

Wallwichen

Three Clusters World Book 01

A “classic” 2d6 campaign world book



Wallwichen

An adventure setting for use with the Cepheus Engine Core Rules

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Contents

Overview	1
The Three Clusters	1
Wallwichen (A651733-A)	1
The System	2
Atmosphere and Water.....	2
Time.....	3
History	3
Population	4
Government.....	4
The Chrhuit	6
Language.....	8
Regions.....	9
Seas and Oceans	9
Lowlands.....	9
Uplands	9
Mountains	10
Settled Regions/Lowlands	10
Mercenaries	12
Ships.....	12
Trading with Wallwichen.....	13
Unusual Cargoes and Freight	13
Personal Encounters and Patrons.....	14
Animal Encounters.....	17
Ephemerides.....	19
Geographic Map of Wallwichen	21
Political Map of Wallwichen	22
OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A	23

Overview

Once, the Orion Arm was humanity's plaything, the Earth Alliance expanding by leaps across interstellar space. But as happens with all our species creates, it was destroyed through greed and lust for power and spite. A thousand years on, space is still dark, but light sometimes flickers for a while in a little corner here or there. The dream of the Alliance dies hard, and over and over one world or another has tried to recreate a fraction of its glory, only to fail.

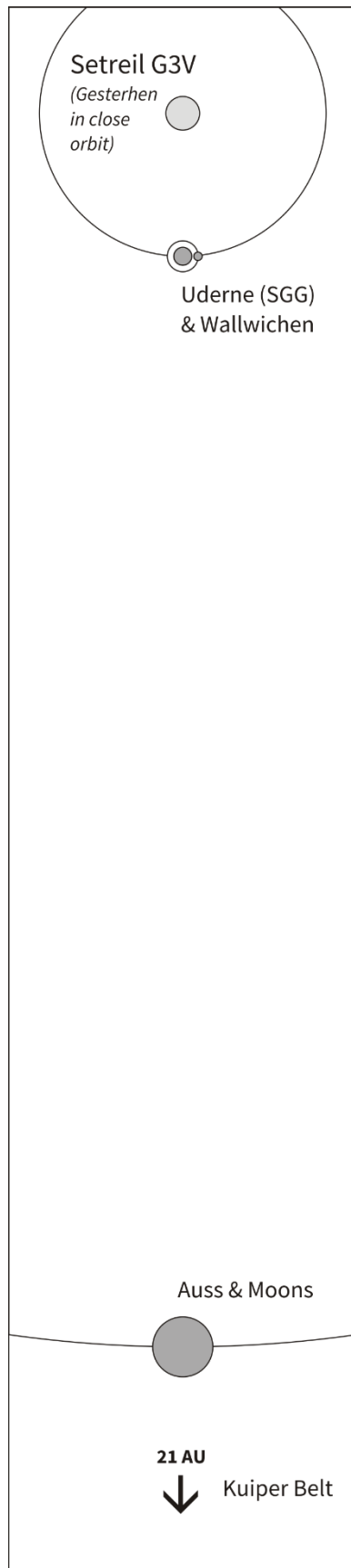
The Three Clusters

Hundreds of parsecs from Earth toward the galactic rim is the Three Clusters, a roughly subsector-sized section of space containing sixteen worlds. As one might suspect from the name, these worlds are in three clusters (and one lone star system) of 4-6 stars within Jump-1 of each other. Each group is separated from the others by a Jump-2 gap. Immediately to their coreward direction is a small rift, while the other three sides are isolated from the bulk of the galaxy by a gulf of at least Jump-3 and often more. During the last centuries of the Earth Alliance this "Helmian Gap" slowed but did not stop colonization as J-3 vessels were common, but now, 1000 years into the Interregnum following the end of the Alliance, the Three Clusters are nearly isolated. Even the most advanced worlds inside the gap rely on Jump-1 and drop tanks, or the very rare scavenged J-2 drives that have somehow managed to survive all the years since it was possible to make them. There are rumours of alien fleets prowling outside the Helmian Gap, while neo-Vikings assault the cluster from within, but no-one from has crossed into or out of the region in living memory.

The last 100 years has seen an uptick in the Clusters' level of interstellar civilization after centuries of retrenchment. The balkanized planet Jeon regained Tech Level A and has established a small trading empire across the Three Clusters, consisting of little off-world territory but instead starports open to all comers. This includes merchants from the planet Wallwichen, which has also made the transition back into space. The current year is 3457.

Wallwichen (A651733-A)

One of the more important worlds in the Three Clusters, Wallwichen is near the rimward edge of the region. It owes its prominence to the fact that it's one of the handful of planets here that can support a human without a spacesuit, or even a breathing mask. That's not to say that it's much like Earth, though: life on Wallwichen is not easy, and over time its colonists have developed an iron-hard culture to compensate. They are stubborn, touchy about their independence, and make for difficult neighbours on the interstellar scene. It's an attitude that's made them influential beyond their relatively small numbers, though one still small enough to be courted by the Three Clusters' major players rather than driving events themselves.



The System

The central star is Setreil, a G3V solitary main sequence star slightly less luminous than the Sun. It has a small system of planets: one former gas giant (Gesterhen) in a Cthonian orbit at 0.04 AU that has stripped away its atmosphere, a mini-Neptune of 8.1 Earth masses in the habitable zone, and a Jupiter-class gas giant (Auss) at 8.8 AU. During the system's formation the gas giant spiraled outward and the mini-Neptune did the same inward, clearing all other orbits. There are not even any planetoid belts until one reaches the beginning of the system's Kuiper belt at 21 AU. Auss has an extensive system of moons, though none larger than 1000km in diameter. Gesterhen is moonless.

Wallwichen is a large, rocky moon orbiting the mini-Neptune, Uderne. Its orbit is rather distant, eccentric, and inclined to the planet's orbit to such an extent that it is only eclipsed from Setreil for brief periods twice a year. While the issue has not been closely studied, the general belief is that Wallwichen was captured by Uderne after that planet formed, probably after interacting with the gas giant's original moon system, which was entirely lost in the process. Wallwichen is accordingly not tidally locked to its primary and has a day of 17 hours and 26 minutes; it takes just over nine days to orbit Uderne, and while it has no moons of its own, that gaseous planet serves as an excellent substitute when it is in the sky.

Gravity on Wallwichen's surface is 0.79G, and the planet is both smaller than and slightly less dense than Earth at 10,422 km in diameter and 5.3 g/cm³.

Atmosphere and Water

The planet has only 10% of its surface covered with water (including the polar ice caps). As the planet's main bodies of water are not hydrologically connected the definition of "sea level" is not obvious but has been assigned to the average level of the largest body, the Zerne Ocean. Some major bodies are above this level, and the northern Drakensea is even several tens of meters below it. All are salt to at least the extent of Earth's oceans and some are hypersaline. Fresh water is found only in the intermittent rains, and so securing a supply of it is the key to living on the planet.

Wallwichen has a thin oxy-nitrogen atmosphere with a pressure of 0.67 that of Earth, which is rarefied but not less than the pressures encountered in some high-altitude cities on the Mother Planet. Settlement clusters around the lower areas where water is found,

and so it's rare to end up in a location where the pressure is below 0.60. Only mountains in the wilderness drop to the level of a Very Thin atmosphere. The Wallenese are adapted to this air, but visitors may have to endure altitude sickness for a few days after arrival.

The planet is slightly cooler than Earth, by about three Celsius on average, but this average is often lower in places where off-worlders will visit: some of the human lands are above the 45th parallels, some settlement is a few hundred meters above sea level, and some of it is distant from the planet's small seas. Nights see the temperature plunge as cloudless skies leak heat into cold space. Despite this, the ice caps are quite small due to the world's overall aridity.

