When speaking about Islam, Governor Sargon will avoid insulting the religion, but suggest that local believers are not as sophisticated as Imperial believers, and need strong guidance to fit in with the rest of interstellar society. "After all, the Baronet has managed to reconcile his ancient beliefs with service to a modern secular government, no? All we ask is for the locals to do the same."

If he gets on well with the PCs & the Baronet, the Governor will call up a few air-rafts and show the PCs and the Baronet some of the more pleasant areas of the planet, the interesting sights, fabulous food, and the quaint local customs. A few of the more attractive Beta women, well-trained in conversation, social events, and both Imperial and Hegemonio etiquette, will be available for escort and sexual services. If the PC likes, the Governor is more than happy to loan a few out as companions while they are on Tsosoe. *Keeping* one requires financial compensation, of course.

On Tsosoe

Tsosoe is a small, green world; a moon which orbits the small gas giant Theouds, along with four other moons. With two major continents, five minor continents, and eleven major islands, it is the home of an abundant amount of native life. Most of it is incompatible with humaniti, but the Vargr imported quite a lot of Vargr-digestible lifeforms (which are broadly human-edible as well). On the large islands colonized by Arzula settlers, the local ecology is being aggressively supplanted by imported, human-compatible fauna, flora, and microbiology.

Cold, dry desert conditions occur at the poles, but there are no massive glaciers or ice sheets. Hot, dry desert conditions dominate one of the minor continents, and can be found in the rainshadow of two of the numerous mountain ranges. There are no jungles, and few swamps on the world.

Tsosoe is a very active world geologically, due to both internal composition and its proximity to the Theouds gas giant. To better tame the world and its destructive earthquakes, the Hegemony has constructed a series of TL 14/15 artificial volcanoes in the pacified and colonized Wresnya District: this region is no more active than the Japanese archipelago on Terra. **The graphic is titled "Sprites" © Geoffroy Thoorens. Please see his work at http://www.djahalland.com/en/gallery and http://djahal.cgsociety.org/gallery/615112/**

The planet is very active geologically, with numerous volcanoes and mountain ranges. It is even claimed that, in the long centuries between the Vargr Pillaging and the War of Man, an entire mountain chain has risen up on one of the continents. All buildings and infrastructure are built to handle major earthquakes: every week, the PCs will experience a minor quake on the planet.

Local gravity is 0.68 G, with a year being 45.3 T-days. A full day and night cycle is long, at about 19 days (465.7 T-hours). Weather-wise, the heat of the orange-red sun drives the strong monsoon seasons: torrid, hot weather is the rule for much of the planet, especially the heavily-inhabited Ryia Aldakura (الأخضر الكرة, "Green Ball") and Radul'dwa (روضة, "Meadow") minor continents.

Politically, the planet is divided into four zones.
  ➤ Zone 1, "Wresnya", covers the oceans and the Arzula-settled islands, and enjoys the most freedom and the most wealth. The main starport is located here.
  ➤ Zone 2, "Trear", covers the remaining islands and the most heavily-settled minor continents. This region is under a strict military Hegemonio occupation, with severe martial law restrictions: violators are routinely executed.
  ➤ Zone 3, "Krez Domj" covers the coastlands of all continents not in Zone 2, as well as some of the more lightly settled continents. This area is locally ruled, with only the rare Hegemonio airborne patrol entering the area. Puppet rulers, 'advised' by the Arzula, suppress their unhappy populations aggressively, leading to extensive controls and numerous restrictions.
  ➤ Zone 4, "Prant", contains the remaining areas of the planet, mainly the interior of the least inhabited continents. This area is officially in rebellion against Hegemonic authority, but there is an understanding with the interstellar government: "Don't cross me, and I won't cross you." The borders are officially sealed, but actually quite porous, especially if you get off the roads. The Hegemony does conduct high-altitude over-flights and orbital surveillance of this area. A few artillery exchanges and minor border incidents has been the sum of the fighting for the last six years: failing attempts have been made to shoot down the spy planes as well.

The common language is Tsosoea Arabic; Arzula-B, -F and –K are also spoken here, but only by settlers, soldiers, and interstellar traders. Suedzuk Vargr languages died out with the Vargr inhabitants during the Era of Horror: the small settlements of Hegemonic Vargr resettled in the Atlas Cliffs and Jerance Highlands speak Arzula-F exclusively. Julian Anglic is spoken by a few starfarers and highly educated professionals. The Transform Anglic dialect of the Imperial Empty Quarter is unknown outside of textbooks and high-end translation software.

Religion is closely tied to origins: Arzula and their Vargr servants worship the Last Man, and most of the local Tsosoea follow Islam, culturally if not as believing followers. The Prant District has completely abandoned Islam in favour of a local nature religion. Locals are very expressive emotionally, while the Arzula are as emotionless and hard as the PCs have come to expect. As of 993-4, there is a large contingent of Nisaga soldiers: grimly devout followers of the Last Man, they are not as stoic as the Arzula, but are still a lot more stoic, quiet, and wiry-tough than the stereotypical East Indian of the 20th-21st century. They speak Nisagan and/or Arzula-K: a handful can even speak passable Tsosoea Arabic.

The local calendar is different from the Hegemonic calendar, which is different from the Imperial calendar. The only shared unit among them is the second: all other days, years, etc are different. See **Stellar Reaches** #6, page 20, footnote 2 for more flavour text. Hegemonic dates are transcribed in a particular format: 94.012.4 HT = 94th Hegemony Cycle, 12th day, point-four day. "Tenths" and "Hundredths" take the place of Imperial "days" and "weeks".

The locals will have as much difficulty understanding Imperial time as Imperials will have of understanding Hegemony time. Local Islamic scholars will understand the Islamic dating system, though; and there are computer programs that can convert between all three systems in a snap.

(**Referee**: Note that computer standards between the Imperium and the Hegemony are fairly compatible for equipment at and below TL 11, as both regions were ruled by the Ziru Sirka. As the tech levels rise, though, incompatibility grows.]

At the Starport
When the *Edrab Alfda'* docks at Starport Wedelph, they will find a small party of 1d6+1 Hegemony guides awaiting them as soon s they leave their ship. They will

kindly point out the high law level of the world, and the divided nature of the government, and insist that they remain in the company of the PCs wherever they go.

The PCs will find that they can't access the local computer nets without permission of their minders: the devices they have on hand can't link up to Hegemony protocols. They can't speak the local language without translation devices, and the devices they have will be confiscated by their guides: "Live translators are required on this world: it's a security precaution we INSIST on." Their Imperial credits are no good here, and – if they haven't thought of making a big exchange of Imperial Credits for Julian Stars earlier – they are financially at the mercy of their generous, protective, controlling ~~masters~~ guides. [Referee: Even if the PCs had the foresight to build up a good pile of Julian Stars, it's best not to show it in front of their watchful friends: it's likely to be confiscated as "possible counterfeits". But never fear: the guides are willing to double the amount of money on tap... but all transactions must be via their electronic accounts.]

The double-wife team of a typical Arzula senior military officer, Tsosoe, 989 Imperial. In the background is the Prime Wife, who fights alongside the officer in wartime. In peacetime, she handles financial matters, insures total family compliance with Hegemonic law & Arzula cultural codes, and handles scientific and military education for his children. Childhood discipline is also within her remit, up to and including the execution of the child for disobedience or excessive failure. In the foreground is the Secondary Wife, who nurtures the children and teaches them of civilian matters, teaches them to love the Last Man, the Hegemony, and the Family (in that order), and insures that her husband is relaxed, well-fed, and in the peak of health when at home. In the graphic, they are discussing the future (or lack thereof) of a child among the ruins of a smashed Last Man sacred grove, destroyed during a failed uprising decades ago. **This graphic is titled "An Evening of Thoughts" © Glenn Antins. See his work at <http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1214592>**

In Wresnya

"For their own safety", the PCs will be restricted to Wresnya District for their entire stay. It is a beautiful and comfortable region, populated by polite and formal Arzula, a fair number of quiet Tsosoea servants, and a small number of friendly, respectful, and evasive Vargr traders and merchants. The planetary TL is 7, but in Wresnya the lifestyle is closer to TL A (no TL A production facilities, so the TL of the planet remains 7). Some Arzula may wonder at the Beta-types who walk like free men, but they will know that they are Imperial visitors quickly enough, and show proper respect when speaking with the PCs.

(The Arzula who dislike the Betas will keep their mouth shut when they see the Hegemonio guides. The Arzula are proud of their strong government, but they know better than to step on its tail before foreign visitors.)

By their non-submissive body posture, it will be obvious that Vargr PCs are not from around here. They will be treated warily, and the human guides will be somewhat uncertain on what to do. Eventually, an additional Hegemonic Vargr guide will be provided: one that *adores* the Deified Man, and who dresses very strangely, in human colours. This is easy to understand, when you realize that he had paid to have his old eyes taken out, and replaced with prosthesis eyes that lets him see exclusively in the human visual range....

A minority of Hegemonio Vargr traders will be wealthier than most of the humans, even the Arzula masters, but will still be of lower social status: they will be amazed by the relative respect Imperial humans show Vargr. They will be rather envious too: the Vargr value charismatic status and public respect more than money, and even the most wealthy would gladly trade in all of their money, in return for legal and social equality with the Arzula humans.

If the PCs just want to take the easy way out, enjoy the sights, the women, and the pleasures of the area, and then head back home, that path is marked out in bright neon lights. If they give the right kind of suggestions to their guides, they will receive a substantial two-part bribe if they can convince the Baronet to leave without getting into contact with the more downtrodden Muslims outside of Wresnya: the lesser part in Imperial Credits or Julian Stars (their choice) when their ship is about to lift off from Tsosoe, and the greater part after they have returned to Ababat and the Baronet, his anxieties soothed, turns to fighting the local pirates.

[**Referee**: the Hegemony has a quiet but substantial PR establishment within the Empty Quarter, dedicated to 'image management' with the Imperial nobility and important opinion shapers. Most of these forces are overt: advertising firms, cultural exchanges, and the like. There is a small but potent group of covert agents at work as well: it is this group that will watch the PCs and reward them if they feel satisfied with their work. Yes, one to three of this number has been embedded into the local Brotherhood: they will guard their identity with their life, for obvious reasons.]

Environment: Wrensya is an elegant and orderly district, very peaceful and civilized. TL B-D equipment and vehicles are commonplace, including grav cars, robots, and illusionwalls. The PCs will hear the martial instrumental music, friendly talks and business arguments, chants to the Last Man and little boys practicing drills, commanded by stern-faced cadets only a year or two older than themselves. Despite the pistols, guns, and grenades being carried, there is little violence: politeness and respect is the rule. The men, when they are not in squads, tend to walk around alone or in groups of two or three: women stick to thongs of five to twelve, and only mothers and older women walk alone. To 20th century eyes, the architecture is a good mix of Greco-Roman, Classical, Art Deco, and Arabesque, with some Vilani touches here and there.

