

VENUS



SPACE
1889



Credits

Based on the original concept of Frank Chadwick

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Preface

Welcome to Venus!

The brightest star in the sky as seen from Earth, known by many as the morning and evening star, has played a role in many cultures and mythologies. It is often associated with goddesses such as Isis, Inanna, Aphrodite, and Freya, although they all have very different aspects. The female aspect however often comprises a creative, life-giving element, which is very appropriate for the planet of Venus in the *Space: 1889* universe. Our planet still seems to be ruled by primordial creative powers. In every corner of this world, life is manifold and primeval, with creatures co-existing that were separated on Earth by millions of years, as, for example, the equivalent to the *Tyrannosaurus rex* (still unidentified in the 1889 of our time) and the *Stegosaurus*.

Observing Venus from afar is difficult: Its dense atmosphere impedes any direct observation. While in 'our universe', planets and moons are explored by means of remotely-controlled probes, it is infinitely easier for the people in the *Spaceverse*. They can reach planets by etherflyer and explore them in person. Following the first failed expeditions of 1873 onwards, Venus has been visited regularly since 1878, to advance both its exploration and its colonization. The underlying motivation is driven by the curiosity of adventurers and explorers, but also by the economic interests of states and private enterprises.

But above all it is the insatiable spirit of discovery that drives men and women to explore and map unknown lands and places. It has also led to an encounter with an unknown people and its culture, the most bizarre and exotic which humans have seen (so far) in the universe. While Martians are certainly strange and different to a degree from mankind, they still resemble each other in appearance. Venusian Lizard-men, however, stand out at first sight as completely alien from their physical appearance alone. Adding to this distinct sense of "otherness" are their differently developed senses, as in their ability to see into the infrared, or their extraordinary olfactory senses. Their culture seems to have stagnated in a "primitive" Stone Age, but who knows which

cultural variants might hide in far-off, and so-far hidden, corners of the planet.

The main focus of this volume is on the exploration, settlement, and cultivation of a foreign world and contact with exotic cultures and creatures. During the eleven years since the first settlers set foot on Venus, they have made astounding progress: they have established settlements and towns, and opened plantations and construction sites. They have been, and still are, expanding transportation routes, they have established some initial industries, and started to tame primeval nature with all the modern technologies of 1889. This is just the beginning of a massive development in which the player's characters can still hope to gain and exert influence. They can build and create something completely new (for themselves): A new home for people – and their homeland.

At the end of this volume we have summarized some peculiar and prodigious mysteries on Venus for the Gamemaster. References to this chapter are marked with  throughout the book.

For the first time since the creation of the trailblazing RPG *Space: 1889*, unbelievably now over 25 years ago, we are proud to present a detailed description of the planet Venus, its inhabitants, and its environment.

As authors of this book, we had a lot of fun imagining and designing a new world. This world is intended to the setting of many adventures and discoveries, and it is with great pleasure that we pass its further elaboration, discovery, history and future into the hands of the Gamemaster. Soon, we will offer you additional ideas and adventures that we hope will intrigue, invite and perhaps even lure the intrepid adventurer beneath the enigmatic, unbroken cloud of the Morning Star.

Have fun in the jungles of Venus!

Stefan Küppers, Würselen, April 2014

Frank Heller, Berlin, April 2014

Venus - An Overview

Venus

Diameter: 7,526 miles or 12,103 km
Circumference: 23,643 miles or 38,022 km
Length of year: 248 Earth days
Length of day: 23 hours
Gravity: 100 % of Earth's gravity

"O my fair evening star"

— Richard Wagner, *Tannhäuser*

As seen from the Sun, Venus is the second world of our solar system, moving on an orbit at an average distance of 67 million miles, or 108 million kilometers, away from the Sun. Only slightly smaller than Earth, the planet is completely covered by a dense, white blanket of clouds. This, in combination with its proximity to Earth, results in Venus being the third brightest object in Earth's sky – after the Sun and the Moon.

Venus – also referred to as the Morning or Evening Star, so called by people from Earth for its position in the sky – is a gloomy greenhouse world. The dense cloud cover appears absolutely unbroken and impenetrable for about one half of the Venusian year. It is only from the highest mountains that the Sun can be seen from time to time. As the magnetic field of Venus interferes with compasses, reliable navigation and safe flight can only be ensured by the pilot following appropriate landmarks or flying above the cloud ceiling and, depending on the time of day, determining his position based on the path of the sun and stars. These adverse conditions are the reason why Venus has been hardly mapped at all. Consequently, the level of detail displayed by the chart in this book is utterly unknown to any person from Earth or any other character in the solar system.

For many years, Venus was a mystery to human astronomers. When the first telescopes were pointed at this world, they only showed a blank, featureless surface. Numerous theories tried to explain the possible origin of this landscape, but it was only when expeditions actually ventured out into space in 1873 that they discovered that the planet's lack of any discernible features was actually due to the dense layer of clouds. Soon, Venus proved to be a hothouse world of warm shallow oceans, steaming jungles, mangrove swamps, bogs and marshlands – a world of eternal rain under a permanently overcast lead-gray sky. The lowlands are also home to hundreds of species of dinosaurs, both large and small, as well as lizard-men devoid of any trait of advanced civilization. Since humans find the climate of the lowlands to be almost unbearable, they mostly tend to stay on the few highland plateaus, where temperatures and humidity are more tolerable and people might sometimes even catch a glimpse of the Sun shining wanly through the thick cover of clouds.

Many settlements have been built since Venus was first explored by humans and following the return of the first successful mission

in 1878. Large-scale plantations have been established where it is predominantly the indigenous lizard-men that cultivate and harvest the most valuable plants. Other peaceful tribes of lizard-men roam the jungle, looking for all manners of plants in order to take them to one of the numerous lowlands trading posts or the colonial settlements that have sprung up around them. Dinosaurs and hostile lizard-men pose a constant threat to the human enclaves and are one of the reasons why all the major colonial powers have deployed military contingents to the planet.

Even though the first expedition to Venus had been undertaken by British Armstrong etherflyers in 1873, the German Heidelberg expedition of 1878 was the first expedition to return successfully from Venus. The participants of the first three missions (of 1873, 1874 and 1876) experienced firsthand that the peculiar nature of the Venusian magnetic field significantly accelerated the decomposition of liftwood. Consequently, it was but a few days after landing that the liftwood lost its miraculous powers and the British etherflyers forfeited their ability to take off again. As Germany did not have sufficient quantities of liftwood available at first, it was compelled to use lifting gas – as in a dirigible – to send its etherflyers into the atmosphere. Thus, it was not until the German ether dirigible landed on a site that came to be baptized *Kaiser Wilhelm Plateau* that the few survivors of the previous British expeditions – which had been near-annihilated by ferocious dinosaur attacks and assaults from hostile tribes – were rescued. For a more detailed story of the first Venus expeditions see the **Space: 1889 Core Rules** (page 102).

Since then, the exploration and exploitation of Venus has been predominantly undertaken by Germany. While most German and British settlements are located in the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains and the Ishtar Highlands, other areas are also home to Russian, Italian, US and further British settlements and trade enclaves. In addition, there are some other minor settlements, though not all of them are willing to establish contact with their neighbors.

Even though Venus is not as heavily colonized as Mars, the young world offers a comparable economic potential. The planet is not only a cosmic sauna but also a veritable botanical treasure house filled with valuable plant products. In addition to having a value for horticulturalists and florists, the resources of Venus are particularly attractive to the German Empire's chemical industry, which, constantly hungering for raw materials, has been using them in the production of medication, paint and other chemical products. Thus, it is no wonder that the German Empire has been especially keen on building settlements on Venus. Moreover, hunters of botanical treasures and raw materials are just as enticed by Venus as are big game hunters, scientists intent on doing research on alien Venusian species or future plantation owners, who are hoping to make a good income on the planet.

Only minor metal deposits have been found so far. Besides, the geography and environmental conditions make the exploration and exploitation of mining areas a difficult process. Heavy machines can be transported through the air or over water only in several short stages. In addition, ores have to be smelted, as transporting them to Earth would not be profitable. In any case, since most colonies want to retain the highest level of autonomy and self-sufficiency possible, metal ores are in high demand locally, as well.

Venus

In the Swamps of the Morning Star

"Morning found us under a remarkably blue sky, just as if the weather wanted to console us for the events suffered on the day before when my loyal mount had drowned in the swamps.

In the wee hours, mist had risen from the moist-warm underbrush and, damp and wet, crept across the land with pale fingers, grabbing hold of our bones as though it wanted to keep us from leaving this jungle. Soon, however, the mist was chased away by the Sun – and fell back into the scrub around us.

We had set up camp on a small clearing in the impenetrable jungle, surrounded by trees and undergrowth that grew in an incomprehensible pattern – as if a giant gardener without any sense of order had once sown seeds and grains and then left his work unattended for several centuries. While vines and creepers dangled from the branches above like fat green snakes, moss and lichen covered the green-brown trunks giving them the appearance of grim bearded faces. Insects as long as my arm buzzed overhead, producing a muffled sound when beating their wings as I was enveloped by the heavy fragrance of alien flowers. I had travelled the deserts of the Orient and the wide plains of the prairie but this place told me quite unmistakably that it was not meant for humans but instead was suffused with a primal force – powerful and omnipresent – that my home planet had lost quite a while ago.

As is the Venusians' wont, Tupua had woken up before me and had even set out into the jungle before dawn in order to gather more of the delicious fruits that had already sated us yesterday. I was left alone with my thoughts.

It was only too well that I remembered Sir David's face, his pleading eyes above the scar-covered nose during our last meeting at Fort Collingswood. I wouldn't even have been able to deny this request if it had been made by a less loyal friend, a less good person, but it was Sir David's pain that truly aroused my compassion – all the more so as I recalled all those adventures we had survived together.

Of course, we could have asked the Englishmen for help, could have called for support from the governor. And, of course, they would have met our request, would have deployed soldiers and cannons to find the lost *Faithful* and Lady Annabell Lindsay. Yet, this wouldn't have happened immediately; red tape is hard to cut, and Sir David had deemed it intolerable to wait for a search party to be raised while his delicate daughter feared for her life in the Venusian jungle. I was resolved to find her – both for her own sake and for the pain suffered by my old friend. These two reasons filled me with a certainty that one can only feel in the face of immeasurably great danger.

A rustling noise announced the return of Tupua, who did not even try to hide his presence from me.

Soon after, he stepped from the underbrush, holding a berry-filled bag made of dinosaur leather in his hands.

"Hepa-Ta-Kao!" Some days ago, he had given me this name, which – as he explained to me – meant "black-bearded son of Earth" in his mother tongue. The Venusian language is so different from ours that I haven't mastered it perfectly yet.

"What's up, Tupua?"

"We are looking for the ship, aren't we? The air-ship that crashed down from the sky?"

"Indeed we are!"

"And tell me", he continued. "The ship, does it only fly with the wind? Or does it have fire burning in its belly?"

"Of course, there's things that burn inside the ship. Oil used for lamps, coals fuelling the boilers. Why do you ask?"

"Because I tasted smoke, Hepa-Ta-Kao, not one league away from here!" His tongue slid out between his lips. I believed that he spoke the truth, since Venusians – that much I had become aware of – smell the world with their tongues, having a sense of smell much keener and more sensitive than us humans do.

"And can't it be something else? Lightning that set a tree on fire?"

"It could be, Hepa-Ta-Kao. But this smoke tastes different. It tastes like the smoke coming from the chimneys in the Earthling settlements. But there are no settlements here. It has to be the ship or some fire made by the pale ones that attacked us yesterday."

Once again, I realized that my companion's lizard face concealed a bright and alert mind that was in no way inferior to that of a human. "Well", I told him. "Then let's head out. You lead!"

After just about an hour, we reached the place that Tupua believed the smell had emanated from. Having climbed a tree, I was able to see a thin column of smoke rise up in the distance, a gray plume resembling a brush stroke in the still blue sky.

With my own dinosaur having found an unlucky death yesterday, Tupua now decided it was best to lead his loyal animal, our baggage tied to its back. Our guns were the only thing we carried constantly. While Tupua had his personal shotgun, I preferred my 'Bärentöter' ('Bear Killer') – a weapon which had never failed me against the creatures of the Morning Star. An attack – whether by animals or sinister men and their frenzied servants – was always to be expected and required us to be armed at all times.

Once we had drawn even closer to the trail of smoke, I signaled Tupua to wait, venturing forward to scout the area on my own. While I did not find any sign of human life, I saw the column of smoke rise up from the wreck of the *Faithful*.

The airship had crashed directly into the jungle, with one half lying in a small river and the main body having been shattered and cracked open, causing the struts and frames, still smoking from the fire's remains, to stick up like the ribs of an enormous skeleton. Ripped off the main body, the passenger cabin lay on the side, the windows burst, the door torn off its hinges and flung several meters away. Corpses could be seen, as well. I rapidly ascertained, though, that they wore the uniforms of English soldiers and that Sir David's daughter was not among them. While many of the dead had perished in the crash and others had been killed by the claws and teeth of wild animals, two soldiers displayed wounds that could only have been caused by shotguns. I returned to Tupua.

"The ship is over there, Tupua."

"And the woman?"

"Perhaps in the cabin. But I don't think she's there anymore."

"Killed by wild beasts?"

"Maybe. But maybe not. Some of the dead show bullet wounds."

"They were shot?"

"Indeed! Come, my friend. Let's take a closer look."

We had not yet reached the wreckage when, from the corner of my eye, I saw something move in the underbrush – and I immediately knew what it was.

"Tupua!", I shouted. "Run! To the ship! Fast!"

A predator lizard sprang out of the undergrowth – a monster with sharp teeth and sickle-shaped claws, as large as a man and twice as heavy. The animal emitted a roar that reverberated in the entire jungle and lunged towards me.

Rolling to the side, I yanked up the bear killer, put my finger around the trigger of the first barrel and pulled. In my haste the shot had been poorly aimed, allowing the beast to be only grazed by the bullet. Yet, the projectile stopped the lizard's attack and, instead of sinking its claws into me, the monster only pushed me over, knocking me to the ground.

I heard another roar and Tupua screamed. My friend ran towards the wreckage of the *Faithful*, another hissing lizard leaping after him.

The beast on my chest tried to bite me, but I pushed my arm against its jaws, shoving them aside. Then I grabbed its neck and threw it off me.

I raised the rifle and pressed its muzzle against the lizard's body, pulling the trigger. When I had tumbled to the ground, however, mud had caked my rifle, causing it to become clogged and wet. As not even Henry's craft was proof against moisture, the hammer ineffectively clicked against the chambered cartridge. I dropped the bear killer, drawing my knife. Hissing, the wounded lizard struggled to its feet.

"Hepa-Ta-Kao!" A shot rang out. The lizard in front of me dropped to the ground, dead.

Turning my head, I saw that Tupua had climbed on the strut where his pursuer was unable to reach him. It was from this elevated position that he had fired a well-aimed shot that had instantaneously killed the lizard. Soon after, the second reptile, angrily hissing at him from below, was felled by a second shot.

"Thank you!", I said once I had returned to his side and cleaned my rifle. "A clean shot, my friend!" Tupua blinked happily with his third eyelid.

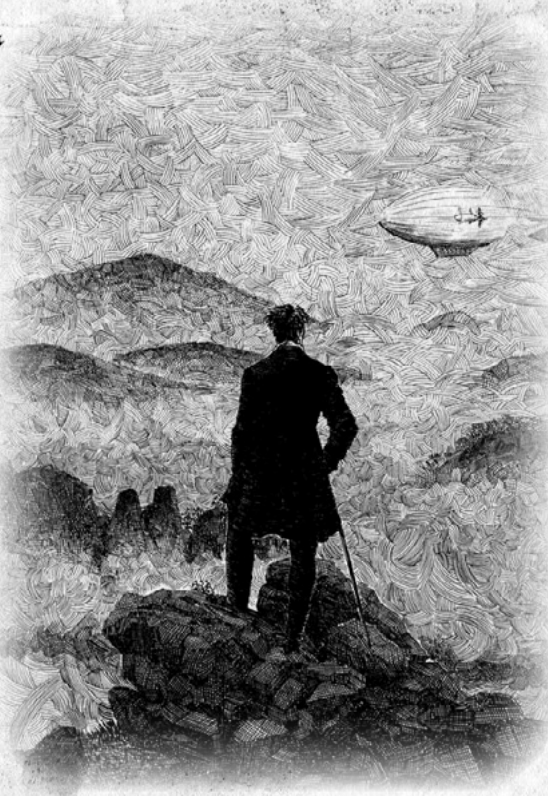
Turning to the wreck again, we climbed up the side of the cockpit to access its interior. Some thorough searching revealed the belongings of Sir David's daughter's – yet no living girl, no body and not even blood. Instead, I had noticed something lying on the ground, and picked it up.

"What's that, Hepa-Ta-Kao?"

"A waxed cigarette-end. Italian, like the men who attacked us yesterday."

The empty cockpit forced us to face the truth – Lady Annabell had disappeared."

— Karl May: *In the Swamps of the Morning Star*.
First unedited edition, chapter 4



The Geography of Venus

"There is nothing that cultivates and teaches the educated mind more than geography."

— Immanuel Kant

The exploration of Venus is a young science that – even after almost twenty years of research – has so far yielded but few results. Though explorers are constantly setting off to the planet and eagerly collecting new data, their fieldwork is hampered by major difficulties (lack of compasses, poor visibility, mist, heat, hungry dinosaurs ...) that all too often destroy or – even worse – fatally compromise the results obtained before they can be properly analyzed. Should a brave explorer still defy these adverse conditions to compile a chart based on his discoveries, the resulting map will be inaccurate in most cases – and, given the circumstances at hand, is bound to become outdated after only a few months.

Yet, Earth's scientists refuse to be discouraged, time and again starting new expeditions which slowly but surely unveil more of Venus' hidden mysteries.

Naming Conventions

Any explorer intending to name newly discovered landmarks should stick to certain already established Cytherographical conventions. While locations are usually given the name of a goddess or prominent mythological woman, the name of an Earth-based monarch is also deemed acceptable.

Of course, explorers may also try to name an object after themselves. That, however, will only serve to prove their vanity and – even worse – bad style, making them bound to be mocked by experts and the general public alike.

Incidentally, no place name used by the lizard-men has so far ever been recorded on human-created maps.

Pancyteria – The Continent

There is a huge geographical difference between Venus and its older sister, Earth. While there is more water than land on Earth, the opposite is true on Venus. With researchers still debating about the exact proportions, it is presumed that about 25 to 40 percent of its surface is covered by water. Venus has two major and several smaller inland seas (see page 12), some of them separated by thousands of miles of land.

The great contiguous landmass was termed *Pancyteria*, a name chosen to allow experts to differentiate between the Venus supercontinent, its oceans, and the continents on Earth. Pancyteria may be divided into several sub-continents.

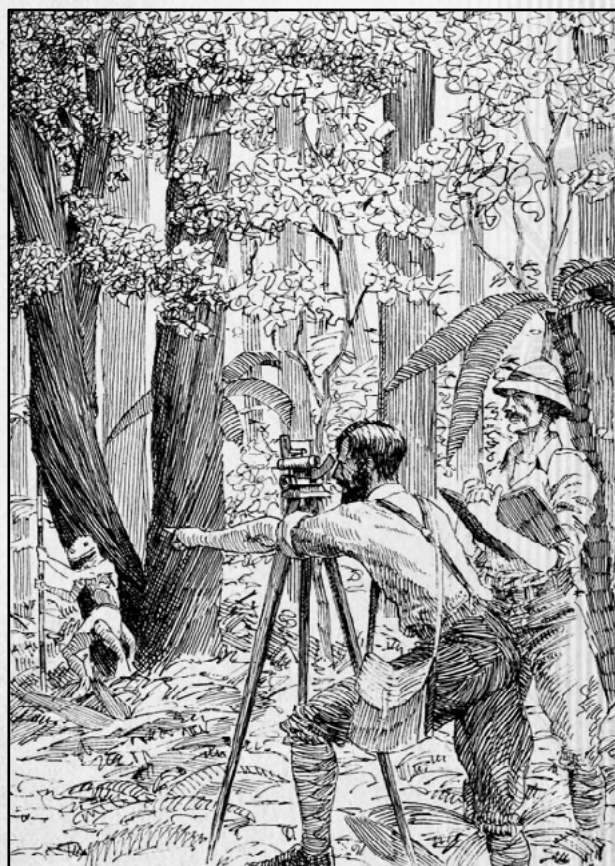
Ishtar – The North

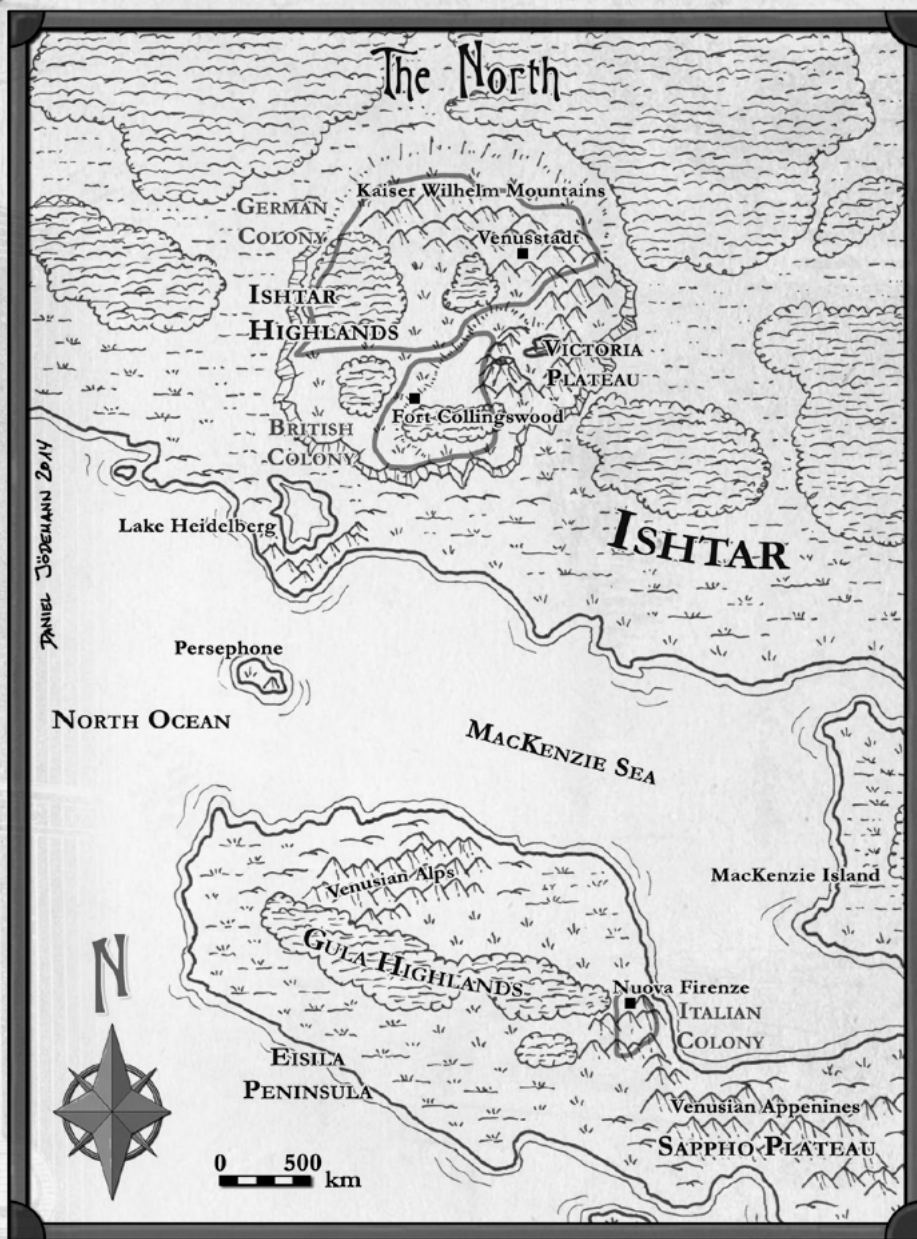
The area around the North Pole was named after the ancient Mesopotamian goddess of love and war. Somewhat larger than Australia, Ishtar is the part of Venus that has been most heavily colonized by humans – predominantly owing to its climatic conditions. As Ishtar is an average of 9,900 ft., or 3,000 meters, above sea level, it is significantly cooler and dryer than lower areas.

The region is characterized by mountains and tablelands. The highest elevation, **Mount Maxwell**, rises more than 35,400 ft., or 10,800 meters, into the sky, and so for no less than half the Venusian year its peak is clear of cloud.

Mount Maxwell gives way to the **Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains**, the most characteristic feature of this part of Venus. This mountain chain surrounds the wide, fertile **Ishtar Plateau** seized by the German Empire. The plateau, which has a diameter of slightly more than 1,400 miles, or 2,300 kilometers, is covered with dense jungle. However, an increasing number of plantations are beginning to expand outwards from the settlements into the forest. The colony's towns and plantations are connected via narrow roads, actually mere dinosaur paths, with lesser trails to lizard-men villages branching off at irregular intervals.

While the colony's northern and northeastern boundaries are formed by the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains, it is bordered by bold cliffs in all other directions. Rising 9,900 ft. (3,000 meters) or more from the lowlands, these crags are specifically the **Danu Cliffs** in the south, the **Akna Cliffs** in the west and the **Freia Cliffs** in the north. Just like the Ishtar Plateau, all of them bear the names of goddesses. These names were bestowed upon them by *Arthur Townsend-Smythe*, an anthropologist and member of the 1874 expedition who displayed a keen interest in mythology. In 1878, he was killed in a dinosaur attack, just a few days





before the other survivors of the Heidelberg expedition flew back to Earth. The above-mentioned landmarks kept their heathenish names in his honor.

A flat plain made up of swamps and mangroves lies to the north of the plateau. It is here where – concealed by mud and mist – the North Pole of Venus is located.

The significantly smaller British colony (p. 37) is situated west of Mount Maxwell. Its heart is the **Victoria Plateau**, where most British plantations have been built. In the east and south, the **Valkyrie Ridge** forms a kind of bridge between the plateau and the land of Fortuna, arguably the planet's largest tessera terrain feature. The biological, geological and geographical diversity of this region attracts many explorers – and afterwards, surprisingly, even lets most of them return to where they came from.

The far north, between **Mount Maxwell** and the **Land of Fortuna**, hides an important landmark called **Hoakha Aohama-KhaMoa** by the lizard-men. The name means something like “the big snake that bites its own tail”. Any traveler approaching the “snake” on the ground will suddenly encounter a densely vegetated hill chain – several hundred meters high – that extends to left and right. If this traveler now moves along the hills for a

few (exhausting) days, hoping to eventually bypass them, he will only arrive right back where he started. If he, however, endures the ordeal of climbing a hill, he will discover the terrain behind it slopes steeply downwards. Eventually, he is bound to encounter a deep lake with no large dinosaurs and only a handful of smaller species living in it.

In fact, the lake is a meteorite crater with a diameter of more than 60 miles, or 100 kilometers. With the crater still being relatively young, its walls have not weathered yet. Over several years, its lack of a natural drain has allowed rainwater to accumulate to form what is now a major lake. Just what this lake with a depth of more than 8,000 ft., or 2,500 meters, might hide in its dark waters is left to the gamemaster's imagination.

Tellus - The Northeast

Ishtar's eastern appendage extends beyond the polar lowlands. Named after a Roman earth goddess, Tellus is surrounded by the North Ocean on three sides. The subcontinent is below Ishtar's sea level, with only a few mesas rising 600 to 1000 ft. (200 to 300 meters) above it. Consequently, a large part of Tellus is covered by swamps and wetlands.

Nothing that might be attractive to explorers from Earth has been found here so far. As the region doesn't offer much to lizard-men

Metis - The Bridge

Metis is a land bridge that connects Ishtar's west to Atla's north and thus the rest of Pancyteria. About 2,000 miles, or 3,200 kilometers, in length, this subcontinent named after a lover of Zeus changes in shape more frequently than any other part on Venus.

Metis is supported by several fixed “core structures” that provide a minimum of stability to the bogs and marshes constantly being moved around by floods and rainfall.

These core structures are actually several coronae – the largest of them being **Feronia**, **Rananeida** and **Coaticue** – and the

Bagbartu Mountains. In the west, the crater **Natalia** (bearing the name of its Russian discoverer's daughter) forms another individual core structure that sees mud and quagmire slowly revolve around it.

Metis' most narrow part in the southwest is only about 200 miles, or 300 kilometers, wide. It features an important trade route used by the lizard-men to transport goods of all kinds from the western to the eastern North Ocean. The trade route's most southern point is **Shosho-Nombaoh-Hauou** (roughly translated as "many feet pass this crossroads"), one of the largest known lizard-man communities. This busily buzzing place sees many lizard-men meet to trade their wares, enjoying the bustling atmosphere that is arguably matched only by cities on Earth or Mars. Often, people from Earth may be found here, as well – either bartering goods or hiring natives for expeditions into the hinterland.

Aphrodite – The Belt of Venus

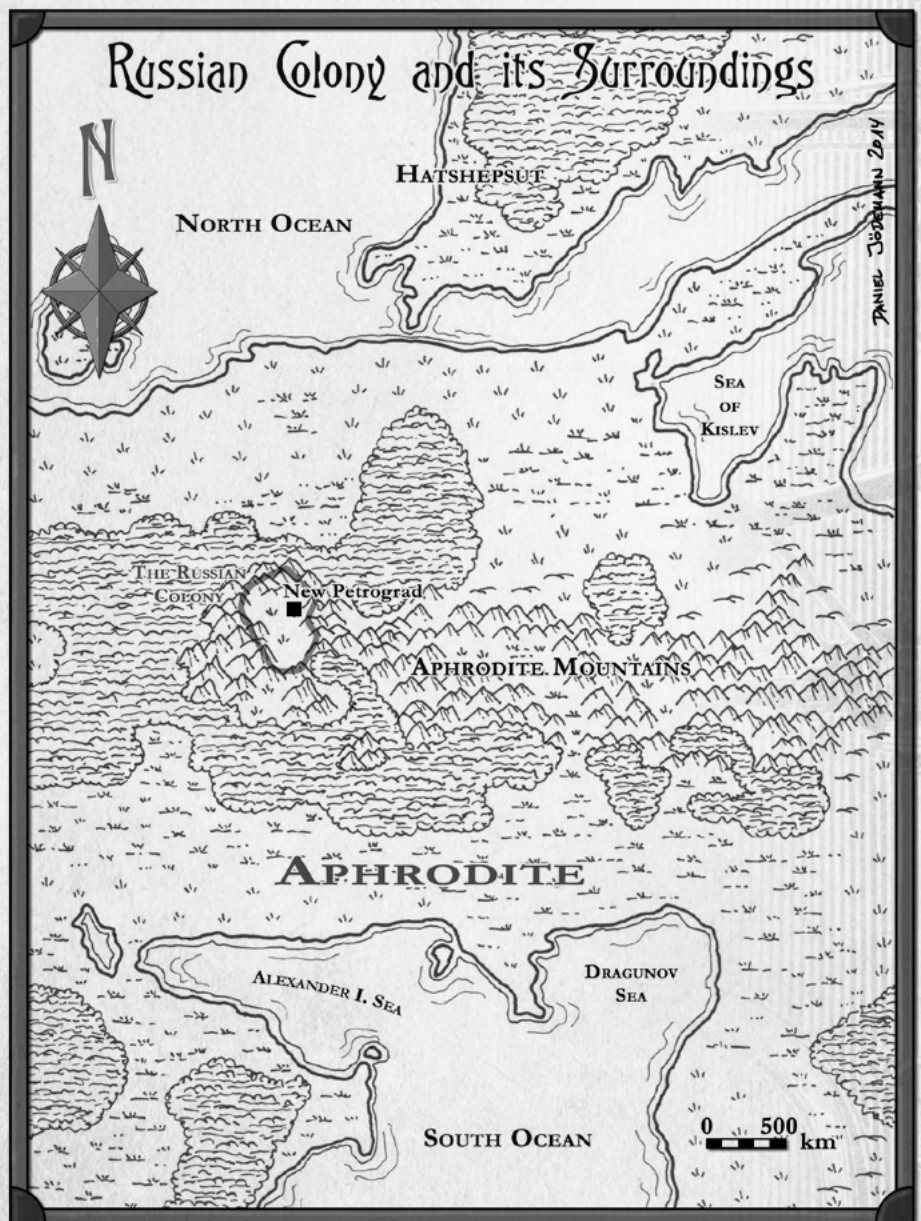
Extending over a major part of the planet's equator, the largest subcontinent of Venus covers about the same area as Africa. Heavily rugged Aphrodite is home to numerous mountains, thus making it highly attractive to colonists. Mountains and plateaus stretch in a chain from east to west, with the swampy **Bereghinya Plain** being located in the north and eventually giving way to the North Ocean. Named after lucky spirits from Slavic folklore, Bereghinya is predominantly known for the large number of *hoplites* roaming the grasslands. It is also rumored to be the home of mysterious carnivorous plants that supposedly may even pose a threat to humans.

The landscape south of the mountains is characterized by numerous gullies and canyons that travellers on foot find extremely difficult to cross.

The **Eisila Peninsula** in Aphrodite's far west sees the continent's highest mountains, the **Venusian Alps**, rise from the **Gula Highlands**, a tesserae-dominated mesa.

The Italian colony is located in the foothills of the **Sappho Plateau**, also known as the Venusian Apennines (see page 53) among the settlers. The peninsula features many (presumed) extinct volcanoes. The number of earthquakes, however, suggests that the area remains a particularly geologically active part of Venus.

The **Hestia Highlands** are situated approximately 900 miles, or 1,500 kilometers, to the east of the Italian colony. While not having many obviously spectacular things to offer, it could yet become home to another colony, as the Italians have proved to be quite interested in annexing the territory. Thus far, though, they



have not felt compelled to define any boundaries or deploy any of their soldiers to the region.

The **Aphrodite Mountains**, home to the Russian colony (see page 60), begin some 3,000 miles, or 4,800 kilometers, to the southeast of Hestia. In fact, only scattered Russian plantations are to be found in this rough and rugged landscape.

It is 1,500 miles, or 2,400 km, to the east of these mountains that travelers eventually encounter the **Thetis Mountains**. Wild rumors about this utterly unexplored mountain range are constantly being circulated by the lizard-men from the north: for instance, probably everyone has heard about the mysterious ruins to be found here, yet no Earth-based explorer has actually seen them so far. This is predominantly due to the fact that most humans dismiss this story as mere superstitious gossip exchanged by the natives – though if the explorers knew what they could find in the mountains, they would immediately pack their instruments and catch the next airship to get there.

The heart of the mountains hosts the ruins of a town that would not have even played second fiddle to London or Paris during its heyday. Now, all that remains are overgrown walls with remnants of inscriptions written in an unknown language. The lizard-men living in this region tend to avoid the ruins as the strange lights said to wander here at night fill even the bravest warrior with dread.

It is about 900 miles, or 1,500 kilometers, to the south of the Thetis Mountains that the Artemis Rift, the largest known ravine of Venus, extends over a length of 500 miles, or 800 kilometers, thus being almost twice as long as Earth's Grand Canyon. The **Artemis Rift** is home to innumerable pterosaurs, which nest in the ravine's walls, predominantly feeding on the fish living in the canyon's creeks.

The far east is where the **Diana Highlands** are located. No explorer from Earth has ever returned from this region that marks Aphrodite's eastern border.

Atla

In the east, Aphrodite gives way to the subcontinent of Atla, which borders Metis in the north and Themis in the east. Slightly smaller than Aphrodite, Atla was named after a Nordic water goddess.

It is the least explored part of Venus – due to the fact that it is also the Morning Star's most dangerous region. The area east of the **Ganis Mountains**, whose deep cave systems still wait to be explored, is dominated by rough terrain repeatedly shaken by earthquakes. Mountains, coronae and tesserae pose almost insurmountable obstacles to anyone moving on the ground. In addition, Atla is the home of numerous active volcanoes, including **Maat Mons**, the highest (5 miles or 8 km) and largest (diameter of 250 miles, or 400 km) volcano on Venus.

Time and again, the mountain – ironically named after the Egyptian goddess of order – spews ash and hot, toxic gasses from several craters. Both of these things have deprived the craters' environment of any vegetation, thus making the region around Maat Mons the only known desert on Venus. The volcano's ash contains large proportions of copper, which may explain the electric discharges to be observed during eruptions.

The few explorers having survived the dangers of this region have described a landscape reminiscent of biblical portrayals of hell – a black land covered with hot ash and whipped by poisonous storms. Towering above this wasteland, the volcanoes spew dark clouds of ash that smother the area like an ominous blanket and constantly strike it with lightning. The few creeks and lakes in the region are not only nearly boiling hot, but have also been turned to acid by the mountain's poisons. In short, this land is a literal hell on Earth (or rather Venus).

And yet this land may once have been the home of a highly advanced ancient civilization as explorers have discovered several stone obelisks – with some of them rising 30 m from the ashes and covered with strange geometrical patterns. Whoever is able to solve the mystery surrounding their origin will almost certainly go down in the annals of history.

The flat **Plain of Phoebe** extends to the east of this rugged terrain. Not very different from similar regions, it is covered with swamps and bogs that are home to numerous herbivores. The plain borders the **Sea of Devana**, which marks the boundary to Themis.

Themis

The southeastern continent, named after a Greek goddess of justice, borders the **Helena Sea** in the south and the **Guinevere Sea** in the north, thus forming a 3,000 miles (5,000-kilometres) wide buffer between the North and the South Ocean.

With Themis being far distant from all existing colonies, the subcontinent remains relatively unexplored. The area best known is the **Benton Peninsula**, jutting into the Guinevere Sea in the northeast.

The peninsula is a paradise for large herbivores as the soft ground protects their heavy bones and the lush vegetation provides food in abundance.

It is the habitat of the solar system's largest known land-dwelling animal, the *Apatosaurus bentoni*. These animals (see **Core Rules**, page 107) gather in this region to mate and lay their eggs before moving on with their herds. The young, hatching some weeks later, form new herds shortly afterwards and then begin to migrate, as well. After several years, this circular kind of migration leads them back to their established breeding area which will see them once again sire a new generation. The young attract several predators which take a heavy toll of life during the first months of this migration – only one out of one hundred apatosaurus is estimated to reach adulthood. In turn, the predators – naturally including the infamous *Tyrannosaurus rex* – are highly appealing to big game hunters from Earth, who are eager to bag some exceptional trophies in this region.

As expeditions only sporadically venture out into the rest of Themis, it is mostly tales told by the natives that give visitors an idea of what the continent's interior conceals.

It is a fact, however, that Themis is dominated by highly rugged terrain. A chain of astra – some of them more than 60 miles, or 100 kilometers, in diameter – extends from the **Asteria Mountains** in the northwest to the **Lavinia Sea** in the southeast. While the region east of the astra sees a few tesserae rise from the swamps, the land to their west is dotted with impact craters. If the scientists are to be believed, all of these craters developed at the same time some 10,000 to 20,000 years ago, when this part of Venus was hit by a cosmic barrage with presumably dire consequences. Most of the craters have been overgrown, but are as yet little eroded. Earth-based explorers of this region obtained some curious scientific results, prompting some geologists to assume that the meteorites that struck this area are the cause of Venus' disturbed magnetic field.

Many of the craters have filled with rainwater over the years – a fact that has led the locals to place the eggs of different small plesiosaurs in these new lakes and thus create artificial fishing grounds. This clever idea might also be the reason behind the semi-nomadic lifestyle preferred by this region's natives.

Themis is likely to attract more human explorers in the future. While the Asteria Mountains might accommodate new colonies, the lizard-men dwelling on the east coast keep on spinning wild yarns of diamond fields and a mysterious advanced civilization living in the **Hathor Mountains**.

The Moon of Venus?

It was in 1672 that the astronomer Cassini thought he had discovered a Venusian moon he later dubbed *Neith*. Even though some people believed his observation, it could not be confirmed in the centuries that followed. Finally, *Neith*'s existence was disproved by the first manned expeditions to Venus. Today's astronomers assume that Cassini deemed a fixed star to be the moon of Venus.

Most recently, however, an increasing number of people support the theory stating that Mercury once used to be the moon of Venus. According to this theory, Mercury and Venus originated in the same matter cloud when the solar system was still young, and circled each other. Over the years, Mercury moved steadily further away from its "mother world" until the mass of the Sun pulled it from Venus' gravitation field and flung it in its current orbit. Proving this theory might be difficult indeed.

The oceans of Venus differ from those found on Earth in several aspects.

The most important difference concerns the concept of tide. As Venus has no moon, the only tidal force on Venus is exerted by the Sun. As a result, the difference between high and low tide is considerably smaller. Likewise, there are no spring and neap tides.

Furthermore, the seas on Venus are significantly warmer – a fact which is probably associated with the planet's increased volcanic activity. That in turn has an impact on its ocean currents: warm water rises from the ocean floor to the surface and then flows towards the coasts. The Coriolis forces cause these warm currents to move clockwise in the northern hemisphere and anti-clockwise in the southern hemisphere.

In addition, the oceans contain more sediments. The permanent rainfall above the continent washes innumerable small particles from the ground, which – carried by the many watercourses – all sooner or later find their way into the ocean as fine silt, so relentlessly raising the seabed year on year. From the coasts, the land shifts slowly but steadily towards the ocean's interior. The ocean is shallow for several hundreds of kilometers, until its floor descends steeply to give way to deep sea trenches. It is still unknown how deep these trenches actually are. The few soundings conducted – mostly from airships – indicated a minimum depth of 16,000 ft., or 5,000 meters. It is assumed that undersea avalanches of sediments are constantly crashing down into the depths. Some explorers predict that in a few millennia the oceanic trenches will have filled up with sediments in a process that will cause the sea level to rise significantly and will see today's plateaus and mountains become islands in a world-encompassing ocean.

Lada - The South

If *Themis* has been hardly explored then most of *Lada* is completely unknown. The southernmost subcontinent, named after a Slavic goddess of love, is still a blank spot on most maps. First and foremost, the area around the South Pole has probably not ever been visited by an airship – even though this has certainly not been due to a lack of attempts.

What is known at least is that *Lada*'s east is a flat plain. Arched like a huge dome, the west is dominated by two large calderas, with tesserae extending between them. The largest known river on Venus, the *Ammavaru*, also has its source in this region. At a length of 800 miles, or 1,300 kilometers, it is not much longer than the Rhine, but it is 75 miles, or 120 kilometers, wide along almost its entire length. Fed by numerous tributaries and headstreams carrying rainwater from the highlands, the *Ammavaru* idly meanders through the lowlands to eventually flow into the South Ocean. A shallow river with constantly changing banks, it is home to a wide variety of fish, which provide food to a large number of swamp devils in turn.

Thetys, Antithetys and Leptothetys - The Oceans

It was at an early stage that the explorers of Venus found several unconnected oceans concealed under the Morning Star's clouds. The North Ocean, which was discovered first, was christened **Thetys** in 1873, while the South Ocean, discovered by Heidelberg in 1878, was given the name of **Antithetys**. Last, the inland seas, discovered by the Russian expeditions in the 1880s, were termed **Leptothetys**, meaning "lesser sea". Should even more inland seas be discovered in the future, they will also be given this designation.

Thetys - The North Ocean

Arguably, the best-explored ocean – which actually does not mean that much – is the **North Ocean**, around which all the human colonies have been established so far. Only interrupted by *Metis*, it forms a kind of belt around the entire northern hemisphere. The **Sea of Guinevere**, located to the south, is separated from the main ocean by *Aphrodite's* *Eisila* Peninsula.

The North Ocean contains the deepest known sites of all Venus' oceans. The **Sedna Basin**, extending to the southwest of *Ishtar*, is about the same size as the Gulf of Mexico. The **Leda Deeps**, a region east of the *Fortuna* Peninsula, which was only discovered as recently as 1887, is called the "sea of many jaws" by the Lizard-men. And the Sea of *Nemesis* to the east of *Tellus* hides the **Atalanta Deeps**, which is actually composed of two different trench systems.

MacKenzie's Island

About as large as the British Isles, this island in the North Ocean constitutes the remains of a land bridge that once connected *Ishtar* and *Aphrodite*. The interior of *MacKenzie's* Island is dominated by steep hills and low mountains, which provide for a rather rough terrain. Most lizard-men inhabit the island's coast, living on fishing. With the climate in the human colonies being so much more tolerable, no human has lived here for any extended period of time since the unlucky *MacKenzie*.

Several local tribes, most of them made up of experienced clans of sailors, live in and around the North Ocean. Any human adventurer who does not shy away from contacting the lizard-men may reach any coast of Venus aboard one of their ships.

Aptithetys - The South Ocean

The mysterious and as yet little known South Ocean is significantly smaller than the North Ocean. Its coasts have been roughly mapped, and soundings have been taken in some places which indicated an average depth of 100 ft., or 30 meters. So far, deep-sea trenches have not been discovered, but the Russians are currently planning an airship expedition which aims to explore the high seas in the following year.

Russian traders maintain contact with local sailors, who occasionally visit the coast of **Dragunov Bay**. These seamen tell stories of a land in the south (probably the northern coast of Lada) that hosts a powerful empire of lizard-men ruled by a bloodthirsty priestly caste. Should these extravagant native rumors have any truth in them, the poor, enslaved subjects of the priests will most certainly be freed by the Russian expedition.

Leptothetys - The Inland Seas

Pancyteria has several inland seas, most of which were only discovered a few years ago. Apart from rough outlines, the only thing known about them is they are (probably) shallow and (most likely) saltwater. For lack of space, only the most interesting seas will be presented in this chapter.

The **Sea of Ulfrun**, located south of Metis, is primarily known for being the breeding area of different amphibian dinosaurs. The Lizard-men living on the east coast are peaceful farmers who have based their entire primitive agricultural community on collecting the dinosaurs' eggs.

The **Sea of Devana**, marking the border between Lada and Themis, is the largest of the inland seas. While relatively advanced tribes live along its coast, the inhabitants of the **Telikki** and **Su-modiva Islands** are both fishermen and pirates.

The **Sea of Navka** is known for having been the first inland sea to be discovered. Furthermore, researchers assume that it was once an extension of the North Ocean and was separated from the latter by an earthquake.

The **Sea of Lavinia**, situated in the north of Lada, encompasses the **Antiope Archipelago**, a group of fairly large islands.

The **Gulf of Kislev** in Aphrodite's north is likely not an inland sea, but an extension of the North Ocean. This theory still needs to be proven, however.

Last but not least, the **Poranica Sea** and the **Poludnitsa Sea**, the two smallest inland seas, lie east of the Diana Highlands. The future will tell whether they really are two separated bodies of water, one huge singular sea or even only one small sea that has merely been recorded twice in error.

Terrain Forms and Climate

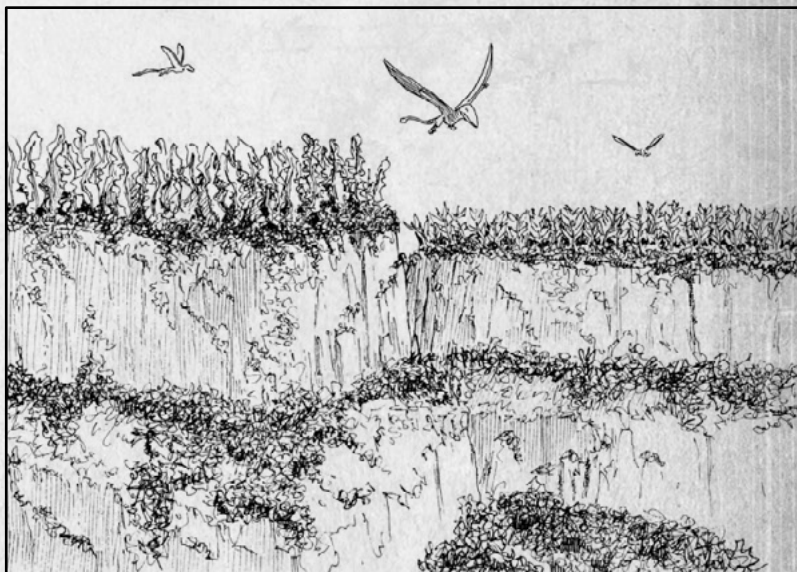
A younger planet than Earth, Venus is still in an early stage of development. Just as the planet's life forms, the terrain features prevailing in the previously described regions are not yet as varied and diverse as those found on Earth, and primarily belong to one of the following categories:

Mountain Ranges

Since the mountains – despite the almost eternal rainfall – show few signs of erosion, they are assumed to be relatively young in geological terms. Some mountain ranges of Venus, such as the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains, are of volcanic origin. Mount Maxwell's height of nearly 35,500 ft., or 10,800 meters, makes it a truly monumental sight. Until approximately 5,000 years ago, it had still been an active volcano, but has apparently not erupted since then. In contrast, the Aphrodite Mountains were probably formed by similar geological faults as most mountain chains on Earth. Mountain places where the terrain is so steep that no plant can take root there often have nothing else to offer than bare rock used as building material by the colonists.

Tesserae - The Mosaic Pieces

Tesserae (sing. Tessera) are a unique geographical feature only known on Venus. The name, also used to mean mosaic tile, neatly describes how the tesserae features look. A tessera is a huge table mountain (up to 8 square miles or 20 square kilometers), which is separated from its neighbors by gorges crossing the landscape at right angles. These gorges form a network, which may stretch over hundreds of square kilometers. Scientists differ in their opinions of how the tesserae developed. The prevailing view is that the surface buckled and cracked when the young planet cooled down. Others adhere to the theory that the surface of Venus was broken up by strong earthquakes. The view expressed by some isolated individuals beyond the bounds of scholarship who suggest that the landscape was shaped by an advanced civilization employing



similar tools to the Martian canal builders is, of course, rightly dismissed as ridiculous.

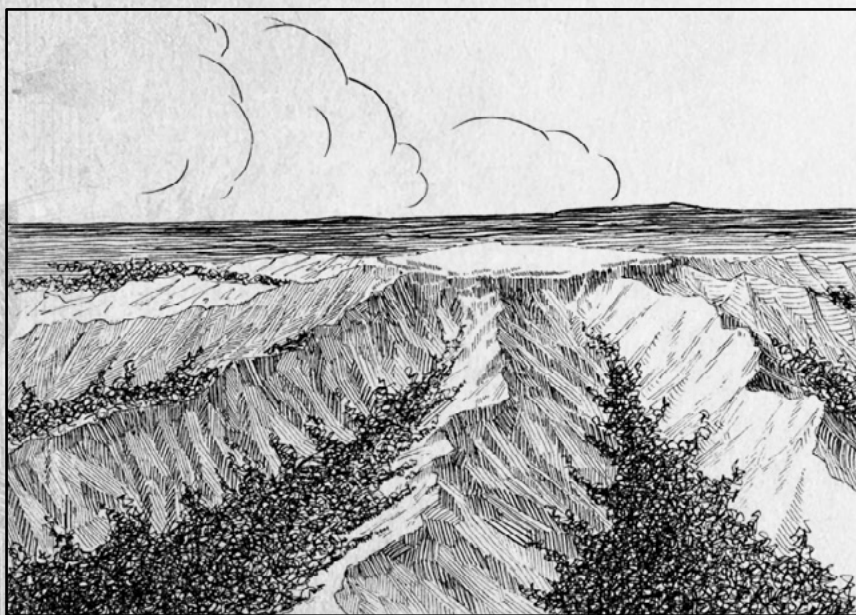
Tesserae are home to a fascinating ecosystem. The table mountains offer excellent conditions for a wide variety of plants, many of which differ considerably from those growing on the neighboring mesas. The plants provide food to small animals that are preyed upon by pterosaurs in turn. The latter make their nests in caves in the mountains' scarp faces, which are usually washed smooth by rainfall in other regions. The canyons between the Tesserae are constantly shrouded in dense fog, with anything flushed down by the rain collecting on their floors. During heavy rainfall, the walls become cataracts and the canyon floors turn into raging torrents. Thus, while potentially obtaining some fascinating results, the reckless daredevils exploring the tesserae may just as easily lose their lives in the process.

Astra and Coronae - The Crowns of Venus

Astra and coronae are two other terrain forms only known to exist on Venus. Both of them are home to truly unique ecological systems – and each of these small, enclosed worlds differs significantly from the one found behind the crest next to it. Yet, exploring them is not without hazards, of course – one never knows what is lurking in the mists enveloping the tesserae.

An **astrum** (lat. star, plural astra) is composed of relatively straight canyons and mountain chains, which – forming a kind of star shape – converge towards a geographic center. While most of them extend over several miles at least, the largest known astra have a diameter of more than 120 miles, or 200 kilometers.

A **corona** (lat. crown, plural coronae) is a high, circular embankment whose interior is lower than the land around it. The corona's inner part is crisscrossed by a maze of gorges that often form concentric rings. The largest known corona (Artemis Corona near the Artemis Rift) has a diameter of 1,500 miles, or 2,500 kilometers. Scientists are completely puzzled as to how these two formations might have developed.



The Highlands

Since the high-altitude regions of Venus enjoy more sunlight, the flora of the plateaus' jungles is similar to that found in comparable climate zones on Earth. Tree-like plants are more common here than in the lowlands, although the giant ferns and cycads of the lowland forests also grow at these higher elevations. Savanna-type landscapes with grasses several meters tall may also be found in this terrain. The humus layer is thinner, being less than two meters thick in some places (for example, on the Victoria Plateau).

The Lowlands

Getting less sunlight, the lower plains of Venus favor plants that require little energy to survive. While flowering plants are few and far between, ferns and cycads are much more common. The ground is a thick morass of organic material, bound by the innumerable roots of plants working their way through it, searching for nutrients. Resembling the peatlands found in Northern Europe, the bogs and fens of Venus are made up of a thick, sponge-like mass of decomposing plant matter and water. In some areas, the uppermost layer is solid enough for people to walk on it, whereas in other areas a person would get bogged down within just a few seconds. Peatlands with a depth of 65 ft. (20 m) and more are quite frequent.

Also fairly common, 'quaking bogs' pose a constant danger to any unwary travelers. Quaking bogs are wetlands with a thin layer of plant residues floating on less dense brackish water. Any step taken on their surface causes the ground to vibrate like jelly. If a traveler walks too fast, these vibrations will increase to the point that the ground will open up, devour the unlucky wanderer and subsequently close above him as if nothing had ever happened. Swift assistance is required if the victim of a quaking bog is to be rescued in time. Within just a few hours, the crack in the quaking bog's surface will have regenerated to the extent that the ground can bear the same weight as before. Experienced Venus travelers

quickly learn how to recognize quaking bogs, since it is one of the ways to survive to be experienced in the first place. Pointed boots or shoes with high heels are out of place in the wetlands anyway.

The bogs of Venus store water like a gigantic sponge, releasing it only slowly to trickle into the oceans. That is why there are no streams and only a handful of rivers on Venus. The few waterways existing on the planet constantly change their course according to an unpredictable pattern and may both appear and disappear within the space of only a few weeks.

The Mangrove Swamps and the Sargasso Sea

The morass of the peatlands becomes less dense in those zones where the bogs turn into *pseudo-mangrove* swamps. The essential difference between Venusian bogs and Venusian mangrove swamps is that the bogs are primarily composed of solids, while the mangrove swamps are mainly made up of water. Resembling the Everglades found in the U.S. state of Florida, they are comprised of sluggish streams and temporary islets, the latter of which are formed by mud washed up by the current. Covered with ferns and palm fronds, some of these islands eventually become permanent land areas, with others being eroded by water after just a few months of existence.

The mangrove swamps slowly give way to *sargassos*. Predominantly less than one hundred meters deep, these shallow lakes are still interspersed with mud and plants similar to Earth's seaweed that occasionally might even creep up all the way to the surface. In some places, the seaweed is rumored to be so thick that it presents a considerable obstruction to water traffic (though no such dense body of seaweed has been actually spotted thus far). The term "sargassos" is derived from Earth's *Sargasso Sea*.

The Oceans

Barring the permanent cloud cover, the oceans of Venus are quite similar to those found on our own planet and would be more than familiar to any sailor from Earth. Navigational problems have led to sea travel being rare on Venus, however – particularly since the gigantic sea monsters dwelling in the depths of the Venusian oceans pose a major threat to any vessel moving on their surface.

The Climate

The weather on Venus may be summed up by two words: hot and wet. Rainfall or drizzle (or a state threatening to turn into one of these two weather conditions) are an almost constant companion on Venus, no matter the area or region of the planet. The good thing is that the temperatures are slightly lowered by precipitation. The more violent storms are accompanied by lightning and thunder, but strong winds tend to be rare.

While the mountain regions enjoy the lowest average temperatures (30 °C or 86 °F), the lowlands and the ocean surface have to cope with much more unpleasant temperatures of about 40 °C or 104 °F. Regardless of the elevation, humidity is always between 95 and 100 percent. In the lowlands, visibility can vary from a scant 10 ft., or 3 meters, to over 1,000 ft. or several hundred meters.

Though the mist is less dense at higher altitudes, terrain features result in visibility being as poor as in the valleys. It is only from the slopes of Mount Maxwell that a person may look further ahead than half a mile, or one kilometer, and detect any airships approaching within this distance. Other mountains cannot be seen from Mount Maxwell, however.

The heat and humidity leads to clothes, particularly leather wear, being overgrown with a thin layer of unappealing green slime, unless they are regularly sprayed with carbolic acid. While rubberized clothes withstand the climate on Venus better, they are also unpleasantly hot and heavy. Common clothes that are not sufficiently maintained begin to rot after only a short while, rapidly turning into a collection of moldy rags if they are not duly taken care of, and often unexpectedly exposing one's body beyond the accepted norms of public taste and decency. Likewise, corrosion will rapidly transform metallic items into useless scrap, if they are not properly maintained, varnished or constantly greased. Wood needs to be treated with carbolic acid, creosote or other chemical preservatives in order to prevent it from decomposing. Kalsa-wood decomposes considerably more slowly than other kinds of wood, thus making it the main species of wood used for construction purposes. Yet, it needs to be regularly treated with special paints and varnishes designed to slow down its decay.

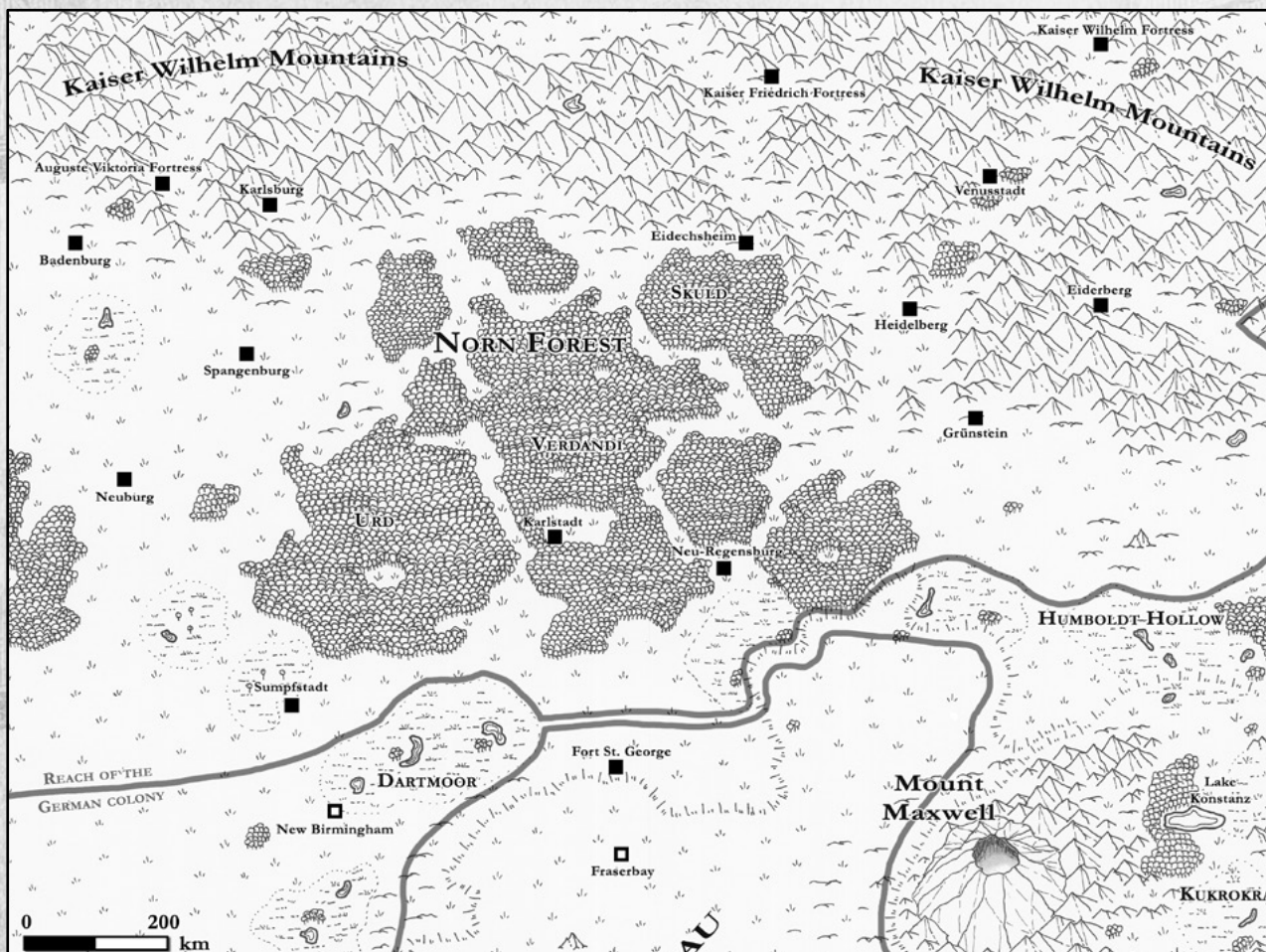
The high humidity soaks even the stiffest starched shirt collars within minutes, resulting in the innovative celluloid collars produced by Abercrombie being a 'must' for every gentleman on Venus. Anyone intending to take a walk outside runs the risk of either getting drenched by rain – or soon dripping with sweat for wearing rubberized rain gear and a sou'wester.

The German Society for Cyterography

At the beginning, the exploration of Venus was marked by the endeavours of individual scientists who had to fend for themselves. The aim to promote their research more widely led to the *German Society for Cyterography* (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Cyterographie*) being founded in 1880 – an organization which has become the main institution for exploring Venus ever since.

While funding research in all areas of science, the Society also collects the results obtained, predominantly publishing them in the quarterly *Journal for Cyterography*. It is headquartered in a small mansion near the observatory in Göttingen, where it entertains arguably the most extensive Venus-related library on Earth. In addition, it has established outposts in **Venusstadt**, p. 24 (overseen by *Dr. Ludwig Wagner*, p. 34) and **Neuregensburg**, p. 30. The Society has about 2,000 members, many of whom are actively involved in research. It is financed by membership fees (20 marks per year), donations (a five-figure sum is said to have been given by His Majesty) and the publication of literature and maps. In your game, the Society may not only provide adventurers with information and put them in contact with experts, but might also be a suitable sponsor for daring expeditions.

The German Protectorate



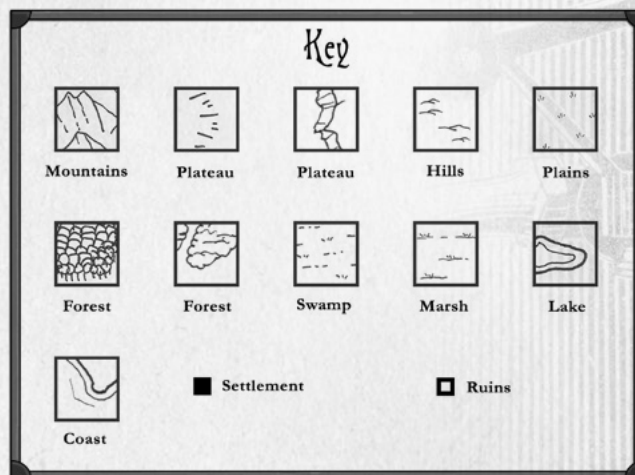
*"Sample the unique fruits of a new world!
Experience fascinating foreign varieties of tea and vegetables!
Press your own wine and distil your very own liqueurs!
Bargain with the Lizard-men in the markets, who gladly
embrace these German delicacies as valuable commodities.*

*Take advantage of this opportunity to create a new homeland
for yourself!*

*See for yourself what you would otherwise only see in colonial
goods outlets!"*

— Guide for Emigrants
(Colony and Homeland special supplement)

When, due to lack of access to liftwood, the German *Kaiserreich* was obliged to revert to its own engineering expertise and made hitherto unthinkable progress in airship technology, nobody imagined that such developments would very soon lead Germany to a breakthrough in their colonial ambitions. Yet when the crew of *SMS Heimdall* triumphantly returned from its solo expedition to Venus, and the corrosive nature of the Venusian magnetic field, damaging to liftwood, became known, it quickly became clear that the time had come to make a virtue out of necessity. Today, ten years after the Heidelberg Expedition, the German *Kaiserreich* is by some distance the predominant colonial power on the planet and is increasingly extending its influence. Whilst other nations strive to match the technological superiority of the German



zeppelins, the *Kaiserreich* is doing its utmost to systematically explore Venus and consolidate its own supremacy.

There exist many reasons to colonize Venus. The lure of the planet lies not only in the prestige of such a success, but more importantly in the unknown raw materials coveted by the emerging German chemical industry. Little wonder that, in *BASF* and *Bayer*, there are two major chemical and pharmaceutical companies competing for the valuable substances still hidden by the jungle.

Germany

Location: Ishtar Highlands, western Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains

Population: approx. 8,000 humans, approx. 200,000 Venusians

Main settlements: Venusstadt ('capital', pop. 3,500), Badenburg (wine-growing, pop. 1,000), Neu-Regensburg (pharmaceuticals, pop. 1,000), Eiderberg (mining, pop. 400), Heidelberg (seat of the hunting lodge, pop. 800)

Trading posts and strongholds: Karlsburg, Neuburg, Spangenburg, Kaiser Friedrich Fortress, Sumpfstadt, Kaiser Wilhelm Fortress, Auguste Viktoria Fortress

Important plantations: Karlstadt, Eidechsheim, Grünstein

Military units: 2 battalions of the 17th Infantry Regiment (total 2,350 officers, NCOs and troops), Skyfort *Widar* (garrison 20 men), native 'Colonial Protection Force' (total 4 regiments, some 10,000 men, under human command)



German Names

Male First Names

Adolf, Albert, Alfred, Artur (Arthur), August, Carl (Karl), Emil, Ernst, Franz, Friedrich, Fritz, Georg, Gustav, Hans, Heinrich, Hermann, Hugo, Johann, Johannes, Ludwig, Max, Oskar (Oscar), Otto, Paul, Richard, Robert, Rudolf (Rudolph), Walter (Walther), Wilhelm, Willi (Willy)

Female First Names

Agnes, Anna, Auguste, Berta (Bertha), Carolin (Caroline, Karoline), Clara (Klara), Dorothea, Elisabeth, Elise, Elsa (Else), Emma, Erna, Frieda (Frida), Gertrud, Hedwig, Helene, Henny (Henni), Ida, Johanna, Luise (Louise), Margarethe (Margarete), Maria, Marie, Martha (Marta), Meta (Metha), Minna, Olga, Paula, Wilhelmine

Family Names

Bauer, Becker, Braun, Fischer, Hartmann, Hofmann, Klein, Koch, Krause, Krüger (Krueger), Lange, Lehmann, Meier, Meyer, Müller, Neumann, Richter, Schäfer (Schaefer), Schmid (Schmidt, Schmitt), Schmitz, Schneider, Schröder (Schroeder), Schulz, Schulze, Schwarz, Wagner, Weber, Werner, Wolf, Zimmermann

German Protectorate

And yet rumors persist that there is another reason behind the German interest in Venus – but what this may be, nobody knows.

➔ **Abteilung Z**, p. 150

Despite the interest in space travel and the exploration of the ether, enthusiasm for colonization is more subdued. The jungle planet seems too far away, and the motives and interests of the Reich leadership seem far detached from the hopes, wishes and needs of the man on the street. Rather than generating a new sense of national feeling within the Empire, differences of opinion on colonization are all too present.

The colonists in Venusstadt and other German settlements are nevertheless ambitious and highly motivated, and Bismarck knows that it could potentially only take a small spark to ignite public enthusiasm.

Although the Germans tend to avoid the word "*Kolonie*", preferring instead the term "*Schutzgebiet*", or "protectorate", we will continue to speak of colonists and colonization in this chapter for convenience.

Note on Place Names

The German colonists have retained many of the British place names, simply translating them into German to honor the original pioneers of Venusian exploration – Mount Maxwell, for example, is known as *Maxwellberg*. As other nations apart from Germany and Great Britain are also involved in the exploration of Venus (the Russians in 1880 and 1883, and the Italians between 1880-81 were particularly successful), Venusian place names also derive from German, Russian, Latin and Greek – the latter because the commander of the Italian expedition was a keen student of the classics.

The names of native villages are sometimes curious. Not all have been named by the natives so, as the German bookkeepers require a name, cartographers have exhibited a certain dry humor and inventiveness in creating reptilian related names such as *Urschleim*, *Grünhausen*, *Sumpfstadt* and *Schuppenheim* for the dwellings of the Lizard-men.

Location and Span of the Protectorate

Covering an area of over 350,000 square km, or 217,000 miles, the German Protectorate stretches from the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains in the west over the Ishtar Highlands. It is bordered by the Danu cliffs to the south, the Akna cliffs in the west and the Freia cliffs in the north.

In total, the various settlements are home to some 8,000 human colonists as well as 200,000 Lizard-men. In addition to Venusstadt, the 'capital', and important settlements such as Heidelberg, Badenburg, Eiderberg and Neu-Regensburg, there are also spread across the region a dozen or so trading posts and villages, often close to larger settlements. The further the distance from the main settlements, the smaller the number of human settlers. Only a handful of colonists live far from the cities in communities of Lizard-men.

The border is lined with scattered military posts at strategically important locations, which are more symbolic than anything – the region is far too vast and the jungle has too many paths, difficult though they are, for its borders to be sufficiently guarded.

Telegraph Stations

The towns, trading posts and plantations in the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains, including the British settlement on the Victoria Plateau, were only recently linked together in a telegraph network, operated in the German territories by Siemens. Private investors, notably plantation-owners, provided the necessary materials. Both the German and English colonial authorities have agreed to subsidize the maintenance of the network, which they view as a military necessity to maintain communication with their outposts.

Whilst in the higher regions, the wires were relayed conventionally from mast to mast, the ground in the vast jungle and moorland was often too moist to fix the poles. The solution was to run huge single cables along the ground, similar to those used for cross-Atlantic telegraph connections on Earth, which quickly sank out of sight in the swamps. The indigenous peoples don't appear to understand what the cables are for, nor do they exhibit the slightest inclination to intentionally cut through them when they stumble across them. They believe them to be offshoots of the creeping vines brought by the humans, and since they have established that they are not edible, they simply ignore them.

The Protectorate covers a varied landscape, dominated in addition to the rocky slopes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains predominantly by grassy steps, impenetrable jungles and swamp land.

Establishment and Development of the Protectorate

If we compare the development of the German Protectorate and the successes of the German expeditions with those of the other colonial powers, it becomes clear that, in colonizing Venus, the Germans have been dealt the most fortunate hand by some distance.

Yet they weren't the first humans to travel to the planet. That honor belongs to the British who, on the back of the success of the Mars missions, also became the first to undertake the journey to Venus, where they were stranded with their liftwood ships.

The Germans were spared this fate. With no access to liftwood, German engineers researched alternative methods of constructing more resistant airships. The project was led by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, whose name would become forever synonymous with his inventions.

Von Zeppelin was inspired by Edison's first attempt, which had required a hydrogen balloon just to reach the height necessary to begin the journey into space. In place of a simple balloon, however, the Count decided on a more aerodynamic form and a sturdy frame of girders and stanchions. His "rigid airship", as he called it, became known as a "Zeppelin" shortly after its unveiling.

Von Zeppelin expanded his invention further to make it suitable for space travel too. And so, in 1878, *SMS Heimdall* set off under the command of Fregattenkapitän *Ruprecht von Heidelberg* to explore the furthest unknown reaches of Venus.

The German expedition ran as smoothly as the Kaiserreich could ever have wished. The *Heimdall* crossed huge swathes of the jungle planet before finally reaching the Victoria Plateau. There, they took on board the survivors of the British Expedition. Heidelberg was simultaneously able to map out the mountains and, to the disappointment of the British, named them after Kaiser Wilhelm before returning to Earth.

Despite generally muted reactions among the public, the return of the expedition was greeted enthusiastically by Berlin and von Heidelberg was decorated with full honors. Whilst the chemical industry was delirious with joy over the new raw materials brought back by the Heidelberg Expedition, the *Reichstag*, and particularly the secret service, were interested in something else altogether.  **Abteilung Z**, p. 150

The colonization of Venus was swiftly agreed upon, but despite concerted efforts to speed up the process, it was only in 1880 that the *Kaiserreich* was able to launch a coordinated operation. The Russians and the Italians also established colonies in the same year, which further encouraged the German efforts. The western slopes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains were an obvious choice of base camp. Not only were the rocky slopes easily defensible (and the area had been expertly mapped thanks to Heidelberg), but the surrounding areas were also rich in numerous different land forms – and therefore potential sources of raw materials.

The first settlers were predominantly soldiers and engineers, supported by a number of civilian experts. Showing great foresight, the German colonists were able to secure the support of the Western Ishtar Tribes early on. They not only helped the Germans to quickly establish their settlements, but also proved extremely useful on the plantations. And so the settlers were able to embark upon peaceful cooperation rather than violent conquest.

The first settlement, the creatively christened "Venusstadt", grew rapidly. The comfort and wellbeing of the settlers was greatly improved by Carl von Linde's refrigerator, which the German engineer tailored to the particular conditions on Venus. The technology was later perfected by Josephus Martin. The provision of cooled storerooms for the settlers cost the *Kaiserreich* a small fortune, whilst Martin himself continued work on an ice factory.

The colonization of Venus quickly developed into a race – a race in which the Germans were forced to balance their penchant for precision and planning against speed, and the ability to keep up with the endeavors of the other colonial powers. *Badenburg* in the far west of the Protectorate became the second settlement, quickly followed by *Neu-Regensburg* on the southern edge of the jungle.

Relatively few human settlers were attracted by the promises of Venus in the first few years, and the colonists therefore relied increasingly upon the support of the indigenous Lizard-men. They took over work on the plantations and much of the physical labor, and were soon receiving military training. The officially named 'Schutztruppen', or 'Colonial Protection Force', soon outnumbered the human troops.

In the aftermath of Great Britain's Fitzgibbon-Montague Act of 1881, which actively promoted the construction of British settlements throughout the explored planets, not just on Venus, the German Colonial Association (*Deutscher Kolonialverband* or *DKV*) demanded increased state support. In response, the *Kaiserreich* promised tax exemptions and incentives to businesses which actively supported the colonization of Venus.

One of the first companies to take up the offer was the technology corporation *Siemens*, who saw their chance to siphon off the

lion's share of the government incentives. The plan was afforded such high priority within the firm that *Carl Siemens*, the brother of founder Werner Siemens, himself travelled to the jungle planet to personally coordinate business on the ground. The plan took off. Today, the name *Siemens* is inextricably linked to the various industrial projects being undertaken on the planet – the creation of the telegraph network and the construction of an overhead railway among other things. Carl Siemens himself enjoys massive influence on the planet.

In the following years, state support for the Venus project increased more and more. One year after the start of the state incentives, Berlin dispatched *Reichskommissar* Gerhart Freiherr von Racknitz to Venus to oversee and direct the colonization. Under the leadership of the enthusiastic commissioner, the Protectorate spread relentlessly with the help and military support of the natives. In the next few years, it finally developed into the region we recognize today.

Economic successes also followed. In 1883, pharmaceutical giant *Bayer* launched a newly discovered substance onto the market, securing incredible profits. A few years later, "*Dr. Müller's Venus Tonic*", a lemonade infused with essence of *bau-bau fruit*, also enjoyed huge success. At the same time, weather-resistant and anti-corrosion technologies developed on Venus by Siemens and other companies were increasingly in use on Earth.

Although public enthusiasm still hasn't reached the levels the Kaiser may have liked, the Protectorate is nevertheless in good health. Today, only eleven years after the Heidelberg Expedition, several thousand Germans live on Venus and the German Protectorate is by far the most successful colony on the planet.

The rate at which the project gathers pace is still on the increase, as is public support. From 1890 onwards, colonization is expected to reach new heights, and the DKV has declared its goal to send 5,000 new settlers per year to the planet. Yet whether such vertigo-inducing figures can even barely be attained remains unclear. After all, not all potential settlers are as loyal to the Kaiser as the government would wish. Meanwhile, the Venus success story is also attracting certain individuals wanting to embark on a whole new beginning – from communists to criminals who hope to avoid prosecution.

One thing is certain. The Protectorate will require energetic and determined men and women who can face up to the challenge and wrest a piece of German civilization from the adversities of Venus.

Organization of the German Protectorate

Reichskommissariat and District Authorities

At the head of the administration of the German Protectorate is *Reichskommissar* Gerhart Freiherr von Racknitz. As representative of the German *Kaiserreich* he is equipped with all the powers necessary to govern the Protectorate in the name of the Kaiser. The *Reichskommissariat* (*Reich Commission*) in Venusstadt controls all the threads to ensure the smooth operation of the Protectorate. Von Racknitz, who lives in the Ice Palace with his family (see page 26), honestly goes about his job of dealing with the challenges of establishing a colony on a foreign planet. His

interests lie unequivocally in the wellbeing of the *Kaiserreich* and the Protectorate.

The four other important settlements are each under the supervision of the local district authorities (*Bezirksämter*) and their local governors (*Bezirksamtleiter*). Mayors are elected in Venusstadt as well as in the other settlements, but these enjoy much less influence than the Reich Commission and the governors.

Due to difficulty of travelling such long distances in anything other than airships, the local governors enjoy a largely free hand. They are required to submit monthly reports, but the chronically understaffed officials in Venusstadt are so overwhelmed that many issues which require the attention of the *Reichskommissar* are lost under the weight of paperwork. Von Racknitz focusses primarily on the annexation of new territories, the military defense of the Protectorate and the needs of the settlers, preferring to delegate internal issues to subordinates. Even additional trading posts and plantations are generally private businesses, only advised by military representatives.

The Role of the Police and Jurisdiction

The overstretched *Gendarmerie* in Venusstadt, composed of elements of each German state police force, is responsible for all police activities on the planet.

Captive criminals are put on trial before the district court, or *Amtsgericht*, the only and therefore highest judicial court in the Protectorate. Criminals arrested outside Venusstadt, or whose crimes were committed in another district, must initially be transferred to the capital. Escapes into the jungle from prisoners en route are commonplace, although it's unlikely any survive for longer than a few days. To combat this eventuality, many district governors prefer to try criminals directly before military tribunals, resulting in merciless sentences.

Whilst they must still abide by the law, the legal status of Venusians is not yet conclusively regulated, nor do they enjoy the same rights as "proper" German citizens. On the more remote, secluded plantations, punishments are often draconian. In the larger settlements, on the other hand, activists and spokesmen are able to negotiate better treatment.

Political Vagaries and Complexities

Although the Protectorate is home to no more than 8,000 settlers, a project on the scale of the colonization of Venus is certain to result in ideological, political and industrial conflicts of interest.

Discontent regarding the governorship of the *Reichskommissariat* and the administration, or *Reichsverwaltung*, has grown in recent years. Many settlers moved to Venus in the hope of starting a new life, dissatisfied as they were with the old order back on Earth. They view their relocation not just as a new personal beginning, but a social one too, where the ossified structures of the German *Kaiserreich* no longer apply and ought to be dismantled.

Social Democrats

Wary of a repeat of the French Revolution in Germany, 'social democratic' activities are tolerated by Bismarck, who accordingly offers concessions following the application of the 1878 Socialist Law. However more radical elements such as the Social Democratic German Labor Party (*Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei*

Deutschlands or SDAP) are banned. The more moderate Social Democrats of the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), formed out of the SDAP in 1875, still enjoy political influence and have successfully fought for the introduction of health and accident insurance in 1883 and 1884 respectively.

Since the passing of the Socialist Law in 1878, which made social democratic activities punishable by law, social democrats find themselves in a markedly difficult situation not just in the *Kaiserreich*, but on Venus too. Yet this is not to say that they don't exist. The influence of the French *communes* gained many sympathizers and forced the German *Kaiserreich* to allow social democrats a little more room for maneuver. And the SPD is a legally permitted organization. But the more radical socialists are heavily persecuted.

The apparent freedom of a new start on a foreign planet has attracted the followers of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to Venus in large numbers. Some in the belief that they can establish a new social order: others wanting to fight for the rights of workers, both human and Lizard-men, on the planet. They cannot congregate publicly but have founded a loose organization which exists in the most important settlements. A local branch of the forbidden SDAP meets in secret in Venusstadt.