Time

Wallwichen rotates once every 17 hours, 26 minutes. The locals use the standard 60-minute hour, but to compensate for the planet's rotation period, there are only 18 hours each day i.e., the clocks run from 00:00 (midnight) to 16:59, then there is "the short hour", which runs from 17:00 to 17:26 before midnight strikes again. By sticking to the traditional switchover of day to day in the middle of the night, the Wallenese are usually asleep when the short hour comes, and the division of the planet into 17 time zones ensures this.

Locals are adapted to the relatively short day and sleep for about seven hours, with the remaining ten and a fraction being waking time. Weeks are seven days long, with formal work time (and so business hours) being seven hours on each of the first five days and four hours on Sestalday.

As the year is 370 Earth days long, the Wallenese day comes and goes 509.37 times per year. They've kept the concept of Earth's named months, with the difference that months alternate between 41 and 42 days long, except for Fevruar which is short and "leaped" every now and then to account for the 0.37 fractional day.

History

The planet was first colonized in 2515, during the old Alliance's golden age. Like many colonies of that time, it was founded by a single homogenous group of settlers looking to establish a place for themselves in the wilds of the galaxy, far away from an Earth (and even the inner planets) that they felt no longer had room for them. In the case of Wallwichen, this was a culture that had a longer history of setting themselves outside the mainstream than most: religious sects of "plain people" from the Americas and Africa who had been taking a wary attitude to technological society since the 17th century.

They saw the planet's aridity and barrenness as something to combat with their patient effort, rather like the way the winds out in the desert slowly carved stone spires into exotic shapes. Unfortunately, they also took this attitude to Wallwichen's native intelligent species, the Chrhuit, and as conflict inevitably sparked over water and the most productive land, the colonists put aside their old pacifism and developed their military skills with the same patience. Eventually they drove their alien rivals out into the wilderness.

Accustomed to lives without electricity or long-distance communication, and with many members familiar with farming, their beliefs served them well as interstellar trade dropped off and the

Interregnum began. Often other worlds suffered population and tech level declines—and sometimes severe ones—but Wallwichen carried on as a TL 3/4 society.

Like all things, Wallwichen's culture evolved, and by the start of the 31st century the planet's citizens had lost their skepticism toward machines and technical advances. When recontacted a century ago they had advanced to a solid TL 5 and were eager to trade for Jeon's more-advanced tech. However, the planetary government was appalled by the cavalier way the Valardi from Jeon landed, built their own starport (in, admittedly, an unused hinterland) and then claimed extraterritoriality for it. That feeling was well-communicated to the populace, which responded similarly. Pragmatic as ever, the Wallenese swallowed the *fait accompli* and proceeded to learn what the interlopers knew over the next forty years. This "Modernization Period" catapulted them to TL 9 in many fields, and TL 10 in ship-building, which in turn let the planet establish its own trading network using the Jeonese ports.

In a final assertion of their growing strength, the government took advantage of the Swain's Land Crisis to offer the Valardi an alliance against their Jeonese rival power in return for selling the highport, while also passing laws to favor Wallwichen's new starport—built under the pretense that it would be secondary to the Valardian one, but now positioned to replace it. With a great need for military strength, the Jeonese signed the treaty and submitted to having their toe-hold on the planet fade into oblivion. Twenty years on, the abandoned facility is rotting away out on the Mankircassen Plain.

Population

There are approximately 21 million people on Wallwichen, of which 19.9 million are human settlers and an estimated 1.0-1.1 million of the native Chrhuit. There are only a handful of individuals from other species who are permanent residents, and none in self-sustaining populations.

The planet has one large city, the seat of government Audenried, which is home to almost 2 million people. No other settlement approaches this: there are a half-dozen other small cities and large towns in the 50-200,000 population range, but most are small and support the rural hinterland. While Wallwichen is tech level A, it has reached that stage in a hurry through substantial government investment in key industries like ship-building and military tech, and agriculture has lagged. About half the population works as farmers and ranchers.



Government

All people on Wallwichen belong to one political unit, the Kingdom of Wallwichen. For several centuries the planet was a representative democracy, but during the worst of the neo-Viking attacks in the 29th and 30th centuries the senate approved a partial dictatorship—at first the Steward and later King or Queen—that has lasted to this day. The monarch's powers have been gradually circumscribed as Wallwichen has developed, but he or she is still commander of the armed forces and selects the ministers of the government, though this latter power is in practise dependent on finding a group of ministers who can command majority votes in

the Senate. The current king is Christoph IV, who has ruled for the last two decades. The royal palace, the Kuperhouse, is in Audenried, adjacent to the Senate Chambers.

The Senate has the bulk of the power, as the King must select his ministers from them; any policy he chooses can be stymied by majority vote if it requires legislation, or if not then by foot-dragging on the part of the Senatorial minister in charge of implementing it. This body is composed of major land owners, industrialists, and other prominent persons. They are partially self-selected, in that two-thirds of new members are voted into the Senate by the Senate, while the others are appointed by the monarch. Both types serve for life. There is no standard size for the Senate, but in the past century the number of members has been slowly growing and stands at 90. The larger public has no direct voice in selecting Senate members, but in most periods either King or the existing body of Senators has been canny enough to co-opt reform movements and the like by incorporating just enough of their leaders to de-fang any unrest.

The planet's autochthones live in an erstwhile protectorate, the Tribal Territories that cover about 60% of the planet, having been reduced from independence by a long series of wars culminating in the Settlement Treaty of 3199. Though large, the Territories are marginal in quality and contain few of the lowlands around the planet's oceans and lakes; isolated tracts are frequently annexed if worthwhile resources are found. In practise they are ignored and allowed to live in their small tribal societies so long as they stay in their marginal lands and do not trouble the human colony. Each tribe consists of 100-1000 members, usually speaking their own dialect. Relationships between tribes are fluid, with wars breaking out periodically and amalgamation or fissioning occurring almost constantly.

Democratic Movement: Wallwichen was once a democracy and that's never entirely been forgotten. Tolerated for centuries because it was small, the planet's democratic movement has been reinvigorated by the powerful example of Valard on Jeon. One major reason for the slow increase in the number of senators recently has been to reduce the pressure from this faction of Wallenese politics. Meanwhile the movement is split between two factions itself, the larger one supporting universal suffrage while the smaller one takes the radical position that the Chrhuit must be included in this.

The Chrhuit

As mentioned previously, Wallwichen has a native TL 0 intelligent species, the Chrhuit, sometimes pejoratively called “bushdevils” or “Creakers”, by the planet’s humans even now. Given that the settlers arrived on-planet to take the most hospitable lands, the relationship between the two species was never destined to be a good one.



Unfortunately, the Chrhuit’s bat-like, almost demonic appearance clashed with the strong religious beliefs of the first colonists and made things even worse. For a time, Earth’s laws regarding human relations with low-tech alien races—and a preponderance of pacifist beliefs among the original settlers—kept the violence in check, but the homeworld was far away and enforcement sporadic. Within a few generations the Earth Alliance was collapsing the old ways were fading and fighting became more and more common, then continuous. The wars finally ended, formally because of the two-century-old Settlement Treaty, but in reality because the Chrhuit have been reduced in population to the point that they can no longer fight full-scale battles against the ever-more numerous humans. It doesn’t help that they’ve also been consigned to outright poverty by their removal to the lands that the Wallenese don’t want.