It may not be the wisest ideal for Vargr scouts to visit the Deified Man temples. You know, the ones with the beautiful pale white marble frescos and the fine bas relief murals, highlighted with red marble where the Evil Vargr are struck by the machinegun fire of the Noble Arzula...

Also, don't ask where the bone from the elegant goblets, the charming meditation sculptures, or the graceful flutes and windpipes comes from. You won't like the answer.

> IISS Scout Orogel
> advising his fellow Vargr teammates
> Zuethun/Tsosoe
> 55-992 Imperial

Where the better sort lives. An Arzula woman enjoying the view of her home in the Salinae Isles, Wrensya District, Tsosoe. This graphic is titled "Archipelago 27" © Artur Rosa. See his work at
http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/25625886#/d513e7q

Legal codes: In public and in private, everyone – civilians and military personnel; Arzula and Beta and Vargr – all wear a vast variety of stylish and attractively cut uniforms with tasteful badges and rank insignia. The law level here is a bit lower than in the other Arzula-dominated districts, around law level C: verbal warnings and mild punishment for non-criminal code violations are the norm, and even the Beta servants tend to be cursed at or slapped around a bit for disobedience, instead of being bullwhipped, neurolashed, maimed, or killed. Note that most Arzula men and the few women serving in the military carry arms: it is forbidden for the other classes to do so.

A special dispensation is given for the Imperials (even the Vargr) to carry personal weapons. Also, in Wrensya there is more forgiveness for Imperials who break the less important of the many rules. The PC guides who never leave their sides will honestly work to keep the PCs happy and comfortable during their stay in Wrensya District – and to keep them in Wrensya District, as well.

On a monthly basis, civil protection drills will be conducted. Wailing alarms will sound, and everyone will run to their shelters and stations. Their guides will drag the PCs to the nearest shelter: often, 1d6 +1 policemen or soldiers will appear out of nowhere to protect the Hegemon's guests as part of the drill.

The Wrensya District is very secure, so it is unlikely that the PCs will see serious violence during their stay. However the likelihood of an incident increases every

month: the longer they stay, the more likely the PCs will witness an explosion or shooting. About 1d6 days afterwards, the PCs will see either 2d6 crucified, naked men in one of the city squares, or the spiked heads of 3d6 randomly chosen native Tsosoea 'Beta' families, from infants to grandparents.

Geological activity: Thanks to heavy Hegemonio subsurface terraforming, this area is no more dangerous than modern-day Japan. Major earthquakes strike only once a decade, and very powerful earthquakes and tsunami (9.0+ on the Richter Scale) only one a century. Earthquakes that hit 3.0 – felt by only a few people, no damage – are a daily occurrence, 5.0 earthquakes occur in the District 1d6 times a month, and 6.0+ earthquakes strike 1d6 times a year. The Referee can ignore daily earthquake rolls, if desired.
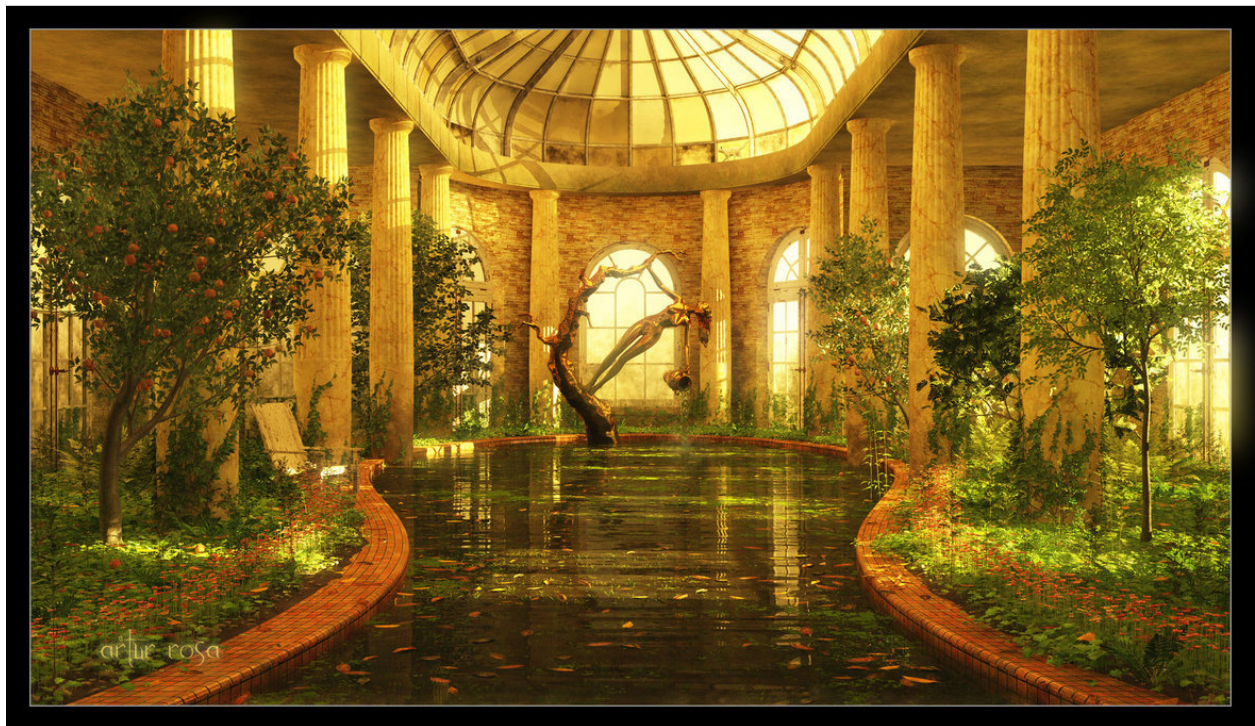
If the PC choose to ignore the reason why they went to Tsosoe in the first place, they can spend their entire time luxuriating in the lap of luxury in Wrensya District. Why worry about the freedom fighters, when you can make powerful friends, make very profitable business deals, and truly enjoy life? **This graphic is titled "Seclusion in Green and Amber" © Artur Rosa. See his work at http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/#/d4zpwpv**

Breaking away

If the PCs are serious about breaking away from their minders and finding out what's really going on, they will have to come up with a plan.

From here, this adventure can't predict what this plan will be. A wise team will have to remember that they

are favoured guests in the nicest part of a military occupation, and that quite a big chunk of resources will be deployed to round them up if they are found to be missing.

The PCs do have a few cards to play:

- This is an official visit by an Imperial Baronet, so it's unlikely that shoot-to-kill orders will be issued.
- They have first mover advantage: the Hegemony will be expecting them to go the easy way – like all the other noble-hearted, fearless scouts – rather than actually risk their skins digging up the truth.
- If the PCs were smart enough to do some preparation before arriving at Tsosoe, they can keep the Hegemony off-balanced, and make it difficult for them to play catch-up.
- If the Hegemony thinks that it is possible, they will try to patch up the 'unfortunate misunderstanding' and soothe the PCs concerns. This provides a certain amount of margin before the hammer comes down.
  - Once the Hegemony decides that the situation can't be salvaged, though, look out! It's most likely that the PCs and their ship will merely be forcibly expelled from the Hegemony and a formal complaint filed with the Imperial government. But there's a small but real chance that the PCs will just disappear, with the Hegemon offering his sincere apologies to the Empty Quarter Sector Duke for his failure to protect the Baronet from those pesky Vargr pirates...

    ["Interstellar Expulsion" is done in two ways: a boarding party pilots the ship out of Hegemony space, or the ship is escorted out of Hegemony space by a patrol ship. Once an expulsion order is given, it is enforced by any passing Hegemonio patrol ship. The Star Legion does not interfere with the internal affairs of a member state, but it does not enforce their orders, either. "All we do is guard the borders against foreign attack and suppress unlicensed piracy, nothing more."]

There is no sign of this whatsoever – besides the ever-present, ever-helpful guides – but any PC with experience of an authoritarian/militaristic culture will take it for granted that they are under surveillance, and that their rooms, communication devices, data streams, and even their equipment and clothing is bugged. If the PCs don't have the wit to guess this, the

Referee is to punish them, preferably just as they think that they are going to escape.

(But not severely: such helpless incompetents are useful tools of the Hegemon, and should not be wasted unnecessarily. It's better that they be gently guided to the right way of thinking, see the things they are intended to see, and return happily to the Imperium with the good news.)

If the PCs actually use their brains, and figure out ways to defeat/reduce the effectiveness of the TL C-D bugs, they should be given a fair chance to reach their goals. Improve their odds if they thought to bring stellar-tech anti-bug/anti-spying equipment, practice communications discipline, etc.

This is a TL 7 world under partial Hegemony occupation. In Wresnya District, there is little sign of this, but in Trear District, there are a lot of high-tech population suppression tools in use, from military warbots, to mecha walker patrols, to drone and fighter airborne strikes. The locals work tirelessly to destroy Hegemonio surveillance and power grids, and snipe drones when they can. IEDs are nasty and commonplace – see http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/how-the-u-s-quietly-lost-the-ied-war-in-afghanistan/ for standard methodology – but the Hegemony is spending a lot on equipping entire divisions with grav belts. Numerous other tools and strategies that low-tech forces use to fight high-tech forces are in play: they are most successful in denying Hegemony reliable on-the-ground knowledge, rather than permanently taking territory.

Their ability to take down, then reprogram Hegemonio warbots against their masters, is leading to a steady withdrawal of these robots to 'secure' areas, freeing up men to handle front-line duties – and increasing the butcher's price for the Hegemony.

(For a TL 7 population, the Tsosoea resistance have gained a remarkable grasp of TL C communication, network protocols, and on-the-fly circuitry –modding and reprogramming techniques. Low tech does NOT equal stupid!)

In the meantime, a good portion of the insurgents have become absolutely *crack* snipers, with both ballistic and laser rifles: no Hegemonic soldier goes anywhere without plenty of body armour. On the other hand, the Hegemony no longer attempts to build localized military or police forces in Trear District, so at least green-on-grey incidents are kept to a minimum.

Hegemonic forces attack a rebel stronghold in Trear District, in the face of heavy rocket artillery. Presented are TL 9/10 forces from Nisaga: as plentiful, useful, loyal and aggressive auxiliaries, the Nisagan regiments are handling the majority of front-line duties on Tsosoe, as the regular TL 12 Arzula ground forces refill the ranks, recuperate, and re-equip for a projected offensive in mid-994 Imperial. **The graphic is titled "Block13" © Geoffroy Thoorens. Please see his work at http://www.djahalland.com/en/gallery and http://djahal.cgsociety.org/gallery/1068906/**

When the Hegemony first dropped their forces, the local kids would come to the base for candy. The troopers would toss it just over the security zone, so the kids would get it.

Later, the troops would toss the candy just inside the zone, so the kids would have to run in to get it – and get shot dead for violating the security zone.

Today, there is no candy. No kids around, either – except the ones who are all grown up now, with a little extra malice in their eyes.