The most influential social democrat on Venus is *Katharina Baumann* (see page 35), a pacifist and confidante of Friedrich Engels who campaigns primarily for the rights of Lizard-men workers. She remains in loose contact with Engels, in exile in London. Her influence and pacifist outlook dominate the social democratic movement on Venus – for now. It is not unthinkable her more radical counterpart *Friedrich Bertram von Reden* (see page 155) could at some point eclipse her in terms of political influence. In actual fact, Baumann and von Reden previously worked together, but differing ideological stances caused the cooperation to collapse.

Espionage and Secret Intelligence

It is in the interests of the various colonial powers to keep a close eye on each other's activities, leading to espionage and the gathering of secret intelligence. German agents of the shadowy *Abteilung Z*, or *Z-Division* (see below), are tasked with uncovering foreign spies but are responsible for so many other tasks that this duty often goes unfilled. *Reichskommissar* Racknitz therefore tends to rely upon trustworthy third parties who don't arouse as much attention as German officials. Consequently it is impossible to flush out every single spy and informant. Individuals on the payroll of other colonial powers – and businesses in particular – are uncovered time and time again, in the German administration as well as in settlements and on industrial sites. The majority of the spies are British, but the Italians, Russians and Americans also have their own informants in the Protectorate. As for the Germans, they too take interest in the intentions and plans of the other powers and frequently dispatch agents – whose identities cannot be traced back to the *Kaiserreich* – to gather intelligence. British olfactory and phenomenological research (see page 41) is particularly appealing, but it remains a domain where the *Victoria Institute* has not yet been able to establish a foothold.

Industrial Espionage

Conflicting business interests represent a further complication across all colonies, but particularly within the German Protectorate. Whilst *Siemens* has effectively monopolized all technological

activity, *Bayer* and *BASF* have also established branches and research labs on Venus. The animosity between the two chemical giants is well known, and each constantly seeks to outdo the other – and not always legally. It's an open secret that both firms make substantial use of industrial espionage. The German Colonial Association (DKV) recognizes that it quite simply lacks the means to execute a thorough crackdown and takes the stance that such competition invigorates business.

Uprisings

As in any colony, the threat of native uprisings is ever present in the Protectorate. The German measures to guard against such events include a mixture of strength and examples on the one hand, and fair treatment on the other.

A bigger complication is that the Germans, thanks to some clever diplomacy, were able to practically take over the "Colonial Empire" of the *Carada-Quaha* tribe. Whilst the *Carada-Quaha*

'Abteilung Z' – Z-Division

Not under the jurisdiction of the *Reichskommissar*, but with offices within the Commission building, the mysterious *Abteilung Z*, or *Z-Division*, occupies a unique position within the administration. *Abteilung Z* is an assembly of German secret services which, with their authority and privileges coming directly from Bismarck and the Kaiser, have their own motives and objectives on Venus. The division is also active in other parts of the solar system, wherever there are instances of strange phenomena, extra-terrestrial artefacts or other secrets.

The authority of *Abteilung Z* is such that, in particular circumstances, it is able to bypass the *Reichskommissar* and even launch military operations, even if the latter has not yet generally appeared necessary.

The officials in the division are cooperative but secretive. From the outside they appear to be a totally normal part of the government apparatus, but tensions between them and the Reich Commission are on the rise. For von Racknitz, the secret service is a thorn in the side. He considers himself solely responsible for the Protectorate and sees the unauthorized activities of the officers as undermining his authority. Meanwhile Racknitz has even begun to refuse outright to cooperate until he is also informed, leading to even more animosity.

Abteilung Z officers remain largely unknown among the public. The various groups which have sprung up in the shadow of the government – communists, liberals and other dissidents – know of their existence and firmly believe that the primary task of the Division is to uncover and prosecute them.

✦ *Abteilung Z*, p. 150

remain loyal, resentment festers among other Western Ishtar tribes, an issue which will eventually affect the Germans. Some of the tribes see the Germans almost as liberators from the hegemony of the *Carada-Quaha*. Should the Germans come to be seen as in league with the *Carada-Quaha* then this simmering anger will also be directed at them, unleashing a potentially incendiary situation.

The German Military on Venus

The German Army has a distinctive presence in the Protectorate on Venus. The main corps consists of the 17th Infantry Regiment, whose two battalions are dispersed around Venusstadt and the rest of the Protectorate. Conditions for troops in Venusstadt being considerably more comfortable than those for units responsible for the defense of the rest of the colony, duties are rotated on a monthly basis. In this way the Reichskommissar is able to guard against excessive unrest, the potential for which certainly exists. In the face of gigantic dinosaurs, fierce native tribes and unknown diseases, the soldiers require iron discipline to survive such trials.

In order to maintain this discipline, officers insist upon the retention of the strict military routines of the Kaiserreich. Flag ceremonies, roll calls and military parades are important aspects of a soldier's life on Venus, and allow for a semblance of normality in a foreign world.

The soldiers are almost exclusively infantrymen, drawn in equal parts from veterans and ambitious young recruits. Troops deployed outside Venusstadt wear a beige-brown uniform complete with hat and cockade, which suit the Venusian climate, whereas troops stationed in Venusstadt itself wear the white tropical uniforms of colonial units. In the extreme climate, the soldiers' rifles require almost constant maintenance, and the troops often have cause to fix bayonets due to fouled mechanisms.

Artillery

As for artillery, the German military on Venus relies largely on robust, proven field guns, an entire battery of which is stationed in Venusstadt, protecting the settlement from attacks. Each of the other four biggest settlements is also equipped with one gun. Experiments in modern weaponry such as machine guns take place in the areas surrounding Venusstadt. But in view of possible unreliability, the general staff is as yet unwilling to rely upon them.

Organization

The 17th Infantry Regiment has a traditionally structured hierarchy. *Oberst Hans Kurzmann* (see page 33) has command, with *Oberstleutnant Michael Saarbach* and several majors subordinate to him. Regimental doctor *Jakob Berger* is responsible for the health concerns of the troops and faces huge challenges identifying and treating hitherto unknown illnesses and poisons.

Of course, the military's most important duty is the protection of German settlers and possessions. Each settlement is protected by at least one company often supported by indigenous Colonial Protection Force. Border protection on the other hand is for the large part left to the Colonial Protection Force, who know and understand the wild.

Cavalry

Although the German Army is based primarily on infantry, there are attempts to establish cavalry too. To this end, a 150-strong squadron of dragoons is stationed in Heidelberg, to assess the suitability of mounted units on Venus. As horses only partly come to terms with the Venusian climate, the squadron is intensifying its research into the training of indigenous dinosaurs for use as mounts. Success has been had with the peaceful *Pacyosauruses*, whilst attempts to use *Hoplites* and *Stegosauruses* have also yielded promising results.

The 'Colonial Protection Force'

Ever since the start of the colonization, the German Army has set about training indigenous fighters known as the Colonial Protection Force, or *Schutztruppen*. The Colonial Protection Force is an attractive proposition for the Lizard-men in the Protectorate, where they are not only equipped with better weapons, but also receive better provisions from the Germans. In this way, the military have increased their number and are also able to benefit from the local knowledge of the natives.

Officially, the Lizard-men of the *Schutztruppen* are divided up into four regiments, each approx. 2,350 man strong, a breakdown which only really exists on paper, the position of the Regimental Commander being merely ceremonial. And so the next smallest units are not battalions (usually approx. 1,000 men), but just companies which function largely independent of one another. Although German Army discipline is enforced in the companies, each of which consist of 150-250 men, they only operate in their specifically allocated locations rather than operating jointly together.

A company consists predominantly of Lizard-men but always under the command of three German officers. The officers wear the common white tropical uniforms whilst the Lizard-men are equipped only with rubber satchels and carrying straps for their rifles and ammunition.

The primary responsibility of the *Schutztruppen* is the protection of plantations, indigenous Lizard-men settlements and the borders of the Protectorate. Here they are preferable to human troops thanks to their experience of the Venusian wild. On the order of the Reichskommissar, there are no indigenous protection force troops stationed in the capital, Venusstadt.

Skyfort 'Widar'

The troops have recently been bolstered by the completion of the *Skyfort Widar*. Unlike the terrestrial skyfortresses *Wotan* and *Donar*, *Wodar* is a brainchild of Count von Zeppelin. The construction was shipped to Venus in individual parts and then assembled in record time. Comparable to the Russian balloon fortresses (see page 63), the skyfort differs in its rigid construction and is manned by a 20-strong crew. Due to its high maintenance costs, the *Widar* spends much of its time in Venusstadt undergoing repairs for damage sustained on patrols over the Protectorate. Thus far, she has not suffered any major damage, which would be extremely costly to repair.



German Protectorate

Life in the Protectorate



The German Protectorate may be on a foreign planet, in the jungle and surrounded by indigenous tribes and bloodthirsty dinosaurs, but it remains strictly a German colony.

It is difficult to maintain the German way of life in such an environment. The hot, humid climate takes its toll on the nerves and health, the strain of survival in dangerous and hostile surroundings leads to nervousness and damages general wellbeing, whilst the hard work on the jungle planet saps the strength of the settlers. Nevertheless, the majority are determined to valiantly carry out their duties and not be defeated.

In the larger cities, particularly Venusstadt, the feeling is very much comparable to that in any colonial German town. The people greet each other with the usual polite German conventions and the various dialects of the Fatherland can be heard. When groups of workers gather together in the pubs and socialize over a beer, whilst in another corner an orchid growing club is founded, it is easy to forget that this is actually a foreign planet.

In the hostile surroundings, most of the settlers draw together in close-knit groups with a strong sense of togetherness. And, Germans being Germans, this idea of formalized community was quick to take hold. Associations began to spring up only months after the very founding of Venusstadt. Today, in addition to the previously mentioned orchid growing club, settlers can sign up to the obligatory singing and gymnastics associations, a veterans' association and, of course, a bowling league. Innovative clubs offering more exotic pastimes are also popular, including the 'Association for the Promotion of the Education of our fellow Venusian Citizens' and the 'Pacyosaurus Leather Tanning Union'.

Ritual and routine also play an important role in life in the Protectorate. The military parade in January, carnival in February, Schützenfest, or 'marksman's festival', in early summer, all are key events in the lives of the settlers, helping them to survive. In 1887, Oktoberfest Venusstadt took place for the first time, enjoying huge success. In addition to Venusian beers, guests were also able to enjoy quality brass music from the fire brigade band.

The Germans on Venus are distinctly pragmatic. In the absence of Christmas trees, they decorate huge fern trees, and with no oxen to pull a cart, a Pacyosaurus is hooked up instead. For the settlers, the most important thing is the continued semblance of tradition; the finer details are irrelevant.

There is great enthusiasm for sport in the Protectorate, however, much to the displeasure of the Reichskommissar, not for the traditional Prussian gymnastics associations. Having spent months in the company of the surviving British explorers on-board *SMS Heimdall*, the German crew had been introduced to *football*. Whilst this so-called "English disease" was condemned by the authorities back home in the Kaiserreich as an excuse for violence and disorder, its popularity quickly swept across the Protectorate. Football clubs have since been established in each of the 5 larger cities, regularly engaging in friendly competition against each other. Whilst *FC Neu-Regensburg* have enjoyed surprising success, a rather unique issue has gripped football on the planet, namely the debate surrounding whether the Venusian players should be allowed to use their tails.

But behind the civil facade of life in the Protectorate, the first signs of discontent are starting to show. Firstly, settlers who don't live in Venusstadt are distanced from the regulated daily, monthly and yearly life of the city, and must endure harsher conditions in the outlying settlements. Secondly, the Protectorate is increasingly developing into a melting pot of general discontent with life back in the Kaiserreich, attracting settlers who reject the strict Prussian society and who, either secretly or openly, are seeking an alternative lifestyle. The stronger these forces become, the more the conservative among the settlers will need to be on their guard.

Project 'Freia'

The German Protectorate shares with the other colonies one significant problem: a lack of women. Most of the settlers who traveled to Venus were soldiers, workers and researchers, few of whom brought families with them. As a result, not only has prostitution boomed in Venusstadt, but a longer term problem has emerged. Namely, if the Protectorate is going to succeed and blossom over an extended period, it needs families who are going to live there. At the same time, male settlers are much more likely to stay on Venus if they meet a woman and are encouraged by the Reichskommissariat to remain, marry and start a family.

To this end, and supported by the German Colonial Association (DKV), the Reichskommissar commissioned *Project Freia* in 1888, named after the fiercely emancipated goddess of beauty and fertility in the northern pantheon. A huge advertising campaign back home in the Kaiserreich targeted young women, encouraging them to come to Venus to work as teachers, nurses or even research assistants, and play their role in the success of the Venus project. The campaign targeted largely single women in the hope that the new influx of young ladies would lead to the development of relationships on the planet. The campaign promised not only independence, but also extraordinary pay in comparison to women on Earth at the time. Simultaneously, a program was launched on Venus to guarantee significant state

support for young families, including the ownership of land in the new settlements, with the aim of encouraging couples to settle on Venus and make it their home.

The *Freia Project* has been a success. Since 1888, there have been more and more women among the settlers who come to Venus, with one side effect that the government appears not to have taken into account. As the project was largely aimed at single women desiring a new life on Venus, the planet has attracted settlers who are determined to reject the traditional conservative role of women in society and take their own lives in their own hands, independent of male dominance. Consequently, a number of traditional gender roles have been softened on Venus to the extent that more and more female settlers are establishing themselves in roles traditionally reserved for men – all the while doing credit to the goddess whose name adorns the whole project.

Cities and Settlements

The five larger settlements in the German Protectorate on Venus are: **Venusstadt, Badenburg, Neu-Regensburg, Eiderberg and Heidelberg**. The success of the capital's location became the blueprint for the other cities, all built on steep slopes and atop tall cliffs making them easier to defend. Marauding dinosaurs no longer pose any great danger for the settlers so long as they don't leave the cities, and hostile tribes of indigenous Lizard-men are largely incapable of breaking the defensive lines.

The situation of settlers who have taken it upon themselves to settle further away from the cities is more dangerous. As with any colonization on Earth, there are individuals on Venus who prefer to chance their luck away from larger settlements, attracted by the possibility of forging their own territory out in the wild. Smaller settlements and strongholds are spread over the whole Protectorate, usually in areas with arable farmland and meadows or with valuable mineral deposits, and travelers frequently encounter idealistic pioneers on isolated farms.

Due to the large distances involved, the settlements are generally self-sufficient. Only luxury goods and tools are traded between the settlements, with advertising largely consigned to Venusstadt.

Different Types of Settlements

The settlements can roughly be divided into the following categories:

- **Cities** such as Venusstadt and the four other large settlements were established in advantageous locations and form the backbone of the German colonization of Venus. They rarely perform a single or limited function and are characterized by a mixture of civilian settlers, workers, soldiers and industrial employees. The five Venusian cities of the German Protectorate are described on page 25.
- **Industrial settlements** have developed around factories and production sites. Usually small communities with populations of no more than 50-100 people who either work for the local enterprise or maintain the necessary infrastructure for the workers. The location of an industrial settlement is selected mainly based on necessity. Smelting factories are located near to productive veins of ore whereas chemical plants can be found in areas with abundant flora and fauna. Industrial settlements are often the "theatre of war" in industrial espionage.

- **Military strongholds** are erected in tactical positions to protect passes, fords and borders. They are heavily fortified and manned by human troops or Lizard-men of the Colonial Protection Force, the *Schutztruppe*. These strongholds are wholly under control of the military and the few civilians who live there only rarely have representation. Some settlers have settled down in and around some of the strongholds, hoping that the bases – which can house up to several companies depending on size – will afford them some protection.

- **Gold mining towns** have been established wherever rich mineral deposits are found, with "gold miners" becoming a general term for prospectors on the hunt for any form of valuable raw material. Such settlements are generally found near the border or even across it. They are largely populated by armed adventurers and are rarely home to more than 100 inhabitants. The Reichskommissar has mixed views towards these settlements. On the one hand, they represent resistance to law and order, but they are equally vital as attractions for new settlers.

- **Trading posts** (see page 31) can be found in economically valuable regions which aren't taken over by agriculture. They serve trade and business with settled or semi-nomadic tribes. They are rarely inhabited by more than a handful of humans alongside a few hundred trustworthy natives.

- **Pioneer settlements** are the least protected settlements on Venus, founded by ambitious or idealist settlers desiring to start afresh on the new planet. In many cases, these settlements have developed around missionary stations, home to a clergyman who preaches faith to settlers and natives alike. Sizes vary from little more than farmyards with a handful of people to small villages with populations of 150 or more. On the whole, the pioneers aim to live in harmony with the natives, if only to guard against danger from the outside.

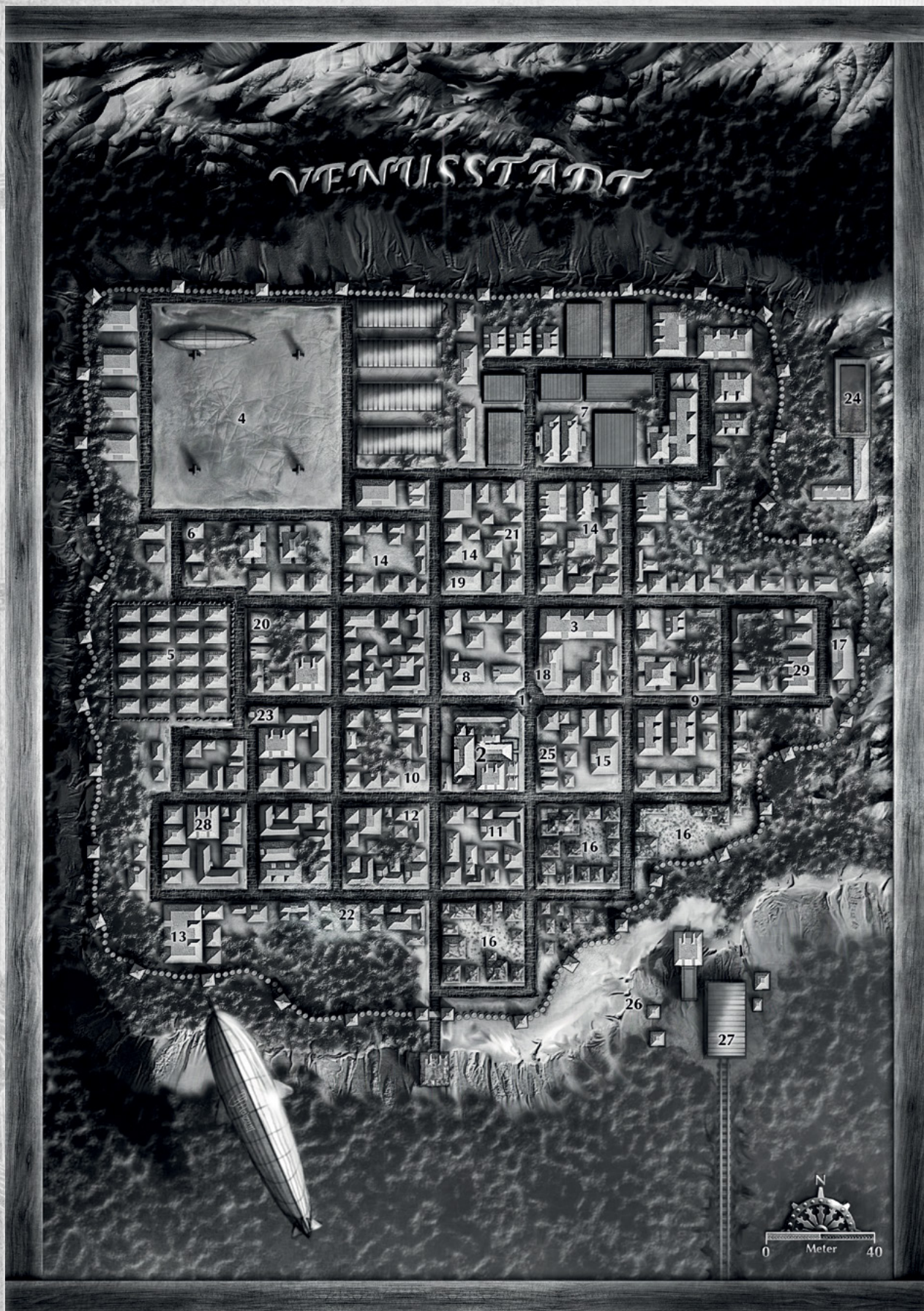
Construction and Architecture

The particularities of the Venusian atmosphere have proved a real challenge for engineers, and the architects have found it no less simple. The first settlers quickly established that the standard construction of their buildings was less than durable on Venus. The aggressive climate rotted wood and turned metal to rust within months, a process which not even the German chemical industry's best lacquers could halt for long.

With the search for weatherproof building material having yielded little success, the settlers have reverted to stone wherever it is available. Quarries have been dug into rock faces near settlements, from which building material is painstakingly extracted. Yet there is not enough to satisfy demand. Usually, only the most important buildings are constructed wholly from stone, whilst the poorest settlers are obliged to put their houses on the line in a constant game of chance against the weather.

Venusian architecture has proved unpopular with the settlers, who have little desire to live in sticky grass huts. The temperature poses yet another problem that has already led to a number of diseases and circulatory collapses. The intense heat is unbearable even for the most hardened of Africa veterans, and it's barely possible to stand being inside buildings on the hottest days.

And so, the German architects have resorted to constructing their buildings as large and open as possible, with huge windows which are only shut when it rains. Skylights allow for air circulation, and some buildings even boast huge, empty wind towers with narrow slits, permitting constant circulation and rendering life indoors significantly more bearable.



And yet, many buildings on Venus are not only pragmatic but also traditional. The Reichskommissariat building in Venusstadt for instance recalls the pompous, representative style of German governmental buildings, whilst Badenburg is full of the pointed gables and open balconies typical of the Black Forest.

The entire Protectorate being strictly governed to plan, it follows that the settlements too are systematically constructed, laid out in the form of a chess board. However, the more settlers move to Venus, the more city planning will undoubtedly relax, and the appearance of the cities will become more organic in years to come.

Plants and trees around settlements are routinely cleared in order to create a defensive ring - backbreaking work in the face of the wild vegetation on Venus.

Major Settlements

Venusstadt

Venusstadt – according to Bismarck, “a sparkling gem cut from the morning star”. His words may be a little too smooth and lofty for the oldest and largest settlement on Venus, but it cannot be denied that Venusstadt is an impressive accomplishment.

Although Venusstadt, with its population of 3,500, can hardly be called a big city, it is nevertheless the only settlement which really merits the term “town”. It was founded in 1878 by the 12 crew members of the *Heimdall* who had voluntarily remained on Venus so that the surviving British explorers could be taken on board. They landed on the

Kaiser Wilhelm Plateau on the edge of the mountains of the same name, and so the unforeseen settlement of the “Venus Twelve” became the foundations of Venusstadt.

Since then, Venusstadt has been in a constant state of growth. The stream of settlers, soldiers and adventurers shows no sign of letting up, especially since the German government accelerated its colonization policy.

Order characterizes the city. The grid iron streets carry typical German names like *Goethestraße* or *Mannheimer Weg* and run straight as arrows, and the houses are lined up in rank and file. There are no cobbles, instead the streets are fashioned straight out of the rock and lined with gutters down the sides which carry rainwater into the ravine. The gutters, in parts deepened and covered, also have a sanitary function, as it is impossible to dig proper sewers into the hard rock. Luckily, the wet climate effectively washes

out the gutters. The city isn't yet so big that sanitation is a serious problem, but as the settlement grows in size and population, this drainage system will no longer be adequate.

Meanwhile, a school of geologists warn that the plateau on which the city lies could prove to be unusually tectonically active. Some have gone so far as to claim that a dormant volcano lies hidden beneath the mountain, but these claims are yet to be proven.

1 – Bismarckplatz and Kaiser-Wilhelm-Allee

Bismarckplatz is Venusstadt's central square, featuring a small statue of the Chancellor in his familiar statesmanlike pose. The statue is surrounded by a flower bed containing flowers from Earth, some of which survive better in the Venusian air than others, which must be continually replaced. Grooves have been cut into the stone in the center of the square and filled in with bright cobbles in the shape of a Prussian military cross.

Small guard houses surround the square and are manned twenty-four hours a day by troops watching over the government buildings, gathered around the square: the *Reichskommissariat* with its famous Ice Palace, the small town hall or *Rathaus*, the Lutheran Church, the Court and the Police headquarter.

Bismarckplatz is not only the focal point of Venusstadt, but that of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Allee* too, the major boulevard running from the main garrison, through the square, and then straight eastwards. The boulevard is lined with small trenches filled with soil from Earth in which magnificent trees have been planted, giving one

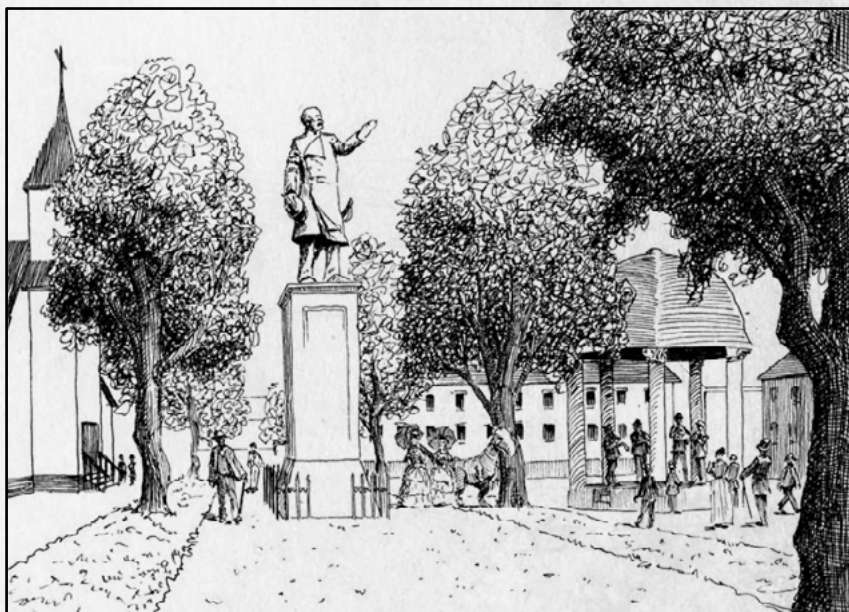
the impression of being in the centre of a grandiose Berlin Avenue (if, of course, jungle trees grew in Berlin and Lizard-men walked the streets...). Each year on the Kaiser's birthday (January 27th), the boulevard is the setting for a resplendent military parade. The inhabitants are allowed off work for the duration of the parade so that they can line the boulevard and cheer the soldiers

marching past in their immaculate uniforms - a glamorous image of the military might of the Protectorate.

2 – Government House

The largest building on Bismarckplatz is the *Reichskommissariat*, the seat of the Imperial Commissioner. *Reichskommissar* Gerhart Freiherr von Racknitz and home of his family. The *Kommissariat* is an impressive construction of pompous design, painted white, and repainted time and time again due to the Venusian weather. The flag of the German Kaiserreich hangs from a balcony supported by two huge columns, whilst the flag of the Reich and that of the Protectorate both fly overhead. Above the balcony itself is a huge stone eagle, the symbol of the grandeur of the Empire.

The interior is no less splendid. The floor is tiled black and white in a chessboard pattern, and the offices are furnished with



laminate flooring and wooden paneling. The building is the seat of both the most important governmental offices and the center of the telephone and telegraph networks. The administration is constantly over-burdened and so the concerns of settlers are rarely dealt with swiftly. New, enthusiastic administrators are urgently sought for this attractive career opportunity on Venus.

Another consequence of the administrative overload is that requests for police assistance, rescue missions and other urgent matters are lost under the mountains of bureaucracy and are only dealt with belatedly. In particularly urgent cases, the people concerned often turn to private help from soldiers and other "specialists". The *Reichskommissariat* is also home to the offices of *Abteilung Z*, albeit separated from other divisions and specially guarded by security forces.

- **The Ice Palace:** Although only a small wing of the *Reichskommissariat*, the Ice Palace is still one of the most famous accomplishments in Venusstadt. The palace, home to the family of the *Reichskommissar* as well as a few other offices and governmental services, takes its name from the revolutionary cooling system which constantly recycles air by passing it through a deep freeze apparatus which cools it down to more comfortable temperatures. The condensation is collected and channeled into the water circuit so that cold running water is always available in the Ice Palace. Responsible for this technical masterpiece is the American inventor Josephus Martin (see page 34), who is currently attempting to build the same technology into a factory for the production of artificial ice. Unbeknownst to *Reichskommissar* Racknitz, Josephus Martin is also in the service of *Abteilung Z*, who are paying him handsomely to install listening horns and other eavesdropping devices so that the secret service may keep a close eye on Racknitz, his life and his plans. Martin's work for the secret service not only guarantees his plans for the construction of his ice factory, it also earns him substantial extra income – not that he easily reconciles his work with his conscience.

- **Wintergarten:** One of the principal attractions in the ice palace, even if the average settler is lucky to even glimpse it, is the winter garden, or *Wintergarten*, a shimmering construction of metal and glass built directly onto one of the wings. Whereas winter gardens are usually warmed, this one is cooled, allowing earthly plants to grow. The earthly climate and plants such as boxwoods, hazelnut trees, pansies, daisies and forget-me-nots recreate the atmosphere of a typical garden of the German aristocracy. Hedges and bushes surround the garden and prevent any view of the interior. In the garden there is an ornate table with comfortable upholstered chairs where *Reichskommissar* Von Racknitz likes to host unofficial meetings, discussions and summits, or to enjoy a relaxed mealtime with his family.

- **Library:** The *Reichskommissar's* library is the only library of note in the German Protectorate. Books rot even quicker than wood in the Venusian climate and numerous indigenous pests have developed a taste for terrestrial paper. The books last much longer in the isolated, conditioned air of the Ice Palace, even if it takes the work of two librarians to regularly clean them and keep vermin at bay. In addition to fiction and non-fiction works, the library is also home to the personal correspondence of the *Reichskommissar*, which is why nobody except the *Kommissar* himself may access the library unaccompanied.

- **Study:** In the study, the *Reichskommissar* receives special guests, be it because they are of particularly high standing or because they require a more discrete environment. At such meetings, only he, his guest and his Lizard-man manservant are generally present. It is a comfortable room, impressively furnished with a fireplace (symbolic more than anything as it is never lit) and

upholstered furniture. The walls are decorated with dinosaur heads, witnesses to the hunting prowess of the *Reichskommissar* (or rather his substantial budget).

- **Offices:** The actual day-to-day governance of the Protectorate takes place in the offices. A telephone system has been installed, connecting the officials with the rest of the city. The fact that the officials and workers no longer have to leave their offices to conduct their business and can remain in the conditioned surroundings of the Ice Palace is a significant advantage.

- **Abteilung Z Office Space:** The actual workplaces of the secretive Z-Division are not located in the Ice Palace. Annoyed by the authority of the secret service officials, the *Reichskommissar* intentionally refuses them office space within the cooling system. Z-Division has only four rooms there, with highly restricted access. The doors to the rooms are made of Oma Jolima, a native reed-like substance, hard as steel, and secured by impenetrable locks. One of the chambers serves as an archive for all secret service files and reports which must be regularly cleaned due to the climate. It is guarded day and night by two armed officials.

3 – Government Warehouse

The government warehouse is located in a heavily guarded storehouse. Rumors abound in the city as to the nature of the "objects of significant importance" held within. Many assume additional weapons or explosives, artillery parts which could be swiftly assembled, or supplies to withstand a siege of the city.

In fact, each rumor has an element of truth. Powerful weapons are indeed stored in the government depot, as well as valuable goods, Venusian artefacts and even a dismantled airship which can be rapidly reassembled in case of emergency.

Furthermore, in a cellar beneath the government depot is another separate area under the control of Z-Division. Here, the secret service stores objects and relics which are too big to be contained in their archive.

The entire governmental depot is well guarded, although there exists an ever-present rivalry between the soldiers and the armed officials of Z-Division who guard their own sector.

4 – Count Zeppelin Etherport

The Count Zeppelin *Etherport* is located to the northwest of the city and consists largely of a large open flat area with a few anchor masts. Numerous buildings surround the port: the control post (see below), large garages and workshops, hangers for smaller ships as well as housing where the port workers live all gathered together.

The port is dominated by loading apparatus, cranes and vehicles used to load and unload the etherships. The site attracts large numbers of day workers hoping for work whenever a ship comes in to land. A carriage station ensures that important passengers can be efficiently and comfortably transported.

Of course, the port also has its own inn. The crews meet in the *Klippenblick*, the Cliff View, right on the rocks. The atmosphere is raucous and loud and the police must sometimes intervene to break up brawls and lock up the culprits.

The majority of ether and air traffic is provided by the imperial Reich airship fleet, although in recent times private flights to the Protectorate have become increasingly popular. Due to powerful winds, the final approach to the Count Zeppelin Etherport is hardly without risk. A cross on the edge of the airfield serves as a reminder of the burnt out remains of the zeppelin SMS *Balder* and a warning for airships. A year ago, the ship plunged over the cliffs and was lost along with its entire crew.

The descent into the chasm is also dangerous – the wind smashes sinking aircraft into the rocks or tears climbers from their hooks. The chasm itself is said to swarm with all manner of unpleasant

beings. For this reason, the wreck of the *Balder* has never been recovered. And so rumors persist that valuable equipment and other objects in the ship's stores still lie on the chasm floor.

5 – Fort Bismarck

This large, modern complex is home to the two battalions of the 17th Infantry Regiment. The buildings, all laid out strictly in rank and file, have thick walls and small windows and are adorned with the regimental crest. The main building contains a common room and mess hall, whilst the officers' casino is open only to the higher ranks. The general staff building houses *Oberst Kurzmann* and his staff.

To the left and right of the entrance are two guard houses. Anyone wanting to enter the fort is strictly searched before being permitted entry.

In case the city is attacked, artillery is positioned on the flat roofs. The barracks is surrounded by a high fence, with no greenery or cover of any sort between the fence and the outermost buildings.

The skyfort *Widar* is also anchored at the barracks whenever it returns to the city for maintenance work, hovering majestically (or threateningly, depending on who you ask) over the city.

6 – Harbormaster's Office

The harbormaster's office is home to all the offices necessary for the operation of the etherport and the direction of air traffic. The details of every ship, its provenance, its load and next destination are scrupulously noted. For a small fee, harbormaster *Großbach* allows visitors a glance into his books – and can possibly even identify freight papers and passenger lists.

7 – Speicherstadt (Warehouse District)

Tall, slim storage halls with loading cranes are testament to the Speicherstadt, or warehouse district, which stretches out to the east of the airfield, home to the warehouses and offices of all the companies which make their money from trade in the Protectorate. Siemens operates three large halls, and Bayer and BASF also store their supplies here. Trading societies also use the storage city for their goods.

For those who don't want to buy in the city, it is possible to acquire goods directly from storage. Although it is harder to locate specific items, the prices are usually 10-20% lower. Many day workers find employment here, even though the work is hard, the hours long and the pay poor.

8 – Pension Venus

The *Pension Venus*, north of *Bismarckplatz* directly on *Schlossallee*, is the best hotel on Venus. One step into the magnificent building and visitors feel as if they have just entered one of the best hotels in Germany. Uniformed bell boys greet the well-off guests, thick curtains keep the outside heat at bay, rich carpets and rugs cover the floors, and at the impressively stocked bar with a golden clock, a pretty young lady in traditional Bavarian dress and necklace adorned with *edelweiß* jewels greets guests. The foyer is furnished with comfortable armchairs and sofas, and the most up to date German magazines possible.

The rooms are furnished with lacquered cupboards and expensive furniture and the hotel servers ensure no wish or request goes unfulfilled. The walls of the dining room are paneled in stylish wood, and the tables decorated with white cloths. Paintings of German landscapes hang on the walls.

The semi-open lift which brings even the most fragile guests comfortably to their beds is currently the highlight of any stay in the Pension. Not that it will remain this way; the lift is due to be usurped as the main attraction by Josephus Martin's latest

ingenious project – air conditioning systems for two of the hotel's suites, which will undoubtedly not come cheap for paying guests.

Even without air conditioning, hotel accommodation is a costly affair, and travelers should be prepared to part with at least two pounds a night for a room. For their money, they can experience authentic German cuisine and a genuinely homely welcome.

9 – Heidelbergstraße

Also known as "diplomat way", the magnificent *Heidelbergstraße* stretches eastwards from the barracks through the city, and contains the consulates of other colonial powers on Venus. The boulevard is also home to other well-off individuals such as important officials and entrepreneurs such as Carl Siemens, whose splendid villa puts even some of the embassy buildings in the shade.

10 – Venusbank

With its characteristic logo featuring the *Hesperidic Gardens*, the *Venusbank* is an affiliate of the *Commerz- und Disconto-Bank* and the largest bank on the planet. Most of the capital earned by business on Venus is handled by the bank.

The gold reserves in the cellar of the Venusstadt branch are legendary. Due to the Venusian climate, gold coins are a much more reliable currency than paper banknotes or coins crafted from lesser metals.

The supposed treasures of the bank naturally arouse a degree of jealousy. There have been multiple unsuccessful attempts to rob the building, which is guarded around the clock by the Gendarmerie. Each attempt has been dealt with firmly by the police and the uncompromising security service – the latter on the payroll of the bank itself.

The bank is considered by some radical German communists as the very embodiment of capitalism, leading to various as yet unsubstantiated threats. Threats from such fanatics however cannot be, and are not, taken lightly.

11 – The Exchange

Trade company representatives and buyers meet in the huge stone Exchange building to buy, sell and trade raw materials and minerals and to thrash out contracts and deals. All sorts of traders, from mining corporations to simple farmers, are represented.

Prices are dictated by supply and demand and can fluctuate hugely according to season and situation so that some goods which appear ludicrously overpriced one day can be snapped up for a bargain the next. Rich salesmen seek to increase their wealth through speculative business moves whereas others are simply in the market to cover their own private overheads. Transport companies visit the commodity exchange too, offering their services. The Exchange is a lively and often raucous place, where goods are vocally touted by increasingly loud sellers attempting to drown out and outprice their competitors. A small number of Gendarmes patrol the Exchange and put a swift end to any potential trouble.

12 – Hotel Brandenburg

After the Pension Venus, the Hotel Brandenburg is the best hotel on the planet. It might not offer quite the same levels of quality as its rival, but it boasts the biggest brewery on Venus and secures huge profits through the sale of its house beer, the *Brandenburg Bräu*.

In an attempt to differentiate itself somewhat from the Pension Venus, the Hotel Brandenburg offers an authentic Venusian ambiance. There are a number of Lizard-men on the waiting staff. Expertly trained and splendidly attired in white livery, they nevertheless bring an exotic aura to the hotel. The interior design of the hotel and the rooms are reminiscent of a safari lodge, with numerous Venusian plants and walls painted green.

In the Hotel Brandenburg, adventurous guests have the opportunity to sample authentic Venusian delicacies such as fermented fruit juice and algae beer, and mixed plates of fruit and raw meats. Typical Venusian food is usually consumed raw by the locals but is adapted slightly for humans. Meat for example is cut into fine, tender slivers.

13 – Martin’s Ice Factory

Claims that the permission to construct an ice factory is akin to allowing *Josephus Martin* to print money are exaggerated, but there is little doubt that the production of ice and a cooling system for perishable goods will earn Martin a small fortune once the factory is up and running.

After a long delay, construction work is underway, although the factory remains at present little more than a skeleton that only exists in its complete form on paper.

The factory is a thorn in the side of the local ‘ice barons’ who have a monopoly on the transport of ice from Earth to Venus. Martin is faced with substantial resistance and his competitors will stop at nothing in their endeavors to damage him, resorting to the dirtiest of tactics. It is only a matter of time until the ice barons resort to more drastic measures to prevent the destruction of their monopoly.

14 – Merchants’ District

The Merchants’ District is home not only to branches of various businesses but also to everyday enterprises such as handymen and other service providers. A number of combines have also set up bases here.

The biggest complex in the Merchants’ District belongs to Siemens. From here, Carl Siemens directs the firm’s activities. Raw minerals, building materials and technical equipment are stored in three gigantic warehouses in Speicherstadt.

Adventurers also find interesting and suitable shops in the Merchants’ District. Rustic gunsmith *Konstantin Spinnrad* produces rifles which withstand the Venusian humidity astonishingly well and also specializes in the manufacture of heavier weapons suitable for dinosaur hunting.

Bozalcov’s Expedition Necessities offers everything required for survival in the Venusian wild, from waterproof tents to torches and non-perishable travel food.

Last but not least, the *Söring Agency* is also of interest to travelers. Initially purely an agency for indigenous transportation aid, it has developed into a dealership offering all sorts of services from transport to travel guides and even experienced soldiers. They also handle requests from contractors and pass these on to suitable clients.

15 – The Prison

The German Protectorate is not so large as to require a fully-fledged prison complex, so for the time being the system makes do with a temporary solution. The administration has had one of the warehouses east of *Bismarckplatz* converted into a penitentiary. It is only an improvised prison but nevertheless far too big for such a small city, a fact dismissed by an administration which describes the complex as anticipatory.

The prison itself is surrounded by a high fence topped with barbed wire but is only loosely guarded. The inmates consist largely of ship crew members who have just taken their arrival celebrations too far. Genuinely serious crime is rare, and the guards have little to do.

Stefan Herkamp, the former owner of the warehouse, was poorly compensated by the government for the loss of his property. It is not beyond possibility that he is aware of weak points or access

points to the prison and is prepared to supply such information to anyone happening to need it.

16 – Kummersdorf (‘Griefville’)

German efficiency and order rules in Venusstadt, at least until you get to *Kummersdorf*, the local slum to the south east of town. Here, warped, weathered constructions of wood and remains of airship wrecks spring up, overgrown and taking on a slimy dark green color as a result of plant growth. Washing lines hang over narrow streets where nobody even attempts to steal the dirty, stained pieces of clothing. Rubbish litters the streets which not even the gutters carrying the Venusian rain can clean.

Small animals, mainly rats and stray dogs but also small dinosaurs fight over the scraps. Bands of feral children walk the streets. Brawls are common, and can often lead to much worse. Drab drinking holes and pubs offer little distraction of value.

Kummersdorf was originally founded as provisional accommodation for settlers but is nowadays home only to the failed and desperate of Venusstadt.

Kummersdorf is also the center of what comes closest to a Venusian “underground”. Banned substances and illegal gambling can all be found here.

Due to the ever-increasing influx of new settlers, the slums of the city are also developing rapidly – and with them, discontent. The Gendarmerie has already stepped up patrols around the borders of the slums, on the look-out for any signs of escalation.

17 – The Church of St. Nikolai

The Catholics of Venusstadt are served by the *Nikolaikirche*, or Church of St. Nikolai, and Father *Heinrich Schwarz* at the eastern edge of town. The *Nikolaikirche* was unveiled in 1884. It is a defiant, sturdy building made of solid stone and its colorful stained glass windows provide little light during the overcast Venusian day.

Father Schwarz is a popular, warm Bavarian. He is part of the diocese of Venus, administered by the Bishop in *Nuova Firenze*. This has sometimes led to tensions with the Protestants of Venusstadt, who wonder if Schwarz is really as patriotic as they expect, or whether his loyalties rather lie elsewhere.

Father Schwarz is not overly concerned by such rumors. His focus is solely on encouraging his flock to trust him with their worries, problems and needs which he deals with to the best of his ability. He keeps his distance from politics. A number of Lizard-men have also joined his congregations, and Schwarz treats them with friendly, understanding leniency.

Father Schwarz’s pride and joy is a huge organ which he had imported from Waldkirch with the help of some contacts in Badenburg. Schwarz is a talented musician who devotes his best efforts to his art and sometimes even plays music during his masses himself.

18 – Luther Church

The *Lutherkirche*, or Luther Church, under *Superintendent Ohlendorff* is in constant competition with Father Schwarz’s *Nikolaikirche*, and claims to hold the upper hand in at least two ways. Firstly, the *Lutherkirche* is situated right next to the town hall on *Bismarckplatz* and therefore right in the heart of the city. Secondly, it boasts a bell imported from Earth which *Ohlendorff* rings with great zeal so that it can be heard all over the city four times a day.

Contrary to Schwarz, *Ohlendorff* is a genuine missionary who zealously stands for traditional values and modesty, and denounces the sins of many a settler. He is currently looking to found a teetotal association and actively promotes a restriction on the consumption of alcohol, whereby he has enjoyed no more success than in his attempts to enthrone a greater number of Lizard-men

for his faith. The Venusians, who are barely affected by alcohol due to their bodily metabolism, react to his zeal with complete incomprehension. His warnings against the evil consequences of drink completely elude them.

19 – School

Even at such a distance from the Earth, German children cannot escape education. Established in 1887, the *Volksschule* in Venusstadt is not much more than a standard elementary in which children are taught basic principles. Children who don't originally come from Venusstadt, or whose families hail from more distant settlements or the plantations, live in a small boarding house next door to the school.

The young geography teacher *Markus Hempel* is somewhat unusual. Hempel was a chemist with the BASF-Combine before deciding to pass on his education to the younger generation. None of which would be considered particularly out of the ordinary were it not for *Hempel's* belief that practice is the best way to learn. Several times a year, he organizes nature expeditions to the surrounding mountains and jungle. These trips last several days and bring the children in direct contact with the Venusian wild - which isn't always dangerous. Worried parents have campaigned against the trips on numerous occasions, even though *Hempel* always takes sufficient protection and can handle a weapon well himself. Nothing has gone wrong – yet.

The *Volksschule* is the only school in the Protectorate. Plans to establish a grammar school are still sketchy.

20 – ‘Zum kühnen Husaren’

‘*Zum kühnen Husaren*’, or ‘The Gallant Hussar’, was founded shortly after the construction of the Bismarck Fort by *Johann Schäfer* – a disabled veteran who, following his medical discharge, was obliged to earn his keep elsewhere. Running affairs with the help of his wife Maria, he made the most of his situation and his background, and the *Hussar* soon became the city's most popular drinking establishment among soldiers.

Civilians are not particularly welcome in the *Hussar*. The atmosphere among soldiers, although admittedly raucous, is however largely jovial. Only those who prove themselves in drinking games (or at other more physical challenges) earn the respect of the soldiers. In this case, the *Hussar* is a tremendous source of military information. The girls who frequent the pub, earning significant money from the drunk soldiers, are exceptionally well-informed.

21 – ‘Zum goldenen Apfel’

If the quayside bar ‘*Klippenblick*’ is too raucous and the *Hussar* too military, then ‘*Zum goldenen Apfel*’ (‘The Golden Apple’) is the place to go for a clean, civil restaurant offering the best in German *Gemütlichkeit*. The *Apple*, situated in the business district, is a meeting point for respectable citizens who like to pop in for a drink after work or simply enjoy coming together in pleasant company. The interior is rustic and cosy, and *Katharina*, the landlady, welcomes her guests in a friendly and heartfelt manner. Like the *Pension Venus* (only less extravagant of course), she strives to provide a homely ambiance, serving beer and pot roast. She also has an incredible knack for creating seemingly German dishes from local Venusian ingredients. She has also built a skittles alley in a back room, where the singing club meets every Saturday evening.

It is a largely unknown fact that *Katharina Baumann* is in fact secretly one of the leading forces behind the social democratic movement on Venus. She hosts weekly meetings with her regional group in one of the back rooms, using the traditional conservative façade of her restaurant to ward off any suspicion.

22 – The Church of the Second Paradise

The disciples of the *Church of the Second Paradise* are more of an obscure sect than a church. The zealots gathered together around the charismatic preacher *Sebastian Moorberg* believe they have found on Venus the true biblical paradise, and they consider the Lizard-men to be the descendants of the snake which tempted Adam and Eve into sin.

The *Paradisians* remain few in number but their influence is growing, particularly as *Moorberg* is an expert at exploiting racist stereotypes and thus winning new followers to his belief. They covertly attempt to pull strings in the corridors of power in order to prevent the social equality of the Venusians and to further human expansion on the planet. They have already launched a campaign to replace indigenous workers with humans to the extent that the roots of many a quarrel or fight between Venusian and human workers can often be traced back to their efforts. *Moorberg* has become braver in recent times and incites his “flock” against the Venusians with increasingly extreme rhetoric.

23 – The ‘Aphrodite’

Despite claims by the owner *Christina* that the name of her establishment is nothing more than a play on the word Venus, it is nevertheless fitting. It's no secret that the attractive employees of the *Variété* perform additional duties to simply serving drinks...

The government is of course aware of the establishment but quietly tolerates it in the city. The *Aphrodite* is so popular among visitors and soldiers that its closure would certainly cause an extreme degree of vexed discontent.

24 – Sports Field

A small distance outside the city fortifications, a portion of woodland has been cut away to create a sports field. In addition to the classic athletics track there is also a football pitch, created on the back of public demand. Conditions are poor, the ground is damp and the turf often grows out of control. But the sport is growing in popularity.

25 – Hunting Lodge

A settlement of the Imperial Venusian Hunting Lodge exists in Venusstadt where officers and aristocrats meet to regale each other with their experiences. The headquarters was however recently transferred to the “wild” Heidelberg. The lodge represents a good opportunity to discover more about the fauna and flora of Venus if you are able to distinguish between the fact and the fiction in the sometimes scarcely believable hunting tales ...

26 – Old Elevator

On the edge of the cliff is an old funicular railroad, or sloping elevator, on which time has no doubt taken its toll. It sways and creaks unbearably but remains the only swift way to get down from the plateau. Plans for a new elevator are in place but construction is repeatedly delayed due to technical difficulties.

27 – Station

As with the train line itself, *Venusstadt* train station is still little more than a building site. Everything is improvised. The station building, the boarding facilities and even the rails themselves look like mere prototypes. The entire impression is one of disappointment. Although the station is of course nowhere near complete, it is functional – with trains travelling to the building site.

28 – Hospital

The ill and injured of *Venusstadt*, both soldiers and civilians, are treated in the hospital, which inevitably explains the military

control over the establishment. For a hospital on a jungle planet, equipment and hygiene are astoundingly good, and the doctors and nurses under the command of chief practitioner *Dr. August Hoffmann* and head nurse *Sabine Fuchs* offer the highest levels of care to their patients.

This is all made possible by substantial investment in the hospital by the Bayer Corporation both in terms of capital and medicines, its “contribution to the cohesion of the Protectorate”. Claims that Bayer’s influence over the hospital is merely a means to experiment with untested new medicines and substances are surely nothing more than sinister rumors.

29 – Himmelsburg (Heaven’s Castle)

Concealed behind high fences is one of the biggest mysteries in the otherwise seemingly well-ordered city of Venusstadt. The noise made by the builders is audible day and night and has been for years, as they work on the construction of a peculiar building.

Even a glance over the fences doesn’t reveal much to enlighten a nosy observer. In the grounds is a magnificent estate, constructed in the image of a northern palace, adorned with “artistic” stone carvings and decorated with the symbol of a great horn. The only known information about the property is its name: *Himmelsburg*, or Heaven’s Castle, the name of the palace of the God *Heimdall*.

The government is obviously aware of the secretive person behind *Himmelsburg*. Its hushed silence leads one to assume that it must be the business of a very influential individual. The impeccably polite, but shrewd administrator *Jakob Wagner* does some serious business deciding which visitors are granted rare access to the magnificent estate.

Rumors as to what is concealed in *Himmelsburg* are plentiful. The estate appears to be finished and yet the building work doesn’t let up, leading many to the conclusion that the owner of the *Himmelsburg* is digging deeper and deeper shafts into the rock.

But to what end, no-one knows. Some claim that the owner is looking for a possibility to one day be able to view the entire universe, as the mythological guardians once did. Others say that he is preparing a chamber to survive a coming apocalypse and thus be able to rule thereafter as king. The most farfetched rumor holds that, deep under the streets of Venusstadt, he is working on his own personal *Bilfröst*: a mythical Norse bridge connecting the physical worlds with those of the Gods.

Whenever the workers regularly leave their quarters on the site and come into the city, they remain tight-lipped regarding any clues to their activities. They are evidently well paid for their silence – or they are scared.

Badenburg

The second settlement to be established on Venus was Badenburg, located in the far western reaches of the Protectorate at the foot of the mountains.

It has a suitable name, as the majority of the 1,000 inhabitants are immigrants from Baden in southern Germany who came to Venus to start a brand new life.

Badenburg is the only place in the Protectorate suited to the growing of wine. The vintners of Baden transported a robust type of grape vine with them from their homeland which ripens more than satisfactorily despite the lack of sunlight, allowing for the production of drinkable wine. The ‘Venusier’ vintages are of course inferior to anything grown on Earth but it nevertheless provides the settlers with a special comfort, and it sells well back on Earth

too. Various attempts to create authentic Venusian wine using local fruits have so far been too “exotic” for the human palate.

A friendly rivalry exists between the settlers of Badenburg and Neu-Regensburg. The distance between the towns however limits the rivalry to a few meetings and sporting confrontations in Venusstadt.

The colonists are protected by a company from the 17th Infantry Regiment dispatched from Venusstadt, who up until now have enjoyed a rather comfortable deployment.

Neu-Regensburg



Neu-Regensburg is surrounded by jungle in the south of the Protectorate. Whilst the name of the city comes from the civic pride of the local mayor, many of the 1,000 citizens come from Swabia in southern Germany, hence the friendly rivalry with the settlers of Badenburg. There is however little genuine animosity. Life on a foreign planet binds the settlers too closely for that.

Neu-Regensburg is the seat of BASF’s largest chemical factory, which is constantly on the hunt for new substances in the jungle. To this end, BASF has erected large tanks in which they are attempting to breed a Venusian species of algae which gives off hydrogen – a particularly valuable material for the *Reich*. Moreover, scientists are experimenting with the essence of a type of glue bush, promising a medicinal wonder glue.

A company of soldiers is stationed here too, providing security and protection for the settlers.

Eiderberg

Not particularly far from Venusstadt in the south eastern reaches of the mountains is Eiderberg, home to some 400 settlers together with 60 soldiers. Life is hard here. No other German settlement has suffered as much from Lizard-man assaults as Eiderberg, a

fact that not even the expeditions dispatched from Venusstadt have been able to change.

The high number of attacks can be explained by the location of the settlement on the banks of a mountain lake considered holy by the Lizard-men.

Due to the hostile conditions, the Kaiserreich understandably struggles to encourage Germans to settle in the town. Some of the inhabitants are indeed former criminals who have chosen a life on Venus over a jail sentence.

Bauxite is mined in Eiderberg. The inhabitants of the town often retreat into the mines for protection against the Venusian assaults, shifting their entire lives underground.

Heidelberg

A similar distance from Venusstadt as Eiderberg, but towards the south west, is Heidelberg – situated on a grassy mountainside. Heidelberg is home to 800 settlers and 150 troopers – the only German cavalry squadron stationed on Venus.

Whilst the areas in the immediate vicinity of the city have been largely urbanized, those more distant have been left comparatively unspoiled. The Imperial Venusian Hunting Lodge has settled in Heidelberg, where German officers and aristocrats gather to practice their favorite hobby amid the Venusian fauna.

Once a year, the association grand gathering takes place, bringing together members of other Venusian settlements for a huge foray to determine the best hunters of the coming year.

Largely unnoticed by the administration and the military, Heidelberg is a socialist strongpoint on Venus, where left-wing thinkers strive to mold society ever closer to their ideals.

German Plantations and Trading Posts

Plantations

The choice of the western Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains for the location of the German Protectorate was a good one in more ways than one. The indigenous Western Ishtar tribes in this area are significantly more advanced in terms of agriculture than their semi-nomadic relatives, allowing for the development of the biggest and most productive German plantations on the planet — which nevertheless employ comparatively few human beings to supervise the native workers. Despite the self-aggrandizing claims of the administration, this is less down to their effective governance as it is down to the simple fact that the Western Ishtar tribes already know what they are doing in this area.

Typical German plantations stretch for several hundred kilometers and are therefore at least three times bigger than their British or Italian equivalents. They consist of a central human settlement (housing observers, machines and store houses for crops) and several dozen native villages spread over the plantation. The villages are responsible for their own upkeep and obliged to produce a certain annual quota of crops.

Each individual village tends to specialize in one type of crop, dismissing the others, so that particular expertise is developed in

their area. The organization and administration of a village is the responsibility of the natives themselves. The German observers are only there to manage relations between the villages and they travel among them to this end.

Important Products

Each plantation produces different types of crops. Alongside useful agricultural crops like the *Jopapo pod*, the majority of plants serve to produce raw materials for the ever-increasing chemical and pharmaceutical industries in Germany. In addition to the glue bush, predominantly cultivated in waterside villages, the *New Tar Bush* is of particular importance, grown in huge quantities by the Germans.

Trading Posts

Distributed throughout the Protectorate are vast swaths of land unsuited to agriculture but which contain valuable minerals and natural materials. Nomadic tribes travel these regions, leading lives as hunters and gatherers. The tribes frequently collect valuable materials to barter them with the Germans at the trading posts.

A trading post is a small, semi-permanent settlement constructed solely for the purpose of trade. As a rule, only a handful of humans live there, alongside a hundred or so Lizard-men who are considered trustworthy. Traders exchange tools and ornaments for valuable products and do extraordinarily good business.

The sturdiest structure at a trading post is generally the fortified store house which functions not only as storage for goods but also as living quarters for the humans. Otherwise, the quality and condition of a trading post vary wildly according to the needs and taste of the founder.

German Industry On Venus

The Kaiserreich was quick to recognize the important potential of Venus for German industry – particularly the chemical and pharmaceutical industries – and has invested in the Protectorate to the extent that industry on the planet has enjoyed impressive growth in a comparatively short space of time. The Reichskommissariat works closely with enterprises to ensure that both sides profit from governmental support.

Businesses

Numerous businesses have an interest in Venus but not all have the means to establish any sort of meaningful presence. Often, lone researchers are dispatched to the planet to develop new substances for an industrialist back on Earth. Among the businesses which have founded bases on Venus, three stand out.

The **Badener Aniline & Soda Factory** (BASF) is a comparatively young business (est. 1865) which has already created a name for itself as a producer of colorful dyes. And so it was the potential of the planet for raw materials for new dyes which initially attracted owner *Heinrich von Brunck*, whose business is

expanding in several directions, enjoying particular success in the curing of textiles. BASF has its headquarters in Neu-Regensburg.

Bayer can also hardly be described as old (est. 1863), but has had astounding success in recent years. Under the leadership of *Carl Duisberg*, the chemists at Bayer are interested first and foremost in pharmaceutical products and research the medicinal properties of Venusian plants. Here, a direct rivalry with BASF has developed, as substances can be discovered at any time which could be invaluable to both businesses.

Siemens Group (est. 1847) on the other hand has absolutely no competition on Venus as the sole company responsible for the biggest technological projects including the construction of the telephone and telegraph network. Their most ambitious project is the construction of a suspension railway from Venusstadt to Heidelberg, but they also take care of telegraph lines between cities and the telephone network in Venusstadt. Anyone undertaking a large project in the German Protectorate will be hard pressed to avoid dealing with Siemens in some shape or form.

The **Imperial Cytherean Research Institute**, led by *Moritz Honigmann* is a state institution working for the good of the German Kaiserreich to develop infrastructure on Venus. To this end it is provided with all funds and equipment necessary. It is a continual balancing act not alienating private industry by allowing them too little room for research whilst at the same not limiting the institute's own advantage.

Projects

The Suspension Railway

Many declared Carl Siemens to be mad when he unveiled his plan for a suspension railway to the Reichskommissar, to be based on the concept of Carl Eugen Langen of Cologne who had been experimenting with suspended tram cars for several years. The connection was to link Venusstadt to Heidelberg, reducing the travelling time to a fraction and significantly increasing the safety of the journey too. The Reichskommissar decided to trust Siemens, although it still remains unclear even today whether the suspension railway will remain nothing more than a dream or whether the project will actually be completed one day.

As the outlay for a conventional railway was far too large, it was decided to take the advice of the engineer Carl Eugen Langen and to pursue the idea of a suspension railway. Freestanding masts or large trees will be connected by a rail made of wattled Oma Jolima, from which a small locomotive and a few light carriages will be hung. The rails will be secured at various intervals using brackets in the mountains, directly anchored in the rock – here, the train will swing more than a thousand feet, or hundreds of meters, above a gaping abyss. At the moment, the weight of the engine and the carriages is not expected to exceed two tons, but there are plans to further strengthen the rails. The scientists are currently experimenting with various different locomotives. In addition to a steam and a petrol engine, the inventor *Moritz Honigmann* has also suggested an engine powered by sodium bicarbonate. After two years of construction work, the line currently stretches 19 miles (30 km) west of Venusstadt. Organizers hope to reach Heidelberg by 1892 at the latest. There is still much to be done before then. The project repeatedly suffers setbacks due to constant accidents caused by wild dinosaurs and wild natives and has to be heavily guarded. At the same time, some indigenous

tribes have to be resettled, often against their wishes. Siemens' and Langen's plan is ambitious, and the reputation of Siemens as a business is literally on the line.

The Celestial Spark

A major obstacle standing in the way of the suspension rail project is a settled tribe and their chief Ko-Hapa, who stubbornly refuse to leave their native territory for any reason, let alone the construction of a suspension railway.

Ko-Hapa's tribe keep a vigil over what they call the Celestial Spark. They idolize an object that they claim fell from the heavens and remains as yet unseen by human eyes. Speculation abounds as to the nature of the object, from a simple meteorite to the remnants of a space-travelling civilization, which has naturally attracted the interest of the secretive *Abteilung Z*.

Telecommunications

Carl Siemens has taken over the expansion of the telephone and telegraph network on behalf of the Reichskommissariat, and has already achieved remarkable successes. There now exists a telegraph connection between all five major cities and some relevant settlements and military bases, and a telephone system has been established in Venusstadt. However the telegraph connection is notoriously prone to disruption and must be monitored around the clock.

In the meantime, the Reichskommissar is also considering the introduction of local post offices to help ease post transfers between settlements.

Niflheim - The Misty Abode

Some 60 miles, or a hundred kilometers, from Venusstadt, high in the mountains, is a plateau shrouded in fog. Nothing particularly out of the ordinary on Venus, except for the fact that the fog surrounding this mountain never subsides even in the best weather conditions. What is hidden beneath is known as "Niflheim", the Misty Abode, and this only to a few.

➡ **Research Station 'Niflheim'**, p. 150

Products

Among the products exported by German industry on Venus are innumerable chemical and medical substances which have accelerated and improved the production of all sorts of proprietary products from headache tablets, stomach elixirs and vomiting agents to caustic solutions and other acids.

The chemists on Venus work furiously to develop substances to combat in some way the aggressive atmosphere on the planet. Among the most successful inventions have been protective lacquers which, although they only postpone weathering on Venus,

have yielded extraordinarily attractive results and gleaming colors in the less corrosive earthly climate. Another success story has come in the form of weatherproof paper made from Venusian wood, too expensive for mass production back on Earth but a vital means of preserving important or prestigious documents.

In the wake of the slaying of the first big dinosaurs, experts in leather from Offenbach were summoned to Venus to create exclusive products from the skin of the beasts. The incredibly resistant and weatherproof leather of the massive animals serves as a useful raw material for the military whilst the more delicate products are sold as luxury items back on Earth.

The new *tar bush* has proven to be just as robust as earthly rubber but, like most Venusian products, is better able to handle tough weather conditions than its counterpart.

Important Personalities

Officials

Reichskommissar Gerhart von Racknitz

Gerhart Freiherr von Racknitz (*1837) was born into the aristocracy and, as an ancient aristocratic house, sees it as his duty to further the reputation of his family and the glory of the German *Reich*. He was offered the post of Reichskommissar on Venus in 1892 following a career first in the army and later in government. Honored by the offer, von Racknitz accepted the post despite misgivings and love for his Fatherland. In the same year he travelled to Venusstadt together with his wife *Johanna* (*1841) and two youngest children *Theodor* (*1878) and *Luise* (*1872).

The gray-haired, bearded Reichskommissar has worked tirelessly since his arrival to bring the Protectorate into bloom and to unite the often conflicting interests and needs of the administration and the settlers. The Protectorate has his rigid determination to carry out his duty to thank for its status today.

Not everything is easy. The Reichskommissar is often held back by his own pride and conservative nature. His unshakable belief in old traditions led to his growing conflict with the administration, and in particular with *Abteilung Z*. Brought up with aristocratic values, von Racknitz thinks little of the secret service's mysterious meddlings, and is even less pleased with their access to resources. He has not gone so far as to actively hinder their work, as this would go beyond even his remit, but he has never shied away from conflict with the secret service officials and agents.

Abteilung Z have responded accordingly by having the Ice Palace under surveillance (see page 26). Little does von Racknitz know that the agents are following his every step and are aware of all his plans.

Luise von Racknitz

Luise von Racknitz is best described as a "pretty tomboy". Back on Earth, the progress of the young daughter of the Reichskommissar is considered to be nothing more than one scandal after another. And not just because of her jaunts through the wilds outside Venusstadt for hours or even days on end in the company of Lizard-men. She also staunchly refuses to wear customary or

formal clothes. Last year, she shocked a delegation from Berlin by appearing as an ancient Greek *Meliade* clad only in a tunic and sandals – an outfit supposedly inspired by the suffragettes in Themiscyra. The seventeen year old exhibits to all intent and purposes a total disinterest in social issues which young ladies of her age ought to care about, according to all social convention. It has long been debated whether the Reichskommissar simply puts up with her wild antics or whether he can't actually contain her. Luise's mother frequently and publicly demands her transfer to a girls' boarding house back on Earth, with no success. Luise has an extraordinary relationship with the Lizard-folk and understands them better than most in Venusstadt. In this sense, she is often a source of valuable advice to her father.

Those who get to know Luise better quickly learn that behind the eccentric outer façade hides a positively intelligent and genial young woman of many talents. For a teenage girl, she possesses not only immense knowledge of botany, zoology and the classics, but also of the customs and habits of the Venusians. Furthermore she is linguistically gifted and, in addition to German, speaks English, Latin and Venusian. She can handle a rifle as well as any soldier and has learnt archery from her Venusian friends. Luise considers Venus her true home and hardly has any real memories of life on Earth. She is horrified by the thought of one day having to return to live there.

Oberst Hans Kurzmann

Colonel Hans Kurzmann (*1841) is a serious man, a trait immediately recognizable by anyone who sees him. Almost 6'5 and of lean, muscular stature with a piercing gaze, the Colonel cuts an impressive if not terrifying figure. Kurzmann gladly cultivates this image in the knowledge that he is respected and feared.

Kurzmann is the son of a well-off factory owner who inherited his father's estate after his death. But his passion – as much as one can speak of passion when dealing with such a composed, self-confident man – remains the military.

A soldier and officer at heart, and a talented tactician and strategist, Colonel Kurzmann is not one to shy away from military solutions, indeed he prefers these to other perhaps more conventional solutions. He is of the opinion that the German Protectorate ought to further cement his reputation on Venus via resolute dealings before it is too late. To this end, he has combated many a discontent among the workers extremely harshly.

Whilst Kurzmann admires von Racknitz's sincerity and traditionalism, the Reichskommissar's considered, diplomatic handling of the administration doesn't always please him. He has therefore been developing his own plans which would enable him to "balance out" the weaknesses of the Reichskommissar when necessary, and is in this venture able to rely upon the support of his soldiers and a well-established network of informants.

Gerhard Döring

At first glance, it can be difficult to take this gangly man in his mid-fifties, with his protective over-sleeves and black, ironed suit seriously. The Reichskommissar's private secretary is the very image of a dry bureaucrat. Stiff, stuffy, and square. And yet behind the outer façade is a jovial man with whom his colleagues get on famously.

Beneath the mask of a dull scribe lurks a savvy intellect with immense human knowledge and a dry wit. The private secretary is known as the beating heart of the Ice Palace, and with good

reason. He is not only responsible for the entirety of the Reichskommissar's correspondence, but is also extremely well informed of all political activity in the Venusian colonies. For those seeking advice, he gladly provides an open ear and is the go-to man on Venus in all things related to coffee. Many within the German colonial administration joke that Venusstadt would have long been lost without Döring's immense organizational talents. Well known throughout Venusstadt (amongst other things, he is also the conductor of the Venusstadt church choir), and easy to talk to, Döring represents relatively quick access to the Reichskommissar himself, avoiding all the tedious, bureaucratic procedures. Döring also possesses a substantial network of contacts all over Venus. He only has a problem with the Venusians themselves, due not to the fact that he can't stand them, but more because he struggles to weigh most of them up.

Back home in Germany, Döring tended to wind people up the wrong way with his pacifist, liberal tendencies and overly democratic stance. But such issues are much less important on Venus and Reichskommissar von Racknitz is much more interested in Döring's ability than how he marks his ballot sheets.

Dr. Ludwig Wagner - Chief Cartographer

Wagner, 35 years old, hails originally from Kassel, where his father is a practicing lawyer and notary. Even as a child, Wagner was fascinated by tales of foreign lands and people, finally going on to study geography under the famous Ferdinand von Richthofen. A promising talent, Wagner took part in the very first German Venus expedition in 1878. He was one of the "Venus Twelve" who voluntarily stayed behind on the planet, giving their places to the survivors of the failed British expedition. He only returned to Earth in 1882 to pursue his dissertation. He was admitted to the German Society for Cartography as a freshly qualified doctor and was sent back to Venus in 1886 to take over their station in Venusstadt. His wife Marianne accompanied him but died in 1887 from fever. Wagner still mourns her passing and has no interest in a new marriage, despite his status as the most coveted bachelor on Venus.

Dr. Wagner, a giant of almost 6'2 inches (or 1.9 m), with blonde hair and moustache, wears a light suit in Venusstadt and hunting gear in the wild.

Adventurers are sure to encounter him in his professional capacity, whether as the commissioner of an expedition or as an advisor in scientific projects. Encounters in the wild are sure to be a pleasant surprise – Wagner is an experienced ranger. Should an expedition find itself in trouble, Wagner is sure to turn things around. As with many men of his background, he served voluntarily in the army. He is the Lieutenant of the Reservists and has more than a basic knowledge of tactics and strategy.

Archetype: Researcher **Motivation:** Discovery

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 **Charisma:** 3

Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence:** 5

Strength: 2 **Willpower:** 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 8

Move: 5 **Defense:** 7

Perception: 9 **Stun:** 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Geography)	5	6	11	(5+)
Bureaucracy	5	3	8	(4)

Diplomacy	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Gunnery	5	2	7	(3+)
Linguistics	5	4	9	(4+)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)
Ride	3	4	7	(3+)
Stealth	3	4	7	(3+)
Survival	5	3	8	(4)

Talents

Natural Leader

Resources

Rank 3 ('Station leader', German Society for Cartography)

Fame 3 (famous researcher)

Wealth 1 (well-off)

Languages

German (mother tongue), English, French, Latin, Ancient Greek, Venusian.

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Dagger	1 L	0	5 L	(2+) L
Sword	3 L	0	7 L	(3+) L
.30-06 Repeating Rifle	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L

Industrialists and Business Men

Moritz Honigmann

Born in 1844 as the son of a mine owner, the inventor and chemist Moritz Honigmann rapidly made a name for himself. At the tender age of 22 he was already the operations manager of a chemical factory and five years later founded his own company, feeling he couldn't make the most of his own innovative concepts and processes under his former employer.

In 1883 he developed a sodium bicarbonate engine which used bicarbonate of soda instead of fire to produce steam. The idea was promising but couldn't be made to work. Honigmann never abandoned his idea and when he was offered the chance to travel to Venus and continue his research there, he didn't hesitate. Today he lives in Venusstadt together with his wife Marie (*1852) and son Otto (*1879), where he directs the **Imperial Cytherean Research Institute** in improving infrastructure, simultaneously seeking to further his own projects too. Amongst other things, he is working on the suspension railway project and also perfecting the concept of a sodium bicarbonate ship to traverse the MacKenzie Sea.

Honigmann is also engaged in the education of children in the Protectorate, supporting the high school with cash and experiments he leads himself as a guest teacher. His involvement in this area has led to a close friendship with the teacher *Markus Hempel* (see page 29).

Josephus Martin

Few foreigners have been able to make such a name for themselves and exert such influence in the German Protectorate as the American engineer and inventor Josephus Martin (*1852). And life on Venus would be significantly less comfortable without Martin. Not only has his Ice Palace provided a comfortable setting for the administration and the Reichskommissar, his cooling techniques are on the verge of revolutionizing the storage of perishable goods on Venus.

Martin is a brilliant engineer who cares little for patriotism, but rather goes wherever his ideas take him. He is a pragmatist who carefully prepares his plans before carrying them out in the minutest of detail. He doesn't just want to carve out a name for himself among the greatest engineers of his time, he wants to earn money too. And lots of it.

He aims to achieve this with his Ice Factory and, despite the resistance of the ice barons who import huge quantities of ice from Earth, his plan is expected to be a success. The Ice Factory is not yet complete, but even the basic guarantee for such an endeavor – one would have expected such a lucrative enterprise to be placed in the hands of German companies – was a massive coup for Martin.

Only Martin himself knows why he received the guarantee. When he was initially commissioned to install the cooling system in the Ice Palace he was approached by Abteilung Z who offered him an exclusive deal and start-up money for the ice factory if he would agree to secretly equip his cooling system with listening apparatus. Martin agreed and designed an ingenious system with which the secret service officials can listen in on the meetings and daily activities of Reichskommissar von Racknitz.

Martin has since developed a guilty conscience about the whole enterprise, as he holds the Reichskommissar in high esteem. But the secret service have made clear the consequences of any leaking of their secret – and the revocation of the guarantee for the ice factory would be the least of his worries.

Carl Siemens

Carl Heinrich Siemens (*1829), the brother of the founder of the company, is unquestionably among the richest people on Venus. After having overseen the Russian activities of the Siemens Combine, Carl was the obvious choice of managing director for the Venus project.

Carl lives with his wife Marie and numerous servants in a pompous property on Heidelbergstraße, but is more often to be found staying in the company headquarters in the business district.

The telegraph network and ongoing construction of the suspension railway count among Carl's biggest achievements on Venus. Yet for all of the Siemens projects he is constantly on the hunt for specialists, engineers, inventors, technicians and rangers – such specializations are rare on Venus and jealously coveted.

Carl has lived on Venus for quite a few years now. It is becoming increasingly clear however that age is catching up on his brother and it is only a matter of time before Carl will have to return to Earth and take over the place of his brother. When that happens, the combine will require a new assertive, energetic leader for the Venus project.

Troublemakers

Katharina Baumann

Not many people are aware of the most politically engaged and active person on Venus who hides behind this attractive brunette. Baumann was born in 1857 in Konstanz into a socialist working class family and came into contact with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels early in life. Her anonymously yet brilliantly informed writings had already come to public attention during her school days,

causing turmoil in her home town, with worries that Baumann's activities would be discovered. Unable to study at university, she instructed herself in the social sciences whilst simultaneously working in the family business.

Katharina Baumann was only 20 when she came to the attention of Friedrich Engels, with whom she has since remained in contact. Encouraged by their detailed exchange of letters, Baumann expanded her thinking from just the German working classes to an international and then interplanetary level. It was Engels who prompted her to retreat to one of the colonies to escape persecution. Under the cover of the *Freia Project*, the young Baumann was able to scrounge financial backing from the Kaiserreich and travel to Venusstadt, where she established the *Golden Apple* and founded, in secret, a local branch of the German Social Democratic Workers' Party.

In recent years, Baumann has enjoyed increasing influence and has even managed to develop a web of contacts in other colonies. She stands firmly for the rights of workers – and those of the Venusians too. Her intelligence and charm have long since banished any suspicion that may have existed as to her activities. Her growing prominence and influence could however easily lead to catastrophe.

Katharina Baumann is a convinced, idealistic socialist and pacifist, and whilst she scorns violence, she is not one to shy away from intrigue, espionage and calls for peaceful revolt ...

She is always on the look-out for people to help her in her work, so long as she can trust them. She is also involved in a never-ending game of cat and mouse with the authorities who have long been aware of the presence of a leading socialist on Venus, but have yet to uncover Baumann.

Archetype: Academic **Motivation:** Justice

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 5

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 4

Strength: 1

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 6

Move: 3

Defense: 4

Perception: 8

Stun: 2

Skills	Basis	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics	4	4	8	(4)
Con	5	4	9	(4+)
Diplomacy	5	4	9	(4+)
Empathy	4	1	5	(2+)
Firearms	2	1	3	(1+)
Stealth	2	3	5	(2+)
Streetwise	5	1	6	(3)

Talents

Inspire; Skill Mastery (Academics)

Resources

Mentor (Friedrich Engels)

Refuge ('Zum goldenen Apfel' Guesthouse)

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	5 L	(2+) L

Other Characters

Soldiers

The amiable lieutenant *Fritz Pfaufurt* (*1860) sees himself first and foremost as an explorer and researcher, exploring Venus hoping to find relics of lost civilizations or to learn about the history and heritage of the Venusians. He is often accompanied by Captain *Gerhart Mauser*, a keen capitalist and entrepreneur who hopes to be able to make some sort of profit from Pfaufurt's findings.

Staff Sergeant *Norbert Vrecking* loves his booze and spends considerable time in the *Kühnen Husar*, often letting slip information that would have better been kept secret.

Private *Stefan Wassermann* lied about his age upon enlisting in the army, claiming he was 16 when he was only 13. That was four years ago, four years in which it has become clear that Wassermann struggles with the stress of army life. It's only a matter of time until something bad happens ...

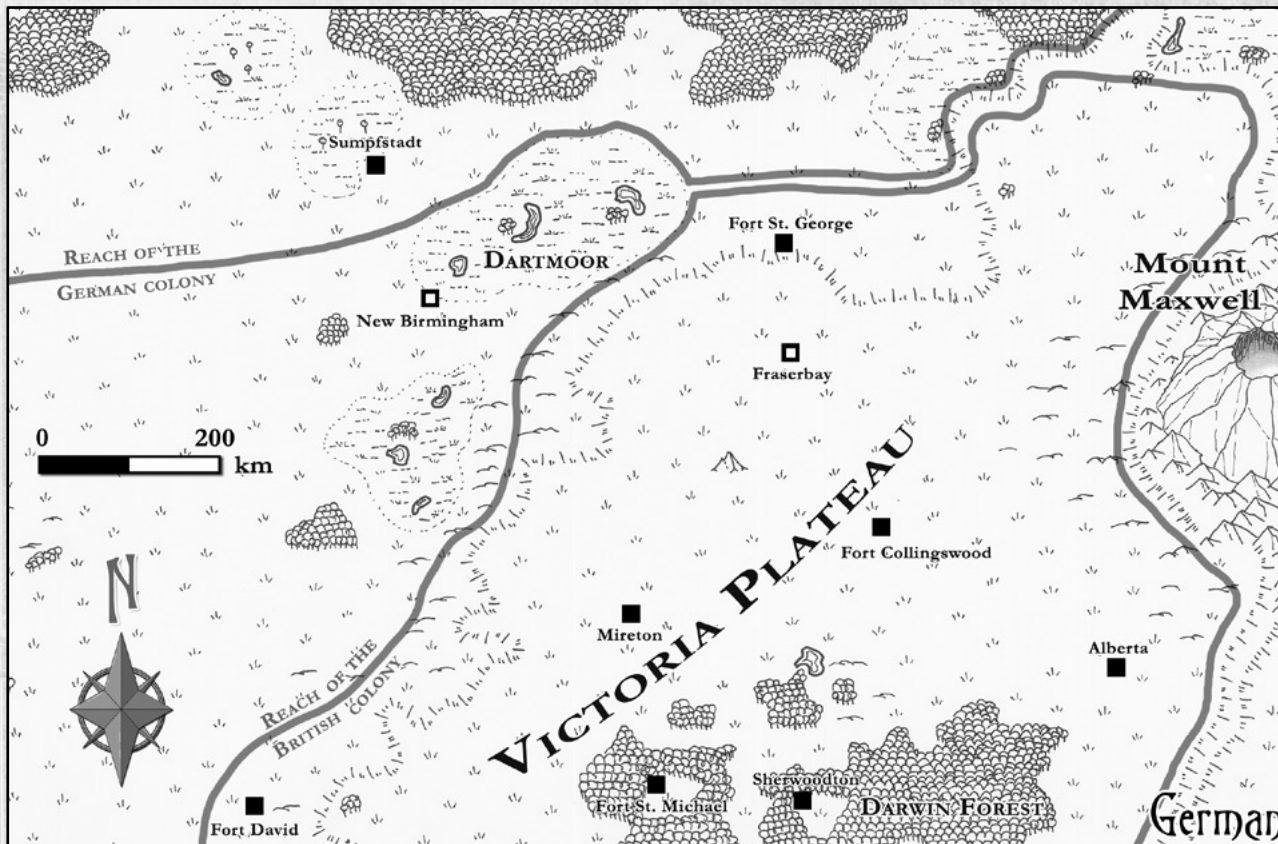
Scientists

Two chemists in the service of the two chemical giants on Venus are in direct competition with one another. *Heinrich von Brunn* (*1847) is the head of research for BASF and a specialist in dyes, whereas *Carl Duisberg* (*1861) is employed by Bayer and searches for new chemical agents on Venus.

The brothers *Max* (*1863) and *Emil* (*1866) *Skladanowsky*, if one can really call them scientists, keep themselves out of such rivalries. They came to Venus on their own initiative to find new substances which will help them to perfect their 'filming' or cinematograph techniques. They dream of producing the first ever motion picture about dinosaurs and are looking for brave volunteers to help them.