Physiology: Many species of Wallwichen’s pseudo-mammalian class are eight-limbed, and the Chrhuit are one of them. Four limbs toward the end of the body are walking legs, and the foremost limbs are arms with coincidentally human-like hands—both clawed, though culturally most Chrhuit clip their claws on the dominant hand (usually the left) so that they don’t interfere with fine manipulation. The pair of legs between the arms and the walking legs are the so-called “ambivalent” legs. Primarily used for locomotion, they can also be used as a second set of arms when needed. Most often this is when a Chrhuit needs to lift a heavy object; they are also used when it wants to deliver a more powerful blow with a hand-to-hand weapon (spears being a popular choice among them).

Smaller than humans, a typical Chrhuit individual is about the size of a very large dog, about 50 to 60 kilograms, and 110 centimeters at the shoulder. The species shows little sexual dimorphism.

Chrhuit have the same five senses as humans but depend more on hearing and less on sight. This stems from their crepuscular habits, which see them hunt at dawn and dusk and then sleep during full daylight while acting relatively quietly at full night. When hunting they drive and circle around large prey like wolves, using their hearing to keep track of where their hunting partners are without vocalizations that might give them away. Many memoirs written by humans who fought in the inter-

species wars describe the terror of suddenly being surrounded and under attack from a group of Chrhuit that had got into position silently, or at least unnoticed by their human opponents.

The Chrhuit are covered with fine hair, usually counter-shaded grey and white. Their heads are, as mentioned, reminiscent of a Terran bat's and—in another unfortunate clash with human sensibilities—like the planet's other “mammals”, females of the species produce no milk but instead feed young with blood exuded through valved lumens on their sides. A young Chrhuit can walk almost immediately, and can run with the rest of its family (though not actively help with hunting) a few days after birth. After reaching six months in age, the child switches over to solid food. Chrhuit are obligate carnivores, requiring animal meat for several nutrients they cannot synthesize. They cannot digest plants, a fact which has steered the course of their development: typical agriculture is useless to them, though the most advanced Chrhuit bands had semi-domesticated herds of *//'ik* (“*tiek*”, to human settlers, a pseudo-ruminant) when humans first arrived on Wallwichen.

Psychology: The basic unit of Chrhuit culture is the extended family hunting group: 10 to 20 individuals no further apart than cousins except for mates. Mating partners are drawn from other nearby groups speaking the same language or, more rarely, by absorbing the last surviving member of a group cut down by violence. Hunting requires close coordination, and so the Chrhuit have developed a very fine sense of in-groups and out-groups, with members of the hunting group/family being the only others trusted completely. All other individuals are treated with suspicion at the very least, with Chrhuit from adjacent bands being the tolerated intermediate class *if* they share a language. This is not always the case as there are dozens of Chrhuit languages and many dialects with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility.

This arrangement has led to an emphasis on group responsibility for actions. Humans have moved away from ideas like family curses being handed from parent to child or collective punishment. Chrhuit have not, a point of contention among xenologists being whether this preference is entirely cultural or if it also stems from the way that Chrhuit individuals work together when hunting, and then share the kill afterward.

Regardless of its source, from a human standpoint this attitude causes problems. Chrhuit see humans as an untrusted out-group that is collectively responsible for the actions of Wallwichen's settlers over the last thousand years. Relationships between most Chrhuit and humans are peaceful only to the extent that a given Chrhuit does not feel it can safely redress those wrongs, not because it doesn't want to. In short, only if the humans it's dealing with are more powerful will a Chrhuit not seek revenge for the past.

Fortunately, there are ways for Chrhuit to perceive larger in-groups. As stated, different bands will trade members as mates; at a higher level, entire language-group “nations” can act in concert after a charismatic *p'iri//q* (“messenger”) has wandered between enough of its families preaching some course of action. On two known occasions—both resulting in deadly wars against the settlers—even multiple nations can be stirred.

As they are far from a monolithic culture, some individual Chrhuit have managed to apply these concepts to humans. A single daring human in the role of a messenger can often speak to a band that's not entirely opposed to human interaction, suggesting things like trade or mutually beneficial action and still leave alive if rejected. A few bands on the borders of the settled area have also

managed to draw a distinction between Wallwichen's settlers and off-worlders, meaning that for now, at least, humans visiting the planet are treated with basic suspicion rather than as people responsible for centuries of conflict.

Chrhuit Characters: Despite their alien appearance, Chrhuit have much the same physical capabilities as humans. As they are native to a world smaller than Earth, they throw 2d6-1 for STR, but on the other hand their basic lifestyle is pitiless to the weak—they are at 2d6+1 for END and INT if they have survived until adulthood. Countering this is their SOC, which should be tracked two-fold: 2d6 as normal for their own society (with a result of A+ indicating that that individual is chief of their small band) but only $(1d6+1) \div 2$ rounded down among humans (in other words, 1-3). Also note that while EDU is also rolled normally, this is EDU at the tech level of their society, which is TL 0. Much that is commonplace knowledge to a person raised in a technological society is unknown to them.

As they come from a low-tech society, they have few options for a career. Most Chrhuit characters are Barbarians, while a few are sufficiently skilled at hunting that they can be considered Hunters. Even in those two cases, re-roll any skill or benefit acquired that implies access to civilized tech: Mechanic, Vehicle Specialist, Comms, Electronics, or ship shares. Similarly, any advanced education skills such as Broker or Advocate are useful only within the context of Chrhuit society and should be treated as level 0 skills when dealing with humans. The exceptions to this tech limitation are Gun Combat skills and Low or Middle Passages: black powder weapons up to TL 3 are available to them as trade goods, and a handful of Chrhuit are recruited as scouts for Wallwichen's civilian mercenary groups (see below), potentially giving them skills for weapons up to TL 5 as well as tickets for a few starship trips. In the latter case they will not be able to purchase weapons above TL 3 on Wallwichen or import them when returning from off-world (they will be confiscated at customs), but there is nothing stopping them from using what they've learned if given a weapon or if they want to purchase and use one somewhere else in the Three Clusters.

Language

The Wallenese speak standard Galactic, with a little vocabulary borrowed from German, Dutch, and various African languages. Most are aware what the "local words" are and will avoid them when speaking with off-worlders, or be in a position to realize they've used one and will need to explain what they mean.

The Chrhuit have approximately forty languages, each broken into many tribal dialects. They have a trade language, Kti, which tribes use to communicate with each other, but it is difficult for humans to pronounce—"Kti" being a human approximation of the first syllable of the language's formal name, *t̪ʰi'i'*. Rather than learn the alien phonemes and dozen pitches for each vowel, a pidgin Galactic named Handel has sprung up; it uses only sounds that can be produced by both species' speech organs.

Regions

Seas and Oceans

Wallwichen is an arid world, and access to water is the key to living here. All major bodies of water are salt, with fresh only available from deep wells, rain, and intermittent lakes and streams that fill for a few days after the rare heavy rainfalls.

Zerne Ocean: The largest body of water on the planet is the Zerne Ocean. As it's also situated at low latitudes where the planet's relative chill is counteracted, its shore was the obvious first target for human colonization. Most of the planet's human population lives around it.

Drakensea: Unlike the Zerne, the Drakensea is not entirely controlled by humans. Its south shore and the large Insel Peninsula have been colonized, but the lowlands on the north shore are cold and infertile, given to bogs and permafrost. It's been left to its native Chrhuit in the knowledge that the sea itself acts as a barrier between the two species.

Three Sisters: Wallwichen's second major area of human colonization is the shores of three similarly sized seas west of the Zerne Ocean on the far side of the Mankircassen Plain. From north to south they are named Eriez, Onarra, and Wenda. They are normally distinct from one another, but during rains they may share water across the isthmuses that separate them, as dry river beds score those areas. Lands here are more recently settled and less-developed than around the Zerne.