> Viola Arince, reporter for The Deep Dark
> Missing since 10-990 Imperial

Should the PCs can somehow get into Trear District undetected – not an easy feat, but doable if they have been able to hook up with local insurgents without their minders cluing in – they will be able to get first-hand audio-video material on some moving and horrifying material. The PCs will be moved around in the night, in one of the multitudes of cheap-but-fixable vehicles, in here today, gone tomorrow tunnel networks. The poverty, ingenuity, pride, gallows humour, courage, and grim determination of the insurgency will be obvious.

If the PCs are all believing Muslims, as they should be if they are role-playing right, they will be especially welcomed. If not, why on earth are they risking their necks in the Brotherhood? Unless they are Imperial, Household, or planetary spies, of course: if so, and if they are discovered, the Brotherhood is more likely to use them to feed false information than kill them. If they are Hegemonio spies, they should be readying the Inevitable Betrayal pretty soon…

If the PCs have any military training, or good tech know-how on TL 9-C military – especially anti-air – equipment, the local Tsosoea are eager students. (Note that the locals don't speak the PC's Transform Anglic, but Tsosoea Arabic). A PC who decides to quit the group and stay and fight against the oppressor is likely to be quite famous locally… and be a marked man by the Hegemony for the rest of his life.

But the PCs are NOT here to help fight the war: their original purpose is only to gather information and collect video data, so the rest of the Ummah can learn what is going on. If they can pressure the Imperium to act, all the better – but there is little hope In that, as the Imperium is tied down in a major war far away, and

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has no interest in angering quiet neighbours without need.

Environment: Once upon a time, Tsosoe was a very important world – important enough for the subsector to be named after it. Relics and remnants of this past greatness can be found throughout the islands of Trear District, from the now-grounded antigrav buildings and abandoned grav cars, to the glimpses of great beauty that sometimes peek through her run-down and shot-up cities. There has been a lot of retrofitting as the planet ran down: the TL 12 maglevs now run TL 7 railroad cars, with steel tracks bolted on its now-powerless superconductor tracks. Almost nothing is underground, in this earthquake-prone region, but a few of the classic high tech towers, earthquake-proofed when Tsosoe was still a rich world, remain standing. Many of these office towers now re-purposed for crowded familial living. (Many of the windows were knocked out, to help with ventilation, and giving an escape for the cooking fires.)

The crowded ground-level warrens of Trear District are sites of great bustle, as the factories hum and the business of life continues. Some of these factories make TL 7 computers by day, and military equipment for the resistance by night – often under the very noses of Hegemonio patrols. (Very few of the Nisagan or Arzula soldiers can speak any of the local languages, not even the widespread Tsosoea Arabic. None speak Imperial Anglic.) While much of the area is poor, it is "1970s America poor": everyone has a car or light vehicle, a TV set, a portable radio, a fridge, a watch, and a decent set of cotton and polyester clothes.

A few families even have working and powered-up gizmos from the old days, but a larger minority has Hegemonic or Julian electronic tools from the interstellar black market, run by the Vargr. In these anti-alien areas, nobody sees the Vargr, and it's always 'my uncle's nephew's friend' who knows where one is holed up, but they do exist in these regions, and the few who really do know where they are tolerate their presence – so long as certain 'protection fees' and high-tech military equipment somehow ends up in the hands of the insurgents. The Irilitok Vargr keep a low profile, fearing both the locals and the Hegemony (who dislikes unauthorized, unrestricted interstellar traders among the Beta types: "It gives them ideas above their station"), but gutsy enough to put their necks on the line for some serious profits.

In 993, women enjoy greater freedom of movement the men do: as they are less likely to take up arms, they are not as harassed as their husbands and brothers and sons are. During the initial decades of the occupation, the Arzula would take the time to abuse them in front of their menfolk, precisely to impress how powerless the men were to protect their families, as well as to show their contempt for 'outdated superstitious delusions, repressing the natural desires of all men and women'. It is unknown if the Arzula got more pleasure in abusing the local women, pouring contempt on local religious beliefs, or in smashing the teeth of the men with their rifle butts.

In any case, the dark-skinned East Indian Nisagans who have replaced the light-skinned Vilani/East Asian/East European Arzula on the line are less interested in publicly exhibiting their pure superiority over the lesser breeds, and more interested in keeping order with the fewest number of sustained casualties. The Hegemonio rules and regulations are harshly, even brutally enforced, "…but you are here to uphold the *Hegemon's* pleasure, not your own." To the Arzula, killing, inflicting pain, stealing, and exhibiting dominance over an enemy – all done with an emotionless mask – is the essence of a life truly lived; but the Nisagans are here to uphold the will of the Hegemon, period.

As challenges to the Hegemon's authority are reduced if the population is not humiliated unnecessarily, the Nisagans avoid such behaviour. The more local woman and children are on the street, the less free the enemy is to detonate an explosive and inflict casualties on his own people, and thus lose popular support. This kind of thinking has certainly not brought peace to the District, nor as the locals forgiven the Hegemony for it's evil, but it has helped to lower the scale and vigour of the violence in many residential sectors.

> "I have learned the Germans took a neighbour family in, suspicious that they rallied for the king. They couldn't prove. But when they set them free from camp, our neighbours ran in glee. And as they danced on down the street, the fascists turned and showered them with bullets, bleeding joy across the gutter. So I hide this gun for help." He slid it down that hollow leg.
>
> "Keep Running", Douglas Jones
> Credenda/Agenda, "A Theology in Stone"
> Vol 11, No. 3
> http://www.credenda.org/archive/

Insurgents strike at a Hegemonio patrol. Thera District, Tsosoe, 993 Imperial.
This graphic is titled "Guerilleros" © Geoffroy Thoorens. Please see his work at
http://www.djahalland.com/en/gallery and http://djahal.cgsociety.org/gallery/711599/

Legal codes: There are effectively two legal codes in Thera District. Both are backed with guns, but when and where differ.

The official **Hegemony** Military Law is quite harsh, bringing the region to law level E: not actually enslaving the population, but bossing them around regularly, while denying them recourse or rights or any compensation for the loss of health, life, property, or dignity. Everyone must carry biometric identification at all times; everyone is restricted in where they can be at any given time; any Tsosoea may be search at any time for any reason, and any article they carry may be taken without compensation. No weapons may be carried by the locals, with 'weapon' defined by the solider on the spot: no appeal is permitted. Any Hegemon soldier or policeman may kill any local for any reason, or for none at all.

Houses are raided 'just because'; and young men are arrested and/or killed 'just because'. Small groups are discouraged, and large groups are broken up. Large family or religious gatherings are now just a memory of the past, and the markets – the only large gatherings still tolerated by the Hegemonio – are constantly patrolled, stalls overturned, money and goods seized 'as they may be a danger to the safety of the public.'

Now, while these are the formal rules of the game, the informal rules are a bit different. The Hegemonio soldiers are tough, heavily armed, and pitiless: but they are outnumbered hundreds, sometimes even thousands, to one. They have a vast number of enemies, and no friends or allies. Most of their enemies are powerless, but some are not, and large numbers have nothing to lose.

The Hegemony has not a single problem with gunning down X number of Betas from air/rafts all day long: but there's always the possibility of an anti-air missile, or a rocket grenade, laser rifle, or ballistic rifle getting a lucky hit. The Hegemony has largely failed in shutting down the underground and dual-use facilities that keep these weapons flowing, and the 'stupid, superstitious locals' are getting mighty smart in observing and countering Hegemony tactics, while reverse-engineering and rebuilding lost Hegemony equipment for their own use.

Moreover, you can't rule massive, impoverished cities from air/rafts and grav belts. You have to get down

there with the locals. Who will be waiting for you, powered armour and all. And the Arzula troops who had the best equipment have been taken off the line: endless violence, day after day after day, and a regular diet of unpleasant surprises and explosions takes its toll on both equipment and manpower.

So, what actually happens now is that the less lavishly equipped Nisagan troopers establish checkpoints, inspection raids, and strong patrols in the most politically and economically important parts of Threa District. The other sectors of the District are patrolled by armoured vehicles and walkers, to flush out enemies which they can then hammer with their superior firepower. The core sectors are always oppressed and the residents tightly supervised all of the time, but the area is also now broadly pacified, with only two or three small street patrols attacked at any given day. The outer sectors are sometimes patrolled in force, and sometimes not. Sometimes every single Beta is inspected for Proper Identification, and sometimes they are simply ignored, if they are not actively shooting at the Hegemony military. This uncertainty helps to drive the insurgents around, preventing them from establishing strongpoints, but it makes life an unpredictable hell for the locals. Not that the Hegemony cares in the slightest, of course.

The field commanders senses that, despite their heavy tempo of operations, the insurgency is building up its strength, either to attack before the main Arzula force is back on the line, or to directly attack while the Arzula are manning their posts. They have no evidence for this: it's just a feeling.

While the Hegemony rules the streets and public activity, the **insurgency** actually rules the people. There are actually multiple insurgencies, of drastically varying effectiveness and popularity, but in general they keep their guns pointed at the Hegemony, instead of each other. In general, these forces provide legal courts, resolve civil disputes, and punish criminal activity according to the mores of the people they spring from. The old Sunni Islamic religious court system was methodically, vigorously, and eagerly eradicated by the Hegemony long, long ago. Remnants of the tribal and customary courts have fused with the insurgency, and are again growing in influence and respect.

(If the Hegemony actually wanted to, they could put in the effort to learn the language and the culture of "Threa District" – actually, more like 15 or so large, unique communities and nations, shoved into a single arbitrary box for the convenience of the masters – then use this knowledge to split the insurgency. But why would they want to do that? That would imply some level of dependence on the Betas, some level of sympathy for the enemy, and the Arzula just don't think that way. When all you have is a hammer…)

The insurgency varies, with a lot of TL 6-7 equipment, used very effectively and maintained at a high level, and a smattering of TL 8-13 material, of varying effectiveness. The most prized equipment are various military grade ECM/ECCM gizmos: they can't break into the Hegemony commo nets, but they can figure out their network structure, the amount of data sent, and sometimes even the nature of the data. Moreover, they can set up their own temporary commo nets and piggyback on Hegemony transmissions. A large boost in the number of TL 8 cell phones and fold-out microwave relay stations brought in by the 'informal Vargr trading network' has opened up new possibilities…

Spotters, runners, low-tech bomb makers, and garage-based armorers are absolutely everywhere. When the Hegemony looks at the masses, all they see are so many interchangeable brown faces babbling incomprehensible sounds, and are dependent on face-recognition software and the mandatory ID cards to identify anyone. On the other hand, quite a lot of insurgents can identify anther Tsosoeans home neighbourhood by their accent and mannerisms. Where the Hegemony sees so many worthless, interchangeable shacks and TL 7 hovels, the insurgency sees brick homes and mobile homes, hospitals and clinics, auto factories and garment districts, mosques and memorials, coffee cafes and hookah cafes, drug labs and pharmacies, auto shops and weapon shops.