The British Colony



British Colony

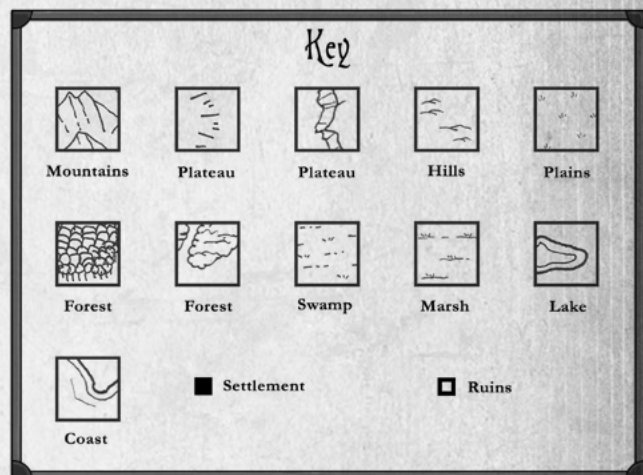
Two Months

JUNE

*NO HOPE, no change! The clouds have shut us in,
And through the cloud the sullen Sun strikes down
Full on the bosom of the tortured Town,
Till Night falls heavy as remembered sin
That will not suffer sleep or thought of ease,
And, hour on hour, the dry-eyed Heavens in spite
Glare through the haze and mocks with watery light
The torment of the uncomplaining trees.*

*Far off, the Thunder bellows her despair
To echoing earth, thrice parched. The lightnings fly
In vain. No help the heaped-up clouds afford,
But wearier weight of burdened, burning air.
What truce with Dawn? Look, from the aching sky,
Day stalks, a tyrant with a flaming sword!*

— Rudyard Kipling, *Two Months - Departmental Ditties and Other Venusian Verses* (1888)



Great Britain

Location: Victoria Plateau, with outposts at the foot of the western slopes

Population: approx. 4,000 humans

Main settlements: Fort Collingswood (capital, pop. 1,600), Fort St. Michael (pop. 700), Sherwoodton (pop. 500), Fort St. George (pop. 300), Fort David (pop. 300), Alberta (pop. 200), Mireton (pop. 170), Fraserbay (pop. 30), New Birmingham (pop. 0)

Military Units: two battalions of regular infantry, in total approximately 600 officers, NCOs and men

Sites of interest: Fort David mine, ghost town New Birmingham, Alberta diamond mine, Fraserbay bog

Location and Span of the Colony

The British colony is situated on the Victoria Plateau, above the Ishtar Highlands, in the shade of Mount Maxwell, close to the larger and more successful German protectorate. Thanks to the altitude, the climate is much more bearable than at the foot of the plateau, but the constant fog and the muggy heat here affect even the British settlers' temper. Nevertheless, the elevated location and the rather more agreeable climate are a blessing to the colony's development. As the escarpments leading up to the Victoria Plateau are very difficult to climb, they keep the biggest and most dangerous dinosaurs away from the area of settlement. The landscape is mainly dominated by grassland and bush, with small scattered stands of trees. Such is the land around **Fort Collingswood**, the central and largest settlement, and thus the closest equivalent to a provincial capital in this wild world. In the southern part of the colony, there are, by Venusian standards, sparse forests, which two settlements exploit commercially. The really dense bush is to be found below the southern edge of the plateau.

There are also settlements below the plateau, the oldest being **Fort David**, followed by **Fort St. George**. As both settlements are part of the outlying defenses for the colony they cannot be relocated to the top of the plateau, despite the settlers suffering from the extreme weather conditions of this area. Even so, the climate there is still more bearable than in the lower areas near the MacKenzie Sea. Far off to the West, there once was the little village of **New Birmingham**, not re-populated since the population fell prey to a mysterious and unresolved incident.

The semi-nomadic tribes of the Eastern Ishtar Culture (p. 81), who make up the main part of the local natives, are difficult to organize onto plantations. The nearby settled Western Ishtar Culture (p. 81) provides only a small percentage of the whole. Hence, there are only a few modestly efficient plantations, for the most part they are distinctly smaller than, for example, the German plantations and host not more than six or seven native villages. In contrast to the German colony, there are two or three humans living in each village who supervise the indigenous population.

The British colony has a stronger focus on research and mining. It is thought the latter could become especially profitable near Fort David, once it has been developed sufficiently.

Establishment and Development of the Colony

The First Years

To this day, the colonists still benefit from the experiences of *MacKenzie*, *Collingswood* and *Ditherby-Stoat* from when they were marooned on Venus, the three men still being venerated as the heroic founders of the colony

Soon after Collingswood and his men were stranded on Venus in 1874, they had realized that most kinds of wood rapidly decomposed in the humid conditions and thus began the search for

British Names

Victorian British names tended to draw strongly from Romantic, classical and medievalist literature, the names of royalty and imperial heroes. For those who would like some pointers to name their characters and non-player characters appropriately, here are some suggestions.

Male First Names:

Alfred, Archibald, Arthur, Charles, Clive, Cuthbert, David, Digory, Duncan, Edgar, Edward, Edwin, Francis, George, Henry (Harry), Horace, James, John, Lawrence, Michael, Osbert, Oscar, Oswald, Percy, Ralf, Robert, Seth, Thomas, Walter, William (Bill)

Female First Names:

Alice, Anne, Abigail, Caroline, Cecilia, Christabel, Deborah, Emma, Eleanor, Elizabeth (Bess, Eliza), Georgina, Geraldine, Hazel, Helen, Irene, Katherine, Lilian, Mary, Polly, Rowena, Rose, Sarah, Susan, Tess (Theresa), Vanessa, Victoria (Vicky), Violet, Zoe, Zuleika

Family Names:

Arkwright, Attwater, Banister, Bloodworth, Carmichael, Cooper, Cotterill, Chalmers, Donaldson, Draper, Everett, Fairburn, Fitzgerald, Foster, Gladwin, Groves, Hargrave, Hewitt, Hughes, Ingham, Jinks, Jorrocks, Knightley, Lynwood, Macdonald, Mason, Metcalfe, Morrish, Mortimer, Overton, Peck, Pemberton, Rowbottom, Seabrooke, Smedly, Smith, Tipton, Turnbull, Underwood, Ward, Wainwright, Welbeloved, Wilberforce, Willoughby

deposits of building stone. It did not take them long as, luckily, there were some rocky outcrops found to be suitable near the landing site. The foundation stone of Fort Collingswood was soon laid, and so began the strenuous labor of building a stout fortification that could protect them from the dangers of Venus.

A tribe of Venusian Lizard-men became aware of the humans' arduous efforts to exploit the rocks and watched them curiously for some time. The Venusians made contact when they saw that those strange pale animals piled up the stones into some kind of habitation. This contact was short and full of misunderstandings, but it proved to the humans that a potentially civilized people of Lizard-men lived on Venus.

The second contact with the Venusians was less peaceful. Lieutenant *Charles Davidson* sensed a movement in the fog, which seemed suspicious, and he was able to alert the camp just in time. While he was still running and raising the alarm, the first spears came flying, and one hit Davidson in the back. He was lucky to survive such a major wound at all but has been completely paralyzed since that moment. Subsequently, he became the most important spokesman in negotiations with peaceful Venusians, his desire for coexistence despite his own grievous injuries acting as a potent symbol for the importance of peaceful dialogue. Today, a fine statue of Davidson in Fort Collingswood is a permanent reminder of his achievements. The succeeding years were turbulent, but as history shows, Collingswood and Davidson succeeded in establishing cordial relations with some of the Lizard-men tribes, enabling both peoples to learn from each other. Nevertheless, it was the arrival of Ditherby-Stoat which finally secured their survival, as doubtless the small settlement would eventually have been defeated by the constant attacks of hostile Lizard-men tribes and monstrous dinosaurs, in spite of the completed stone fortifications.

The arrival of the German Heidelberg expedition in 1878 finally ensured the survival of the British, and the rescued castaways left the hostile climate of Venus with many a profound huzzah some months later. But Collingswood could not find peace of mind, as the alien world's exotic potential fascinated him beyond endurance. When plans for a Venus colony became known, he immediately volunteered and thanks to his experience he received a leading position. Collingswood left Earth - to the great disapproval of his pregnant wife Elisabeth. He was to meet his son for the first time only several years later. *Samok*, the friendly Venusian who had greeted the Ditherby-Stoat expedition in English, remained close by and helped in establishing contact with other Venusian tribes, improving hunting techniques and choosing dinosaurs suitable for drawing carts or even for riding. Through his help, several settlements could be established within a few years. However, some tribes regarded him as a traitor to his species because of his endeavors to help the new settlers. In 1884, *Samok* was ambushed and murdered by a hostile tribe. Collingswood led a punitive expedition and defeated his killers, granting no quarter to any member of the tribe they could get hold of. Only a handful of Venusians survived and retreated into the woods. Today they live - unseen by the humans - in a small enclave in the jungle and make plans to drive away all humans from Venus for good.

Alberta was the second of the British settlements, followed shortly after by Sherwoodton, which is mainly inhabited by lumberjacks. More and more people arrived on Venus, but that was still far from being enough to sustain the colony's growth to the extent that the Empire would have liked. Advertising campaigns attracted further workers, but very few women were among them, thus no families of settlers could be established. Most of the men came to the planet only temporarily, hoping to find their fortune and freedom, while planning on a happy return at the next opportunity.

The only ones willing to establish roots on Venus permanently were the poor, the treasure hunters, and the criminals. Those who were as successful as they had hoped fled back home to Earth as quickly as possible. Those who stayed often belonged to those unfortunates who could not afford the return fare.

Still, some brave individuals have been, and still are, advancing the colony step by step. It is their deeds, perhaps, which will go down in history when the British Empire justly triumphs on Venus as it has on Earth.

Organization of the Colony

The British colony on Venus is self-governing. Each settlement, every fort and trading post is basically autonomous. This includes its expansion, the protection of its inhabitants from the environment, the preservation of internal law and order, the administration of the crops and the supervision of the Lizard-men. Thus, technically, each settlement has far reaching authority to exert its power, which is limited, controlled and regulated by the appointed **Town Council** in Fort Collingswood. It is the central administration of the colony, the keystone of the unifying arch above the individual settlements.

Appointed by London and reporting to the Colonial Office, the **Governor** (currently *Sir Eugene Crawford*) is in charge of the Town Council, which he has installed as civilian representation of the colony. The governor nominates the members, presides over the meetings and discusses many decisions with the mayor, *Kitteridge*.

The Town Council devises and promotes the long-term development guidelines and directives that each settlement has to fulfill. In so doing, it adheres strictly to directions from London. Any deviations have to be justified in the semi-annual report to Parliament.

The administration on Venus works as efficiently as can be expected under the circumstances. Missing infrastructure often complicates close co-ordination, but in spite of these adverse conditions, disagreements between the different levels of the executive are relatively rare. The military has a separate administration, but in general, the two work closely together. Often representatives of the military observe and advise in Town Council meetings - to the great displeasure of some members who regard the heavy influence of the military on civilian life as troubling.

The British Military on Venus

Currently, there are two regular infantry battalions based on Venus: the *2nd Somerset Light Infantry* and the *2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers* - altogether approximately 600 officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and private soldiers.

Moreover, some among the colonists have in the past formed Volunteer companies. These units are supported by local Lizard-men, who serve as scouts and pioneers, but rarely as fighting troops. Only a few of the Volunteers wear uniform; for the most part they carry out their military duties in their civilian clothes. In some of the settlements, the men have introduced their own uniforms: the *Mireton Fusiliers* (originally the *Mireton Volunteer Company*) wear grey corduroy trousers with blue puttees and grey corduroy Norfolk jackets with red collar tabs and piping. The broad brims of their grey slouch hats are distinctively pinned up on both sides of the crown. This is worn with old regular army-issue, 1870 Pattern Valise Equipment of treated buff leather.

Structure of the Town Council

The Town Council is supervised by the **Governor**, and unusually for such a key frontier posting, *Sir Eugene Alexander Wintergreen Crawford*, CMG (b. 1834), has no military background. Possibly his mill-owning father's brief career in the Manchester Yeomanry might explain this (in which proud militia Cornet George Crawford had notably distinguished himself by lustily sabering women and children alike at 'Peterloo' in 1819) but whatever the reason, Sir Eugene has followed a diplomatic career. A man with an impressive beard and equally impressive girth to match, he owes his appointment as Venusian governor to some powerful enemies in the Colonial Office on Earth, who wanted to see him as far away as possible - he was "kicked upstairs", so to speak. Not the kind of person who tries to make the most out of a bad situation, he idles away his time, privately considering the inhabitants "low and ungentelemanly", and leaves decision-making to the mayor. He sees his main task in drafting finely tuned reports for the government on Earth, which make himself and the colony appear in a favorable light. In fact, Sir Eugene's Foreign Office career is merely a stepping stone to Parliament and a comfortably enriching retirement on the green benches. He is fond of repeating the folk saying, "Cheshire born, Cheshire bred, Strong in arm and wick [quick] in head", which his staff, nodding enthusiastically in agreement, unfortunately always hear as „weak in head“.



At the moment, the Town Council consists of five members appointed by the governor:

Mayor Solomon Kitteridge: a straightforward man who has already achieved much thanks to his cordial relations with the military. His critics accuse him of granting the military too much influence on civilian life. Kitteridge is always on the side of money, but even so he has proven diplomatic skills in labor circles.

First Town Councilor Loughlin Webb: the colony's second most powerful official has only lately arrived from Earth where he was a Liberal politician with a good sense for the laboring class. His enemies call him 'Mr. Unscrupulous, MP'. Webb's assignment on Venus was a clever move of the government on Earth and brought in some votes.

Town Councilor Richard Boyce: an honorable man and uncompromising opponent of Kitteridge's policy. He wants to exclude the military from the decision-making, as they, in his opinion, slow down the colony's development by their excessive caution regarding the Lizard-men.

Town Councilor Porter Milborrow: Milborrow is Kitteridge's most loyal supporter, to the point that, as some settlers murmur, he does not even have an opinion of his own. For Milborrow, the rise or fall of the colony depends on its economy, thus he wants to invest as much money as possible.

Town Councilor Maddock Blackton: Blackton fights for the sovereignty of the colony and its financial independence from London. Blackton is both radical and completely devoted to realizing his aims. He would sell his own grandmother to achieve them ...

Due to the tense situation, it has become common to have one company ready for action in each settlement. Fort Collingswood as the capital is the exception to this rule; it has seven companies in its defense. In addition, it has some military rarities for Venus. The Venusian volunteer "horse", for example, is stationed here, the *Venusian Mounted Rifles*.

While all British regulars are armed with either standard-issue Lee-Metfords (just introduced) or Martini-Henry breechloaders, the Volunteers mostly have old Snider-Enfields, while the Mounted Rifles use some special weapons. Almost uniquely, they have one of the brand new Maxim guns at their disposal (the first self-loading machine gun). This is intended to be used on a wheeled artillery carriage though the troop artificers have also replaced the pommel of their Pacyosaur saddle with a brass pintle for mounted use.

As the headquarters of the colonial administration, Fort Collingswood is exceptionally well defended. Most settlements have a Gatling gun or a Nordenfelt machine gun for their defense, which are operated by specially trained men of the Volunteer

companies. Thus, the forts and towns are able to resist the "natural enemies" on Venus.

Life in the Colony

Life on Venus resembles life in India: it is hot and humid. The discomfort that the sticky heat of Venus causes led the British to adjust the construction of their buildings accordingly. Just as in India, there are no solid doors but curtains which allow a cooling breeze to enter the rooms. Furthermore, the rooms themselves have a high ceiling, reminiscent of the bungalows in India, roofed terraces, only few windows, and many doorways. However, the current British fashions in architecture are preferred for prestige purposes, especially so in Fort Collingswood.

Most of the British settlers choose to spend their days on their verandas. Very often, they have comfortable seating and even their office desks there, to carry out their correspondence.

Some also take their morning tea and breakfasts of porridge and “mock-herring” outside. In the muggy hours around noon, they enjoy tea and a light lunch or *tiffin*, followed by a little rest in the slightly cooler rooms of the house. Only for five o’clock tea do the ladies and gentlemen become active again, taking strolls among an entourage of servants, while at home, supervised by human cooks, skillful Lizard-men prepare an invigorating meal for the hosts and their guests. Formal invitations to dinner and the leaving of calling cards, as demanded by etiquette, are common. Far away from Earth, the upper classes abide by each and every smallest set phrase of pleasantry, in public at least. While the Lizard-men servants serve the dishes in breechcloths, the lords and ladies perspire quietly in freshly starched shirt collars, tightly-laced corsetry and voluminous gowns. The conversation during dinner is either remarkably shallow, so as to avoid any possible faux pas, or, among friends of the same class, both risqué and surprising. After dinner, the menfolk will smoke cheroots and drink a few *whisky-pegs* late into the night while the ladies retire to score social points in barbed conversation.

Guidelines for the Venusian Colony

The *Guidelines for the Venusian Colony* are mandatory reading for all colonists, and even more so for all members of the British colonial administration. The small red book outlines all aspects of colonial life in detail, even meticulously describing how a table is to be set, how the dishes are to be served and how guests are to be placed at the table according to their social state. Any mistakes made at table could easily lead to social ostracism. It quickly becomes clear to any reader that in the colonies traditional customs are valued distinctively higher than, for example, in London: a gentleman on Venus would rather suffer a heatstroke than undo the stud of his shirt collar.

The journey to such dinner parties – as well as almost any other distance – is never covered on foot. Even ladies going to see their neighbors at the end of the road use rickshaws drawn by Lizard-men. Those who can afford it have their own rickshaw, but they can also be hired in the street. The arrival of the rickshaw or the hackney carriage drawn by cursorial or yoke-dinosaurs is not only part of the common etiquette, it functions as a symbol of social class, which the people on Venus cling to even harder than on Earth.

Transportation of impressive silverware and fine tea sets from home often proves difficult, but every effort is made to have the utensils deemed essential to maintain a civilized life in the wilderness of the jungle. However, broken items cannot easily be replaced, thus many British families have to use local products and order tableware made of kalsa-wood and chairs and benches made of Oma Jolima. By using color-staining and varnishing, the local craftsmen try, with some success, to imitate goods from Earth. The construction of weaving looms, and instructing Lizard-men how to use them, allows for textile production in the colony. Spinning mills produce the cotton, and at the gates of Fort Collingswood a pottery is currently under construction.

In the smaller villages, life is inevitably more rustic. Still, the settlers try to maintain British life as far as possible, but they have

to make many compromises. To visitors from Fort Collingswood the life on the plantations appears primitive and uncivilized – in spite of all the efforts the locals might make.

Beyond the etiquette and the effort to adapt life to the standards on Earth, beyond the silverware, the insect curtains, and Lizard-men servants, beyond everything else, life is determined by the overall prevailing heat. Every activity is constrained by the need to make the cloying stickiness and oppressive heat bearable: From the design of buildings to the work schedules and the use of huge fans operated by Lizard-men, which supply at least a degree of cooling. As the British will be British, they are not really bothered by the ‘pea-souper’ fog and the sun’s almost constant absence. Still, the heat is a discomfort and stresses both mind and body. Currently, the colony is recruiting specialized doctors to train in public health care.

From Here to There

In spite of the rough terrain and the bad roads, the settlements are able to stay in contact and mainly by entirely British-controlled *All-Red Routes*. Telegraph lines ensure an undisturbed communication – unless one of the lines is damaged again, which could mean being cut off for months, until the line is repaired. Nowadays, the cables are being laid underground, to minimize the possibility of damage.

Additionally, each human settlement has a “landing field” for airships, which is employed more or less regularly. Usually, the landing fields are nothing more than cleared areas, but some of them are now full-grown air-ports. Fort Collingswood even boasts of a hangar in which airships are repaired, refitted and improved (p. 43).

To ensure smooth communication between distant settlements, which so far have not been connected to the telegraph network, *Her Majesty’s Telegraphic and Heliographic Service* employs special messengers. These messengers, showing daily the utmost British pluck, use steam powered tricycles to carry letters and official dispatches to the most remote corners of the colony, yet this task is a real challenge as regards the condition of the ground on Venus.

Olfactory Research

Since it is known that the Lizard-men express their emotions by emitting odors, the best British scientists are doing their utmost to explore this phenomenon. A small breakthrough was the discovery that some Venusian plants are able to influence the Lizard-men’s emotions. This could explain why some feelings seem to be “contagious” in Lizard-men groups. The impact of plant substances is not as strong as the odors emitted by the Lizard-men’s own glands, but the fact that those olfactory chemicals can be extracted and processed opens up a whole universe of new possibilities – although the research project and its results are strictly confidential.

The odorants of these emotional olfactory communications are called *emotional fluids*, within the Victoria Institute they are mainly abbreviated by *EFs*, which lead to their being called *Effs* in colloquial language. The team around the two scientists *Prof. Guy Lakefield* and *Dr. Daniel Maverick* leads the research. They succeeded in identifying an orchid which conveys a feeling of melancholy to the Lizard-men. Last year, they also produced an *EF-oil* which makes the Venusians indifferent to anything. They extracted tiny amounts of the oil from a bright red blossom which can only be found in the swamps and had been previously unknown. They dubbed it the *Silencer Flower*. Since then, the team sends regular expeditions to Fort David, searching for the rare flower. The *EF's* effect is still minor, but there is hope that a stronger result might be achieved by further concentrating the substance.

Another field of research opened up with the tragedy of Fraserbay (p. 49). Should it ever be possible to combine the research there with that of Lakefield and Maverick, a perfect army of Lizard-men could be created which could go to war and recklessly slaughter their enemy, and afterwards could be soothed by a simple smell which would make them indifferent towards their deeds. The military is watching this research very carefully indeed.

Controversially, experiments with living and dead Lizard-men are also currently being made. For fear of a revolt of the Venusians, the Town Council has decreed the utmost secrecy. The scientists "harvest" glands and then try to extract the odorants. Moreover, they experiment in producing emotions in living Venusians and preserve the resultant odor in liquid wax, from which it is later to be extracted and concentrated.

The Reverend *Patrick Bones*'s endeavor to establish a boarding school in Fort Collingswood (see p. 47 and 51) is supported by the management of the Victoria Institute as well as by the military command. The ruthless *Dr. Maverick* hopes to gain access to a new source of test subjects this way. But this idea is secret even within the Institute; *Maverick* anticipates some colleagues' opposition should the plans become known.

➔ **British Olfactory Research**, p. 150

Industry

The industry of the British colony is not as advanced as in the German protectorate, but the Empire is determined to reduce the German lead at the earliest opportunity. The colonial scientists work closely together with British industrialists. The main part of the research is not conducted in the Victoria Institute but in the industrial buildings at the gates of Fort Collingswood, where scientists try to develop new processes that could gain Great Britain a technological edge on Venus.

The main issue with the industrial development of the Venusian colonies remains the transportation of goods. For this reason, most of the settlements are self-sufficient; they harvest *swampweed* for the production of briquettes, grow edible plants, and process raw materials all by themselves whenever possible. Not every settlement is autonomous, however, but the dependency on other settlements is reduced to a minimum. At the moment, goods are transported mainly by carts drawn by dinosaurs. Even when using large carts, the shipping still takes a long time and delays are frequent. Sometimes, merchants resort to steam powered armored traction engines, which transport heavy goods to their destination on the few broad roads available. Not much faster than dinosaur transports, these land trains are also more prone to obstacles on the road, such as flooding or boggy ground. The completion of

the railway will be a giant leap forward for industry and is eagerly awaited. Thus, private donations for the project flow in constantly.

As the British love fine ceramics, a large pottery is currently under construction. The fact that ceramics do not rot adds extra interest in developing the fragile material. As extremely robust kinds of Old Martian ceramic are known on Mars, new processes of manufacture are tested regularly. The researchers try to develop harder and more robust ceramics for the fabrication of various implements, from girders for buildings to knives and mechanical devices. Should there be a success in making a stable ceramic cogwheel, then automated looms, clocks and other important machines could be protected considerably better from the Venusian climate. Above all, the cotton processing industry would benefit, too, as it is dependent on automated looms. Up to now, it is mostly the Lizard-men that spin the yarn and weave the fabric, as not many machines can be applied as yet.

The largest industrial sector is potentially the **chemical industry**. The abundant plants of Venus offer the most diverse substances which can be used as basic material for the processing of chemicals. New ways are constantly evolved to extract them with the utmost efficiency and process them into dyes, primers, and protective varnishes. To the great displeasure of the British, the modest beginnings of the chemical industry near Fort Collingswood seem pathetic in comparison to the German factories. A lot of chemical products still have to be imported from there, but as it is planned to become independent, large sums are invested in research and development of the chemical economy. Shady characters find an outstanding source of income as industrial spies, who pass on information from one side to the other.

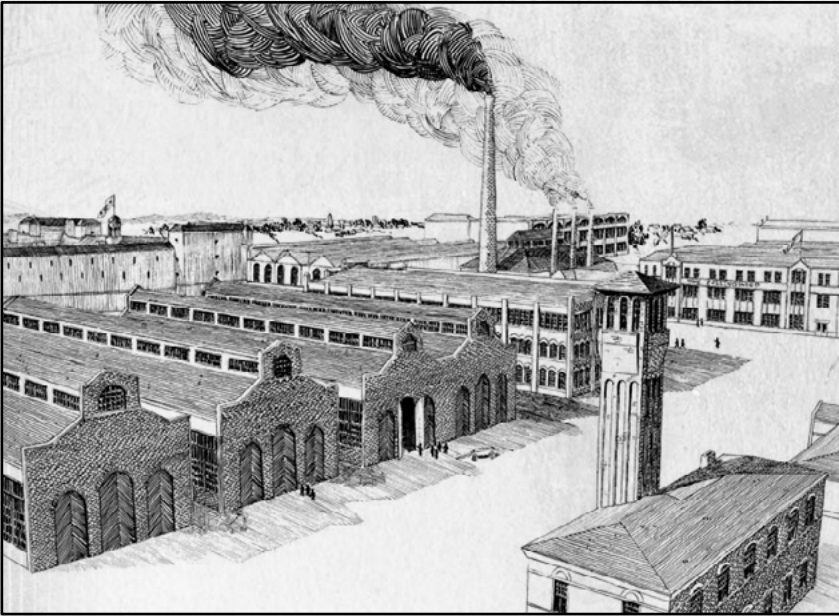
Important Settlements and Plantations

Fort Collingswood

Fort Collingswood (pop. 1,600) is the seat of the Governor and the Town Council as well as the military administration. Far more than an ordinary fort, it has developed into a small town. There are several hotels, a scientific institute, a hospital, a church, a telegraph office, an "air-port" (the "landing ground"), and everything else that is needed by a modern habitation. The fort is surrounded by stone walls and palisades, which protect against the few predatory dinosaurs that reach the plateau, as well as against human and Lizard enemies. The fortifications have been extended several times in recent years, but by now the fort is bursting at the seams. The constant growth made it necessary to build not only all the larger industrial buildings outside the fortification but also occasionally other buildings, which grow in number frequently. Huts of poor settlers are also located outside the fort's gates.

Many of the houses are built of stone. Wooden buildings need permanent maintenance to avert their decay, which makes the substantially more expensive stone buildings a symbol of prestige and wealth.

The British, especially the wealthy, make every effort to preserve the elegance of the British way of life. However, the narrow width of the buildings makes this aspiration almost impossible. Building facades are beautiful to look at, and the houses are built in Victorian style wherever possible, but even so the housing situation gives



only a moderate amount of space. Buildings are generally high and narrow and for the most part made of the typical grey stone from the colony's quarries. Lizard-men are constantly cleaning the buildings' fronts and take care of the few wooden houses to prevent them from rotting.

At night, the fort is illuminated by gas lanterns fed by a swamp gas specially piped for that purpose. In the darkness, the white lights are surrounded by uncanny halos due to the omnipresent fog. Swarms of insects are drawn to the lanterns, the humming of their translucent wings echoing through the streets. To repel the insects, strong pesticides are either applied on the lanterns' glass or burned along with the gas, which then diffuses a strong citric smell.

Despite its cleanliness and the elaborate and very recent construction of its buildings, the fort resembles a medieval city with its narrow alleys, muddy backstreets, and an area of slums (2) rife with undesirables outside its gates. The industrial area may be rather unsightly, but the machines, the plants, and the generous expanse of the buildings make it appear more modern than the fort itself.

1 – Military Training Area (see (12))

2 – Outer Settlement

3 – Orchid cultivation

People have always been fascinated by this flower, and Venus is a real treasure house for exotic orchids, so it's no surprise then that the British have built up a rich orchid cultivation. The small greenhouses are located a little way outside the fort and are run by *Richard D. Andrews* (see p. 50) whose main goal is to achieve the highest price possible for his plants on Earth.

4 – Anglican Church

The vicar of the stone church of St Mary is the Rev. *St. John Drummond*, a rotund but increasingly haggard and reserved man, who is rumored to be lazy. In reality, he is nothing but timid, and at home he has his hands full in asserting himself against his matronly wife *Angelica* and their two daughters. Not long ago, Drummond was contacted by a Russian traveler, who promised him "Security for his family" in exchange for "certain information". Since then, Drummond has received orders from the stranger or one of his agents on an irregular basis.

5 – Victoria Institute

The Victoria Institute accommodates some of the most capable scientists of Great Britain, at least those willing to labor in such uncongenial surroundings. Its resources are somewhat limited due to the distance to Earth, but the equipment is nevertheless impressive, taking into account that the institute is located in the midst of a jungle on a distant planet. The colonial administration pours a lot of money into the institute, as it aims to surpass Germany as soon as possible.

One of the most important research areas, besides Venusian botany and zoology as well as the development of devices for flight, is the exploration of the emotional communication among Lizard-men (see *Olfactory Research*, p. 41).

6 – Fort Collingswood Town Hall (Administration Building of the Town Council)

The Town Hall at the market place (7) is an impressive stone building with an ornate front. Court cases, in the attached Courtroom, and meetings are held here, as well as the reception of diplomatic visitors. It is the colony's main public building and is therefore well maintained.

The building's hallways are lined with paintings, tablets and sculptures of the worthy. There are, among others, a bust of Captain George Garner, the *Dragonslayer* who fought in Fort St. George (see p. 45), and paintings of MacKenzie, Collingswood, and Ditherby-Stoat. It is a gallery of heroic portraits of men and a few women whose deeds made the founding and the development of the colony possible in the first place (many of whom still live in the colony). The most valued artifact of this collection is a tattered copy of the MacKenzie Report, kept behind glass in a table-case. The book itself is not particularly precious; it is the symbolic value that counts. The work stands for the British victory over all odds and adverse circumstances. Everyone who signs the ledger of visitors is allowed to read the book.

Solomon Kitteridge is the town's mayor and as such the head of the Town Council. This popular individual is on friendly terms with the military and discusses many decisions with the military leaders. Officially, the civil and military administrations are strictly separated, but the leaders of both readily take advantage of a good collaboration. For the duration of his time in office, Kitteridge and his wife *Sarah* live in a side wing of the Town Council building. The little square in front of the building is adorned with a stone statue of Charles Davidson, the commander who warned Collingwood of the first attack by nomadic Lizard-men and by doing so probably ensured the stranded explorers' survival. He is represented in a sitting position, as he suffered a wound during the attack that paralyzed him forever. Once a week, the white marble is freed from moss. A gas lantern illuminates the life-sized statue and makes it glow in the nightly fog like a ghost. For some time past, the Davidson-statue has been daubed time and again; once the vandals even invaded the building and defaced the busts and some of the paintings. A small group of Lizard-men was caught red-handed and publicly chastised in the market place, but that did not stop the barbarous vandalism. It is yet unclear what troubles the Venusians in the representations and why it is now of all times that these outbursts occur. To protect the artworks, the Lizard-men are granted only accompanied ac-

cess to the Town Council building and are generally not allowed into the market place unless under supervision. A guard has been positioned day and night next to Davidson's statue. Resentment spread among the Venusians, in particular due to the humiliating public punishment, and the Town Council fears that a riot could break out at any time.

7 – Marketplace

For first-time visitors, the open market, which takes place twice a week in the square directly next to the Town Council building, is an unforgettable experience. The range of products offered seems to be born straight out of an exotic dream: Venusian cotton, fabrics, orchids, scented oils, swampweed briquettes, flammable oils, Venusian meats, dinosaur mounts and draft animals, surprisingly palatable local teas, and a multitude of new inventions or Venusian products which even those who have been living here for years have never heard of before. The square has become too small for the great number of market stands and goods, thus more and more merchants decide to have only samples on site and deliver the merchandise to the customers' address. This method has become prevalent, particularly with bulky goods. There are plans to build a fine new market hall with secure storage and loading bays. Next to the marketplace, the **trading house**, or 'Exchange' is situated, in which major orders and deliveries to Earth or Mars are negotiated, deals struck and shares and bonds sold.

8 – 'The Frontier News'

A pair of fine Albion printing presses are worked all night, when the latest issue of *The Frontier News* is in print. Depending on the amount of current news, the daily paper comprises a single

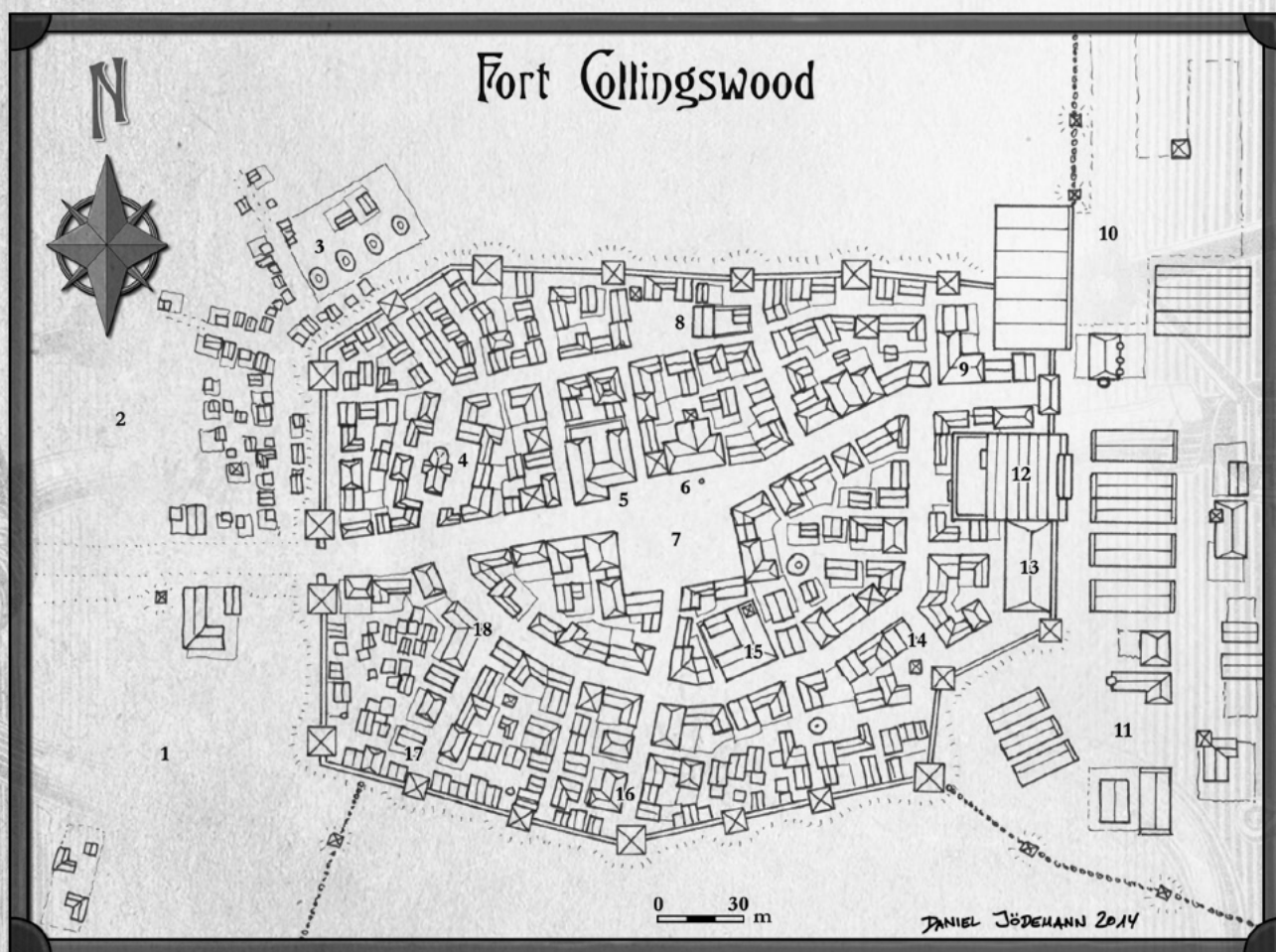
or a double-page spread of broadsheet. Printer and publisher *Robert Candy* employs two reporters, who are sent throughout the colony. He also buys news and reports from trustworthy correspondents. Sometimes, he even sends out one of his reporters to verify the information.

10 – Air-port and Hangar

The air-port or "landing ground" is located outside the fort. Airships and etherflyers land here on a regular basis to bring goods and passengers. A spacious hangar provides the facilities to repair airships and implement improvements devised at the Victoria Institute. Engineer Mr. *Geoffrey Forbes-Hamilton* is working on a much-improved "Lighter-than-air-ship", which is to outclass the German Zeppelins. He collaborates closely with a number of other engineers and scientists.

11 – Industrial Area

Due to the lack of space inside the fort, the larger manufacturing plants and workshops had to be built by the gates. Despite their partly primitive external appearance – simple stone buildings, mossy wooden wheelbarrows, and rusted tools – the plants are as modern and large as is at all possible on a jungle-covered alien planet with excessively hostile conditions. Many industrial experiments and research projects aim to develop materials that help to prevail over the climate (see also p. 42). Ceramics proved to be an interesting option, as it is immune to the constant decay. The British also pursue their chemical researches here. Besides these two key industries, the area holds smaller manufactures which produce articles of daily use and even luxury goods.



Listed below is a short overview of the different industrial sites on the area at Fort Collingswood – the game master is of course free to add further production sites:

- **Pottery and brickworks:** hardly any other industry has a comparable waste of labor. It is said that the best workers are not able to work longer than a year in a kiln on Venus as the strenuous efforts in the blazing heat and the steam are relentlessly debilitating. Burns are the order of the day. New protective suits are tried over and over, but either their heat protection is insufficient or the workers can barely move while wearing them.

- **Chemical industry:** the manufacturing facilities range from simple paint shops to small stills and complex distillation towers. Small pharmaceutical companies ('Chemists and Druggists') produce pills, tablets, 'Tabloids', drops, and tinctures for the colonists' health.

- **Weaving mills:** the weaving mills produce textiles on a large scale, all of which are quickly chemically treated to prevent their decay.

- **Wood processing:** Wood remains an important material for a variety of goods. Carpentry shops produce building material for the maintenance of existing settlements, cabinet makers construct furniture and other items of daily use. All products are given a protective treatment in a paint shop.

12 – Barracks

Located directly next to the headquarters buildings are the barracks, where most of the British soldiers are stationed. The building is oppressively narrow and dark, although it is one of the cleanest and best maintained buildings of the colony. The maintenance falls to those soldiers on fatigues or who are not out on an exercise or on patrol to one of the plantations or outposts. The soldiers sleep, eat, and receive technical instruction here. Drill, "square-bashing", is carried out on the *maidan* or parade ground at the gates of the fort (1), as the building does not offer enough space.

The barracks also has a "Glasshouse" or detention cells in which criminals and prisoners are locked up. Custody and provisioning of the inmates are carried out by the army as well.

13 – Headquarters of the Military Administration

The military headquarters in Fort Collingswood resemble a small fortress and only the Town Council building stands higher. The Union Jack flies constantly on the roof, from the deep "boom" of the morning gun before Reveille at sunrise, startling clouds of small flying lizards swirling into the sky, until the bugle's "Last Post" rings poignantly out over the town when it's lowered at dusk. The commander in chief of British land forces is Brigadier *Bruce Rawlinson*. Although he owns a quite capital private house on the outskirts of the fort, he spends most of his time in the headquarters and the officers' mess, arranging dispositions, drafting memos, downing *chota pegs* and only reading the last paragraphs of reports. Otherwise his interests are hunting, shooting and fishing, all pastimes which have proved surprisingly more taxing on Venus than did the odd brace of pheasant or bind of salmon on Earth.

14 – Collingswood's House

Sir *Edward Barton Collingswood*, his wife *Elizabeth*, and his son *Harold* (see p. 50) live in this beautiful Victorian Italian-Gothic style house.

15 – Holy Trinity Hospital

Two doctors and a handful of nurses take care of the injured and the sick of the British colony. According to the chief physician Dr. *Harold Longfellow*, Holy Trinity is nothing more than a

field hospital. He is constantly fighting to raise more funds to purchase medical equipment and medication. For the standards of a colony that far away from Earth, the hospital is relatively well equipped and quite comparable to the respective facilities of the larger German colony.

17 – Kramer's Shop

Niklaus 'Nick' Kramer's shop is the starting point for everyone who wants to enter the jungle. Nick offers everything, from spades to emergency provisions, guns, and knives. The small house is situated directly at the fort's wall and is filled up to its roof with equipment and other goods.

9, 16, 18 – Hotels and Inns

Fort Collingswood has no less than three hotels: The **Dragon and Crown** (9) is the most expensive of them and is frequented by people of quality: diplomats, politicians, and the wealthy. Those less well-to-do, but who still put emphasis on their place in society, try to find a room in the **Queen's View** (18). The hotel tries to convey the appearance of opulence, without digging too deep into the guests' pockets. **Amber's Inn** (16) provides generally favorable accommodation, although the standards of cleanliness and service are accordingly lower. It is also a public house, which some see as a compensation. Owner and landlady *Amber McAuley* is a young widow who gets along with hard work and quite a bit of self-confidence.

Fort St. George

In the extensive trading post of Fort St. George there are two kinds of people: on the one hand there are young, naïve soldiers who hope to build up an impressive reputation in "dragon hunting" and to gain precious and prestigious trophies; on the other hand there are soldiers who are stationed here, it has to be said, somewhat against their will. The fort is situated at the foot of the escarpment leading up to the Victoria Plateau, to the colony's main territory. Due to its lowland position, the temperature is 5 °C to 10 °C higher than in the highlands and the humidity is distinctly higher. Not much sunlight makes its way through the fog and as the fortifications are drawn closely around the extremely limited living space, privacy is a rare prize. Widespread circulatory disorders and lung diseases are a common problem, and thus two doctors take care of the fort's inhabitants. One of them is an intuitive psychologist who tries to keep the general mood up and minimize violence within the fort: Dr. *Abraham Pettinsworth* (p. 50) is a big, jovial, man, with fine 'dundreary whiskers' of a military character, who is called on whenever the 'tap', the lethal mix of fever, depression, nervous exhaustion or madness ..., overcomes the iron discipline of the soldiers.

Fort St. George plays an important role in the trade with three small local clans of Lizard-men who harvest rare and valuable plants in the jungle and barter those in the fort. The beautiful and wonderfully fragrant flower of the *Venusian angel's coat* (see p. 103) is purchased in large amounts (several pounds per month, which is a large amount considering the rarity of this plant) and used in dry form as home decoration or in fresh form to deliver exotic fragrance for the perfume industry. The buds of the *gray-cherry bush* (named after its strange colorless fruits, see p. 101) are used in the production of an aromatic oil, which is to expel the *Mineur*. Unfortunately, the effects are weak and the oil often causes itching of the skin and gives off a quite bestial stench. But, perhaps not unsurprisingly, most soldiers prefer the foul smell over

cutting out the disgusting brood of alien beetles from underneath their skin. Many other plants, used as spices, fragrances, poisons, or bases for experimental science, are also traded.

Four years ago, three years after its foundation in 1882, the trading post was converted into a fort. Back then, the attack of an aggressive tribe of Lizard-men only failed to exterminate the local human settlers because Captain *George Garner* happened to be present with his men for an exercise and inspection of the post. Because of his heroic intervention, the captain was dubbed without his consent '*St. George, the Dragonslayer*', which was to give the fort its name.

Only three years later, in 1885, another fight with these scaled beasts occurred. A group of *Steller's dragons*, although many miles away, moved straight toward the fort for reasons as yet unknown. The migration of this mighty herd of twelve animals was luckily discovered by a team of researchers and thus help from the highlands could be called in time. The beasts threw themselves against the fortifications in a blind rage and caused massive damage, but finally they were driven away. It is still unclear what made them move so resolutely in this direction.

The number of the soldiers constantly stationed in the fort has been tripled since and so there is at least one patrol on reconnaissance in the surrounding jungle at all times to spot any possible new attack in time.

Fort David

In spite of its small size, Fort David is the most important British outpost beneath the Plateau. Of course it has its own airship hangar, a landing place and a connection to the telegraph. It started off as a trading post and outpost for expeditions. Two tribes of Lizard-men that settled nearby proved to be more willing to work and easier to control than other Ishtar tribes. Another advantage was the outstanding growth of swampweed and kalsa-wood in the surroundings of the fort.

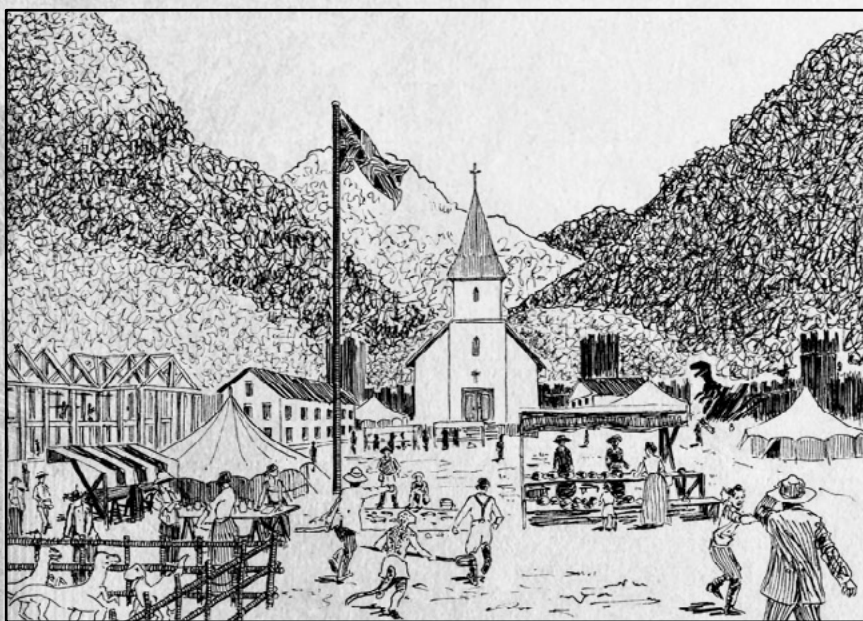
But this growth soon lost its importance when iron ore was discovered in the walls of the escarpment to the plateau. The mine has been growing ever since, and Venusians are trained to work in it, though as working in the dark is very unpleasant for the mostly nomadic forest dwellers, it is for the most part humans

who work in the mines. The exploitation could be much more advanced, if it were not for the complicated transportation of the ore to the plateau. So far, it is transported upwards by Lizard-men workers on carts drawn by dinosaurs over narrow and, somewhat appropriately, serpentine roads. Unluckily, there has not been any possibility to smelt larger amounts of ore.

Seven months ago, mineworker Jack Linton broke through the wall into a cave under the plateau. Teams of explorers discovered that the plateau can be reached from here via numerous caves and passages. In the following weeks, this route was expanded and secured. Humans can already traverse between the Lowlands and the Highlands with the help of ladders and stairs, however, the transportation of ore still is not possible. The construction of steam-powered lifts and the expansion of the paths are already well advanced. Shortly after it became clear that this route would support the transportation of ore, the planning of new ironworks began. At the moment, the tender is being fought over fiercely on Earth.

As Fort David lacks the protection of the steep faces of the Victoria Plateau, which keep the large dinosaurs away, the fortifications had to be built more stoutly than, for example, those in Mireton or Alberta. More than in any other settlement, it is made sure that every male over 14 can handle a weapon. One of the local military detachment's main tasks is the protection of guests, as the wealthy of Britain and the Empire frequently travel to Fort David for the exhilaration of a dinosaur hunt. Therefore, there are two hotels which offer all the best modern conveniences to their rich guests. The organization of hunting trips has become the fort's main source of income. Provisions for the visitors are supplied via airship on a regular basis – especially ice, to ensure a comfortable stay.

In addition,, many different research expeditions start off at Fort David. If the scientists, treasure hunters, and adventurers do not fly off to the jungle in an airship, Fort David offers everything needed for a good start to the adventure: hotels for that last small luxury, and various guides and trackers, humans as well as Lizard-men. It goes without saying that there is also a brisk trade in equipment. Basically everything is available here, from hammocks, capacious tents and modern weapons to food packages containing tins of appetizing bully beef (in Venus' heat usually poured liquid from the tin) and jaw-breaking hard-tack biscuit.



Alberta

Until a few months ago, Alberta had been a sleepy trading post far to the east of Fort Collingswood. The main activities here consisted in trading with peaceful Lizard-men, and wresting small patches of farmland from the swamp - until the first diamond showed up. A lucky fellow named Francis O'Donald came across a jolly sparkling stone while ploughing his field. Then the diamond fever broke out. Alberta became an irresistible center of attraction for soldiers of fortune; the small trading post soon became a large trade center. Retailers for mining equipment, hotels and restaurants, a generous marketplace, and new residential houses slowly grew around the small Alberta.

However, for some time there have been quarrels between the diamond hunters and a local tribe of Lizard-men, one of the few non-nomadic Ishtar tribes. It had only reluctantly accepted the presence of the humans, and the relationship has always been complicated even though the trade earned good revenues. The crowds of people now reaching Alberta, clearing parts of the jungle and building camps there have led to new frictions. Recently, the number of warlike confrontations between diamond hunters and Lizard-men has increased and the usual trade with the natives has come to a standstill.

Rumor has it that the local Lizard-men and some nomadic tribes plan to ally themselves against the human intruders and recapture their hereditary territory.

Juh-Hoa, the Murderous Incendiary

Lizard-man *Juh-Hoa* is the scourge of all sedentary Lizard-men on the Victoria Plateau. He is the ferocious chief of a nomadic tribe and hates all humans and those Venusians he regards as their willing slaves, in short: all sedentary Lizard-men in or near a colony. He is called the "Murderous Incendiary" by the British, who have been trying to eliminate him for four years now, without any success.

Mireton

Mireton is a small plantation with five satellite Lizard-men villages and a central human village providing the name. It has a small "landing ground" for airships and captive balloons. Balloons take off on a regular basis, and they are manufactured on site as well. These simple air-craft are at least partly dirigible and can be rudimentarily operated by small muscle-powered propellers. They are employed chiefly when the wind is right or on windless days. The latter might be more exhausting for the passengers but the personal conveyors are more easily navigable that way. Those who can afford it employ a Lizard-man servant at the pedals.

Mireton Boarding School

Anglican minister, the Reverend *Patrick Bone* founded a school in Mireton seven years ago, in which humans as well as Lizard-men were to be educated in Christian teachings. Since there were only a few families, and it was hard to convey the concept of a school to Lizard-men, the new school desks for the most part remained vacant—until Reverend Bone succeeded in having compulsory school attendance introduced in Mireton. The education of the Lizard-men children proved more difficult than expected, as they returned to their 'amoral' conditions as soon as they were leaving for their home villages in the evening. Thus Bone turned the establishment into a boarding school in which all young Lizard-men of the plantation have to live from age two to eight. This way, Bone wants to teach the Lizard-men Christian morality and civilized behavior, as the conditions he witnessed during his early visits in the villages were plainly intolerable for

any decent society. In Lizard-men villages, children are raised in groups and their parents do not look after them, so their mentors for potential questions and problems change constantly. The village might provide for some kind of education, but morality and decency, according to the Reverend Bone, are clearly neither taught nor lived. Currently, five female teachers are employed in the boarding school, of which four take care of the Lizard-men children and one teaches the five human pupils.

In the beginning, it was not at all easy to take the Lizard-men offspring out of their villages. The females who looked after the young before they were assigned to hunting and work parties fought against the abductions. Removing the children from already established work parties was even harder. However, with a little help from some soldiers, Bone could convince the villagers of his just cause. The Lizard-men's discontent decreased in the course of the years and Bone is certain that they will very soon learn to appreciate the advantages of a solid education.

Nevertheless, Bone keeps ignoring the difficulties the Lizard-youth have with their reintegration when returning to their villages. Recently the first class of pupils taught entirely in the boarding school graduated. The young Venusians speak English almost exclusively, have never been assigned to work parties and have to learn working and hunting with great effort. Moreover, they have problems with the traditional religious and social rituals; either they do not believe in nature's animism or they regard the spirits of nature as angels or servants of the "real" God. Even though they stand out due to their more profound knowledge of agriculture and diligence with farming routine, life in the villages is hard for them.

In one of the villages a special work party of the "Scholars" has already formed. This group of boarding-school graduates does not feel closely related to the village community and the usual work parties.

The mixture of cultures will cause new problems in the colonies in the near future. The work parties of Scholars are not widely accepted and these are almost separate tribes, or clans. Among those, there could very well be one who would want to take revenge on the humans for forcing a life of outcasts on them. The development of a genuine religion could also prove interesting. Similar to the mingling of West African animism with Catholicism on Earth from which a new belief evolved, a monotheistic creed could mingle with the belief in natural spirits on Venus, too, to form something entirely new. These issues are the heart of conflicts the game master may use at his convenience in his adventures. Following the great success of the Mireton boarding school, Reverend Bone plans to encourage missionary work and the foundation of similar schools in the whole British Colony. He is travelling the country and attempting to raise funds and find teachers for his cause. Fort Collingswood is one of the regular destinations of his political mission. He has found a strong promoter of his plans in *Sarah Kitteridge*, mayor Solomon Kitteridge's wife. Their first common project is to be the founding of a boarding school in Fort Collingswood itself.

During his absence, the young teacher *Carla Jefferies* (p. 51) takes over his tasks. In the village there is some gossip about Bone and "the grass-widow". He and Jefferies are the best-known "secret couple" of the colony, and the older teachers regard the young woman's influence on Bone and the school with jealousy and skepticism.

1889

Fort St. Michael

Fort St. Michael was the first British settlement in which forest clearings were a major feature. Today, St. Michael is the most important location for British wood processing on Venus. In contrast to Sherwoodton, St. Michael is not a prison camp. Here the workers cut the trees in record time with the newest steam-powered technologies. The latest invention by *Dr. Thomas Pike* (p. 51) is a veritable steam-breathing monster: a huge movable crane cuts up tree trunks and frees them from branches in a single motion.

Pike's Patent Steam-Powered Forest-Clearing-Machine

This prototype by *Dr. Thomas Pike* literally towers above each of his past inventions. The enormous metal construct moves very slowly on rails, a great colossus surrounded by smaller donkey-engines. Wherever there are trees within the range of its arms, the machine pauses and immediately starts its work. But a single man operates the controls while three others fire the vast steam boiler which would shame a huge luxury ocean liner.

Once under pressure, the metal claw seizes a tree and immediately activates the built-in saws. The trunk is separated and cautiously brought to a horizontal position. Then the trunk rushes through the claw and the saw blades cleanly and effectively sever all protruding branches. Not until there are no more trees within the machine's range do the workers lay rails in the direction of the next group of trees. Pike's monstrosity does not leave anything behind but a track of rails, wood chippings, unusable branches and carefully stacked trunks. A small group of men is thus able to make enough wood for an entire town palisade within a single week.

Pike's presence in Fort St. Michael had a clearly visible effect: The Fort is far more mechanized than other settlements of similar size and it was here that Pike established the first experimental swampgas lanterns as a trial before having them installed eventually throughout the town of Fort Collingswood.

The expansion of the Venusian railroad system on the Ishtar Highlands, under the general auspices of the *London and North Western Railway Company*, is centered in St. Michael. With the help of innumerable Lizard-men navvies, British engineers, and Pike's ingenuity, the tracks slowly keep crawling toward Collingswood and from there at the same time toward Alberta (also see *The British-Venusian Light Railway*, below).

Despite all the technology and Dr. Pike's omnipresence, Fort St. Michael remains a military base. The commander-in-chief is *Colonel Francis Harrington*, a good-natured and resolute man of immaculate pedigree. He personally pays attention to Dr. Pike's wellbeing. After all, Col. Harrington is convinced that Imperial success on Venus will be determined by technical progress. Pike and his machines, "a strong railway system", and an efficient

The British-Venusian Light Railway

The British railroad program here on Venus is an enormous and essential project for rapid and economical transport over the vast distances on the planet. The railroads might be more effective for freight traffic and the relocation of troops than transportation via airship, but the construction of the tracks is difficult. The Venusian climate as well as the flora and fauna considerably slow the process and the swampy and often unstable ground is unsuitable for railway construction. There are foundations to be laid, whole marshy landscapes to be either bridged over, drained, or embanked. In addition, transportation of materials from Earth renders the project extremely expensive, with the result that the work only started in earnest a few months ago. Under the patronage of *Dr. Thomas Pike*, the work on the narrow-gauge permanent way slowly proceeds. Simultaneously, Pike is building the route from Fort St. Michael to Collingswood and from Collingswood to Alberta. This massive project employs hundreds of Lizard-men workers as track-layers. They are guarded by a small group of soldiers, who not only ensure the security of the engineers on site but also "arbitrate" in quarrels among the Lizard-men. Moreover, advance parties of soldiers, cartographers and geologists are employed to survey and secure the areas of the planned course of the rails.

communication network will contribute to further colonization and the guaranteeing of British supremacy on Venus.

Sherwoodton

At first, the settlement of Sherwoodton was little more than a depot for construction materials, built in a natural clearing within the dense, overgrown jungle. Here, the British felled the enormous trees in relentless piecework, cut them up, treated them against the menacing decay, and transported them to the other settlements and forts. Whereas at first there were only tents and rough wooden huts, soon a small village with less basic accommodation and large houses developed. The massive clearances enlarged the settlement with each swing of ax, saw or mechanical claw. The impenetrable forest, dubbed in jest by some wag "Sherwood Forest", had to yield and the settlement grew. The lumberjacks' camp finally became Sherwoodton – the most important location of British wood processing on Venus besides Fort St. Michael.

Visitors are likely to consider Sherwoodton more a prison camp than a village. Convicted criminals from all corners of the Empire are brought here to work, just as ill-disciplined soldiers on a charge are sent for a week or two to "join the merry men of Sherwoodton". Each convict starts off with the most menial type of work: varnishing the wood. In the muggy climate the handling of toxic chemicals quickly leads to headaches, streaming eyes, and

nausea. Those who do well here, and get their job done well, may apply for the packers and (as of late) have to prove themselves in some imaginative games – to the delight of the whole settlement.

From among the packers handling treated boards, planks, and slats for the other settlements, it is possible, after a while, to be transferred to the sawyers. Their task consists of sawing the enormous trunks and cutting them to shape according to the overseers' instructions. But a sawyer has to keep (more or less) immaculate accounts. Dangerous criminals and violent felons can be upgraded to this position only by permission of the local commander. Otherwise, tasks are selected according to skill: tree climbers (mostly former sailors), lumberjacks, equipment managers (craftsmen and blacksmiths, who maintain the tools), and other settlement-related jobs like skivvies and kitchen helps.

'Venusian Exercises'

Lieutenant Charles Peck, the second in command at Sherwoodton had the possibly bright idea to introduce games for the prisoners ("Venusian Exercises") which would require strength and skill. The games had to be useful for the work, and the only people able to win ought to be those who exercise on site and maintain a certain degree of discipline. That way, Peck hopes to sift out workers who are ready to give up their "ill-disciplined criminal character" to rise in the work hierarchy. In this he has succeeded, more or less, though Peck's games naively presume that only incapable fumblerers can be criminals. They have to be failures, or else they wouldn't be unemployed, would they? At least, that's what Peck fondly imagines...

In the games, certain minimum results have to be obtained (the higher the working rank, the more challenging the task). Of those who succeed, only a certain percentage is granted the rise, which varies according to the kind of workers needed.

The games change regularly. At present, the following events have to be passed in order to get a better job than varnishing:

- Board run: boards of diverse length and width have to be carried as quickly as possible along a course.
- A certain amount of felled trees have to be freed from branches within a given time by means of an ax.
- A tree trunk has to be chopped as quickly as possible with an ax.
- A tall tree has to be climbed within a limited time.

The event always takes place in front of a crowd and this adds considerably to the entertainment of the entire fort. However, something Peck might not have considered is the fact that the games produce not only good and compliant workers, but also fit and disciplined criminals ...

The settlement's current commander is a paper-pusher and bean-counter named *Captain James Francis Howland*, ex-Roper's *Light Horse* but now attached to the Governor's staff. His greatest military performance so far has been an unfortunate incident in 1884 relating to the reinforcements intended for Majuba Hill proceeding in a mistakenly retrograde direction. Following this outstanding contribution to the most incompetent and disastrous campaign in living memory (and the competition here is exceedingly high), forty-year-old Lieutenant Howland was swiftly promoted and transferred to the Commissariat on Venus, now the new Army Service Corps, to dedicate himself to 'more important tasks'. Indeed, Howland has found his true vocation here and carries out his duty brilliantly: the painstaking deciphering of innumerable incomprehensible chits and receipts, and the accounting, calculating and minute by minute administering of construction materials comes naturally to him. For the irritating military matters and the tiresome supervision of the prisoners he has an excellent deputy: *Lieutenant Charles Peck (Royal Engineers)*.

Peck has previously served in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878 – 1880) and does not wish to end his career on Venus. He is single-minded, talks exceptionally loudly, even for an officer, has a firm grip on the convicts and has furthermore devised and promulgated the 'Venusian Exercises'. Peck hopes to be able to return to Earth after his compulsory time on this posting is served, or at least to be transferred to Mars, but to this end, his term of service has to pass without any blemish on his record. Unfortunately for him, and indeed for the convicts concerned, a few prisoners have been missing for some time and, awkwardly, some of them have already been found dead. Others report a strange chanting coming from the impenetrable jungle. So far, Peck has not told his commanders anything of these occurrences, to prevent them from appearing in the records. After all, the colonists are quite used to solving all these small problems by themselves.

Fraserbay / Maahu Bay

Fraserbay is located on three hills, which encircle a small valley the local Lizard-men called *Maahunahanglaoah*, in short: *Maahu*. This "bay" is not much more than a large bog covered by swing grass (a species of grass growing so densely on top of mud and water that it can carry the weight of a human) and some enchantingly beautiful blue orchids. It is a sacred place to the Lizard-men, where they meditate and their shamans question the clouds.

Before *Frank Fraser* and his family founded the village on the hills, Maahu was threatened. A teeming population of frog-like swamp creatures the size of beagles grew close to explosion. In their feverish hunt for insects, they were in danger of constantly damaging the swing grass and destroying the orchids. Fraser helped the Lizard-men keep the frogs at bay by putting up traps and ordering rat poison from Earth that killed off the vermin. He placed his village directly next to Maahu Bay and a private treaty with the Lizard-men assured him of their loyalty. He helped them to build villages and thus laid the foundation of one of the most successful plantations of the British colony, which would rapidly have become the largest and most productive one, but for a terrible and unforeseen calamity.

One night, without warning, the Lizard-men from the plantation took up arms and massacred every human they could find. Afterwards they turned their weapons on each other and only ceased their frenzy when nearly half of them were dead.

To investigate the cause of this sudden rage, five scientists were sent from Fort Collingswood. From evidence and months-long

investigations and observation they came to the conclusion that a form of swamp gas was responsible for the incident. A large bubble of gas had escaped from the bog that formed Maahu Bay. The gas was heavier than air and formed a veil of mist which replaced the oxygen in the lower areas and suffocated all humans whose houses were not situated high enough up the hills. The wind carried the gas to the North and distributed it over a large part of the plantation. The Lizard-men who came into contact with it flew into an unexplainable and uncontrollable rage. The noise of battle attracted further Lizard-men, who fell under the influence of the noxious cloud, until the gas was sufficiently attenuated.

In the hastily installed scientific base, the British scientists frantically pursue their research into the utilization and artificial production of this gas. The base consists of ten scientists and their assistants, ten soldiers for protection, and ten civilians. In Fort Collingswood, there are discussions to increase these numbers because of the great potential for research.

Even eight months after the incident, there are still small gas bubbles escaping from the bay. Initial research suggests it was indeed the influence of the gas that caused the bloodlust, although it does not bear any resemblance to anything the Lizard-men emit themselves. Intriguingly, the blue orchids have been growing far more luxuriantly in the bay since the incident.

New Birmingham

New Birmingham was a small plantation at the foot of the plateau, west of a large swamp area. Kalsa-wood and swamp weed were to be cultivated here. As the plants' optimum conditions for growth had not yet been completely established – and there are still questions concerning this today – the intent was to test whether the harvests would be richer in lower areas. Two tribes of Venusians lived in several villages on the plantation and were supervised by the human settlers of New Birmingham. A commercial route was to be built as soon as the harvests were sufficient.

Desite all these plans, one year after the plantation's founding, when a small group of scouts from Fort Collingswood reached the village, they did not find a living soul. No-one could tell how long the people had been dead. The bodies lay in the houses or between half-finished buildings. They were parched and seemed mummified. A thin layer of moss grew on the bodies and on every wooden surface.

The shocked scouts tried to make contact with the natives, but their villages were abandoned as well. It seemed that the Lizard-men had left in a great hurry; some products of daily use had been left behind in the rush. There was evidence of fighting, but not a single corpse was to be found.

It is still unresolved what happened in New Birmingham. The nomadic Lizard-men avoid the area and what has become of the Lizard-man villagers remains a mystery. The moss is a plant growing in many places in the Lowlands, above all on young trees and the few rocks protruding from the swamp. Nowhere else does the indigenous vegetation seem to have such devastating effects as in New Birmingham.

➔ New Birmingham, p. 151

British Personalities on Venus

Sir Edward Barton Collingswood

Sir Edward has now retired from active politics. His resignation three years ago caused a few frowns, but it was accepted all the same. He immediately travelled to Earth when he got word that his request was granted, but to everyone's surprise, he returned after only six months and brought along his wife *Elizabeth* and his son *Harold*, and they bought a house in Fort Collingswood. Sir Edward has interests in the trade of diverse goods and helps with the organization of the railroad project. Moreover, he travels across Venus and often leaves his family alone for weeks at a time. Collingswood is still an important person; as a co-opted town alderman he is often invited to Town Council meetings and appointed to council committees. Although he is not officially in charge of anything, he still has influence: it is said that, if someone succeeds in convincing Collingswood of something, it is as good as done.

Neither Collingswood's wife nor his son can adapt to the life or the Venusian climate. Harold though is still too young to stay on Earth alone, other than in boarding school, and here he can finally be near his father. In theory, Elizabeth is of the same opinion, but she herself does not want to stay on Venus forever. An insidious disease affects her due to the climate.

Dr. Abraham Pettinsworth

In his diary, Dr. Pettinsworth, a doctor in the fortified trading post of St. George, likes to refer to himself as a school teacher, or "adjutant-general". The latter, self-ironic title springs from his regular work in the daily military routine.

The situation in Fort St. George seems more tense than in the other forts. The cramped living conditions and the muggy weather give rise to depression and a gloomy or aggressive outlook among the fort's inhabitants. The constant patrols are almost as exhausting as the exercises that are held regularly.

Dr. Pettinsworth's main task is keeping an eye on the outward demeanor of the soldiers and deciding when some brisk physical training seems reasonable to counteract any negative mood (or, indeed, when to avoid such exercises so as not to exhaust them). Sometimes he even helps with the planning of such exercises and passes a jovial, manly word or two, "straight from the shoulder" to anyone as soon as they show any signs of such problems.

In the course of time, Pettinsworth has acquired a canny intuition, which enables him to read moods. His personal hobby-horse is the psyche of Lizard-men, which he is eager to learn more about, particularly in terms of phrenology which fascinates him. So far, however, he is nothing but a gifted amateur in this field. Word has spread of his evident skills and Pettinsworth is forever summoned to areas of conflict, to estimate the intentions of Lizard-men or to keep trouble at bay before it can develop into open violence. Normally, the doctor does not like traveling, but what choice does he have other than to do his duty and follow instructions?

Richard D. Andrews

A young and lean man, Andrews is always immaculately dressed and would never dream of grubbing in the soil, even though he is

an orchid grower and trader. Andrews is one of the people who pursue the delights of horticulture only theoretically and have the practical work done by others. Nevertheless, Andrews is visibly animated by his fascination for this special plant. Here on Venus, his collector's heart is racing. Every week, a new orchid is discovered, and Andrews does his utmost to have the plants transported to Earth as safely as possible. After all, he knows that collectors there are ready to pay enormous amounts for the rarest specimens. Thus, he is on a constant search for new discoveries in the Venusian swamps. It is said that the British trader pays better than his Italian competitor, Dr. Tremante.

Dr. Thomas Pike

Thomas Pike is one of the prodigies who know how to combine theory and practice to achieve the most useful effects. Already during his studies in engineering, Pike dealt with the possibilities of the steam engine and its practical use. Pike contributed among other things to the construction of steam-powered tricycles, which are today counted on for news transmission by *Her Majesty's Telegraphic and Heliographic Service*. However, Pike's constructions go further than that. His designs for a machine to enable woodcutting on a grand scale on Venus have been recently realized with the building of a gigantic prototype. Pike continues to rely on the railroad for the transportation of large amounts of goods, and together with Lizard-men and British engineers he drives the tracks across the Ishtar Highlands. But the efforts are exhausting, as the workers are often threatened by dinosaurs or hostile tribes of Lizard-men.

Nevertheless, Pike's greatest triumph is yet to come. Under utmost secrecy, the scientist is working on a new prototype. Some say he designs vast glass domes for each settlement, in the style of the Crystal Palace in London – with built-in functioning air-conditioning. Yet others think they have seen some sort of steam-powered metal work-suits which are to facilitate the labor. Still other rumors tend to a huge weapon which is designed to permanently change the climate on Venus. Whether it really is one of those projects, or possibly something else entirely, is a question so far only the game master can answer.

Reverend Patrick Bone

Right after the Reverend Patrick Bone first set foot on Venus, he knew God had given him a new mission. On Earth, he had cared for the poor and the sick and tried to improve their lives with the help of religion. He stepped out onto the streets of Fort Collingswood and saw Lizard-men gathering in small groups, chattering and abandoning themselves to idleness, or even licking each others faces with their tongues instead of showing common decency. One look sufficed to show him his calling was to fight these godless, barbaric conditions.

Reverend Bone is a tall, chubby man who wears well-cut mutton-chops and always takes care of his appearance. He radiates authority and calmness and possesses considerable diplomatic aptitude. Well aware of the impossibility to save all such needy creatures at once, he had himself transferred to the small plantation village of *Mireton*, where he swiftly founded a boarding school and had compulsory school attendance introduced for Lizard-men. A handful of chosen teachers assist him in teaching the Lizard-men young to be pious. One of his teachers especially, *Carla Jefferies*, proved to be of outstanding help. Bone feels attracted to the beautiful woman and even considers the possibility of marriage.

When he is away on a political mission, raising funds for more new boarding schools and spreading his idea to other plantations, he knows he can trust her with the management of the school.

In Fort Collingswood, Bone enjoys the full support of *Sarah Kitteridge*. She is the mayor's wife and also the head of the Town Council. With her help, Bone has already gained significant funds and is currently building a boarding school in Fort St. Michael.

Archetype: Missionary **Motivation: Faith**

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 4

Dexterity: 1

Intelligence: 3

Strength: 2

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 4

Move: 3

Defense: 3

Perception: 6

Stun: 2

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Theology)	3	3	6	(3)
Diplomacy	4	5	9	(4+)
Empathy	3	2	5	(2+)
Intimidate	4	3	7	(3+)
Performance (Oratory)	4	2	6	(3)

Talents

Natural Leader

Resources

Rank 1 (Priest)

Refuge

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N

Carla Jefferies

Carla Jefferies is a teacher at Mireton boarding school and Reverend Bone's substitute when he is away on a political mission. Her late husband was a German soldier. The British woman had only been married to the ambitious young man for a year before, in the performance of his duties, he caught a so-far unknown Venusian disease and died.

Searching for a new purpose in her life – Carla had only moved to Venus to be with her husband – she signed up for espionage and the life of a spy. Her orders were to „go to the British Colony and settle down at a place inconspicuous but not entirely without influence. There you will be contacted”.

The young woman met Reverend Bone shortly after her arrival in Fort Collingswood and her application to be a teacher. He seemed to be easy to influence and suitably ambitious – exactly what Jefferies had been looking for. At first, she gave in to his romantic approaches only in pretense, but in the meantime she has almost grown fond of the naïve overachiever. She stands in for the Reverend at school while he is away to establish further influential contacts, and thus she learns much about the politics of the colony when he comes home.

Carla Jefferies has been working at Mireton boarding school for several years now, and still no-one has contacted her yet. She has already sent some trusted Lizard-men to the German sanctuary, but is still waiting for an answer. The young woman grows more impatient day by day and wonders if she has been forgotten. Her loyalty is slowly dwindling while her doubts increase. She will not be able to sit still for much longer, especially as there is word about of the Reverend Bone planning to propose to her. She likes Bone, but marriage might be going a bit too far.

Commander Maximilian von Coburg, RN (Ret.)

Max von Coburg is one of those people constantly looking for new challenges, even when retired, and so, shortly after he left active service in the British Navy, he set course for Venus in search of new adventures.

Son of a German father and a British mother, Max von Coburg grew up in a different atmosphere to the growing tension between the two Imperial powers we know today, and from a very early age these experiences were to influence his life profoundly. As a young man he studied engineering at the university of Heidelberg, and following the wishes of his mother he finally joined the British Navy in the fledgling Engineering Branch. However, his technical roots made his career within the traditionally-minded Royal Navy quite difficult and despite his good education he did not succeed in attaining the recognition he deserved. It was only after joining the nascent Naval Intelligence Department (NID) in 1887 that he began to achieve recognition and success. Although he never made it to the rank of full Captain, Max is still proud of his time in the Senior Service and he will take any opportunity to reminisce with his old Navy comrades.

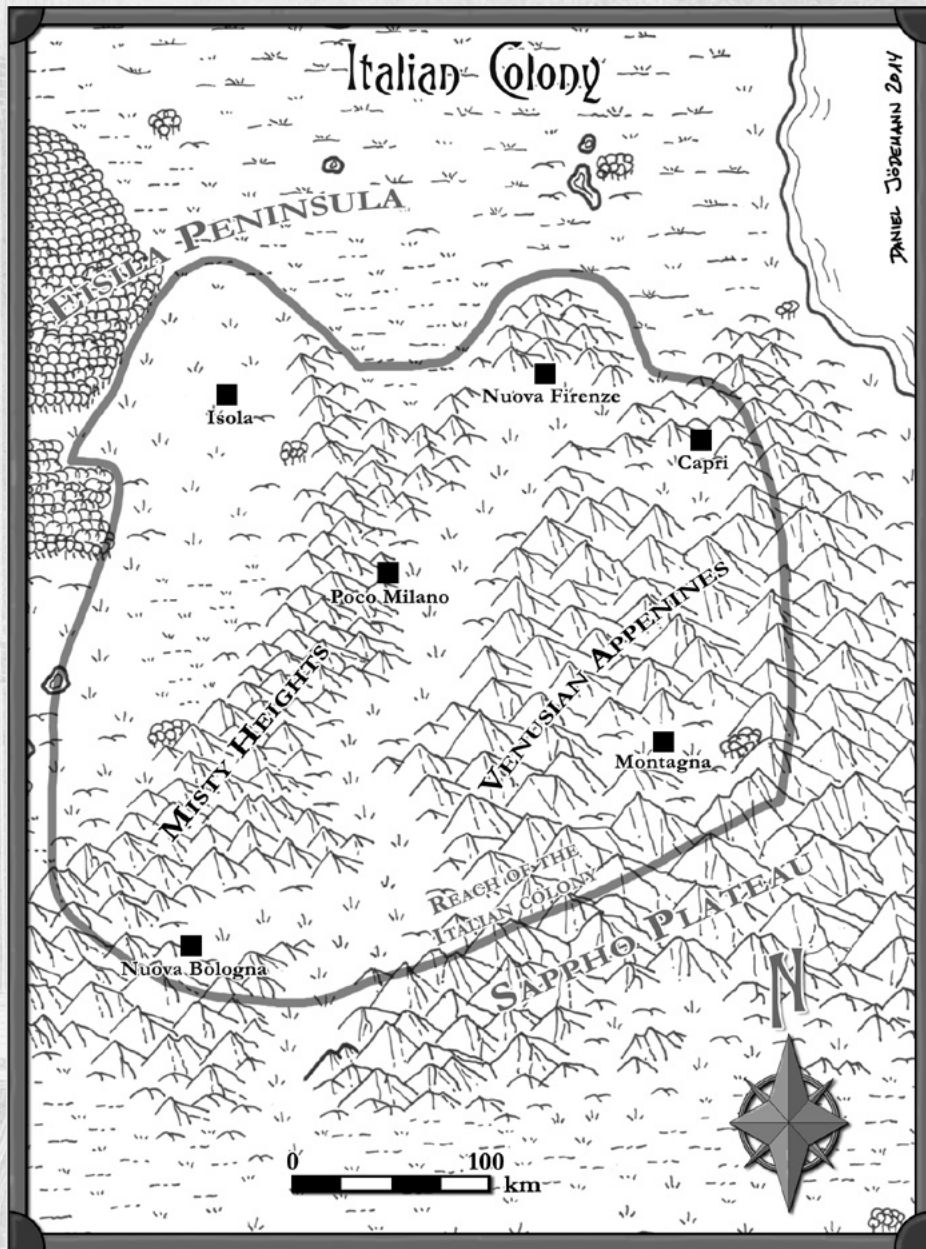
He hardly ever speaks about his brief time with the Department, partly because many of his missions were secret, and partly because he still feels conflicted in his loyalties – as Max was often sent on undercover missions in Germany and the German colonies.

The years did not pass by the Commander without leaving any traces: his hair and his full Naval beard are becoming grey and recently he even has to wear spectacles for reading, although they highlight the bright mind that gleams in his steel-grey eyes even more. Despite his time in Heidelberg, Max does not have any dueling scars on his face. At that time, he trained in pistol shooting rather than fencing, and his good upbringing and discipline made sure he never got into any fights. Furthermore, Max is a Free Mason, but would never advertise the fact.

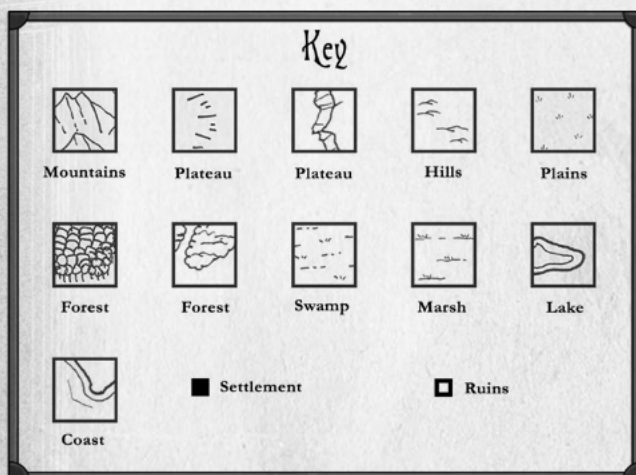
Although he has a reasonable income from his father's estate, he occasionally works as an engineer. His knowledge in the field of power plants and the new electrical engineering make him an expert in demand. But rumor has it that he sometimes still works as an agent for the British consulate – or the German one, depending on who you ask.



The Italian Colony



Italian Colony



Even Rome wasn't built in a day.

— Italian saying

Italy

Location: Northwestern Area of the Sappho-Plateau

Population: approx. 2,500

Main settlements: Nuova Firenze ('capital', pop. 1,200), Isola (pop. 400), Capri (pop. 350), Piccola Milano (pop. 250), Montagna (pop. 200), Nuova Bologna (pop. 100). The population numbers refer to human beings in addition to which is the indigenous Venusian population, accounting for around 50 % (in Nuova Firenze) and up to 90 % (in smaller towns and rural areas) of the whole.

Military units: 3 infantry companies of an overall strength of approx. 300 officers, NCOs and soldiers

Sites of interest: Calvino's Fortress, mine near Capri, thermal springs near Nuova Bologna, ruins of Montagna

Location and Span of the Colony

The Italian Colony (known as 'Terzo Cielo'*, meaning Third Heaven) is situated south of the MacKenzie Sea and east of the Gula Highlands in the western foothills of the Sappho Plateau – here also known as the 'Venusian Apennines'. The Italians are rather isolated from the other major powers on Venus, which on the one hand gives them the opportunity to expand unhindered, but on the other excludes them from much of what happens. Thus, in rather less than splendid isolation, the Italians try to make the best of their situation on top of the plateau, and make every effort to gradually to enlarge their colony.