Lowlands

The lowlands are the most fertile area of the planet as, though they are dry, they receive enough rain to support popgrass and small stands of forest. These are the regions targeted by humans for colonization and over the centuries they have managed to gain control over all of them except for those around the northern polar cap. These are too cold for farming, and have been left to the natives,

Uplands

The majority of the planet is cold, dry, rocky uplands comparable to the Great Basin Desert or Patagonian Desert on Earth. There is little ground cover except the occasional scrubby bushes and tufts of alien grass analogs. Though not very much higher than the lowlands (rarely more than 3000 meters above sea level), Wallwichen's thin air is even thinner here and distinctly unpleasant to breathe. Even at the equator the nights are cold, and further north or south temperatures often drop below freezing once the sun has set.

Mankircassen Plain: The only notable upland on Wallwichen is the highland plains between the Zerne Ocean and the Three Sisters, which was included in the human region defined by the Settlement Treaty for strategic regions—the Wallenese were averse to having a gigantic Chrhuit salient thrusting into the kingdom from the south. Even before then it was human-dominated; farming may have been impossible, but there are mines here and some ranching on its fringes, and the planetary railway runs through it. The old Jeonese starport is in a small lowland at its center, but it has been abandoned since the government moved the main starport to a new facility near Audenried.

Other uplands have names, of course, but they're generally referred to as "The Territories" unless there is some need to refer to someplace more specific.

Mountains

There are several mountainous areas in the Tribal Territories, including all the highest peaks on the planet. The single highest mountain is Mount Stenger, in the distant Oderberge Range; it is 8167 meters (26,795 feet) at its summit and has never been climbed.

Halmland: Within the Kingdom proper there is only one mountain range, Halmland, an area of high rolling hills south of the Mankircassen Plain that never exceeds 1800 meters (5900 feet). It is as almost as sparsely populated as the plains below, but has a few settlers living off the small amounts of water that the extra altitude squeezes out of the rising winds. The region is far more notable for being the planet's sole known quartz gold reef, at the Schact Gertrud pit mine located some 1300 meters high. The air is thin, but the resource too valuable to ignore.

Settled Regions/Lowlands

Erstesirk: The first area settled, and site of the planetary capital Audenried, this is the best-developed part of the planet and the most populous. Lying near the equator and on the shore of the Zerne Ocean, Erstesirk has a mild climate for such an arid world. Visitors who went only to the First Colony would be forgiven for thinking that the planet is very Earth-like.

Untersirk: A predominantly rural area, Untersirk is site of many large agricultural estates, which are dependent on an extensive and costly irrigation system. It has correspondingly many Senate members despite its small population (fourth out of the six large regions inhabited by humans), and these quasi-industrial farmers form the core of the government's conservative wing.

Lengesder: On the opposite shore of the Zerne Ocean, Lengesder has a similar climate to Erstesirk, but drier. It is famed for its wines and fruit, as well as being the home for several profitable mines located in the up country on its western side. Weissport is the region's largest city, and the second-largest on the planet, and there is regular boat service between it and Audenried—though at about 3000 kilometers the journey takes about eight days and those in a hurry will want to consider transport that flies.

Mauchsland: The first substantial territory well away from the equator to be colonized, Mauchsland is on the far side of a low ridge of upland from Erstesirk and is connected to it by the railway as well as a few roads running through various passes. The farms here are generally held by small landholders, as larger businesses and richer people prefer lands elsewhere—Nordliseen and its substantial Chrhut population are just across the border to the northeast, and if there are any raids in this era, they come from that direction. The locals are accordingly more supportive of the military than those anywhere else on Wallwichen, and the King has been relying on them heavily to sign on and help bulk up the Army.

Fernesland: Next to Erstesirk, Fernesland is the richest and most pleasant part of the planet, though its smaller size and relative distance from the First Colony kept it from being settled before the 30th century. Though initially quite bustling, it has come to be overshadowed by the other settled regions around the Three Sisters as their populations expanded. There is still some resentment here over this, though partisans of Salsfals and Fotsirk point to Fernesland's relatively large amount of power in the Senate—a holdover from the earlier days not being corrected nearly fast enough for their taste.

Salsfals: Millions of years ago a tectonic rift started here but failed, driving a long, v-shaped structure into the surface of the planet. Elsewhere the lowlands tend to shade into the uplands almost imperceptibly, but Salsfals is surrounded by cliffs and steep inclines as much as 500 meters tall. When it rains in the surrounding uplands, dozens of small falls activate on the edge of the escarpment before drying out again after a few days—it's a scenic panorama known all over the planet.

In so doing, they've also washed salt and other evaporate minerals down from above, and the occasionally tortured terrain in the old tectonic basin has trapped it in places rather than having it wash into the seas as happens in the other lowlands. Usually just below the surface, these deposits are another thing the region is known for, as it's cheaper to mine here than it is to extract salts and other substances from the oceans.

Fotsirk: Human explorers first passed through Fotsirk not long after settlement began, but for centuries the area was considered extremely remote; there were fewer than a thousand permanent residents here (amid hundreds of thousands of Chrhuit) until the 32nd century. Then Wallenese colonies appeared and grew by leaps and bounds for several decades until the last great war was sparked, ending in the Settlement Treaty. The autochthonous population was obliged to move north or west, and the fogs and low hills of Fotsirk were annexed to the Kingdom. Even today it is the least populous of the major settled regions, and its main city Jacobsettel is more a large town than any kind of metropolis. This northerly town's major claim to fame is as a gathering point for Chrhuit who have made their own rough peace with humans and now look for employment as guides or bodyguards.

Fotsirk is an outlier among the settled areas, as the climate here is a little less dry and definitely colder than elsewhere. Some of the whiskeys and brandies native to this area are acquiring an interplanetary reputation, and trade and investment from off-world are lifting what had once been a poor region. Even so, someone wanting to see the spectacle of a farmer and his family living in a turf house to contrast with the glittering TL 10 society on show in the capital would just have to come here.

Dry Hochland: A small and nearly waterless lowland east of Erstesirk, this area was annexed to the Wallwichen Kingdom proper from the Tribal Territories in 3308 after the Chrhuit tribes there rebelled against the Settlement Treaty. While formerly (with Nordliseen) the part of the planet with the most post-Settlement Chrhuit, they were expelled and the area taken for human use. As it's not particularly fertile or pleasant—if it were it would have been included in the original treaty—Dry Hochland is very sparsely populated, with perhaps 8-10,000 ranchers and no more.

Nordliseen: The only major lowland that is in the Tribal Territories, Nordliseen earned that distinction by being circumpolar. The ground is frozen more often than not, and there are long days in summer and equally long nights in winter. It's utterly unsuited to farming, has no known resources besides water, and so has been left to the Chrhuit. The bands here are fully nomadic, the only lifestyle that can survive Nordliseen without high technology, but they are thinly spread and rarely interact with humans. A mere handful of colonists live similar lives here, trading with the aliens, but they are poor and itinerant by Wallwichen's standards.