Even without cell phones, the more powerful insurgency groups can call up hundreds of armed men with ten minutes' notice. The hardline phones are tapped, of course, but as they have a far better understanding of this technology than the invaders, they remain quite useful to the insurgents. And you'd be surprised how far coloured flags can go, when you know where to look and the Hegemony doesn't. Even shouted commands can do quite well, as a large minority of Hegemony software still can't even detect and interpret the words "open fire" in the local tongues – and if they do, switching to code words and gestures is a snap.

Geological activity: Serious earthquakes remain a danger here. Notable, 5.0+ earthquakes happen 1d6 times a week, a serious 6.0+ earthquakes strikes at least once a month in Thera District, and a whopper 8.0 earthquake hits once a decade or so. Every month, there is a 50% chance of one-to-three volcanic

eruptions as well. Local architecture is built with these conditions in mind: either cheap, light, and easily replaceable walls and roofs, or strong, heavily reinforced, and not too high. The occasional clouds of volcanic ash is dangerous to breathe, but with the heavy rainfall, it helps to refresh a lush and very fertile planet. Most families have filter masks for everyone in the family, plus a few for guests.

"Genocide is the answer."

"Not this time! The Hegemon is not interested in fending off another expulsion resolution [from the Council of Star Nations] and risking our Associated status once again. In any case, he *knows* that we can kill any local world: what he *wants* is a world that is properly broken and usefully taxed."

"What he wants is different from what is doable. We've been playing political games on Tsosoe for almost a generation now, and the price in blood and treasure is higher now than when we started! He should just cauterize this bleeding wound, and be done with it. Her Fussbucket [Regent Harsha] crawled before that collared dog [Archduke Koktso] to 'preserve the peace of all': Lastman Lucky [Hegemon Lorian] should be able to play her like the violence-shy little girl she is."

"We can't just kill our way out of trouble. Not all the time, anyways."

"Oh you Damlaerites, always trying to bargain your way out! Look, you break the locals properly *first*, and *then* you tax-farm your way to a happy ending! The problem here is that the Hegemon thought that the blood-mouths [Suedzuk Vargr] were the only enemy..."

"Can't you just bribe them? Get some puppet-intellectual to demand 'compensation' 'for true racial healing', get them hooked on some welfare checks, bribe the big names with nice titles and nice salaries, and get things calmed down enough to pull out the troops? It's worked on a dozen worlds!"

"We've tried stuffing [Julian] Stars into mouths plenty of times... and each time, they just took the Stars and kept on shooting! The 'welfare' part of the warfare-welfare state isn't getting us anywhere. I think it's time to kick the 'warfare' part into high gear."

Governor Calpurnia
and Political Advisor Carnesîr,
Tsosoe, 127-993 Imperial

(Previous) A Hegemony interstellar troop transport, bringing in an additional 200,000 troops (i.e. a full Hegemonic Army, or two corps, or 20 divisions, or 100 regiments, depending on the military unit you're counting). In this graphic, dated 103-990, the Fourth Nisagan Army is deploying to support the eleven other Armies on Tsosoe. **This graphic is titled "Tanker" © Geoffroy Thoorens. Please see his work at http://www.djahalland.com/en/gallery and http://djahal.cgsociety.org/gallery/765305/**

Among the Marionettes

Getting into Krez Domj District is a lot easier than the heavily-patrolled Trear. If the PCs outfoxed the high-tech surveillance networks and built a useful cover identity (and learn how to look, move, and speak like a real Tsosoea, complete with a passable accent in Tsosoea Arabic) it should be easy enough to simply sail (or stowaway, or hire out as a wetship's workhand) into Krez Domj.

All the rulers here claim to be independent nations, "capable of dealing with the Hegemony as an equal." Har, har. However, their citizens believe it (kinda), and at least the Grey Ones are off the streets. A good-size chunk of the population doesn't believe it, though, and are willing to kill the quislings.

In the old days, they would kill as a religious duty, to fight the infidel oppressor. The Hegemony did a very good job in sniping the religious leadership using air/raft platforms, and dropping missiles into any and all religious gatherings. The Arzula rather enjoyed it, too, often taking the time to broadcast "Allah Akbar!" from the skies after a particularly bloody kill.

And for few years, things really did calm down.

Then the bombings, the explosions, the rocket strikes, the mortaring, the ambushes, and the IEDs showed up again, sure as rain. The fight was much more nationalistic and broad-based, with no particular leader, network, ideology, or bond except relentless hostility to the invaders. There simply wasn't enough troops and warbots available to police *both* the heavily populated Ryia Aldakura and Radul'dwa continents, *and* the endless shorelines and seaside cities of the other continents. So the Arzula 'lost', handed over the territory to the 'true voice of the people', and got the 'victors' hooked on Hegemony money and kick-backs in return for peace, quiet, and a free hand to deal with the majority of the planetary population in the two minor island-continents.

As the PCs mix with the locals and get the real story, this peace can be seen to be slowly fraying. More and more hopelessly corrupt 'People's Army' troops are on the streets... more and more baby-carriages explode in pro-government neighbourhoods... more and more rules and curfews appear daily. By this time, the PCs

are likely to be wanted by the Hegemony, and the so-called Free Nations of Tsosoe have to toe the line, but their heart isn't into it. If the PCs (and their insurgency friends) can provide the Stars for bribes, while guarding against armed robbery from the official and unofficial thieves, they should get though all right. The most dangerous enemy is the rare Hegemony patrol: unless the PCs unwisely stand out like a sore thumb, those patrols are very unlikely to loiter around and take a *really* good look at the disgusting mess of superstitious, faceless, mindless masses of Beta humaniti writhing beneath them.

Note: If a PC is a Vargr, this counts as "standing out like a sore thumb". It is assumed the PCs spend the effort to hide the Vargr: otherwise, the anti-Vargr population and government would report the PCs to the Hegemony themselves. It is a Formidable, Staggering, or Impossible task (See page 4 of this issue) to persuade locals in the know to keep quiet about the Vargr, depending if the locals are friendly, neutral, or hostile to the PCs. Fortunately, most are friendly to Imperial visitors, but there are exceptions…

Environment: These areas are closer to the TL 6 (AD 1950s) in technology than TL 7 (1970s). Colour TV is rare, radio coverage is spotty, and there are a fair number of areas without phone coverage or electricity (or rail, or paved roads…) Due to the large number of earthquakes, volcanic action, and tsunamis, homes are light and mobile. Cities do exist, but are generally built of flimsy materials, including certain types of 'stiff cloth', as well as local woods and soft stone. Newspapers, mail, and black & white 'newsreels' are important if you want to keep up to date.

Women are generally tied to their menfolk, and dress with great modesty; they will avoid male PCs, to protect their honour and reputation. Clans and tribes are important in local politics, with the most important families dominating the national government. The Islamic religion having been smashed flat, racial and kinship networks now shape culture, custom, and business. There is a strong sentiment for attacking the Hegemony, but many locals, fearful of the Hegemon's wrath, would rather avoid antagonising the interstellar government. Conflict between these groups is sporadic, but ongoing.

An Arzula exile, living in isolation in Krez Domi District, Tsosoe. Arzula who cannot fit in to their highly conformist culture, and yet are too valuable to kill, are often cast out to various worlds and settlements within Beta Quadrant. Sometimes, they eventually come to terms with their place in life, and return to Hegemonic civilization. Sometimes, they remain exiles all their lives, working remotely with telecommunication hookups.
This graphic is titled "Exile" © Geoffroy Thoorens. Please see his work at http://www.djahalland.com/en/gallery and http://djahal.cgsociety.org/gallery/770614/

Legal codes: There are a broad variety of legal and customary codes in this part of the woods. Krez Domj District is home to 41 'Sovereign States', 'Republics', and 'Sheikdoms' and 8 'Free cities' and 'Independent ports', as of 001-993 Imperial. The main ones the PCs need to worry about are 'Don't make The Leader look bad, or threaten his power in any way' and 'Don't draw the attention of the Hegemony.' The other ones are avoidable, or negotiable, so long as the pride of the locals is respected. Humiliating someone important is a reliable way to get a vendetta called on you.

Of course, if word gets around about their location, the Hegemony is going to get interested, and there are always informers, willing to fink on the PCs for good money.

Geological activity: Earthquakes remain dangerous in this District, but the volcanoes and tsunamis are more deeply feared. Every day, the PCs will feel a mild earthquake, with the walls shifting a bit and a few things falling from the walls. Every week, there will be a 6.0 or so earthquake in the PCs area, and once or twice a year they will witness an 8.0+ Richter scale monster.

There aren't many tall buildings in the area, and the few antigrav buildings that have survived centuries of war and horror are cared for and maintained in a lavish fashion…

Much of this area resides under the gaze of one volcano chain or another, and sometimes, the volcanoes get nasty. Once to three times a month, the PCs can witness a 'safe eruption': no larva flows or deadly gases heading their way, but keep an eye out for the occasional flaming boulder or wave of hot ash running down the volcano's side. Volcanic bombs are fairly common, with a few flying out of the local volcanoes every few weeks. Every year, there are one to three full-on volcanic eruptions, with superheated air – pyroclastic flows – igniting everything, oceans of invisible gas that can kill a large town, or larva flows that the PCs need to outrace.

If the settlement, town, or a city ward is wiped out, but there are enough survivors, rebuilding will start springing out from the ground, right before the PC's amazed eyes. (The locals have quite a lot of practice doing this, for thousands of years now.) They may pick

a new spot that is absolutely safe... for a decade or so, while the land shifts and groans all around them… Tsunamis are more dangerous, as there is little warning… sometimes no warning… before a 20 to 30 meter wall of water comes along to ruin your life. Fortunately, the topography can be read to determine where the tsunami is most likely to strike and how it will flow, but mistakes have been made before. More importantly, cities want to be close to the water to enjoy the low-cost oceanic transportation. But on this world, ships aren't the only things coming in from the sea…

A young woman, standing on some rocks ejected by the ever-active earth over five years ago. Right now, they are jutting out of a hill: whenever that exact location will be a mountain, a canyon, or a prairie a century from now is anyone's guess. Of even greater importance is the genetically tailored vegetation: the rich volcanic soil and the regular rains help life triumph over the landscape, but the key is the high tolerance the flora has for heated soils and the aftermath of sudden eruptions. As obscure as they are, the Rule of Man-era Bil'nad Al'hyad (بناة الحياة, "Life Builders") deserve respect. **This graphic is titled "Carried by the Wind II" © Artur Rosa. See his work at http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/#/d4y41tb**

Breathing Free Air

Getting inland from the local Krez Domj-controlled shoreline into insurgency-dominated Prant District is rather easy, so long as you avoid the roads. Claims that "All the passes are mined, and all the trailed are watched!" may have been true ten or twenty years ago... maybe. Certainly not now: the mines have been carefully harvested by the insurgents for their explosive material, electronics, and metal content, while most of the watchtowers and firebases were abandoned a long, long time ago.

Officially, the region is sealed off: good-sized, dug-in platoons stop and turn back all vehicles crossing the border... in the daytime. At night, after lining the pockets of the platoon commander and/or the guards at the post, quite a bit of material crosses the border. Still, it's cheaper just to get off the roads and hit the rugged forest or mountain trails with a guide.