Establishment and Development of the Colony

When the first colonists arrived at the Sappho Plateau in 1880, they found that building proved to be extremely difficult. Either they arduously had to take the material for construction to the site, or manufacture it themselves, and support from Rome was rare. It seemed to the Italians on Venus that no one in Rome had the slightest idea as to what was needed on the planet, nor either any interest in their welfare. Clearly, the only thing that mattered was to fly the Italian flag on the Sappho Plateau! This very quickly led

* The name *Terzo Cielo* refers to the Italian poet Dante and the third part of his Divine Comedy, 'Paradiso'. In *Paradiso*, Dante approaches God in Heaven, and in each Heaven which corresponds to one of the celestial bodies, he meets ghosts and gains knowledge. The Third Heaven (III Cielo) corresponds to Venus and is filled with loving ghosts.

to a bitter disillusionment with the government on Earth and the colony rapidly developed a very distinct degree of independence.

The colonists actively made peaceful contact with the Lizardmen and did not treat them as worse than humans. The credo was then, and still is now, that mutual understanding was of the greatest importance for all those involved. And this strategy has worked well.

It was only when the established colonists founded further settlements, and women began to work in occupations thought to be exclusively male, and the whole colony grew larger, that Rome sent the Triumvirate to Venus. The representatives of the military and scientific spheres were originally from Venus anyway, but the role of the **Consul General** was controversial from the start. Currently, a large number of Italians are understandably skeptical concerning this flexing of the long arm of Rome.

Italian Names

For those who would like to name their characters and non-player characters appropriately, here are some suggestions.

Male First Names:

Adolfo, Andrea, Armando, Bernardo, Claudio, Cristiano, Daniele, Dario, Delano, Edmondo, Edoardo, Elia, Eliano, Enrico, Fabio, Fabrizio, Fernando, Fulvio, Giuliano, Lino, Luigi, Manuele, Marcello, Nicola, Riccardo, Salvatore, Sandro, Teodoro, Timoteo, Tommaso, Umberto, Vincenzo, Zaccaria

Female First Names:

Adriana, Alexia, Annabella, Bella, Carla, Daria, Domenica, Elena, Franca, Francesca, Giuliana, Lavinia, Marina, Mariella, Marietta, Marcella, Monica, Mina, Raffaella, Rita, Tamara, Vera, Viola, Zara

Family Names:

Alfonsetti, Antonetti, Ardigo, Auzizio, Benedetti, Bellizoni, Dal Monte, D'Annuzio, Di Domenica, Di Giorgio, Donato, Fabio, Fabrizio, Ferrara, Fumagalli, Galante, Gelmetti, Gentile, Gervasi, Jovino, Maggio, Maurizi, Menico, Montaldi, Odoardi, Ovidia, Ranalli, Rino, Roca, Romano, Sabelli, Santo, Scalrini, Taraborrello, Tommas, Valent, Virrina, Zabatino, Zaratino, Zulli

Organization of the Colony

The organization of the Italian Colony is highly centralized. All decisions concerning construction and extension of the settlements are made in Nuova Firenze. For two years now, the decision-making body has been the Triumvirate, which is appointed by Rome. It consists of one representative of the military, one representing the sciences, and a consul from the Kingdom of Italy. The latter is replaced every two years.

The Triumvirate

Until two years ago, the decision-makers had been limited to the military and their scientific consultants. Since then, a consul general has been sent to Venus by Rome, to check if everything is in good order. Thus, resentment is inevitable and the consul general is accordingly unpopular.

At the moment, the Triumvirate consists of the following people:

Colonel Sebastiano Schiazza is the commander-in-chief of the Venusian colony. From the first day of the colony's founding, he has been both commander-in-chief and the highest colonial administrator.

Prof. Dr. Silvano Pierdomenico is the chief scientist on Venus and an expert on biology and astronomy. He has served as scientific consultant from the founding of the colony.

Consul General Conte Alfredo Linardi is an important politician and was sent by Rome to represent the interest of the Kingdom of Italy on Venus. Count Linardi has just arrived on the planet and complains continually about the climate and the conditions in the colony. The role of women and the colony's relations with the Lizard-men trouble him in particular.

dedicated to the harvesting of the Venusian cotton-tree. Moreover, on Earth, Italy consistently promotes the benefits of a new life on Venus. Architects, engineers, carpenters, roofers and bricklayers are especially deliberately targeted by the Italian government, to urge them to consider a new life "in the stars".

Kites

Striving for the greatest influence on Venus, Italian scientists are working hard to reduce the German lead in airship technology. Engineer Paolo Donadoni (p. 58) could be of great importance in this chase.

In the hunt for alternative ways to achieve flight, Donadoni, inspired by the model of flying lizards, developed a light flying-device which functions without an engine. From the flexible and lightweight material Oma Jolima (p. 102), he built a framework of a very light design but still robust enough to carry a human being, allowing him to glide on the winds of Venus.

To begin with, the wings were covered with specially treated Oma Jolima leaves, though later with dinosaur skins. At first, only short gliding flights from treetops were possible, but eventually, Donadoni was able to make the breakthrough with his wife's help. The petite but determined woman's slight body enabled her to make longer flights, and after some months' experimentation (and only a few broken bones and those relatively unimportant) she learnt to take advantage of upwinds and was able to keep the device in the air for up to ten minutes at a time, depending on the weather.

That was three years ago. Since then, the Italian gliding technology has advanced considerably and Donadoni and his wife have become important personalities in the colony. They continue to lead the development of their flying machine, even though their project was taken over by the military. More and more experienced flyers (and in particular female ones, see below) are now being trained. One important branch of research is meteorology, since a reliable weather forecast allows for making optimal use of the winds. Furthermore, efforts are made to develop different engines based on muscle or various mechanical power sources, which, however, have not yet been successful. One tremendously imaginative thinker even tries to train pterosaurs that could drag a kite across greater distances. Thus, the Italians hope to one day be able to fly to the other colonies. But so far, long distance flights of that kind are all still up in the air.

The Italian Military on Venus

The Kingdom of Italy has a small military presence on Venus of three infantry companies of *Bersaglieri* with an overall strength of 300 officers, NCOs and soldiers who serve primarily to enforce Italy's claim to a number of areas on the Sappho-Plateau. The majority of the soldiers guarantee security on the plantations, whereas three platoons have been delegated as guards to the consulate.

Life in the Colony

Life in the colony tries to maintain as many aspects of home life on Earth as possible. Thus, common meals and strong family bonds are emphasized on Venus as well. However, the role of the increasingly emancipated female population leads to conflicts, which strain family ties and the traditional patriarchal routine. Visitors to the colony will immediately notice the multitude of Lizard-men in the settlements. Almost 90 % of the inhabitants of the Colonia di Veneri are Lizard-men. Moreover, it's particularly clear that on the Sappho Plateau, the Lizard-men have built up a solid, if primitive, agriculture and they fit well into the life on the plantations. Difficulties with the Venusians are very rare. On the contrary: humans and Lizard-men value and support each other. The Italian efforts in colonization have until now been mainly aimed at building trading posts in their area of influence, so as to foster trade with the rather docile Lizard-men of the Plateau. Lately, the Italians have established more and more plantations

Women in the Colony

The Italian colony trains women in the navigation of flying devices primarily to serve in the military – on Earth this would be unthinkable. But their lower bodyweight makes 'the weaker sex' better suited to be aerial pilots. Fifteen of the currently twenty-two trained pilots are women. When the military command began recruiting adventurous women for this uncommon task, it gave rise to an unexpected movement. Many women have followed the example of the female soldiers – above all inspired by Angela Donadoni, who has become a clearly audible voice in the politics of the colony – and advance into fields of life which, up to now, had been reserved to men. Some strive to take leading positions of authority and even claim their right to vote. So far, the influence of the military's male command has prevented the political influence of women from growing too strong – but, still, grow it does and, because of this development, the colony evolves faster than some others. While the British, Germans and Russians have

to cope with low percentages of women in their populations, and thus have difficulties attracting settled colonists, the percentage of families that are ready to settle down permanently on Venus lies above average in the Italian colony. As a result, there is already a good number of Venusian-born colonists here.

Important Settlements and Plantations

Nuova Firenze

The capital of the Italian colony is changing rapidly. The construction of new buildings for recently landed colonists and their families is thriving. Everywhere you look there are walls being built and houses being roofed. In Nuova Firenze, the noise of building is as common as the Venusian fog. New workers are temporarily accommodated in a makeshift camp, before they are assigned their quarters (see below).

Compared to the local circumstances, Nuova Firenze is a large settlement, with lots of different facets. Except for the omnipresent new buildings, the southern part of the city is the older one. Here, the buildings which have been erected by the first colonists are to be found. But it turned out that the majority of the buildings have been built on a weak foundation. The area is too damp, the buildings and streets have slumped in the course of the years, so that mud is a ubiquitous nuisance. Many roads are so muddy that heavy loads are best transported on sledges, and the lowest floors of the houses are often now submerged halfway into the mud. But, housing space being rare, some buildings have been 'straightened' and consolidated by placing slanting buttresses on them, after the model of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. However, these houses do not exactly belong to the first class addresses of the settlement, though these conditions are well suited for shady characters. Some Lizard-men live in these half buried houses as well. Newly arrived people tend to live at first on the lowest level, and very slowly move to the top, floor by floor, as they rise through society. For practical reasons, in the South new buildings are now raised on platforms resting on kalsa-wood stilts. There are bridges spanning the largest swamp areas and experiments in draining the most important roads are underway. There have also been attempts to 'roof' the streets with posts and boards, but the material costs are high and the Triumvirate's interest in investing resources in this area is low. The **central administration of the colony**, the **Triumvirate**, is situated in a plain but large building. Day and night, two soldiers guard the entrance to the building which houses all the administration offices of the colony on three floors. All the different committees meet in these offices, and every two weeks the Triumvirate itself holds a meeting here behind closed doors. If complex questions arise, then experts are summoned and the colonial secretaries of the different settlements are heard.

In the southern quarter of Nuova Firenze, there is a little **chapel**, which is consecrated to the holy Virgin Mary. It seats barely more than 50 persons, and when the bell calls to *Pater Alessios'* mass, most of the congregation are left standing outside the church to look in at the service through the unglazed windows. The greatest problem here is also the swampy ground, as the chapel sinks more and more into the mud every month.

Most of the Italians consider this an intolerable state of affairs, and even though support from the Vatican is long in coming, it

was decided to build a church for the whole settlement – and this time on solid ground. Two architects have already drawn up a plan of construction and everyone, male and female, engages in voluntary help at the new church site, often after a long day's work and on their free days. Pater Alessio is deeply touched by this amount of decency and piety and pays the people back by giving them as much support as possible. Many masses are being held in the open air, near the construction site, and the community's approval for the project is enormous. However, many inhabitants of the southern quarter wonder what is to become of the old chapel in the South. Already, Lizard-men have been seen to gather there on some nights. Is it possible they hold their own worship in the chapel, or do they search for something mysterious inside?

'*Benvenuto*' is written in huge letters above the **camp** west of the city: but a true hearty welcome would look somewhat different. Before being allotted a place in a tent for one's family, or possibly in a log cabin – available only for important skilled workers, or those who pay some *bustarella* – one has to register with the colony's administration. This formality may take several days, leading to a certain 'proliferation' of emergency shelters around the camp. After registration, families and workers are divided among the different settlements. This is decided according to demand and skills. Only a few non-skilled workers and craftsmen are needed in Nuova Firenze itself. Many are sent to the far off settlements: working in the capital is a privilege one has to either earn or pay for, one way or another.

In the **botanical garden**, families can visit a display of the wondrous Venusian flora. Above all the rare species of orchids, which can only be found on the Sappho Plateau, attract a lot of visitors. The garden's elderly superintendent, biologist Dr. Mario Tremante, was able to create this garden thanks to the financial assistance of Count Romano Graziano. The count, from Florence, is a fanatical orchid enthusiast and pays well for each new kind of orchid, and so Dr. Tremante is always in search of new species. The vulnerable glass building has been protected by ten private security guards ever since the burglary and theft of several orchids and seedlings.

The **opera house** is a personal concern of Consul General Alfredo Linardi. He has always been a great lover of the Italian opera, and to him this art symbolizes civilization. Against all opposition, he had a stone theatre built in which plays and operas can be staged now. On the 25th December 1888, the opening was celebrated by a gala performance of Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

The small **hospital** is designed for 100 patients. It includes two operating theatres and around forty sickrooms. About one half of the beds are usually occupied by Lizard-men. Dr. Lucio Mariani is cooperating closely with the Venusian *Tongaloo*, to let the lizards benefit from the blessings of modern medicine. Not everyone agrees with the idea of Venusians taking beds away from humans, which might be a cause of concern, the more so as they are at the moment barely treatable. Especially currently, when the poor housing conditions lead to an increase of sickness. The hospital is currently being extended by a new wing. Lizard-men are to be found carrying tools and building-material all over the place, which greatly disturbs the processes of the hospital.

Isola

Isola oversees the largest cotton plantation of the Italian colony. The middle-sized settlement (400 human inhabitants, excluding the Venusian weavers living nearby) is situated near the colony's and the plantation's own borders. The landscape is made up of grass

and bush land, interwoven by groves and medium-sized forests. Those forests are ideal spots for the cultivation of Venusian cotton. The Lizard-men's villages are to be found by the edges of the largest woods. The mostly human workers 'infect' the trees with cotton and harvest it. At the same time, the forests are extended by the planting of suitable trees. Someday, the administration of the plantation wishes to make use only of the newly planted woods, as their neat, linear rows greatly facilitate the upkeep and harvest of the crop. As much as possible of the harvested cotton is processed directly in Isola. So far, this is done by hand, with only a few automated looms and spinning machines used. The automatic machines do not entirely agree with the extremes of the Venusian climate and so tend to malfunction. There is still a long way to go before a fully automated production is possible, and many engineers try to solve this problem. Until then, the cotton has to be processed by hand. Humans and Lizard-men are engaged in the processing day and night. First, the cotton is freed of the cottonseeds in spiked rotary tumblers, before being washed and dried. The few looms and spinning machines are maintained by craftsmen around the clock, and repaired immediately in case of failure.

Capri

Capri is a mining town high up on the Sappho Plateau. The buildings cling to the rugged mountainsides and have been constructed on several levels. The individual plateaus can be reached only via stairs and lifts. On each level, shafts have been dug into the mountainside. Wagons full of rubble are transported out of the mines on rails and emptied every thirty minutes or so, with constant regularity.

The highest plateau can only be accessed by means of a small ropeway. Only chosen staff are granted access to the topmost level. Here, the biggest building of Capri is to be found: the **Institute of Geology**. This long building shields the mine shafts from curious eyes. The institute's head is *Matteo Angelosanto*, who also controls the exploitation of the ores.

🚂 The Ore of Capri, p. 151

Piccola Milano

Besides Isola, Piccola Milano is the second largest cotton plantation. The town is situated near a slope. Many of the fields are in the shade of the high mountaintops and, more often than not, landslides interrupt the plantation workers in their harvesting. Frequently, after an especially strong landslide, the field has to be cleared of gravel and as many humans and Lizard-men as possible are assembled to get the work done quickly. But even with a lot of persuasion and encouragement, the Lizard-men do not like to go near the fields. Inquiries reveal that the Lizard-men's hesitation is due to their olfactory senses. Seemingly, weeds grow on the plantation which emit a strong odor the Lizard-men perceive as an unbearable stench of death and decay. Thus, any extended stay strongly affects their mood. The local head of the plantation is aware of this problem, and in fact already prefers human labor, but in the long run this could cause serious problems.

It is not yet clear which plants generate this foul miasma, or even if it is the area as a whole which does so. Some of the more superstitious workers claim the plantation on the mountainside is set on an ancient burial ground of the Lizard-men, and the landslides are a punishment for disturbing the peace

of the dead. However, to date no mortal remains of Lizard-men have been found.

Calvino's Fortress

In the mountains west of Piccola Milano lies the estate of Victor Calvino (p. 59), a rich eccentric with great ambitions. **Calvino's Fortress**, as it is called, was built into the side of a mountain on the instructions of its owner, both for aesthetics and in view of the scarcity of raw materials on Venus. Calvino came to the planet because he felt too restricted on an Earth which seemed to him too much in thrall to reactionaries and class conceit. He himself is of low social rank and owes his fortune to his deceased wife. Without warning he appeared one day with an army of workmen and built his estate amidst the mountains, from where he now does his research. Calvino's aim is the construction of a 'Weather Machine'. Nuova Firenze grants him as much support as possible, but his intentions aside of his scientific ambitions are, however, obscure and there are people in the main settlement who regard him with distrust. Calvino has withdrawn into his castle and his brooding presence gives the authorities great concern. He likes to receive visitors, but he also keeps them under a constant watch.

The weather machine is based on Calvino's theory that the Ether is responsible for many weather phenomena – a theory for which he earned only derision on Earth. Calvino takes the fact that liftwood rapidly rots on Venus as evidence for the accuracy of his theory, since the decay is heavily influenced by the weather. It is not known how far Calvino's research is advanced. He claims to be close to a breakthrough, and indeed the weather above his estate is curiously changeable and shows extremes of strong thunderstorms and lightning, or oases of clear air amidst otherwise constant fog.



Montagna

Enclosed in mountaintops, Montagna is situated in the colony's Southeast. The small mining town is easily reachable via airship, balloon, or kite, but on solid ground, the journey to Montagna is arduous. Crossing the mountain passes, the journey takes many days. Provisions are mainly delivered by air, but the transport of bulky devices often takes several flights. Nevertheless, the people in Montagna try to cope with their situation as well as possible: they are proud of their ability to build necessary devices on their own and have learned to improvise and fend for themselves.

The main reason for placing the settlement here was not only a large tribe of Lizard-men (providing many workers) living nearby, but also the broad veins of silver ore to be found in the mountain. Due to the extraordinary situation of the settlement, the Venusians are treated exceptionally well. Especially in the mines, Lizards and humans work together hand in hand, and more often than not this common labor leads to fellowship. Up to now, the mine workings are still in their early stages: the first shafts have been driven into the rock, and the mining of the silver proceeds very slowly.

Some months ago, the news of scientific discoveries from Nuova Firenze kept the inhabitants of Montagna on tenterhooks. South of the settlement, a sink-hole opened, the loud rumbling of the falling soil could be heard in town, but fears that there could have been an accident in the mine were unfounded. A small expedition found a hole of 80 feet (25 meters) in diameter. In the depths, they found traces of ancient ruins and even steep passages leading deeper into the ground. These remain clear, and despite a steady torrent of muddy water from the swamp now flowing into the passages, they have yet to be flooded. A large team of scientists has made camp near the sink-hole, to excavate the ruins and find out how these passages could exist in such swampy ground.

➡ **The Ruins of Montagna**, p. 152

Nuova Bologna

Nuova Bologna is the most southerly town of the Italian colony and clings to the edges of a vast mountain chain. With only around 100 inhabitants it is the smallest settlement, yet it is by no means the least important. Thanks to minor volcanic activity, numerous geysers and thermal sources have arisen nearby. These are used as sources of energy for the heavy steam engines, which then operate huge drills. Ceaselessly, the drills dig deeper and deeper into the rock revealing precious iron ore from far inside the mountain – at least in theory ... Three puffing and wheezing prototypes of steam drills have already been constructed. Very slowly two of them are at work penetrating the hard rock, nervously surveyed by a team of engineers and geologists, ever ready to shut off the machines in an instant in case of a problem. The reason for this remarkable care and attention is fairly simple: the third prototype drill exploded with terrific force a few months ago due to excessive pressure in the steam boiler. In spite of the volcanic activity, the Italian geologists are sure that the work here is utterly, 'absolutely', safe. A handful of scientists and skilled workers are already planning to use the volcanic heat in further applications: for iron smelting in particular there are schemes involving white-hot magma.

Since its founding, Nuova Bologna has seen the arrival of numerous wandering Lizard-men, who are attracted by the thermal sources. In some cases, brief rites are celebrated before taking baths, and often the bathers sacrifice small gifts to the steaming

sources, which they deposit in the waters after bathing. It is not clear if this is more than a ritual ablution. However, what is abundantly clear is that the number of thermal pools is decreasing due to the drilling. Increasingly, the hot water is piped directly into the boilers of the steam engines, slowly depleting the Lizard-men's ritual pools.

Italian Personalities on Venus

Paolo and Angela Donadoni

Sometimes, but only rarely, *Angela Donadoni* embarrasses her husband. The very reasons he first fell in love with her land him in many an inconvenient situation. Angela Donadoni takes pleasure in treating important men as her social equals and in showing them that she is far more intelligent than they are. Despite her dainty physique, the attractive woman's charisma is able to fill every room, no matter how large it may be. All eyes are drawn to her when she enters.

Paolo and Angela Donadoni are the most famous engineers in the Italian colony. Together, they develop prototypes of kites, give flying lessons, and supervise the training of the kite pilots. They barely allow themselves a moment's rest.

Paolo is an introverted, rather narrow-chested man who owes more to his wife than he wants to admit in public. He is a natural scientist, and labors tenaciously on every project until it is beaten to its knees. Angela provided him with his job on Venus, supported him in his research, and, when he made a presentable success – with her as a pilot – she stood by him with further finance and took the project to the highest level. Kiting owes its importance within the colony solely to their work.

Angela is adventurous, enterprising, charming and self-confident. She advocates women's rights in public and, through her influence, women were admitted to be trained as pilots to a greater degree than men.

Angela Donadoni

Archetype: Scientist **Motivation:** Justice

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 4

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 4

Strength: 1

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 8

Move: 5

Defence: 6

Perception: 7

Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Diplomacy	4	3	7	(3+)
Drive	4	2	6	(3)
Empathy	4	1	5	(2+)
Firearms	4	2	6	(3)
Performance	4	1	5	(2+)
Pilot (Kite)	4	5	9	(4+)
Science (Engineering)	4	6	10	(5)

Talents

Captivate; Natural Leader

Resources

Contacts 2

Fame 2

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L

Matteo Angelosanto

Angelosanto is a miner's son and a man who prefers working with his hands rather than pondering great theories. He finished his studies in Florence and was assistant superintendent for several mines in Italy before coming to Venus. Here, he works in the small settlement of Capri as head of the **Institute of Geology**.

Angelosanto is powerfully built and constantly busy with one kind of practical work or the other. Only very rarely does he wrestle with 'paper work', mainly he is engaged in digging, hammering or, indeed, grinding something. If there is anyone at all who knows anything about the mysterious discoveries of ore at Capri, it will be this man.

Victor Calvino

Victor Calvino found his fortune on a train station in the Netherlands. *Lisanne Rorendaal*, the only daughter of an industrialist richer than Croesus, fell in love with Calvino when he gallantly held open the carriage door for her, and they had dinner together during the trip – of course in the presence of her chambermaid and her two burly manservants. The pretty blonde woman with the intriguing freckles fascinated Calvino, and she was for her part attracted by the apparently poor man's intelligence and humor.

One month later, the young couple got married. She followed him to Italy, where she greatly enjoyed the climate, although, alas, she was soon to miss her homeland forever. One year after her parents' death, she died in her house in the Netherlands.

Thus, Calvino had become immeasurably rich, but equally swiftly of greatly changed mood. The loss of his wife affected him noticeably and, trying to fill the void she left in him, he searched for increasingly bigger and more ambitious challenges. Finally he became prey to the malady of 'megalomania' in its fullest form.

So, when Calvino traveled to Venus, he fell in love again – this time with a planet. He had a fantastical castle built into the mountains of the Italian colony (p. 57) and has ever since dedicated himself to his new home. There is now a small army of servants and scientists living with him in his fortress eyrie. The most ambitious project among the many inventions on which he works is probably his 'Weather machine' – a huge apparatus consisting of inductors, Tesla coils, brazen funnels, and ceramic containers. It is placed above the highest roof, in communication with the Ether, and does indeed, it seems, influence the weather. However, the effect is still random and restricted to a small area.

But, soon ... Soon, Calvino will have perfected the machine and then no-one will stand in his way, when he ascends to the heavens to be the lord and ruler of all Venus. He is the only one who knows what she really needs, and only he is able to give to his new love what she truly deserves.

Archetype: Scientist

Motivation: Love

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 3

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 6

Strength: 1

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 10

Move: 5

Defense: 6

Perception: 9

Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Literature)	6	2	8	(4)
Craft (Electrician)	6	4	10	(5)
Demolitions	6	1	7	(3+)
Diplomacy	3	3	6	(3)
Ride	4	2	6	(3)
Science	6	8	14	(7)

Talents

Intelligent; Skill Mastery (Science)

Resources

Artefact 4 (weather machine)

Wealth 4

Refuge 5 (mountain fortress)

Flaw

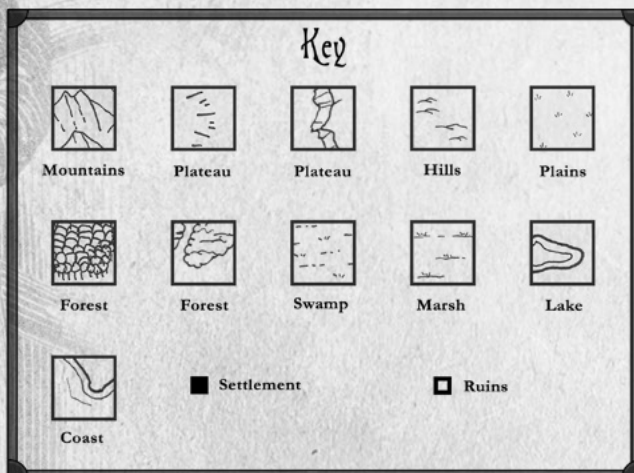
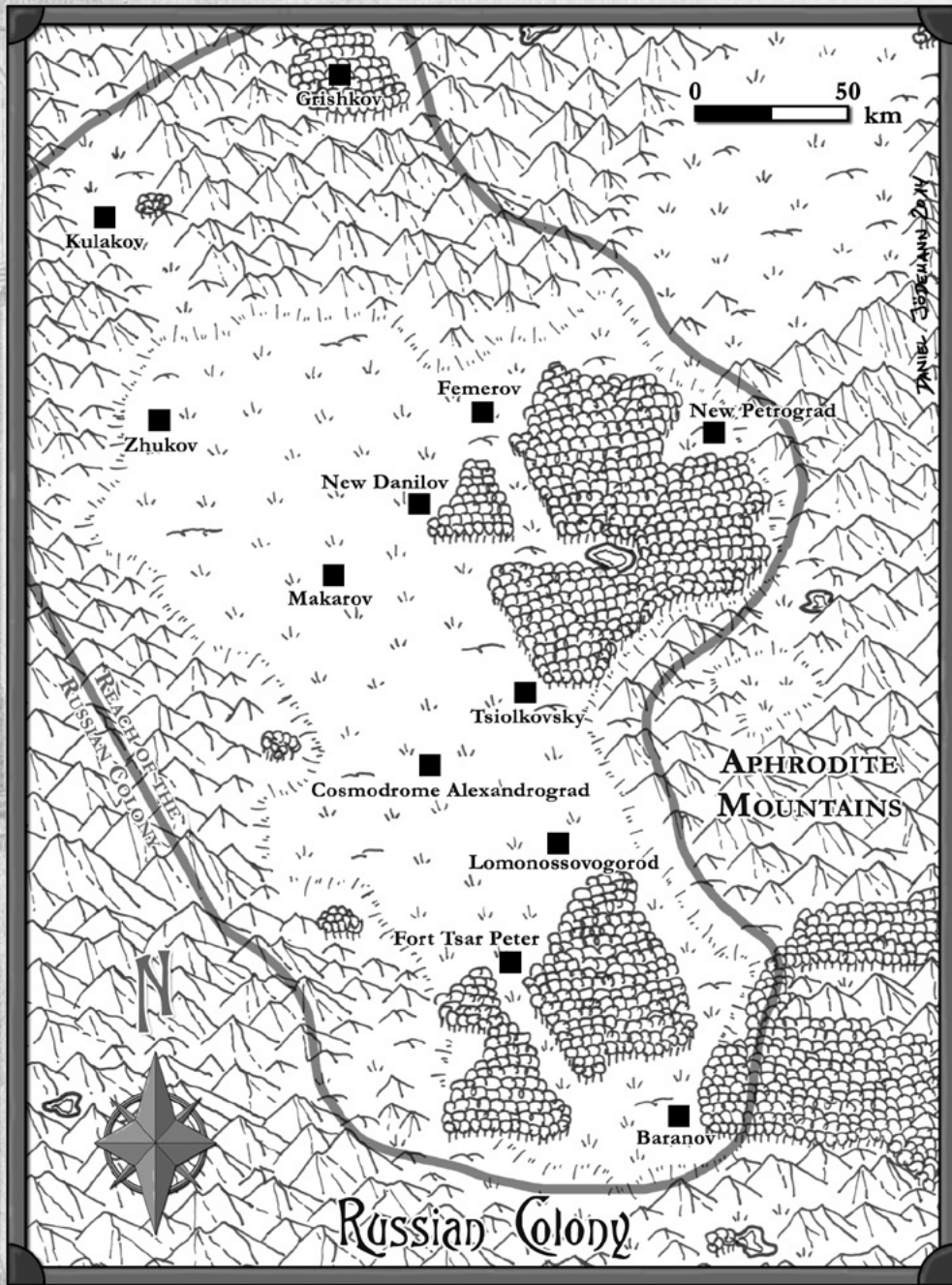
Obsession

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N

Dr. Mario Tremante

The friendly old gentleman with his glasses, his worn suit, and his dirty shirt-cuffs is *Mario Tremante*, superintendent of the botanical garden in Nuova Firenze. Even today, Dr. Tremante still takes care of the planting of new flowers himself, especially the newly discovered orchids. As a botanical expert and orchid enthusiast, Tremante is utterly fascinated by the Venusian flora. He considers it a special delight to supervise personally the cultivation and care of his orchids and also to search for new species. Orchid collectors are very well paid and can easily establish a reputation with Tremante by bringing him an unscathed, flamboyant specimen of orchid. It is said that the Italian pays better than his British competitor, *Richard D. Andrews* (p. 50). In addition, he finances expeditions and often needs staff for errands to other colonies on the planet, or even to Mars and Earth.





The Russian Colony

"It's true that Earth is humanity's cradle, but one cannot stay in the cradle forever. The solar system will be our nursery."

— Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky

Russia

Location: Western Plateau of the Aphrodite Mountains

Population: approx. 3,300 humans

Main Settlements: New Petrograd (administrative headquarters, pop. 1,500), Fort Tsar Peter (fortress town, pop. 1,000), New Danilov (residence of the Orthodox Church of Venus, pop. 250), Lomonossovogorod ('Sharashka', pop. 100), Osvobozhdenie (fishing village, pop. 100)

Trading Posts: Grishkov (pop. 70), Kulakov (pop. 50), Baranov (pop. 40)

Plantations: Zhukov, Femerov, Makarov, Tsiolkovsky (pop. about 20 each and 50-100 Lizard-men)

Military Units: 6 balloon fortresses each with a crew of 25; 5 companies of infantry, with a total strength of 450, including officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel

Points of Interest: New Petrograd, Fort Tsar Peter, Cosmodrome Alexandrograd, Ruins of Venergorod

Location and Span of the Colony

The Russian colony on Venus is situated on the western plateau of the Aphrodite Mountains, located on the eponymous continent. The landscape consists largely of forested savannas occasionally broken up by lakes, forests and arid zones.

When asked why the Russians chose this location they would respond that their search for a primary settling site was motivated by finding a region that would allow trade with the indigenous population and also to farm on Venus' fertile soil. They found the perfect location among the feud-ridden of the Aphrodite Mountains. Though at the beginning things looked very differently.

Establishment and Development of the Colony

In 1879, Tsar Alexander II decided to participate in the new race to conquer space. He used his family ties to the German Empire to obtain plans for an Etherflyer of Zeppelin design, which led

Russian Naming

Surnames were not common in Russia for a long time. Instead the father's first name with the suffix '-ova' was used by female and '-ovich' for male persons. Siblings named Alexandra and Yuri whose fathers name is Ivan would be formally addressed as Alexandra Ivanova and Yuro Ivanovich.

Close friends and family members are often called by a familiar version of their name. Some examples can be found in brackets in the name list below. These are occasionally used as regular names.

The real family name was only used for formal events. In case of female persons the name was adapted again, usually in form of a '-a' or '-va' added to the surname. The exception being names ending on '-ski' or '-sky', their female ending was '-skaya'.

Pronunciation and Notation of Russian Names

Because the Russians use the Cyrillic alphabet, there have been different interpretations when transcribing into the Latin script of other languages. The Germans are often using a 'j' where an Englishman would use an 'i', or in some cases a 'y' (Sergej, Sergei, Sergey). None of these notations are wrong or right, the pronunciation is always 'y'. It is quite similar with the 'z' and the 's', which are always spoken as 's', and the 'v' and 'w', which are pronounced as an 'f' if placed in front of a vowel. Occasionally a word ends with 'ff' ("Smirnoff"). 'x' and 'ks' are interchangeable. 'kh' is spoken as throaty 'ch' as in 'loch'.

At times vowels are left out of Russian names if they are slurred (Peter and Petr); this can influence the pronunciation of a name.

Some vowels are accompanied by an additional 'j', if stretched when spoken (for example 'Yevgeniy' which is pronounced as 'Jefgenie').

Male First Names:

Alexander (Sasha), Alexej (Alyosha), Andrej, Arkady, Boris (Bosha), Dimitri, Fjodor, Grigori, Ilya, Ivan (Vanya), Lev, Luka, Maximilian (Maxim), Mikhail, Nikita, Nikolai (Kolya, Nikolasha) Oleg, Peter, Pyotr, Ruslan, Sergej (Serjoshka), Tomas, Vadim, Vassily, Vladislav (Vlad), Yegeniy, Yuri

Female First Names:

Aleksandra (Sasha, Shura), Alina, Anoushka, Anya, Daria, Ekaterina (Katya, Katyusha), Elena, Galina, Irina, Kira, Larisa, Lyudmila (Lyuda, Mila), Mara, Maria, Nadezhda (Nadya, Nadeschka), Nastasya (Natasha), Nina, Olga, Oxana, Raisa, Svetlana, Tamara, Tatyana, Valentina (Valya), Veronika (Vera)

Surnames:

Abramov, Aleev, Anisimov, Bakhmatov, Baranov, Bazilevsky, Belousov, Borisenko, Bukharin, Chernitsky, Danilov, Dmitriev, Frolov, Ganelin, Grishkov, Ilin, Koslov, Kovalenko, Larionov, Litvinov, Melnikov, Mikulin, Morosov, Orloff, Panin, Petrenko, Popov, Putilov, Revnik, Smirnoff, Sokolov, Sorokin, Tarasov, Timofeev, Tretiakov, Volkov, Volsky, Yakowlev, Yavlinksy, Zbruev, Zubov

to the rapid construction of the first Russian space-faring vessel, *Zhemchug* (Pearl), rapidly completed in only six months, at the Galerniy shipyard near Saint Petersburg.

Since the British had already concentrated their efforts on Mars, Alexander wanted to avoid initial confrontation with Russia's strongest rival (in his opinion). So he ordered *Zhemchug*, commanded by Admiral *Sergej Ivanovich Semjukov*, to Venus, where they were to create the first interplanetary outpost for the Russian Empire. The ship entered Venus' atmosphere near the South Pole on June 14 1880, as far as possible from their German "friends", and began with their mission with an exploration of the southern continent. Semjukov was fascinated by the untamed beauty of the planet and named the continent they disembarked on "Lada", after the Slavic Goddess of Harmony and Love, as well as Youth and Beauty. *Zhemchug's* crew built their first settlement and named it **Venergorod** (Venus City). In the following weeks the ship undertook additional exploratory flights, once even as far as the German colony in the Kaiser-Wilhelm Mountains, to extend a goodwill visit.

On their flight back the *Zhemchug* got caught in a thunderstorm. While frantically searching for a landing place to weather the storm, the swampy continent of Metis offering little solid ground, they were relieved when suddenly a great mountain emerged from the clouds. The *Zhemchug* made a hard emergency landing, but the ship weathered the storm on what turned out to be an inactive volcano. Semjukov later named the crater after his daughter Natalia, an otherwise unique name that has endured to the present day.

Zhemchug returned to Earth on December 18 1880 leaving Venergorod with a shore party of twenty. Admiral Semjukov earned an enthusiastic reception at the Tsar's court and was awarded the title "Conqueror of Space" by Alexander the Second.

Before a new expedition for Venus could be launched, the Tsar was assassinated in a bomb attack on March 13 1881. His son Alexander III ascended the throne, but the new autocrat of all the Russias had completely different priorities. Admiral Semjukov continually petitioned the Tsar to be allowed additional expeditions to expand the colony on Venus, but the new ruler was preoccupied by too many internal political problems. Semjukov, who wouldn't back down, quickly fell from favor and was relieved of command. It was only in 1883 that the Tsar decided to give his attention to Venus and *Zhemchug* was prepared for another voyage. Alexander III ordered all Russian Etherflyers to be allocated to the cavalry, and as a result Cossack *Essaul* (Captain) *Zakhar Petrovich Nikanov* took command of the ship. After an adventurous journey with an only barely overhauled ship, Nikanov landed near Venergorod on April 16 1883, but he found the settlement in disrepair and deserted. The superstitious Cossacks were convinced that this location was bad luck and searched for an auspicious new site for a colony of the Russian Empire.

After a few days they discovered an extensive plateau where they would land. Shortly thereafter they met the *Ssasam*, a Lizard-men tribe of the Aphrodite Mountains. The Cossacks offered the Lizard-men a generous liquid welcome of vodka, and the Venusians found the curious yet strong beverage to their liking. The Russians on the other hand were impressed by their guests' ability to hold their drink, and thus was the first alliance between Russia and Venus forged.

The *Ssasam* are nomads, living by hunting and barter for simple trinkets. For many generations they have been at war with the *Lekrek*, a rival tribe of farmers to the east of their hunting grounds, who regularly clear parts of the jungle to make fields. Instead of coming to a mutual beneficial agreement, both tribes have fought countless skirmishes without any side gaining a significant advantage. The arrival of the Russians has changed the balance of power

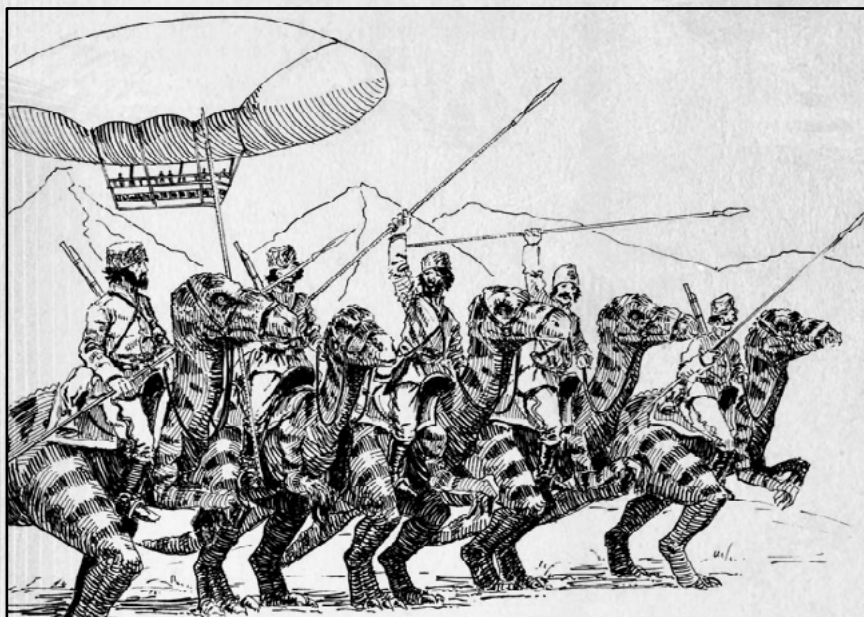
considerably. In exchange for small art objects and a collection of local flora, the Russians gave their new friends sabers and lances to help them in their fight against the *Lekrek*. This trade remains an excellent source of income for the colony. Together with the Russians, the *Ssasam* would eventually conquer nearly all of the western parts of the Aphrodite Mountains. Prisoners were sold as forced laborers to the Russians to help them build their settlements. Soon after, the Russians recognized that they could use the agricultural expertise of their slave laborers to build plantations. They stayed true to their allies and employed the *Ssasam* as guards. In the few years since their first colonization of the Aphrodite Mountains, the Russians developed a fully functional colony in which their efforts were never timid nor gentle. It is not yet possible to assess how long this status-quo will last or whether the situation will become critical and lead to disaster.

Colonial Organization

The Russian Colony in the Aphrodite Mountains was under solely military control from 1883 until 1887, mainly consisting of Cossacks. In addition to the official capital **New Petrograd**, they constructed a massive fortified position in the southern parts of the colony called **Fort Tsar Peter**. For his achievements Major Nikanov was promoted to Colonel and he urged the Tsar for additional development of the colony. Until 1885 only the *Zhemchug* made routine voyages from Earth to Venus, but Colonel Nikanov convinced the Tsar that a more regular connection, under Russian control, would make good sense. For this undertaking two new freight zeppelins (*Chaika* and *Grif*) were built, after modified German designs. Additionally, Russian authorities chartered two American Etherflyers to compensate their lack of ships. Now, every two to three months a ship launches from Earth to Venus, fully loaded with supplies and colonists to be landed and then swiftly to return with Venusian treasures. If enough room is available they take on private travelers, but often enough the last free places are filled with prisoners who have been sentenced to 'Katorga', forced labor in exile. It is assumed that currently at least 400 prisoners are living on Venus. Most of them are sent as forced labor to the plantations or trading posts. Some better off and educated prisoners have been transferred to **Lomonossovogorod**, a secret research station in the southern parts of the colony. To Nikanov it seemed as if his dreams had come true, and on August 6 1886 he let his soldiers announce him as **Ataman** of Venus, Commander of the Cossacks and as such the whole colony. When this news reached the Tsar he feared he would lose control over his settlements on Venus and decided that a civil **governor** should take sovereignty in New Petrograd. He sent his brother, the *Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich Romanov*, and his family, to New Petrograd where he landed on March 10, 1887 (the Tsar's birthday) aboard the gunboat *Anakria*. Nikanov was seething with anger, but he knew that he could do nothing against the Tsar's decision. Since then, the Ataman has withdrawn to Fort Tsar Peter and will only travel to New Petrograd on a direct command from the Grand Duke. None of these squabbles are allowed to reach outsiders, as such the other nations only see a unified front of military and civilian.

Officially the Grand Duke and the Ataman make all decisions concerning the colony together, though the governor has the final say in this matter. Both men usually try to reach a compromise, despite thoroughly disliking each other. This means, for instance, that the plantations are under the supervision of a Cossack officer, while the trading posts are under civilian control. For some time now, well-informed sources claim an uprising of Venusian troops

is only a matter of time or that the Tsar will bring in other troops to replace the unruly Cossacks. As of yet nothing has happened to bolster these rumors.



The Russian Military on Venus

Since the settlement, Russian military forces on Venus have consisted mainly of the 3rd regiment or *polk* of the Ural Voisko of Cossacks: semi-irregular cavalry units who are also capable of fighting as dismounted soldiers (although Cossack infantry regiments also exist). They are trained as lancers and are also proficient with sabers, carbines and bayonets. Above all they are known for their excellent marksmanship and, unlike many units on Earth, the Venusian Cossacks are equipped with moderately modern 'Vintovka Berdana' carbine (single shot breechloaders of American design). Over the years they have additionally received roughly two dozen Gorloff machine guns (Russian copies of U.S. Gatling guns) as well as a battery of Orenburg Cossack horse artillery (six 3.42-inch guns mounted on wheeled artillery carriages).

Few of the horses originally accompanying the Cossacks to Venus are still alive, so that the troops are mostly riding Pacyosaurs and Gennarosaurus. Only the guard Cossacks of the Ataman, stationed in Fort Tsar Peter, are exclusively mounted on horses, which is actually more a matter of prestige than military necessity. The Cossacks see themselves as the real rulers of the colony and the Ataman is sure that he could use the warriors of the *Ssasam* as auxiliaries or mere cannon fodder in case of a military conflict.

Balloon Fortress

The dirigible balloon fortresses are the backbone of Russian forces on Venus. These ships are called "strug" (plural: strugi) by the Cossacks, in reference to the transport boats their ancestors used

during the Tatar campaigns in the seventeenth century. They are hot-air airships, which have been designed by *Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky* (p. 67). Under a 330 feet (or 100 meters)

long hot-air balloon hangs a rectangular nacelle roughly 80 by 40 feet (25 x 12 meters), which is connected to the frame by metal beams. The nacelle consists of an open top deck and a closed deck below. The underside is reinforced, in order to serve as landing surface.

The armament of the top deck consists of a Gorloff machine gun mounted on each side (the weapon mounts can also be used for light, quick-firing or QF guns). A steam-powered propeller is installed on each corner, which provides the vessel with excellent maneuverability. In the middle of the deck rises a hot-air duct, which is connected to the steam engine in the lower deck. Through this duct, steam is blown into the balloon, which generates buoyancy.

The front half of the lower deck consists of a cargo area, which can be loaded through a floor or front hatch.

To this end a steam-powered crane can be mounted on the upper deck. The middle of the lower deck is dominated by a steam engine, which generates the power for the propeller and the heat for the balloon. Next to it is a hold for heating material. Aft is the living quarter of the ship's commander, a single cabin. The rest of the crew lives on the open top deck.

Russian Military Ranks

The following list is a (simplified) overview of the Russian military ranks (in brackets the English equivalent):

Enlisted:

- Ridavoj (Recruit)
- Efreytor (Private)

Non-commissioned officers:

- Kapral (Corporal)
- Podpraporshchik (Sergeant)
- Praporshchik (Ensign)

Officer ranks:

- Poruchik (Lieutenant)
- Kapitan (Captain)
- Mayor (Major)
- Polkovnik (Colonel)

General ranks:

- General-Mayor (Major General)
- General-Poruchik (Lieutenant General)
- General (General)

Balloon fortresses are not mere combat units, they are a weapon system especially designed for Venus. They serve as troop transports as well as fire support for ground troops. The design for the dirigible balloon fortress has proven so successful that the Russian government decided to forgo any other flying machines. A total of six balloon fortresses exists in the Russian colony, even though no more than four are actually flightworthy at any given time – a fact which is of course kept secret by the Russians.

Women in the Colony

Women are considered to be little more than cheap labor, and have to follow the instructions of their husbands and superiors. This is also true for industry, where women constitute a third of the labor force, as well as agriculture, which would have collapsed without female workers.

Broad sections of (male) society believe that women are biologically unsuited to receive higher education. Above all they should not be subject to dangerously anarchic ideas. As such 80 percent of illiterates in Russia are female.

The colony on our neighbor planet is a duplicate of these conditions, perhaps to an even greater extent than Earth: due to the influence of the military, obeying orders without question is the foundation of everyday life. Only with the arrival of the Grand Duke has this attitude changed slightly, mostly because the new governor did not want to be deprived of the agreeable *soirées* which were such a delight of Paris and St. Petersburg, and dully submissive women, he had found, rarely made the most vivacious guests. However, it cannot be said that gender equality exists to any degree whatsoever in the colony. A woman only receives respect due to her social standing. As such, no Cossack would dare to defy Grand Duchess *Maria Pavlovna*, but during a plantation inspection he would have no qualms about showing an unruly peasant woman who is the master and who the servant. Even among the educated classes it is simply not thought to be “high-tone” for women to learn a profitable calling. That said, within the officer corps and the aristocracy, high-status women, individually or via numerous factions or cliques, wield considerable influence within the rules of *politesse*. Officers’ wives have even been known to accompany their menfolk on campaign, riding immediately behind the line of battle in some cases.

Important Settlements and Plantations

New Petrograd

New Petrograd is probably the only place within the Russian colony that deserves to be called a town. In front of its gates is a tramped earth “**landing field**”, large enough for several Etherflyers to land and anchor, but it is mostly used for the two balloon fortresses *Gnevniy* and *Sorkiy*, whose squadron is on picket duty and tasked with protecting the administration headquarters.

The settlement itself consists of a city grid with four main roads, aligned to the cardinal points, all flowing into a central plaza and as such is divided into four quarters. Small clusters of

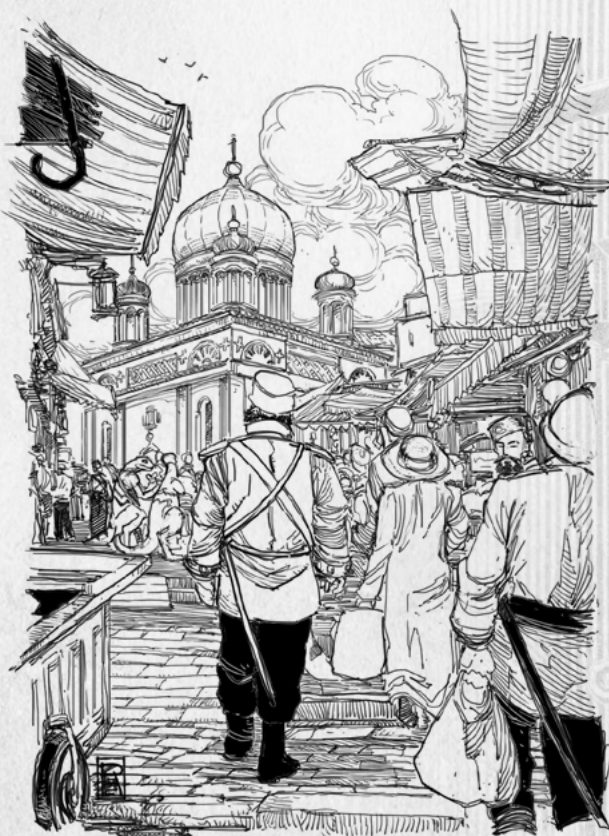
houses exist in between, which are mostly utilized as housing and stables; where no real street exists, there are small pathways made by the inhabitants. The central plaza houses the **governor’s palace**, one of the few stone buildings in New Petrograd. Despite its moderate size, each of the colony’s quarters has its own style.

The western road has earned the disparaging nickname of ‘**Boulevard**’, since it leads directly from the landing field to the palace main entrance. Most of the colony’s people of quality live here. The townscape is completed by what are, for Venus, quite magnificent **hotels** and the sight of the Orthodox **Church**’s onion-domed towers. This is, of course, designed to present visitors with an impressively well-ordered image of the colony, though behind the glorious facade the accommodation is more modest. Along this road there is also the **Headquarters of the Okhrana**, short for **Okhrannoye Otdelenie** (Security Department), the local police, which for the last two years has acted as a counterbalance to the ubiquitous Cossacks.

To the north, **taverns**, **brothels** and all manner of **drinking dens of the worst kind** can be found. Things are quite lively here, even though there are only a few houses. The northern road of New Petrograd is known all over Venus as an avenue of dubious hedonistic pleasures. Visitors of the more dubious sort from all Venus’ colonies enjoy a passing visit to the Russian colony, which, after enough vodka, ends more often than not in the bed of a *fille de joie*, or, after a hearty bar brawl, in the possibly less hazardous lodgement of a roadside ditch.

All along the eastern road a motley collection of **merchants** have set up shops, from food traders to expedition outfitters, and street vendors can be found here, day and night offering two of anything one could ever desire. Navigating the narrow alleys is only possible on foot and then with difficulty due to pickpockets and swarms of intrusive hawkers of worthless trifles.

Lucky are those who reach the southern street, the quietest quarter, unharmed. **Residential houses** as well as small inns and other possibilities of **lodging**, can be found here, where one can



supply oneself with *blintz* and *borscht* for very little money and get a (relatively) calm and comfortable night's rest.

Life in New Petrograd is marked by contradictions. While the west and south quarters are under the control of the *Okhrana* and the Cossacks and so seem partially civilized, the north is more and more dominated by the *Bratva* (Brotherhood), a unification of criminal elements, which are, according to hear-say, demanding protection money from the barkeepers lest their establishments fall victim to fire and flame. No one can really say who truly holds the real power in the city now (and, indeed, in the whole colony). Military honor is defended ruthlessly; perceived slurs are settled with beatings or by dueling. Drunkenness among the officers is widespread and heavy drinking the norm. This is attributed to there being nothing to do: often drinking will start at noon and last till late at night. This isn't universal of course, one or two officers only drink rarely, and when they do it's said the binge lasts barely longer than a week. Parts of the administration openly take bribes and even some of the armed forces (*Okhrana* and Cossacks) have been caught up in corruption scandals. It's rumored that one of the infantry officers regularly steals his men's pay to cover gambling losses, even now. Ultimately, one should choose very carefully on whose toes to step in New Petrograd (since step on them you will).

Fort Tsar Peter

In the southern part of the colony lies the fortress city of Fort Tsar Peter where Zakhar Petrovich Nikanov has established a strong power base. Here, long rows of barracks offer enough living quarters for all the Cossacks stationed on Venus. Some observers say it is a sure sign that the Ataman's plans cannot bode well for the governor.

At the fortress center is a square defensive structure, heavily armed and constantly manned by a guard company, where the Ataman has his headquarters. Around the fortress there is an unplanned settlement, mostly populated by the Cossacks' families, civilian refugees from the Russian colonies and even some released convicts, who have found a new home here. Outside of Fort Tsar Peter is the landing field for the two balloon fortresses stationed there, among them the flagship of the small fleet, the *Zharkiy* and her sister ship *Bespokoiniy*. The Ataman's ship is now an even more dangerous opponent since two of its Gorloff machine guns were replaced with 3-inch QF guns.

New Danilov

Monks of the Russian Orthodox church first reached Venus with the Grand Duke. They decided not to stay in the hellish pit of sin that is New Petrograd, but to instead found a monastery they named New Danilov, after the seat of the Holy Synod in Moscow. Together with a few followers they established a small settlement at the edge of a forest, and their next move even dared to provoke the governor. Their highest priest *Dmitri Alexandrovich Trofimov* named himself Patriarch of Venus – a rank that had been abolished in the Tsar's Russia to weaken the power of the church, then seen to threaten the Tsar. Under the name of Kyrill I and with support of the faithful Cossacks, the Church has firmly established itself on Venus. A few faithful arrive with each new transport, always finding their way to New Danilov, hoping to leave their old troubles behind on this new world with the church's protection.

Osvobozhdenie

The name of this small fishing village on the Dragunov Sea's shore is best translated as "Liberty". Twenty to thirty families settled here and elected their own mayor. They trade with the local Lizard-men, regardless of the colonial administration's directive. Nobody now dares to take the land route to this distant village, after Lizard-men living south of the settlement reported bizarre wandering plants, appearing out of thin air between other flora, capable of swallowing beings the size of a man whole only to devour him gradually over the course of weeks. Nobody can say if these rumors are true or if it's a ruse by the fishermen to avoid visitors. Certainly, some Russian scouts, sent to discover the truth, have disturbingly never returned.

Periodically, despite all this, one of the balloon fortresses heads out to Osvobozhdenie to barter their supplies for fish and other sea creatures, though they would probably not interfere to save the wayward fishermen from any peril.

The Russian Trading Posts

As has already been mentioned, the governor took control of all the colony's trading posts when first arriving on Venus. Back then there were only two, **Grishkov** and **Kulakov**, which existed as lonely enclaves amidst the mountains, surrounded by high wooden palisades and guarded by heavily armed mercenaries. Their exposed position made them favorite targets for Lizard-men who would not dare penetrate further into Russian territory. The Russians mostly traded with the *Ssasam*, but also with other tribes, even with some *Lekrek*, who dared to venture there. They were mostly interested in hides and plants which could not be cultivated on plantations, but needed to be harvested in the jungle.

Less than a year ago the Grand Duke founded a new trading post, namely **Baranov** in the southern parts of the colony, which sparked the rumor that it was only a smoke screen to provide *Okhrana* units the opportunity to spy on the Ataman's fortress.

The Russian Plantations

With the help of some turncoats from the eastern tribes, the Russians received seeds and germ buds of different plants, which could be used economically. These included not only cotton trees, which were also found in other regions, but also the *Aephodilia*, a rare plant which only seems to exist in the Aphrodite Mountains. Three of the four Russian plantations are nowadays under military control, namely **Zhukov**, **Femerov** and **Makarov**. Each is headed by a *Praporshchik* who has control over a squad of six Cossacks. They are officially exempt from military service, however guarding of the plantations is in fact a military operation, since there are frequent raids by hostile Lizard-men or human marauders.

The work on each of the plantations is done by roughly a dozen colonists who take care of the processing of fruit and handle the livestock. For the heavy labor on the fields of each plantation the Russians use a few dozen Lizard-Men from the *Lekrek* tribe, guarded by their arch-enemies, the *Ssasam*. It is hardly surprising that such an arrangement creates animosities, but by and large the Russians have managed to keep the situation stable without sparking larger conflicts.

The situation is slightly different on the **Tsiolkovsky** plantation, which was awarded to *Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky* as thanks for his construction of the balloon fortresses. Though *Lekrek* are used as workers, Tsiolkovsky does not allow Cossacks or *Ssasam* as overseers on his land. Instead he has made a secret agreement with the estate workers that they would only have to work one season for him, and would afterwards be allowed to give some of the harvest to their tribe. To date he does not have any problem finding new workers for his fields. Intriguingly, even after his workers take their portion, his plantation produces enough to keep up with the others.

Points of Interest

Lomonossovogorod

While outwardly it is claimed that Lomonossovogorod is a research station, anybody who gets near the enclosed compound and its barracks will quickly realize that it is in truth a prison camp. Named after the generalist Russian scholar Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonossov, the *Sharashka*, as such camps are usually called, is home to roughly 50 researchers. The same number of guards, consisting equally of Cossacks and *Okhrana*, ensure that nobody either gets too close or escapes the installation. It's said the scientists work on multiple secret projects, both military and civil in nature. Supposedly they are trying to gain bigger yields by crossing crops from Earth with Venusian ones. Reports claim that they are also working on a new weapons system, suited for future capital ships of the Tsarist Empire.

➡ New Birmingham, p. 151

Cosmodrome Alexandrograd

Eighty miles north of Fort Tsar Peter, construction of a big *cosmodrome* has begun, a facility that is not only capable of servicing balloon fortresses but also much larger vessels and more frequently. Official statements claim that the Cosmodrome Alexandrograd serves only peaceful purposes and is supposed to improve the colony's supply situation; however, many now question why it is constructed near the Cossacks' headquarters and not near New Petrograd. Additional questions were raised as it became public knowledge that the balloon fortress *Pylkiy* was stationed there to deter any approach, apparently even authorized to open fire if necessary.

The Ruins of Venergorod

Venergorod was the first Russian Settlement on Venus, but in the years between the *Zhemchug's* voyage back to Russia in 1880 and her return in 1883 the original colonists here vanished without a trace. As the Russians discovered the partially collapsed buildings quietly shrouded in Venus' warm and humid air, without a single sign of its inhabitants, they quickly left without searching for clues of what befell the settlement. For several years nobody dared to venture near this place, but finally an investigation commission of the *Okhrana* was sent to Venergorod, to find out what

happened to the first colonists. They indeed found documents in the ruins, allowing for a nearly complete reconstruction of what happened from the colony's founding up to 1882. The colonists made great progress, even without help from the homeworld, they traded with the local Lizard-men and occasionally received visits from other colonies. But in June 1882 disaster must have struck. Surviving official documentation describes the lack of the usual visits, the withering of crops in the fields, strange deaths and more. Shortly thereafter the written record suddenly stops and still no one can say what happened to the Russians. Not a single corpse nor any large number of graves were found, so a plague can be ruled out. Despite intense questioning, none of the Lizard-men in the wider vicinity could help to solve the riddle. It is probably impossible to discover who came up with the improbable rumor that someone killed the inhabitants of Venergorod because they had found a treasure of the indigenous people. But since then the place has become an El Dorado for treasure hunters, trying to find the supposed lost riches.

Important Russian Personalities on Venus

Governor Vladimir Alexandrovich Romanov

Vladimir Alexandrovich Romanov (* 22.4.1847) is Tsar Alexander II's third son and as such is brother to the present ruler. The Grand Duke was not exactly overjoyed that the Tsar had chosen to send him to Venus, but then who would gleefully swap the glamorous Vladimir Palace in Saint Petersburg for a superheated stone hut in a steaming alien jungle? Knowing, however, that he had to comply with his brother's wish, he dutifully embarked on the journey to Venus together with his wife, Grand Duchess *Maria Pavlovna* (*Marie Alexandrine of Mecklenburg-Schwerin* *14.5.1854) and his four children *Kyrill*, *Boris*, *Andrei* and *Jelena*.

Grand Duke Romanov is well aware that he sits atop a large powder keg with a short and brightly glowing stub of fuse. The constant quarrels with the unruly Cossacks under their Ataman *Nikanov* puts a great strain on his nerves, as does the constant accusations from his wife who feels she has been unfeelingly exiled by her brother-in-law and blames her husband for it. The only ones viewing the voyage to the jungle world as a great adventure are the couple's children. Boris especially is quite the unkempt wild child, who even dares to venture into the squalid corners of New Petrograd, usually accompanied by his little brother Andrei. This is unlike the barely seven year old Jelena, who charms even the wildest Bratwa boys with her natural beauty and grace. Kyrill, as potential successor to the throne, is well under his mother's thumb and much to his chagrin is only rarely allowed to leave the palace. The intellectually-inclined Grand Duke himself tries to evade the "rabble" and withdraws himself from the day-to-day life of the colony, entrenched behind the palace walls, guarded by Cossacks and *Okhrana*, who eye each other warily. When he or his wife make public appearances they do so in full ceremonial attire, the Grand Duke in his dress uniform and his wife in an elaborate dress. Every once in a while – mainly to appease his wife when she is throwing another tantrum – the governor entertains a soiree, to which senior representatives from other colonies are invited in order to show off how well the Russians are doing on Venus. But how much his guests fall for this charade only they know.

Archetype: Ruler **Motivation: Power**

Health: 7

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 **Charisma: 3**

Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence: 4**

Strength: 4 **Willpower: 3**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative: 7**

Move: 7 **Defense: 7**

Perception: 7 **Stun: 4**

Skill	Base	Level	Rating	(Average)
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Academics	4	3	7	(3+)
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Art	4	3	7	(3+)
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Bureaucracy	4	2	6	(3)
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Diplomacy	3	1	4	(2)
-----------	---	---	---	-----

Firearms	3	2	5	(2+)
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Intimidation	3	3	6	(3)
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Melee	4	4	8	(4)
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Ride	3	3	6	(3)
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Talents

Inspire; Fearsome; Skill Mastery (Academics); Skill Mastery (Art)

Resources

Status 5

Rank 5

Wealth 5

Refuge 4

Flaws

Condescending

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
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Sword	3 L	0	11 L	(5+) L
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.30-06 Repeating Rifle	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
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Colonel Zakhar Petrovich Nikanov

Zakhar Petrovich Nikanov (* 17.9.1843) comes from a long line of Volga Cossacks. His family was involved in the Pugachov Uprising one hundred years ago, directed against Catherine the Great's rule, and to this day Nikanov's heart lies with Cossack ideals of honor and strength. Although he made a career in the Tsar's army his great dream is to liberate his people from the Russians. Accordingly, he was enraged when the Tsar presented him with Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich as new governor, because he had nursed the hope to secretly make Venus the first bulwark to realize his plans. He is aware that he currently does not have the means to rise up against the Grand Duke's rule, because the colony at large and his troops are still too dependent on supplies from Earth. He puts his hopes for the future on the Cossacks using the power they have as the crews of the Russian Etherfleet.

Nikanov is a broad-shouldered, bearded giant of a man of nearly 6'3". He is rarely seen without his *chokha*, the Cossacks long mantle, with a *shashka*, a heavy saber, resting in a leather belt. In addition and despite the enormous heat he always carries his *papakha*, the traditional high fur hat, usually made of lambswool. However, despite this quite unsuitable clothing for Venus, it is rumored among his people that his self-control is such that he never breaks into a sweat.

Archetype: Soldier **Motivation: Justice**

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma: 3**

Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence: 2**

Strength: 4 **Willpower: 3**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 5

Move: 7

Defense: 6

Perception: 5

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
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Athletics	4	2	6	(3)
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Brawl	4	2	6	(3)
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Diplomacy	3	2	5	(2+)
-----------	---	---	---	------

Firearms	3	4	7	(3+)
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Intimidation	3	1	4	(2)
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Melee	4	3	7	(3+)
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Ride	3	4	7	(3+)
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Talents

Inspire; High Pain Tolerance; Diehard

Resources

Status 1

Rank 4

Flaws

Reformer

Equipment

Chokha, Papakha, Shashka (Cossack Sabre), Nagyka (whip)

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
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Nagyka	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
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Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N
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Shashka	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
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Long spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
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Rifle	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
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Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky

Tsiolkovsky (* 17.9.1857) is a young scientist, who published papers on the future of space flight in 1885, where he demanded a series of Etherflyers of Russia's own design. The Tsar was inspired by his ideas and gave him enough money to finance his research. The first prototype of a hot-air ship crashed during its first test flight from high altitude, and all hands were lost. Despite this Alexander III was convinced he found "his" Count Zeppelin and sent the young man to Venus, where he was to utilize his research to help the Russian military on site to gain proper flying machines.

Tsiolkovsky built the six dirigible balloon fortresses, which today defend the Russian colony, between 1886 and 1888. As a reward for this, the governor granted him an area of land – against the Ataman's express wish –, where he could build his own plantation.

He usually lives and works there, supposing that he is currently on Venus at all, and is not experimenting on rockets and research for future space travel elsewhere. At the Tsar's request he often visits Earth or travels to Mars to exchange ideas with other scientists and scholars, or visits the national *Galerniy* shipyards. While on Venus he often undertakes trips to Lomonossovogorod to do research with the scientists there while under the watchful eye of the guards. According to rumors he is working on a project which is supposed to revolutionize Russian space flight.

Though Tsiolkovsky works with the military, he is in reality a Romantic who in his heart and soul would like nothing more than to be the captain of a ship of his own design and to explore the endless expanses of space. Thus, it is his dearest and as yet unfulfilled wish to meet the author Jules Verne, whom he deeply admires.



Archetype: Scientist **Motivation: Discovery****Health: 5****Primary Attributes****Body: 2** **Charisma: 3****Dexterity: 5** **Intelligence: 7****Strength: 2** **Willpower: 3****Secondary Attributes****Size: 0** **Initiative: 12****Move: 6** **Defense: 7****Perception: 10** **Stun: 2**

Skill	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Literature)	7	2	9	(4+)
Craft (Electrician)	7	2	9	(4+)
Demolitions	7	1	8	(4)
Diplomacy	3	1	4	(2)
Drive	5	2	7	(3+)
Firearms	5	1	6	(3)
Gunnery	7	2	9	(4+)
Pilot (Etherflyer)	5	2	7	(3+)
Science	7	6	13	(6+)

Talents**Intelligent; Skill Mastery (Science)****Resources****Mentor (Tsar Alexander II)****Fame 3****Flaws****Absent-Minded**

Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N

Sergei Ivanovich Semjukov

When Semjukov was an admiral he led the first Russian expedition to Venus, but later fell from the Tsar's favor and quit his command, frustrated, in 1887. His wife – a distant relative of the imperial house – left him, and his life was shattered. Under a false identity he embarked shortly thereafter on a regular transport to Venus. Indomitable, despite his ignominious fall, he worked tirelessly as a common tradesman to get back on his feet, with a store in New Petrograd as an expedition outfitter. However, in November 1888 he received news that changed all his plans: *Zhemchug*, the ship with which he explored Venus for the first time, had gone missing while on a flight to the continent of Lada; nobody knew what happened to the ship or her crew.

Semjukov left the business in the hands of his partner, a young Kirgiz named *Askar Olobajev*, and outfitted multiple expeditions to search for “his” ship. He was grimly determined to find it to restore his honor. He does not know that the ship was seized by pirates commanded by *Friedrich Bertram von Reden* and was added to their own fleet as a prize ship. But one can be sure that a shrewd tactician like Semjukov will not be so easily deterred from his goal.

Other Settlements
and Colonies

Venus offers ideal conditions for human colonization – the voyage is relatively short, the atmosphere breathable, it has no winter season and the natives are (still) technologically inferior. It is no

wonder that multiple groups are trying to get a foot in the door here. While only the major European powers are capable of maintaining colonies with thousands of settlers, it is possible to realize one's own vision and establish a small outpost with more modest means. As such it is no wonder that financial gamblers, religious fanatics, and political madmen stake their claims on the “Morning and Evening star”. The existence and location of the following settlements is common knowledge. Their settlers openly go about their business and trade with other colonies. Information on the lesser or even completely unknown settlements can be found on page 148.

Eden – the Emperor's Dropouts

Eden lies on a ledge on the western edge of the Ishtar Highlands. The colony is home to 30 men, 20 women and seven children. Eden consists of 20 tree houses, which are connected by walkways and suspension bridges. Even though Eden's inhabitants rarely seek contact with the German colony, they see themselves as German.

Eden is a reaction to the ever-growing industrialization of the last few decades. Since mankind's early days some always believed that progress is an aberration and that man has to return to the simple life of his ancestors, for his own sake. That view led to the development of the “life reform” movement in Germany, and in 1886 their determined members – mostly from the middle classes – decided to leave the poisoned Earth behind and to lead a pure and natural life on Venus.

Eden is divided into plots of land where the inhabitants grow their own food. In addition, the communal lands harvest is used to meet the colony's needs. Mainly local fruit and vegetables are grown here (particularly Venusian apples and swamp turnips), added to this are diverse herbs and roots which are gathered in the woods. Their processing is Eden's only industry, these goods (fruit juice, syrup, natural remedies) are traded for the few tools Eden needs. Eden's inhabitants have no need for fishing, hunting and animal husbandry since they are all firm vegetarians. An animal would only be killed in Eden if it is a threat to its inhabitants. Furthermore, Eden has renounced all of civilization's poisons, as such neither alcohol, nor tobacco – not even a single cup of coffee – can be found.

They strive for a simple, natural life. This also includes clothing, which deviates from the modern standard – Eden's inhabitants usually only wear a light robe with sandals and a hat should it rain. Technical achievements are looked down upon.

Eden's ‘nature friends’ are looked upon with mild amusement and are usually ignored. Their relations to the nearby Lizard-men is relaxed, even though the latter are mildly confused by the Edenites – some Lizard-men believe the strange humans are doing penance for something they did beyond the clouds. But, ‘et in Arcadia ego’: even in Eden conflicts exist – primary over running the colony now that it has been established. Eden's inhabitants view themselves as doctors who want to cure civilization's sickness by natural means, but how should that happen? And in which direction should humanity develop?

American Representatives

On Venus, the Americans (both USA and CSA) mainly focused on building outposts and they have largely waived any territorial claims. For years they have been campaigning for an ‘open door

policy', its intention is to allow free trade agreements with all of Venus' inhabitants, despite colonization.

In one sector the American businessmen have gained a de facto monopoly: They are the only suppliers for ice! Frozen water commands exorbitant prices on Venus, for obvious reasons. It is even lucrative to bring ice from Earth to Venus in isolated containers and hoard them in specially sealed warehouses. Even when the prices drop the traders have means to ensure that Venus' earthly residents are willing to pay any price for a little cooling off, by creating an artificial shortage. Some American traders even deem it more lucrative to transport ice to Venus than to Calcutta.

For this very reason many Americans view Josephus Martin's plans to build an ice factory as a big threat, some even thinking it treason. The inventor has to endure constant threats from the ice barons, but so far, the fact that he is under protection from the German Reichskommissar has deterred his opponents, who now strive for more severe ways and means.

Independently from their monopoly the Americans have a second pillar of income, namely a large fleet of interplanetary etherflyers under American flag, which transports the largest share of civilian freight to and from Venus. Mostly Italian and Russian colonists hire them, since their nations possess comparatively few etherflyers of their own. The Americans do not maintain armed forces on Venus, but it is common knowledge that their convoys are always heavily armed.

Finnegan's Landing - In the Name of the Dollar Symbol

Finnegan's Landing lies on a ridge of the Hestia Highlands. 200 men live here in 20 log cabins, cramped together behind a palisade. This colony is property of *Venusian Mercantile & Trading Company* (VMTC). This combine is a consortium of multiple U.S. banks and corporations and was founded in 1886, when it became clear that the goods from Venus earned the German chemical industry huge profits. The consortium's members inevitably wanted a piece of the action. The first ten employees of VMTC under *Jebediah Finnegan's* leadership landed in 1887 and built a single cabin. Over time the colony grew to its present size. Currently they still focus their business on trade. Large caravans roam the land between the Italian and Russian colonies and do business with the Lizard-men. They also work on constructing a plantation for glue bushes, but it is not expected to yield any harvest before 1891.

The most important commercial cornerstone is the colony's research. There are different laboratories each researching the characteristics of local plants and animals. Additionally, Edison maintains a small laboratory, where the properties of Venus' magnetic field and its effect on the Ether are researched.

Employees of VMTC are not particularly popular. It is rumored that their trade missions act quite aggressively and that some of the "guards" learned their craft in the American Indian Wars. Occasionally some men spent their free weekend in Nuova Firenze or New Petrograd where they usually end up in a cell to sober up.

The American presence in this area raises some eyebrows in Rome, since the Hestia Highlands is seen as future Italian territory. The VMTC is not shy to get its name in the news, at least once a week the *New York World* reports about the heroic pioneers on Venus.

Zion - The Saints of the Last Days

Zion is located on the ridge of the Bagbartu Mountains in Metis. 90 Mormons – 23 men, 40 women and 27 children live in log cabins. Mormonism was established in the 1820s in the rural part of New York. The religion quickly gathered followers, which were not greatly appreciated by their neighbors. As time went by the Mormons retreated west several times and finally arrived at the Great Salt Lake in 1846, where they created a thriving community. Finally, they could live how they wished, but the expansion of the USA would not slow down and it eventually reached the Great Salt Lake. And the troubles started all over again. The Mormon beliefs encourage its members to polygamy, which is illegal in the United States. The government put economic and political pressure on the Mormons to give up this practice and it seemed more and more likely that the Church would give in. In 1887, some true believers – or the hardcore fanatics – decided to leave the sinful Earth behind to live a life after their religion's teachings on Venus. Zion's inhabitants live on farming and fishing. They rarely have any contact with other colonies and want one thing above all – to be left in peace.

Themiskyra - The Women's Mountain

Themiskyra is situated in Ishtar's far east on a tessera at the edge of the Victoria Plateau. Fifty women live here, sharing ten cabins. The settlement was founded by women who wanted to live their own lives. Most of them are graduates of Girton College in Cambridge, the first University college for women in England. After graduation these highly educated young women found they had basically two choices – "marry well" or start a career as a governess (before marrying well). In 1886, a dozen women elected for a new option – life as settlers on Venus, beyond the patriarchy. The colonists first lived as hunter-gatherers, but by now they thrive through horticulture and successfully sell the natural remedies they produce in Fort Collingswood.

In October 1889 they founded the *Themiskyra Public School for Women*, to impart higher education to women and girls on Venus. At the moment five students are enrolled, but many more have shown an interest. The long-term goal is to train female teachers and prepare female students for studies on Earth. The women are doing well. The only thing that bothers them are the men who occasionally appear on their doorstep and ask whether the fair sex need any 'help'.

New Coronado - the Failed Colony

This colony lies at the edge of the meteor crater of Themis. Though at one time over 100 people lived here, today New Coronado has been abandoned. In 1885 an expedition by the *University of California* explored this region and one of the researchers found something interesting. For a time he kept it to himself, but after returning to Earth he sought out 'Captain' Charles T. Hinde, one of the expedition's sponsors, and proposed a deal.

Hinde is one of the richest men of the USA. He always had a great sense for business and he couldn't miss such an opportunity. Hinde hired miners and engineers and sent them to Venus where they established New Coronado. They built the necessary buildings and began digging. Once a month, an airship from the Italian colony brought supplies. The people of New Coronado were reserved and mysterious, but the sailors noticed that the inhabitants were very excited in July 1888. When the airship next visited they found the settlement abandoned. It seemed as if they had just vanished into thin air – the huts were empty of life, but undamaged. There were no signs of predators or natives and in some huts there were even full cups of coffee still on the table. The only damage was found at the mines – the mining gallery

was flooded and the shaft tower collapsed. They found the chief engineer's diary, which ended on July 15. In his last entry he wrote:

"The signs multiply. We've reached the bottom and not later than tomorrow noon should we break through."

Nobody can explain what happened here. And, as of yet, there is similarly no explanation as to what happened to the Italian "rescue mission", which went missing in October 1888. The same applies to the British "botanists", who ventured here in search of new specimens in January 1889, only to vanish without a trace. All that is left of New Coronado is the collapsed mine and its derelict huts on the edge of the once-again silent crater of Themis.

➡ **The Mystery of New Coronado, p. 152**



The Venusians

"We have more in common with the denizens of darkest Africa, or even the wildest Afghan chieftain, than with the Venusians, at least they are descendants of Adam and Eve. The Venusians however, originate from a world so very different than our own."

— Dr. Franz Adolf Köhlinger, German Society for Cyterography from the University of Göttingen

When humans first encountered Martians, they believed that there had to be some sort of close kinship between both races - so very similar were they. It was even speculated that Martians could perhaps be Israel's 13th tribe who emigrated to Mars, or that they are descendants from the humans who once colonized Atlantis. Today it is known that these theories were nothing but wild nonsense, but still the similarities between both races has led to the belief that the Martians are our "brothers in the stars". The Venusians however were not so fortunate due to their nonhuman appearance. When the Lizard-men were first encountered, many doubted that these seemingly coarse, primitive reptiles could even be considered sentient beings. Not only was their physique fundamentally different from that of humans, but their whole behavior, their thinking, and gestures seemed literally "extraterrestrial". Their physical strangeness, their different customs and demeanor still causes humans to treat Venusians with significantly more distance than Martians. Despite this, ever so slowly, they are beginning to be viewed as more than a wild mob of savages with scales for skin. People such as the legendary explorer MacKenzie are primarily to thank for the close and peaceful contact that has now been established with many Venusian tribes. In order to simplify the process of gaining some insight into the Venusian soul, we will need to induct the reader further into the mysterious world of the "Ha" - as the Venusians call themselves. Here, we will inform you about the Venusians' curious physical distinctions and the most relevant aspects of mindset, customs and traditions.

Biology and Appearance

The first humans to alight on Venusian soil called the indigenous peoples they met "Lizard-men" due to their reptilian appearance. Lizard-men are upright-walking bipedal beings. If the need arises to move fast, they tend to slither over the moist ground on their bellies, in a way comparable to the otter on Earth sliding along a riverbank. Their feet are broad and flat and feature three webbed toes. The webs assist the Lizard-men in swimming, and prevent them from sinking in Venus' swampy soil. The powerful tail is used as the main source of locomotion when swimming, and provides improved stability when moving upright. In a strange way, this evokes an odd similarity in appearance between Lizard-men and Australian kangaroos, and their broad bellies and small chests only underlines the impression of kinship to the Earthly marsupials. Their arms are, as they say, as thin as a rake, but surprisingly strong and end in human-like hands, with only the little finger missing. When they slide or swim the arms rest close to the body and are used to steer or brake. The head resembles that of terrestrial goannas, but boasts large, round frog-like eyes,



which probably developed due to the Venusian twilight. The eyes appear strongly bulging due to the thick, horn-like crests above them. They possess two pairs of eyelids - one pair consisting of a transparent nictitating membrane, which is closed when swimming through relatively clear water, and the outer, thicker one for digging through the mud of mires and swamps.

Male Lizard-men grow a small horn on their nose, which cannot be employed as a natural weapon and is only used during ritual mating competitions. The nostrils are large and can be closed by a muscle, in order to prevent the entry of foreign objects into the nose. Lizard-men are capable of perceiving scents by flicking their tongues, even underwater, in order to differentiate between prey or others of their kind. For additional orientation on solid ground, they use their ears. Originally it was suspected that Venusians had gills, but upon closer medical examination the assumption proved false. Lizard-men breathe through lungs, but only recently an unexpected additional ability was discovered: Like terran amphibians their skin serves as a respiratory organ; however, this only remains true for the thin skin on the belly, the skin on their back is too thick. While the oxygen absorbed through the skin is not sufficient to keep them alive indefinitely, it increases the time they are capable of staying submerged by a whole hour. Just like humans, Lizard-men are omnivores, but they never cook their food before consumption, as they usually have not mastered fire. Some animals and plants eaten by the Venusians are indigestible for humans. The reverse is true as well: for instance, Venusians get a feeling of nausea from all meals containing even the slightest trace of milk.

The Skin

Lizard-men shed their skin while growing. The intervals between molts increase as they grow older. Throughout his life a Lizard-man's growth never stops, though the pace of growth slows with advanced age. The skin on their back is very thick and warty, while it is thinner and softer on the belly, but still remains very robust and leathery. During their lives the skin becomes thicker and harder. On the back it is normally a dark green or a greyish brown, on occasion even nearly black. The belly color is lighter and covered by complex patterns in green or a yellowish green. An individual's belly pattern is as unique as a human's fingerprints and Lizard-men believe that their future is written in their belly patterning.

Shamans (who are female only) exist among higher developed tribes, and read belly patterns in the 'Tonumutola ritual'. During this they proclaim prophecies about an individual's future life and the mating season. Warriors keep the last skin they shed and stretch it over their shields - particularly if they wear a breastplate that covers their bellies and their unique patterns.