Mercenaries

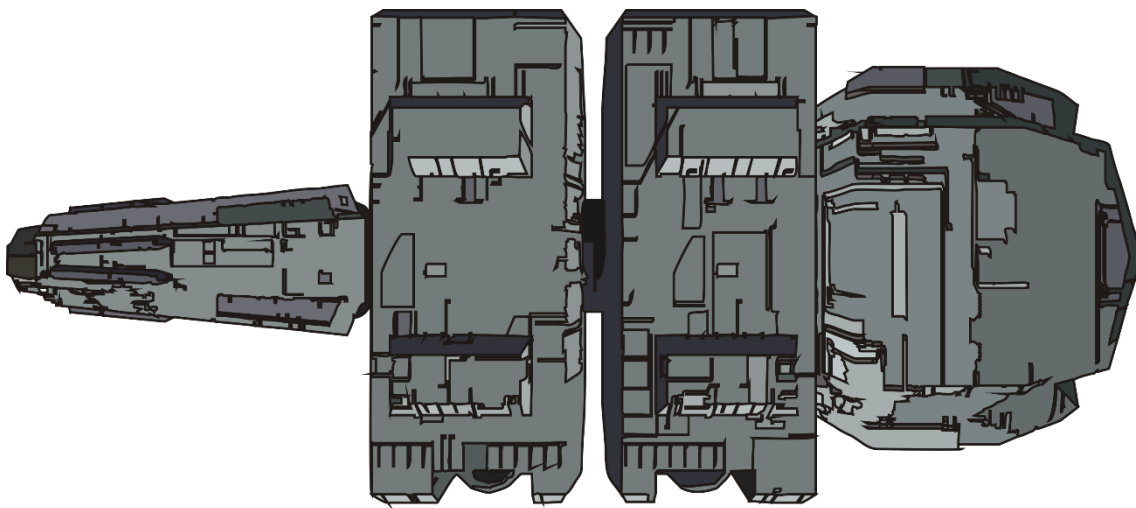
For a long period between the 27th and 32nd centuries, Wallwichen's humans were in a near-continuous war with the Chrhuit, and the original settlers' predominant pacifism soon gave way to widespread martial skill. There were periods where every adult human was expected to undergo some formal training in arms, and those employed permanently made up a lop-sided fraction of the population.

Then when the Settlement Treaty was signed, Wallwichen entered a century and a half in which the military was no longer important. While some soldiers were needed to deal with overspill from intra-Chrhuit conflict, *levée-en-masse* was no longer necessary. Even so, it continued through cultural inertia, though quality suffered through corruption and lack of operational experience. In time it likely would have faded away entirely, but then the Valardi made contact.

Suddenly faced with a technically advanced and numerous off-world society, the King and the Senate revitalized the existing military skeleton and massively expanded the army while also constructing a small navy for system defense. The naval crews get experience battling away neo-Viking attacks, but the army had no such outlet—and it was so large, at about 300,000 members from a population of just 19 million humans, that it was a drain on the economy. As the government was also eager for sources of off-world currency, they chose to rent out units to other worlds in the Three Clusters, and to encourage the formation of civilian mercenary units that could bring foreign funds home too. Wallenese “security forces” are now a common sight from Sapphal to Alzacherra.

Ships

Wallwichen's ship-building capabilities are still limited, though they are increasing and the government leans on the alliance with Valard to import whatever skills and components they can. Right now, they do not make ships of more than 400 tons, and they prefer to stick to one modular design that can serve as a cargo ship if equipped with a jump drive (and possibly drop tanks) or a missile-carrying system defense boat if not.



200t Wallenese ship configured for merchant activities, with two modular cargo bays (center) and no drop tanks

Trading with Wallwichen

As one of the few worlds in the Three Clusters that can build its own jump-capable ships, Wallwichen is a major player in the region's trade. Merchant ships are inbound and outbound every day. It is neither an agricultural or industrial powerhouse, but is reasonably good at both those aspects of production, so a wide variety of goods can be found in her holds. Traders from other worlds have learned that there are several things they can buy here that will bring good ultimate profits, especially if taken to the many nearby low-tech planets.

Like most worlds with a Class A starport, Wallwichen has an orbital highport, imaginatively named Highport Alfa. However, as Wallwichen is not actually a planet but an ice giant's moon, the station cannot be positioned in a synchronous orbit; anything that high has its orbit disrupted by Uderne in short order. Accordingly, it is less useful for the ground side than it could be, and it caters mostly to ships that cannot make atmospheric re-entries. The government encourages this by placing a 20% surcharge on berthing and refuelling fees any vessel that are capable of landing but whose captain chooses to use the highport for whatever reason.

Major Exports (+1 *Purchase DM*, -1 *Sale DM*): Bulk grains (Basic Consumable Goods, Common Goods), gold and fissionables (Trade Goods 45), industrial machinery (Trade Goods 33), some specialized chemicals like dyes and fertilizers (Trade Goods 44).

Major Imports (+1 *Sale DM*, -1 *Purchase DM*): Spices and "exotic" foods (Trade Goods 31), computers and other cutting-edge equipment (Trade Goods 11, 16, 52), rare earth metals (Trade Goods 55), petrochemicals (Trade Goods 42), medicines (Trade Goods 43).

Unusual Cargoes and Freight

If a roll on the Trade table comes up as "Unusual cargo", the following table may be used to generate the exact nature of the result.

Roll d6	Description	Cost per Ton
1	50 tons of aquarium containing <i>semmanTERS</i> , a pseudo-fish from Wallwichen's salt lakes. Their flesh is processed into a paste used in expensive foods but goes rancid soon after death. Live fish are shipped off-world, and the ichthyologist to look after them needs a berth too. Payment is 200,000 Cr per parsec travelled.	N/A
2	1d6 tons of <i>Tannenshaus Twelve</i> , a prized rye whiskey from Insel in the Drakensea, bottled.	50,000Cr
3	20 tons of heavy water. Wallwichen's oceans were once considerably more extensive, but as they disappeared into space, molecules of water containing one heavier deuterium atom was concentrated. It's more cost efficient to make the stuff here than anyplace else in the Three Clusters. Salable on any world with TL7+ power or medical tech.	50,000Cr

4	10 tons of nerve gas. A corporation named L-Fahne has developed a new chemical warfare agent and is looking to open new markets. Shipping it requires a permit from both Wallwichen and the destination world—the latter would have to be obtained after arrival otherwise it will be quarantined. However, selling it is potentially quite lucrative, +4 DM to sale price at the destination. Just don't let it get loose in the hold.	150,000Cr
5	1 ton of Elder glass (see Ephemerides for details).	250,000Cr
6	4d6 people emigrating and 10 tons of freight. A few Wallenese have not forgotten their low-tech, pacifist past. The group is looking for transport to a world that 1) Has a breathable atmosphere, 2) Has liquid water, 3) Has low or no population. If treated with respect during the journey, they will remember the crew if their colony succeeds, tell others to follow, and favor their ship for trade.	Normal passenger and freight rates

Personal Encounters and Patrons

Hannah Barr (Female Human) A786A8 Age 38

Cr -25000

Admin-1, Carousing-2, Electronics-0, Engineering-1, Farming-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Jack o' Trades-1, Liaison-2, Linguistics-0 (Handel), Mechanics-0, Medicine-0, Riding-1, Shotgun-1, Survival-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1.

Hannah is the right-hand woman of Amos Detweiler, the owner of Boulder Valley Farm, a large farm and ranch in Salsfals. Advancing age and a serious riding accident saw her transition from working as a hand to administering the day-to-day operations of the farm on behalf of the Detweilers, a position she has taken to quite well. She is popular with the other workers and trusted by the owners, having worked hard to educate herself about every aspect of the business that she didn't already know—she's even completed a long-distance course in the business side of things through Barriye College.

Her main flaws are that she's perhaps overfond of carousing and a little stubborn and unimaginative. The former has at least bought her some goodwill from the mostly male ranchers she deals with, but the latter can be an issue when something out of the ordinary requires a quick decision. She is also still in substantial hospital debt from the accident, but it's not her nature to worry about that.