Once within the Prant District, the PCs can feel the change in the air. The locals quickly detect that they are foreigners, but as soon as they are reassured that the PCs are Imperials, not from the Hegemony, there are smiles and hospitality all around. However, PC Vargr are banned from entering the region, on pain of death. Given the choice of welcoming the PCs, their 'pet Vargr', and their money, or ejecting all three, the locals will toss the lot.

The Islamic religion may be fading across Tsosoe, but it is extinct within Prant District. All of the old mullahs and religious students, along with their schools, were killed in the vigorous Arzula anti-Islamic purges and mass executions, like everywhere else in Tsosoe. What made the difference *here* was that the believers of the interior of the continents were routinely treated with contempt by the more urban and wealthy Moslems of the world, who were perfectly willing to kill to suppress local interpretations of Islam, and insured that only foreigners could be mullahs. When the Arzula made known their wish to wipe out the religion, the denizens of the interior of the major continents not only pointed out where all the despised mullahs were hiding, but quite happily destroyed/erased all the Islamic literature they could find as well.

Currently, the locals directly worship the world as a living god, able to build up and tear down whatever She wills on the planet. Deified Man missionaries are tolerated, and have a small following: they also act as intermediaries with the Hegemonic government. The local government consists of sometimes squabbling, sometimes feuding clan elders and town mayors. These groups currently reject the Hegemonic government, and occasionally engage in lackadaisical artillery duels and mortar exchanges with not-exactly-enthusiastic soldiers of the pro-Hegemony puppet states. The Hegemony could kill every town and village in the district using fighters, air/rafts and spaceborne weaponry, but is uninterested in doing so, so long as the locals keep out the Muslim planetary insurgency. As a reward for their relatively good behaviour, the Hegemony occasionally permits a few Hegemonio traders (humans only: the locals hate the Vargr) to land and trade near the largest local settlements.

A mere three months after an earthquake, any newly revealed caverns will be covered with the lush green life of the area. **This graphic is titled "Hidden Garden" © Artur Rosa. See his work at http://arthurblue.deviantart.com/gallery/36631310#/d4sbu9b**

Environment: The air tends to stink upon occasion, except when it rains, or during and immediately after a storm. If the PCs choose to sleep outside, and can take the occasional whiff of sulfur, they will find the ground comfortably warm. Don't dig too deep: heated rocks may be what resides below you, but it may also be a underground magma river, or a gaping crevice, or a sealed bubble of poisonous air, waiting to erupt...

(This paragraph is copied from Krez Domj District.)

These areas are closer to the TL 6 (AD 1950s) in technology than TL 7 (1970s). Colour TV is rare, radio coverage is spotty, and there are a fair number of areas without phone coverage or electricity (or rail, or paved roads…) Due to the large number of earthquakes, volcanic action, and tsunamis, homes are light and

mobile. Towns – but not cities – do exist, but are generally built of flimsy materials, including certain types of 'stiff cloth', as well as local woods and soft stone. Newspapers, mail, and black & white 'newsreels' are important if you want to keep up to date.

Women are generally tied to their menfolk, if not their husbands, then their fathers. However, the requirements of modesty have been greatly relaxed, and they can bear arms and travel without male escorts. Like in Krez Domj, clans and tribes are important in local politics, with the most important families dominating the national government. Worship of Mother Tsosoe is widespread, and both theology and some local songs revolve around Her powerful and unpredictable rages.

Internal controversies rage as well, but violence is limited: one-on-one honour duels are much more common than collective wars. Moreover, men only duel other men, and women, other women. Human visitors are allowed to substitute money for blood, due to their ignorance of local customs.

Legal codes: Prant District is thinly populated with a very hearty and self-sufficient people. There legal system is quite old, and has been shaped by the a host of legal influences: even some traces of the Rule of Man and Suedzuk Vargr blood-duel customs can be detected, as well as the far more ancient Sharia' of the Quran. The legal system is Law Level 5: quite mild.

Geological activity: Serious earthquakes are very common here, with a magnitude 6 or 7 earthquakes striking most locals once every few weeks. In many places, the heat of the planet can be felt right on the dirt, with steam rising after a strong rainfall and hot rocks, dimly glowing red, found after digging just a few meters. There are a few volcanoes, but more common and more dangerous are cracked badlands, with magma simply bursting out of the ground along with dangerous eruptions of magma, explosive eruptions, or solid volcanic blocks blasting into the air. Cracks in the land has been known to form in seconds, and expanding for miles, creating canyons or sinkholes or cliffs that last for weeks or centuries, depending on the whim of the hopelessly shattered tectonic 'plates'.

Getting Off-World

Having got the information they came for, the PCs need to get back to Imperial space. If they have angered the local Hegemonic government by 'interfering with local affairs', it will be very difficult to get to their starship without capture. If captured, they will – at best – held for years, until the Imperium finally gets around to freeing their Noble and his companions: their audio-visual records will be lost, and they will have to tell their story only with words, storyboards, and re-enactments. They may well be imprisoned for life. If they had actually shot at or killed Hegemonic military forces, they will be executed as armed combatants, and Imperial/Hegemony relations will go into the deep freeze.
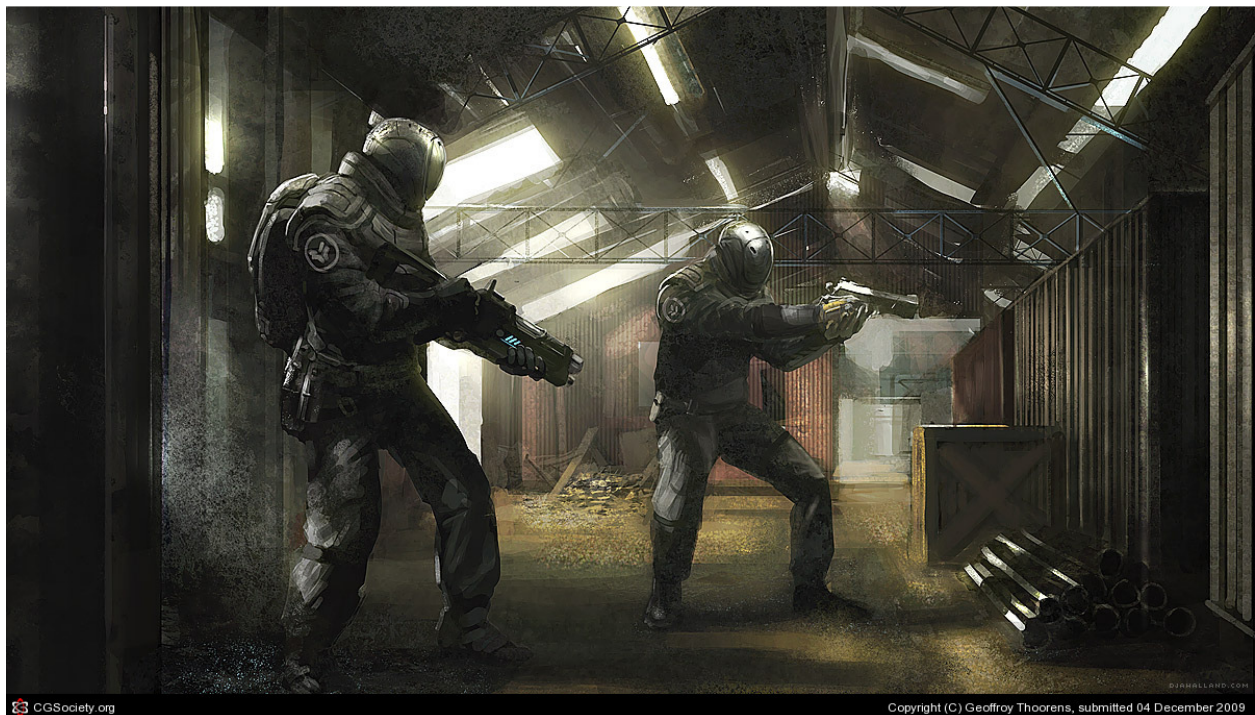
(If a PC is an Imperial spy, he is expected to make sure that this failure in the Imperial/Hegemony relationship does not happen. The Emperor would prefer that the Baronet not be killed, though, unless there is no other way to prevent a diplomatic disaster from happening. Merely betraying him to the Hegemonic authorities is sufficient. For anti-pirate purposes, it would be really nice to get the *Edrab Alfda'* back in Imperial space – and if it proves necessary to simply leave the Baronet behind, then so be it.)

If the PCs can get to their starship – by not investigating aggressively, by deception, by playing very good political games, or by mounting a difficult assault on the starport (which is set deep in Arzula-secured territory, if you recall), they then need to get to the 100-diameter point to execute a safe jump.

Tsosoe is a military theatre, and there are always 1d6 Nightwatch-class corvettes and 1d6+4 Turcap aerospace fighters which can be immediately sent to intercept the PCs: it will be difficult to evade them all if the PCs are making an unsanctioned run for the jumppoint. But with a TL E ship with Agility 1, they do have a decent chance of pulling it off – if they have a

hotshot pilot, and put that Emergency Agility to use. It would be better to head out without everyone shooting at you, of course.

With a jump4 starship, the PCs should be able to outrun news of their escape and orders for their recapture, if they don't dwaddle. They should be moving immediately to Virgil, then Ghothu, then Khinisidaa, to successfully outrun news of their flight and escape the Hegemony. Going the other way, to Suedsuk-dominated Ssilnthis space, is unwise: the PCs have a hot ship, but there are quite a number of Suedzuk pirate packs here who also got their paws on high-tech warships 'somehow', and would *love* to add to their collection.

It is tempting to go to Kharo in their first jump, then surrender to Julian authorities instead of the Hegemony. Things get diplomatically interesting if that route is chosen. It is likely that the PCs will be allowed to leave, but only after they (…or the Imperium…) cut a deal with the Hegemony and the Protectorate. Otherwise, they may well remain as respected guests on the Star Legion military base for the rest of their lives.

On Tokitre

After leaving the Hegemony – in peace, by stealth, or in headlong flight – it's only a single jump4 from Khinisdaa to Tokitre. Tokitre has been described elsewhere – see **Stellar Reaches** #19, page 32, for references. For the lazy, just think "desert-dwelling Catholic Poles, with aristocrats and laser pistols" and you're OK.

Baronet Mohammad will spend the week around startown, talking with Brotherhood operatives, handlers, and moneymen, so the PCs are free to wander around and get into fistfights about religion... or drink it up, far from the wagging fingers of most of their fellow believers... or look into the local situation of the few Moslems on the world, mainly traders and fellow travellers like themselves.