The Senses

Venusians see the world through different eyes - and not only in a metaphorical sense. In some respects, Lizard-man senses differ fundamentally from those of humans, which time and again leads to unexpected misunderstandings between both species. Lizard-men are, in comparison to humans and Martians, slightly short-sighted and perceive things exceeding a distance of 650 feet, or 200 meters, as indistinct, blurry shapes. As if by way of compensation, their perception of colors is outstanding: Lizard-men are not only capable of perceiving the same color spectrum as humans, but are also sensitive to ultraviolet and infrared light. As such Venusians have five, not three primary colors. Aside from Red, Yellow and Blue, these colors are *Uol* (Infrared) and *Ponu* (Ultraviolet). The additional color perception still causes much confusion for humans when Venusians describe their impressions of color. Conversely, Venusians are also troubled by the concept that humans perceive fewer colors than they do. It has been only three years since the *German Society for Cyterography* (Venusian Studies) made the discovery that Venusians observe a broader color spectrum. Many of this study's critics think of 'Uol' and 'Ponu' as a strange, spiritual concept originating from Venusian superstition and have difficulty accepting that Venusians have a different perception of colors than humans.

Mysteriously, Lizard-men are capable of detecting the suns position as well as the direction they are heading via the different shades of Ponu in the clouds. Professor Sanderson-Grey of Yale University assumes that their nictitating membrane serves as a natural polarizing filter. The Lizard-men's sense of smell is also superior to that of *Homo sapiens*. While Venusian noses do not rival those of terran hunting dogs, they still recognize smells which are otherwise hidden from humans. The Venusians are also capable of perceiving scents underwater. Lizard-men can smell using two options. The first is, to sniff with their nostrils, just as humans. The other is to flick their tongue, which also possesses olfactory receptors, and "taste" the air. Their noses are used to smell far-off scents, while their tongues are capable of recognizing very subtle nuances. If a Lizard-men 'sniffs' underwater he exclusively uses his tongue, since his nostrils are closed while

diving. Thanks to their sensitive tongues, the Venusians possess quite a good sense of taste, even if it is rarely used.

Venusians have the same fine motor control as humans, but are less dexterous. Their thick skin and their horn-like claws prevent them from feeling subtle unevenness. As such it seems that humans will always remain the better surgeons and finer craftsman. The Venusians' lack of dexterity has already given rise to some figures of speech: Incompetent persons are called "Venusian clockmakers" and particularly rough behavior is said to be as "gentle as a skink paw". Their sense of hearing is also poor. Humans and Martians possess a great anatomical advantage over Venusians, when it comes to hearing: Auricles! While Venusian eardrums are roughly as sensitive as a human's, their lack of auricles notably limits their sense of hearing. In comparison to humans, Lizard-men possess a slightly impaired hearing. Not only have they trouble with directional hearing, but also in noticing subtle tonal differences. As a consequence Venusians often talk very loudly and are distinctly unmusical (although Earthly music holds a strong fascination for them). Only very few Venusians can hold a pitch, let alone learn to play a human instrument. Venusian music consists of rhythmic speech-songs, where the extraterrestrials' musical deficiency goes relatively unnoticed. Should one make the mistake of putting a Venusian on the piano, then one is in for a novel acoustic entertainment (unless, of course, it is a work of one of the more daring modern composers, where one might not notice).

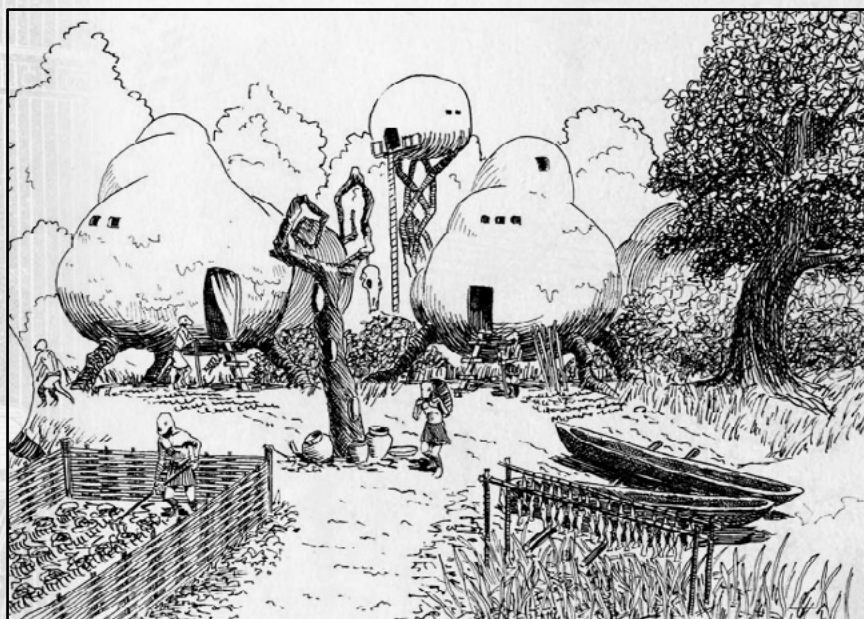
As a Lizard-man's senses deviate greatly in part from the human standard, we can also assume that their senses differ significantly in perception. As such a Lizard-man might not be able to hear a saurian sneaking up on him, but he would certainly notice its smell. Utilize these and other, different, ways of perception to provide an exotic feel, when describing a scene to Lizard-men characters.

Diet

The Lizard-man has to be counted among the omnivores, just like *Homo sapiens*. A variety of food, raw as well as cooked, suits them equally well, though for cultural reasons, cooked food is to a large extent unknown. None of the tribes neighboring a human settlement has yet mastered fire. As far as we know, only a few tribes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains were familiar with the practice of cooking food before the arrival of mankind. They used the volcanic mountain springs to boil the meat of previously hunted animals until soft. Basically, the biochemistry of humans and Venusians is so similar that both species can process the same food. There are a few differences of course. Venusians have trouble tolerating milk or dairy products. For many Venusians it takes only a spoonful of milk or a bite of cheese before a feeling of sickness or vomiting sets in. By contrast they take much better to rotting or fermented food than humans. As such, a Venusian gets only drunk through imbibing very large quantities of strong spirits. As far as their choice of food is concerned, they display a - for Europeans - quite shocking pragmatism. Venusians are capable of eating everything that is not directly poisonous.

They only seem to feel disgust when it comes to poisonous plants, excrement, or highly rotten carrion. No Venusian would voluntarily eat eggs: the devouring or even the destruction of a clutch of eggs is viewed with the utmost repugnance by all the known tribes. This behaviour occurs most likely because the Venusians are egg-layers themselves and view the inviolability of eggs, even those of different species, as sacrosanct. Aside from these exceptions, there is little else a Venusian would not eat, be it

maggots, pieces of bark, aluminum acetate or even other recently, or not so recently, deceased Lizard-men (since cannibalism can be found among many tribes). Within the colonies, cannibalistic practices are strictly prohibited. The reason for most of the differences between human and Venusian diet is to be found in the anatomical dissimilarities between both races. Unlike humans or Martians, the Venusians are incapable of chewing, because they lack molar teeth. Smaller pieces of vegetable or small prey are swallowed whole, larger chunks of food are roughly shredded by their fangs before being gulped down. Like many lizards, Venusians possess a gizzard instead of molar teeth, which helps to further grind down food. Many Lizard-men swallow smooth pebbles, so called gizzard stones, that act as 'teeth' in the gizzard, and thus help digestion. A while after consumption the gizzard stones are regurgitated together with pieces of scales and bones and other indigestible parts of a meal (it's actually taken as a sign of immense stupidity to void gizzard stones in any other way). In some Venusian cultures the gizzard stones are collected from the expelled pellet to be reused. Some tribes go so far as to count gizzard stones as valuable, personal property (rather as "bezoar stones" were on Earth, or possibly even the family silver). Understandably, Lizard-men's table manners can appear disgusting to humans and even more so to the highly sophisticated Martians.



Language and Communication

"Gentlemen, I ask you: Could there be more fitting proof for the evolution of all languages, from one primal language than the Lizard-men?"

— Professor Joseph Maria Czagek, University of Prague

It is generally known that Venusian is an "agglutinating" language, which means that its grammar is similar to Earthly languages such as Japanese and Turkish. In fact, Venusians often combine whole sentences into gigantic, single-word constructs. Venusian offers a substantial vocabulary in regards to animals and plants. The language knows 98 different words for "leaf" and about 30

different expressions for "morass", but not a single one for "fire". Those Lizard-men, who are familiar with fire, call the phenomena *Nhuahoagaaoahaiaha-Aha* in their language, which translates to "billowing, red leaf that hurts". All tribes that have been contacted so far appear to speak the same language, with little dialectal differences. The reason for this curiosity is unknown. The Venusian language itself has no proper name, the Lizard-men simply call their language *Buao*, which can mean "language" or "speaking". Earthlings simply refer to the language as "Venusian". It was only after the contact with humans that Venusians discovered that there could be different languages. Only a very few tribes have discovered writing, for instance the **Carada Quaha**. Based on anatomical differences in their vocal tract no Venusian will ever be able to speak a terrestrial language without an accent. No matter how hard a Lizard-man tries, his words will always be accompanied by the characteristic hissing and gargling of their kind. The pronunciation of closure sounds such as G and K or a soft CH causes especial trouble for a Venusian - those sounds are always spoken as the hard CH in the English word "chasm". By the same token, a Venusian will always pronounce S, SH or a Z as a sharp S, a Q becomes a guttural croak. Humans however are largely able to imitate and speak the richly-vowelled Venusian language, though they fail miserably to mimic the nonverbal elements of Venusian communication, since they miss two critical organs: Tail and scent

glands. Venusians possess fewer movable facial muscles than humans, and as such they lack any facial expression worth mentioning. Instead they express their feelings through pheromones, intonation and gestures. Venusians emit different odors, depending on their state of mind; as such Lizard-men can smell how their counterparts feel. They are even capable of influencing their smell to a certain degree, by artificially conjuring specific emotions. This is quite difficult and ensures that Lizard-men notice liars among them more easily than humans, and they are as such mediocre liars at best. It is also one of the reasons why they stand so close to each other during a conversation. The closer they are to the person opposite, the better they are able to assess their emotions. Occasionally, they use their olfactory receptors on their tongues during discussions. Flicking the tongue during a conversation or even licking

the person they're chatting to is not regarded as disagreeable or indecent for Venusians. The tail's movement and position is also of importance for nonverbal communication. A tautly stretched out tail indicates tension or aggressiveness and a tail coiled around the legs could mean grief, shame, or spiritual sentimentality. Slowly wagging the tail is usually associated with impatience or boredom and a rhythmic tail tapping is the Venusian counterpart of a human laugh - the more fiercely a Lizard-man taps, the more he is amused by something. It is usually best to stand away from a Venusian before telling a particularly good joke.

Due to the distinctly different way that humans and Venusians express their emotions, it is no surprise that each race sees the other as emotionless or reserved. A human will instinctively watch out for a Venusian's facial expression, and see that it never changes. Whereas a Venusian will notice, that it is impossible for him to smell a human's state of mind or read his (missing) tail to learn

what he is thinking. Both humans and Venusians can in time learn how to correctly interpret the other. Venusians are capable of learning the meaning offered by human facial expressions and also their - in comparison more subtle - pheromone perspiration. Humans are also able to learn which emotions are displayed by a Venusian's subtle odor nuances. But this requires a lot of effort and as such there is plenty of room for misunderstanding. Many humans find the Venusian ways of communication disgusting. Who would want to have a conversation with someone who shouts in your face while being only an inch away and also tries to lick your face? In return, Venusians often suspect that Earthlings have something to hide, seeing as they smell so 'unemotional' and are always seeking to keep a distance. This is even more true when humans deliberately (it is said) cover and alter their scent with perfume, aftershave, or insect repellent.

Family and Reproduction

The question where little Lizard-men come from is pursued rather reluctantly in published research. Firstly, although a perennially fascinating topic among academics, sexuality is a socially delicate topic in the 19th century. On the other hand few humans (again, excepting academics) are keen to imagine Lizard-men during mating. Nevertheless, it is worth a few lines of text here, if only because Venusian reproduction played a major role in shaping Venusian society. As is commonly known, the Venusians are an egg-laying race of two sexes. A Venusian female has one estrus cycle for several weeks during a Venusian year and in this time-frame she copulates with one or multiple males. The existence of marriages or "free love" depends on the respective tribal customs.

Venusian Names

The biggest difference between human and Venusian naming conventions is the absence of gender specific names. Since Venusian males and females cannot be distinguished at first glance, Venusians do not see much sense in emphasizing this, to us, most curious circumstance by giving it a proper name. Many names have a specific meaning and refer to animals, plants, actions, personal traits, and manner of death. The latter is particularly popular among tribes where it is common during a freshly hatched Venusian's belly pattern ritual to also prophesize the individual's death. Among these tribes exists the tradition to name a young Lizard-man after his or her suspected death. Family names are unknown to Venusians.

Aquahata (root newt who laughs), *AheUa* (eats poison), *AiTu* (bright flower), *Ahualii* (courageous crab), *AoeaHoa* (dances with woodlouse), *EqueHa* (falls into hole), *Faai* (wise fish), *Faaoateata* (alligator who quickly kills), *Haami* (fern jumper), *Hemi* (beautiful eel), *Hihimahana* (enemy pokes spear), *HoneHohepa* (treads like stomper), *Ioio* (loyal root), *Luana* (berry stalker), *Maaka* (ceratosaur who dreams), *Mahuoa* (gets sick), *Mahuiqua* (bug protects village), *Manihinihini* (who takes large bites), *Moana* (loving pterosaur), *Naehu* (shouting frog), *Ohu* (snake), *OliUau* (brings meat), *PaoHa* (many we), *Puatea* (eager slasher), *SaaHuea* (ähredie wanders), *Ssu* (humus), *SsumuMaha* (earth digger we), *Tahitoa* (worm in belly), *Tohu* (great frog), *Vahimeo* (swims like crab), *Whetuo* (wanders long)

Figures of Speech

Bolu Popimayama – 'pale as dead fish': derogatory term for Earthlings.

Ha – literally 'we': Venusian self-designation. Comparable to the earthly word 'human', and is used for differentiating between Lizard-men and animals as well as spirits. Depending on circumstances "ha" might also be used for Earthlings, since they are neither animals nor spirits.

Quhu – hello / good day

HumaSnao – "hunt well": Used in the sense of 'good luck'.

Snao – good

Jolima – weapon

Uama – thank you

Snao Uliquo – literally 'hatched well'. Used with the meaning of 'friend' and 'relative'

Nouh – eat (verb as well as noun or adjective in the sense of 'edible')

Oma – mother / father / ancestor

TuTu-Nao – 'tailless one': respectful method of address for Earthlings.

Hihi – enemy.

PhuoaNouhQhuo – 'Oh, execrable dropper of the Giz-zard-stone' (lit. 'Gizzard stone shitter'): Common insult comparable to 'idiot'

Phuphuliaophaquomi – 'laughing till the tail bleeds' / most amusing.

Samma-Wirru – literally 'horn grinder': 'lout' or 'Green-horn' would be fitting translations.

A few notes about spelling: Between syllables which are separated by a hyphen, Venusians make a small breathing pause, which is only a bit shorter than the speech pause during separate words. Syllables that start with capital letters are sharply pronounced. In this we follow the Lehmann-Finsch Transcription for recording Venusian in Latin letters, as used in the English dictionary.



Every known tribe practices strictly ritualized reproduction, and, to the horror of their terrestrial colonial masters, *in public*. Both colonial administrators as well as missionaries struggle to instill the idea in Venusians that decency demands that reproduction has to happen in private and not in the middle of the village square. It is a never-ending source of dispute, even with settlers who otherwise get along tolerably well with Venusians.

During the three months of pregnancy, between one and three eggs grow in the mother's "womb", which are then laid and hatched in a safe location. Hatching takes another three months. During this brood period the females guard the clutch, while males gather food and secure the surroundings. This is one of the most important pillars of Venusian culture - as well as guarding the clutch together. Every village and every tribe has a secure clutch hut or cave, which is the community's most important location, even over that of the central sanctuary. All eggs are laid and collectively hatched there.

In most tribes the clutches of eggs are not arranged in any sort of order and more often than not it is not known which child belongs to which parents. Children are therefore raised collectively. Family structures as known on Earth and Mars are nonexistent on Venus. Children are reared by the whole tribe. Basically every adult Lizard-man is responsible for the tribe's children. Once they are old enough to walk they are introduced to the different hunting parties of a tribe. There, little Venusians are educated and trained. What a family is to humans, a hunting party is to Venusians. Here he has his "parental" role models and his 'siblings'. Whether gender segregation is practiced or not varies from tribe to tribe, or, in some regions of Venus, even from village to village. Aside from hunting parties, agricultural groups or craftsmen groups exist in higher developed tribes and form the tribe's individual 'families'.

Psychology

While they evolved in a completely different environment and possess bodies so unlike our own, Venusians display the same range of emotions. They are sad, happy, eaten alive by hatred, fall in love; they can even be altruistic or self-serving. Not a few have concluded that all sentient beings possess the same souls, despite their alien bodies, which indicates the existence of a common creator god. Despite these remarkable similarities, some 'anomalies' have to be noted. Female Venusians are quite territorial, most likely because guarding the clutch is one of their most important instincts. Even female nomads develop a distinctive sense for their own territory. Once the eggs are secured the surrounding territory will be defended against everything (with the exception of their males), be it by claw or tooth. In sedentary tribes this instinct is extended to include the whole village. Venusian females show strong distrust when it comes to strangers. The extent of this mistrust varies from tribe to tribe and ranges from a polite distance to hysterical hostility. Newcomers to the rather hospitable Ishtar Tribes are pestered with questions in a ritual lasting several hours by the village's females. Once this procedure has been endured and the women decide that the guest is welcome, then one is treated with genial friendship. There are contrasting examples as well; within the paranoid Sappho Tribes, the xenophobia is even reflected in the village's design - every village has two distinct circles or zones. In the outer circle strangers are tolerated (albeit grudgingly), in the inner circle trespassing by outsiders is punishable by death. The female's protective and territorial instincts increase after the mating season, if a new clutch

The Fog Cries

"I'll be damned, Grummet! If you allow yourself this prank again, I'll be deuced angry with you! Do you want your master to die of sudden deafness?"

— Captain Hugh Wallace Crammond, famed British colonial officer

Like many amphibians, Venusians can "croak". However, when Venusians do so, it does not sound like the comical croaking of the local tree frog, but is more the deep, sonorous roar of a particularly large and impressive bullfrog. An *extremely* large bullfrog. Practiced Venusians can make these thunderous sounds with the volume of a lighthouse fog horn. The resourceful extraterrestrials use this ability to their advantage. The thunderous rumble can be heard for miles in the Morning Star's swamps. Therefore, Venusians have developed a set of signal calls to communicate in thick fog over large distances. They call these sounds "fog calls". Naturally, this croaking language is not as sophisticated or flexible as the spoken word. The closest comparison that comes to mind for fog calls is the yodeling of the Alpine peoples of Earth or the whistle language of the Canarian shepherds. It consists of a specific repertoire, ranging from simple greetings, to warning and huntsmen's calls, by which hunting or raiding parties can be coordinated. Roughly half the fog calls are "common property" - though every tribe has a set of secret calls at its disposal which it doesn't share with other tribes. Considerable training is required by a Venusian in order to correctly master and make the calls, so that they can be heard clearly at a distance. Humans are capable of learning and understanding the meaning of these calls, but will never be able to correctly make them. Even humans with a remarkably powerful voice could only imitate these sounds half-heartedly - and then their range would still be pitiful compared to what the Venusians are capable of. Nonetheless, many colonists on Venus have taken the indigenous fog calls as an example and communicate by whistling very loudly and piercingly with their fingers. Among British troops this practice has particularly proven its worth, so that the War Office in London is considering issuing 'Thunderer' whistles more widely and incorporating these fog calls into the *'Field Manual for Soldiers'*.

of eggs is present. Among the Ishtar Tribes females drive away everyone who loiters around the clutch house with a broom. The extreme Sappho Tribes even go as far as opening fire from the palisade at passers-by. Males become more vigilant too, once there is a new clutch, but their concerns are focused on hunting

Theories of Language

Many theories circulate about the fact that all Venusians speak essentially the same language. The most prominent among them is that the Lizard-men species is still very young and as such has yet to develop beyond the stage of a common proto-language. Based on this assumption the Bohemian linguist Professor *Joseph Maria Czagek* from the University of Prague has calculated that today's species of sentient Lizard-men has been in existence for less than 1000 years. Had they existed longer then it is likely, according to this theory, that a process of gradual change would have caused the development of multiple dialects, according to Professor Czagek. Well-known Texan theologian *Dr. Keith Morgendorffer* (Reverend and founder of the Evangelist Church of Recent Revelation) holds to an opposing theory. In his opinion the Lizard-men, while already fallen prey to Original Sin, have not as yet committed an act of blasphemous hubris, as did mankind with the Tower of Babel, or the Martians through the construction of the canals. Accordingly they would not have been smitten by the Lord with the Babylonian confusion of tongues. A Japanese paleontologist, *Dr. Sato*, however, promotes a radically different theory. According to him, the striking parallels between Venusian life of the present and life on Earth during the Cretaceous period are neither random nor the result of convergent evolution. He and his followers believe that examples of Earthly flora and fauna had been rescued and brought, shortly before the devastating cataclysm responsible for the dinosaurs' extinction, to Venus (which was at that time uninhabited - by the incredibly highly advanced Lizard-men of those times!).

According to *Dr. Sato* the Venusian race is far older than 100 million years and their common language is but the remnant of a single world language, which their highly developed ancestors undoubtedly spoke.

Then again, Professor *Aristide Bonnet* from Bordeaux posits that the Lizard-man language is simply inborn and instinctive and not learned. In this case the common Venusian language would not be a question of learning, but instead of genetics. In autumn 1887 he tried to prove his theory, by planning to raise freshly hatched Venusians completely isolated from their kind. As stated in his theory, these youngsters would have been capable of speaking Venusian completely naturally. The experiment failed, since French public opinion firmly rejected 'the torture of children'. The little Venusians were rescued by the police and have been placed in a state-run children's home, where they are raised 'in the spirit of social democracy'. It was only thanks to the exertions of a good lawyer that the professor evaded charges of child cruelty and abuse.

or tending the fields. It's quite common during a hunting tour to encounter the hunting parties of another tribe, and as such male Venusians are more accustomed to meeting strangers and can possess a rather communicative, sometimes even quite talkative manner. Though equally just as often there are violent clashes between hunting parties of different tribes, and the opposite is true as well and sometimes they simply cooperate to take down larger prey or accompany the other group. As such, Venusian males are considered fairly sociable in comparison. Of course this behavior varies from tribe to tribe and the different relations between tribes play a big role during encounters. Human colonists prefer to interact with male Venusians instead of their females, who are labeled "Xanthippes" among humans. Aside from these sex-specific variations, all Venusians have a poor sense of time, since they inhabit a world that knows only twilight and no seasons. They are notoriously bad at guessing shorter spans of time, and punctuality as such is a foreign concept to them.

The fact that Venusians are capable of smelling their opposite's emotions has some influence on the Venusian mindset. In larger groups they have trouble assigning the different intermixed scents to individuals. As such, Venusians believe that true feelings can only be revealed in small gatherings and intimate circles. Furthermore, Venusians are prone to let themselves be "infected" by the scents of others. If the air is full of "cheerful" odors they will soon join the joyful atmosphere; however if the air is "thick with anger", then the individual's mood will darken as well. Occasionally this results in emotional chain reactions within a tribal society. Venusians are not the mindless slaves of this effect (a Venusian whose best friend has just died will still be sad, however full of joyful scents the air might be), but this effect can be manipulated to a certain degree, since herbs and blossoms can smell like "emotions". Shamans have utilized this knowledge for hundreds of years, whether by decorating the lodge for peace talks with peaceful and friendly smelling blossoms or by letting warriors take a deep breath from a 'wrathful' mushroom. Possibly this effect explains why the Venusians believe that both plants and physical locations are capable of having emotions.

Religion

"The belief in spirits, idolatry, and extraterrestrial witch crafting hides beyond the fogs of this star. Listen to the drums playing at night and watch how the scaled vermin flocks together behind our backs! I say unto you: The Venusian religion is akin to Satanism!"

— **Brother Augustus Finkel, Sectarian from the Church of the Second Paradise**

The Lizard-men's belief in the supernatural is largely identical among the different tribes. The fact that they have developed an animalistic world view should not come as a surprise, considering their sensory perception: Since plants, animals, and locations smell like emotions, the idea that they are sentient comes naturally. Aside from certain variations, all Lizard-men share the same animalistic religion, which states that the world is full of spirits, called **Timu**. Every animate or inanimate object has its own spirit. The **Timu** are however only weak spirits compared to the **Natimu**, who represent the incarnations of forces of nature, such as wind and thunder. The greatest **Natimu** is **Homa**, the great spirit of life and death. **Homa** gives the Lizard-men their belly patterns, determines their fate and decides when and how death reaches them. The belief in **Homa**, who is revered in a near monotheistic manner among

some tribes, helps Christian missionaries a great deal on Venus, unlike Mars, where the inhabitants possess their own complex religion and an elaborate theology. Accordingly, there are quite a few baptized Lizard-men in the colonies, although elements of the old animistic religion have been integrated into the new religion, just as was the case with south American beliefs and Voodoo on Earth. Homa is often equated with god, while Natimu are compared to angels. Only the devil had to be newly “invented”, since pure evil spirits were previously unknown to Lizard-men. Among other tribes some sort of proto polytheism can be found, wherein Homa is still the most important of the great spirits, but as part of a quite variable pantheon of different, similarly powerful spiritual beings. You can find more information about the beliefs of higher developed tribes on pages 161 and 164. Quite interestingly, Venusians don’t ‘pray’ in the proper meaning of the word, as humans do. In their beliefs gods and spirits exist in the same realm as Lizard-men, but are not generally revered. Only a few tribes feel subordinate to the spirit world. Venusians and gods live next to each other, but on the whole they do not necessarily feel inferior. While spirits and gods possess abilities that Venusians do not, equally Venusians are capable of things that gods and spirits

are not. The Natimu of the Thunder Horde (see below) might be capable of conjuring storms, but in return they are as deaf as posts. Even the frontier between spirits and mortals is blurry. A mighty Venusian might become a “god” through legendary deeds, and more than one spirit is said to have met its end through Venusian actions. Many Venusian spirits seem absurdly limited to humans who are used to omnipresent and omnipotent gods. The single exception is Homa, the Lord of Destiny, who has the characteristics of a real god in human eyes (however it should be noted here that, according to most legends, Homa is physically absurdly weak and cannot even carry a bundle of reeds).

From a Lizard-men’s perception his relation to spirits is quite businesslike, more so than what would be called a prayer or reverence in human eyes. It has more the feel of a bargain or mere courtesy. Venusians do not see any difference between magic and the practice of religion. Lizard-men offer up sacrifices or conjure or sing to spirits, expecting something in return. As such they “pay” spirits of fertility for a good harvest or bargain for the supernatural support of a war spirit. If a spirit proves to be untrustworthy, the Venusians show little hesitation in trying another. Venusians are quite flexible in their spiritual views. Spirits who are dangerous,

Venusian Gods and Spirits

For Venusians the world is filled with powerful and less powerful spirits which are, aside from the almighty Homa, responsible for a variety of natural phenomena. There are far too many to create a comprehensive list. We will only present the most important and most popular Timu and Natimu here, which are still “revered” despite the increasing Christianization of the colonies.

JuoJuoLimu – The tall, undying hunter. Many Venusians call upon him to request a successful hunt or recount stories about him to inspire themselves to great deeds. JuoJuoLimu exists as god or figure of legend in the myths of many tribes but always has the same back-story: Once he was a mortal Lizard-man, but his hunting skill was so great that one day he slew and ate a true spirit. By this deed he himself became a spirit. JuoJuoLimu appears as a 30 feet, or ten meter, tall hybrid of Venusian and Tyrannosaurus, who slays his foes with a sharpened tree trunk that he wields as a spear.

Quardaodao – According to folklore the **thunder horde** is a group of animal spirits that are responsible for storms and thunderstorms. It is envisaged as a herd of huge, transparent sauropods treading high on the clouds. Through their mighty stomps they create thunder and their tail lashes conjure mighty winds. The thunder horde comes and goes where it will and is completely impervious to prayers because, as is commonly known, sauropods are extremely stupid. The thunder horde acts more as an explanation for severe weather than an object of religious devotion.

Fnomi – tiny spirits in the shape of Lizard-men who live in the ground and are seen as responsible for plant growth by taking hold of roots and pushing them upwards. Fnomi only live one day, but always emerge wherever a raindrop touches the ground. Venusians ask the Fnomi for a good harvest by pouring beer or grape musts onto the earth, so that the Fnomi might feast on them.

Oma-Ghadahoa – The father of all stones. This mighty and always bad-tempered god with the appearance of a bipedal tortoise causes the growth of volcanoes and mountains out of the ground. Often he is angered by mortals and kills them with erupting volcanoes; sometimes he torments farmers by growing stones among their fields. Homa tricked the secret of creating stone tools from him, to give it to his children, the Venusians.

Jesshuo – the Sky God, Lord of Friends and Love. This god is a rather recent addition to the pantheon and his name is probably a malapropism of Jesus. Jesshuo was most likely created by word of mouth, when baptized Lizard-men shared stories of Christ with pagan tribes or through encounters with humans in general. His typical iconography shows him in the shape of a tailless Venusian with a tropical helmet who exits a zeppelin bringing gifts.

Nanaoma – The Mother of all poisons. Like JuoJuoLimu, Nanaoma once was a mortal being. Multiple legends circulate about her apotheosis. In some she was an ancestor of JuoJuoLimu and also ate of the slain spirit, in others she mated with Homa and laid the egg from which Oma-Ghadahoa hatched. In every incarnation she is the first shaman and discovered all the now widespread poisons and cures.

Qualabaho – Qualabaho was a mythical oracle once revered by the Western Ishtar Tribes. According to legend this being, in appearance either an old Venusian or a gigantic swamp octopus, would prophecy the future to anyone who would bring him wild game or beer. Only his own future was dark to him, which might explain why he dies or is murdered in most legends about him. This is possibly also the reason why he is no longer worshiped actively, although many Venusian figures of speech and wisdom lore originates from him.

such that they may have caused the eruption of a volcano, are treated politely, which is shown in offerings and rituals, but they are not bargained with.

Among most tribes, the position of shaman is in female hands. Their education is not limited to herbal lore, incantations, and folklore but also includes extensive training in bargaining and negotiation. This is deemed necessary to conclude bargains with spirits. It is to be assumed that the rapid conversion of many Venusians to Christianity is motivated by similarly pragmatic reasons as the reverence of other spirits. The 'business relationship' to the Christian god seems to grant the Earthlings powerful spells and immense riches – and so it seems only sensible to show him a little respect and participate in the rites that seem to please him. So far this business seems to work well for the Venusians. The baptized tribes profit more from the trade with Earthlings than the pagans, though it's also clear that many baptized Venusians still conclude business with pagan spirits, as long as they stand to benefit.

History and Folklore

"As you can see, the Venusians possess no history. All they have are folktales! These are however splendidly done."

— Professor Alexander Igolkin, lecturer for Anthropology at the University of Königsberg

The known tribes possess no written culture (at least none worth mentioning). Their lore is transmitted orally and as such it apparently does not date back further than four or five generations or so and often distorts quickly. Two tribes might, for example, remember that they waged war during the time of their great-grandparents, but the war's history will be recounted completely differently. Their stories are heavily influenced by their animalistic world-view, full of spirits, magical powers, and mysteries. This makes it exceptionally hard for 'Terrane' scientists to find the thread of truth contained within Lizard-man legends and determine what facts there might be among all the charms, spells, and prophecies by spirits and legendary animals. For this reason, many scholars dismiss Venusian folklore out of hand. Only a few Earthlings seriously study Venusian oral culture and those who do are without exception literary scholars or anthropologists, who look at Venusian history from the point of view of research into Mysticism and fairy-tales. Interestingly, Venusians assume that their world is still very young. That Venus was not created a long time ago, but instead is still in the process of being created by the great spirits. The period of creation has already lasted for many generations, and will take many more generations before it is complete. The spirits, according to Venusian storytellers, shape the world out of fog. Regions on Venus with less fog – such as the Highlands – are 'more complete' than regions with lots of fog. Within the colonies, some Venusians assume that humans have just recently been created, since they appeared so suddenly out of the fog. Why humans might not agree with their point of view is a mystery to them.

The Lizard-men's alien understanding of time poses another problem with oral history. On Earth and on Mars even the most primitive people have some sort of calendar at their disposal. The Morning Star however is a world without seasons, without lunar phases, and with no starlit sky. This makes it very difficult for Venusians to develop concepts to measure time. The tribes know neither year nor month. Only the day serves as measurement of time. The most primitive tribes known on Venus live in

a world of everlasting present. The higher developed tribes know of the existence of past and future, but do not practice the exact measurement of time. Things that occurred more than twenty Venusian days ago are 'long gone', things that happened during the time of their parents and grandparents happened during the 'time of the ancestors' and things before that are events of the mysterious "primeval time".

Should a Venusian provide such a thing as 'historical' dates, these will be rather abstract and more or less meaningless as e.g. "back when the opanos were still green" (no green opanos have been sighted to date, they are usually greyish brown) or "when the morass spirits danced upon the mushrooms". This way of measuring time (or rather not measuring time), causes endless problems for the colonial administrations on Venus. Most Venusians are hopelessly overburdened by the Gregorian calendar system, commonly used on Earth, with days, weeks, and months. It is far too complicated for them. Even the question, "How old can Venusians live" is contentious. For Venusians, a life takes as long as it takes. No Venusian can accurately say how old he is. The only known age categories are "little", "adult", and "rather old". (Medical experts and biologists assume, after diverse tests and examinations, that Lizard-men have a life expectancy of 60 Earth years in their natural habitat. After factoring in the poor hygienic and medical circumstances, it has to be assumed that Lizard-men have a higher life expectancy than Earthlings. Under the same conditions humans would only reach the age of 30 or 40.

Technology and Art

Treatises on Earth about the Lizard-men's 'technology' are usually limited to the statement, that Venusians live in a "Neolithic Age" and assume that everything else is explained by this simple fact. Due to the particular environmental conditions on Venus, there are a multitude of variances among the tools and materials used by terrestrial Stone Age people and the Venusians. So pottery, for example, is unknown to Venusians, since most tribes have not discovered nor mastered fire. To create waterproof containers, Venusians first weave a vessel and then seal it with a compound of clay, saliva, and particular mushrooms. The mixture then hardens to a rubbery substance from which amphorae and bowls are created. This clay-like saliva-mushroom compound is named *jimol quoma* and Venusians not only use it for their "pottery", but also for a variety of other items. As such they use it to waterproof huts and boats. It is also used as an adhesive to glue ornamental stones to their bodies or to other items. At first *jumol quoma* is as malleable as clay, later on it becomes as sticky as tar and finally as hard as caoutchouc.

Another material Venusians are very familiar with is Oma Jolima (p. 102); they create everything, ranging from weapons and armor to containers, from this material. The supreme art of Venusian high technology is boatbuilding. Even the most primitive tribes know how to build reed boats quickly and efficiently. Among the settled tribes a variety of boat types can be found, from skillfully crafted small fishing boats, reminiscent of Welsh coracles, Mesopotamian *kuffa* or Indian canoes, up to mighty longboats cut from tree trunks. Naturally the most highly developed boats can be found among the coastal tribes – here they fashion, with tools of only a Stone Age technology, vessels that even eclipse the catamarans of Polynesia in seaworthiness. Some tribes even create entire swimming platforms, which can house whole villages. Metal imports from Earth have accelerated this development among some tribes. Thanks to Earthly tools, the MacKenzie Coast Tribes were able

to develop elegant and fast ships with astonishing speed. It has to be said that they accomplished this entirely on their own; no human taught them about shipbuilding!

Huts are usually woven. The basic shape is often a sphere measuring six feet in diameter, or two meters, made out of reed and twigs, placed upon durable posts of root timber and usually sealed with Jimol Quoma. Larger buildings consist of multiple combined woven spheres and are stabilized by sealing compounds such as clay, leaves, and fungus as well as supporting vines. Some tribes suspend their "living-spheres" from durable branches. These constructions appear both bizarre to the human eye and neither very inviting nor accessible, but the Venusians obviously feel completely at home in their spheres. Some nomadic tribes build and erect huts with a round ground plan, covered with sticks or foliage, as are known from Africa. Stones are used for construction as well, be it to erect walls or build conical monuments of stone, to house sanctuaries. It is quite remarkable that Venusian architecture constantly features rounded shapes and never hard edges, even if stone is used. Due to this fact, some scholars assume that the obelisks in the Desert of Maat Mons (see. p. 11) have not been erected by present-day Lizard-men – since they seem 'Un-Venusian' with their straight lines. The higher developed tribes are capable of working flint, obsidian, tuff/tufa, and soapstone with a high level of craftsmanship. However, knives, arrowheads, and blades are often created out of bone, teeth, or sharp-edged shell. They create sophisticated sculptures out of the last two mentioned stone types as well as wood. Interestingly, Venusian art is rarely representative. In most cases it consists of complex geometric patterns or spherical shapes. Spirals seem to hold a special fascination with Venusians. The spiral is known as 'Homa's symbol' and the symbol of life among nearly all tribes. The complex spiral patterns

can be found with angular or circular spirals in the art of all the known tribes. Venusians are fascinated by everything that glitters and sparkles, not only shiny coins, but also all sorts of precious and semi-precious gemstones, which have significant value in their eyes. Small, glittering objects are often used as decoration or in art, be it intertwined or glued. Some Venusian tribes have already discovered weaving and manufacture cloth, for example out of Venusian cotton. However, Venusian crafted clothes never consist of more than loincloths or ornamented cloaks, which are used for decoration and display rather than clothing.

Aside from this, the value of armor woven from Oma Jolima or sewn from leather is already known. Besides a (primitive) sense for art and craftsmanship, Venusians show remarkable skill when it comes to poisons and chemical substances. A multitude of natural poisons and chemicals from animals and plants are known to Venusians and find ample use in their everyday life. The higher developed tribes have already discovered basic chemistry, which is used to combine all sorts of poisons and substances. Since the human-sized Venusians do not possess the firepower to kill large dinosaurs through the force of spears and arrows, they instead focused on the application of especially potent poisons. Before humanity's arrival, the indigenous' arrows and pikes were very light and had little penetrating power. The Lizard-men offset this disadvantage by coating the tips of their weapons in poison. Luckily, these poisons proved less deadly on the human metabolism than on local wildlife: In most cases they 'only' cause severe fever, but only rarely result in death. For some time now, metal tips obtained through human traders provide their tribal warriors' projectiles with more weight and penetrating power, making the application of poison no longer necessary. Therefore the tribes near human settlements no longer use poisoned arrows, while

Arsenal of the Morning Star

For simple weapons such as spears, knives, bows and arrows and so forth, please consult the tables in the equipment chapter of the Core Rulebook (p. 221). Venusian tribes that have contact with humans have partial access to metal blades and arrowheads. Most Lizard-men weaponry differs only slightly from those of primitive humans, some characteristics should be mentioned, though. Most tribes of the "Ha" have no access to metal weapons and as such they use blades and arrowheads made out of flint, bone, horn, or shell. These weapons are razor sharp and as deadly as their steel counterparts, but also distinctively less durable. Their armor penetration is notably worse, be it natural protection like the rough skin of a dinosaur or artificial such as woven cuirasses made from Oma Jolima reed. The defense bonus of thick hide (e.g. Apatosaurus) or armor against such weapons increases by 1. There is one thing all these weapons have in common. They cannot be purchased, which is why we have omitted a price tag.

Dinosaur harpoon: This heavy, impressively martial javelin has been specially designed to hunt the huge denizens of the inner sea, but is also thrown against unwanted intruders. This two meter long spear is used only by the most experienced hunters of the tribe. A

special throwing technique rotates the shaft in flight for extra accuracy and range, while the spiral-shaped blades made from flint and nacre penetrate deep into the victim's flesh and are fiendishly hard to remove.

Ranged Weapon	Dmg	Str	Rng	Rate	Spd	Wt
Dinosaur Harpoon	4 T	3	23/7.5*	1	D	4.5/2*

* US customary units (ft., lbs.) / metric system (m, kg)

Armor made of Oma Jolima

Oma Jolima, p. 102, is used to create simple pieces of armor. For this purpose reed and canes are interwoven while still fresh and after hardening they provide flexible, durable and also very light armor protection. Lizard-men helmets made from braid-like shoots, however, are quite a peculiar sight for anyone who has never seen one before.

Armor	Defense	Weight
Helmet	+1	2.2/1*
Breastplate	+1	5.5/2.5*
Shield	+1	3.3/1.5*

* US customary units (lbs.) / metric system (kg)

far off tribes still rely on them. Aside from deadly substances, Venusians produce potent soporifics and attractants for specific wildlife species. The latter is used to lure out prey or to attract predators in wartime. A favorite war tactic is to sic dangerous predatory dinosaurs on the enemy and wait until these have devoured them. Equally popular is the usage of hallucinogenic drugs in the form of vapors or arrow poison in combat, in order to put the opponent out of action. Although a collection of drugs that change their state of awareness is known, their shamans do not use drugs to put themselves into trance, quite the contrary to some terran counterparts, instead they rely on self-hypnosis. Drug visions are perceived as caused by the drug and as such count as unsuitable means to become receptive to messages from higher beings. Chemistry is also used in more areas of day-to-day life, than just warfare and hunting. One extracts gastric juices from prey to pickle otherwise indigestible food components in order to make them edible and use sap to disinfect wounds or ease pain. The hut's inner walls are painted with a (terribly stinking) fermented fungus paste to keep away vermin. Chemical substances are used to make rock mushroom (p. 102) meat soft and malleable.

Particularly the terran chemical and pharmaceutical industry is very interested in the Venusians' practical knowledge. Alcoholic fermenting is of course known to the Venusians and is used to create durable drinks. Nearly all settled tribes already know how to brew beer-like drinks and consume them eagerly. The production of beer from fermented kelp is especially widespread. By now this beverage is also very popular among colonists.

Common Habits and Customs

The many tribal cultures on Venus are no less various than those of terrestrial cultures. There are however some fundamental habits, morals, and behaviors, which can be found among all Venusian tribes: Venusians have no pronounced, individual facial features like humans. It could be challenging to identify a Venusian only by his face. Instead Venusians recognize each other through their belly patterns. Covering the belly pattern has the same impression on a Venusian that a face mask has for a human and as such they do not generally fabricate clothing that covers their bellies. Venusians would only cover this area if they did not want to be recognized. To face somebody with a covered belly is considered an offensive impoliteness and among some tribes it is even a crime worthy of death. The only exception is in war. Then it is allowed to wear armor to protect a warrior's life. But even these breastplates will always be marked with an imitation of the wearer's belly pattern.

In encounters with humans, their habit of covering the belly can become a problem very fast. Even within the colonies, where Venusians know that humans do not possess belly patterns and can be identified by their individually disagreeable facial features, Venusians consider buttoned up jackets impolite. Occasionally this can lead to scenes that seem quite bizarre to an outsider. It can happen that an experienced colonial officer, when entering a tribal village, opens his uniform jacket to show his belly to all present. For Venusians this is a polite gesture, by which the officer shows that he is trustworthy. For humans just arrived from Earth this seems quite incomprehensible.

It is considered equally polite to loudly announce one's presence when entering a foreign tribe's territory. Venusians do so by barking "fog cries", as soon as they cross the border. Should this not be done, the rightful owner of the territory usually assumes that the newcomers are trespassing with dishonest intentions and reacts accordingly.

Socially, it is common among nearly all tribes to have a tendency towards a planned economy. The division of responsibilities is coordinated by the chieftain or a reigning council of elders. Among primitive nomadic tribes, this is mostly the assignment of hunting directions. Among settled tribes however, this requires impressive planning to coordinate a number of craftsmen, farmers, hunters, and builders. Fascinatingly, the Venusians manage impressive and effective logistical skills, despite their poor sense of time. In colonial plantations this ability of Lizard-men elders is often put to good use and they are incorporated directly and fully to the plantation's administration.

Sky Magic - On the Human Belly Pattern

For Venusians their most important "body part" is their belly pattern. It distinguishes them as an individual and describes, according to many tribes' superstition, their personal destiny. Much to Venusian astonishment, they find that humans do not possess belly patterns. As such, many Venusians assume that humans therefore have no real individual features and instead of identifying themselves through abilities and traits, they identify themselves by profession. In this regard, they are officers, doctors, airship men, and missionaries, but they are not "real" people like Venusians. An additional conclusion from the missing belly pattern is that humans have no destiny - at least not one that is preordained. Therefore Venusian shamans always decline to read a human's future, since humans have no predestined future that could be read. Furthermore the missing belly pattern marks humans as magical beings between "Ha" and spirit - which also explains their manifold powers, such as getting giant fish (zeppelins) to fly and the ability to kill with thunder sticks from a distance - or even the most remarkable ability to stand upright without a tail while not falling over.

Venusian Cultures

"The day that Homa peeled this part of the world out of the mists he cast a handful of seeds over the forests. From each of these seeds sprouted, surrounded by a light of Ponu, the ancestor of a tribe."

— from a popular Venusian tale

No Earthly scientist has yet succeeded in creating a complete list of all the Venusian tribes. Too many areas of Venus remain unexplored and the Venusian population is too great in number. According to estimates, the Venusians are most probably the second most numerous people of the known solar system, second only to humanity. Depending on which study one is to believe, there are

between 15 and 60 million Lizard-men living on Venus – maybe even far more. Considering the fact that some Venusian cultures are only to be found in a single village, it becomes clear how many different peoples are living on Venus. The fragmentation into small tribes and clans, characteristic for the Venusian race, often causes anthropologists a headache. This is why Earthly academics have started to compile the innumerable lists of the many small tribes and clans into larger groups sorting them according to certain broad cultural features. To Venusians, these classifications are of no relevance, to humans however, they provide a quick and easy overview.

The Western Ishtar Culture

This tribal group accounts for a considerable part of the native population of the German as well as a small percentage of the British colony. Long before humans landed on Venus, the Western Ishtar Culture had developed a primitive form of agriculture and had therefore no trouble adapting to labor on the plantations. In recent times, a great number of new Western Ishtar villages have been founded in the German colony to house the plantation workers. The life of the Western Ishtar Venusians is centered around the home village which is governed by a council of village elders called **Nupapa Kumama**. These elders consist of tribal members accorded particular respect. They settle conflicts, enact laws and taboos, lead the tribe in times of war, and take care of the tribe's daily business. There is often one elder that is acknowledged as tribal leader, a role that humans usually designate as "chief". Each village has a shaman who watches over the mysteries and ceremonies of her tribe and lives in a hut located at the center of the village. The shaman's hut is not just the central meeting point of the village but also a sacred place where rituals and ceremonies are held. Surrounding her hut are the dens of the toolmakers. The villages of the semi-nomads often boast as many as twelve toolmakers and weapon crafters who can fashion all the objects required for everyday life. Craftsmen are usually less numerous in the plantation villages as the inhabitants receive their tools from the humans. The Western Ishtar Culture has also developed a primitive barter system.

The **Carada-Quaha** (p. 82) and the **Carada-Ahoqi** (p. 87) can be considered as particularly typical representatives of the Western Ishtar Culture.

The Highland Tribes

The Highland Tribes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains consist of two large Lizard-men groups. They account for half of the native population in the German colony, but only 5% in the British colony. They build small huts and their villages are not designed for permanent settlement, as are those of the Western Ishtar Culture. Members of the Highland Tribes usually adapt well to the sedentary life on the plantations. But most of them live as nomadic hunters and gatherers. They collect wild plants and other resources on their forays through the wilderness, which they then trade for tools and trinkets at the trading posts. A significant feature of the Highland Tribes is their burial rite. These rituals vary between tribes, but all of them believe in life after death. To them the beyond lies

deep beneath the earth in rock caves. The deceased has to decay first – a process that only takes a couple of days in the Venusian climate – before he swims through the rock into the beyond. The dead are buried alongside weapons, tools, and pieces of jewelry, which they might need in the beyond to have a good afterlife.

The Eastern Ishtar Tribes

Culturally, the tribes of the Eastern Ishtar highlands are identical to those of the Victoria Plateau. They are characterized by a nomadic lifestyle and represent a significant proportion of the Lizard-men living in the British colony. In terms of ritual, these tribes have only a few simple religious ceremonies and are as a whole more primitive than the native tribes of other regions. They have difficulties adapting to the life on the plantations and, other than their cousins in the West and in the North, they are rather unreliable – all too soon do they leave again the working area that has been assigned to them. This is the main reason why British plantations are smaller on average than the German ones. The Eastern Ishtar Tribes in the borderlands have hardly been exposed to the civilizing influence of humanity and often go on raids.

The **JaoÓ** (p. 86) of the Benton Peninsula resemble the Eastern Ishtar Tribes in their way of life.



The MacKenzie Coast Tribes

Lizard-men are superbly adapted to a semiaquatic lifestyle. The tribes living along the coast are often just as highly developed as the civilized tribes of the Western Ishtar Culture. The tribes of the Western MacKenzie Sea are seafaring cultures and their villages are a common sight on this coast. Access to Earthly metal tools enables them to build ever larger ships. At present, their culture is in a rapid upswing as they are able to undertake longer and more profitable trading voyages. They are slowly developing into the wealthiest of all Lizard-men which is why some Earthlings now call them the 'Phoenicians of Venus'.

The Aphrodite Coastal Tribes

Little is known about the coastal tribes that dwell north of the Aphrodite Mountains. They are primarily a seafaring people and build their huts on large rafts, which they anchor in the mangrove swamps to establish temporary villages. When the time comes to move on, they simply weigh anchor and unfurl the sails. As of yet, they have had hardly any trading contacts with humans and do not possess as many tools as the Coastal Tribes that dwell closer to the British and German colonies. This is why they are not capable of building vessels as large and developed as those of the coastal tribes of the MacKenzie Sea. Originally, the **Huonocabi** (p. 85) belonged to the Aphrodite Coastal Tribes, but, due to their new habitat, would now probably be counted among the MacKenzie Coastal Tribes by humans.

The Gula Tribes

The Lizard-men of the Gula Highlands on the Eisila Peninsula are among the most primitive Venusians that have yet been discovered. They do not build any structures at all and have no notable religion other than their belief in some spirits of nature. They do know how to craft some primitive tools. However, the Italians have tried in vain to employ them as workers on their cotton plantations. On rare occasions, they deliver rare flowers and a multi-colored, breathtakingly beautiful leather of unknown origin to the trading posts. In actual fact, the Gula tribes obtain this leather from the mysterious Gri (➡ **The Gri**, p. 168) with which they are in regular contact.

The Sappho Culture

As with the Western Ishtar Culture, the tribes settled on the Sappho Plateau had practiced agriculture before mankind set foot on Venus. 90 per cent of the native population of the Italian Colonia di Veneri belongs to this Sappho Culture. These tribes were perfectly able to adapt to life on the plantations and they have already transformed large parts of the jungle to cotton growing. One of the largest tribes of the Sappho Culture is the SsuoSsnono (see p. 84)

The Aphrodite Mountain Tribes

For generations, the nomadic highland tribes of the Western Aphrodite Mountains have been at war with the agricultural tribes of the Eastern Mountains. No one side was able to defeat the other until the Russians landed on Venus and disturbed the political

balance by trading metal weapons for local products. Many Russian plantations employ captured members of the Eastern tribes as workers, and members of the Western tribes as supervisors.

The Diana Culture

There are some vague hints of a high culture existing in the remote Diana Highlands that is supposed to be far more developed than even the Western Ishtar tribes. Some artifacts traded by nomadic Lizard-men suggest that the Diana Culture has very skilled craftsmen that obviously know how to process river gold. The complex wedge symbols engraved on the artifacts could even be a kind of primitive script. If the garbled reports made by a few half-crazed wandering nomads have been interpreted correctly, there exists a culture in the Diana Highlands that knows fire and is currently in a stage of civilization between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. These wild tales claim that this "Diana Culture" designs huge and massive spiral stone conical obelisks and lives in large villages built of mud huts, which are ruled by a high priest or a god king. The name **Zhath** appears frequently in this context.

➡ **The Realm of Zhath**, p. 159

Particular Tribes

In the following notes, we have selected from among the diverse range of Venusian tribes and clans five peoples to present them in more detail. Some were selected because they dwell close to human settlements and have thus close contact with the colonies, others due to their unique and unusual way of life.

The Carada-Quaha

Of all the tribes human scientists have met so far, the tribe of the **Carada-Quaha**, which belongs to the Western Ishtar Culture, ranks among the most civilized and most developed. Some Cytherologists have even hypothesized that the Carada-Quaha had the potential of becoming the first true "high" culture of the explored areas of Venus. The Carada-Quaha are known for their iron discipline and for their crafting skills. Their tribe is both better organized and equipped than most other Venusians in their area, and so, before the arrival of mankind, it had been able to conquer a considerable territory and even collected tribute from their numerous neighboring tribes. Nominally, the Carada-Quaha's claim of primacy is still valid, but the establishment of the German and British colonies has fragmented the tribe's realm.

Homeland

The spiritual and geographic center of the Carada-Quaha, the village **Carada-Mohaka** lies at the western edge of the German colony. It is home to the chief of the Carada-Quaha who rules over some 20 villages, half of which are settled by subject client tribes.

History

Until some 200 years ago, the tribal homeland of what is now the Carada-Quaha was populated by a loose confederation of tribes

that all belonged to the Western Ishtar Culture and worshipped Qualabaho. One or two generations ago, the tribes broke with the predominant Qualabaho cult because Qualabaho (depending on the legend favored) died, fell silent, or was overthrown. Following this, the tribes of the confederation quarreled terribly and started what could have been the first great religious war of the Lizard-men. In the end, the ancestors of the Carada-Quaha, who promulgated that Qualabaho was dead and that it was now the time to worship Homa directly, won the war and began to further expand their realm after their tribe had pacified (and absorbed) the neighboring villages. Only a few years after the Carada-Quaha had established their first “colony”, mankind arrived on Venus and this event was to change everything.

Governance and Social System

The Carada-Quaha were in the initial stages of creating a centralized ‘empire’ which had every small village governed directly from Carada-Mohaka. For this purpose, the tribe developed a messenger network quite remarkable by Venusian standards. Generally, the villages of the Carada-Quaha are ruled by a council of elders, called *Nupapa Kumama*, as is customary in the Western Ishtar Culture. Thanks to their strong military focus, a mighty warrior always presides over the Nupapa Kumama among the Carada-Quaha, who has a veto on all council concerns and can even pass new laws all by himself. In most of the villages, these chiefs practically rule as autocrats. The Nupapa Kumama is “left” with the management of the tribe’s strict planned economy. The warrior receives his orders from the High War Chief of the Carada-Quaha, the tribe’s sole ruler. At present, this position is held by *OjahGuo* (“Blood-Soaked Field”) who is a personal friend of the German governor. The Carada-Quaha always establish a small occupying force over their subject tribes to enforce their tribe’s interests. This provides a foreign elite or “military nobility” over the occupied tribe which is able to immediately suppress any resistance.

Culture and Technology

In general, the Carada-Quaha have the same Neolithic tools as the other tribes of the Western Ishtar Culture. However, their high degree of organization allows them to manufacture and use them much more efficiently. Their efficiency has brought them a cultural and technical blossoming reflected in highly evolved handicraft skills. In fact, the Carada-Quaha are the only tribe known to represent animals in art, either with carvings or as decorations of their spherical stilt huts, made of fungus webs with paintings. It is also notable that the Carada-Quaha are the only known Venusian tribe to have developed a system of writing, which they scratch into Kalsa bark with their claws and which resembles Babylonian cuneiform (or “wedge-shaped” writing) on Earth. This “writing” consists of simple pictograms and can at present only transmit relatively basic meanings and concepts.

Religion, Customs, and Traditions

The Carada-Quaha worshipped Homa in a monotheistic way and had banned the “despicable” worship of other gods almost entirely. As the arrival of men had unsettled the priests of the Carada-Quaha, many of the tribe today are Christianized or at least are on their way to become Christians. The political power of the priests has severely diminished. The pagan customs (above

all, the traditional funeral feast at which deceased tribal members are eaten, accompanied by lamentations) have therefore been abolished. Strictly speaking, the ritual of the *Tonumutola*, the foretelling of the future from the patterning on the belly, would also count among these, but this is still performed even in the mission church. At a christening, the missionaries say some unctuous, meaningless words to newly hatched Venusians about their belly patterns and thus equate the christening with *Tonumutola*.

Traditionally, slavery is widespread among the Carada-Quaha. Firstly, the tribe’s “colonial empire” was practically based on slavery and secondly, the Carada-Quaha believe in the principle of “life debt”. If someone saves a Carada-Quaha’s life, the latter’s soul belongs to him. This ensures an immensely strong bond within the warrior caste of the Carada-Quaha, as after countless fights everyone literally “belongs” to everyone. Sometimes, however, this practice can lead to strange situations, if for example a foreigner rescues the life of a Carada-Quaha.

Carada-Quaha and Humans

The founding of the first human colonies on Venus virtually put an end to the Carada-Quaha’s dominion in the Kaiser Wilhelm Mountains, as now the human colonial masters ruled over the territory instead of the chiefs of the Carada-Quaha. One would think that this would enrage the Carada-Quaha and alienate them – but, strangely enough, this is not the case. Great chief *OjahGuo* is a cunning opportunist who immediately saw his opportunity.

From the Carada-Quaha’s point of view, a stable alliance with the “almighty” humans secures their dominion all the better. As the humans’ ally, and equipped with their weapons, nothing on Venus will be able to stop them! That’s why *OjahGuo* offered to forge an alliance with the Germans and why many of his sub-chiefs followed him. Since that day, the Carada-Quaha are the most loyal and reliable Lizard-men in the Schutztruppen. On the one hand, the Germans are pleased with their allies, but on the other, the constant servility of many Carada-Quaha to anything human can be quite annoying at times. It is also problematical that the Carada-Quaha have a reputation among other Lizard-men as arrogant and domineering tyrants, a reputation which they unfortunately live up to all too often. This sometimes leads to disputes among the “natives” which the colonial administration would prefer to avoid. Another problem is the fact that the Carada-Quaha applied the same strategy in the British territory and so the villages on the other side of the colonial border joined the British to secure their power. Officially, this divided the tribe, but in secret, *OjahGuo* pursues a strategy of secret diplomacy. He realized that there was a certain amount of rivalry between the German and the British colonists and he wants to keep all possibilities open so that he can choose the side of the winner in case of a conflict.



OjahGuo

OjahGuo was already what is called a “Great Ruler” among his people before the Germans founded their colony on Venus. Figuratively and literally, the king of the Carada-Quaha probably counts among the bulkiest Lizard-men on the entire planet. The ruler towers over his tallest fellows by about one head length and is also massively overweight. Due to his pronounced love of splendor, he is always covered with large amounts of garish jewelry and embellishments; he has several Lizard-men servants carry him around lolling lazily in a sedan chair while he nibbles big and juicy maggots and gulps down great gourds of beer. As highest king of the powerful Carada-Quaha, OjahGuo was (and still is) one of the most influential and most important personalities of the Western Ishtar Culture. And, regrettably, it has to be admitted, one of the most brutal too.

OjahGuo is the last of a long line of warrior kings who all became rulers thanks to their hunting and fighting skills. He slew the last king of the Carada-Quaha more than twenty years before in a bout of berserk rage and consequently was crowned king by the decision of the shamaness council. Since that day, OjahGuo managed to increase the tribe’s territory to more than double its original size. The Venusian king has a special gift: He is one of the few Lizard-men who have the ability to lie! On the surface, the fat and indolent Venusian seems quite dull and slow-witted. In reality, though, OjahGuo is cunning and devious. He is a smart tactician who does not shy away from fraud when it comes to achieving his aims.

Contrary to what Venusians claim, the “great” realm of the Carada-Quaha was not conquered by OjahGuo’s brute fighting strength alone, but mainly through his cunning combat strategies. When the first men appeared on Venus, the glorious days of the Carada-Quaha seemed to be over. But OjahGuo soon realized that the tailless new-arrivals underestimated him completely – and they were also much more easily deceived than his fellow Lizard-men. He became allies with (“what smelt to him”) the most powerful group of Earthlings – the Germans. To please them, he allowed their missionaries to enter his villages, and he took care to restrict his tribe’s most bloody traditions himself. Von Racknitz still deems OjahGuo a loyal friend of the German empire and often points to the fact that, thanks to OjahGuo, the German colonists have succeeded in “civilizing” the Carada-Quaha.

The tyrant, however, is only holding back so as not to displease his current rifle suppliers. For months now, the truly loyal Carada-Ahoqui (p. 87) along with Gerhard Döring (p. 33) have been trying in vain to make the Reichskommissar realize the real objectives of the tribal king of the Carada-Quaha. Meanwhile, OjahGuo is already establishing contacts with other colonial powers via secret emissaries so as to be prepared for a potential war between the ‘sky tribes’.

Archetype: Ruler **Motivation: Power**

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 4

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 4

Strength: 5

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 6

Move: 7

Defense: 7

Perception: 7

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	2	3	5	(2+)
Brawl	5	2	7	(3+)
Con	4	3	7	(3+)
Diplomacy	4	2	6	(3)
Empathy	4	1	5	(2+)
Firearms	2	2	4	(2)
Intimidate	4	4	8	(4)
Melee	5	2	7	(3+)
Streetwise	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	4	1	5	(2+)

Talents

Diehard; Inspire; Lethal Blow; Strong Defense

Resources

Status 1

Fame 1

Flaws

Callous

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
.30-06 Repeating Rifle	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
Spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L

The SsuoSsnono

The latently xenophobic **SsuoSsnono** are the most powerful tribe of the Sappho Plateau. In the eyes of anthropologists, the tribe is rather unusual as it consists of a fusion of two entirely different cultural groups. While the peasants of the SsuoSsnono build elaborate tree-house villages, which they usually dwell in their entire lives, the knightly nomad warriors travel long distances on their eternal journeys and thus control large areas.

Homeland

The SsuoSsnono form a loose confederation of villages that spreads over the entire Sappho Plateau. The domains of numerous small tribes of the Sappho Culture are scattered throughout their territory, so one can hardly speak of a closed tribal homeland. Generally speaking, the SsuoSsnono are rather characterized by a divided culture than a shared political structure.

History

It is unclear exactly when the divided society of the SsuoSsnono emerged. The tribe's legends reveal that the SsuoSsnono once were actually two different tribes. At first, the marauding nomads used to raid the peasant villages and to extort tribute. But when some of the peasant villages proved to be quite capable of defending themselves, the bandit-booty relationship was soon replaced by mutual respect; and what started as plundering evolved into a stable alliance of two different peoples. The nomads' close contact with the villagers even has a distinct civilizing effect. Since not all of the villages and nomad bands joined this tribal alliance, the SsuoSsnono are today confronted by many hostile forces.

Governance and Social System

The SsuoSsnono do not know any central governance. Each village belonging to the tribal alliance is led by a group of three female shamans professing second-sight, who are in turn supported by a council of craftsmen and peasants. A fourth shamaness accompanies the nomad group associated with the village. The nomads themselves are organized strictly hierarchically and are always subject to the most skilled warrior (or at least the one that is regarded as such). In principle, this chief warrior also has a seat in the village council but this seat is usually vacant as the nomads usually operate beyond the village.

Culture and Technology

The SsuoSsnono cultivated Venusian cotton long before the arrival of the Italians and so it is no wonder that they are among the best cloth weavers on Venus. With their attractive "rustic" patterns, the cloth of the SsuoSsnono count among the finest Venusian textiles. The tribe's villages are quite impressive, too. The SsuoSsnono weave the same spacious spherical huts as other sedentary Venusians, but instead of building them on stilts, they suspend them with sturdy ropes from the branches of enormous trees. Just like an immense accumulation of insect cocoons, the SsuoSsnono villages hang between huge branches and thus offer a breathtaking view. To get from one hut to another one has to climb along branches and ropes. This unusual architectural style prevailed both because the suspended villages were easy to defend against enemies and predators and also because of the happy coincidence that the tribe's peasants primarily cultivate plants that thrive as parasites in the tree crowns – such as Venusian cotton.

Religion, Customs, and Traditions

The SsuoSsnono believe in a relatively loose pantheon of various spirits of nature to whom they sacrifice crops or game in order to win their favor. As the tribe is ruled directly by the shamanesses, most tribal members display a high degree of spirituality. Regular oracles also assume an important role, with the shamanesses foretelling the tribe's future out of the pattern of falling leaves. Elaborate rituals of civility and politeness have evolved between the villagers and the nomads which are crucial when communicating with the villagers. If newcomers do not know the specific rituals required to ask permission to enter, the villagers will simply refuse them access to the village. Furthermore, the SsuoSsnono attach great value to "good morals" and appear quite sophisticated to

the Earthly viewer despite their Stone Age technology. Among Venusians, the nomads of the SsuoSsnono are known for their forthright sincerity and "chivalry".

SsuoSsnono and Humans

From time to time, the Italians have their difficulties with the SsuoSsnono as the villagers are always wary of strangers, which makes dealings with them anything but easy. The SsuoSsnono benefit from the trade with their Italian colonial masters, but still expect them to meticulously adhere to the customary etiquette. More than a few Earthly merchants have waited in vain beneath a SsuoSsnono village, ignored after mispronouncing one of the ritualized greetings. Contact with the tribe's nomads is much easier – within the colony, they make for loyal and honest scouts.

The Huonocabi

The fan-shaped sails of the **Huonocabi's** trimarans have only recently come to be seen regularly on the south coast of Ishtar. The Huonocabi are a tribe of daring seafarers who left their homeland due to a quarrel over succession, intending to build a new empire far away from the Aphrodite Coast. Fortunately for the native populations of the south coast of Ishtar, the Huonocabi are a peaceful tribe, subsisting on fishing and organized hunting for sea creatures, and trading fish, ivory, or nacre. As the Huonocabi are only few in number, the new arrivals did not cause any alarm among the local tribes.

Homeland

The Huonocabi are semi-nomadic, living on large platforms made of seaweed and wood, on which they set out for fishing trips, sea creature hunts, or trading voyages. Originally, the Huonocabi settled at the north coast of the Aphrodite Highlands. However, they left this area years before the Russians arrived and have now settled on the south coast of Ishtar near the British colony.

History

Originally, the Huonocabi belonged to the nation of the Aphrodite Coast Tribes which, as the Huonocabi say, are ruled by a single "Wave King" who, after his death, has his throne passed to a chosen heir. **Pada-Hono**, king of the Huonocabi, had a claim to the title of Wave King (or so he says) as the current king had promised him the throne – just as he had to five other warriors of his tribe. The old Wave King died before he could make a final decision and thus a devastating war of succession broke out, which Pada-Hono and his followers lost. Thus began an odyssey of several years, searching for a new homeland. Before their departure, the refugees were cursed by the chief shamaness of the Aphrodite Coast Tribes, an event that has had a lasting effect on their belief system.

Governance and Social System

The Huonocabi live in a centralized kingdom ruled by a single king who is supported, more or less informally, by a council of



all the tribe's boatmen. The hierarchies among the Huonocabi are exceptionally flat compared to other tribes. The Aphrodite Coast Tribes have a very complex social structure, the Huonocabi however seem to have abandoned this system, which is partly due to the fact that the tribe merely consists of fishermen, hunters, and some craftsmen. The few shamanesses accompanying the Huonocabi on the odyssey across the ocean did not survive the journey, and some common professions such as flute carver or kelp dyer are not represented at all in this group of expatriates.

Culture and Technology

Artifacts collected from the North coast of Aphrodite allow the general conclusion that the local population is on a similar cultural level as the highly evolved Western Ishtar Culture. The Huonocabi, however, have lost much of the otherwise common technical knowhow due to their recent isolation. They are still capable of building streamlined trimarans, weaving skillfully-wrought nets, and crafting sharp harpoons. But the knowledge of cultivating shells or carving nacre has been lost to the Huonocabi.

Religion, Customs, and Traditions

The Huonocabi worship **Homa** above all others, as creator and god of death, alongside a pantheon of ancestor spirits who are all based on mythical hero figures from the past of their former tribe. Compared to other cultures, the tribe's religious rites are rather simple and naïve as the Huonocabi lack any priesthood. Without shamanesses maintaining a religious dogma, the religious beliefs of the Huonocabi have begun to shift hazily between various superstitions.

Traditionally, hunters that have killed one or more "sea monsters" have a very high standing among the Huonocabi. Sea monsters are considered evil forces from the deep, the eternal enemies of all Lizard-men. Anyone who kills such a beast deserves respect. From the depth of their soul the Huonocabi believe that they were cursed before their departure. From that day, the Huonocabi have blamed this curse for each time they have been attacked by a large sea creature. Their new homeland is close to a breeding ground of

a group of white-headed sea turtles (see p. 111 in the **Core Rules**) which leads to the Huonocabi being attacked by these creatures quite often. Of course, the Huonocabi think this to be a result of the curse, and the frequency has meant that they have resolved to no longer let themselves be intimidated by it. In a dauntless and rousing speech, King Pada-Hono declared unending war on all beasts of this world, especially the white-headed sea turtles. Since that day, the Huonocabi have done their best to eradicate them from Venus.

Huonocabi and Humans

As of yet, no Huonocabi has ever met a human being. They have heard the members of some MacKenzie Coast Tribes talking about "tailless ghosts that dance above the clouds", but these stories usually only raise a laugh among the Huonocabi. How the Huonocabi are going to react when they first meet a human being depends on the exact circumstances of that meeting.

The JaoÓ

There is hardly any other nomadic people that causes as much fear and terror among the sedentary tribes of the Benton Peninsula as the ferocious **JaoÓ**, who have a reputation as being both cruel and barbaric. A violent horde of hunters and marauders, they follow the migrations of the mighty Apatosaurs and attack every tribe they meet along their way. Attempts to negotiate with the JaoÓ have invariably failed so far and it is unknown to outsiders what drives the JaoÓ in their single-minded aggression. The sedentary Lizard-men of Ishtar deem them to be actual monsters, far worse than any other nomads.

Homeland

As nomads, the JaoÓ do not have a permanent homeland. Their territory is the ground they and their herds occupy at any given time. Basically, the JaoÓ can be met everywhere in the Ishtar region at least for those who dare to come close to an Apatosaurus herd. In the colonies, and near large, sedentary tribes, the odds for an encounter with this tribe are a little lower.

History

"History" is a concept that the JaoÓ hardly understand. While they do know some stories about legendary heroes and the usual myths about the creation of the world, they do not have any precise history of their own tribe. As far as they are concerned, they have been following the mighty Apatosaurs since the beginning of time. It has always been like this and it will stay this way forever. Nothing else matters to the JaoÓ.

Governance and Social System

The society structure of the JaoÓ is simple. There are no notable hierarchies or differentiated professions; by Venusian standards, the JaoÓ society is almost egalitarian. Each tribal member is hunter, gatherer, and warrior, regardless of age or gender. Individual groups are led by those members who excel in particular skills, their age is of no importance. Exceptions to this rule are the shamans who the JaoÓ believe to be in contact with the spirits. They foretell the future from the pattern of falling leaves or from the cries of dinosaurs, and negotiate a safe passage through dangerous territories with the “Disembodied”. It is worth noting that the JaoÓ also have male shamans, which is rather unusual among Venusians. The JaoÓ are also among the few nomads that do not set up nest caves during breeding season. They simply lay their eggs into breeding bags filled with sauropod dung and suspend them under the bellies of the dinosaurs to let their body warmth brood them.

Culture and Technology

Even compared to other tribes, the JaoÓ’s technology is underdeveloped. They have only a vague knowledge of Venusian chemistry which they use solely to manufacture a handful of arrow poisons. As weapons they use rough spears as well as the bow and arrow. Woven armor or containers sealed with fungus material are as unknown as the production of alcohol. They only obtain such products through raids on other tribes. Some tribes, by contrast, build platforms and crude saddle constructions which they buckle on their dinosaurs in order to live on them.

Religion, Customs, and Traditions

Just as with their society and their technology, the religion of the JaoÓ is essentially unsophisticated. They believe the Apatosaurs to be some kind of divinity or powerful spirits and consider them to be sacred. Contrary to what outsiders assume, the JaoÓ do not actually hunt the Apatosaurs but keep close to them to stay in contact with the higher powers. Individuals who would attack “their” dinosaurs invite their wrath. When one of the Apatosaurs dies, the JaoÓ honor it by performing dances and holding funeral rites while cutting the most valuable meat out of the carrion. This is the only event at which the meat of an Apatosaur may be eaten. The same funeral rituals are held when a member of the JaoÓ dies. Among themselves the JaoÓ are astonishingly peaceful and loving – from a human point of view, they could even be taken as a prime example of Christian charity. Disputes, murder, and robbery are almost unknown within JaoÓ society. Whenever two different JaoÓ groups meet, they hold a boisterous feast during which they exchange stories and gifts. To the JaoÓ, every Lizard-man not belonging to their tribe is considered an enemy that has to be fought without mercy. Outsiders are liars, murderers, and beasts that can never – really never – be trusted. Whatever an outsider might say, the JaoÓ always believe them to have bad intentions. Following the principle of “attack is the best form of defense” the JaoÓ wage war on all other tribes they encounter – and successful hunters keep their loot after killing their prey. ➡ **The Mystery of the JaoÓ**, p. 156

JaoÓ and Humans

It is clear where the lines are drawn between the JaoÓ and other Venusians – their only possible relationship is eternal hostility! Things are potentially different with humans. Only a few JaoÓ have met humans so far and they do not know as yet exactly what to make of them. They have never met creatures like them and, unlike their enemies, they do not smell of lies but of nothing. The JaoÓ fear humans rather than hate them, and believe them to be ghosts. Thus it could be possible for humans to communicate with the JaoÓ and to learn of the peaceful and friendly side of their culture – something that seems to be impossible for normal Venusians. Some orchid hunters and rangers from Earth have already succeeded in establishing peaceful contact with some JaoÓ. Others consider the JaoÓ to be a horde of marauding nomads and savages without having investigated their culture any further. They keep them away from their property by shooting at them with firearms if necessary. The JaoÓ in turn interpret these events as a punishment of raging spirits rather than the attack of a worldly power. For this reason, the JaoÓ lay out offerings for the angry humans to demonstrate that their war is only aimed at their lying enemies and not at the world of spirits. The JaoÓ have not yet determined the exact relationship the “sky fish riders”, as they call the humans, maintain with their enemies.

The Carada-Ahoqui

Life in the villages of the Carada-Ahoqui is calm and contemplative. This tribe had not fought a war for over a generation when it was subjected by the more powerful Carada-Quaha (p. 82). They cultivate a large variety of various crops and vegetables on the fields surrounding their villages. Just like their neighbors and masters, the Carada-Quaha, the Carada-Ahoqui count among the most evolved cultures of Venus as far as it is known.

Homeland

The Carada-Ahoqui settled at the western edge of the German colony where they have established four larger villages. They cultivate the land surrounding their villages extensively and have transformed it into a unique cultural landscape unparalleled in all the explored parts of Venus.

History

Until a few generations ago, the Carada-Ahoqui were part of a larger tribal confederation unified by their worship of *Qualabaho* (see p. 83). When the confederation collapsed in a bloody war after *Qualabaho* vanished, the small tribe was unable to escape the religious massacres. Sheltered by a valley basin and shielded by a surrounding rock chain, the Carada-Ahoqui withdrew from the outside world and lived in their small and peaceful enclave. They continued worshipping *Qualabaho*, who they hoped would return one day. Everything went well for quite some time until the Carada-Quaha, now with a developed military, rediscovered the “lost” villages of the Carada-Ahoqui, conquered them and forced them to pay enormous tribute. Today, the Carada-Ahoqui are under German colonial rule, which means they are still ultimately under the domination of the Carada-Quaha.

Governance and Social System

The four small villages are governed by a strict matriarchy. Since the tribe subsists solely on agriculture and its territory is restricted to a small valley, the traditionally male hunters do not play an important role. The male tribal members have become field workers instead. The women of the tribe occupy a more important position since such key tasks as the work scheduling and the administration of the supplies falls to them. Just as in other tribes, the Carada-Ahoqui have a kind of "council of elders" which in their case consists, however, exclusively of female members. It cannot be determined whether this matriarchy developed due to the isolation in the valley or whether the isolation was rather a result of the xenophobia often remarked in female Venusians. Asked about this, the Carada-Ahoqui simply say that governing has always been a woman's task.

Culture and Technology

Concerning the crafting of tools, hut building and handicraft, the Carada-Ahoqui resemble the mass of other sedentary tribes of the Ishtar Highlands. They had learned of the invention of writing by the Carada-Quaha before the arrival of mankind, but they did not really know what to make of it. In agriculture however, they outdo all other known Venusians. Following generations of hard work, the field workers have transformed their home valley into a well-planned 'cultural landscape' of terrace fields, groves of fruit trees, and pastures for fat and tasty SsumsSsum (a big-sized ceratosaur, see p. 99). Techniques such as crop cultivation with crop rotation and improvement of vegetables and SsumSsum by selective breeding are as well known to them as the use of fertilizers. To people from Earth this might seem trivial, but among Venusians, agriculture this far developed is rather extraordinary. In order to enlarge the limited agricultural area of their valley the Carada-Ahoqui were quite creative. There are various "useless" trees that the Venusians were unable to cut down with their modest technical means. So, the tribe's clever field workers stretched densely woven nets between the sturdiest trunks and branches, filled them with rough mulch, soil, and branches, and started to cultivate small berry bushes and fungus fields. The cultivation of these suspended fields is not so simple as the nets can only support the weight of the bed and little else. The workers have to know which branch they can set foot on, and it is recommended to rope up to be safe to work there. But it is worth the effort: The tribe has been able to increase its yields by a quarter as they could exploit an area that would have been uncultivable otherwise due to the huge trees growing there.

Religion, Customs, and Traditions

This small peasant tribe takes neither an interest in Christianity nor in the monotheistic worship of Homa. They believe in Qualabaho, their oldest guardian spirit who appears to its believers in the form of a giant squid. Concerning his disappearance, there are two opinions prevailing within the tribe: Some believe that Qualabaho set out on a sacred journey and will one day return to his tribe, while the others believe he still protects his tribe from the world of spirits and odors. The tribe's beliefs were prohibited under the rule of the Carada-Quaha, and was only practiced secretly in a number of hidden caves while the tribe paid lip service to the Homa priestesses. Thanks to the influence of the German colonial administration, their situation has improved slightly. The Carada-Quaha still try to eradicate the belief in Qualabaho but the Germans do not tolerate quarrels among the natives, and they put a stop to any dispute immediately – even using violence if necessary. The tribe is slowly beginning to practice their former rites openly as they know, should the Carada-Quaha dare to bring war into their valley, that they will have to face the Germans. That is why the Carada-Quaha try their best to discredit the religion of the Carada-Ahoqui in front of the Germans. Christianity has not yet been successful in the valley, which is partly due to the fact that the missionaries of the local Catholic and Lutheran stations are occupied fighting each other rather than bringing the Christian faith to the Venusians.

Carada-Ahoqui and Humans

As of yet, humans and Carada-Ahoqui have gotten along splendidly. However, the tribe members still feel unfree. They understand very well that one foreign domination was just replaced by another. Nonetheless, they also see that they have a much better standing under the new dominion, and for the first time they are allowed to train their own warriors. The Germans respect the Carada-Ahoqui for their diligence and their success in agriculture, and the tribe enjoys an impeccable reputation, in spite of its determinedly atavistic paganism. Members of the Carada-Ahoqui are often employed as foremen on the plantations, because it is thought that experienced locals will be better able to teach fellow Venusians agriculture than humans ever could. The tribal council views the alliance with the Germans as an excellent opportunity to finally throw off the yoke of the hated Carada-Quaha. Behind the orderly facade of the native Schutztruppen, a wild fight for the colonial master's favor has broken out in which the Schutztruppen officers take every opportunity to discredit the members of their rival tribe in order to occupy important posts.



Venusian Flora and Fauna

The forests of Venus are overflowing with life. In this chapter, we want to amend the list of creatures included in the **Space: 1889 Core Rules** and introduce you to more of the animals and plants you might encounter on Venus. We will also reveal a few secrets of Venusian plant life and bring you up to speed regarding the planet's domestic and small animals.

Generally, the life forms on Venus are smaller, more primitive, and less evolved than those found on Earth. Higher life forms like modern birds or mammals apparently do not exist, flowering plants are rare. Venusian flora is similar to that of primordial Earth, which is why humans will find plants on Venus strangely familiar, though primeval. There are more ferns, snake grasses, and Cycads on Venus than on Earth. These plants can reach extraordinary sizes in the Morning Star's hot and humid climate. Countless dinosaurs

roam the surface, shifting between hunting grounds or different kinds of prey. Sea creatures are present in all the larger bodies of water and can be encountered in many locations.