Adventuring groups are likely to encounter her in Barriye or even Audenried, engaged in some trading or bureaucratic business that she can't do from the farm. She's a friendly sort, quick to pick up new acquaintances and apt to bring them out to the ranch if they're looking to head out from the city.

She is a large and strong person, about 180cm (5'11") and 83kg (183 pounds), with long black hair and brown eyes.



Kit (Female Chrhuit) 599772(2) Age 24 (SOC scores are for Chrhuit and Human society respectively)

Cr0

Linguistics-0 (Kti), Linguistics-0 (Handel), Medicine-0, Piercing Weapons-2, Recon-1, Sailing Ships-0, Slug Rifle-1, Survival-2.

Q'li'ŋ (a name unpronounceable by humans, so she also answers to “Kit” and “Stalker”) is an outcast Chrhuit, living on the boundary between her native culture and human society. Several years ago, the other members of her familial hunting group were killed in inter-band warfare, leaving her injured but alive. Usually this situation ends with the survivor absorbed into another band, but she chose instead to revenge herself. It took two years, but she managed to stalk and kill all of the band that had destroyed her own family, thus ending the feud in the most final way possible.

This is not strictly against Chrhuit customs but is considered such a fearsome feat that the previous option of joining up with others was now cut off. Left as a roaming pariah, she navigates the connections between humans and Chrhuit, working as an interpreter, petty trader, and guide. As she can't hunt normally in a pack, she favors a TL3 black powder rifle (2d6-1 damage) with a ring bayonet (1d6) that lets her use it as a spear if she fires it and doesn't have time to reload.

Humans generally can't tell Chrhuit apart, but Kit is distinctive because one of her ears is badly scarred, a souvenir of the attack that killed her family.

Conrad Bixler (Male Human) CCA523 Age 28

Cr5000

Bludgeoning Weapons-1, Mechanics-0, Mole-1, Recon-0, Shotgun-0, Slug Pistol-1, Tracked Vehicle-1.

The quick economic change of the last few generations has left a lot of people unrooted, loose labor to be picked up as needed. At least there's no shortage of work. Conrad Bixler is one of these people, an itinerant miner who has probably seen the underside of more mountains than anyone else—and that includes the many peaks out in the Tribal Territories. For now, he works the gold mine at Schacht Gertrud.

Conrad takes his life as a drifter very seriously and tries to have no more clothes than he can wear, one of everything to eat with (plate, cup, spoon, knife), and not a lot else. The one thing he finds he can't leave behind is the memory of his older sister Rebekah, who disappeared during the Weissport Raid. He helped with the search and rebuilding afterward, hoping to find her or at least proof that she was no longer alive. He has not been so lucky.

Physically he is very imposing and so has no trouble at all getting mining jobs. It's been years since swinging a pick was an important part of the job, but maneuvering the hydraulic drills takes strength, and he knows how to drive drilling machines and tractors. He is a little over 2 meters tall (6'7") and even broader than he is tall (105kg, or 230 pounds). He has red hair and blue eyes.



Volker Knepp (Male Human) 6B679C Age 34

Cr104,000

Admin-0, Athletics-0, Bribery-1, Carousing-1, Comms-0, Computer-1, Gambling-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Leadership-0, Piercing Weapons-1, Riding-2, Streetwise-1.

Volker was the third son of “Baron” Stefan von Bremsau Knepp and never was a more conceited and priggish man inflicted on the world than the self-styled Baron. Offended by his young son’s “dissolution”, he disowned him, and Volker was turned on to the street at 16—a great scandal but one the baron had the power and influence to survive.

Young Volker naturally turned to crime and, while he wasn’t particularly good at it, he kept his arrest record clean and bided his time. Some say he was somehow involved in the deaths of his two older brothers, but anyone else who might know is probably dead. The old Baron was stricken with complete paralysis after a stroke, his remaining son was appointed as his caretaker by right of blood, and Volker was soon the new owner of Bremsau and all its holdings.

As one of the richest men on Wallwichen, Volker was soon elected to the Senate in his deceased father’s place, but that was a hasty move they’re coming to regret. The newly minted Senator set out on a political career and has cemented a small following of cronies that vote according to his lead. He’s already angling to become a King’s Minister. In his darkest heart of hearts, where he’s allowed no one, he would like to usurp the kingdom for himself.

Volker is a thin and rather weak man, though physically quite quick. He has dark brown hair and a receding hairline. His eyes are a very dark brown, almost black.

**Abraham Schrock (Male Human) 764966 Age 46**

Cr1000

Admin-0, Broker-1, Comms-2, Electronics-0, Gambling-1, Linguistics-0 (Handel), Mechanics-2, Medicine-0, Motorboats-1, Sailing Ships-0, Ocean Ships-3, Shotgun-0, Slug Rifle-1, Streetwise-1, Survival-1, Tactics-1.

Captain Schrock runs a tramp ship—“not a spaceship, goodness no, a steamer!”—up on the Drakensea. Over the years he’s run cargoes, passengers, and the occasional lot of smuggled goods over nearly every body of water on the planet, at first as crew and later on his own behalf.

After a four-year stint in prison for running an alcohol smuggling ring around Audenried, he relocated to the Drakensea, where he acquired his current rundown scow and started taking jobs again. He’s familiar



with both sides of the sea, human on the south and Chrhuit on the north, and is useful for those looking to slip goods or people across the border in either direction.

He is of average height and weight, with scruffy hair that has already gone to grey and brown eyes. He is not in the best of health since his prison stint, so he is lacking in endurance and has a persistent cough.

Animal Encounters

Ocean

D6	#Enc	Mass (Kg)	Type	Locomotion	Spd	Str	End	Weapon	React
1	1-2	7000	Intermittent	Swim	6	H	6	Teeth	F5 A10
2	16-66	0.4	Gatherer	Swim/Walk	4	1	1	Teeth	A5 F7
3	1	13	Siren	Swim	6	3	4	Claws	AS F8
4	100-600	0.5	Carrion	Swim	4	1	1	Sting	A7 F10
5	100	120	Intermittent	Swim	2	6	7	None	No No
6	Event (Gale, make watercraft rolls at -3 DM for 1d6 hours)								

1 are Seasheep, something like a manatee or small whale covered with tight, oily fur. Their “mutton” is considered a delicacy back on dry land. 2d6 × 50 kg of meat per individual, Cr20 per kg.

5 are the Waterteppish, which move in tightly packed schools at the surface, so that animals inside the outer layer are protected from all but projectile weapons.

Lowlands

D6	#Enc	Mass (Kg)	Type	Locomotion	Spd	Str	End	Weapon	React
1	3	18	Grazer	Fly	5	4	6	Claws	F4 A5
2	1	15	Hunter	Walk/Swim	5/2	4	5	Teeth	A13 F9
3	3	114	Pouncer	Walk/Swim	5/4	D	6	Claws	ASur FSurAgn
4	1	24	Reducer	Fly	6	4	1	Teeth	A7 F9
5	1-3	26	Intermittent	Walk	2	6	5	Teeth	No F6
6	Event: Hunters. The characters encounter 1d6 hunters armed with rifles. Roll for reaction.								

1 is a pest on the crops of farmers, the Korndieb. A family (male, female, and one young) will descend on a field at night and gorge themselves on their own weight in grain or corn. There is a bounty of Cr50 on one's head.

3 is the hated Gravshender, which may be the smartest native creature after the Chrhuit. Despite being heavily hunted because of their disgusting habit of consuming human dead, they still persist in the lowlands.