The biggest news at the time of the PCs arrival is the prepared departure of a major expedition of Imperial Vargr to "Psychopath Sector", a.k.a. Ktiin'gzat Sector. Human crews sent to that blood-splattered region don't come back, and only since the post-Civil War era, when Vargr were permitted to crew exclusively Vargr starships and scouting expeditions, has a trickle of sporadic and fragmented information began to be gained from that bleeding edge of Charted Space. "*One* returning ship out of 30 is FAR better than *zero* returning ships. *Let's celebrate!*"

The planet's talking heads are up in debates on the local Imperial Vargr, prepared to die for a largely human empire. The locals revere the Imperium, and despise the Vargr, so the clashes of opinion are quite vigorous. Are they heroes? Useful tools for humaniti? Will they betray the Imperium within the more pro-Vargr Julian Protectorate? Will they lead the savage Vargr of Killin' Sector in a massive cannibal invasion of the sacred worlds of the Imperium?

(Local ideals – on the Vargr, especially – tend to be hyper dramatic and overwrought...)

The IISS Mission Leader of the Wolf's Head Expedition, the Gvegh Vargr Aeneerngaegh, insists that he does *not* have a bank of frozen humans to use as trade meats and livestock for free passage into the Hezeraek Connective, the new government that has grown to dominate the region using means best not discussed publicly. His main vessel, the *Galchobhar*, does bear

ample amounts of Terran meats and genetic seed that are highly valued in that region of space.

The 744 crewvargr of the *Galchobhar*, a Imperialis Eie-class surveyor detailed in **Stellar Reaches** #14, page 44-45, are an uneasy lot. Normally, sailors sailing into near-certain death either wildly party at their last save port of call, or retreat into monastic devotions. These Vargr can't party much in an anti-Vargr world, and the Vargr don't do monasticism very well. So what is left, but sports, drinking, and infighting to work off the tension? Of course, these are Imperial Vargr with the typical geeky, off-beat bend of the Scouts, so they aren't much given to exuberant behaviour.

Cowards they are not: first because they are Scouts – you have seen the casualty rates for this service, yes? – and second, because they are volunteers for this mission. (And third, cowards *lose* charisma!) But they are not given to wild behaviour. Instead, they are given to wild curiosity, and many are quite curious about the interesting history of this strategically crucial, Vargr-loathing world. The Scout team leaders have to keep an eye on things, less that 744 headcount shrinks a bit before they even get off-world…

If the PCs somehow get aboard, they will see that the ship's interior has been redecorated in a bizarre mix of Ancient Celtic and Interstellar Baroque Vargr patterns, fit for the glaringly colour-blind. (See http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204349404578100942150867894.html for more on colour-blindness, including tests and suchlike). The PCs will not be able to join the ship's crew: but – after doing their duty to Allah and Brotherhood – they just might be able to join the expedition fleet as "auxiliary escorts".

As a jump3 vessel, the *Galchobhar* will be spending about five months travelling through the heart of the Julian Protectorate with a Star Legion escort 'for her own protection'. Soon after, she will be entering Suedzuk space, where she plans to spend the next five years scouting.

 In another circumstance – or with a different PC group – this would be quite an adventure. But with *this* PC group, in *this* adventure, it would be a dereliction of duty: once again, the folks back home could really use their ship against the pirates, and they are trusting that the PCs will keep their word and return after checking out Tsosoe.

Appendix: Catastrophic Success

Some PCs desire significance, rather than money or killing. This is one flow chart to give it to them...

1) The Hegemony is run on a National-Socialist economic system, which means that it is massively inefficient, broadly corrupt, and dependent on a huge black market to get anything done.

2) By "Black Market", I mean Irilitok/Hegemonic Vargr, whose scrounging skills and fast'n'loose attitude with the law, combined with the perception that they are no threat to man, have made them very, very rich.

3) Combined, there has to be some mutually-profitable way to get some high-tech weaponry past the guards and the patrols, into the hands that eagerly await them.

   a. For extra help, recall that Justice's new rules are Vargr, who defeated a human government, and did NOT have his world toasted from orbit. I wonder why (besides deft politicking and astute deal-making, of course)...

4) Let the Players win, and, after some difficult fighting, drive out the Hegemony from the world.

5) THEN, let it be known that "The Imperium" was behind this change of government. (Actually, just a renegade Imperial Baronet whose way too close to the Muslim Brotherhood, '...but that's just details!'

6) See how long it takes before the Hegemony starts to get a little vengeance back, stirring up big trouble in the Six Subsectors...

7) Watch as serious numbers of Suedzuk pirates, mysteriously able to cross Hegemony space without interference and with a remarkable upgrade in technology, turns the Six Subsectors into a living hell.

8) The Emperor gets to hustle and redeploy forces to the Quarter from Antares, weakening the Antares Fleet...

9) ...which is exactly what the Protectorate was waiting for, setting off the Second Julian War.

10) At this point, Emperor Gavin, Archduke Koktso, Sector Duke ~~Death~~ Dethwabtakebwebwakawa, and Regent Harsha all *desperately* want a word with the PCs. In private. With a sharp, blunt, or explosive instrument, depending on personal taste....

11) ...but not if SolSec can get to them first. These PCs have just won the Solomani Rim War for the Race, and – if they can survive the long journey to the Solomani Sphere – entire worlds will be given to them. The entire Ummah would be bursting with pride, the names would become legendary within the rolls of the Brotherhood, and the Baronet would be a shoe-in for the next Secretary General.

Appendix: Kikhushegi clergy

Vilani woman must spend their early years raising their children, but afterwards they have about 90-100 years to develop their religiosity. Vilani women have long been involved with food preparation, and are the typical *shugilii* (ritual food-preparers) in standard Vilani ritual religious systems. In Kikhushegi, these women are the religious consensus-builders and belief-conservers, and define what right action is. Religious men enforce their decisions, and punish those who defame the religion. Both men and women – typically married couples – work together to spread the religion far and wide throughout the human worlds, and work with the priests of the Shirga Mysteries to spread a closely-allied form of monotheism among nonhuman sophonts.

Sexuality is rather more constrained in Kikhushegi than in most Vilani religions, with public shaming or violence meted out for transgressions. Traditional Islamic teachings of modesty are intertwined with the extra clothing high-caste Vilani wear: being wealthy, being righteous, being obedient to community morality, and being holy are all tied very closely together in Kikhushegi thinking.

Appendix: Your Way or the Official Way?

If you take a look at "Population Shifts in the Empty Quarter, 993 to 1105" article in **Stellar Reaches** #18, page 73, it looks like a good bet that the Hegemony finally tired of the local hostilities, wiped out the population (excluding Wresnya District, and perhaps sparing Prant District as well), and repopulated it with a loyalist population: Arzula settlers certainly, and maybe some Damlaerites. Even some Nisagans, if they provided outstanding service to the Hegemon.

This isn't a certainty, though, but looking at the numbers, it's the way to bet.

Or, maybe, it's time to ignore the Official Traveller Universe, and let the good guys win

Appendix: The Hand-Written Letters

Referee: this letter was actually written in long-hand, and physically mailed to the address on the world of Tsosoe, on a journey involving 86 parsecs. Even more miraculously, a return letter was actually received: unlikely enough in a universe where pirates and trade wars always lurk, but a phenomenon when it comes from the blood-soaked Spark Worlds.

12 Ragheb Street, El Aliaj
Ferozepur Highlands,
Pakistan/Cirqa/Fornast
Domain of Sylea
Third Imperium

Jumada I 28, 4786[36] [**Referee**: 331-752 Imperial]

Kinsman Babur!

Let me introduce myself, dear friend. I am Qaval, I am 12 years old. I like birds and flying griss [Referee: common pet 'living stone' in Fornast]. I hope that you like them too!

Father says that you are a good friend who lives far way. He says that you have many children, who would like a friend from faw away. I would like to play swarr with them. [**Referee**: Swarr was a popular "board & ball game" at the time.]

Here is a picture of my pet fish. Aren't they pretty?

Write soon,
 Qaval.

956.08.794 Ring C3
Tefect, Dept. Ureva,
Arymn Postal Union
The Free Nations of Tsosoe

Safar 14, 4788 [**Referee**: 208-754 Imperial]

Inshallah, little Qaval!

I'm glad that I made a friend from a distant star!

Sorry that my brothers and sisters can't write a reply: they all left after the divorce, and I haven't seen them in ages. It's just me and Papa now.

By the time you get this letter, you might be in Adult Training, or maybe in First Medical School. I'm in Space Construction myself, leading a team of Blood Vargr fixing up satellites and such. Everybody thinks that I'm so brave to work with them, but praise Allah they are much more interested in the job than in my skinny bones!

I can't understand much of what they say, and only one can speak T-Arabic so I can understand it. I guess I would be scared out of my V-suit if I could understand what they say behind my back! But really, they're all right: always on the ball, never a screw up.

I am returning your letter back to you, along with this note and a print out of me and the workgang. I got them to each give you a scratch-pad, believe it or not!

Come up and visit sometime!
 Marlof

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[36] The Imperial Office of Calendar Compliance doesn't bother to vet private letters.

Appendix: Starships

The ships below were designed (or were provided with) Andrew Vallance's High Guard Shipyard Version 2.0 (Alpha).

```
Ship: Edrab Alfda'             Class: Timewinds
Type: Armed Yacht              Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 14


USP
       AK-3642681-140000-40000-0 MCr 328.878    300 Tons
Bat Bear           1    2      Crew: 9          Agility 1
Bat                1    2      TL: 14           138 Fuel


Cargo: 6 Tons     Passengers: 3    Emergency Low: 3 EP: 18
Craft: 1 x 2T Air/Raft
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification


Architects Fee: MCr 3.289   Cost in Quantity: MCr 263.102


High Guard Design
```

HULL: 300 tons, 4,200 cubic meters, Flattened Sphere Configuration
CREW: Pilot, Navigator, 2 Engineers, Steward, Medic, 3 Gunners
ENGINEERING: Jump-4, 2G Maneuver, Power plant-6, 18 EP, Agility 1
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/8 Computer
HARDPOINTS: 3 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
2 Triple Beam Laser Turrets organized into 2 Batteries (Factor-4)
DEFENSES:
1 Triple Sandcaster Turret organized into 1 Battery (Factor-4),
Armoured Hull (Factor-1)
CRAFT:1x 2-ton Air/Raft (Crew of 0)
FUEL:
138 Tons Fuel (4 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
10 Staterooms, 2 Low Berths, 3 Emergency Low Berths,
1 High Passenger, 2 Middle Passengers, 6 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 332.167 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 3.289),
MCr 263.102 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 71 Weeks Singly, 57 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
This is a very wealthy adventurer's yacht, designed to travel far, fight hard, and return to live the tale. Unlike most yachts – which assume a safe environment and place a premium on comfort – the Timewinds class assumed an unpleasant interstellar environment, such as that found in the Vargr Extents or today's Six Subsectors.

The high passengers' room (a double cabin) is for the Baronet, and the two passenger rooms are for his use as well: one for the Valet/Personal Secretary, and the other for the highly trained bodyguard. The remaining six cabins are divided as follows:
```
Captain (and Pilot)-1       Navigator-1      Senior Engineer-1
One Medic, One Steward-1     Two gunners-1    One Gunner, One Engineer-1
```

The ship is a gift from House Metawea to the Muslim Brotherhood. A family that can afford to give away over 300 million credits is not to be trifled with – never mind the donation of a few billion credits to finance the construction of the Cairo Complex on Ababat.