The planet's fauna is primal. Giant reptiles are the dominant animals on land. Due to their striking resemblance to fossils found on Earth, these reptiles are commonly referred to as "dinosaurs". Since dinosaurs have been extinct for millions of years on our home planet, scientists will have to ascertain whether there is an actual relationship between the similar life forms on Earth and Venus, or if we are faced with an astonishing case of convergent evolution. It should also be noted that on Venus, creatures co-exist which on Earth were separated by eons. So far, several hundred dinosaur species have been catalogued, and many more are waiting to be discovered.

Paleontology, Venus, and the Bone Wars

In 1889, paleontology is still in its infancy. It was only in the early 19th century that scientists had started to study dinosaurs in earnest. The English surgeon and obstetrician Gideon Mantell (1790-1852) is considered to be the first serious paleontologist, and even the term 'Dinosauria' was coined by Richard Owen only in the middle of the 19th century. Mantell and Owen inspired a growing number of scientists to dedicate their research to the subject – and of these, two more prominent than all the others are *Othniel Charles Marsh* and *Edward Drinker Cope*.

Marsh (b. 1831), a trained geologist, mineralogist, and anatomist, had met the self-educated natural scientist Cope (b. 1840) in Germany. They quickly bonded over their shared passion for paleontology. Both wanted to further the advance of this new science, concentrating on their American homeland, where they expected to find numerous previously undiscovered dinosaur species.

What started as an intimate friendship soon devolved into rivalry as the two researchers argued more and more frequently about fossil discoveries and the prestige that came from them. When Marsh publicly ridiculed his former associate for an embarrassing mistake in a reconstructed skeleton, their relationship collapsed entirely. The incident set off a bitter competition, which quickly became known as the "Bone Wars" and revolved around fame, scientific acclaim, and personal insult.

Beginning in 1869, Cope and Marsh organized several risky expeditions into the American West, which was largely unsettled at the time. Their expedition diaries resemble adventure novels: lack of food and water, skirmishes with hostile natives, espionage, counter-espionage, and the destruction of dig sites were almost daily routine for the former friends.

Their competition resulted in new digging and conservation techniques and unearthed various new species, but it also caused the wanton theft or destruction of many valuable finds.

Then came the year 1879, and everything changed.

The Heidelberg expedition returned from Venus and brought reports of living dinosaurs. The paleontological community was in an uproar – Cope's and Marsh's findings seemed shaken to their very foundations. A new destination was set: Venus.

Cope, always more impulsive than his adversary, was the first to make the journey to the jungle planet in 1880. His expedition was hastily arranged and poorly planned. Persistent rumors maintain that Cope went to Venus to verify a recent, spectacular discovery made on Earth. Cope himself could never give a statement regarding the rumors' veracity. Shortly after his arrival on Venus, he embarked on his journey into the jungle and was never heard from again.

Marsh, known as a level-headed and meticulous planner, held back initially. The disappearance of his rival removed any pressure of time, and scientific obligations prevented his immediate departure for Venus. Instead of heading for the Morning Star at once, he organized the establishment of a scientific outpost, supported by the Peabody Museum at Yale and the National Academy of Sciences. He undertook several journeys to Venus, where he supervised the construction of the outpost and conducted his studies. Today, he is counted among the foremost dinosaur experts on the planet.

What happened to Edward Drinker Cope remains as much a mystery as the reason for his precipitous departure. For years, his daughter *Julia* (b. 1866) has been trying to organize a rescue mission for her missing father, even asking Marsh for assistance, if only for the sake of the friendship the two men once shared.

So far, Marsh has not decided on any action, and thus Cope's fate as well as his discoveries in the jungles and swamps of Venus are still unknown.

Marine life forms on Venus are as similarly primeval as their counterparts on land. Bony fish, primitive sharks, and coelacanths thrive in the seas. But the giant lizards have also conquered the maritime habitats of Venus, granting the planet an abundance of sea monsters.

Apart from the larger inhabitants of Venus, there are a number of insects, plaguing humans and lizard-men alike. The mineur has gained some unpopularity among the settlers. This bug deposits its clutch of eggs underneath its host's skin. The removal of the eggs usually results in skin marks colloquially referred to as "colonial scars". Disregarding monstrosities like the emperor dragonfly – whose taxonomic classification is still disputed by biologists – the largest Venusian insect generally known so far is a species of dragonfly with a wing span of half a meter.

Land Creatures

Juggernauts

(also known as Behemoth lizards or Hahlah-Homa)

Despite their bulk, which almost matches that of the legendary *Apatosaurus bentonii* (see p. 107 in the **Core Rules**), these giant creatures are rarely spotted. The hornless ceratosaurs, however, have a much thicker skin than the apatosaurus. Stoically, they roam the flat land regions at a relaxed pace, using their bizarrely small eyes to scan their environment for food. There are no natural threats to these armored giants, which is why they usually reach astoundingly old ages. Their skin is rutted and covered by lichen, fungi, and parasitic mosses. Some of the particularly old specimens even carry small shrubs on their backs, in which tiny flying lizards are known to make their homes. The Hahlah-Homa, 'Homa's Brethren', are called 'Behemoth lizards' by the German colonists, a name drawing on the biblical monster from the book of Job. The British have taken to calling them 'juggernauts' after the giant Indian temple cars, which are almost impossible to stop once set in motion. The same goes for the juggernauts of Venus, which won't be held back by *anything* in their path. There are no Venusian weapons that would be able to kill a Juggernaut, though terrestrial settlers may find artillery useful.

Juggernauts

Animal Companion 5

Archetype: Dinosaur

Health: 30

Primary Attributes

Body: 12

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 15

Willpower: 5

Secondary Attributes

Size: 9

Initiative: 4

Move: 19 (38)*

Defense: 7 (10)***

Perception: 5

Stun: 12

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	15	3	20	(10)
Stealth	4	3	0**	(0)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)

Robust (+4 Health rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	9 L	-9	20 L	(10) L
Kick	10 N	-9	21 N	(10+) N

* Animals with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Juggernauts suffer a -9 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

*** Juggernauts have a thick skin that provides a +3 bonus on their Passive Defense.



Gennarosaurus (Palapon)

This bipedal saurian, which bears the name of its discoverer *Vito Gennaro*, is sometimes used as a riding animal. Gennaro was attached to an expedition into the Russian territories, where a ranger patrol saved his life after an accident. He discovered that the gennarosaurus, at first thought to be a close relative of velociraptors, is actually a quite companionable animal and can easily be domesticated, as long as it is regularly provided with live food or very fresh meat.

Cossack units prefer gennarosaurus over pacyosaurus mounts, as they are faster and less easily startled than the latter. Many Cossacks also praise these dinosaurs' more affable nature.

Gennarosaurus

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Dinosaur Health: 9

Primary Attributes

Body: 5 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 1
Strength: 3 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 5
Move: 7 (14) Defense: 8
Perception: 6 Stun: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Stealth	4	3	6*	(3)
Survival	1	2	5	(2+)

Talents

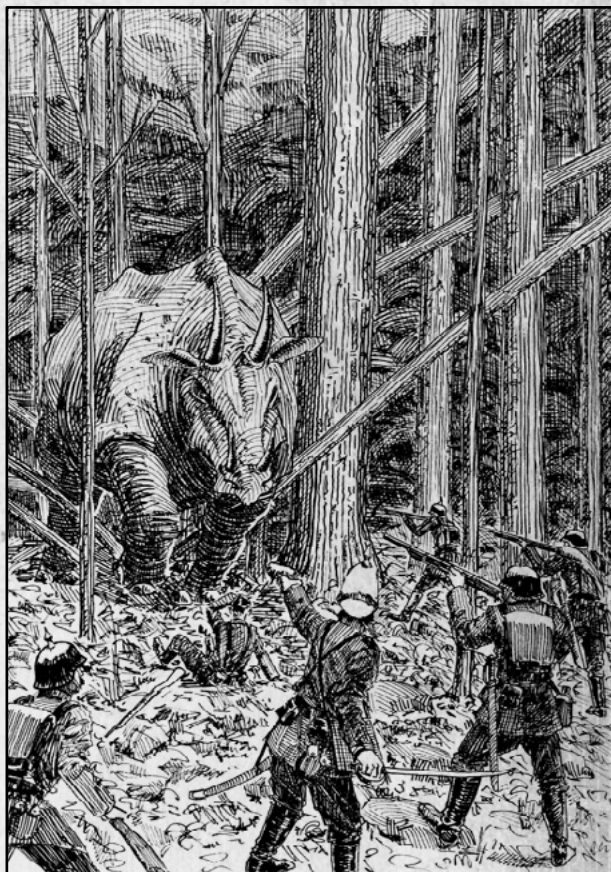
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Run (doubles its movement when running)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	1L	-1	8 L	(4) L
Tail	0 N	-1	7 N	(3+) N
Claw	2 L	-1	9 L	(4+) L

* Gennarosaurus suffer a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls



Maclurosaurus (Quaggaquao-li)

The bizarre-looking Maclurosaurus is one of the Venusian species of dinosaurs that paleontologists cannot yet find a terrestrial counterpart to. At first glance the maclurosaurus, which is named for its discoverer Captain Quentin MacLure, appears almost grotesque. The quadruped's massive body is of similar size as that of a stegosaurus, while the singularly ugly, horned head is reminiscent of a warthog found on Earth. The tail end of the animal is adorned with a bushy tuft of feathers. When facing a maclurosaurus, there is not much else to laugh about, as the animals are extremely aggressive, bloodthirsty, and voracious. Recent investigations have shown that maclurosaurus are the only known viviparous species of dinosaurs, and scientists believe these animals might be an evolutionary link between reptiles and mammals. However, maclurosaurus do not seem to have any organs resembling mammary glands.

Maclurosaurus

Animal Companion 2

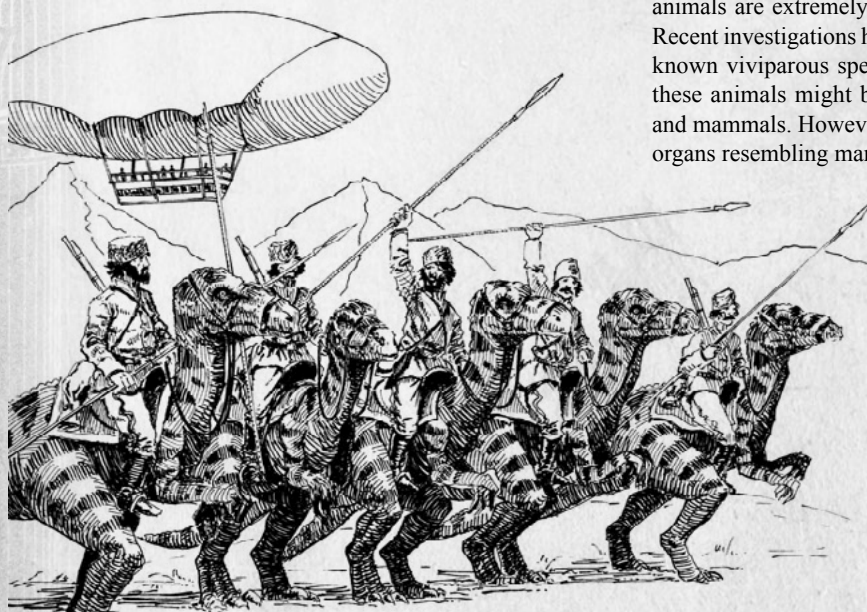
Archetype: Dinosaur Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 5 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 4 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 Initiative: 5
Move: 9 (18)* Defense: 7
Perception: 5 Stun: 4



Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	4	4	10	(5)
Stealth	5	2	5**	(2+)
Survival 0	4	6	(3)	

Talents**Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)**

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	10 L	(5) L
Tail	2 N	-2	10 N	(5) N
Headbutt	3 L	-2	11 L	(5+) L

* Animals with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Maclurosauruses suffer a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Pacyosaurus (Nanahoa)

At half a ton, pacyosaurs are comparatively lightweight animals and are often regarded as the “horses of Venus”. These dinosaurs were originally only at home in the highlands and grass plains of the Sappho Plateau, but are now domesticated by colonists and Lizard-men alike. While the Venusians only rely on the pacyosaurs’ meat and carrying strength, humans also use them as mounts. The animals are undemanding, but as stubborn as donkeys are on Earth – much to the chagrin of their riders. Once they are running, there is no easy stopping them. In the highlands, pacyosaurs are ideal riding animals, whereas the dense jungles of the lowlands will give them some trouble.



Pacyosaurus

Animal Companion 2**Archetype: Dinosaur****Health: 7****Primary Attributes****Body: 3****Charisma: 0****Dexterity: 3****Intelligence: 0****Strength: 3****Willpower: 3****Secondary Attributes****Size: 1****Initiative: 3****Move: 6 (12)*****Defense: 5****Perception: 5****Stun: 3**

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	4	3	6**	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents**Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)**

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	-1	4 L	(2) L
Kick	1 N	-1	5 N	(2+) N

* Animals with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Pacyosaurs suffer a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Procompsognathus (Ssvuvuo)

A Venusian procompsognathus is twice as big as an Iowa chicken and as toxic as a Texan rattlesnake. During most of the year, procompsognathi are harmless and would rather run and hide than bite anything that is larger than them. During the mating season, this behavior changes dramatically: nicknamed ‘Ssvuvuo’ (‘poison waves’) by the natives, besotted amorous swarms of these animals will annihilate anything in their path. Only flamethrowers or the swift ascent of a stout tree can save anyone unlucky enough to find themselves in their path – fortunately, they have not learned to climb, as yet.

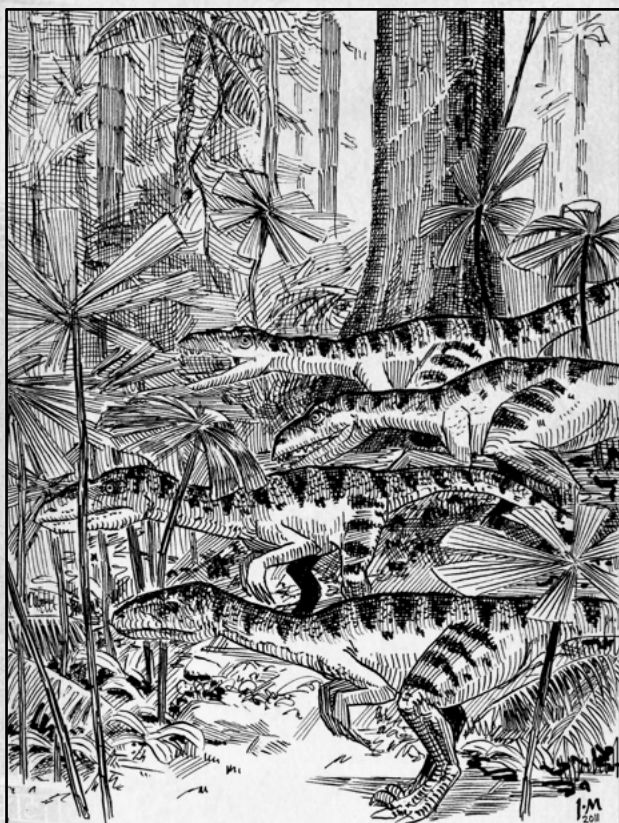
Procompsognathus

Animal Companion 0**Archetype: Dinosaur****Health: 2****Primary Attributes****Body: 2****Charisma: 0****Dexterity: 4****Intelligence: 0****Strength: 2****Willpower: 1****Secondary Attributes****Size: -1****Initiative: 4****Move: 6****Defense: 4****Perception: 3****Stun: 2**

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Stealth	4	0	5*	(2+)
Survival	0	3	3	(1+)

Talents**Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)**

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite**	1 L	+1	5 L	(2+) L



* Procompsognathuses receive a +1 size bonus on stealth rolls.

** A procompsognathus bite induces a 3 L venom which requires a Body roll. Each success reduces the venom damage by 1. A procompsognathus can use the venom twice a day.

Pterygotus (Uovu-Suomlao)

Within the putrid undergrowth of the lowlands lurks the pterygotus, a ten feet, or three meter long scorpion the Venusians call Uovu-Suomlao, which translates roughly to 'egg guardian'. Three meter long scorpions naturally seem revolting to humans, as only few of us generally empathize with giant, venomous vermin. The natives of Venus are less reserved about these animals, especially since pterygotus is naturally reclusive in the wild. His preferred prey are the pig-sized ceratosaurs. The venomous stinger is only used against direct threats. Despite their venom, Uovu-Suomlaos are relatively affable animals which can even be tamed. Many tribes train the giant scorpions as guard animals, nomadic tribes even use pterygotus dwellings as nesting caves. As pterygotus will not eat eggs off any kind and can be approached cautiously, it is an ideal helper in nesting efforts.

Pterygotus

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Insect Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 5 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 5 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 4

Move: 9 (18)* Defense: 8

Perception: 6 Stun: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Claw	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L
Stinger***	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L

* Animals with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Pterygotuses suffer a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

*** A Pterygotus sting induces a 4 L venom which requires a Body roll. Each success reduces the venom damage by 1. A pterygotus can use its venom five times a day.

Steller's Dragon

This bipedal monster bearing the Latin name *Megalosaurus stelleri* is an exception from the rule that two-legged dinosaurs exclusively inhabit the lowland regions and are not found in the comparatively cool highlands. Even though this animal is not the largest Venusian predatory dinosaur, it still weighs in at 25 tons and can be a formidable opponent. If you are particularly unlucky, you may even encounter Steller's Dragons in the Ishtar Highlands. They occur most frequently in the western and eastern outskirts of the British colony. To get this threat under control, the British authorities have recently offered a reward of 40 £ for each killed Steller's Dragon.



Steller's Dragon

Animal Companion 5

Archetype: Dinosaur Health: 21

Primary Attributes

Body: 7 Charisma: 0
 Dexterity: 8 Intelligence: 0
 Strength: 8 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 6 Initiative: 8
 Move: 16 Defense: 8
 Perception: 6 Stun: 8

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	8	6	16	(8)
Stealth	8	5	7*	(3+)
Survival	0	4	7	(3+)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Robust (+4 Health rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Talon	7 L	-8	15 L	(7+) L
Bite	7 L	-8	15 L	(7+) L
Tail	6 L	-8	14 L	(7) L

* Steller's Dragons suffer a -6 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Stilted Horror (The Nameless Thing)

Fortunately, the gruesome 'stilted horror' can only be found in the deepest parts of the swamps. The natives regard the animal, which resembles a daddy longlegs, as the ultimate messenger of evil and even refuse to give it a name. The stilted horror is an insidious ambush predator and can wait in a single location for days or weeks until a victim passes within its clutches. At this instant, the stilted horror stabs its prey with its long, thorned tentacles and pulls it upwards, where venomous pincers inject toxins and digestive juices. The victim is then sucked dry. The cruel part is that the prey usually remains alive for the duration of the hour-long feeding process and suffers unspeakable agonies. After feeding, the stilted horror changes location, often with its prey still wailing in pain! Needless to say the stilted horror is the source and object of uncounted nightmares.

➡ World below the world, p. 166

Stilted Horror

Animal Companion 3

Archetype: Insect Health: 13

Primary Attributes

Body: 7 Charisma: 0
 Dexterity: 6 Intelligence: 1
 Strength: 7 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 3 Initiative: 7
 Move: 13 Defense: 10
 Perception: 4 Stun: 7

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	7	2	11	(5+)
Stealth	6	5	10*	(5)
Survival	1	3	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Assassin (When unnoticed, it can make a Surprise Attack using its Stealth rating instead of its Brawl rating against the Passive Defense of its victim.)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Tentacle**	4 L	-3	12 L	(6) L
Bite***	3 L	-3	11 L	(5+) L
Leg	3 N	-3	11 N	(5+) N

* Stilted horrors suffer a -3 Size penalty for Stealth rolls.

** The tentacles' sting induces a Level 4 paralyzing venom which requires a Body test. Each success reduces the venom damage by 1, the remaining venom level is deducted from the Dexterity and Strength rating of the victim. The Stilted Horror can use its venom five times a day.

*** The bite of the Stilted Horror injects the victim with a digestive toxin, slowly disintegrating it. If failing the Defense check, the level 5 toxin causes 1 L damage per hour. The victim keeps taking damage until it accumulates 8 successes in a prolonged Body test (1 test per hour; see Core Rules, p. 217)

Velociraptor (Lalaoami Sshu)

No other creature on Venus was met with as much astonishment as the velociraptor – an outlandish animal halfway between dinosaur and bird. Velociraptors are the size of a human, covered with a dense plumage, and very well camouflaged in the Venusian undergrowth by the emerald green color of their feathers. The animals, which the natives call 'Lalaoami Sshu', are rightly reputed to be hellishly clever and are known for their wolf pack hunting tactics. These tactics compensate for the velociraptors'



small size and make them serious opponents. Natives of Venus have a veritable hatred for Lalaoami Sshu and hunt them down wherever they meet them. Anyone who kills a velociraptor wins great honor by his deed, and the brilliantly green feathers are treated as a special treasure and keepsake. Surprisingly then, it is strange to learn that, in the Russian colonies especially, there have been successful attempts at training these animals. Velociraptors are distinguished by their fair share of viciousness, but they are also capable of heeding commands like the more intelligent breeds of dogs. One drawback to domestication is that the loathing the natives feel towards these animals always causes trouble when working with humans who rely on trained specimens.

Legendary Animals

There is a host of stories and rumors regarding mythical creatures existing somewhere in the Venusian wilderness. Some people doubt that it is even possible to reveal all the mysteries of the pathless, foggy marshes. Below is a short selection of the most interesting rumors and legends.

- Repeatedly, Lizard-men have spoken of giant, flesh-eating plants in the depths of the jungle, which are said to be capable of swallowing an entire human-sized creature at once. Theoretically, such plants are absolutely conceivable on Venus. As long as there is no material evidence of their existence, the 'man-eating plant' has to remain in the realm of legends.
- During his Venusian odysseys, MacKenzie repeatedly observed sea snakes of enormous size, as well as a kraken-like creature of awe-inspiring bulk. The latter killed two of his companions by pulling them off their boat and devouring them. So far, MacKenzie's reports are the only indication of such animals.
- While MacKenzie lived among the Lizard-men inhabiting the island now bearing his name, he encountered the skull of a giant flying creature in an ancient rock cave. He dubbed it the 'Venusian Roc'. The natives call the brightly patterned animal *Opeme u Mola*, which translates as 'sky screamer'. Local legends speak of sacrifices to the *Opeme u Mola* in the form of unfortunate Lizard-men. Other stories link them to the *Nahe Gadewalu*, or 'elders', an apparently magic-using earlier race of lizard-folk. It is unclear whether the "sky screamer" species still exists or has gone extinct.
- Several consistent reports by settlers and natives point out the existence of giant turtles with shell diameters of up to 100 feet, or 30 meters. These *Nomele Palelinnu* ('boat overturners') are said to be carnivorous. At least one tribe of sea-faring Lizard-men has reportedly trained some *Nomele Palelinnu* to build their huts on the animals' backs and use them as living rafts.

Velociraptor

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Dinosaur **Health:** 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma:** 0

Dexterity: 5 **Intelligence:** 1

Strength: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 6

Move: 8 (16)* **Defense:** 8

Perception: 6 **Stun:** 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Stealth	5	3	8	(4)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Run (doubles its movement when running)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Tail	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L

More Venusian animals are described in the Chapter *Flora and Fauna of Venus* in the **Core Rules**, starting p. 106.

Land Animals

Apatosaurus	p. 107
Hadrosaurus	p. 107
Hoplite	p. 108
Marsh Devils	p. 108
Opano ('Tree Crushers')	p. 108
Sailbacks	p. 109
Stegosaurus	p. 109
Steller's Dragon	p. 110
Tyrannosaurus	p. 110

Water Animals

Ichtyosaurus	p. 111
MacKenzie's Leviathan	p. 111
White-Headed Sea Turtle	p. 111

Flying Animals

Butcher-Bird	p. 112
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Water Animals

Dunkleosteus (Vono-La-Na)

The “shark of Venus” can be found at almost any coast, and sometimes these predators even venture in the waters of the mangrove swamps. A dunkleosteus can reach lengths of 30 feet, or 10 meters, although most specimens are only 10 to 13 feet (3-4 meters) long. The animals grow continuously until they die. Usually, they do not reach a very old age, as the fish tend to prey on each other or are hunted by other, larger sea creatures. Therefore, ten-meter long dunkleosteus can safely be considered to be among the oldest and most savage of their kind.

Dunkleosteus

Animal Companion 3

Archetype: Animal **Health:** 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 6 **Charisma:** 0
Dexterity: 7 **Intelligence:** 1
Strength: 7 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 3 **Initiative:** 7
Move: 28 (0)* **Defense:** 13
Perception: 6 **Stun:** 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	7	4	12	(6)
Stealth	7	3	7**	(3+)
Survival	1	3	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	-3	13 L	(6+) L
Tail	3 N	-3	12 N	(6) N

*Dunkleosteuses double their Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water.

** Dunkleosteuses suffer a -3 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Jonah Fish (Homa-Huadha)

Only after establishing closer contact with the tribes living along the MacKenzie coast did human explorers find out about the existence of the Jonah fish. The animal was named by the Anglican missionary *Sir Albert Hastings*, who was reminded of the biblical story of Jonah and the whale when proud Lizard-men fisherfolk showed him the beached cadaver of a ‘Homa-Huadha’ they were stripping of meat. Jonah fish are a species of placoderm and can be twice as large as Earth’s blue whales. The 30 feet (10 meters) long head with its gargantuan maw used for sucking in plankton is armored with thick bone plates. Fascinatingly, the Jonah fish has “telescopic” eyes it can extend from its head. Even though these creatures are strictly eaters of plankton, Lizard-men assure scientists that Jonah fish can become very aggressive. Their meat is a delicacy, and their fat can be processed into very useful train

oil, just as that of their terrestrial counterparts. Already, businesses in all the colonies are planning whaling expeditions to hunt for the Jonah fish. This enterprise promises considerable profits, as it will finally put an end to expensive oil and soap imports from Earth. One interesting technological challenge will be to make the whaling ships submersible, as the Jonah fish is rarely seen at the surface.

Jonah Fish

Animal Companion 5

Archetype: Animal **Health:** 29

Primary Attributes

Body: 10 **Charisma:** 0
Dexterity: 9 **Intelligence:** 0
Strength: 10 **Willpower:** 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 13 **Initiative:** 9
Move: 38 (0)* **Defense:** 6 (8)**
Perception: 4 **Stun:** 10

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	10	7	19	(8)
Stealth	9	4	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Robust 1 (+2 Health rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	13 L	-13	8 L	(4) L
Tail	13 N	-13	8 N	(4) N

* Jonah fish double their Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water.

** Jonah fish have a strong coat of scales, which grants them a +2 bonus on their Passive Defense.

*** Jonah fish suffer a -13 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Flying Animals

Dimorphodon (Raipuati)

A shrill cackling and a ferocious stench suggest the presence of a flock of dimorphodons. These ugly, roughly three feet, or one meter, long flying dinosaurs live in groups of five to ten animals and preferably build their nests on the caps of giant mushrooms. Their unpopularity is not just founded on their repulsive appearance or their pungent odor, but also on their decidedly unpleasant nature. The animals are carrion feeders and behave similarly to Earth’s corvids. Sometimes, they attack humans and animals for sport, exhibiting a malicious mixture of playful instincts and cruelty. As if that was not devious enough, they excrete poisonous caustic feces. Some Venusian shamans use dimorphodon guano as the primary ingredient in “fascinating” arrow and respiratory poisons.



Dimorphodon

Animal Companion 0

Archetype: Dinosaur Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 1
Strength: 1 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: -1 Initiative: 4
Move: 4 (2)* Defense: 6
Perception: 4 Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	1	2	3	(1+)
Stealth	3	0	4**	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	+1	4 L	(2) L

*Dimorphodons use their full Move rating when flying, but only half their Move rating when running.

** Dimorphodons receive a +1 Size bonus on Stealth rolls.

Emperor Dragonfly (Gaoguovomu)

For a long time, the emperor dragonfly was considered to be a fairy tale creature, a gullible lizard-man myth, or the feverish dream of hallucinating orchid hunters. Then, the crew of research zeppelin *Lohengrin* managed to photograph an emperor dragonfly. The (grainy) plates suggest that these insects are not really

dragonflies, but seem rather to be flying millipedes. Their 50 feet (15 meters) long bodies are distinctly segmented, and the front fifth of their torso carries three pairs of iridescent wings. The head with its enormous mandibles does rather obviously seem to have eyes. One could think the *gaoguovomu* is a species from another world (➡ **World Below the World**, p. 166) Not even the oldest shamans and sages can say why the lizard-men call these animals *gaoguovomu*, which translates as “Messenger of Decay”. Emperor dragonflies react aggressively to anything that moves through the air around them. The *Lohengrin* only escaped an attack because the photographed specimen was fully absorbed in dismembering a group of pteranodons. Various universities and scientific societies have offered sizable rewards for the capture of a live or at least undamaged emperor dragonfly.

Emperor Dragonfly

Animal Companion 4

Archetype: Insect Health: 20

Primary Attributes

Body: 8 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 7 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 9 Willpower: 6

Secondary Attributes

Size: 6 Initiative: 7
Move: 16 (8)* Defense: 9
Perception: 6 (10) Stun: 8

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	9	6	17	(8+)
Stealth	7	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	3	5	(3+)



Talents**Keen Sense (+4 Perception bonus for smelling)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)**

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	6 L	-6	17 L	(8+) L
Mandibles	8 L	-6	19 L	(9+) L
Leg	6 N	-6	17 N	(8+) N

* Emperor dragonflies use their full Move rating when flying, and half their Move rating when on land.

** Emperor dragonflies suffer a -6 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Bladewing

Even on Venus 'pretty' and 'dangerous' are not mutually exclusive. Bladewings are extraordinarily beautiful butterflies with opalescent wings of ten centimeters across. They are wholly harmless, as long as one does not touch their wings, whose edges are razor-sharp and can cause nasty lacerations, which are as painful as paper cuts. It is only a small consolation that this touch is usually much more fatal for the fragile butterflies, whose wings usually break off, killing the animal. If one is more careful, the injury risk is minimal for both observer and butterfly. Bladewings are only dangerous in swarms. At times, the insects will gather in their millions and form large clouds of flying blades. Anyone who is engulfed in such a swarm will quite literally be filleted. Even zeppelins can be at risk from swarms of bladewings.

In the yellow literature of the cheap dime novel, bladewings cut open the envelopes and gas-bags of dirigibles, which then plummet to their doom. This is, of course, absolute nonsense. The real danger lies in masses of these insects being sucked into the engines, which can cause massive, often fatal damage.

Bladewings (Swarm)

Animal Companion 2**Archetype: Insect** **Health: 12*****Primary Attributes**

Body: 5 **Charisma: 0**
Dexterity: 5 **Intelligence: 0**
Strength: 3 **Willpower: 5**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 **Initiative: 5**
Move: 8 (4)** **Defense: 8**
Perception: 5 **Stun: 5**

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Stealth	5	2	5***	(2+)
Survival	0	3	5	(2+)

Talents**Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)**

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Cut	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L

* Only weapons with an Area of Effect inflict full damage on a swarm. All other weapons inflict a maximum of 1 point of damage per hit.

** A swarm of bladewings uses its normal Move rating when flying, and half its Move rating when on land.

*** A swarm of bladewings suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Quetzalcoatlus (VuoCuoLuo)

The *VuoCuoLuo* ("Windmaster") reigns supreme over the skies of Venus. This giant flying dinosaur with a 13-meter wingspan was only recently discovered by human explorers. Normally, these animals live in the largely uncharted southern hemisphere of the planet, but something has driven several groups of them northward. The name, which is reminiscent of the Quetzalcoatl feathered snake of Mesoamerican legend, is inspired by the long, feathered tail decorating the male *VuoCuoLuos*. The animals are carnivores and potentially dangerous to humans due to their powerful talons and ability to carry off large prey. There are vague reports of tribes in the southern hemisphere who use the birds as riding animals, even though it is unclear how they manage to tame these wild flying dinosaurs.

Quetzalcoatlus

Animal Companion 3**Archetype: Dinosaur** **Health: 6****Primary Attributes**

Body: 7 **Charisma: 0**
Dexterity: 6 **Intelligence: 0**
Strength: 6 **Willpower: 5**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 3 **Initiative: 6**
Move: 12 (6)* **Defense: 10**
Perception: 5 (9)** **Stun: 7**

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	6	3	8**	(4)
Survival	0	3	5	(2+)

Talents****Sharp Sight (+4 bonus on all sight-relevant Perception rolls)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival)****Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth)**

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	3 L	-3	10 L	(5) L
Tail	3 N	-3	10 N	(5) N
Talon	3 L	-3	10 L	(5) L

* Quetzalcoatluses use their full Move rating when flying and half their Move rating when running.

** Quetzalcoatluses suffer a -3 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Small Animals of Venus

Of course not all Venusian creatures are huge, voracious, venomous, or otherwise dangerous monsters. Some are actually quite small. Apart from the amicable *pacyosaurs* (p. 92), which are commonly used as mounts, the 6-inch (20-centimeter) *glimmer roaches* (*Vlaoling*) are often found as pets. These animals have been adopted as household mascots, even by some of the better houses in the colonies, which often keep one or two of these pretty, docile animals at home. They are appreciated for their beauty and their playful nature. In addition, they are also very useful, as they feed on the ubiquitous isopods, or woodlice, of Venus. In Venusstadt, a glimmer roach breeders' association was established earlier this year. Venusians themselves also love the

Vlaoring – though generally as a hearty snack and for their colorful chitin, which they process into beautiful jewelry.

The flesh that is offered in the form of cutlet, steak, scallops or boiled meat on Venus usually comes from the **boar lizard** (*SsumSsum* in Venusian). These small ceratosaurs can confidently be called the “swine of Venus”. The SsumSsum have been domesticated by the Ishtar culture for generations, a practice that was eagerly adopted by German, Italian, and British colonists alike. Boar lizards are an undemanding and yielding source of meat. Their aromatic and delicious taste is only faintly reminiscent of pork.

Another nourishing meal, albeit with a peculiar, earthy-smoky aftertaste, is provided by the 6 feet (2 meters) long **bacon worm**, which breaks up the soft soils of Venus. Its meat probably still has a long way to go until it becomes a nutritious staple for settlers, but “tinned bacon” is now a regular standby in British army stores, if not exactly a popular one.

One very inconspicuous representative of Venusian fauna is the thumb-sized **ghost lizard** (*Tua Tua*). The animal resembles a gecko and feeds mainly on pollen, overripe fruit, and small insects. The first humans on Venus thought the Tua-Tua lizard to be another superstition of the natives. They probably still would if it had not been for a German officer, who accidentally killed one of these shy reptiles while eating a forest fruit. The ghost lizards boast the singular ability to make their entire bodies almost completely invisible. Contrary to many species that only adapt their appearance to the environment, Tua-Tuas are actually able to disappear in front of the eyes of would-be predators, apart from a slight visual distortion and their oversized retinas. This not only makes them a much sought-after research subject, but also a stale joke on Earth’s funfairs and cabinets of curiosities: “Come see the invisible lizards!”

Dinosaurs may be the largest inhabitants of Venus, but the insects outnumber them by far. The largest known insect – apart from such giants as the **emperor dragonfly** (p. 97) or the **stilted horror** (p. 94) – is a species of dragonfly with a wingspan of 1.5 feet (0.5 meters). Below is a short account of the very smallest, common animals, for which you will not need game values. Your players will be glad if you do not insist on rolling for combat against individual fern flies.

The most annoying creepy-crawlies of Venus are the ever-present **woodlice**, or *Sssp* as the Venusians call them. They can be found under floorboards, in closets, among bed sheets – simply everywhere. As soon as humans began to colonize Venus, it appears the woodlice began to colonize the colonists. Few homes were spared visits from these, one of the worst species of vermin. According to some stories, groups of woodlice would silently gather on the ceilings above dinner tables and await just the right moment to drop onto the plates. The natives of Venus do not seem to mind sharing their homes with legions of woodlice. The colonists from Earth are more sensitive in this regard and have come up with a number of ideas to handle the insect situation, ranging from beer traps and poison nebulizers to sticky woodlice paper. So far, none of these methods has proven effective for long.

Swamp termites (*AoJamja*) are much less annoying than the woodlice. These colonial insects resemble a mixture of crabs and termites on Earth. They can climb and swim, and they construct their floating nest balls from reeds and mud. Usually, colonists ignore swamp termites, while Venusians consider them a delicacy and serve them to their guests, either live or mashed and formed into mushy dumplings. Various blood-sucking crawlers also abound on Venus. The **fern flies** shall suffice as an example of such nuisances. Their serrated proboscis is ideal for penetrating the thick skin of reptiles and can cause uncomfortably large wounds on humans.

The blood loss occurring after a fern fly sting is really not worth mentioning – unlike the festering rash that follows it, of course.

Among the settler population, the **mineur** has achieved great notoriety. This loathsome insect lays its eggs under the skin of its hosts. The removal of the clutch often results in what is colloquially known as ‘colonial scars’ or ‘miner-pocks’.

Venusian Flora

The Morning Star teems with life, and the planet’s flora is even more diverse than its wildlife. There is hardly a single spot on the entire planet which is not, in one way or another, covered with vegetation – even if it is merely a thin layer of lichen and algae. A rich and moist green is the dominant color wherever you look. So far, only a small fraction of all Venusian plants has been researched and catalogued. The odds that the Morning Star’s plantlife will ever be fully explored are low. Most areas of the planet have a vegetation density similar to the rain forests of Borneo. It has been discovered that the plantlife, like the wildlife, is similar to that which existed on Earth about 150 million years ago, including a rich variety of early flowering plants. There are also several plants that are intrinsic to Venus and have no equivalents among terrestrial plants – at least none that have been discovered thus far. The size of Venusian flora ranges from micro-organisms to plants that, in comparison, reduce the mighty giant redwoods from Earth to dwarfs. Even so, the fact that Venus’ undergrowth is denser than the mycelium on a moldy blackberry does not mean that the flora is identical everywhere on the planet. Since Venusian flora is so rich and diverse, we can only provide a small glimpse into the plant kingdom:

The highlands are dominated by „small“ trees. The vegetation here is reminiscent of terrestrial rainforests, with comparably low density. The trees grow up to about 65 to 165 feet, or 20-50 meters, in height. **Kalsa-trees** and **ground pines** dominate the highlands, alongside **giant ferns** and **palm trees**. In these areas of the Morning Star, agriculture and logging are possible without any major obstacles, which is another good reason why both human colonists and the more highly developed Lizard-men have settled in the highlands. Since the sunlight is more intense here than in the lower regions, the largest number of flowering plants are found in the highlands too, ranging from the **common climbing Cytherian daisies** up to the vile-smelling **corpse flower**, which has a calyx that can measure up to nine feet, or three meters, in diameter.

There are forest-free areas in the highlands as well, with grasslands overgrown with the widest varieties of **Oma Jolima**, **reeds**, and exotic **bamboo**, which has plate flowers that tower over all other grasses. Since the highland grasslands are usually wetter than the forests, traveling here is paradoxically more difficult than in the forest. Prairie grasslands can grow up to ten feet, or three meters, high.

Travelling through the lowlands, one quickly comes across the true **macroflora** of the planet with giant trees growing up to incredible heights. Some specimens of the **lowland giant kalsa** measure over 650 feet tall, or 200 meters. The branches of this huge and sprawling tree can grow several feet thick and can thus even serve as “hiking” trails above the muddy lowland grounds – allowing for good climbing skills and appropriate safety measures. Because of the dense vegetation with huge trees, one could travel for hundreds of miles through the deep jungle without ever touching the ground – once one has penetrated into the regions where it is possible to move from branch to branch. Mosses, lichens, ferns,

vines, fungi, and similar vegetation thrive at the expense of the larger plants. Between the giant trees there are always smaller trees and bushes. Many plants form aerial roots, which over time turn into mighty trunks. It is not always easy to distinguish one tree from the other. Rather, the forest partially forms a thick, tangled mass. As the sunlight in the lowlands is a little weaker, mushrooms sometimes reach enormous sizes as well. There is, for example, the **rock fungus**, which can form gigantic pillars and fantastic shapes. Indeed, early explorers initially thought the fungus to be a rock formation.

In the mangroves, the proportion of giant trees slowly declines. Instead, lean **coal trees** and smaller Ishtar pastures can be found which form aerial roots. Between these lie wide water surfaces covered with all kinds of **hadrosaurus groats**, **kelp**, and **swamp grass**. Unlike terrestrial fungi, some types of Venusian giant mushrooms are comfortable in water. Some fungal growths, the tissue of which can achieve the hardness and stability of Oma Jolima, grow in and out of the mangroves in the shallow waters of the Venusian coasts. There they rise out of the water and form peculiarly shaped „islands“ on which in turn numerous parasitic plants and fungi settle. The largest of these fungi found so far had a height of 330 feet, or 100 meters, and a diameter of up to 990 feet, or 300 meters. Some Lizard-men tribes climb the trunks of these organic islands and build villages upon the „mushroom caps“, which are naturally easy to defend.

The seas are, as far as has been explored, densely covered with fields of seaweed, enormous coral reefs, and oak-sized **Bismarck anemones** (which are, strictly speaking, not plants, but will be mentioned here nonetheless). Numerous algae fields with different types of coloring give the surface a peculiar appearance, seeming gilded with the oily coruscations of all the prismatic hues.

It is significant that many of the plants have almost incredible chemical properties. The planet's flora offers fascinating

substances, toxins, and materials. The meat of rock mushrooms can achieve the hardness of stone. **Prototaxites** causes a pseudo-rejuvenation. The fungal **mucus crawler** 'eats' morbid skin growths while avoiding intact skin. Some plants produce complex chemical compounds. Others remove heavy metals from the soil, which subsequently merely need to be extracted from the harvested plant. And these are just a few examples. The potential economic utility of the Venusian jungles is enormous and the opportunities are dizzying!

Venusian Crops

Besides fruits and vegetables which simply supplement the diet, such as **Venusian apples**, **banana grass**, and **swamp turnips**, the plants listed below are used by humans on a large scale. They are therefore discussed in more detail. Other plants provide raw materials for the chemical industry (e.g. very pure oils, greases, and dyes), and every week new species are found. Yet, the benefits of the substances obtained are not limited to the industrial sector alone. Approaches in medical research have been promising since, inter alia, anti-inflammatory agents were discovered. Thus there is hope for further drugs, which might even cure cancer and other serious diseases, or even defeat old age. Rumors speak of various drugs, stimulants, or even delirants and mind-expanders allowing for memories of past lives. Additionally, at auctions on Earth exotic and beautiful Venusian orchids are sold for premium prices, and some adventurers have earned fortunes with a single superb specimen.

Aephodilia

At first glance, the Aephodilia looks like a variety of terrestrial Asphodeloideae, from which it has also received its name. It is a herbaceous plant - that is, it produces no woody elements. It is easy to grow and can be processed almost completely. During its growth it forms meaty, high-protein leaves that can be processed into a solid curd-like mass. This mass is very rich in nutrients, but completely tasteless, so it has to be seasoned accordingly when used in a tasty dish. For the Russians, the use of panicles that grow from the center of the plant seems to be of greater importance. In these panicles, small triangular seeds grow from which one can produce a strong grain spirit. In recent years, this has become one of the largest commercial successes of the Russian colony, as *Venera Vodka*.

Bau-bau

On every plateau of Venus the **bau-bau** tree can be found. The bau-bau has a spherical shape and can grow up to between 25 and 30 feet, or eight to ten meters, tall. All year long the tree produces round brown pods, which develop a reddish color and have a pleasant, slightly sour taste when ripe. It also exerts a slight calming effect on humans, which is why it has been used as a local equivalent to tea for years. However, bau-bau loses this effect when heated, so the fruit is mainly used in soft drinks or as basket fruit. Bau-bau does not cause hallucinations and does not lead to addictiveness. No one suspects at this time that its stimulating effect is caused by an active substance in the bau-bau which, in the human body, is converted into the hormone serotonin. The effects of bau-bau are nevertheless well known. The tree is grown



mainly on German plantations and exported from there to Earth. Since 1886, a manufacturer from Detmold in Lippe produces the famous *Baubau-Brause* (or *bau-bau soda*, the proprietary *Dr. Müller's Venus Tonic*), which has found buyers throughout Europe with increasing success. In the German Empire it became an enormous sensation within a few months.

For Venusians the fruit of the bau-bau is not edible, as it causes them stomach cramps (bau-bau in Venusian means 'pain-pain', which refers to the stomach discomforts Lizard-men suffer after eating the fruit). Therefore, they use the juice only as a solvent for poisoned arrows and wonder greatly about the humans to whom the bau-bau fruit apparently tastes delicious.

Cotton

Venusian cotton (*Loranthacea gossypia veneris*) is a tree parasite similar to the terrestrial mistletoe. It grows in the branches of a select number of Venusian tree species, which have so far only been cultivated on an unsatisfactory scale. In the wild, they can mostly be found in the Gula Highlands and the Venusian Apennines. Therefore, their harvest is primarily the domain of the Italian colony. The Venusian cotton grows seed hairs between 10 and 13 feet (three to four meters) above the ground in large clusters, to protect their sweet seeds from the ubiquitous insects. As opposed to their earthly counterparts, they are water resistant, more resilient, and largely rot-resistant - a natural necessity, considering the climatic conditions on Venus. Since the planet has no seasons, Venusian cotton constantly produces seeds and seed hairs, allowing for continuous harvests and thus a high yield of plant fibers. Because of its growth habit, however, the harvesting of the cotton itself is troublesome, strenuous, and not without danger (due to the altitude). The substance obtained from the fiber retains its water-repellent and robust properties, which makes dyeing more difficult, but also makes it as comfortable to wear as silk. Additionally, it can be used for rain jackets or even as solid exterior covers for industrial use, without further processing.

Blue Venus Dew

From the sticky seeds of the blue Venus dew, a tall-growing grass species, a kind of resin can be obtained which is extremely flammable and can not only be used for refining fuels, but could revolutionize the development of explosives.

Cytherian Orchid

The famous Cytherian orchid is appreciated not only for its rich, bright colors, but also for its surprisingly seductive fragrance. Unfortunately, the flower is extremely rare. All attempts at cultivating the orchid have failed without exception. Human and Martian collectors often pay astronomical amounts for intact, living plants, but well groomed, dried flowers are worth a fortune as well. In addition to the breathtaking beauty of the Cytherian orchid, the Lizard-men consider the plant to be highly medicinal. Shamans use the flowers of the orchid to treat woodlouse fever and moss-fungus disease. Among human physicians the effects of the Cytherian orchid are controversial, as there is not enough research data available. So far it has only been found in the rough lowlands south of Mount Maxwell, and many travelers have already paid with their lives in the search for the precious plant. It

is not known whether the Cytherian orchid can be found in other, more secluded areas of Venus.

Coloring Grass

Coloring grass, also called Venusian Indigo, is a type of thin bamboo that grows in the lowlands. From the pith a natural dye can be extracted that is especially suitable for dyeing cotton. Unlike terrestrial indigo, coloring grass also exists in red and yellow. The dye is rarely exported to Earth, as the aniline dyes used there are cheaper.

Filtermoss

This inconspicuous moss grows in thick clumps on trees in the swamps of the lowlands. It converts carbon dioxide into oxygen even in low light and requires very little nutrition - which is why it is predicted to become much used in space travel, where it could become an important component in systems to support life.

Graycherry Bush

The buds of the **graycherry bush** have earned their name for the strange colorless fruits of the plant. They are used to produce a foul-smelling oil which repels the mineur, an odious and tenacious parasite. Unfortunately, the effect is weak and the oil often causes an itchy rash in addition to the pervasive stench. Many soldiers, however, much prefer this over cutting these loathsome beetles out from underneath their skin with a knife.

Great Leadcap

Several types of Venusian mushrooms, such as the **great leadcap**, with a fruiting body that can grow up to 18 inches tall (half a meter), usefully collect heavy metals and rare earths, which are expensive and rare on Earth, in a vein-like braid. They need only to be harvested and cleaned.

Devil's Onion

Among the many Venusian plants there are some that can be used as an intoxicant. The best known among the colonists is the **devil's onion**, an onion-like plant of purple coloring. With Lizard-men, even small amounts of the infernal onion produce strong delirium, which is why the shamanesses use them against their enemies. With humans, the plant has a different effect: when small amounts are consumed, humans reach a mild state of intoxication and they feel 'cooler'. Only in excessive doses does delirium and an aggressive bloodlust set in. The treacherous nature of the onion is that its active substances can accumulate in the body over time, so that prolonged consumption can cause delusions and madness. Craving on ceasing to consume the onion also lead to uncontrolled violence. Several cases are already known in which acts of brutal violence could be traced back to an onion-habit. Although the consumption of the devil's onion has now been prohibited in all colonies, the use of the drug could not be rooted out. Meanwhile, nowadays the alien drug can even be found in the opium dens of Whitechapel.

Jopapo

The Jopapo bean is an example of a plant that is beneficial in more ways than one - and provides a lot of people with work. The crushed shells are used as insect-resistant filling and insulating material. Its case serves as the basis for jewelry and utensils. The savory pulp is eaten raw or dried, and fruit oil can be expressed from the kernels. Indeed, because of its nutritious and diverse use, the plant provides many people with their daily bread.

Empress Augusta's Puffball

At first glance, one might think it would be *lèse-majesté* to name this gray-flecked fungal growth with wet-purulent warts after the wife of the new German Emperor. However, behind the repulsive exterior of the roughly fist-sized tubers, called *Mug Mugu* by the Lizard-men, hides an excellent edible mushroom with an unparalleled aromatic flavor. The human colonists would have overlooked the fungus if a German colonial officer had not been forced to try the puffball during a visit to a native village. He excitedly returned to Venusstadt with a whole bag of mushrooms. Since then, the Empress Augusta's Puffball is a desirable supplement to the Sunday roast on Venus. In Earth's gourmet cuisine the mushroom has been recently discovered too, though the fungus' appearance is preferably concealed through breading. In the high-class restaurants of Berlin, London, and Rome, the Venusian fungus has established itself as a side dish to lobster. On Venus, the fungus can be found quite often, so that less wealthy colonists also have the opportunity to serve it during the weekend. It is the transport costs that drive up the prices on Earth. One should nevertheless be careful to harvest young puffballs, as the spores of mature specimens can cause severe respiratory irritation with humans.

Kalsa-Wood

Another major export product of Venus is the wood of the **Kalsa-tree** (*Kalsa kalsa*). It is a fast-growing broad-leaved tree which produces a wood that is not only stronger than a German oak, but also lighter. However, the texture of Kalsa-wood, with its greenish coloring, appears busy and unattractive, which is why it has so far only been reluctantly used by carpenters for furniture. Instead, its use has been limited to strictly technological applications. Thanks to its excellent properties it is threatening to displace terrestrial woods in this area. The Kalsa-tree is grown on Venus in gigantic nurseries. It takes around five years for a tree to reach the required felling height of about 30 feet, or ten meters, at a trunk diameter of up to 1.5 feet, or half a meter. The very young shoots of the Kalsa-tree in particular are tasty treats for numerous small pterosaurs, so that it has become a real science among the settlers to develop pterosaurs scarecrows. But this development is still in its infancy.

Glaebush

This head-high bush grows along the riverbanks of the Aphrodite and brings forth inconspicuous white flowers. These flowers are occasionally used in the perfume industry, but the bush is mainly used for its branches. These produce an extremely strong adhesive resin, which can be dissolved and processed using strong alcohol.

Glowing Mushrooms

The Venusian luminous mycena (*Mycena lucifera maxwellii*) was discovered on Mount Maxwell during the second English Venus expedition under Collingswood, and used as a light source. The lining of the mushroom cap produces an amazingly bright, greenish-yellow glow at night, although not sufficient to illuminate entire buildings or roads. It is nevertheless well suited as a desk or reading lamp. The fruiting body of the fungus and part of the mycelium in the soil are dug up and put into a pot in which they can be easily transported. It will emit light for about two weeks, without further care. The fungus is grown on cleared land, where its mycelium can grow several square miles large and many luminous fruiting bodies can be formed regularly.

The luminous mycena shines only on Venus, which biologists attribute to a hitherto undiscovered element in the Venusian atmosphere. When removed from Venus in a space-ship for only a few minutes, the glow will be dimmed immediately and never return, even after being returned to Venus.

Lobalong

This stimulant, which is also consumed by the Venusians, has effects similar to the alkaloid cocaine, but far stronger. It is rumored to cause an injurious Lobalong-habit, especially among humans. Although it affects people and Lizard-men alike, it is far more powerfully affecting to the human.

New Tar Bush

The new tar bush secretes large quantities of a black, oily substance which not only has excellent properties for mechanical gearbox lubrication, but, when processed, also forms a useful rubber-like substance.

Oma Jolima

Oma Jolima is a reed-like plant from the lowlands. When alive, the plant is quite soft, yet hardens rapidly after harvesting. In this hardened state, the tubes become as strong as ebony, but are much lighter and about as flexible as horn. Under normal circumstances, items made from Oma Jolima can withstand the Venusian elements for several years - if they are properly maintained. When they are harvested, the tubes are immediately formed into the desired shape, so they can harden accordingly. Lizard-men use young shoots for making arrows, and older tubes to fabricate javelins, harpoons, and lances. War clubs, axes, and sticks, but also shields and helmets are made by braiding several shoots and allowing them to harden. Scientists have so far catalogued six different subspecies of this plant, which can be encountered everywhere on Venus. The small differences between subspecies are solely a concern to botanists and so we will not tax our reader further on this subject.

Prototaxites

In some particularly wet coastal regions, a cone-shaped giant mushroom thrives, growing up to 16 feet, or five meters - the so-called 'Prototaxites'. Not long ago, it was discovered rather

by accident that the meat of these giant mushrooms can cause a pseudo-rejuvenation with humans. After consuming the fungus, any wrinkles and age spots tighten and miraculously disappear from the skin. Consumers of Prototaxites can appear up to 20 years younger, depending on the age and quality of the fungus, and the effects of a Prototaxites meal last up to four weeks. Therefore, not unsurprisingly given the vanities of the present age, enormous sums are paid on Earth for real (and fake) Prototaxites preparations. However, even though all the newspapers of Europe praise the Prototaxites as a source of eternal youth, the consumption of the fungus does not truly rejuvenate. Consumption of Prototaxites only tightens the skin and does not change the actual age of the consumer. Some people are allergic to the wondrous Venusian fungus, the eating of which can prove fatal.

Dinosaur Fruits

Also known as Apato-berries, these fruits grow on the Benton Peninsula and in eastern Themis. The tree that bears them has a round crown, up to 15 feet (five meters) in diameter, which grows on a trunk that can reach between 3 and 30 feet in height (1-10 meters). The fruits themselves are about the size of melons and hard as rocks. Apatosauruses are virtually the only animals that are able to reach the fruit and digest it. On its way through the long digestive tracts of the beasts, the fruit becomes soft and starts to ferment, after which the alcohol passes into the animals' blood. The Apatosauruses are aware of this effect and are only too keen on the fruit. The evidently tipsy animals excrete the already germinating seeds of the fruit a few days later, usually dozens of miles away from the mother tree. When, during their migrations, the animals arrive at a new tree, the cycle begins anew.

Swamp Grass

Since there are only small deposits of oil near the German colony on Venus, and these are solely reserved for the operation of airships, the energy supply for all Venus' colonies is almost exclusively based on swamp grass, which grows in vast quantities. For this purpose, the grass first has to be dried by being pressed and heaped in large piles in special drying houses. After adding a fermentation starter for bacteria via dead swamp grass, the grass starts to

ferment. The heat created allows for further drying. Within a few days, a pile has 'cooked' by itself and must subsequently be cut in time before it self-ignites. The 'cooked' swamp grass is pressed into briquettes and can be burned as peat. Settlers describe the resulting smell as resinous, yet pleasant.

Venus Apple

The name of this fruit is misleading – „Venusian tree potato“ would have been more appropriate. This wide, sweeping shrub can grow to over 15 feet tall (5 m) and bears fist-sized fruits throughout the year that resemble apples. These fruits are indeed edible, rather like terrestrial potatoes, but must be boiled or roasted beforehand and taste similarly bland. The Venus apple is one of the most important types of food in the colonies and can be found on the menu practically daily (ranking only with “Tinned Bacon” for popularity).

Venusian Angel's Coat

The flowers of this beautiful and wonderfully fragrant flower are dried and used as home decoration. In the perfumer's trade it is used as a fine and novel fragrance.

Venus Pepper

An inconspicuous shrub grows in the forests of Ishtar which is about six feet, or two meters, high and has almost round, fleshy leaves. Only the yellow flowers, which are replaced by small yellow fruits throughout the year, stand out as remarkable. These fruits are the spiciest known substance in the solar system - hotter than terrestrial chilies or even Martian Gruuma weed. **Venus pepper** can only be used in tiny quantities in cooking. In general, the peel of the fruit is usually rubbed on the pot in which the dish is cooked, although it is a popular children's trick to add a whole pepper to the dish of a victim. People who have experienced the taste, say it is like biting into a red-hot poker. After a few minutes, Venus pepper paralyzes the nerves in the human mucous membranes and the effect lasts for hours. Some terrestrial dentists are currently experimenting with the Venus pepper as an anesthetic.



Adventures on Venus

"Do you want to bet that an adventure will happen to us on our ride, even if it is just a small one?"

— Karl May, *Across the Desert*

Venus has a lot more to offer than big game hunts and expeditions into the jungle, she is her very own world, populated with countless interesting characters. Adventures just wait to jump a hero! This chapter offers some hints and tips for play on and with Venus.

Peculiarities of the Morning Star

A game master has to keep some things in mind for an adventure on Venus. The planet is hot and humid and the days are an hour shorter than on Earth. These conditions pose trouble especially to new arrivals. After weeks or even months in space, floating about in zero gravity, breathing the same processed air, a character is greeted by a wet towel wrapped around his body and pushed into his lungs: the Venusian atmosphere. At the same time he will notice a heavy millstone around his neck, called gravity. After the first few steps, he won't feel like immediately heading into the jungle and hunt dinosaurs - he needs to become acclimatized first, which will take quite some time. Eventually, a week or two later, after adapting to the local conditions he can finally set off on a new adventure, just to be harried further by the merciless environment.

Reclimatization

In game terms, adapting to Venus' environment is treated as a disease (see "Diseases" in the **Core Rules**, p. 213), with the notable exception that you are not allowed to make a Resistance roll - no new arrival is used to climate and gravity, and as such immediately effected by the symptoms. After becoming acclimatized he can no longer become "infected", unless he leaves the planet for a longer period of time.

Symptoms: Similar to a severe flu. Affected adventurers will feel weak and tired, with pains in the head and limb as corresponding symptoms as well as loss of appetite and shortness of breath. Your character's Health rating is temporarily reduced by half.

Healing: 2, a successful constitution check is required per day - beginning with landfall. 10 successes are needed to acclimatize.

Aside from short strolls the patient should avoid exertion. Medical care and massages are only available in large settlements and grant the patient an additional die to his pool for the checks.

First there is unbearable heat. A character who wears unsuitable clothes (e.g. a woolen suit with a fashionable celluloid collar) can receive heat damage (at the game master's discretion) - please see "Exposure" in the **Core Rules**, p. 215. Add to this the frequent fog and rain in the low- and highlands that constantly limit one's sight. The dense fog leads to a -2 sight penalty (see 'Visibility' in the **Core Rules**). Venus' moonless, clouded nights always provide a minimum -4 sight penalty.

Last but not least it is always a possibility to catch one of the multiple diseases endemic to Venus, against which no cure as yet exists (see box on the following page). It is therefore recommended to use diseases in a threat scenario, such as rescuing infected people or searching for a cure.

What are we even doing here anyway?

Apart from the environmental conditions on Venus, there is little difference between adventures taking place on Venus and any other world: On a 'young' world like Venus adventure always beckons. The **Core Rules**' references (p. 15) are as valid here. '**One-shots**', simple and short adventures, offer small changes in pace during everyday life and work as fillers between campaigns, and require no particular effort on part of the game master. All he needs is a simple plot ("rescue the princess", "protect the witness"), a location and a few non-player characters.

Short campaigns or individual, **longer adventures** take place over multiple sessions and are more complex. The heroes interact with many persons, visit different locations and face multiple challenges. A short campaign requires preparation: Aside from the protagonists and antagonists, various places and a more complex plot, the game master has to take into account possible deviations and variable actions. What happens if one of the heroes does not want to save the princess but rather run away with her? Or a witness testimony would cause a huge scandal for one of the heroes' family?

Long campaigns take place over many game sessions. They are designed in a similar way to a TV series or a cycle of novels. A long campaign needs a storyline that determines the events that will take place during the campaign. These events, consisting of various "one-shot", adventures and short campaigns are the building blocks of the story arc. Individual elements such as events or persons from these building blocks influence others and are in turn affected by other events to form a large and living campaign. Also, the Gamemaster has to design a lot of non-player characters, for the whole campaign as well as individual adventures.



Diseases on Venus

Aside from the tropical climate, always an enabling factor for respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, the jungle planet threatens with even greater dangers: unknown diseases. They pose a threat to the lives of humans and in some cases even Martians, whereas Lizard-men seem to be resistant to most of the diseases or are only affected by weakened symptoms. The **swamp rot** is invariably fatal, but renders the infected an invalid for a considerable time beforehand, while **limb grub** causes appalling deformations for the sufferer. Below you will find a list of some widespread diseases on Venus.

Woodlouse Fever

The woodlouse-fever is similar to malaria, receiving its name after the description by infected patients, during bouts of fever, who reported a sensation as if thousands of lice were moving under their skin.

Symptoms: Infected are plagued by bouts of fever every four to five weeks, and the aforementioned "woodlouse feeling". Individual patients even sink into a delirium. The disease itself is rarely deadly, far more problematic are the bloody scratch wounds, self-inflicted by the infected during bouts of fever, because the Venusian climate enables infections.

Infection: The woodlouse-fever's transmission paths are currently unknown – the game master may define them to his liking.

Healing: Unbeknownst to the earthlings, the Lizard-men use the Cytherian orchid as a cure, but the fever's bouts can also be alleviated to a bearable degree by skin ointments and sedatives.

Moss-Fungus Disease

The moss-fungus is a bizarre alien plant that seems to feel right at home on human skin. Many think the moss-fungus is a vile parasite, but according to Dr. August Hoffmann, head of Venusstadt hospital, the moss-fungus is quite to the contrary not a disease but man's best friend on Venus.

Symptoms: a thin, green moss-like layer that spreads all over the victim's skin surface. It feeds on sweat, sebaceous secretions and the surrounding humidity. The thin fungus layer itches a bit when it gets too dry, but also prevents the inevitable pest infestation. Interestingly, the skin fungus releases a substance that increases the body's defenses against other diseases and helps the human organism to better adapt to the hothouse climate of the Morning Star. By now some colonists are covered from head to toe in moss-fungus, walking around with a lime green skin color. Being infected by a skin fungus is a rather horrid thought on Earth – the "infected" on Venus, however, have come to terms with it.

Infection: 2. The infection spreads through spores.

Healing: Multiple cures are currently tested, all developed on Venus, with varying results regarding their effectiveness. Only the Cytherian Orchid shows promising leads.

Lung Sponge

This disease's fitting name, lung sponge, originates from a mould fungus that nests itself into a human's or Martian's air sacs, where it grows and prospers - Lizard-men seem to be immune. Within a few days the sponge expands until it covers the infected lung wholly with a very fine fluff that makes breathing impossible. The disease first appeared in 1886, the pathogen was first identified in 1888.

Symptoms: After two days the infected will suffer from slight breathing difficulties, which will get increasingly worse within the next three days. Additionally, fits of coughing will occur more often and eventually turn into respiratory distress, usually within a week. From this point on the infected receives 1 deadly Wound every day.

Infection: 3 for humans, 4 for Martians. The mould fungus occurs in the Ishtar Lowlands, a region that is frequented more and more by expeditions. Most people suffering from lung sponge seem to have been infected while exploring dark, humid caves. The breath of the infected seems to be a transmission path as well: in Venusstadt a doctor and two nurses probably caught the disease this way. As such, the infected usually wear a facemask or at least a cloth covering their mouth.

Healing: 3. 12 successes are required to shake the disease off. However, this requires the patient to breathe dry air – impossible on Venus – for multiple weeks, so that the fungus can no longer spread in his lungs. Ironically, in this case smoking is healthy - while it won't cure the disease, it slows down the growing of the fungus. As such, it is not unusual, in a Venusian hospital, to see men, women and children chain smoking for their lives. For a full recovery doctors recommend a longer stay in an arid climate, the atmosphere aboard an etherflyer does not suffice. Since there is a risk that passengers aboard a ship will catch the disease, etherflyers with an infected aboard are required to put themselves under quarantine. There are no known pharmaceuticals against Lung sponge.

Nuova Pontebba Plague

Symptoms: Only few facts are known about this horrid disease. It seems to be highly infectious and was responsible for the destruction of the Italian outpost Nuova Pontebba in 1887.

The victims' skin turned purple, they spat bloody foam and finally died in terrible pain, possibly due to internal bleeding. Within three days the whole population of Nuova Pontebba was infected and died agonizing deaths. The last survivor managed to send a garbled message via heliograph to the weekly aerial supply flyer before he died.

Infection: Direct body contact with an infected.

Healing: Unknown, the flyer's crew explored the outpost in space suits, which were generously cleaned with carbolic acid afterwards. More detailed information are not known: since corpses decay rapidly in the Morning Star's hothouse climate, it was not possible to carry out an autopsy. The region around Nuova Pontebba has since been placed under the strictest quarantine.

"And What Do We Do Now?" - More Inspiration

The **Core Rules** offered you some concepts for ideas and inspiration (see p. 10).

Victorian Science Fiction has its place on Venus. Even now technical achievements can be found among the drawing boards of Venusstadt or Fort Collingswood, and the German suspension railway is only one of many projects to develop the colonies. Commercial laboratories research the characteristics of Venusian plants to develop medications which will prove a blessing for humanity – or its downfall. And if an insane scientist can't develop a death ray out of Venus' magnetic field and the ether, than he just isn't trying hard enough!

Another aspect of science fiction is the effect of such things on humans. Good examples are the changes some humans have experienced on Venus (see **The Altered**, p. 152). What does a human do who – just to give an example – can see additional colors? A new world opens up to him that other humans will never

grasp. Will he make his gift public? If so, how will his fellow men react? Will it be amazement, envy, or a lack of understanding? Will he be shunned, in order to prevent infection? Or will he even be put in a laboratory to copy the effect and monetize it?

The **Victorian adventure novel** is the role model for campaigns on the Morning Star. Unknown wilderness, dangerous beasts and strange races can be found as soon as one leaves one's own settlement – be it human colony or a Lizard-man village. Maps of Venus are full of blank spots, scientists from all disciplines could make breathtaking discoveries – they just need to get out into the wilderness.

Dime Novels, often dismissed as mere rubbish, are written to deliver action, style and speed rather than well-rounded characterizations. Everything happens in a – mostly – breathtaking rush – just as the heroes have survived their airship's crash, a hungry Tyrannosaurus Rex mistakes them for their next meal, only to escape into the middle of a battle between savage Lizard-men tribes. While they are still befriendng a tribe, its shamaness is already plotting to take possession of the earthlings' "wonder weapons". In a dime novel, everything is on an exaggerated scale. Expeditions are not about the search for a tedious orchid, but for

'One-Shot': Velvet Paw Must Die

The heroes stumble upon a small settlement (a Lizard-man village or a colonial plantation), which faces a problem: "Velvet Paw" is an old Tyrannosaurus Rex, and the settlement lies in his hunting ground. So far he has preyed upon large omnivores, but he is getting old. A couple of days ago he encountered a small but slow and weak prey – one of the settlement's inhabitants. Velvet Paw took a liking to human flesh and has eaten a dozen settlers since then – among them a hunter who was supposed to get rid of him. The settlement is in dire need of heroes to take care of Velvet Paw before he devours the rest of the villagers. For this adventure the Gamemaster only requires the statistics for some villagers and Velvet Paw (please see **Core Rules**, p. 110: the statistics should be lowered due to age, e.g. lower Speed by 1).

Short Campaign: The Little Lord

The Earl of Farnborough has died. His title - and with it the associated estate - is inherited by the late lord's only son, Lord Cotswold. His lordship has been on Venus for some time now, in order to bag some trophies for his parlor. Unfortunately, he set out on an extended excursion a couple of weeks ago, before the message of his father's death arrived, and has no knowledge of his inheritance. The British authorities request the adventurers to search for the lord and inform him – it is required of him to return to Earth immediately and accept his inheritance. The characters set out for an extensive voyage across Venus and visit different colonies and outposts, following every hint. Nobody suspects that Reginald Sunderland, cousin to his lordship and second in line of succession, will stop

at nothing to get hold of the title. He even sent henchmen to Venus to permanently get rid of his lordship. One of them, Edgar Abingdon, will play the role of friend of the family and try to befriend the heroes. The game master needs to outline all the locations the lord travelled to and who could give the heroes hints on-site about the lord's whereabouts. Those characters as well as the Lords Cotswold and Abingdon should be prepared in detail.

Long Campaign: The Way Back Home

The characters are aboard an airship exploring the Lada subcontinent. A technical defect or an attack of pterosaurs results in a crash landing in an unexplored part of Venus. Even after weeks of waiting, there is no sight of a search team and it becomes clear that the crew has to make its own way back to a European settlement.

In front of the adventurers lie 6,000 miles (approx. 10,000 kilometers) of jungle, swamp, dinosaurs, multiple oceans - and natives, who have never seen an earthling before. It might take months or even years until they return to civilization. The Gamemaster should consider the travel route and the territories through which the adventurers might travel. The most important non-player characters are the other survivors of the crash, who will travel with the heroes. They should be prepared in detail. Other persons are members of various Lizard-men tribes who may be encountered along the way. Individual adventures revolve around procuring food, overcoming obstacles, and of course making first contact with unknown tribes. As such an integrated mini-campaign could revolve around the adventurers building a sailing ship after a terrestrial design for the natives in exchange for them guiding them over the ocean.

the cure against a disease that threatens half the solar system. The villain did not just embezzle money, he plans to rob the bank of Venusstadt. The affair with the governors' wife is not a small romance, but is deep, passionate love, and not an issue of personal morality but something that will shake society to its foundations.

The **Ruritanian Romance** is about conspiracies and intrigue in fictional small states and is just as fitting for the colonies on Venus. However, the Gamemaster has to set other criteria. The wilderness with its monstrosities is right on the doorstep, but intrigue and conspiracy are not that easy to find. They are of course present, but in other dimensions as on Earth or Mars. On Venus it is not about overthrowing governments or putting the rightful heir on the throne.

Plotting and scheming in the colonies are more about power ("I want to become Governor instead of the Governor.") or to put the right people in influential positions within the administration, whether of their own colony or that of another power. It is all excellent training for aspiring diplomats and officials.

Something similar can be said about **Crime Novels**. The reasons for men to commit a crime are everywhere the same. Greed, hate, envy, and jealousy (intensified by the lack of women on Venus) are only a few possible motives. Add to this the widespread ambition that drives many colonists who come to Venus in the hope of getting rich or to make a name for themselves as explorers. When their plans are on the brink of failure, many men are willing to do almost anything in their desperation.

But even the outlaws have to adapt to local realities. While it is easier to commit a deed, there are also hurdles, which are mentioned further below. Nearly everybody has a weapon and the forests offer a plethora of unknown poisons and drugs. Additionally, new possibilities open up - how do you prove a murder, if the victim was eaten by a tyrannosaur? A small population also has its downside as many criminals realize. The colonies and the natives' villages are small, everybody knows their neighbor. If something is wrong it becomes immediately apparent for all to see. Once exposed, the only option remaining is escape into the wilderness, because they cannot hide anywhere else. Then they can hope only to reach another colony and board an etherflyer before their crimes become common knowledge. Doing so has become increasingly more difficult, since the German and British colonies are now connected by telegraphic systems.

The few policemen in the colonies are completely overwhelmed with work. Be it gendarme, constable or carabinieri - their training is more fitting for a village policeman than the huge areas they are responsible for. Criminal investigators are almost unheard of in the planetary colonies and as such a hero may well try his hand as a master detective.

Alternative Campaign Ideas

Naturally there are different ways to keep the adventurers busy besides the classic options presented above. Some examples are:

"Where No Man Has Gone Before ..."

This campaign revolves around the characters being among the crew of an airship, exploring Venus in the name of one of the colonial powers. The adventures - mostly one shots and short campaigns - represent individual voyages. Airships are quite rare, there is a lot to do on board, and, last but not least, a multitude of things can happen during such a voyage. In one mission the

zeppelin transports a diplomat to a delicate negotiation in another colony, in the next one they search for an expedition which set out to explore some old ruins and went missing months ago. Action is guaranteed in encounters with pterosaurs and air pirates. The plot of a long campaign could involve a conspiracy in which the adventurers encounter clues in the individual adventures, with a big finale that merges all parts of the puzzle. Most heroes in such a campaign would be humans, but there is nothing to be said against a Venusian translator or a Martian navigator - a player who wants to play such an exotic character may readily come up with a good back-story.

Free Traders

A popular campaign in 'classic' science fiction role playing games is about the crew of a small, independent freighter, which transports all kinds of cargo to the most exotic places and experiences the wildest adventures. In this campaign the adventurers are the crew of a sailing ship in the North or South Ocean. It offers adventures similar to the above mentioned airship campaign, with the difference that they are not supported by a colonial government. Most heroes would be Lizard-men, probably from a sea nomad tribe. The part of the 'alien on the bridge' could be filled by a human, who gained his experience on the cold and wild oceans of the world beyond the clouds.

A New Home

This campaign revolves around the foundation of a new colony. The game master has to decide who wants to found the colony. Is it a nation of Earth, which aspires to become an interplanetary power? In this case the Netherlands or the French would be obvious candidates, but also exotics such as Chile, Sweden, or even the Tossian Empire of Mars could be conceivable candidates. Just as is the option for a markedly political (Socialists? Monarchists?) or even a religious colony, such as the Mormons.

The campaign starts before the actual founding. The characters first have to secure finances, hire other colonists, buy equipment and finally charter an etherflyer for transportation. On Venus they need to choose a suitable location - and then the campaign can start in full.

Erecting the first buildings and ploughing the first fields will keep the settlers busy for a while, but what next? At some point the settlers will notice that life is not as idyllic as they envisioned. Dispute arises among the settlers, and what if there are powers who want to sabotage the fledgling colony?

The Invasion

Another option would be a campaign that revolves around a tribe of Lizard-men (or another undiscovered high culture). All heroes and non-player characters are Lizard-men. The adventures would originally focus on the day to day life - the hunt, the search for specific herbs, feuds with a neighboring tribe and so on. Other adventures could - if adapted accordingly - fall in the above-mentioned categories. Lizard-men understand intrigue and espionage, too. Their ships have been sailing the seas for quite some time and why shouldn't there be a Lizard-man consulting detective?

Once the players have acquainted themselves with their roles and the Lizard-men's culture it is time for a twist. First they hear strange noises from the clouds and then see the silhouettes of giant

fish in the sky. Eventually they make contact with strange beings, pale and with smooth skin, who have amazing abilities. At first they trade with the strangers who call themselves humans, and vanish back into the skies. But eventually more of them follow and they come to stay. They erect strange huts on the most fertile soil and declare it their land. The Lizard-men are now supposed to work on the humans' plantations, and in exchange the humans will teach them 'civilization'. What will the characters do now?

who offer only hollow promises of the "blessings of civilization". Criminals flee the colonies and join forces in the wilds, in order to terrorize outlying plantations as gangs. Many an adventure awaits. So saddle your loyal pacyosaur, load your trusty Winchester and cut the cattle thieves off at the pass!

The Good, the Bad, and the Lizard-man

Venus and Wild West do not seem a close fit at first glance, but the jungles of Venus have more in common with the deserts of the New Mexico Territories than one might think. The cattle on Venus is larger and has scales, the natives lay eggs, but the West offers many ideas and elements which work well on the Morning Star, too.

The cities and villages harbor similar character types as those in the Wild West during its establishment phase, and among orchid hunters, dinosaur egg hunters, and soldiers of fortune the same scenarios arise as among California's gold-seekers. When dinosaur-cowboys have driven the herd to the city, they squander their money within a few hours with booze and women, only to find themselves some hours later lying behind a bar after a hearty brawl (if they're lucky).

Outside the burgeoning cities, people on plantations can only count on themselves in a crisis, just as the settlers of North America a few years ago. Natives and wild animals endanger their lives, big landowners and companies (on Venus they are more likely to be from the chemical industry than the railroad) practice land robbery by all available means. The Lizard-men are displaced by the ever-encroaching settlers and betrayed by colonial officials,

Not For School ...

This more light-hearted campaign focuses on school kids and their day-to-day adventures. Be it in the primary school of Venusstadt, the Themiscyra boarding school for girls or a missionary school for little Lizard-men - the adventures revolve around the small, but to the heroes important things such as pranks or discoveries which can be made outside the schoolyard. The heroes of the classic children's book magically attract trouble of all kinds - only think of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn - and as such a Gamemaster can intersperse a few "real" villains, or a treasure map.

Particularly important persons are the heroes' parents, other family members, and of course the teachers ('the tough but fair teacher', 'the lovable but absent-minded professor') and the schoolmates ('the bully', 'the eager beaver', 'the drama queen').

In game terms a child is created as an Unlucky Fellow, resulting in only 9 Attribute points and 9 Skill points, one Resource at level 0, and 5 Experience points (see **Core Rules**, p. 140). The Skill maximum should not exceed 3 points and should be fitting for children - few rascals are knowledgeable in surgery. Experience should be rewarded sparingly, otherwise ten-year olds will soon surpass experienced veterans of the colonial troops! Style Points may be awarded generously - after all children have a guardian angel.



Some Particularities of Living on Venus

"And as such it is a special honor for me to award this medal to Herr Dr. Seybold for his yield improvements of the blue Venus Dew and the extremely valuable natural resources that could be gained from it. Venus, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the future of German industry, and it cannot be mentioned enough that the rapid expansion of the planet's settlements will be crucial for the fate of the German nation."

— Excerpt from a speech of the Prussian cultural attaché Herbert von Arnim in 1889 on the occasion of the award ceremony for the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Medal First Class (agricultural chemistry division)

Many colonial powers pursue the expansion of their settlements on Venus with enormous effort. But what is to be gained here and how do the lives of European settlers differ from those in colonies on Earth? It is not only the Germans who have a burning interest in this topic. The administrative bodies of other colonial powers collect and catalogue this information - even if it is only by virtue of their government bureaucracies, to lure new colonists to Venus while keeping possibly undesirable details secret.

Liftwood on Venus

The first failed expeditions revealed that liftwood rapidly loses its uplift generating ability on Venus. This effect not only has a big influence on the traffic between Venus' colonies, but also on arriving etherflyers, which generate most of their planetary uplift through liftwood. The (mostly) German etherzeppelins are naturally unaffected.

Within a few days liftwood becomes useless and it is assumed that the planet's magnetic field is responsible for this effect. For this reason, inbound etherflyers do not take any risks: Typically they unload passengers and freight as fast as possible, then quickly load up and immediately depart. The precise cause for liftwood degeneration is still being researched, as is the search for a method to make liftwood more resistant to the effect, either by some form of coating or shielding. Some of the research is taking place at the **Adonis Station**, a British facility in the planet's orbit.

Plantation Products

The focus of all colonial undertakings on Venus is the exploitation of the exuberantly abundant Venusian flora. To this end all colonial powers maintain vast plantations to cultivate human foodstuffs such as potatoes, beans, tea, wheat crops, and often rice, which have to be rigidly separated from the plantations listed below, due to the sometimes toxic characteristics of the Venusian flora.

Besides cultivating plantations for food production, the farmers collect plant-based raw materials or grow Venusian plants which offer important basic materials for the chemical industries of their home countries. These products partly involve complex organic compounds which require considerable financial effort to produce in laboratory environments, but can be extracted without much trouble on Venus from chosen plants. A detailed summary of useful plants on Venus is given on page 100.

Venusian Climate and Its Consequences

Rotten as a plank after three days of rain.

— Venusian Phrase

The settlers' main problem is the perpetual warm and humid climate. If it isn't raining, then fog appears and once the fog disperses it starts to rain. Only the high plateau of Mount Maxwell occasionally has dry phases, which are, however, still uncomfortably hot and humid for a European.

Due to the humidity all colonies attach great value to maintenance and repair. Wooden parts of buildings are lacquered multiple times during a year and checked for mold while supporting beams are replaced. Recessed floors and the corresponding stairs pose a special problem, which is why simple buildings are built as one-story houses with a cellar underneath. Doors and shutters regularly distort, so that carpenters and sawyers are never out of work. Unattended wooden structures are in danger of collapse within a year and are as such only frequented by shady characters.

Even handmade paper does not have a long life in the humid climate of Venus, therefore private libraries are rather rare. Official papers are stored in archives, which are kept dry by constant heating and aeration; important papers might even be copied regularly. Experiments to create rot resistant paper from plant fibers of the Venusian cotton have failed so far (not least due to the fact that the final product will not accept ink). For similar reasons banknotes are rarely used, even coins from materials other than gold are mistrusted since they usually tarnish quite quickly and become unreadable.