Uplands

#	#Enc	Mass (Kg)	Type	Locomotion	Spd	Str	End	Weapon	React
1	1	0.07	Grazer	Walk	2	1	3	Horns	F6 A4
2	3-8	Neg.	Gather	Walk	3	1	5	Sting	A9 F9
3	3-8	0.8	Trapper	Walk/Swim	2/6	2	3	Claws	AS F11
4	1	Neg.	Reducer	Walk	3	1	1	Sting	A3 F11
5	2-12	3	Intermittent	Walk	1	2	3	Thrasher	No No
6	Event (Dust storm, low visibility for 1d6 hours)								

4 are Muckies, the local equivalent of gnats. Actual #Enc is thousands but treat as one individual.

Mountains

#	#Enc	Mass (Kg)	Type	Locomotion	Spd	Str	End	Weapon	React
1	2-12	0.7	Grazer	Walk	2	2	6	Projectile	F6 A9
2	3-8	25	Gatherer	Walk	3	6	2	Thrasher	A9 F6
3	2-12	20	Chaser	Fly	6	44	2	Claws	A6 F5
4	6-36	16	Carrion	Walk	4	80	6	Sting	A8 FSurAgn
5	2-12	7000	Intermittent	Walk	4	M	H	Hoofs and Horns	A9 F11
6	Event: Temperature drop. The air suddenly drops below zero Celsius, and on 1 on a d6 it begins to snow heavily,								

1 is Spine Mice, which are covered in quills and can fire them for Personal distance (same square).

6 are the Teekak (Chrhuit: $\ddot{t}ii\ k'k'$), essentially an octopodal rhinoceros with two fearsome pointed horns. They are a famous game animal but move in herds and are supremely dangerous if provoked.

Ice Cap

#	#Enc	Mass (Kg)	Type	Loco	Spd	Str	End	Weapon	React
1	3-8	0.04	Filter	Walk	5	26	3	None	F8 No
2	2	11	Gatherer	Walk	6	32	3	Thrasher	
3	2-12	21	Chaser	Walk/Swim	1/4	64	3	Teeth	A7 F7
4	3-8	75	Hijack	Walk	6	20	2	Horns	A12 F9
5	6-36	22	Filter	Swim	2	28	2	Horns	No
6	Event: Aurora. The magnetosphere of Wallwichen's ice giant primary interacts with its moon, producing tremendous aurora overhead. They are visible even in daylight, and brilliant at night.								

5 is the Ballerina jellyfish which is so named because its jellyfish-like bell is multihued and swirls around it while it swims. A cloud of them is rare, and valuable if one can somehow be brought to a zoo or natural history museum.

Ephemerides

Christina II (“The Vile”): Queen Christina ruled Wallwichen some 350 years ago. She is infamous for conniving with Chrhuit bands to break a rebellion by landowners in the relatively new settlements of Fernesland, and then being deposed when the plan was uncovered after much loss of life. The highlands between Lengesder and Fernesland were cleared of Chrhuit bands afterward, and as she was royally exempt from the death penalty, she was made a Tertiary of a female prayer house in the Mauchsland. She was murdered by a disgruntled fellow nun a few years later.

Rumour ever since (dismissed by serious historians) is that an attempt to rescue her was underway when she died, and that a cache of valuables—gemstones, gold coins, and the like—was concealed somewhere in the lowland where she was confined so that she could use them for bribery during the escape. The plan fell through with her death, and the cache is supposed to be still out there somewhere.

Eisenferd Railway: Wallwichen has had government-run steam railroads since the mid-31st century, with their spread only limited by the world’s low population and lack of coal or petrochemicals. Converted to electricity within living memory, the trunk line circles the Zerne Ocean, while spurs cross a pass into Mauchland, and over the highland Mankircassen Plain to the settled lands around the Three Sisters. There are no railways in the Tribal Territories, however.

Tickets are inexpensive, costing 45Cr from Audenried to Weissport and 200Cr from Audenried to the end of the line in Barriye. Trains run through the night and average speed is about 100km/h, so most population centers can be reached within 3 or 4 days; sleeper cars are available and cost twice as much.

Elder Glass: The nearby planet of Soseris is site of the City of Jewel, a high-tech alien ruin that long predates settlement in the Three Clusters. As well as being an archaeological dig, a small salvage concern also retrieves pieces of Elder Glass for sale elsewhere.

This substance is a wonder material, in that it can be melted and then, depending on how high one raises the temperature after that and how quickly one cools it, it takes on a variety of different physical properties. It can be made into an electrical conductor or insulator; resist heat or pressure like the best metal alloys; or be made resistant to all but the most corrosive atmospheres. Unfortunately, it is scarce, and most of Soseris’ production is tagged for the Valardi Navy, but ton-sized cargoes do come available to the public on occasion.

Kuperhouse, The: The palace of Wallwichen’s kings and queens, so-named because of the verdigris copper panels covering its roof. Relatively small as these things go, it is 29,000 square meters over several floors, with one wing converted into an art gallery open to the public.

Neo-Vikings: As the power of the Earth Alliance dropped away, piracy became an increasing concern. By the end of the 28th century the first wave of neo-Viking attacks had begun, with entire planets devoted to attacking others and taking from them what was no longer available through trade on the spaceways. These eventually faded away, but only because the level of wealth and technology across human-inhabited space had dropped so low that it was difficult to outfit a neo-Viking expedition with ships and just as hard to find a worthwhile target.

Within the Three Clusters, the neo-Vikings have returned in the last few decades, as ships began flying again—and could be diverted by violence to nefarious hands—and worlds developed again to

the point of becoming tempting targets. The newly spacefaring worlds of the region are combatting them as best they can, but space is vast and resources to seek and destroy the neo-Vikings are thinly spread. For now, they remain a major threat.

Popgrass: The fertile plains surrounding Wallwichen's equatorial seas are covered in popgrass unless converted for agriculture. On close examination this olive, springy turf consists of tiny blades tightly coiled in on themselves, giving the surface its distinctive feel. It dies after a frost or, in the warmer central regions, during drought, and awaits the next rain. When the first drops hit, the blades suddenly unfurl *en masse*, each with a slight popping sound—remarkably loud in aggregate, when a whole field goes up over the course of a minute or two—distributing spores that drift away on the wind. These spores then start the next generation of popgrass. “Popgrass Shed” is one of the major allergens on Wallwichen, and anyone with hay fever will find the area intolerable for a few days until the air clears.