Within the Empty Quarter, the Edrab Alfda' doubles quite nicely as a minor warship. Her armour and high level of computational power, coupled with her excellent jump rating, would make her a key asset in taking back the starlanes – and establish some nice Islamic bragging rights in the tribal-minded Quarter verses the soulless Bwaps and the heretic Lazisari. But the ship came with a condition attached: if the Metawea family desires, the ship must be places at their disposal when the family is in the Six Subsectors.

The Baronet of the family initially planned to go on Haji to Mecca with a jump-5 family starship, but the Rim War interfered. So instead, he wanted to see Hebrin and Tsosoe instead. The local Brotherhood was able to foist a less valuable ship for his use within Imperial space; but now he demands the Edrab Alfda' to cross the Lesser Rift, and the Brotherhood can't deny the ship to such a generous friend…

■■■

Ships: Sareshnig, Giish   Class: Roivalk
Type: Destroyer   Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 14

USP
        DD-C6459G3-052200-50505-0 MCr 2,922.278   3 KTons
Bat Bear   1   1 1 1 Crew: 48   Agility 5
Bat   1   1 1 1 TL: 14   1470 Fuel

Cargo: 44 Tons Crew Sections: 3 of 16 EP: 270 Shipboard Security Detail: 3
Craft: 1 x 50T Modular Cutter
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification

Architects Fee: MCr 29.223   Cost in Quantity: MCr 2,337.822

High Guard Design

HULL: 3,000 tons, 42,000 cubic meters, Flattened Sphere Configuration
CREW: 14 Officers, 34 Ratings
Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings; Engineering: 2 officers and 10 ratings;
Gunnery: 2 officers and 12 ratings; Flight: 1 officer;
Service: 1 officer and 5 ratings;   Medical Section: 1 officer;
Three ship's troops, treated as ratings.

ENGINEERING: Jump-4, 5G Maneuver, Power plant-9, 270 EP, Agility 5
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/7fib Computer
HARDPOINTS: 1 50-ton bay, 9 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
1 50-ton Particle Accelerator Bay (Factor-5),
5 Triple Missile Turrets organized into 1 Battery (Factor-5),
2 Triple Beam Laser Turrets organized into 1 Battery (Factor-5)
DEFENSES:
2 Triple Sandcaster Turrets organized into 1 Battery (Factor-5),
Nuclear Damper (Factor-2),
Meson Screen (Factor-2)
CRAFT: 1 50-ton Modular Cutter (Crew of 0)
FUEL: 1,470 Tons Fuel (4 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant

MISCELLANEOUS: 10 Staterooms, 44 Tons Cargo (100 tons wasted space)
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST: MCr 2,951.501 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 29.223),
MCr 2,337.822 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 139 Weeks Singly, 111 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
This is a hideously designed warship, as discussed by the Traveller's Aide
Book #7, Fighting Ships, page 37. It was designed to be an all-rounder, but
failed for a variety of reasons, including bad missile feeds, overlarge
missile storage, and insufficient bunkage. Don't build ships like this!

Of course, these ships are a major part of the Empty Quarter Sector Fleet.

▪▪▪

Ship: Endurance Trap   Class: Nightwatch
Type: Corvette   Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12

USP
        LL-A423322-A00000-30008-0 MCr 1,830.032   1.5 KTons
Bat Bear   2   1   Crew: 28   Agility 2
Bat   2   1   TL: 12   480 Fuel
                                                        Pulse Lasers

Cargo: 13 Crew Sections: 2 of 14   EP: 45   Shipboard Security Detail: 2
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 1 x 2G Maneuver Drive 1 x Jump 2 Drive 1 x Factor 2 Power Plant
3 x Model/2 Computers

Architects Fee: MCr 18.300   Cost in Quantity: MCr 1,464.026

High Guard Design

HULL: 1,500 tons standard, 21,000 cubic meters,
Close Structure Configuration
CREW: 11 Officers, 17 Ratings
Book 5 Crew Breakdown
Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings; Engineering: 1 officer and 5 ratings;
Gunnery: 1 officer and 4 ratings;   Service: 1 officers and 2 ratings;
Medical: 1 officer;   Security: 2 troops, counted as ratings

ENGINEERING:
Jump-2, 3G Manuever, Power plant-3, 45.000 EP, Agility 2
1x Jump-2 Backup, 1x 2G Manuever Backup, 1x Power plant-2 Backup
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/2 Computer; 3x Model/2 Backup Computers
HARDPOINTS: 1 50-ton bay, 5 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
1 50-ton Missile Bay (Factor-8),
5 Triple Pulse Laser Turrets organized into 2 Batteries (Factor-3)
DEFENSES:
Armoured Hull (Factor-10)
CRAFT: None
FUEL:
480 Tons Fuel (2 parsecs jump and 112 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS: 17 Staterooms, 13 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None

COST:
MCr 1,848.332 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 18.300),
MCr 1,464.026 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME:
127 Weeks Singly, 102 Weeks in Quantity

COMMENTS:
(From Stellar Reaches #9, page 56-57)
The Nightwatch class of starships is designed by the Hegemony
Naval Board for maximum length of time on-station, operating far from
reliable support. The ship is heavily armored and with numerous redundant
systems. Sufficient life support is provided to run the Nightwatch for 112
days. To save space, no small craft is provided. If using the backup power
plant and maneuver drive, Agility is reduced to 1.

▪▪

Ship: 'Head-Cracker'   Class: Turcap
Type: Fighter   Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 12

USP
        F-0506A11-100000-03000-0 MCr 32.425   25 Tons
Bat Bear   1   Crew: 1   Agility 6
Bat   1   TL: 12   2.5 Fuel

Cargo: 0.25 Tons EP: 2.5
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops
Backups: 1 x Model/1 Computer

Architects Fee: MCr 0.324   Cost in Quantity: MCr 25.940

High Guard Design

HULL: 25 tons standard, 350 cubic meters, Sphere Configuration
CREW: 1 Officer
ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 6G Manuever, Power plant-10, 2.5 EP, Agility 6
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/1 Computer; 1 Model/1 Backup Computer
HARDPOINTS: 1 Hardpoint
ARMAMENT:
1 Single Plasma Gun Turret organized into 1 Battery (Factor-3)
DEFENSES:
Armoured Hull (Factor-1)
CRAFT: None
FUEL:
2.5 Tons Fuel (28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
1 Acceleration Couch/Fold-out bed, 0.250 Ton Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 32.749 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 0.324),
MCr 25.940 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 13 Weeks Singly, 11 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:(From Stellar Reaches #9, page 57)
The Turcap is a Plasma-based fighter, in use within the Hegemony of
Lorean.

Hegemony Motherships, Justince System, 989 Imperial
The graphic is titled "Mother Ship" © KKohji. See his work at
http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=1531471

```
Ship: Caudivzyi                      Class: Nysoviav
Type: Base Ship                      Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 13


USP
       AK-V6313GZ-093307-38809-0 MCr 242,699.200     500 KTons
Bat Bear          8   G YX8 Y  Crew: 12372           Agility 0
Bat               G   Y XWG X  TL: 13                180,000 Fuel
                                                     Pulse Lasers


Cargo: 11,578 Tons Passengers: 52 Crew Sections: 500 of 25 EP: 15,000
Shipboard Security Detail: 500
Craft: 500 x 50T Troop Transports, 100 x 100T Heavy Transports
```

Fuel Treatment: On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 2 x Model/7fib Computers 1 x Factor 3 Nuclear Damper 1 x Factor 3
Meson Screen
Substitutions: W = 128 X = 64 Y = 32 Z = 500

Architects Fee: MCr 2,426.992   Cost in Quantity: MCr 194,159.360

High Guard Design

HULL: 500,000 tons, 7,000,000 cubic meters,
Flattened Sphere Configuration
CREW: 259 Officers, 12113 Ratings
Command: 25 officers and 225 ratings;
Engineering: 60 officers and 540 ratings;
Gunnery: 57 officers and 512 ratings;
Flight: 1 officers and 1400 ratings;
Service: 100 officers and 900 ratings;
Medical: 16 officers and 36 ratings
Ships' Troops: 500, counted as ratings

ENGINEERING:
Jump-3, 1G Maneuver, Power plant-3, 15,000.000 EP, Agility 0
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/7fib Computer, 2 Model/7fib Backup Computers
HARDPOINTS:
112 100-ton bays, 128 50-ton bays, 224 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
16x 100-ton Particle Accelerator Bays (Factor-8),
64x 100-ton Missile Bays (Factor-9),
128x 50-ton Fusion Gun Bays (Factor-8),
64x Triple Pulse Laser Turrets organized into 64 Batteries (Factor-3)
DEFENSES:
32 100-ton Repulsor Bays (Factor-7),
160 Triple Sandcaster Turrets organized into 16 Batteries (Factor-9),
Nuclear Damper (Factor-3),
Meson Screen (Factor-3)
1x Nuclear Damper Backup (Factor-3),
1x Meson Screen Backup (Factor-3)
CRAFT:
500x 50-ton Troop Transports (Crew of 2),
100x 100-ton Heavy Transports (Crew of 2)
FUEL:
180,000 Tons Fuel (3 parsecs jump and 56 days endurance)
No Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
6,241 Staterooms, 2 High Passengers, 50 Middle Passengers, 11,578 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS:
8 Repair Bay/Docks
(each 20,000 tons, Crew 1000, 400 Energy Points, Cost MCr 1,000.000)
COST:
MCr 245,126.192 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 2,426.992),
MCr 194,159.360 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME:
228 Weeks Singly, 182 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
These mammoth motherships are not particularly amazing, once you get past the
sheer size of the things. They bare no spinal weaponry, and are unarmored.
They have plenty of small craft, but lack the marines to use them all.

What is key to these ships are the jump drives, coupled with the ample cargo and the massive repair bays/docks. Each of the eight semi-automated docks were able to act as repair and overhaul stations for 2000 dtons of craft at any one time, working round the clock to keep the patrol ships up and running. Keeping the patrol ships and skirmishers up was crucial in restricting the Vargr's raiding and scouting abilities, and gave space for the Hegemony to build up and deploy offensive and strike forces without endless worrying about Suedzuk flanking maneuvers.

Moreover, in ground operations ground and dual/environment units could use the motherships as desperately needed rally and resupply points. In essence, these ships were the mobile "safe zones" that the Vargr couldn't infiltrate or assault easily, secure areas that were practically impossible to establish on the ground.

Finally, the Nysoviav-class could act as troop transports in a pinch, converting 10,000 tons of its storage space to house 5000 troops. This was crucial in the last years of the Blighted War, where the rapid withdrawal and redeployment of troops managed to keep the grim retreat from the frontier from turning to a full-scale rout and slaughter. The genuine likelihood of survival – if you could just hold on long enough – kept more than one decimated Hegemonio army from complete disintegration.