Food supply and the conservation thereof poses a special problem. Fresh food products, butchered or harvested on site, have to be processed the same day unless cooled with expensive ice. But even smoked or salted food has a rather diminished storage life. Even tin cans, in which the army put a lot of trust, rust within half a year and spoil their contents unless brushed regularly or stored in oil. On rare occasions their contents ferment and might even explode without warning. Only food immersed in liquid and kept in sealed jars stays fresh just as it would on Earth. A good cook who can prepare a tasty meal under such conditions is a highly praised luxury encountered only in the best colonial administrations, and is rewarded accordingly.

Even clothes and clothing styles have had to adapt to the climatic conditions. Regular clothing has to be treated with antiseptic tinctures periodically, to prevent a green film forming,

unfashionable on all but the most modern of “rational” dress, accompanied by the soon-to-follow rot. Carbolic acid in spray bottles as well as the newly developed *Venusine* have proven equally effective. A gentleman wears a celluloid collar with his shirt, as regular collars are soaked through in no time. Women resort to Venusian cotton. Outside of the house, the well-aerated tropical hat or *solar topi* is accepted head wear for both sexes. Milliners are currently experimenting with an unusual mix of brocade and felt from Venusian cotton, in order to at least provide women with a befitting alternative. Rubberized clothing is usually worn for longer travels, but it is quite heavy and causes its wearer to perspire heavily in no time.

The material most demanded by settlers is ice. Usually flown in from Earth, it earns premium prices. Ice is used to cool selected food and beverages, but not to cool living quarters. The proverbial Ice Palace of the German Reichskommissar in Venusstadt is the only air-cooled building on Venus, and the envy of every other settler and military personnel, regardless of nationality.

It is still a topic for medical research whether the climate is not only to blame for Venusian diseases but also for Earthly tropical diseases such as dysentery, malaria, cholera, and yellow fever, which have been introduced by settlers. Among their Venusian counterparts are the unexplainable **Woodlouse Fever** (p. 105), the **Nuova Pontebba Plague** (p. 105), the **Lung Sponge** (p. 105), parasites such as the **Mineur** (p. 99), or the ‘double edged’ **Moss-Fungus Disease** (p. 105).

Women on Venus

The majority of the human settlers on Venus are of the male sex – a quite ironic situation, if one considers that the eponymous goddess is the epitome of female beauty and elegance. Naturally, the sex ratio is due to the hard climate of the colonies. At first it was held that women should not be unnecessarily burdened with the conditions prevalent on Venus. Now, however, the German government in particular is working hard to settle whole families on Venus, and as such is trying to raise the percentage of female settlers.

A summary of the female population in the individual colonies is given on p. 22 (**Germany** and Project ‘Freia’), p. 55 (**Italy**), and p. 64 (**Russia**). A distinctive group is that of the women of Themiscyra who make their own way in marked fashion.

Currently there are three groups of women on the Morning Star:

Settler Wives

The first women on Venus were the wives of high ranking officers and colonial officials, who had to accompany their men to Venus, if only for largely ceremonial purposes. Additionally, most governments of the colonial powers implemented programs, promising

salaries exceeding those on Earth by far, in order to attract women to Venus to work as nurses, housekeepers, secretaries, and teachers. Due to the surplus of men, colonial bureaus are anticipating marriages and family formations which will result in an important foundation for human settlements on Venus.

Courtesans and Prostitutes

Although officially disapproved by the authorities, prostitution is hard to avoid wherever many bored and single men live. Prostitutes enjoy far higher payment for their services than anywhere else in the solar system, especially since there are no female natives. The authorities certainly know about these circumstances, and as such they tolerate prostitution within their borders. Scandals of various kinds would seem to be inevitable.

Performers

The performing arts are far more publicly agreeable. Women are extremely popular as singers and actresses – especially in the colonies due to their scarcity. The celebrated Sarah Bernhardt world tour not only took the U.S.A.’s “Wild West” by storm, but also triumphed on Venus. It remains a lively rumor among settlers that the famous play *Lady of the Camellias* is supposedly to be renamed to *Lady of the Cytherian*, such is its popularity on the planet.

Culture and Entertainment

Venues for the arts are at present limited on Venus, but are currently under development. Taverns, inns and public houses can be found in the larger colonial cities, but theatres or opera and concert halls are inconceivable (with the notable exception of Nuova Firenze.)

However, most places of public entertainment are capable of clearing sufficient space to serve as a stage or dance floor, even if it is only by moving benches and tables out of the way. While the theatre or public performance of song is rather rare, the ‘Venus Waltz’ is currently spreading from the German colony and establishing itself as evening entertainment. This quite slow dance in three-four time (faster rhythms are out of the question due to the ever-present heat) is noted for its extraordinary and novel orchestration. Influenced by military bands, the Venus Waltz is accentuated by brass instruments in a cut down orchestra. (Wooden instruments would not be up to the task due to the humid conditions on Venus.) Venus Waltz evenings are particularly popular with the ladies, and the far more numerous gentlemen need perfect mastery of the dance, should they want to impress their beloved one, possibly even with a Cytherian orchid in their buttonhole.

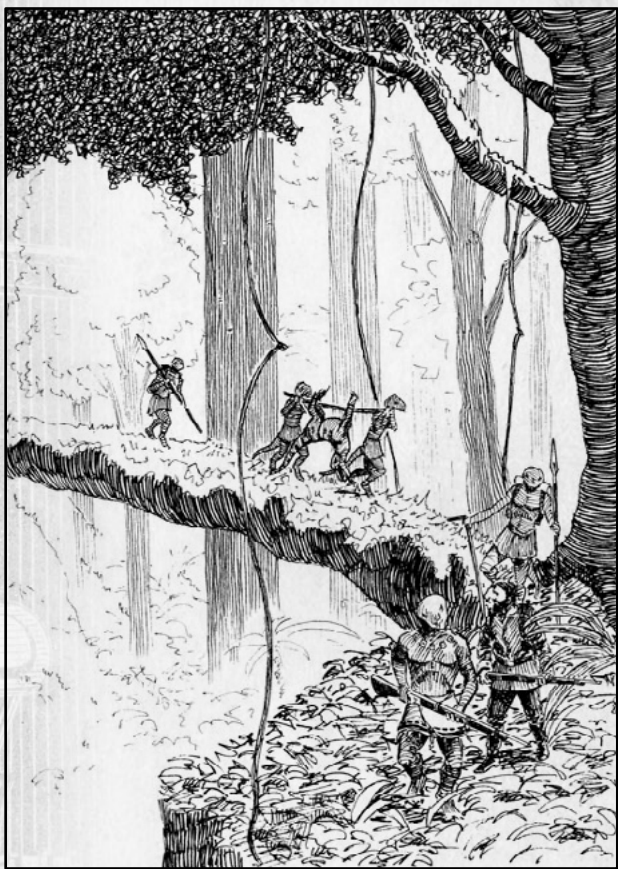


Expeditions on Venus

"The most dangerous worldview is the worldview of those who have not viewed the world"

— Alexander von Humboldt

Despite the best efforts of the colonial powers, Venus is still for the most part terra incognita, only a map covered in blank spots. This is largely because the planet is covered almost entirely by a dense blanket of clouds and therefore avoids systematic mapping by air. To discover more about Venus, there is really only the one option: Take the arduous route by land, just as it was taken by countless courageous explorers on Earth from time immemorial. Now this task awaits equally brave men and women on Venus.



Objectives

Before setting out for the unknown, an explorer should reflect upon the objectives of his expedition. No one should stumble into the jungles of Venus haphazardly, let alone manage to convince wealthy financial sponsors to invest in such an aimless enterprise. Possible objectives therefore might be:

- Mapping the coastline of Venus' continents, and surveying the depths of the oceans to enable secure water travel in the future.
- Searching for a hypothetical connection between the North and the South Ocean.
- Mapping the course of the countless rivers of Venus, especially with regard to navigability.
- Prospection and development of new resource deposits.

- Prospection of new and unknown plants, especially in regard to their possible exploitation.
- Establishment of new areas for settlement in secure territory with fertile soil.
- Negotiating trade agreements with new and unknown Lizard-men tribes as well as establishing trading posts at favorable sites.
- Exploring possible routes for roads and telegraph lines between settlements and colonies.
- Anthropological research on Lizard-men for scientific institutes.
- Discovering new spectacular dinosaurs and other Venusian species.
- Popular sensationalism like a hunting or photographic safari.
- Searching for the source of rumors and legends of the Lizard-men.
- An expedition not unlike that for El Dorado or the mines of King Solomon on Earth

Searching for a Financier

After setting the objective, a future explorer has to look for a financier who is willing to shoulder the sometimes considerable expenses. The more common situation though is that such a financier will tender a specific contract and assigns it to – possibly already known – explorers. Depending on the destination and subject of the expedition, possible financiers include governments or their colonial administrations, private enterprises and industrialists, scientific institutes, large publishing houses, or wealthy private individuals. Once financier and explorer have agreed on the basic objective, they usually draft a contract that defines when the expedition is considered a success, or under which circumstances the expedition may be aborted without the sponsor claiming any compensation.

Financiers in the Game

Only a few player characters, usually belonging to the upper classes in society, will be able to afford the equipment and support of a long expedition with their own resources. Thus, most characters will have to depend on the assets of a financier, whether they like it or not.

Generally, a financier may provide an expedition with an Equipment rank (see box on p. 114) equal to his Wealth rank without any penalties. If the expedition should mean so much to him that he is willing to draw upon his financial resources in a way that would reduce his Wealth rank by 1, than the expedition's Equipment rank is raised by 1.

Governments usually equip an expedition with an Equipment rank of 5, big enterprises and institutes with a rank between 4 and 5, and private individuals with a rank between 3 and 4.

The Gamemaster may decide whether he wants to roleplay the search for and the negotiations with a financier – he might reward particularly cunning or famous player characters with certain advantages, while on the other hand let characters who do badly during negotiations set out on Venus with insufficient equipment or unfavorable contracts - or, if he wants to let the expedition start fully equipped, merely informing the players of its objectives and background information.

Preparations and Equipment

It is part of the preparation for a journey to study any previously existing maps and the reports of preceding expeditions (if available). As the case may be, it might be worthwhile to seek out the reports of natives and other pioneers. Based on this information, the route is charted as precisely as possible – although this is likely to be only to a very limited degree as Venus is basically terra incognita. Subsequently the expedition can be equipped with means of transport, food, scientific devices, weapons, and trade goods (such as imitation pearls or bronze) and hire followers, guides, and carriers.

By Foot

Walking is the easiest, cheapest, and in high mountain regions, sometimes the only way to move forward. The disadvantage is

that additional carriers need to be hired and provided for. For some routes climbing equipment might be necessary, since some paths might lead across steep cliffs or through the branches of giant trees.

By Dinosaur

Pacyosaurs have been used as pack animals long before the arrival of human settlers, but it was the new arrivals who first put a saddle on their backs and rode them. These dinosaurs are mainly used in the highlands and the lowlands; they can also move forward through swamps, but are easy prey for giant crocodiles or other predators. Without pacyosaurs, the exploration of Venus would be impossible – a grown animal might easily carry 450 lbs., or 200 kg, worth of equipment. They are not particularly fast but can maintain their speed up to eight hours without a break. After that, they must pasture for four hours. Trained animals are offered for rent or sale in every human settlement. Gennosaurs are solely used by Cossacks and are as such of no importance for expeditions.

Travel Funds, Travel Costs ...

Traveling might enrich an adventure, but it is also accompanied by large expenses. If you do not wish to include the Equipment rank rules (p. 114) into your game, you will find some information on travel costs detailed below.

Personnel

Traveling across the wilderness (but also through a foreign city) requires the assistance of a local guide, and in foreign countries an interpreter is often needed as well. Since it is unthinkable for a gentleman to carry his own luggage through the jungle, the adventurers might also hire some bearers, each of them able to carry 45 lbs., or 20 kg, worth of equipment. Larger groups will also need cooks, watchmen, and other staff.

Simple **Bearers** receive an underclass wage (1 S / day)*, a **Specialist** (guide, interpreter) a worker's wage (2 S / day).

Half the wage is typically paid in advance. The numbers given above are just minimum wages, the prices may rise considerably depending on the season, destination, or reputation of the adventurers. The adventurers have to earn the loyalty of their "employees" with good manners (roleplay), or else they might wake up one morning missing their bearers – as well as their luggage.

Equipment

Prices and weight of the necessary equipment are listed in the *Equipment chapter* of the **Core Rules** (starting page 220). Of course, the heroes will have to decide in advance what they are going to need and what they can spend. Then, it is up to the Gamemaster to decide what will be available on site – simple tools can be obtained in any

village, ammunition at Earthly trading posts, items such as rifles, cameras, or typewriters on the other hand can only be purchased in the colonial cities – if you are lucky.

All the equipment needs to be transported somehow, which brings the bearers into play, whose needs have to be catered for as well.

The necessary equipment also includes trade goods that can be bartered with local people for goods and services on route.

To provide rations for the expedition, three meals per person per day have to be considered: in cans they weigh 6 lbs., or 2 kg, and cost 2 S. Fresh food is cheaper (hunting and fishing is free even), but spoils easily. Gathering fresh food may also spend precious time.

Means of Transport

Pacyosaurs (in the Russian colony also gennosaurs) can be bought or rented. A mount costs £ 10, a pack animal £ 7. Renting an animal costs 2 or 1 S per day.

A passage on a zeppelin costs 10 S per day, with a maximum travel speed of 300 miles, or 500 km, per day. A passage on a local sailing boat costs 3 S worth of trade goods per day, with a maximum travel speed of 60 miles, or 100 km, per day.

If no passage is offered to the required destination, the travelers might still rent a vehicle. As a rule of thumb, renting will cost one thousandth (1/1000) of the vehicle's price (see *Vehicle chapter* in the **Core Rules**, p. 230) per day, with an additional 10% for the security deposit. Larger vehicles might even require hiring a crew, which will have to be paid accordingly.

*) see *Wealth* in the **Core Rules**, p. 174

By Boat or Ship

In the swamps, small boats are needed to move along through the dense reeds if necessary. **Dugout canoes** and **reed boats** are available almost everywhere and can even be specially built if necessary. Modern folding boats present a good alternative – especially when only part of the route goes through water – as they can be transformed into a handy carrying load in just a few simple steps.

If long parts of the expedition's route lead along coastlines or on rivers, a range of ships are worth considering. Simple **pirogues** are canoed or even sailed, and can easily be built on site when needed. Of course, there are larger alternatives, too: steam-powered gunboats just like the one *Ernest Doudart de Lagrée* used to explore the Mekong in 1866, or even a disassembled gunboat that can be transported across dry land for short distances, such as the boat that *Jean-Baptiste Marchand* had with him on his expedition on the Congo and the Nile between 1896 and 1898.

To conquer the oceans a local **sailing ship** might be just the right choice. These ships are rather slow as they usually stay close to the coastline. The fares can be negotiated, but are usually about half of the price a comparable passage would cost on Earth. Characters with nautical skills who can prove themselves to the captain might even work for their passage instead.

By Airship

This is the fastest and safest, but also the most expensive way of traveling. There are regular scheduled flights that connect all the large settlements, although only the Germans have a significant number of zeppelins at their command. These flights cost the usual prices (see box on p. 112).

Air travel too is not without risks. These exist not only in bad weather conditions but also in technical defects of the airships (after all, airship technology is still in its infancy), human errors (since the technology is new, there are still many crewmembers that have not mastered it yet), and of course the hazards presented by nature itself. Some airships have already suffered collisions with pterosaurs while navigating through the mists that almost made them crash. Swarms of bladewings are a major issue, too, as they tend to blunder into the engines and block them. Removing the bladewings is a risky task that can result in painful cuts. Still, there is some small solace – if something goes wrong, airships usually crash rather slowly and chances are high that the passengers will survive.

Modern Vehicles

Just as on Earth, modern automotive land vehicles are mainly of experimental nature, and heavy vehicles also tend to get stuck in the mud. There are a handful of automobiles on Venus which can be quite useful in the highlands – even though they need specially broad wheels as not to get stuck in the soft ground. The British have successfully experimented with a walking tripod in the lowlands. However, conditions aboard the driver's cabin can be unbearable. One thing is certain, though: outside the cities, Venus is definitely not planet for cyclists.

By Train

Probably the most ambitious projects on Venus are the construction of a suspended railway (p. 32) from Venusstadt to Heidelberg and The British-Venusian Light Railway Project that intends to build a railroad connecting Fort St. Michael with Collingswood and Collingswood with Alberta.

In the long term, these railway connections could speed up the development and supply of the colonies considerably. Until then, however, there is still a long – and boggy – road ahead.

Navigation

Navigation on Venus has a major obstacle: the Venusian magnetic field. The extreme fluctuations in magnitude and polarity make any compass useless, thus it is necessary to find other ways of orientation. Above the clouds, the same methods are used as on other planets. **Sextants** are used to measure the angles to the sun and the stars, and thus determine the latitude, a **chronometer** is used to determine the longitude in reference to a zero meridian (the zero meridian of Venus runs through Mount Maxwell). Some particularities like the different length of day, axial inclination, and diameter of Venus have to be taken into consideration, but the method of navigation is basically the same that has led the way on Earth for centuries. Some manufacturers on Earth now offer instruments specially calibrated for use on Venus that cost about twice as much as instruments for Earth. With some additional calculations, however, Earthly or Martian instruments can easily be adapted.

Airships can target destinations beneath the cloud cover by means of **weather balloons**. Each human settlement – and even many temporary camps – has a balloon anchored in its midst that flies high above the clouds and is clearly visible at that height.

Travelers on the ground orientate themselves mainly on prominent **milestones**, assuming they can be found amidst the fog and the rain. Lizard-men enjoy a great advantage with their finely tuned olfactory sense – many locations possess an individual smell that Lizard-men can sometimes scent from afar. In the highlands, it is possible to locate the sun by using a polarizing filter; in the lowlands, however, there is usually too dense a fog to apply this method. Earthlings use a filter made of calcite like the “sun stones” of the Vikings; Lizard-men obtain the same effect with their nictitating membranes.

Food

“Though we lacked the good things of this life above named, we possessed salted giraffe and pickled zebra tongues, [...] sweet potatoes, tea, coffee, dampers, or slap-jacks; but I was tired of them. My enfeebled stomach, harrowed and irritated with medicinal compounds, with ipecac, colocynth, tartar-emetic, quinine, and such things, protested against the coarse food. ‘Oh, for a wheaten loaf!’ my soul cried in agony. ‘Five hundred dollars for one loaf of bread!’”

— Henry Morton Stanley, Africa in 1871

Ensuring an ample and regular food supply is one of the most important tasks during an expedition. As food tends to spoil rather quickly on Venus, some expedition leaders take along canned food in quantities of up to one ton. To spare such an enormous

encumbrance an expedition can also rely on hunting (and the occasional barter trade with local Lizard-men). There are plenty of waters alive with fish and an abundance of edible game on Venus. However, Europeans not used to a diet solely consisting of dinosaurs may suffer from malnutrition. An expedition planning to feed on wild animals also needs to think about how it plans to prepare their meat. Unlike the Lizard-men, humans can barely tolerate raw dinosaur meat – dry fire wood for cooking, roasting, or broiling, is hard to find on Venus, so that it is either necessary to carry a larger amount of fuel – e.g. spirits – or, as is normally the case, fall back on the traditional preparations of the Lizard-men – although these are not exactly healthy or nutritious for the human body.

Barter and Trading Goods

It is recommended to carry suitable goods for trading with foreigners. The most popular trading goods are knives, axe blades, and spearheads made of brass, which is less prone to corrosion than other metals. Bowls, pots, and other containers made of pottery or glass are highly esteemed by the Lizard-men, too. Other trading goods might be rubberized linen for pouches, belts, and clothes, colored glass beads, prisms and pendants, and gilded medallions. In general, Lizard-men are enthusiastic for everything that sparkles, shines, and does not rot. Even polished trouser buttons have been exchanged for large sacks of valuable goods.

Followers

Expedition leaders usually do not set out alone into the wild – that would be considered suicidal. At least one local guide is needed, which is usually a Lizard-man. As expeditions depend on this guide for better or worse – he can also lead negotiations with Lizard-men tribes along the way – it is of the utmost importance to choose him with great care and make sure that he is treated well during the journey. It is possible, but not necessary, to hire several human soldiers or mercenaries for protection and hunting purposes. Large expeditions might be equipped with about 100 rifles. Finally, the retinue is also made up of the bearers, a group of Lizard-men (at times as much as several hundreds of them) that carry the equipment.

Realization

Before the expedition can finally set out, participants and equipment will have to be transported to the intended point of departure (should the latter not be located within a colony). On Venus, expedition transports are usually airships, while expeditions that travel by ship could also follow a river down to the sea. However, since these ships are usually of a smaller design, they could be easily transported by cargo airship too.

An expedition will face countless threats and uncertainties on its journey, which of course makes it interesting to roleplay.



The Equipment Rating

Every expedition should be assigned an Equipment rank by the Gamemaster (see p. 111) which works just like a Resource. As a guideline you might apply the following table:

Equipment Rank	Description
0	Expedition leader without further company or equipment
1	Expedition leader without further company, but with adequate equipment, possibly mounted
2	Expedition leader and his guide, with adequate equipment, possibly mounted
3	Expedition leader and several participants, a guide, several bearers, possibly mounted or equipped with a small boat
4	Expedition leader and several participants, a guide, armed escort, numerous bearers, possibly mounted or equipped with boats
5	Expeditions leader and several participants, several guides, 100 soldiers, 200 bearers, possibly mounted or equipped with a steam ship

The Gamemaster may ask for Equipment tests (which work just like Attribute tests) whenever the characters wish to know whether the expedition carries a certain technical device, whether it has sufficient trading goods, whether their guide knows how to handle a specific critical situation, whether the food supply is in decline and other important information.

As usual the dice pool for this roll equals double the Equipment rank.

If parts of the equipment or even of the followers go missing during the expedition, the Equipment rank should be lowered accordingly.

These include:

- Rapids and waterfalls, forcing the expedition to carry the boats or even leave them behind altogether.
- Treacherous ground and dense jungle that only allow for progressing not more than a thousand feet or so a day.
- Sudden changes in weather conditions that make the ever-present rain merge into downpour and thunderstorm, and thus turn the path or the river-bed that the expedition is following into a raging torrent (or a mudslide) within seconds.
- Diseases caused by malnutrition or contaminated water, or transmitted by insects and other small creatures, not to mention the peculiar Venusian diseases.

- Savage, voracious raptors or alarmed giant herbivores.
- Peaceful Lizard-men with whom one might trade goods for food and information, or with whom one might establish a trade relation in general, or who might be needing protection against aggressive neighboring tribes.
- Hostile Lizard-man tribes. In this case, a large, armed escort might be a disadvantage, as the Lizard-men could feel threatened and won't gain confidence in the expedition (depending on negotiating skills) or it might be an absolute necessity if it comes to an attack.
- Hunger; especially when provisions either get lost or spoil
- Madness: It is not uncommon for an expedition to lose participants, not mentally capable of withstanding the strains mentioned above, and who just walk into the jungle or sink into catatonia.

There is hardly ever an expedition which arrives with the same headcount as it departed, some parties even go missing completely – thus giving an objective for succeeding expeditions.

The End is Near

"Land Ahoy! Land Ahoy!"

—Gaspard-Théodore Mollien, sighting a European trading post in 1818, deep in the African mainland

Finally, every expedition needs to define an end point, in time and ideally also a place, at which it may be expected to return to the civilization of the Venusian colonies. The participants may now finally relax and rest, and celebrate the success of their work – be it immortal fame or treasures. Should an expedition fail to consider this last step in their planning, and is thus not received by an expectant press or their backer's delegates on its arrival, then the whole enterprise could still prove to be a failure in retrospect.



Little Vademecum for the Morning Star

(Excerpt from Dr. Ludwig Wagner's "Little Vademecum for the Morning Star", Göttingen, 1886, 3rd edition)

"A journey is like a game; it always involves gain and loss – usually from a most unexpected part."

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Traveling on Venus is quite an adventure. There are only small islands of civilization scattered throughout this wild planet – be it a Lizard-man village or a plantation of Earthly settlers – all are separated by vast areas of untamed wilderness.

Travelers are recommended to adhere to some basic rules if they are inclined to survive their journey.

Never travel alone

Voracious dinosaurs, hostile Lizard-men, insidious Earthlings, or nasty diseases – Venus is full of dangers. Travel companions increase the chances of your survival considerably. Whether it is on an Earthly expedition or a Lizard-man hunting party – your companions will probably save your life sooner or later. They will share their last ration of food with you and carry you hundreds of miles to the next settlement in case a Tyrannosaur ate your leg. Their presence alone will prevent you from going mad from loneliness and desperation. And if the worst comes to the worst, your companions might at least take care of a decent funeral for you.

Please keep in mind that to most Lizard-men „a decent funeral“ means to feast on the bodily remains and to craft the bones of the deceased into hut decoration. If you should not wish this, please instruct your Venusian companions accordingly in advance.

Leave information on where you are going and how long you will be gone

This is a simple precaution that may save your life. If someone knows in which direction you set out and when you have been planning to return, maybe they will send out a search party for you to appear just in time to pluck you from the jaws of death.

Hire a local guide

This is possibly the most important advice. Without someone at your side who knows the area by heart you will get completely lost. A good guide knows every path of the territory, he knows where to seek food and refuge, and which corners to avoid. The best guides are experienced hunters. For longer journeys, however, you are best advised to hire a traveling salesman.

Expect long detours

There are plenty of obstacles to circumvent: Treacherous swamps, bubbling volcanos, or rugged coronae – sometimes you don't have a choice, and you have to accept detours of several days to reach a seemingly close destination.

I packed my bag and ...

The particular conditions on Venus call for special thoughtfulness when compiling your travel baggage.

What you will need:

- ➔ Weapons: As mentioned above, Venus is alive with hungry dinosaurs, always ready for a tasty snack. Without heavy weaponry, you will not survive your journey.
- ➔ Walking stick: In the swamps of the lowlands, you will use it to inspect the treacherous ground. In the highlands, it is your third leg when traversing unsafe territory. A spear may render a similar service.
- ➔ Barter goods: Hard cash is quite worthless on Venus. You will need goods of interest to potential trading partners. Tools of all kind are always useful, nutritional goods such as flour, salt, and sugar are also well regarded, alcohol even more so. Additionally, Lizard-men desire glass, even when shattered, which they process into arrowheads or knife blades. And of course,

they love everything that glitters. Settlers crave especially for news of all kinds – for an old newspaper from Earth, an administrator of a secluded plantation will gladly trade you a Cytherian orchid.

⇒ Airproof canisters: A must-have. The humid climate corrodes everything, and unless sealed, an expedition's record papers and samples won't endure the journey. The novel preventing jars have proved most effective, which are filled with small bags of silica gel (silicon dioxide) to absorb the humidity. The fragility and weight of the glasses are of course disadvantageous, but the low price and small size more than make up for that.

⇒ Fire: Fire provides hot food, keeps off hungry beasts, and impresses the natives. Unfortunately, dry wood is a very rare commodity on Venus, and so travelers have to carry combustibles with them. Briquettes of compressed swamp grass are cheap, but heavy, and it absorbs water within a few days. Spirit stoves are preferable and may be purchased complete with metal cans of fuel in every colony.

⇒ Telegraph wire: Apart from its original application, rubberized wire provides for a robust, corrosion-free cord.

⇒ Weather balloon: You should take this item with you if you are planning for an extended sojourn in the wilderness. Airships that supply travel parties will thus find you more easily.

What you will not need:

⇒ Water: This you will find in abundance. If at all possible, drink solely spring water or collect rain water. Water from rivers or ponds has to be boiled first! If against all warnings you drank bad water, don't hesitate to take a strong laxative or emetic. Most parasites can be flushed out this way during the early state of an infection. Probably.

⇒ Food: There is plenty of game, and an experienced guide (You have hired an experienced guide, haven't you?) will know where to find edible plants. Only have your bearers stagger along under a ton of cans if you are in a hurry.

Characters on Venus

Space: 1889 is about players and their characters. In this section you will find some new rules for characters on Venus: **Archetypes**, **Motivations**, **Talents**, and **Flaws**. These can help you when creating and advancing characters. You will also find the equipment and weapons commonly found on Venus, specially designed to survive the challenges of the planet.

Many of the new characteristics presented below are not restricted to Venus. The new Archetypes and Motivations especially are certainly found on other worlds and can be used as you please.

Archetypes, Motivations and Talents

New Archetypes

Leader

A leader is someone who gets things done and makes other people work together. A leader has a natural talent for guiding people or spreading a message many people can identify with. Leaders are loved and respected, but sometimes they are feared, too. Many leaders are especially skilled with words, general planning, and strategy and let other people do the real work, but some – officers and freedom fighters, for example – have to be an example and know their craft. Often leaders have a certain goal in mind. Maybe they want to traverse space to build a colony or to try and spread their ideology.

Examples: Politician, freedom fighter, demagogue, guru, chieftain

Typical Motivations: Power, Justice, Hope

Clerk

In many places the clerk is the person who makes the wheels spin: Be it an official in a government department implementing the directives from above and pursuing statute and law, or a colonial civil servant representing his country in Africa, on Venus, or on Mars. He orchestrates people, pulls strings, and makes sure that regulations are implemented. Maybe he is even involved with creating them. That is why he can accomplish much in the right places – especially where new ground is broken.

Some clerks are very precise with rules and regulations, others are more practical and do what they can do under the circumstances. And all of them serve an institution or a country.

Examples: Colonial civil servant ('on location'), administrator (in an agency)

Typical Motivations: Power, Justice

Servant

At first glance, a servant's life is not an exciting or adventurous one. Nevertheless servants are the ones who not only keep things running in the background, but also are barely perceived doing so. That is why they get the chance to overhear a lot of things. There are nobles and respected merchants who would not know what to do without their servants. Many servants are not simple employees, but close and trusted friends of their masters.

Often servants are an endless source of information and have a wide array of skills and talents. It is rare that they are at the forefront, but they have their master's back and help where they can.

Examples: Butler, mistress, lab assistant, nanny

Typical Motivations: Duty, Secrecy, Care, Love

Commercial Traveler

It is the task of the commercial traveler to pass his company's newest products to potential customers. It is not that they necessarily go from door to door – as do, for example, modern **canvassers** in the book trade – some commercial travelers are not simply salesmen, but are the representatives of a company tasked with securing bulk orders. Their business by necessity sees some of them travel from continent to continent or even from world to world. Commercial travelers have a keen business sense and are skilled at dealing with people, especially where negotiations are concerned. Many commercial travelers understand their wares only to the extent of extolling their doubtless numerous advantages, but some have grown to be true experts.

Often commercial travelers have considerable resources available to them and have connections and contacts everywhere. Sometimes you can find interesting equipment, medication, and tools in their sample bags.

Examples: Chemist and Druggist's representative, novelty merchant, mercer, bookseller

Typical Motivations: Greed, Hope, Freedom

Draftsman

Just like commercial travelers, draftsmen often work for big companies – but where these "travelling salesmen" want to sell products, draftsmen travel the world for their company to make visionary large-scale construction projects come true. Constructing a railway through the Venusian jungle, irrigating a Martian channel, or building a huge theatre in the African plains: Many draftsmen are not solely motivated by greed, but by their vision to follow progress and make a lasting impression on the world.

Examples: Building contractor, factory owner, wealthy engineer

Typical Motivations: Greed, Hope, Power, Legacy

Pioneer

If there were no pioneers, no discoveries could be exploited and no colonies could be built: these brave men and women are prepared to leave their old life behind to build a new life in another place.

Recently, settlers moving to the far West in America have created their own stirring legend – but today, beyond even this, the promise of strange new worlds lures settlers to go into the far distant unknown. Some pioneers are looking for good fortune or freedom, others want to escape from an existence that has grown unbearable. In any case, most pioneers are hard-working people who will stoically endure any number of hardships when it is about realizing their dreams – even if this dream is only a small plot of land to live in peace.

Examples: Settler, migratory worker, colonial preacher

Typical Motivations: Freedom, Hope, Legacy

Shaman

A shaman is the spiritual leader of a primitive tribal society. His tasks include contacting the spirits and natural forces of his religion, conducting rituals and festivities, and sometimes dispensing justice. Usually shamans are influential in their communities and strong-willed, well-versed in herbal lore and the healing arts and able to help their tribal members in word and deed. Shamans rarely leave their home; a shaman could join a group of adventurers because a soul debt binds him to one of its members or because a vision lures him to another world.

Examples: Sioux medicine man, Venusian lizard shamaness, British drop-out

Typical Motivations: Faith, Atonement, Care

New Motivations

Freedom

Your character is driven by autonomy. Nobody is allowed to take away his freedom. If he gets into trouble, he will do everything he can to escape his problems.

Style Points: You receive Style Points if you free yourself from a restricting situation or accomplish your goals against resistance.

Possessed by: Commercial travelers, Scientists, Reporters, Hunters

Care

Your character cares for other people's well-being. He cannot stand to see others suffer or is simply accustomed helping others. Maybe he has given his word or thinks it is his destiny to help others. Whatever his reasons might be, he will do anything to make other people's lives easier.

Style Points: You get Style Points if you are doing somebody a favor or make a sacrifice for others, for example by accepting some form of hurt or giving away something of worth.

Possessed by: Missionaries, Shamans, Servants, Doctors

Provocation

Your character is a troublemaker. He enjoys causing gratuitous offense and testing how much he can swim against the tide. Maybe he has convictions that differ from most people and he feels the need to share them all the time. Maybe he is simply a rebel. In any case your character loves to butt heads and does not have a need to be liked.

Style Points: You get Style Points if your opinion causes offense or starts a discussion.

Possessed by: Adventurers, Criminals, Scientists, Eccentrics, Artists

Legacy

Your character wants to leave a lasting impression on the world. He does not really care about power, money, or fame, he just wants to create something lasting. He enjoys building things later generations can profit from. He wants to change the world, even if only a little bit. The colonist helping to raise a settlement seeks a legacy, and the same goes for the builder who wants to span a chasm difficult to cross with a bridge, or the rich patron endowing a museum. Your character finds his happiness in making lasting projects come true.

Style Points: If your character changes the world with his work or influence (even if only a little), he gets Style Points.

Possessed by: Industrialists, Scientists, Pioneers

New Talents

Pleasant Smell

Prerequisites: None

Your character's body odor is really nice. That's all. Most people only perceive this on a subliminal level, but creatures relying on their sense of smell are strongly influenced by it.

Benefits: Characters with Pleasant Smell receive a +2 Bonus for all social rolls when dealing with creatures whose sense of smell is an important sensory perception (e.g. dogs, Venusians). Other creatures (humans or Martians) find the smell pleasant, but the effect is merely cosmetic.

Advanced: This Talent is Unique.

Chemist

Prerequisites: Intelligence 4, Science (Chemistry) 4

Your character is an outstanding chemist. If he has the time and the means, he's able to produce any chemical imaginable.

Benefits: The difficulty for developing and producing chemicals is lowered by 1.

Advanced: This Talent is Unique.

Field Chemist

Prerequisites: Intelligence 3, Science (Chemistry) 4

Your character knows how to adjust to his surroundings when developing and creating chemicals. He has learnt to make do with limited means and gets impressive results even in a field kitchen.

Benefits: Normally, you need a laboratory as *Refuge* to develop and create chemicals, with a Resource level equal to the chemical's Effect Level. *Field Chemists* only need lab equipment with a Resource level equal to Effect Level -1. In addition a Field Chemist can replace one exotic Ingredient with a common Ingredient (natron, vinegar, or something similar). This lowers cost and effort.

Advanced: You can buy this Talent up to two times. The 2nd level reduces the lab equipment needed to Effect Level -2 and allows the replacement of one additional Ingredient.

Inquisitive Mind

Prerequisites: Intelligence 4, appropriate Skill (e.g. Science Chemistry or Biology) 4

Your character's mind is as curious as it is analytical. This is a great boon for research. Your character is able to translate the results of his research to the field at hand much faster.

Benefits: If a character with *Inquisitive Mind* uses *Fundamental Research* (see page 128), he only needs 1 Research Point to make development or creation easier.

Advanced: You can buy this Talent up to two times. The 2nd level does not lower the requirements of Research Points any further, but makes it easier to publish your findings. A character with the 2nd level of *Inquisitive Mind* only needs 30 / 80 / 130 *Research Points* to publish his work.

Heat Adaptation

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character is used to great heat and is barely hindered by it. It does not matter if he wanders the burning vastness of the Sahara or the steaming, tropical jungles of Venus, the heat has far less effect on him compared to a character without this Talent.

Benefits: Characters with *Heat Adaptation* lower the damage they suffer from intense heat by 1 point. They can lower penalties incurred by hot or moist climate by 2 dice.

Advanced: You can buy this Talent up to two times.

Moss-Fungus

Prerequisites: None

Your character is infested with moss-fungus (see page 105). This 'blesses' him with a light green skin color. Many people would not see this as a desirable trait, but settlers of Venus know that an infestation with moss-fungus can be quite useful. Not only does the fungus protect from disease, it even makes the Venusian climate easier to bear.

Benefits: Characters infested with moss-fungus receive a +2 Bonus for their Body roll to resist any disease. Damage caused by intense heat is reduced by 1, penalties incurred by hot or moist climate by 2. In addition infested characters are immune against infestations with parasites and vermin. On the other hand, their skin color can cause public irritation. When dealing with people not accustomed to the look, infested characters suffer a -2 penalty on their social rolls. On Venus, where the fungus is common, the penalty is only -1.

Advanced: This Talent is Unique.

New Flaws

Heat Sensibility: Your character cannot bear great heat. If the surrounding temperature experienced is higher than a certain value (usually 30 °C or 86° F, but in moist climates or direct sunlight the effect can set in much sooner) he suffers a -1 penalty to all rolls.

Bad Smell: Your character has a bad smell. This is unfortunate. In most cases this effect is merely cosmetic, but with creatures relying on their sense of smell (e.g. dogs or Venusians) the character suffers a -2 penalty on social rolls.

Arch-Enemy: Your character has earned another person's enmity. His arch-enemy tries constantly to make your character's life hard or even impossible. The player can usually decide who this arch-enemy is, but he must be an NPC portrayed by the Gamemaster. You receive a Style Point whenever your enemy's machinations have a negative effect on your hero.

Equipment

Weapons

Venusian weapons are usually quite primitive – spears and bows prevail, even though those natives who have had contact with humans will have usually have had some experience with firearms. You will find the stats of primitive melee and ranged weapons on page 221 of the **Core Rules**.

The special conditions on Venus have had some influence on the development of weapon technology. Listed below you will find some weapons and weapon variants which have withstood the testing conditions on Venus, but which can also be very useful in other places.

Chemical Ammunition

Due to the omnipresence of chemical industries and the dangerous fauna on Venus it is no surprise that chemists were soon looking for a way to counter the threat of huge dinosaurs. These endeavors resulted in many types of chemical and explosive ammunition. This goes from bullets treated with the corrosive sap of Venusian trees to special small projectiles filled with chemicals. All these inventions have two things in common: on the one hand, they raise the damage inflicted, on the other they lose their effect very quickly. If the ammunition is not fired shortly after its production it loses its penetrating power. Chemical ammunition is available for all common firearms and costs double the amount of normal ammunition.

Rules: Chemical Ammunition raises a firearm's damage by 1 L. It loses its effect soon – 24 hours after its creation the damage bonus is lost.

Rifle Grenades

There have long been experiments with grenades that can be fired from special rifle attachments. If the Gamemaster wants these weapons to exist, the dangers of Venus have accelerated these developments, so that today there are several practical working variants.

Rifle grenades are specially adjusted grenades that can be fired from an attachment fitted on a rifle. Often the stock is rested on the ground or stuck under the arm, since the recoil is too strong to fire the rifle from the shoulder. Sometimes a special sight is used for aiming.

Rifle grenades have good reach – they do not have to be aimed precisely due to their explosive blast damage and they have a bal-

listic trajectory. On the other hand they are notoriously unreliable and can present a danger for the shooter himself.

Attachments for firing rifle grenades are available for all common types of rifles and cost half the price of the weapon.

Rules: The shooter makes a *Firearms* roll to hit against a difficulty of 4. If the grenade hits, it explodes and causes area damage of 4 L in a radius of 6 feet, or 2 meters, and damages everything in this area. If the shooter does not hit, the grenade was a dud. If the roll produces a Critical Failure, the grenade explodes inside the weapon.

Weapon	Dmg	Str	Rng	Rate	Speed	Cost	Wt
Rifle Grenade	4L	*	**	1	L	***	2/1****

* The Strength is equal to the Strength of the rifle.

** The Range is equal to double the Range of the rifle.

*** The Cost of the grenade attachment is equal to half the rifle's Cost. A single rifle grenade costs 6 S.

**** US customary units (lbs.) / metric system (kg)

Net Launcher

Since the dawn of time, nets have been used to immobilize dangerous creatures or to catch them alive. The net launcher is an extension of a simple throwing net: A crossbow-like weapon launching a specially prepared net that wraps around the victim and binds it.

Normal net launchers can be used to catch creatures up to Size 0. The huge fauna of Venus made it necessary to improve the design. Today there are net launchers that can wrap around a Tyrannosaurus Rex (which, unfortunately, only makes the creature angry in most cases).

Rules: Net launchers are built for different sizes. Launchers intended for creatures of Size 5 or more are mobile artillery weapons and are not used hand-held.

To fire a net launcher, the shooter makes an attack with *Firearms* / *Archery* (for normal net launchers) or *Gunnery* (for launchers for creatures of Size 5+). If the shooter's attack is successful, no damage is caused. Instead compare the damage the attack would have caused with the Strength of the enemy. If the rolled damage is higher than the Strength rating, the enemy is bound and has to use a round to free himself from the net. If the damage caused is equal to double the enemy's Strength rating, he is caught in the net and can only escape if somebody frees him.

Loading a net into the net launcher takes 5 Turns.

Weapon	Dmg	Str	Rng	Rate	Speed	Cost	Wt
Net Launcher	5*	3	**	1	L	5£***	****

* Add the Size rating the net launcher is intended for to the damage caused. Thus, a net launcher for creatures with Size 5 causes 10 damage.

** 350 ft. / 15 m

*** Minimal cost. Add 10 £ per point of Size of the creature the net launcher is intended for. A net launcher for creatures with Size 5 costs 55£.

**** portable net launcher: 11 lbs. / 5 kg & artillery net launcher: 440 lbs. / 200 kg

Other Ranged Weapons

Very Heavy Revolver: This monstrosity, which is also called the "uber revolver", was specially created to work as a "last resort" handgun which would be effective against larger dinosaurs. As such, it is a massively-enlarged modern example of the many types of multi-barreled "Howdah pistols" of near recent times. The barrel is chambered for 4-bore ammunition, but can only take 3 brass cartridges (as otherwise, the weapon would be too unwieldy). Each projectile weighs a quarter of a pound and its brass case is 4" long.

Lancaster Pistol: Gunsmith Charles Lancaster's robust, fast-shooting 2 or 4-barreled pistols are a popular alternative to potentially unreliable and smaller caliber revolvers. The 0.577 caliber, 4-barrel Lancaster is a widespread private purchase among British officers on Venus

Dinosaur Rifle: This weapon was also created especially for dinosaur hunting. The large single barrel rifle is a 2-bore breechloader and so must be reloaded after every shot (not that the shooter will feel much like reloading, considering his bruises from the fierce recoil). The projectiles are 1.32 inch caliber, weigh half a pound each, and cost three times the price of usual ammunition. The weapon itself is about 4 feet, or 1.2 meters, long and is usually carried in a special bag made out of dinosaur leather. It has to be said that most professional hunters prefer a double-barreled 4-bore.

Weapon	Dmg	Str	Rng	Cap	Rate	Speed	Cost	Wt
Uber Revolver	4 L	4	50/15*	3(r)	H	D	5£	3.3/1.5*
Lancaster Pistol	4 L	3	25/7.5*	4(i)	F	D	2£	2.25/1.13*
Dinosaur Rifle	6 L	4	165/50*	1(i)	1/2	D	25£	22/10*

* US customary units (ft./lbs.) / metric system (m/kg)

General Equipment

The lists in the **Core Rules** (see p. 227) offer equipment for traveling through the wilderness and for survival in strange and hostile environments. Listed below you will find some especially exotic, handy, or special items that can be of great use on Venus.

Paint Marker

The paint marker is a special attachment for rifles which can fire cartridges filled with paint. These cartridges do not cause any damage, but they cover the target with a special signal paint that is hard to wash off. This makes it easier to track it, especially in the dense tangle of the jungle.

Another variant of paint marker is filled with phosphorescent paint. If this is aimed at a target, the target will glow in the dark. This makes the location and approximate shape of the target clear even in the twilight underneath the trees.

Ammunition	Cost
Paint cartridge	2 5
Phosphorescent cartridge	4 5

Battlefield Illumination

The battlefield illumination or “Brock’s benefit” is another type of rifle attachment. It shoots a flare straight into the air where it ignites. Instead of burning out quickly – like other types of flare – the flare slowly glides to the ground on a small parachute. While descending it illuminates a large radius. The use of battlefield illumination reduces the penalties for darkness by half for 5 minutes.

Ammunition	Cost
Battlefield illumination	3 5

Big Game Deterrent (Artefact 2)

The big game deterrent, an invention of German engineers, has already proven its worth on Venus several times – although it should actually be called a dinosaur deterrent, since that is what it was designed for.

The deterrent is a tripod, 5 feet in height, on which a funnel-shaped siren is mounted. A crank powers a large flywheel which first has to be set in motion. If the deterrent is fired up, it takes about a minute to reach its full volume. It emits a piercing, deafening howl which is uncomfortable for humans, but almost unbearable for dinosaurs.

The deterrent could be the perfect tool to ward off dinosaurs – if it were not so bulky and could be started faster. Then again, if you are being attacked by a dinosaur you rarely have the leisure to turn the crank anyway. Due to these minor drawbacks most sirens are permanently mounted at outposts.

The flywheel stores enough energy for half an hour of use.

Rules: Dinosaurs within earshot have to make a *Body + Willpower* (difficulty 5) roll or flee. Even if they succeed their roll and there is a fight, they suffer from a -3 penalty as long as the siren can be heard.

Unfortunately the sound is uncomfortable for other creatures, too: humans and Martians within earshot suffer from a -1 penalty on all rolls, Venusians even -2.

Artefact	Cost	Weight
Big game deterrent	75£	66 lbs. / 30 kg

Photosonar Beacon (Artefact 2)

The exact opposite of the big game deterrent was developed by the noted British **Eccentric** Dr. Miles Thatcher. The ‘photosonar’ beacon uses a sophisticated system of sounds and rhythmic flashes designed not to scare dinosaurs away, but to attract them. Apparently it works: The prototype of the photosonar beacon was found in the jungle at the foot of the Victoria Plateau, surrounded by blood, one of Dr. Miles’ shoes, and the spoor of a Steller’s Dragon. There has been no sign of him since, although his aunts in Tunbridge Wells remain hopeful.

If the beacon is started, its sounds and flashes attract dinosaurs from a radius of almost a mile. Which type of dinosaur is attracted is determined mostly by chance – but even if there was a way to set up the machine to only affect certain types of dinosaurs, the

invention would be of little use. Who could possibly be interested in luring a tyrannosaur to a certain place?

Rules: When the beacon is activated, roll a die. If the result is an even number, you attract a herbivore, if it is an odd number, a carnivore. The higher the roll, the bigger and more dangerous the dinosaur or the more of them appear.

In theory it is possible to specifically program the beacon. To do so you first have to understand the complicated electro-clockwork mechanism. You have to achieve 20 successes on an extended roll with *Craft (Electrician)* against a difficulty of 5. You can make one roll per week.

Next you have to study the type of dinosaur. For each type of dinosaur you have to make a roll using *Science (Biology)* or *Animal Handling* against a difficulty of 5. You have to achieve 20 successes. Each roll takes a week. The notes and writings of Dr. Thatcher could halve the needed successes and lower the difficulty by 2, but they are be-mildewed and quietly decaying somewhere in the British enclave. If you succeeded your rolls, the beacon can be programmed with a simple roll using *Craft (Electrician)* against a difficulty of 2. Until programmed otherwise, the machine will only lure the specified type of dinosaur.

Artefact	Cost	Weight
Photosonar Beacon	unsaleable	55 lbs. / 25 kg

Sample Belt

Skilled tailors have created a special type of sample belt especially for the surroundings on Venus. Not only is its dinosaur leather durable and weatherproof, it also has sealable and waterproof sample pouches that can be labelled individually.

The wearer of the sample belt receives a +2 Bonus if he is looking for ingredients for the creation of chemicals or similar (see page 129).

Artefact	Cost	Weight
Sample Belt	2 £	0.6 lbs. / 0.3 kg

Sun Stone

A “sun stone” allows defining the position of the sun even in dense fog. The user holds the stone in front of his eye and adjusts it until he can see two rays of light showing the direction of the sun. The sun stone consists of calcspars and has to be exported from Earth, because as yet no source has been discovered on Venus.

Artefact	Cost	Weight
Sun Stone	1 £	0.2 lbs. / 0.1 kg

Rocket Fan

“Hector, crank it!” – “Yes, M’lady.”

— Overheard on the Victoria Plateau

The “pocket fan” is an invention from the British colony, where it is mostly used to ease the stay of visiting ladies. It is simply a small fan or propeller with a mechanism that can be wound up with a crank. Unfortunately, 5 minutes of energetic cranking only gives cool air for 10 minutes. For that reason many wealthy

ladies carry several of these machines and have them wound up by servants all the time.

Artefact	Cost	Weight
Pocket fan	1 £	0.6 lbs. / 0.3 kg

Venusin

Venusin – commonly called “Venus protection spray” – is a chemical developed in the German protectorate by Bayer to fight the omnipresent decay, especially if it stems from infestation with mosses and fungi. Venus protection spray can be applied to appropriate materials such as clothing and reliably protects them from decay. At present, the effect of Venusin is only temporary but *Carl Duisberg* and his men work to improve its duration.

Artefact	Cost	Weight
Venusin	2 S	0.2 lbs. / 0.1 kg

A dose of the spray is enough for 5 uses. One use is enough to protect the clothes and equipment of an average traveller for 1 day.

Waterproof Paper

Waterproof paper is an achievement of the BASF Corporation. The paper is chemically treated and can even be used in rain or under water. It even resists the ever-present decay on Venus. For use with this paper there are also special waterproof ink pens, which are more reliable and less fragile than pencils.

Artefact	Cost
Waterproof notebook	6 S
Waterproof pen	2 S



The Chemistry Set

Timeline of Milestones

Venus is a planet full of exotic secrets, not least among them the mysterious substances that can be found, analyzed and used by inventive scientists.

Although the chemical industry on Venus is primarily in the hands of a select few companies, there are some bright individuals who are committed to scientific research on the far distant planet. In their laboratories they create many wondrous potions and poisonous tinctures.

In the following section we present a complete 'chemistry set' which player characters (and of course non-player characters) can use if they choose to be a chemist. The chemistry set is kept rather general so it can also be used if your character should be on another planet.

You won't find detailed information here about special substances. Instead we suggest primarily rules to portray the development and creation of chemicals. Of course, setting out to search for rare ingredients might present an adventure in itself.

Even though we try to keep game balance in mind, the openness of the chemical set might create loopholes that can be abused to create truly powerful potions beyond compare. The most important rule is: Use your common sense to judge if a certain substance suits your style of play. When in doubt, the Gamemaster decides if he wants to allow a creation or not.

A Short History of Chemistry

Early human civilizations (for example, Egypt and Babylon) already knew and used a type of chemistry and metallurgy based on careful observation and empirical science. It was the great ancient philosopher Aristotle who started to develop hypotheses about the nature of materials and their transformations in his natural philosophy.

In the Dark Ages, these now wondrously arcane thoughts gave rise to alchemy, whose goal was to research the transmutation of base materials to noble ones. The transformation of lead to gold or the search for the Philosopher's Stone was the alchemist's ultimate ideal. Even highly educated minds of great subtlety and understanding, like Sir Isaac Newton, committed themselves to this useless search.

As a side effect of these obsolete interests, very useful inventions were made: thanks to alchemy we have black powder (gunpowder) and European porcelain.

The modern chemistry we know today started to take shape in the 17th and 18th centuries. Modern methods and exact measurements brought unknown insights into the nature of matter. Antoine Lavoisier (1743 - 1794) started to classify the elements and compounds. He thought about the methods of analysis and laid the foundation for the chemical and pharmaceutical knowledge of our own enlightened 19th century.

1804

The apothecary **Friedrich Sertürner** manages to isolate morphine, the most effective component of opium. For the first time it is possible to exactly dose the active ingredient that appears in natural opium in varying concentration.

1808

John Dalton publishes his theory of atoms, the first scientific model of the interrelation of atom, substance and element. For Dalton the atom is an indestructible unit that does not change with reactions.

1811

The Italian **Amedeo Avogadro** hypothesises that identical volumes of a gas always have the same amount of particles. His theory of molecules is controversial in scientific circles since it does not agree with the common scientific consensus.

1817

When **Sertürner** publishes his research results, other materials like caffeine, strychnine and quinine can be isolated from natural products. His findings also appear to be a weapon against the all too common opium addiction. Sertürner, who diligently tests the preparation on himself, calls it *Morphium*, referring to the Greek god of dreams.

1818

A modern and consistent terminology for elements is introduced by **J. J. Berzelius**. In addition, the somewhat disputatious authority publishes his table of atomic masses.

1828

Organic chemistry is founded when **Friedrich Wöhler**'s synthesizes artificial urea. This discovery supersedes the theory of vitalism, in which a mysterious life energy called *Vis Vitalis* is necessary for the creation of organic substances. Many experimenters make enthusiastic attempts to create additional organic substances.

1832

Michael Faraday starts his work on electrolysis – the chemical disintegration and analysis of matter using electricity.

Justus Liebig studies the structure of organic substances and develops radical theory.

1849

By inventing *super phosphate fertilizer* **Liebig** makes it possible to greatly improve the world's food situation in the second half of the century.

1852

Liebig finds a way to reduce meat – it is the birth of “Liebig's Meat Extract”, a nourishing condiment for soups and other dishes particularly prescribed for invalids

1856

The young British chemist **William Henry Perkin** manages to create the first completely artificial coloring called *Mauveine*. Perkin's Mauve makes its inventor rich and famous. It is used in the textile industry and is said to give the British Empire's “Penny lilac” stamps their color (although this is not actually so).

1860

R.W. Bunsen and **G.R. Kirchhoff** develop spectral analysis. By segmenting light, they learn about the structure of matter. They find the elements caesium and rubidium and solve the almost fifty-year-old riddle of the Fraunhofer lines in the solar spectrum.

The chemist **Albert Niemann** manages to extract a substance from coca leaves. He calls it *cocaine*. The substance proves to be an invigorating stimulant and is used as medication against the increasingly common morphine addiction. Niemann dies a year later during experiments with *mustard gas*.

1866

The theorist **F.A. Kekule** publishes his hypothesis about the structure of the benzene ring, the most important component of organic chemistry.

Following a transportation accident Alfred Nobel finds a safe method to stabilize the explosive *nitroglycerine*. Until then, many people had died from explosions during his research – among them his brother Emil. After Nobel has perfected his formula and removes the instability by adding kieselguhr, he patents his invention and calls the explosive *dynamite*. The mining boom leads to great demand. In front of the gates of Hamburg the dynamite factory Krümmel is opened – the biggest factory for explosives in Europe. Many other factories follow.

1869

The Russian scientist **Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev** publishes his periodic system of elements. He assigns *ether* ahead of hydrogen and declares that it is the element with the smallest atomic weight. He places it into its own group which it occupies alone for now. At the same time, J. Meyer publishes his own variant of the periodic system, but it isn't as complete as his competitor's.

During a solar eclipse over Russia, Canada and the USA, scientists detect indications of a previously unknown element in the sun's corona. For the moment it is called *coronium*. **Mendeleev**, who's working on a thorough analysis of the chemical properties of ether, assigns it between ether and hydrogen. Coronium is made the second element in the group of all-pervasive fine substances. Many scientists doubt the discovery and think it is a measuring error, because the substance can neither be found on Earth nor in space.

Celluloid (formerly called *parkesine*) is used in imitation of many natural products (e.g. mother of pearl).

1871

Dmitri Mendeleev manages to predict properties of elements presently unknown to humanity using his periodic system. He predicts the properties of gallium, scandium and germanium. Mendeleev describes a metal with incredible explosive power. Because he holds to the theory of coronium, many people mock his bold theses – until gallium, scandium and germanium are actually found.

1872

The landing on Mars makes red the fashionable color of the moment. The director of the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik, **Heinrich Caro**, who improved the production method of the red coloring alizarin with **Carl Graebe**, gives the dye the trade name *Mars Red*.

Graebe, Caro and **Liebermann** become extremely rich, as many companies use the new coloring. For example, the German-American entrepreneur **Levi Strauss** now sells his workman's Jeans not only in *Indigo Blue*, but also in *Mars Red*.

1873

After his discovery of several organic compounds in opium and animal bone oil the previous year caused much interest, the Scottish doctor and chemist **Thomas Anderson** tries to isolate the active part of the spice *Bhutan*. He finds that the spice does not only contain one active substance, but consists of a number of substances that achieve their stimulating effect by their interaction. He establishes that the removal and addition of components can strengthen the effect, weaken it, or turn it to its opposite. Later experiments with organic compounds derived from Earth's flora and fauna are added the formula. One year later he has to give up his chair at the University of Glasgow. Later, his colleagues issue a statement that he is suffering from growing neurological problems, bouts of fever, hypersensitivity, petulance and hypertrichosis in recent months. He disappears without a trace while visiting London. It is presumed that he was the first victim of a series of unexplained animal attacks.

1874

The British chemist **C. R. Alder Wright** develops a process to conjoin opium with several acids at St. Mary's Hospital. He creates a partly artificial and very efficient pain medication. His discovery sinks into obscurity.

1875

Driven by his craving for innovation, Nobel develops *blasting gelatine* – a variant of dynamite that does not become dangerous when wet. A few years later it is produced under license in the German colony on Venus, since it is ideally suited to the extreme weather of the jungle planet.

1876

Dmitri Mendeleev travels to Mars at the behest of the Russian Czar to study the production of liftwood. On his return his findings lay the foundation of the Russian space program. Even though the researcher, who is divisive among scientists, is hindered again and again, he enthusiastically develops several prototypes of ether ships, navigational gear and measuring instruments.

Mendeleev states that it should be space travel's goal to voyage to the sun to study *coronium*. His research indicates that the substance should be similar to ether, but contrary to ether it should be able to interact with other substances. His writings about coronium therapy and coronium weapons are largely ignored in professional circles.

1878

The Swiss scholar **Jean Charles Galissard de Marignac** finds an extremely explosive substance while studying rock samples from space. After the British scientist **William Crookes** confirms his findings, Gallissard calls the new element *varenium*, after the community of Varen in the canton Wallis. There, a meteorite was found in which traces of the new element could be detected, too.

Varenium proves to be very rare. On other planets there are only small traces of the element, while it is rather common on Venus. For a short while, Dmitri Mendeleev is once again under discussion, because he had predicted the properties of varenium using his periodic system in 1871.

1879

Crookes discovers cathode rays while studying the vacuum tube. He posits a fourth aggregate state where energy and matter start to merge.

1883

Dr. F. v. Heyden brings out an improved pain reliever with the main component being *salicylic acid*.

Justus Liebig's meat extract is produced under license on Venus. Branded as "Liebig's Dinosaur Extract" it becomes a hit – not least because of the series of trading cards depicting scenes from Venus that are packaged with it. The less exotic version using beef becomes an important part of the iron rations of most of the world's armies, because it is lightweight and nourishing.

1884

Dmitri Mendeleev returns to Mars. He is tasked by the Russian government to further the exploitation of the resources of the red planet. Mendeleev is shocked by the treatment of Martians and political prisoners by his fellow countrymen in Hecates Lacus. Reluctantly he contributes to the analysis of liftwood sap. In the end, he concludes that the composition of the substance is too complex to be decoded with the means available.

Instead he writes many submissions to the government complaining about the injustices in the colony. At the end of the year, he is put in an expedition headed to Venus.

In a tomb near Syrtis Major on Mars the German archaeologist **Reinhard Kekule**, a cousin of the chemist bearing the same name, finds a document from the time of Seldon VII (about 4700 years old). In the document, a periodic system of elements is described. It contains many elements unknown to man with their description. The document is stolen in a bandit attack on the archaeologists' camp, and the excavation license is revoked by the British government, citing reasons of security.

1885

Eugen Goldstein finds a positively charged particle in an electron beam experiment. He calls it a *proton*.

Mendeleev arrives on Venus. He plans to advance the mining of *Varenium*. Unfortunately, the Germans control the largest deposit. Instead, he develops a new etherometer based on Crooke's research.

The factory for salicylic acid, Dr. F. v. Heyden, and the company E. Merck, which have branches on Mars and Venus, combine to found the *Kaiserliche Arzneimittel Union (Imperial Medicines Union)*. Together they bring out many medications that also use alien components.

1886

Carl Graebe, who rose to the position of Secret Councilor, travels to Venus on behest of the German emperor. There he contributes to German paint production. He manages to derive the anti-pigment *occultin* from the tiny Tua-Tua-lizard. Experiments to employ the refractive properties of the Tua-Tua use to become almost invisible are not met with success. The treated materials are in fact translucent, but they do not hide the wearer. The nine-figure funding for 'Project Siegfried', drawn from the military budget, appear to have been in vain.

A social democratic tract entitled 'The Emperor's New Clothes' makes Councilor Graebe a laughingstock. This doesn't affect the great success that Venus Silk, developed as a side product, has with wealthy ladies because of its iridescent sheen.

1887

Celluloid is used as translucent carrier for photographic films. This invention revolutionizes film and photography, although film on nitrate stock can combust if not stored properly and there are many accidents.

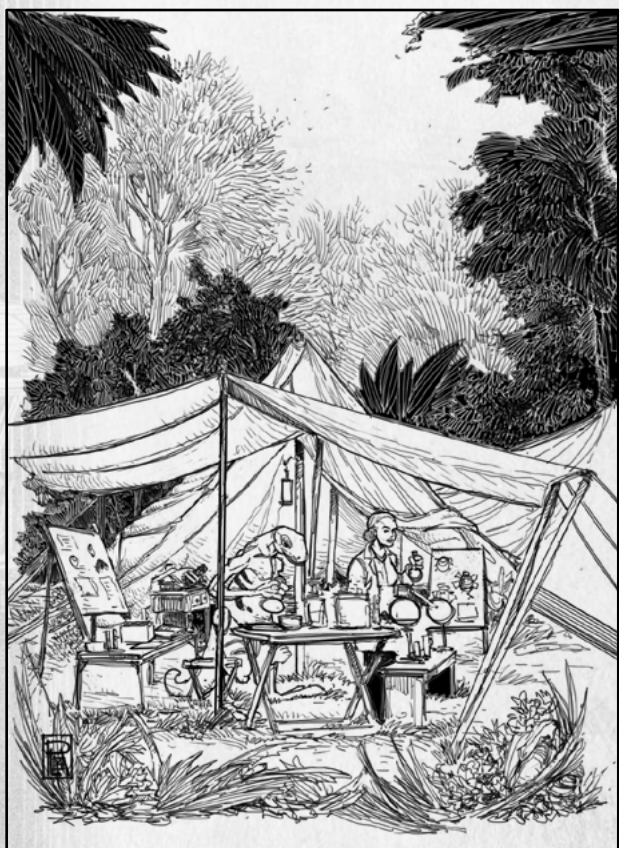
Alfred Nobel is temporarily imprisoned for espionage in France, because he refuses to sell his newest invention, a smokeless black

powder called *ballistite*, to the French government. Shortly after, some of Nobel's former British co-workers release a very similar product called *cordite*, which greatly enhances the power of firearms. Nobel calls it an audacious fraud.

1889

Under the pressure that alien medications put on the medicinal market, the *Münchener Aktiengesellschaft Farbenfabrik* decides to buy **C.R. Alder Wright**'s patent for the process that he developed in 1874. The medication is supposed to be used as treatment for addiction from opium, *Morphium* and *lobalong*. There's already talk about a brand name. To promote the medication among the heroic space pioneers, it will be called *heroine*.

Due to his constant complaints about the treatment of Lizardmen in the Russian plantations and his general criticizing of the czarist bureaucracy, **Dmitri Mendeleev** is sent to Mercury with an expedition. There he studies the recently found „glow crystals“ and installs a variation of his etherometers. He plans to use it to prove the existence of *coronium*. When he receives a letter in which the government instructs him to build a permanent Russian presence on Mercury, Mendeleev disappears with all of his gear. All that remains are tracks in the desert's dust moving to the boiling wasteland and a single word, written by hand on a document found beneath a stone: “Njet!”



In the course of the 19th century, chemistry as a science came of age. In its theory, the vague term „element“ is developed and refined into a profound understanding of matter and its order. Using symbols, structural formulas and stoichiometry, the language of chemistry developed to be a tool allowing exact representation and analysis of experimental results.

By discovering synthetic substances and using organic chemistry, in a short time a new industry developed. German companies especially (BASF, Bayer, *Münchener Aktiengesellschaft Farbenfabrik*) expanded in short order – also on Mars and Venus new industrial complexes developed. Venus grew to be a „Mecca“ for biochemistry and pharmacy after it was discovered that innumerable potent substances were to be found in the eternal jungles of the planet.

In public perception chemistry was competing with other sciences. Chemistry sets (e.g. *Statham's Students' Chemical Laboratory*) grew to be a huge commercial success and motivated children and adolescents to start exploring the world with chemistry.

The Venusians' Chemistry

Even though Venusians might appear rather primitive to civilized Europeans, their chemical understanding is surprisingly sophisticated. Of course they lack scientific explanations for chemical reactions. Instead they use a complex system of occult superstitions. In practice, they managed to develop remarkable substances that sometimes are not at all inferior to the creations of human scientists.

Venusians are at a disadvantage as they do not use well equipped laboratories. On the other hand, some of their shamans and priests have developed an impressive gift for improvisation. Many of them possess the *Field Chemist* Talent (see page 119) to compensate for lacking technical equipment.

The Martians' Chemistry

During the age of the great empires, the chemists of the Canal Martians were even better than those from Earth – but this knowledge has been lost to time, like many other things. Today Martians (not including some respected luminaries) operate on a somewhat lower level, but they do have profound knowledge about the substances found on Mars.

The Hill Martians know (with only a few exceptions) a more primitive type of natural medicine, comparable to the 'primitive' tribes of Earth.

High Martians do not use any chemistry to speak of.

Producing Chemicals

To produce a chemical, you have to follow a two-step process: **Development** and **Creation**.

The first step, **Development**, means that you have to do the lengthy laboratory work to find an effective substance. Weeks, sometimes months of research and trial and error are necessary to get what the scientist wants: A **Formula** which can be used to produce the researched substance.

The second step is **Creation**, which (depending on the chemical) can be a lot faster than **Development**.

When a scientist has researched a Formula, he can create the chemical again and again without having to redo the Formula. That means that usually you have to accomplish the first step only once for each chemical.

Step 0: Fundamental Research (optional)

Every important and seemingly ingeniously spontaneous development is in truth preceded by precise, lengthy research that can take months, years or even decades. For a roleplaying game, it does not usually make much sense to remove a character from the game for such a long time. For that reason, the rules for developing and creating a substance assume a timespan that can be accomplished by player characters.

Nevertheless, you should not completely ignore fundamental research, because it can be used between two adventures or on long journeys through the ether. Since this system makes almost any invention possible if you have enough time, the Gamemaster decides if and how fundamental research can be used.

Collecting Research Points

To conduct fundamental research a scientist needs appropriate surroundings, in most cases a simple laboratory. Research in different surroundings is possible, but more difficult.

For each week a scientist spends on fundamental research, he may make a skill roll using an appropriate skill. An especially well equipped laboratory brings bonus dice, adverse conditions (like a field camp in the Venusian jungle) lead to penalties.

If the scientist doesn't have the whole day (8 hours of work) to concentrate on his studies, the time he needs grows longer – if he only has two hours per day, he only may roll once every four weeks.

Every scored success grants one *Research Point*. Research points can be collected and spent at different times.

Research points from different areas (for example *Biology* and *Chemistry*) are marked individually and have to be used individually. There are three fields of study that are likely for the creation of chemicals:

Area of Studies	Used Skill
Developing / Creating chemicals	Chemistry or Craft (Apothecary)
Studying ingredients	Biology or Chemistry
Finding ingredients	Survival

How to Use Research Points

The Research Points collected during your studies can be spent in two ways.

Aid Development / Creation (3 Research Points)

You can ease the Development or Creation of substances with your collected points. For each 3 Research Points spent, you receive a Style Point you can only spend for the rolls listed below.

The Research Points have to stem from the appropriate 'collection' - if you have collected your points using *Survival*, you cannot use them to support your *Chemistry* roll.

Hasten Development / Creation (5 / 10 / 20 Research Points)

You can spend the collected points to shorten the time for Development or Creation of the substance. Spending 5 points reduces the time you need for a single roll to 7 days, 10 points to 5 days, and 20 points to a mere 3 days.

Publication (50 / 100 / 150 Research Points)

Maybe a scientist does not care about the practical use of his results. Instead he is aiming for the esteem of his peers in the scientific community.

In this case, he can publish the results of his research. 50 Research Points mean an article in a scientific journal, for 100 points it is a treatise, and for 150 points it is a recognized, acclaimed work.

As a result, the Resource *Fame* (esteem in the scientific community) is raised by 1 / 2 / 3 levels. This gain in esteem is only temporary (about 6 months), if the scientist does not spend experience points to improve his Resource.

Other scientists' publications can be useful for Development and Creation: When you use another scientist's publication, you receive a bonus of 1 / 2 / 3 dice on your rolls for Development and Creation.

Venusian Chemists and Fame

Venusian shamans and priests tend to be secretive and do not share their discoveries with others. Nevertheless, they can benefit from their research's Fame by using their new knowledge for a demonstration of power, for example by demonstrating the effects of a new poison on an enemy or healing a tribal chieftain in a spectacular way.

Stage 1: Development

1st Step: First you have to think about the **Effect** the substance is supposed to have and how it should work. You are only conceptualizing your chemical in this step, but it does not have any effect in game terms yet. You can draw inspiration from the list of Effects (see page 132).

2nd Step: Pick Effects from the list to calculate the **Creation Difficulty**. In theory, you can combine as many Effects as you want, but don't forget to keep the resulting substance believable: a healing salve that heals and poisons at the same time does not make much sense, a balm that heals and improves physical skills does.

The more Effects your substance is supposed to have, the more difficult it is to create the substance: The Creation Difficulty equals $1 + (\text{total number of Improvements} / 2)$, rounding down.

Total number of Improvements	Creation Difficulty
1 – 2	2
3 – 4	3
5 – 6	4
7 – 8	5
9 – 10	6
11 or higher	7 or higher

3rd Step: Choose **Restrictions** and calculate the **Effect Level** of the Substance.

Restrictions lower a chemical's effectiveness, but they also reduce the number of necessary improvements, which makes the substance's Creation easier. The more Restrictions you choose, the lower the Effect Level. There has to be at least one Effect per Restriction. For example, it is not possible to create a Medication that only causes Restrictions and then use it as a poison.

The **Effect Level** is determined by subtracting the Restrictions from the total number of **Improvements**. The Effect Level is important to determine the quality your laboratory equipment must have and how expensive the substance will be in the end.

Improvements	Effect Level
1	0
2	1
4	2
6	3
8	4
10+	5

4th Step: In the 4th step you have to prepare the necessary laboratory equipment. Now the substance's **Effect Level** comes into play. The substance's Effect Level is equal to the level of the Resource *Refuge* the scientist must have access to. The laboratory does not have to be his, but he has to be able to work there for an extended period of time without disturbance. That means that for preparing simple chemicals, a glass flask and a field kitchen are sufficient, but for highly complex substances, you need a perfectly equipped, modern laboratory.

Effect Level = required Refuge level (Laboratory)

5th Step: The Ingredients have to be found. As a rough guide one might say, that **for every Effect you need an Ingredient**.

These Ingredients can be collected in any suitable place, for example in the Venusian jungle or along the banks of the Mercu-

rian World River. How difficult it is to find a suitable ingredient depends on the effect it should cause. Take a look at the list of Effects. Each Effect costs a certain number of Improvements. This number determines how difficult it is to find the substance.

To find an Ingredient, you have to make a roll on *Science (Biology or Chemistry)* or *Survival*. The Gamemaster has the final say. Maybe he wants to write his own adventure about the collection of an especially rare or hard to find Ingredient.

Improvements	Difficulty
1	1
2	2
4	3
6	4
8	5
10+	6

A single roll takes two weeks, so the search for the proper Ingredients can take some time. This is only for the first search. When an Ingredient has been found for the first time, additional tries to find Ingredients for the same Effect only take 3 days – you already know what to search for and where to find it.

It is possible to buy Ingredients. The cost for the Ingredients of a substance are about half as much as the finished substance (see below).

The Ingredients are completely used up in the development of the Formula.

6th Step: Make a *Science (Chemistry)* roll against the substance's Creation Difficulty. If the Gamemaster deems it appropriate, there can be a synergy bonus if the character has another very suitable skill. Each roll means a week of work, but you can shorten the time needed by spending Research Points (see above). When a character has collected an amount of successes equal to half the Effect Level, he has found a Formula for the substance.

Optional: If a character rolls a Critical Failure when making the Development roll, the Gamemaster may give the substance an additional Restriction.

Stage 2: Creation

When a Formula has been created, true Creation of the substance can be attempted. From now on, you don't have to tediously study the chemical, you can start to actually create it.

1st Step: First, you have to collect **Ingredients** again. This works the same way as in Step 5 of the previous stage, but takes less time (3 days per roll). Of course you can simply buy the Ingredients.

2nd Step: Make a *Science (Chemistry)* roll against the substance's Creation Difficulty. Each roll takes a week of work, but you can shorten the time by spending Research Points (see above). When the character has scored a number of successes equal to the Effect Level, he receives a lot (5 uses) of the substance.

Optional: When you roll a Critical Failure when making the Creation roll, this can have grievous consequences which the Gamemaster decides upon. These can range from an explosion in the laboratory to poisonous clouds or collective hallucinations of the laboratory personnel.

3rd Step: If it is necessary, determine the substance's **Buying Price**. The price for a lot of the substance (5 charges) depends on its Effect Level.

Level	Buying Price
0	11\$
1	1£ 3\$
2	3£
3	15£
4	40£
5	1000£

Example of a Substance's Development and Creation

The chemist Strebel works on Venus for a big German chemical corporation. She has free rein where her work is concerned. She wants to develop a chemical to make life on Venus more bearable for humans. The chemical is supposed to improve resilience and grant the user heightened senses to better react to dangers.

From the list of Effects, Anna's player first chooses *Improved Attribute*. The most fitting choice is her *Body rating*. Raising the attribute by +2 takes 4 Improvements. Then she picks the effect *Talent* with the Keen Sense (Hearing) Talent. This costs 2 Improvements. Anna thinks that the effects' duration of a scene is too short and decides to improve it to a day, which itself takes 2 Improvements. Injection as *Application* seems viable.

The Effects take 8 Improvements altogether. She decides to accept a side effect and picks the Restriction *Flaw* (Paranoia). This lowers the cost by 2 Improvements to 6. The substance improves the user's stamina and hearing, but it makes him suspicious and over anxious and alert. Anna thinks that this might be appropriate for Venus.

6 Improvements require a level 3 laboratory, but Anna has no trouble getting access to an appropriate environment via her employer. Next, Anna has to collect the Ingredients. Her chemical has two Effects, so she needs 2 Ingredients. To get the Ingredient for an Improvement of the Body rating, she has to make a roll with Difficulty 3, while for the heightened senses another roll with Difficulty 2 is necessary. Anna sends out two of her corporation's biologists. They both succeed with their first rolls and return with the Ingredient after two weeks.

Anna starts working in her laboratory. The Creation Difficulty for 6 Improvements is 4, the Effect Level is 3, so she has to achieve 3 successes. Her skill rating in Science (Chemistry) is 8. She does not have much luck with her first roll and only achieves 1 success. With her second roll, she receives the two remaining successes. After two weeks in the laboratory, she holds the Formula in her hands.

After she finished her research, Anna can start production. The two biologists that had been looking for the Ingredients now know what they are searching for. 3 days later they have collected the next Ingredients. Anna rolls again against the Creation Difficulty and gets 3 successes with her first roll. One week later she holds her first 5 doses of her promising „Venus Survival Tincture“ in her hands.

Venus Survival Tincture

Venus Survival Tincture is a clear liquid with a sharp smell of methanol that has to be injected intravenously. Its effect is almost instantaneous and grants the user health and sharp hearing, but also leads to a mild paranoia.

Application: Injection

Anatomy: Human

Improvements: Improved Attribute *Body rating* +2 (+4 Improvements); *Keen Hearing* Talent (+2 Improvements); Duration 1 day (+2 Improvements)

Restrictions: *Paranoia* Flaw (-2 Improvements)

Sum of Improvements: 6

Creation Difficulty: 4

Effect Level: 3

Cost: 15 £ for 5 uses

Medications and Combat Agents

For Development and Creation, you can group chemicals in two broad categories: Medications and Combat Agents.

Medications are all types of substances that improve the user in some way. They do not necessarily have to heal poison or wounds, they can also be drugs that improve physical performance.

Combat Agents are chemicals that can be used to damage an enemy, like ingested poisons or toxic gas. They do not have to be lethal, but they always hinder the victim in one way or another.

Development and Creation of Medications and Combat Agents do not differ – but they do use different lists of Effects. What can be a wanted effect for a Combat Agent would be fatal for a Medication.

There are countless Effects and Restrictions that can be used to create chemicals – more than we can include in this book. The following lists offer the most common Effects, but of course you can use them as examples to create your own. As always: The Gamemaster has the final say over what is possible and what is not.

Medications

Medications are substances that give advantages to the human (Venusian, Martian, animal) body. This can be a serum healing ailments, a combat drug improving performance or healing salves that stop bleeding.

The effect of medications can be permanent, when they are removing some kind of drawback (wounds do not open again after being healed, diseases do not return), or persist for one scene when they improve performance. It is possible to improve this duration, but it makes Creation much more difficult.

Every lot produced contains 5 uses of a medication.

Effects and Applications for Medications

Additional Sense

Cost: +2 Improvements per additional sense

The user can now perceive the world with a new or extended sense. This may be useful for collecting important information, but can have its own restrictions. Being able to perceive the infra-red spectrum means that you do not suffer penalties from darkness, but you could suffer penalties due to the surrounding temperature. To use an additional sense, the user has to make a *Perception* roll.

Examples: Eye drops, augmented nasal spray

Anatomy

Usually, medications only affect a certain type of creature, for example only humans (if the Gamemaster wants it, this can include close relatives like apes). It is possible to broaden the medication's scope. The chemist has to decide if the substance is supposed to affect intelligent beings or animals.

Scope	Example	Cost
1 species	Humans	0 improvements
2 species	Humans, Martians	+3 improvements
3 species	Humans, Martians, Venusians	+6 improvements
Animal species	Domestic dogs	0 improvements
Animal family	Canids	+3 improvements
Animal order	All predators	+6 improvements
Animal class	All mammals	+8 improvements

Antidote

Cost: +2 improvements per Poison Level

The Medication stops the effect of poisons up to the chosen Poison Level. Each poison needs its own antidote.

Examples: Snake venom serum, Atropine

Application

A medication's application is important when its use should be as quick or easy as possible. There are four possible types of application: injection, ingestion, contact and inhalation. The standard type of application is injection. Other types cost improvements.

Application	Example	Cost
Injection	Syringe	0 improvements
Ingestion	Pill, liquid	+1 improvement
Contact	Salve	+2 improvements
Inhalation	Spray, steam	+3 improvements

Cure

Cost: +2 Improvements per Infection Level

The medication stops a specific disease up to the achieved Infection Level. The Gamemaster can declare a disease to be "incurable".

Advanced: For +2 additional Improvements, the cure is a vaccination and can be used to prevent infection.

Examples: Flu vaccination, antibiotics

Extended Duration

Cost: +2 Improvements per raise

The substance's effects last longer than a scene.

Duration	Cost
1 day	+2 Improvements
1 week	+4 Improvements
1 month	+6 Improvements

Examples: Concentrated dose, custom-made chemistry

Hallucinogen

Cost: +2 Improvements per effect level

Even though a hallucinogenic effect can be a disadvantage, there are some drugs that achieve just that effect. Hallucinogens confuse the user and make him act randomly and hallucinate. If the user isn't being watched, he can be a danger for himself. The hallucinogen's effect subsides after four hours per effect level, reduced by the user's Body rating.

Examples: Scopolamine, alcohol

Healing

Cost: +2/+3 Improvement per nonlethal / lethal health point

The medication heals health lost by wounds, poison, disease or other effects in the course of a day.

Advanced: 2/3 Improvements heal a health point. If you spend +3/+4 Improvements per health point, the healing time is reduced to 1 hour.