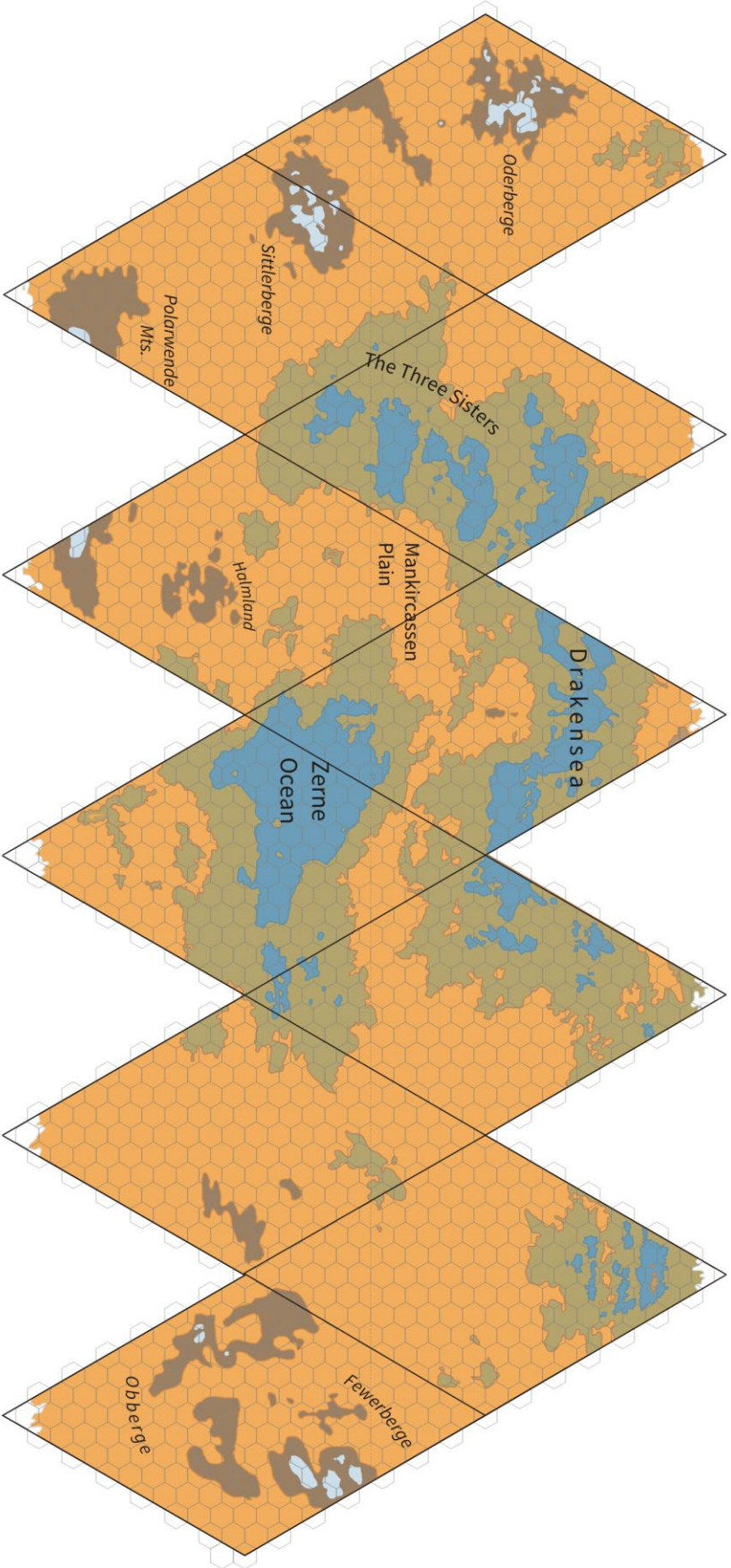
Weissport Raid, The: Nine years ago, neo-Vikings made a daring attack on Wallwichen's second-largest city, Weissport. In less than two hours over MCr40 of goods, equipment, art, and other valuables were snatched, and a substantial section of the downtown core smashed to pieces. Over a hundred people are still missing or unaccounted for and are believed to have been taken as slaves.

The government used the raid's aftermath to drum up more support for the military. As well as increasing the number of system defense boats, fast reaction forces have been scattered throughout the settled area, with orders to converge on the site of any new attack. To date none have occurred (though ships have been taken out past the 100-diameter limit), and it remains to be seen if the new measures will work when one comes. Meanwhile, the Wallenese have become enthusiastic partners in Jeon's policing of the space lanes, convoy duty, and searching for neo-Viking bases to destroy.

Weissport itself has rebuilt, though some damage is still visible if one knows where to look. The ruin of the Old City Hall, which was a write-off, has been left standing as a memorial.

Wallwichen A651733-A N 201 Po

Geographic Map

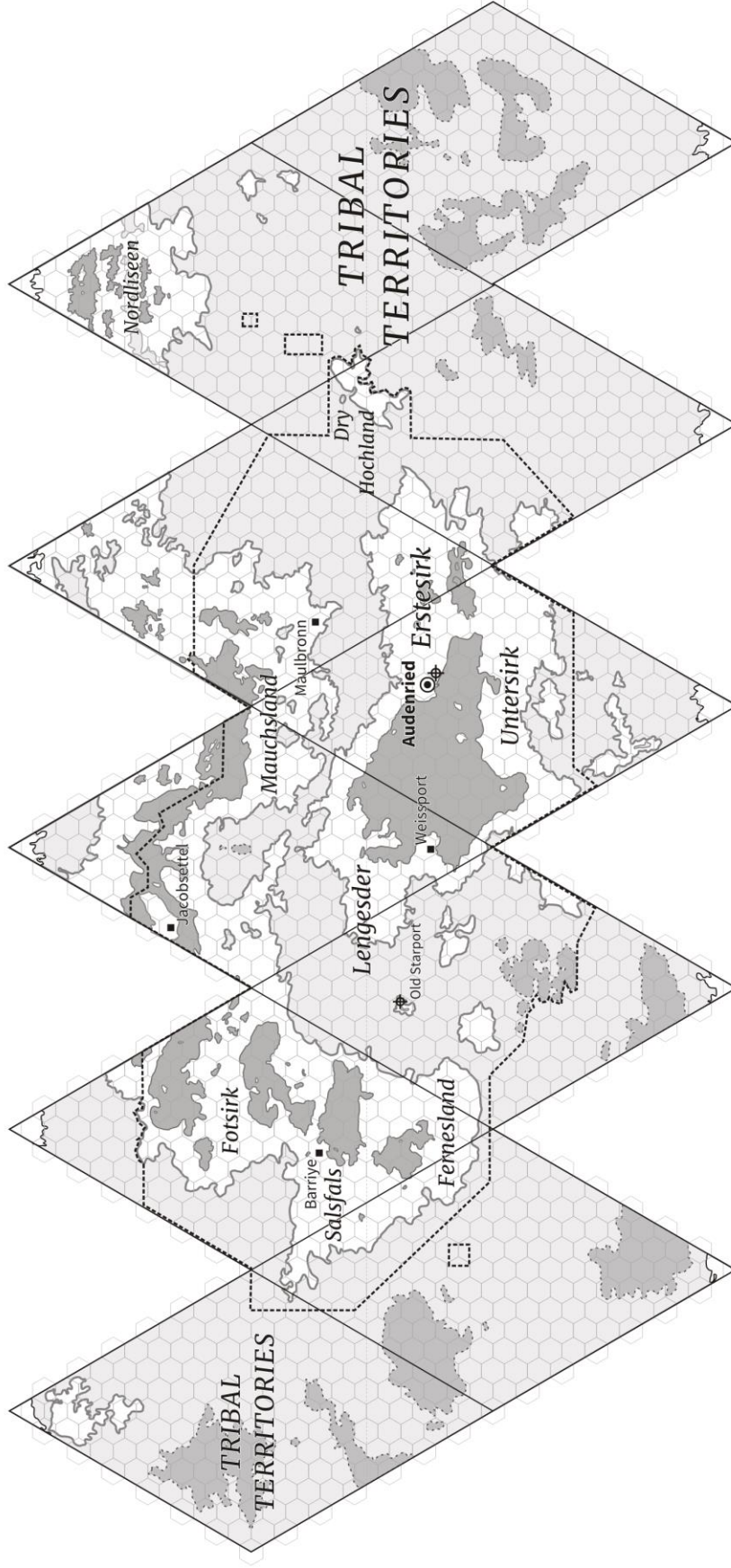


1 Hex = 512 km

- Lowlands
- Highlands
- Mountains
- Mountain Peaks
- Ice Cap
- Ocean

Wallwichen A651733-A N 201 Po

Political Map



- Region
- City or Major Town
- Starport
- Territorial Boundary
- Capital City

1 Hex = 512 km

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