In 993, a single base ship of this class – usually the Caudivzyi – make regular patrols within Beta Quadrant. The Caudivzyi provides succor for Star Legion and Hegemonio ships alike. Despite her non-existent armour and poor agility, the level of her weaponry and defenses makes her an unbeatable opponent for the 400-ton, TL B Suedzuk pirates that still lurk within the Hegemony, and a real handful for the TL D-E warships that are known to be in the hands of certain packs hunting within the Ssilnthis Gap.

▪▪

Ship: Accumsan   Class: Oricus
Type: Base Ship   Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 13

USP
        AB-T6314GZ-493300-308P9-L MCr 192,506.330   300 KTons
Bat Bear   Q   Y X1X   Crew: 7328   Agility 0
Bat   W   V U1U   TL: 13   102,000 Fuel
                                                    Pulse Lasers

Cargo: 10,485 Tons   Crew Sections: 300 of 25   EP: 12,000
Shipboard Security Detail: 300; Marines: 4000
Drop Capsules: 30 (plus 500 Ready 2000 Stored) Pulse Lasers
(Fitted as Flagship: Accommodation for an Admiral and ten staff members)
Craft: 6 x 5000T Battle Riders, 200 x 50T Fighters,
100 x 50T Troop Transports, 20 x 200T Heavy Transports, 1x 20T Launch Tube
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 2 x Model/7fib Computers 2 x Bridges 1 x Factor 3
Nuclear Damper 1 x Factor 3 Meson Screen
Substitutions: U = 100 V = 200 W = 40 X = 60 Y = 120 Z = 300

Architects Fee: MCr 1,925.063   Cost in Quantity: MCr 154,005.064

High Guard Design

HULL: 300,000 tons, 4,200,000 cubic meters, Flattened Sphere Configuration
CREW: 202 Officers, 2926 Ratings, 200 Pilots, 4000 Marines

Command: 15 officers and 135 ratings;
Engineering: 42 officers and 378 ratings;
Gunnery: 73 officers and 656 ratings;
Flight: 2 officers, 200 pilots and 896 ratings;
Service: 60 officers and 540 ratings;
Medical: 10 officers and 21 ratings;
Ship's Troops: 300, counted as ratings;
Marines: 4000

ENGINEERING: Jump-3, 1G Maneuver, Power plant-4, 12,000 EP, Agility 0
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/7fib Computer
Fitted as Flagship: Includes accommodation for one Admiral and ten staff
2x Backup Bridges, 2x Model/7fib Backup Computers
HARDPOINTS: Spinal Mount, 200 100-ton bays, 600 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
Meson Gun Spinal Mount (Factor-P),
100x 100-ton Particle Accelerator Bays (Factor-8),
100x 100-ton Missile Bays (Factor-9),
200x Triple Pulse Laser Turrets organized into 200 Batteries (Factor-3)
DEFENSES:
400 Triple Sandcaster Turrets organized into 40 Batteries (Factor-9),
Nuclear Damper (Factor-3),
Meson Screen (Factor-3),
Armoured Hull (Factor-4)
1x Nuclear Damper Backup (Factor-3),
1x Meson Screen Backup (Factor-3)
CRAFT:
6x 5,000-ton Battle Riders (Crew of 89),
200x 50-ton Fighters (Crew of 1),
100x 50-ton Troop Transports (Crew of 2),
20x 200-ton Heavy Transports (Crew of 2),
1x 20.000 ton Launch Tube
FUEL:
102,000 Tons Fuel (3 parsecs jump and 28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
3,674 Staterooms,
30 Drop Capsule Launchers with 500 Ready Capsules and 2000 Stored Capsules,
10,485 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 194,431.393 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 1,925.063),
MCr 154,005.064 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 219 Weeks Singly, 175 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
These are the six-spoked version of the legendary eight-spoked Nysociav Base
Ship. Unlike the Nysociav Base Ship – which is all about mobile
infrastructure and support – the Oricus is all about sharp, glittering teeth.

As of 993, this ship – and her sisters, the Tortorum and the Evincte, are
what keep the local systems in line. If necessary, each ship could go take on
the three most powerful worlds in the Hegemony in the quadrant, and burn it
to ash all on their lonesome. Such an action hasn't been necessary in over 50
years: instead, the Base Ship and her group of battle riders clear out local
space, and her compliment of marines secure the starport. Soon enough, large
numbers of Hegemonio troop transports arrive in orbit, permitting a gentler
pacification of the planet. For Hegemonio definitions of 'gentle'.

All three vessels combined make up a Hegemonio Pacification Group. A HPG hasn't been needed since the Era of Horror, over 120 years ago.

The vessel has ample amounts of cargo room, to comfortably supply her marines for as long as necessary. If instead pure numbers of soldiers are the goal, an additional two regiments of 2,000 men each can be borne in the cargo hold, with some room to spare for extra ammo and equipment.

As the reader might suspect, the Oricus class is older than she looks. At TL 13, she's better than most anything made locally, but she is, in some sense, a well-armed and fully operational relic of another era. Dozens of similar motherships were used in the Blighted War against the Suedzuk Vargr packs of Arzul. The sheer effort of producing, manning, and maintaining this huge military fleet came very close to crushing the Hegemony.

When the average Beta sees these ships, his teeth clenches in hatred. When an Imperial or a Julian citizen watches them, he is in awe of their power, their majesty, and their might. But when an Arzula sees them, his heart twists in pride and grief. He can see what others can't.

As it is, these are actually second-line ships now. Dalmaer, the capital of the Hegemony of Lorean, is at TL 14 now, but half her warships serve the Star Legion (with broadly Hegemonic crews), and the other half either are in the Strategic Reserves (should the Imperium strike again) or guard the border systems in Arzul sector, watching the untamed Vargr worlds, worlds that stare coldly back across the void. There is little trade here, little real piracy. Only knives in the dark, shattered cities, relentless civil preparedness drills. Still, the situation is better than it was even a generation ago: the Suedzuk neighbours are no longer united in their hatred of humaniti, and the last of their multisystem governments dissolved into infighting 10 years ago. The Arzula Fleet can breathe a little easier now.

Instead of massive motherships, more flexible fleet tenders are used in most of today's Hegemony, centred on one to four ships of 5000-20000 tons that maintain the small and medium patrollers. This philosophy was developed during the Blighted War, where the Suedzuk shredded stationary naval bases, but had difficulty handling mobile maintenance units. But in Beta Quadrant, the Oricus-class starships are more than able to handle maintenance for the all Hegemonio starships in the region, with their own maintenance done at the Star Legion naval base at Kfarror.

■■■

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Ship: Veniam                        Class: Aliquipsan
Type: Battle Rider                  Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 13

USP
        BR-E6049G5-D00100-30030-0 MCr 6,174.530      5 KTons
Bat Bear                     W  1    Crew: 89         Agility 2
Bat                          W  1    TL: 13           1450 Fuel
                                                      Pulse Lasers


Cargo: 63 Tons Crew Sections: 5 of 18    EP: 450    Shipboard Security: 5
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification
Backups: 2 x Model/7fib Computers 1 x Bridge
Substitutions: U = 100 V = 200 W = 40 X = 60 Y = 120 Z = 300


Architects Fee: MCr 61.745   Cost in Quantity: MCr 4,939.624
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High Guard Design

HULL: 5,000 tons, 70,000 cubic meters, Flattened Sphere Configuration
CREW:
16 Officers, 73 Ratings
Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings; Engineering: 2 officers and 13 ratings;
Gunnery: 5 officers and 42 ratings; Service: 1 officer and 9 ratings;
Medical: 1 officer   Five Troopers, counted as ratings

ENGINEERING:
Jump-0, 4G Maneuver, Power plant-9, 450 EP, Agility 2
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/7fib Computer;
1x Backup Bridge, 2x Model/7fib Backup Computers
HARDPOINTS: 1x 100-ton bay, 40 Hardpoints
ARMAMENT:
1 100-ton Meson Bay (Factor-3),
40 Triple Pulse Laser Turrets organized into 40 Batteries (Factor-3)
DEFENSES:
Nuclear Damper (Factor-1),
Armoured Hull (Factor-13)
CRAFT: None
FUEL:
1,450 Tons Fuel (28 days endurance, plus 1,000 tons of additional fuel)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS: 47 Staterooms, 63 Tons Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 6,236.275 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 61.745),
MCr 4,939.624 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 148 Weeks Singly, 118 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
Unlike the base ship, the Aliquipsan-class battle rider is primarily designed
to destroy large numbers of small craft. In the final phases of the Blighted
War, the Suedzuk would often flood the battlezone with large amounts of small
craft, with successful boarders detonating nuclear or even antimatter
explosives in critical areas of the major capital ships. The Meson cannon was
meant to deal with the heavily armoured and shielded vessels that the Suedzuk
used to co-ordinate a "jump net" containing hundreds, even thousands, of
these small, cheap, but very fast and agile vessels.

In a pinch, these ships can be used as make-do fuel ships, when the main base
ships cannot or should not conduct refueling operations herself. With 1000
tons of extra fuel capacity, the Aliquipsan-class ship can fill up the 90,000
tons a Oricus-class base ship needs to pull a jump-3 in 90 cycles; a group of
six can do it in 15 cycles; and if all you need is a jump1 to get out of the
area quickly, then a group of six Aliquipsans can pull it off in only five
cycles.

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Ship: H-45                            Class: Feugiat
Type: Fighter                         Architect: Alvin Plummer
Tech Level: 13


USP
        AK-0106D41-000000-04000-0 MCr 81.555   50 Tons
Bat Bear                      1      Crew: 1      Agility 5
Bat                           1      TL: 13       6.5 Fuel


Cargo: 0.5 Tons    EP: 6.5
Fuel Treatment: Fuel Scoops and On Board Fuel Purification


Architects Fee: MCr 0.816   Cost in Quantity: MCr 65.244
Detailed Description
High Guard Design


HULL: 50 tons, 700 cubic meters, Needle/Wedge Configuration
CREW: 1 Officer
ENGINEERING: Jump-0, 6G Maneuver, Power plant-13, 6.5 EP, Agility 5
AVIONICS: Bridge, Model/4 Computer
HARDPOINTS: 1 Hardpoint
ARMAMENT: 1 Single Fusion Gun Turret organized into 1 Battery (Factor-4)
DEFENSES: None
CRAFT: None
FUEL: 6.5 Tons Fuel (28 days endurance)
On Board Fuel Scoops, On Board Fuel Purification Plant
MISCELLANEOUS:
1 Acceleration Couch/Fold-out bed, 0.5 Ton Cargo
USER DEFINED COMPONENTS: None
COST:
MCr 82.371 Singly (incl. Architects fees of MCr 0.816),
MCr 65.244 in Quantity
CONSTRUCTION TIME: 24 Weeks Singly, 19 Weeks in Quantity
COMMENTS:
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The Feugiat fighter has a better fusion gun and better survivability thanks
to its computational power, but the agility has fallen down a notch. It does
its job and does it well, but it isn't as much a joy to fly as the older
Turcap fighters.

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