Examples: Ointment, circulatory stabilizer

Improved Attribute

Cost: +2 Improvements per additional point in a Primary Attribute or per two points in a Secondary Attribute

The substance improves a specific Primary Attribute by one point or a Secondary Attribute by two points. These bonuses are used for all Attribute and skill rolls. If you wish to improve a Primary Attribute, you can use the rating when determining your Secondary Attributes.

Examples: Muscle strengthener (Strength), neurology serum (Intelligence), immune system enhancer (Body)

Refreshing

Cost: +2 Improvements

The medication's use instantly wakes a person from Unconsciousness.

Examples: Cardiovascular agent, smelling salts

Sedative

Cost: +1 improvement per level

The substance calms the user down. It ends fits of anger or panic attacks. The user becomes peaceful and loses any aggression. To

take aggressive actions the user must succeed in a Willpower roll. The level chosen with Improvements determines the roll's difficulty.

Examples: Valerian, tranquilizer

Talent

Cost: +2 Improvements

The medication grants the user a certain Talent. These may also be Unique Talents. Prerequisites do not have to be met.

Advanced: The Improvement can be taken up to three times. Each pick improves the Talent's level.

Examples: Strong anaesthetic (High Pain Tolerance), mind-expanding drug (Keen Sense)

Weird Science

Cost: Varying

Some scientists do not only create common medications, but substances that seem to make a mockery of natural laws. We do not offer fixed rules for these effects – the Gamemaster has the final say. In any case, these types of effect are very difficult to create (+6 to +10 Improvements) and always need exotic substances that cannot be found the usual way but require an adventure in itself.

There are rumors that some chemists have managed to create invisibility (+10 Improvements) or physical transformation (+8 Improvements). Others tell stories about greatly enhanced jumping power (+6 Improvements), magnetic skin (+6 Improvements) or so-called „phase shifting“ that leads to random, uncontrolled teleportation (+10 Improvements).

It is unknown how many of these rumors are true.

Examples: Serum of invisibility, Mr. Hyde's tincture

Restrictions for Medications

Addiction

Cost: -2 Improvements per level

Use of the medication is addictive. For each use, the user has to make a Body roll with difficulty 3. If he does not succeed, he is addicted and has to take doses at regular intervals or suffer a penalty of -2 on all rolls. This dose does not have any further effect beyond negating the penalty. Each level chosen shortens the intervals at which the medication has to be used.

Interval	Cost
1 week	-2 Improvements
3 days	-4 Improvements
1 day	-6 Improvements

Examples: Opium, nicotine, some cough syrups

Flaw

Cost: -2 Improvements

The medication makes the user suffer from a certain Flaw, picked during the Development of the chemical. This condition is in effect during the whole period the invention is being used, but the player does not get Style Points for playing out the Flaw.

Instead the Flaw has to be portrayed at least once per use or the substance loses its effect until the player spends a Style Point.

Examples: Creates tunnel vision, dims the senses

Lowered Attribute

Cost: -2 Improvements per lost point in a Primary Attribute or two lost points in a Secondary Attribute

The substance lowers a certain Primary Attribute by a single point or a Secondary Attribute by two points. These penalties are used for all relevant Attribute and Skill rolls. If you are lowering a Primary Attribute, you use the lowered value to determine Secondary Attributes.

Examples: Body pain, headaches, nausea, disfigured face

Permanency

Cost: -2 Improvements per level

Restrictions have usually the same duration as the effects of medication. This restriction lengthens the duration of another Restriction (for example a Lowered Attribute) to beyond the duration of the effect.

Restriction Duration	Cost
Double duration	-2 Improvements
3 months	-4 Improvements
6 months	-6 Improvements
1 year	-8 Improvements
Permanent	-10 Improvements

Poisonous

Cost: -2 Improvements per lethal wound

For each use, the medication causes a lethal point of damage after its effect subsides.

Improved: Each pick raises the damage by 1.

Examples: Experimental formula, poisonous vapors

Sensitivity

Cost: -2 Improvements per sensitivity

For the duration of the medication's effect, the user becomes sensible to a certain environmental influence, like light, smell or noise. If he is exposed to the influence, he suffers from a -2 penalty on all rolls.

Examples: Light sensitivity, noise sensitivity

Shortened Duration

Cost: -1 Improvement

The medication's effect does not last for a whole scene.

Duration	Cost
1 minute (10 combat turns)	-2 Improvements
6 seconds (1 combat turn)	-4 Improvements

Examples: Weak mixture, low dosage

Tiring

Cost: -1 Improvements per nonlethal wound

For each use, the medication causes a nonlethal point of damage after its effect subsides.

Improved: Each pick raises the damage by 1.

Examples: Stressful, weakening

Volatile

Cost: -2 Improvements

The substance cannot be stored for long and loses its effect after 3 days.

Improved: This Restriction can be taken up to three times. The second level lowers the effectiveness to 1 day, the third to 6 hours.

Combat Agents

Combat agents are substances made to damage living beings or objects. They differ from Medications in fundamental ways and so they need their own lists of Effects and Restrictions. Combat Agents can be contact poisons, acids or poisonous gases.

Each lot produced consists of 5 uses of the Combat Agent.

Effects and Applications for Combat Agents

Anatomy (Poison / Infection)

Usually poisons and pathogens only affect a certain type of creature, for example humans (the Gamemaster can decide to have it affect close relatives like apes, too). It is possible to broaden the scope of effect.

Scope	Example	Cost
1 species	Humans	0 Improvements
2 species	Humans, Martians	+2 Improvements
3 species	Humans, Martians, Venusians	+4 Improvements

Application

A Combat Agent's application is very important – the easier it is to inflict damage with a substance, the more potent it is. There are four possibilities: Injection, ingestion, contact and inhalation. The standard type of application is injection. Other types cost Improvements.

Application	Example	Cost
Injection	Syringe, snakebite	0 Improvements
Application	Pill, liquid	+1 Improvements
Contact	Acid, burns	+2 Improvements
Inhalation	Respiratory gas poison, poisonous	+3 Improvements

Area of Effect

Cost: +2 Improvements per enhancement

The substance explodes or attacks several targets standing close together. In other words, it causes Area of Effect damage.

Area	Cost
5 ft. / 1.5 meters	+2 Improvements
10 ft. / 3 meters	+4 Improvements
25 ft. / 7.5 meters	+6 Improvements
50 ft. / 15 meters	+8 Improvements
100 ft. / 30 meters	+10 Improvements

Examples: Dynamite, gas cloud

Burn

Cost: +2 Improvements per point of damage

The substance causes burns using fire or acid. The damage usually is nonlethal damage (caused by great heat or pain), but if you choose the *Damage Type* Effect, you can also cause *lethal damage*.

The substance burns hot, but only for a moment, and causes damage once per turn. It is possible to lengthen the duration by taking the *Improved Burn Duration* Effect.

Examples: Sulphuric acid, incendiary composition

Damage Type

Cost: 0 Improvements (nonlethal damage); +2 Improvements (lethal damage)

Depending on whether you want the substance to stun or kill the victim, you have to choose the appropriate Improvement. Nonlethal damage does not cost any Improvements.

Glue

Cost: +2 Improvements per level

The substance sticks to a victim so that it can barely move. The victim suffers a -1 penalty on all physical rolls. This may lead to complete immobility.

Examples: pouch of paste, super glue

Hallucinogen

Cost: +2 Improvements per level

Hallucinogens confuse the user and make him act randomly and hallucinate. If the user is not being watched, he can be a danger to himself. The hallucinogen's effect subsides after four hours per effect level, reduced by the user's Body rating.

Examples: Scopolamine, alcohol

Improved Burn Duration

Cost: +2 Improvements per round

Usually, incendiary substances burn for only one round. This effect can lengthen the time of the fire. Each 2 Improvements improve the fire's duration by 1 round. The incendiary substance causes its damage every turn.

Infection

Cost: +3 Improvements per Infection Level

The substance infects the victim with a disease whose level depends on the chosen Improvements. If you want to create such a substance, you do not make a *Science (Chemistry)* but a *Science (Biology)* roll.

Examples: Plague pathogen, Anthrax

Knock-Out

Cost: +2 Improvements per level

The substance knocks out the victim. The victim has to make a Body roll to stay conscious. The roll's Difficulty is equal to the level chosen with Improvements.

Examples: Snake venom, anesthetic gas

Lowered Attribute

Cost: +1 Improvement per point lost in Primary Attribute or per two points in a Secondary Attribute

The substance lowers a certain Primary Attribute by 1 point or a Secondary Attribute by 2 points. These penalties are used for all Attributes and skill rolls. If you lower a Primary Attribute, the new rating will be used when determining Secondary Attributes.

Examples: Body pain, headaches, nausea

Poison Effect

Cost: +2 Improvements per Poison Level / point of damage

The substance causes poison damage. The damage is usually *nonlethal damage*, but if you pick the effect *Damage Type*, *lethal damage* is possible. For each 2 Improvements, the poison gains 1 level (maximum 5) and deals 1 point of damage (maximum 4). This damage is caused over 6 hours, but you can choose the effect *Shortened Poison Duration*.

Examples: Potassium cyanide, snake venom distillate

Shortened Poison Duration

Cost: +2 Improvements per shortened duration

Poisons usually cause their damage over a course of 6 hours. It is possible to shorten this time and have the damage be caused over a much shorter time. With less time, the victim has less chance to fight the poison.

Duration	Cost
6 hours	0 Improvements
1 hour	+2 Improvements
1 minute	+4 Improvements
Immediate	+6 Improvements

Restrictions for Combat Agents

Unstable

Cost: -3 Improvements

The substance is extremely unstable. With even the smallest concussion the user risks to free the substance's effect, which has it probably hit the wrong targets. If you do not succeed with your roll for using the substance, you become the substance's target yourself.

Example: Nitroglycerine

Volatile

Cost: -2 Improvements

The substance cannot be stored for long and loses its effect after 3 days.

Advanced: This restriction can be picked up to 3 times. The second level shortens the duration to 1 day, the third to 6 hours.





Sample Characters

Settler

Archetype: Pioneer Motivation: Survival
 Style: 3 Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 2
 Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 2
 Strength: 3 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 5
 Move: 6 Defense: 6
 Perception: 4 Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Craft (Agriculture)	2	4	6	(3)
Diplomacy	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy (Negotiation)	—	—	5	(2+)
Firearms	3	5	8	(4)
Firearms (Rifles)	—	—	9	(4+)
Linguistics	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)
Survival (Hunting)	—	—	5	(2+)

Talents

—

Resources

Refuge 1 (Farm)
 Mentor 1 (Faohehe)
 Contacts 1 (Settlers)

Flaws

Underprivileged

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
.30-06 Repeating Rifle	3 L	0	12 L	(6) L
Punch	1 N	0	1 N	(0+) N



Settler

„Don't open the canned food. I'll go and shoot some soup lizards for dinner.“

Character Background

I've been here longer than most. My husband and I, we were among the first to come here. What? Nah – Heinz, God bless him, was no soldier. And no scientist either. Back on Earth, we'd already been farmers, but way more down on our luck. We had a farm in the Sauerland and, if I may say so, lots of problems with it. Didn't make much, see? Just like most farmsteads in the area. So we turned it over in our minds what to do. Go to Hagen or Bochum, work in a factory? Right, they're always looking for workers there. On the other hand – so much work for so little money? Nah. Emigrate to the US? My Heinz didn't like that at all. He was a patriot, the good soul. Then there was Gotthilf, who was my cousin's brother-in-law, working for the colonial office in Berlin.

And in Berlin, they were looking for people for the colony on Venus, which had still been in its planning phase back then. Well, we used our connections, sold our farm and got a seat on one of the first ships that came here. That was much easier then, not like today, with all the bureaucracy and stuff. That was a ride, I can tell ya. We sat there in the cargo hold like sardines in a tin. Still, what little space we had there, it's been more than enough here!

Of course, the first couple of years were hard. We had nothing, 'cept the gear we had brought with us, see? Yet, we got the feeling we would make something new. That we had a future again. You know what I mean? Well, then we put up a new farm. Learned how and what you can grow here, how to handle them soup critters and all. That was a bit harder than during the time in the Sauerland. Luckily, we had no trouble with the Skinks – that's what the English call the lizard folk. That's not always true, I'm afraid. Some settlers can't stand them lizard folk. When finally my Heinz, you know, with the fever ... when he passed away I wanted to follow him straight away. Just managing the farm, that didn't go well – and then there it was again, the wretched money problem. And my mourning for Heinz didn't make things better. The Faohehe, that is the chief hunter of the tribe in the neighborhood, helped me during the hard times, and I learned from him how to hunt on the face of the Morning Star, how to track and all that. Back on Earth, I always liked to shoot. Actually, we weren't allowed to, but a couple of partridges did find their way into our frying pan. So I didn't have much trouble hunting. And after we had taken the first skins into town, and the first load of meat from our livestock, it was enough to continue living on the farm. Gradually, the farm's being spruced up again. And we're also doing some forestry, of course. By now, I know the area and the woods quite well and get along great with them lizard folk. Sometimes even the folk from the colonial office ask me for advice – about talking to the lizard folk or organizing expeditions in the deeper parts of the forest. The only thing that worries me is those large-scale farmers who come here and think they could talk hard-working people out of their property! I've heard rumors that they've been hiring some toughs lately!

Roleplaying

By God, you've never had the easy life! You hail from the poorest of circumstances, and most of your life destiny has been cruel to you. On Earth, you were destitute. On Venus, fate took away your beloved husband. Only with difficulty and with the help of the natives could you keep up the farm you had struggled to build. You have learned to overcome the worst situations. You usually cover up the sadness within your heart with a superficially happy demeanor. Here, on Venus, you have earned a considerable reputation due to your stoical persistence. Back on Earth, your savage looks would be thought whimsical, and your behavior would be considered indecent for a woman – but here on the Morning Star, your deeds and your (by now) immense knowledge about the Venusian wilderness and the traditions of the natives are the only things that count. Due to your communicative personality and your sense of justice you have made many friends on Venus. That makes you a kind of advocate for the less powerful settlers – as well as for the Venusians.



Orchid Hunter

Archetype: Adventurer **Motivation:** Discovery
Style: 3 **Health:** 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma:** 2
Dexterity: 4 **Intelligence:** 3
Strength: 2 **Willpower:** 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 7
Move: 6 **Defense:** 7
Perception: 7 **Stun:** 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Law)	3	1	4	(2)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	1	2	3	(1+)
Firearms	4	4	8	(4)
Science (Biology)	3	3	6	(3)
Science (Biology: Botany)	—	—	7	(3+)
Stealth	4	1	5	(2+)
Survival	3	3	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness, Direction Sense

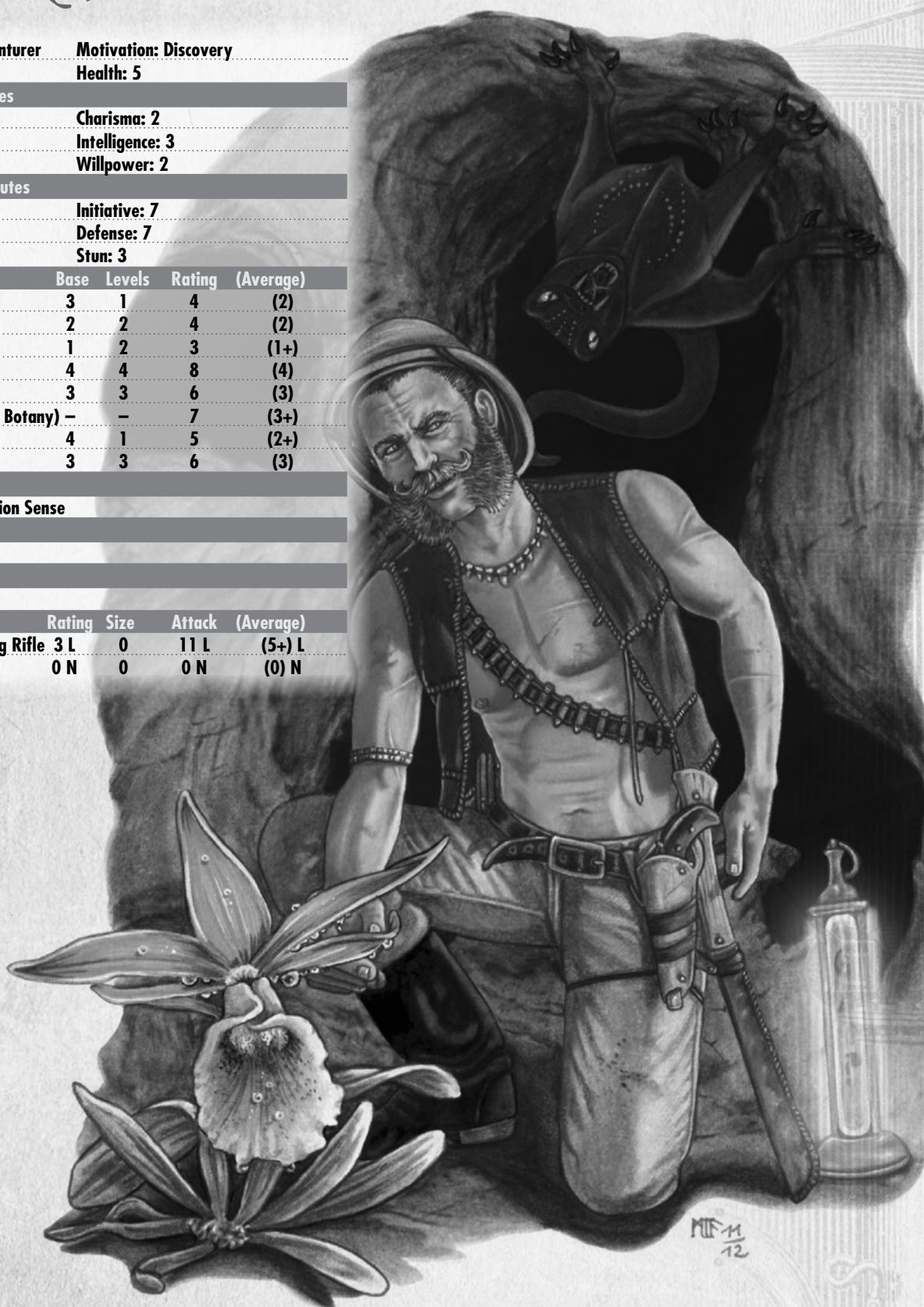
Resources

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Flaws

Obsession

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
.30-06 Repeating Rifle	3 L	0	11 L	(5+) L
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N



Orchid Hunter

"There is an old Skink legend about a flower with nine petals – the most perfect of all orchids. Every one of us is dreaming of the day we will behold it with our own eyes!"

Character Background

Yes, I know ... back on Earth a chap plucking flowers would be considered an eccentric, if not ... well, you know, an aesthete. Heaven forfend! Here, though, it's a deadly business. And if I say deadly, I do mean deadly! Wild animals, poisonous insects, brambles, enemy Skinks – these are the least of the problems. This is not just about some flowers, but about living gold! Rare poisons and healing plants, which are worth their weight in gold in the colonies, because of the good they can bring to humanity. And it's about the queen of the Venusian forest: the Cytherian Orchid.

To find what we are looking for, not only do you need real men, with a steely eye and steady trigger fingers, but also expert knowledge of botany. Most of us keep to our own unwritten code of honor. When someone has tracked down a valuable herb (we say "track down", not "find" or even "pluck"), it's theirs. Taking it away by force would not only be considered a criminal act, but dashed unsportsmanlike to boot! That's the difference between us and that common rabble parading into the jungle to pluck any flower they see, hoping that there would be something of value among them. Those are the blighted ruffians who would shoot each other in the back for wretched two-leaves that our kind would let continue growing. On the other hand, what can you do? Stupid is as stupid does.

What I do here, I don't do just for the money. There is a wise saying from out beyond Mandalay claiming that the journey is its own reward. Fits me like a glove that one. Livy has something on it too, but I forget. . Rather, it's the excitement of the search and the closeness to nature which drives me to look for prized plants in the local swamps. Back on Earth, I lived my life in the cities – sheltered and protected in the "heart of civilization". And yet, I always felt empty. Hollow. Compensating for my soulless work at the solicitor's office, I spent every spare minute in the wild and learned everything about botany by reading all the books I could find. Autodidact, that's me! Actually, I was sent to Venus to settle a legal dispute between two companies. It was about some desolate hill both parties claimed for themselves. The case was closed soon enough. On my arrival I was awestruck by the eternal forests, by the greenery and by the teeming, overflowing life. I decided to stay. I had to stay. As a solicitor on Earth I would surely have had a capital house and a full bank account by now. But here, in my dirty clothes, with my hunting rifle and my specimen containers, I feel alive, full of vim and "go"! There is nothing more exciting than, after weeks of „hunting“ some beguiling orchid, to stumble across a rare herb or bulb no human being has ever laid eyes on before.

Roleplaying

To strangers, you may appear at first to have leapt out of a sensationalist Wild West novel. This is true to a certain degree. Through your search for „living gold“ you have become a hardened ranger above all others. Your practical knowledge on the subject of botany easily surpasses that of any man of learning, and you can handle your hunting rifle like a true marksman. Many people would be surprised to learn that originally you hail from the upper middle-class and that the mind of a sophisticated philosopher is hidden behind your ill-shaven exterior. You are not looking for botanical specimens just for filthy lucre – but because searching and ranging through virgin nature has become your passion. Looking for the "Nine-Leaf", the Holy Grail of all Venusian orchid hunters, is something spiritual for you, sacred even! As a real orchid hunter you are part of a small, devoted community of like-minded people. You despise those who look for the treasures of nature only for the money, or are even at each other's throat because of it. This kind of behavior is beneath a true orchid hunter. Bullets are to be used against wild animals (or thugs), but not against your fellows!

Sample Characters



Construction Engineer

Archetype: Draftsman **Motivation:** Hope
Style: 3 **Health:** 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Charisma:** 2
Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence:** 5
Strength: 2 **Willpower:** 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 7
Move: 4 **Defense:** 4
Perception: 7 **Stun:** 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Bureaucracy	5	1	6	(3)
Craft	5	3	8	(4)
Demolitions	5	2	7	(3+)
Drive	2	3	5	(2+)
Firearms	2	3	5	(2+)
Science	5	3	8	(4)

Talents

Tinker, Skill Aptitude (Science), Skill Aptitude (Craft)

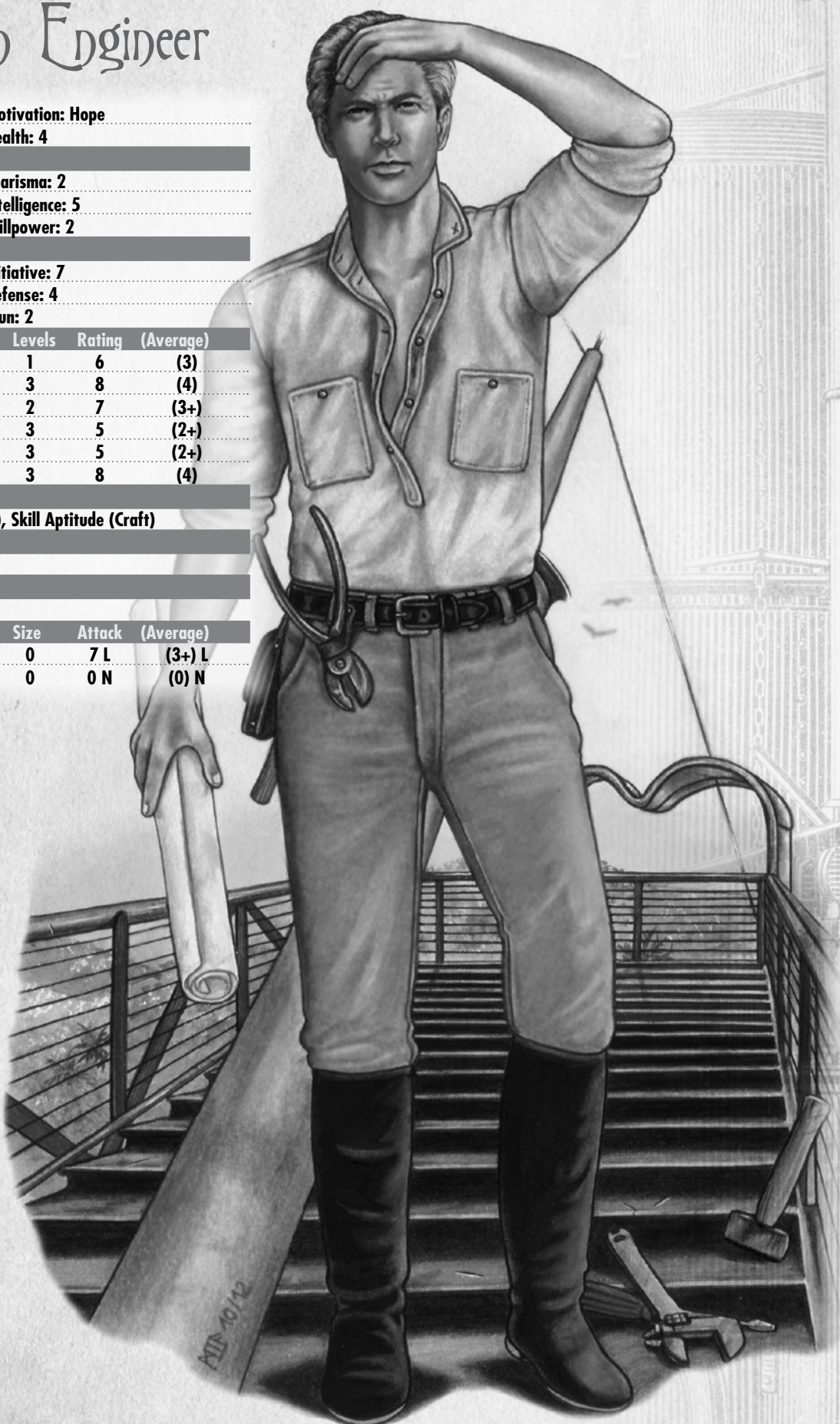
Resources

—

Flaws

Condescending

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	7 L	(3+) L
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N



Construction Engineer

„We need better materials. This stuff can't bear the stress. Explain this to the dullards!“

Character Background

What do you see looking out there? Untamable scrub? I'll tell you what I'm seeing there: railway lines in shining iron encompassing the whole planet; farmland stretching to the horizon and the grand cities of our descendants. *This* is my goal, and in my heart of hearts I believe that we can achieve it!

For the human mind with fortitude, nothing is impossible. Every wilderness can be tamed. What do you think makes civilizations great? It's not some loudmouthed General or some marauding conqueror – it's the mind and the hand of the builder. Where would we be if our ancestors hadn't built houses, cleared woods and erected dams? Right – we'd still be sitting in the trees with the other monkeys. It is my strong conviction that the future of humanity lies with technological progress. Technology will help improve the life of the native peoples who so far are less enlightened. Technology will help change this green hell of a planet into a paradise! And I am here to do exactly this! Yes, this planet poses a real challenge. True Herculean tasks are awaiting us here. The climate chips away any metals, everywhere the ground is swampy, and every clearing cut out of the undergrowth grows over again after only a couple of days. Yet, these problems can be solved. We will use non-corroding alloys. If necessary, we'll put constructions on pontoons and brace them with chains. New chemicals will keep the rapidly growing plants at bay. And the great lizards? Well, in my opinion, if all the planetary governments acted in concert, they'd have enough firepower available to utterly wipe out the most dangerous of them. As you can see, there are no obstacles – only challenges! I've already managed other successful major projects. I built railways in Honduras. And reservoir dams in North India. For the good of the locals! All right, in some cases the people didn't realize that, but I built those projects for them and not only for the government. They nearly had me stoned to death in North India – but I had no other choice but to flood that ramshackle old temple of Ganesh! It stood right in the middle of the basin where the reservoir was to be located. But, really, it's progress! And now, the natives finally have clean drinking water. Still, you'll always have to deal with small-minded people. You can call me a madman or a fanatic, for all I care. One day, you're going to thank me!

It's because of my successes that I was put in charge of this new project. Fascinating, isn't it? Our names will go down in Venu-sian history. And now, for the site inspection. Please make ready the gear for the coming eight weeks and hire some navvies. I beg your pardon? Yes, of course I will travel along the whole railway line! I need to get an idea of the local conditions if I am to plan it.

Roleplaying

In your area of expertise you are one of the best, and you already managed several major projects on Earth or were at least part of each. For you, nature is something that needs to be tamed by humans, and state-of-the-art technology is the key to the realms of Heaven.

You represent a curious mixture of an airy-fairy dreamer and a cold and calculating pragmatist. You are a dreamer in designing bold visions (the grander the better), and a pragmatist in going into the primeval forest and setting your hand to the completion of your vision. With your pretentious, even megalomaniac behavior, some of your contemporaries think of you as arrogant and mad – downright the obsession of progress incarnate. Your goals, though, do not arise from hubris, but from your sincere wish to make the world a better place for everyone. Even if you have to demolish some hoary, old relics. It is just that you have some difficulty conveying this to people who think of your visions and plans as perhaps too bold.



Chemist

Archetype: Scientist **Motivation:** Discovery
Style: 3 **Health:** 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Charisma:** 3
Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence:** 5
Strength: 1 **Willpower:** 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 7
Move: 3 **Defense:** 4
Perception: 7 **Stun:** 2

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Bureaucracy	5	1	6	(3)
Con	3	2	5	(2+)
Diplomacy	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	2	3	5	(2+)
Ride	2	2	4	(2)
Science (Chemistry)	5	4	9	(4+)

Talents

Chemist

Resources

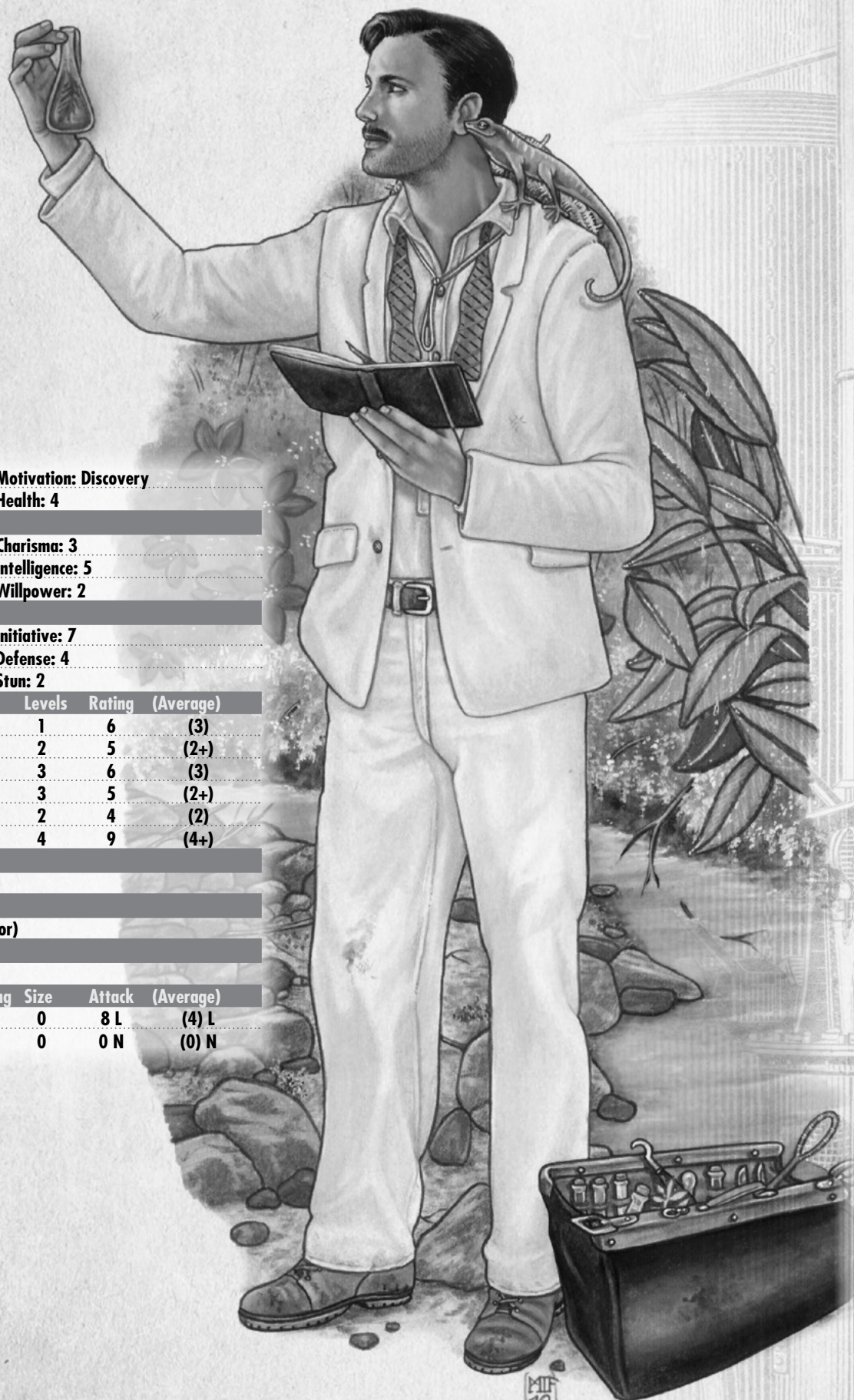
Mentor 2 (doctoral supervisor)

Flaws

Overconfident

Weapons

	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Shotgun, 12 Gauge	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N



Chemist

„This solution was effective only after a woodlouse had fallen into it by chance. Sometimes, all you need is a little luck!“

Character Background

Are you aware of those moments when dream and nightmare are separated by a hair's breadth? Look at this planet, for example. On the surface, it seems like Hell incarnate. Lots of man-eating beasts, depressing constant rain, mildew which corrodes clothing. And on top of it all, we're still dwelling in primitive huts like our ancestors did once under the reign of Arminius the Cherusk. And with a couple of thousand six-legged roommates. Ghastly! And yet, I feel like I'm walking on air. Not only because of the young widow from the farm outside the settlement visiting me sometimes. Ahem. Every day, Mother Nature has a new surprise in stock for us.

I believe that my assistants and I have already made some of the most important discoveries in biochemistry since Miescher discovered nucleic acid back in '69! Hopefully, you can soon read of it in my finished publication. All I need are a conclusive series of tests and field studies. And speaking of nucleic acid – I believe I can conclude from my studies that nucleic acid in Venusian cells must be composed in a similar way to cells on Earth. As far as we know, there are numerous differences between Martian and Terrestrial cells. This may be the best evidence that Venusian and Terrestrial lifeforms are related! We have to discover more about nucleic acids, though. Too much about them is still obscure.

I am very grateful to my doctoral adviser that he literally coerced me into taking the position in this jungle laboratory. I wasn't very enthusiastic at first about the old man jockeying me to Venus. Actually, I'm a true city dweller. Well-equipped university laboratories, pressed newspapers, croissants with jam for breakfast, young ladies in the park – I thought all this was by far more preferable to swamps and protozoa. In the end, the old fox did manage to outsmart me. He suggested that this would help me gather the knowledge a young doctor of chemistry couldn't hope to gain at the university. And he was right! Just to give it a shot, I came here for six months of research. Those are nearly up, and I'm going to extend my commitment in this place! I've even started to practice shooting with a rifle, since I'm out on excursions more often.

Perhaps I should occasionally talk to some of the natives ... They seem to possess a kind of instinctive understanding of botany and some knowledge about primitive alchemy. Some of the stuff they brew is very interesting. To be honest, they terrify me a bit. How do you talk to someone who tries to lick your face during a conversation? I should probably pull myself together and ride to the widow's farmstead. It seems that her farm hands are jolly good conversationalists. And on this occasion I could pay my respects to the lady of the house.

Roleplaying

You are an enthusiastic young scientist who wants to get to the bottom of the biochemical secrets of Venus. And with the power of science you are going to achieve this goal! In fact, you always thought you were not made for living in the wilderness. You thought of yourself as an inherent city dweller, a feeble civilized man, best at home between walls. To your own surprise there seems to be more to you than that, because you are doing quite well on Venus. And Venus has given you much in return!

Eager for more discoveries and secrets, you dare to progress a step further every day. Maybe one day you will become a true adventurer! Slowly, you are leaving your old self behind. Still, you haven't been able to shed your „Terrestrial“ ways. It still bothers you that you sweat like a laborer at a Krupp blast furnace, and you are not quite sure about how to talk to the natives yet – but you will overcome these obstacles as well.

You are confident that, in the end, you, the slack „parlor scientist“, will become a real manly man on Venus. Still, you will never be able to cast off one particular trait from your time as a young city dweller on Earth: You are an incurable ladies' man ...

Sample Characters



Lizard-man Shamaness

Archetype: Shamaness Motivation: Survival
Style: 3 Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Charisma: 4
Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 4
Strength: 6 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 6
Move: 4 Defense: 4
Perception: 6 Stun: 2

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Con	4	3	7	(3+)
Craft (Apothecary)	4	4	8	(4)
Empathy	4	2	6	(3)
Linguistics	4	1	5	(2+)
Medicine	4	3	7	(3+)
Performance	4	1	5	(2+)
Survival	4	1	5	(2+)

Talents

Lifesaver, Charismatic, Pleasant Smell

Resources

—

Flaws

Primitive

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N



Lizard-man Shamaness

„You rub thisss powder on left ssshoulder and thisss powder on right ssshoulder. Then spiritsss have mercy and fever goesss away. Twenty Marksss, pleassse, no billsss.“

Character Background

Oooh ... please don't step into the bowl. There's mussel meat fermenting in it. Not for any spells, you dimwit. For dinner! Even a powerful spirit speaker like me gets hungry from time to time. Powerful? Of course I'm powerful – I can heal wounds, ease fevers and talk to the great Homa himself! I can help you, too. You only have to drink this herbal stew, and the spirit which causes your headache will go away. The brew contains pounded aspirin – a potent magic tree bark from the pale, tailless Earthlings. The brew only costs ten fish. Or five Marks, if you have hard cash. I must live, after all.

You'll see, my spell will work, since I was already a shaman before you peeped out of your egg for the first time! What? Yes, I was a shaman, even before the Earthlings came. You were still very small then. At that time, we didn't have any metal arrow heads and no tax collectors either. So you see, the benefits and drawbacks are kept in balance, as is all of Homa's creation. Your path as a warrior was predetermined by the patterns on your belly, so was mine as a shaman. When my belly pattern showed shortly after I had hatched, the elders knew at once that I was chosen to speak to the spirits. So I was prepared for this path from an early age. Holho-Jhoehe, my predecessor, who went back to the humus before the arrival of the Earthlings, taught me everything I had to know as a shaman. How to send one's soul to the spirit world; how to treat herbs with the gastric juices of big animals, so they become healthful or poisonous; which berries need to be plugged into wounds to keep away worms; how to sing the songs of our tribe. And of course she also taught me those secrets impudent young warriors like you do not need to know! That's how I became a shaman and sang, healed our people and poisoned the enemies of our tribe.

It was an easy task for me ... until the Earthlings came with their magic, which is more powerful than the spells we know by far, and yet, yes, at the same time weaker. They taught our tribe many things we didn't know before. They gave us new weapons and made us a part of their new land they call the „colony“. For many members of our great tribe, life became easier; but for many other shamans it became harder because the Earthlings' tenets, as you know, also said that our magic was false. And who would doubt the word of people who can build flying boats when it comes to magic?

Thus, many of the shamans were driven away, or they had to catch fish like normal women. I, on the other hand, decided to learn the magic of the earthlings and went to Dr Gladstone, the Earthlings' shaman, to be taught by him. Nowadays, I still help him once in a while. (Did you know that apparently all their shamans are males? Strange customs they have.) There, I learned new ways of healing. I've stayed a shaman, and I still sing and heal to this day. Sometimes I even sing for the Earthlings. Some of them are very interested in our tales; or in the plants in our swamps. I don't tell them all about the plants, though. And now give me the ten fish or the five Marks. Or else there is no headache brew for you!

Roleplaying

The time of your magic might come to an end in the human colonies, but you will survive, because you have never been beneath learning something new and changing your ways in accordance with the altered circumstances. Many other shamans could hardly cope with their encounters with the Earthlings, since their arrival undermined the shamans' traditional worldview. Despite your age, you are still as curious as a young hatchling, though, and you have learned a lot from the Earthlings. Some Earthlings may think of you as a charlatan or a witch, but you really possess knowledge about healing and medicinal herbs. Furthermore, nobody can lead you on about the old stories of your people. You find nothing wrong about the fact that you have learned to use your knowledge for some profit. Firstly, you have to look out for number one, and secondly, all trades you conduct are always to the benefit of both parties!



Lizard-man Sailor

Archetype: Hunter Motivation: Freedom
Style: 3 Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 1
Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 2
Strength: 4 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 5
Move: 7 Defense: 6
Perception: 4 Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	3	2	5	(2+)
Athletics	4	3	7	(3+)
Melee	4	4	8	(4)
Pilot (Ships)	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	3	2	5	(2+)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Swim, Direction Sense

Resources

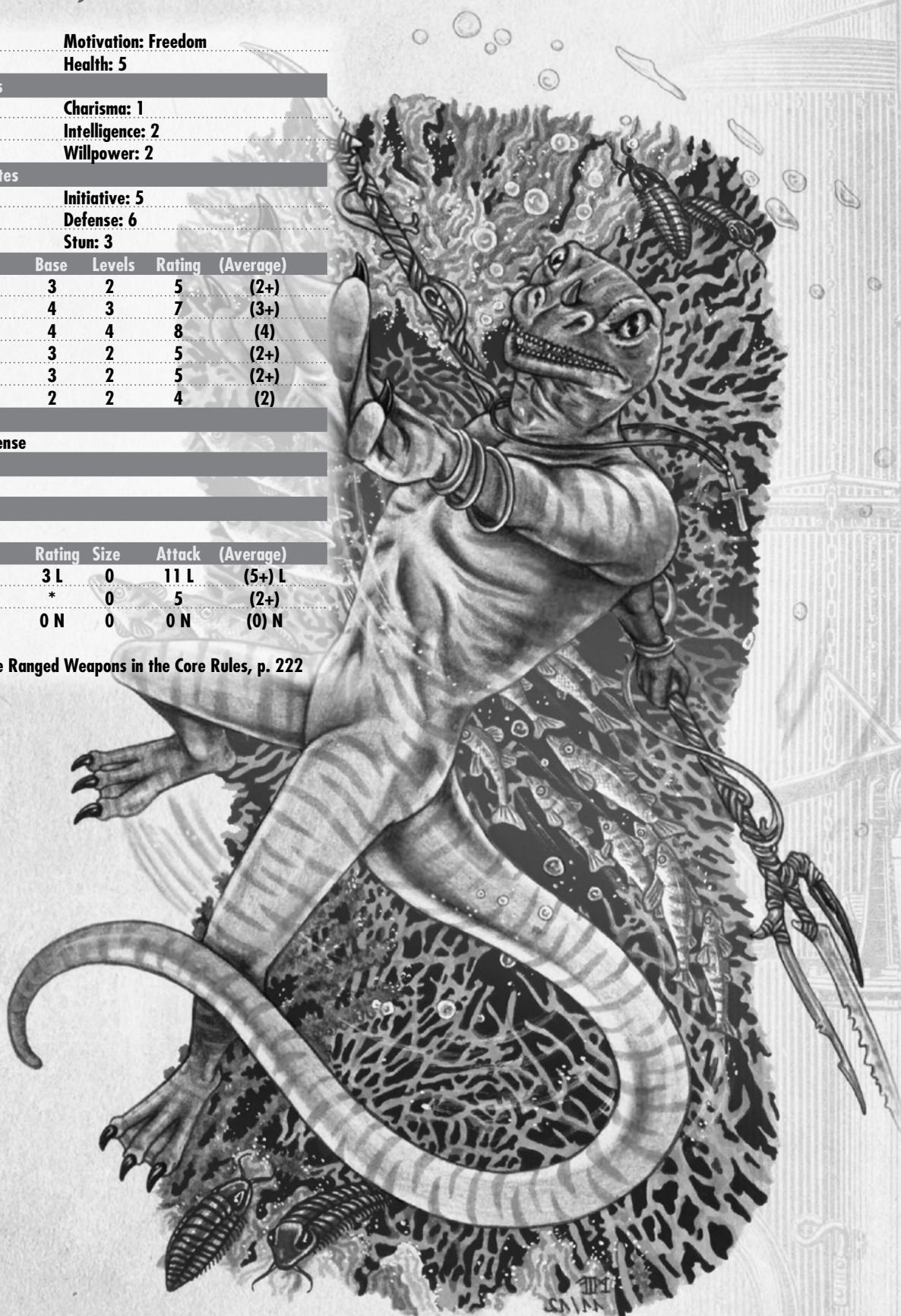
Fame 1

Flaws

Primitive

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	11 L	(5+) L
Cast Net	*	0	5	(2+)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N

* Special rules: see Ranged Weapons in the Core Rules, p. 222



Lizard-man Sailor

„The beast is yonder. Ho, friends! Aim straight and go for the neck, because our harpoons cannot pierce its shell!“

Character Background

See, oh spellcasting tailless being with the tall drum on your head, my people have lived here for times unknown. How our shamans say, since the day when the islands were peeled from the mist. We are the greatest of all tribes on the islands and on the waters, despite the blathering of the scabby Dende-DejDej. I have sailed the streams and lakes between our islands since I became part of my coterie. I have even often travelled the wide sea, which reaches as far as Homa's eye. Thus, I very well know how to pilot a boat, since I can sail as well as I can swim. I and my coterie are hunting big game to provide our tribe with meat, horn and bone. We are among the best hunters on the islands. At first, we look for the big animals, then we drive them into a bay, and after that we dive to kill them with our harpoons and spears. It is not without risk because many monsters struggle and fight. But we fight better! To this day, I have conquered any beast I have hunted with my boat and my coterie. You only need to be familiar with the beast you're hunting, and with water and currents. And you need a strong, agile arm to throw a spear. Homa bestowed these skills unto any one of our coterie. The priestesses say, it is written all over our belly patterns. Sometimes I wonder that, after I hatched from my egg, the priestess must have interpreted my belly pattern wrongly. Back then, she allegedly said it was my destiny to become a simple fisherman. Yet I have become a mighty slayer of great water beasts! That is why my word means a lot to the young warriors of my coterie.

After Umho-UohQuo's death on the island of red mushrooms, I became the leader of my coterie. That is the reason why I am probably the best guide you can get. Nevertheless, I'd be happy to leave the village soon. Besides, I feel more comfortable on the open sea, because there, no elder and no priestess can tell me what to do. Here the village council decides everything that has to be done. I don't like it. Out there, on the many waters of the sea and the mangroves – there is only me and my coterie. We go where we find prey; we hunt, and then we chat, and we eat what we do not bring back to the village. No female queens over us and says we'd pound the ground too hard with our tails while laughing. Thus, I escort you and yours with pleasure.

I can show you enough interesting water animals on our way so you can fill ten of those paper stacks with drawings. All my life I have caught animals and know which of them taste good. And I know the ones that look funny and can be very well drawn on your sheets of paper! Before we ponder which islands to cruise among, let me first drink up my beer and smash this gourd made from transparent stone you call a „glass bottle“. I'll make a new blade for my trident from the sharp fragments, because the seashells on its tip have become blunt from the killing during the last hunt.

Roleplaying

You have already seen a lot of the Venusian seas. You know the coastline, along which your tribe conducts fishing and trading, like the back of your webbed hand. You have the restless soul of a true adventurer, and you can hardly stand being on dry land for more than a week. The pursuit of freedom is what calls you back to the sea time and time again, where you collect riches by killing fish and giant lizards, where you meet interesting people or undergo thrilling adventures. Your nautical skills are as envied and admired as your hunting qualities. Thanks to your prowess you have become a respected person despite your simple belly pattern. Within your circle of friends, you are usually happy and sociable, but also a little bit loudmouthed on occasion. As commander of your crew you are more of a good, wise friend than a tyrannical superior – a style of leadership that appears to be unorthodox, especially to Earthlings. War and battle may not be in your nature, and yet on more than one occasion you have learned how to fight against other Ha.

Sample Characters



Mysteries of Venus

Many things are hidden from the eyes of the inhabitants of Earth in the mists of the Morning and Evening star. Only a fraction of the planet has been as yet discovered and many secrets still lie in the dark, unknown. The mysterious jungles and fathomless oceans possibly hold more secrets than Mars and Earth combined. Some of them have been 'imported' by human colonists, but most originate in Venusian culture, its fauna, or its strange environmental phenomena. Yet others are perhaps beyond any human comprehension, let alone classification! In this chapter, we want to offer you a glimpse of some of these dark mysteries.

Unknown Colonies

Beyond the boundaries of the settlements mentioned below, almost no one knows that these small colonies exist – with only one exception, they remain secret. And the settlers have sound reasons for that.

Jacob's Island – The Lost Colony

Jacob's Island – named after the man first buried here – is one of the islands in the **Antiope Archipelago** in the **Sea of Lavinia**. It lies about 500 miles off the coast of Lada. At the moment, eight men, thirteen women and six children live there. Five more men went missing a few months ago. The group is a mixed one – the women and children are from Italy, as are four of the men. The other four are three Americans and one solitary Chinese, who is the former ship's cook.

Their settlement consists of 15 huts huddled together on the beach of the jungle island, where luckily no dangerous predators live. However, the water around the island is teeming with dinosaurs, some of which have learned to appreciate the novel taste of human flesh.

This colony was established involuntarily when in December 1886 the American freighter *Elizabeth Dane* crashed into the sea offshore. The ship was on a mission for the Italian administration to transport a group of settlers to the Italian colony when it got into difficulties on the approach to Venus. The wreck sank in just a few minutes, and only 40 out of the 60 passengers were able to save themselves. When crawling onto the island's beach, summoning their last bit of strength, the plesiosaurs had already claimed six more victims. The monsters of the sea and a poisonous fruit on land claimed five additional lives, but one year after the crash the first baby was born, and two more were to follow. It was the fathers of these children who decided three months ago to leave the island and search for help. They built a boat and headed out in the firm belief the island was located in the South Ocean. They hoped to find Russian traders at the north coast or at least Lizard-men with contacts to the Russian enclave. No one suspected that they were in fact stranded over 3,100 miles (5000 km) away from the South Ocean.

Shiroyama – The Last Samurai

Shiroyama is hidden deep in the Hathor Mountains of Themis. 40 men, 30 women, and twelve children live here in lightly-constructed houses that could be taken directly from a Japanese woodcut print. Probably no other country has changed as much in the last few decades as Japan. After the forced economic opening of Japan in 1853, a modernization without precedent began. In this way, Japan hoped not to suffer the same fate as other Asian nations. In just a few decades, a medieval feudal state evolved into a modern industrial nation.

Many Japanese citizens disapproved of the "Westernization" of their country and of the other sweeping changes, which seemed to be destroying the old ways. The most widely-known critic was *Saigo Takamori*, a samurai who had initially loyally served the imperial court. In his home province, he founded a private military academy in which the old traditions were emphasized. When his students rose against the government in the Satsuma rebellion of 1877, Saigo was in the vanguard.

It was a hopeless fight from the beginning. The samurai fought bravely and won some battles against the troops of the emperor, but in the end they did not have enough men nor ammunition. So the uprising ended in September 1877 on the hill of Shiroyama, when 300 samurai confronted 30,000 soldiers and perished in atavistic glory. Saigo was fatally wounded and summoned his four youngest fighters with his dying breath. He asked them for the greatest sacrifice – not to seek death in battle, but to live and to preserve the ancient ideals. Dutifully, the men obeyed and hid until everything was over. After that, they swiftly left the country because the government was determined to make an example of every traitor. And so these four men, now lordless rōnin, set forth into the world. When they realized that Earth no longer valued warriors as themselves, they journeyed to Mars, where a brave and upright man with a sword still counted for something. For some years, they wandered Mars and sold their swords to canal princes, caravan leaders, or peasants plagued by bandits. In 1885, they encountered a fellow countryman who told them that Saigo had in the meantime become a popular hero in Japan. The four rōnin decided that it was time to fulfill their master's legacy. In the years on the red planet they had not only gathered fame and glory, but also made a small fortune. Consequently, they rented a ship that brought them to Venus, a planet out of reach of the Japanese authorities. They contacted some old friends on Earth who gathered like-minded individuals and founded a settlement in 1886, which they named after the site of the final battle.

The largest part of the inhabitants of Shiroyama are peasants fleeing the many demands of the modern state to cultivate rice, which flourishes in the Venusian climate. Besides these are some craftsmen perfecting their art, who manufacture almost everything the colony needs. The amount of warriors is unusually high – almost a third. The four samurai instruct the young from Earth, who will one day become the elite of the aspiring Japanese nation, in the old virtues. In exchange, once a year a ship brings materials and new settlers. The inhabitants of Shiroyama have powerful

benefactors. In the meantime though, there has been a surprising turn of events: because of the popular myths which have arisen around Saigo, the emperor has rehabilitated the memory of the deceased master. The four samurai disagree about whether to open to the public or to continue operating in secret.

Polonia – Under the White Eagle

Polonia is situated on a tessera in Lada, about 310 miles, or 500 kilometers, south of the Sea of Lavinia. 120 men, 30 women, and five children live here. The colony consists of 20 houses which are all, like the gardens and fields, hidden under tall trees. There is a good reason for this excessive secrecy – the settlers consider themselves to be Poles, an act which counts as rebellion or even high treason in two countries on Earth. After a slow decline in the 17th and 18th centuries, Poland, which had formerly been a great power in Europe, had been divided up among its neighbors, Prussia, Russia and Austria. Polish culture was initially tolerated by the new rulers, so a feeling of Polish identity was preserved. However, since the 1830s there have been a number of uprisings – the last of which was as recently as 1863 – but they all failed due to lack of planning and support. In consequence, the attitude of their rulers has hardened.

It is now illegal to be Polish. In Germany and Russia, Polish has been banned as an official language. In schools and universities it is no longer permitted to teach in Polish. The simple use of the adjective “Polish” can cause trouble, and the German government is financing a program to buy out and sell the land of Polish people to Germans.

Only in the Austrian part of Poland can the Poles enjoy some freedom and be allowed to use their mother tongue, but here too the government watches the Poles closely.

Of course, this heavy-handed harassment leads to a growing resistance. In their home country as well as in the Polish diaspora, more and more Poles think that things cannot continue like this. It was only a short time after the beginnings of space travel that voices were heard that advocated a Polish colony among the stars, where the Polish heritage would be treasured until their homeland would finally be free.

In 1887 this idea was put into practice. Polish settlers traveled to Venus and created a new home where they could finally live in freedom. They were supported by the British government, which finances Polonia and sees to it that fresh supplies are brought in regularly.

The British motive for this kind of support is clear – a Polish state, or even only a Polish uprising would weaken a rising Imperial Germany as well as Russia. It is also clear that should this become known, grave diplomatic consequences would be sure to follow, and so the support of Poland is one of Great Britain’s most closely-kept secrets.

At the moment, the first disagreements have arisen in Polonia. Its inhabitants are split into two factions: The “reds” are striving for a democratic Poland after the image of the French commune and see their biggest enemy as Russia. In contrast, the “whites” belong to the conservative camp and think that Germany is the bigger obstacle to a free Poland. In both factions there are young individuals with fiery tempers who ache ‘to do something’. An assault on the German or Russian colony would surely be a good start, wouldn’t it...?

Kal-Gorovaan – A Dynasty in Exile

Kal-Gorovaan (the hearth fire of Gorovaan) is situated in a cave on the eastern border of the Ganis Mountains of Atla. 60 men and 40 women live here. Most of them are Canal Martians, but there are also 15 Hill Martians, who serve as mercenaries, and five British prisoners.

The actual settlement is the castle of **Gilvaak Zaganoor** who is the ‘rightful’ canal prince of the Martian city of Gorovaan. After his home was conquered by the detested Parhoon and their allies from Earth, he, as the only member of the royal family, fled accompanied by his daughter **Inardu**. Gilvaak is now obsessed with thoughts of vengeance. After some years of acquiring knowledge on Mars and Earth, he decided to retire to Venus to evaluate his discoveries and build weapons that would be capable of destroying his enemies. He gathered his most loyal subjects around him and captured a British etherflyer that brought him and his followers to Venus in 1887.

Gilvaak’s most important reason for the choice of his hideout was the proximity to Atla’s many volcanoes, his most powerful weapon being a device to control volcanoes, which he has already tested with some success. Besides this, he is experimenting with various other inventions that are intended to give him an advantage over his enemies. Among them are pathogens, toxic gases, and electric cannons. The unlucky Britons who were the etherflyer’s crew are used as guinea pigs for his loathsome experiments.

The inhabitants of Kal-Gorovaan make their livelihood by hunting and by receiving “tribute” from tribes living in the mountains who are terrified of the “golden sorcerer from beyond the clouds”. The Martians would take any group of human adventurers they encountered prisoner. Britons would be made into more experimental guinea pigs while the other characters would be forced to fight against various dinosaurs, the Hill Martians, or against one another for Gilvaak’s and his daughter’s perverted entertainment.

Gilvaak Zaganoor – Master of Volcanoes

Gilvaak Zaganoor was born in 1835 to a canal priest of Gorovaan and one of his many courtesans. In contrast to his siblings, Gilvaak did not concern himself with the excesses and intrigues of his father’s court, but showed an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Even as a small boy he already knew the old chronicles by heart and his hungry mind engaged with everything the ancient scientists of Mars had discovered. He studied the old scriptures that told of expeditions to other worlds, and thus he knew that life was to be found there. Nevertheless, when barbarians from the third planet fell from the sky one day and proved to be more than equals to the Martian civilization, he was surprised like everyone else. At first, the humans from Earth were only a curiosity to him, but then, in 1879, the ruler of the city of Parhoon died. The troops of Gorovaan marched on Parhoon immediately, to conquer their old rival. The Parhoon though had unexpected allies: the British. With their help, Gorovaan’s army was annihilated. The counterattack followed soon after, and the palace of the ruler of Gorovaan was utterly destroyed. Gilvaak was the only survivor from the royal family. He gathered his family’s treasures and a few confidants, fled from the city, and swore eternal vengeance on his enemies.

Gilvaak knew very well that he would need patience – and that only science could bring him closer to his goal, so he occupied himself in further studies of the old ones. When there was nothing left to learn on Mars, he traveled to Earth and studied his enemy there. In 1886 he decided to put his plans into action. He captured a British etherflyer and searched for a hideout on Venus from where he could act undisturbed.

Gilvaak Zaganoor is planning to let Earth plunge into chaos with the help of natural disasters and plagues. When Earth's inhabitants are distracted, he will conquer Mars. And Mars will be the base from whence he will enslave the rest of the solar system ...

Archetype: World Ruler **Motivation:** Power, Revenge

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 4

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 6

Strength: 2

Willpower: 5

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 10

Move: 6

Defense: 7

Perception: 11

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Martian History)	6	3	9	(4+)
Bureaucracy (Government)	6	2	8	(4)
Craft (Electronics and Pharmacy)	6	3	9	(4+)
Diplomacy (Leadership)	4	4	8	(4)
Intimidation	4	3	7	(3+)
Linguistics	6	4	10	(5)
Medicine	6	2	8	(4)
Melee	4	4	8	(4)
Pilot (Ether Flyers and Airships)	3	4	7	(3+)
Science	6	5	11	(5+)

Talents

Leader; Charismatic; Skill Mastery (Science)

Resources

Status 5

Artefacts (Ether flyer, volcano control, other artefacts at the Game-master's discretion)

Followers 5

Wealth 3

Refuge 4

Flaws

Obsession; Condescending; Overconfident

Languages

Gaaryani (mother tongue), **Oenotrian**, **Son-Gaaryani**, **Koline**, **Umbrian**; **German**, **French**, and **Venusian**.

Equipment

Gilvaak's most precious possession is his mind. He has his henchmen do the rough work, getting their hands dirty for him.

Second to his mind is the jeweled sword of the prince of Gorovaan. This longsword is a masterpiece of Martian blacksmith's work and the symbol of the prince of Gorovaan.

Armor

Gilvaak usually wears traditional Martian robes without any particular armor protection.

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N
Long Sword	3 L	0	11 L	(5+) L

Secrets in the Colonies

Abteilung Z

The activities mentioned on page 20 are primarily a decoy for Abteilung Z's real assignment: The Heidelberg expedition of 1878 brought a "holy artifact" from the Western Ishtar Tribes to Earth where it was discovered, with considerable surprise, that this artifact resembled an ancient relic which had been found in the 1860s in the Ruhr area. Massive support for settlement policy on Venus followed. Additionally, Berlin directly assigned Abteilung Z to the task of finding out about the connection between both relics. Officials already suspect that they must both be artifacts from an ancient spacefaring people linked to Venus. Since then, attempts have been made to find more evidence for the origin of the two fragments, mostly on Venus, but also in other places. It was also not by accident that Venusstadt was established where it is at the foot of the mountain range. It was of course here that the "Venus Dozen" stoically endured, and here that the very tribe where the mysterious relic was found are settled — at the foot of the same mountain.

Research Station Niflheim

Whoever passes through the fog of 'Niflheim' finds himself suddenly standing before a wall and a huge locked gate. Installed on the wall are enormous machines that constantly emit chemically produced fog, and behind the gate is a research station so secret that even among the highest officials of Venusstadt only a few suspect anything of its existence: *Niflheim*.

In Niflheim, three dozen scientists are working on possible military uses of the discoveries made on Venus. For the most part the scientists have been chosen by the German empire, but despite incipient rivalries, hand-picked chemists from BASF and Bayer are working here too, side by side. At the moment, two projects are in development at Niflheim.

One of them is still comparably harmless: The scientists are trying to turn the secretions of the new tar bush into a self-sealing coating for zeppelin hulls.

The second though could cause serious political disruptions if it became known: Directly after the return of the Heidelberg expedition, German scientists speculated that instead of the aggressive climate of Venus attacking liftwood, it could be the magnetic field of the planet that was altering its properties. For ten years the scientists have now been working on simulating this characteristic of the magnetic field, hoping to be able to manufacture a weapon that could annihilate the liftwood fleets of all other nations and even crush the Martian armadas with a single stroke. In such a case, Germany with its zeppelin technology would gain absolute sovereignty over the airspace in no time. Until now, no spy has acquired any knowledge at all about the existence of Niflheim, and the German empire will do everything in its power to keep it that way.

British Olfactory Research

The German colony has a great interest in the scientific results of the British, but to date they have not been able to infiltrate the

institute. However, 20-year-old Collin Jewell is working for the Germans (see page 47). He is a supplier of food, scents, and other necessities. He has repeatedly let himself be hired for research expeditions or for the hunting of certain plants, but until now, he could not acquire any clear insights. He has now become aware of the efforts made on behalf of the *Mireton boarding school* (see page 47), and he wonders what that might be all about.

Collin Jewell

Collin Jewell is much more intelligent than is good for him. The 20-year-old is a minor genius, but he grew up in the wrong corner of London. If he could have had a proper education, he could have become a brilliant scientist, a rich industrialist, or a super villain.

At the age of 16, he came to Venus to make his fortune. He stole the ticket for his passage and lied about his age. In the hard life of Venus his cunning did not take him as far as he had hoped. After a few gruesome months of hunger and hard labor in the fort (Collin hates hard labor) he tried his luck in the German colony. There his situation improved a little; he could scratch a living with a few small acts of fraud. Until he got caught. A German official recognized Collin's potential and after a short time of detention he was subjected to rigorous training. He tried to escape on numerous occasions but got caught every time. Later, he was given a rudimentary education and the chance of earning himself a good life by selling information to the Germans.

It took almost half a year before he could establish himself as pretend adventurer and tradesman supplying chemicals, rare materials and plants for the Victoria Institute, but now he is regularly sent out to fetch things that are needed. He takes a look around, learns – and reports everything he considers interesting back to his handler. If he should come across something of real importance though, he will use it in the most profitable way possible.

Archetype: Criminal		Motivation: Greed		
Health: 4				
Primary Attributes				
Body: 1		Charisma: 3		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 6		
Strength: 1		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 8		
Move: 3		Defense: 3		
Perception: 9		Stun: 1		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Con	3	4	7	(3+)
Diplomacy	3	2	5	(2+)
Firearms	2	1	3	(1+)
Larceny	2	2	4	(2)
Stealth	2	3	5	(2+)
Streetwise	3	3	6	(3)
Talents				
Calculated Defense; Intelligent				
Resources				
Contacts 1				
Flaws				
Underprivileged				
Equipment				
Pocket revolver				
Weapon	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	5 L	(2+) L

New Birmingham

This settlement fell victim to a failed Russian experiment. Russian scientists had discovered a plant in the jungle which proliferates by exploding fruit. In the process it ejects big clouds of spores which then grow into new plants.

Because these spores produce violent nausea in humans, Russian scientists bred a variety of the plant on request of the Ataman, Colonel *Zakhar Petrovich Nikanov* (see **The Russian Colony**, page 67). This variety does not proliferate through the capsule-like fruit, but can be used as a weapon. First tests in the penal colony of **Lomonossovogorod** ended in deadly accidents among the scientists, who had misjudged the dangerous variations of the plant. The fruit of this new plant can be harvested and bursts only when thrown with great force at a surface. The resulting spore cloud was supposed to stun any enemies.

Nikanov's scientific consultants did not trust the plant and its effects and wanted to conduct more tests, but Colonel Nikanov persisted in ordering a field test. The Ataman himself flew to New Birmingham on board of the balloon fortress *Zhakiy*, dropped down through the clouds at night and let the seed capsules rain on the village. In this high dosage the resulting spore cloud not only caused nausea, but apathy and aboulia. What no one had expected though was the effect the spores had on the moss of the adjacent surroundings. The plants grew so fast that in a very short time they covered and suffocated the people who were sitting around impassively. Lizard-men who lived nearby and had witnessed the assault have since avoided the place because of an eerie smell. They suspect it to be a curse or nature's revenge. They fled to their Lizard-men's settlements on the plantation and forced everyone to leave quickly. If nature sends a flying monster from the sky which drops deadly fruit smelling of a curse, then clearly one should look for a new place to live as fast as possible. So the Russian military's experiment was a success, although in a different way than was planned. A small troop of Cossacks reached the village three days later and evaluated the result of the attack. Nikanov was very pleased, although he is not sure yet if the development of the new weapon is in fact complete. After all, if used in a wider area, the seed capsules could show other side-effects which might very likely endanger himself and his men as well.

The Ore of Capri

The ore discoveries in Capri are kept very secret. Almost no other colonial power on Venus knows anything precise about the mining in Capri, and even within the Italian colony itself only a select few know anything about it. *Matteo Angelosanto*, the leader of the Institute of Geology, supervises the evaluation personally. Even the *Triumvirate* has not been fully informed about the results of the mining yet.

It is left open at this point exactly what the ore is and what characteristics it possesses. The Gamemaster can let his imagination run free. It could be radioactive, have inexplicable qualities, could be especially hard or light. Possibly it is just plain gold or maybe even some kind of "living" stone?!

The Ruins at Montagna

The subterranean ruins that have been discovered here are remnants of an ancient stone-built city. Beneath the ruins, partly collapsed corridors lead to a labyrinth of fossilized roots which lead down further and further until it finally breaks through the top of a 55-yard-high cave below a swamp. The water drains off here and drips into a primeval lake below the surface of the earth. To what end and by whom the city was built is left to the Gamemaster to decide.

The Mystery of New Coronado

The crater of Themis has always been an uncanny place for the Venusians. The ridge surrounding the crater reeks both of irrepressible love and panic-fueled hysteria at the same time. And whoever struggles through this emotional chaos and reaches the inner part of the crater then smells ... nothing. Or at least nothing that would imply the presence of ghosts. It is as if the inner part of the ridge were in a sort of spiritual vacuum. Naturally, the scientists of the *University of California* did not allow themselves to be impressed by the blabber of primitive savages and advanced bravely into the uncharted wilderness. Inside the crater they discovered a number of natural vents in the ground from which viridescent light and hot vapors were streaming at rhythmic intervals. Most of the expedition members considered this phenomenon to be nothing more than plain geothermal energy ... as opposed to *Dr Martin Stimpson*, the expedition's geologist. During a period of rest, he death-defyingly let himself down on a

rope into one of the vents and found traces of an ore which was utterly unknown to him. Apparently, the ore became incredibly hot when in contact with water!

At home in the USA he told *Charles T. Hinde* of the discovery and both sensed a big business opportunity. The colony *New Coronado* was established to find out more about the secret of the wondrous ore. But Stimpson, who died from a mysterious fever in 1886, would not live to see the construction of New Coronado.

The colony was erected near one of the vents at the rim. Knowing that the unearthly ore would only set free energy when in contact with water, a sophisticated drainage system was constructed. The vent had collapsed in part, so some mining had to be done.

In the meantime there were experiments with some smaller rock samples in the laboratories of the colony, though without being able to solve the mystery of the ore. What the Americans could not know was that here, in the crater of Themis, they were close to discovering the secret of atomic fission. Below the crater lie the remains of an asteroid which came from far beyond all known worlds. The ore, shot through with streaks of green crystal, consists of elements unknown to our solar system. It is not only highly radioactive but has more wondrous characteristics. Many of the processes taking place beneath the crater are of a nuclear nature. The physics of 1889 are not nearly advanced enough to be able to understand this phenomenon and so the scientists of New Coronado considered this to be either a chemical reaction of the strange ore or some phenomenon of the ether. Not one of them was thinking about real nuclear fission taking place below their feet.

What they also did not know was that the crater had been examined by a spacefaring race before. Thousands of years before the Americans, a Martian expedition had stumbled upon this natural nuclear reactor. Having much more technical knowledge at their command than the scientists of today, the Martians soon understood what they had found, and secured the site with warning glyphs and some automatic traps. The Americans erroneously considered the highly weathered warning glyphs as Lizard-men's work and ignored them. This was a fatal error that contributed to their destruction. If anyone was able to decrypt the glyphs and discover some of the crystal tablets, densely covered in writing, left in the jungle by the ancient Martians, he or she would be surprised to learn that they too had problems with disappearing personnel. And that they also observed that the extra-solar ore they named 'element 115' contains something *living*.

The Altered

"Whenever the strange visions occurred or I saw colors indescribable in human words, I acted like a madman. I screamed. Laughed. Cried. Finally I was locked away in a detention cell. Here, I jolted the bars in mental derangement and scratched at the door until my fingers bled. More beast than human. Somehow, I do not remember how, I managed to free myself from the cell."

— **Franz Hoppenstedt,**
former chemist and assumed madman

Surely no one who has had a look at a newspaper in the last 20 years would doubt that humans fundamentally change the planets they colonize. But does the contact with foreign planets also change human beings? Most scientists of the 19th century would deny that the human organism could change on foreign worlds. However, they are not always right about that: There are



vague – though rare – accounts about some humans on Venus are beginning to alter, though the accounts vary about the way in which they alter and the precise effects. Some accounts claim that humans change into neo-primitive “children of the woods”. Or that their souls change and they become someone else. There are also stories about mysterious dreams and visions. And of Venus-born children who can see things that are hidden to adults.

Some blame the alien nature of Venus, others concealed aliens or God himself. On Venus, most people only talk about these things behind closed doors. The stories sound too much like crude superstition. And yet, some settlers know people who have relatives or friends who at some time have had contact with the strange ‘Altered’. Earth inhabitants think of these stories of mutants, doppelgangers, and vision-haunted lunatics only as Venusian fairy tales. Novel writers on Earth have adapted the legends about altering Venusian settlers for their own ends. The dime novels of Europe are full of stories about Venus colonists who regress into apes, change into scaly lizard beasts, or get infected by power hungry brain worms who plan on subduing the empire. These dubious adventure stories only reinforce the fact that on Earth no one believes in the existence of “Venus mutants”. Nevertheless, there is some truth in these tales.

The Nature of the Alteration

Some smaller changes are easily explainable by their biological nature and are caused by symbiotic organisms like the moss-fungus. But there are also people whose physique changes imperceptibly but very extensively. In most cases only the affected themselves recognize what is happening to them. Those who are subjected to this mysterious mutation do not change outwardly. The change is subtle, but continuous. What they all have in common is that they, or their parents, have lived on Venus for a long period. When the process begins, color perception expands into the ultraviolet and infrared spectra until the eyes of the affected can perceive roughly the same color spectrum as Lizard-men. Additionally, their skin becomes more heat and humidity resistant. A few of them can even absorb oxygen through the skin. All in all it seems as if the bodies of the Altered adapt to life on Venus. The Altered find their way around Venus much better than new arrivals or unaltered settlers do. They do not suffer from the damp heat, they are able to orient themselves better in the mists, and thanks to their enhanced color perception they can perceive and distinguish plants and animals that ordinary humans have to examine closely first. Altogether, the changes seem to be harmless. It can be ruled out that these mutations occur accidentally because they have adhered to the same pattern with every affected person so far. Without exception, all of the Altered have lived on MacKenzie Island, in the Hestia Highlands, or other areas that seem to favor these alterations. At first, strange confused dreams set in, in which the affected see colors which cannot be described in human language. In the next phase, their actual visual perception changes even while being awake. In the last phase, their temperature perception alters. Some people start changing a few days after their arrival on Venus. With others it takes years. Some children on Venus seem to have been born altered. It is unclear whether the moderately ‘Altered’ of today are the final stage of this development or if the bodies of the affected individuals will evolve into something even further removed from humans of Earth.

The Altered and Their Surroundings

Among the Altered themselves, there are different reactions to their mutation. Some are driven mad because they suddenly begin to see strange, unearthly colors. At the moment, the doctors at Venusstadt consider this to be a sort of mental illness they call the ‘Venus tantrum’. But most of the affected after a time consider the mutation of their bodies to be a gift. Among the Altered in Venusstadt and Fort Collingsworth, the seemingly esoteric belief has spread that the mutations are a sign of Venus itself having adopted them as ‘its children’.

Most of the Altered hide their transformation in public and only talk about their mutations when they are amongst themselves (they have an uncanny ability to sense who is altered and who is not) – but this is not so much because they fear persecution from the government than because people generally tend to put others, who talk about seeing strange colors, into mental asylums.

Some colonial administrations suspect something of the phenomenon, but do not know anything specific. It is only representatives of the British government who seem to know something more than this, because MacKenzie also belonged to the Altered. The story goes that in the body of MacKenzie several new organs were found during the post-mortem that was performed on him (against the will of his surviving family members). The functions of these new organs could only be speculated upon. The results of the MacKenzie autopsy are regarded as “most secret” by the British military. In the German colony there are not yet thoughts of a new human subspecies. Abteilung Z suspects a kind of politically motivated conspiracy behind the secret meetings of the Altered of Venusstadt.

The Altered in the Game

Due to the short time that people have been living on Venus, it is unclear how the situation with the Altered will develop. At the moment, the Altered have started to organize themselves in small fraternities and circles, while the colonial administrations have become vaguely aware of the phenomenon for the first time.

Many Victorians will probably react to mutated colonists with ‘cthulhoid horror’. Humans getting changed by ‘uncanny planetary powers’ into ‘another race’ is not something that can be easily incorporated into the worldview of the late 19th century. Because most of the colonial administrations do not want to take account of the phenomenon, people talking about a mutant conspiracy on Venus will have to expect severe difficulties. But the governments on Earth will also be quite disconcerted when the phenomenon begins to spread, as they can neither understand nor control what is happening to the affected colonists. It is possible that intelligence services will take action against the Altered or there might even be pogroms against them if the situation begins to grow more acute. But it might also be that the Altered become an accepted part of Venusian society and might serve, for example, in the military as task forces which are especially ‘fit for Venus’. It depends on circumstance what the Altered themselves might do. Most of them are ready to defend themselves at gunpoint against their enemies, if necessary. If one acts with hostility against them, it is possible that one might eventually be faced with an organized unit that purposefully eliminates any troublemaker. But one could also think of adventures in which the characters support the secretly persecuted Altered against ignorant ‘witch hunters’ and intelligence service agents.

Investigating the reasons behind these transformations is also of primary concern: Maybe the whole thing is nothing more than a natural process caused by the strange environmental conditions of Venus. But there could also be an alien intelligence orchestrating humanity's transformation.

Secret Societies and Criminals

The Morning Star Society

On Earth as well as on Mars, one classic conspiracy theory is enjoying near constant popularity: the idea that a group of conspirators like the Freemasons, the Jesuits, or the Mathematic Monks of Meepsoor stand behind the actions of those in power. In fact, on Venus at least one such conspiracy fantasy has a kernel of truth. The conspirators are not after power, riches, or the concealment of esoteric knowledge, but are after something highly pragmatic: the survival of humankind on Venus.

The secret society calls itself the "Morning Star Society" and consists of scientists, clerks, settlers, and officers from all nations present on Venus. Venusian colonies are fragile and easily damaged, and living on Venus is a constant struggle with the elements. International conflicts, ideological warfare and jealousies, which are common on other planets, can give rise to serious problems here. Often, political decisions made on Earth are far away from the realities of Venus. Therefore, some members of the Society have begun to handle things their way, instead of relying on terrestrial standards and regulations. It is out of this practice of 'handling things the short way' that the Morning Star Society has evolved in secret during the last three years. Its primary goals are securing the survival of humanity on Venus and keeping the colonies strong and vital. National goals are of secondary importance.

In case a war breaks out on Earth that could endanger the survival of the Venusian colonies, or worse, and is extended to Venus, the colonies have to be able to act autonomously. Should they lose contact with Earth, humanity has to be able to take care of itself here. For these reasons, the Society supports the extension of infrastructure and helps to maintain close contacts between the colonies. Mitigating or preventing diplomatic incidents between the colonial powers is another of their spheres of activity. The options for acting openly are limited, but much can be achieved through smaller manipulations. Telegrams, for example, can be modified, nationalistic hardliners can be neutralized by subtly engineering their transfer to another place. In one case, a Prussian lieutenant who was itching for a fight is said to have been drowned in the swamps. And who knows what would happen if someone found out about the disputes between the Russian Ataman and the grand prince and took the side of the Cossacks?

The Morning Star Society is in no sense an all-powerful, monolithic organization – not all of its members even have the same goals. There is a wide-ranging spectrum of aims, from people who just want things to go well for everyone on Venus, to separatists who aim to found a Venusian state. Despite many good deeds done by the Society, for those colonial officers loyal to their governments that get to know of its existence, it is loathsome. After all, its members disregard regulations and law on a daily basis and are, strictly speaking, traitors to their home countries. Among the general public at large, no one knows exactly what the Morning Star Society is and what it does.

The Prototaxites Connection

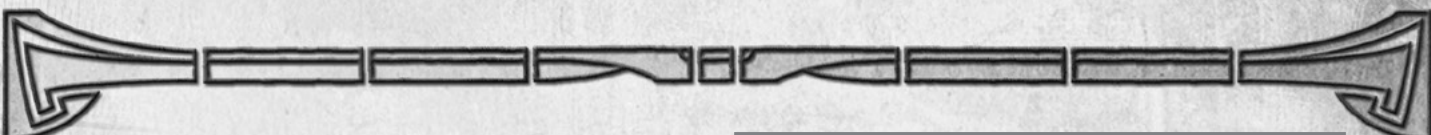
Heaps of money can be made from prototaxites mushrooms (see page 102). Even though they only make a pseudo-fountain of youth, many of the wrinkled ladies and aging dandies of Europe and North America are ready to pay a three-figure amount in Sterling for prototaxites concoctions. Therefore it is not surprising that all the colonial powers are heavily involved in trading the precious mushroom – in the form of horrendous export duties on Venus, which are complemented by horrendous import taxes on Earth. What is also not surprising is that there are resourceful people who try to evade the customs inspections.

Prototaxites on Earth have recently become more and more common on the black market. On Venus, a whole network of smugglers has established itself which deals secretly with the orchid hunters, mushroom gatherers and natives to get the mushroom pulp away from the Morning Star on shadowy paths. They are proceeding very cleverly and use every means from clever hiding places, bribery, and blackmail, to using unsuspecting carriers who get prototaxites smuggled into their luggage. Some trails lead to the charismatic Mr. *Kaito Yamada*, a former Japanese navy officer, who is said to have been involved in deals with Yakuza, triads, Tongs, and European criminals back on Earth. It is easy to assume that he is the head of the prototaxites smugglers. But Yamada is nowhere to be found. Technically it should be easy for officials to find an Asian in the very confined Venusian colonies, which are almost exclusively inhabited by Europeans and reptiles. But in practice, until now Yamada has slipped the grip of the authorities every time. Sometimes he pops up here and there only to disappear again as he likes. Apparently he has assistants and friends everywhere, despite being accused of murder, robbery, and blackmail besides smuggling. Is Yamada the Fu Manchu of Venus or just an unscrupulous crime boss and murderer whose people stop at nothing? Or is he instead a congenial gentleman gangster who tricks the police and customs officials with cunning and finesse?

Pirates under the Hammer and Sickle

Authorities attribute the loss of some recently disappeared transport zeppelins to storms that haunted Venus around the end of the year 1888. They could not be more wrong. The first ship to disappear was the German military zeppelin *LZ Undine* which has been missing since the middle of last year.

But the reason for the airship's disappearance was no accident, but carefully prearranged high treason! The ship's crew and its captain, lieutenant commander *Friedrich Bertram von Reden*, deceived the Kaiser and defected. In spite of being a Junker and therefore part of the aristocracy, Herr von Reden has sympathized with the socialist cause since his studies at university. At the beginning, he only did this in secret – until he got to know some socialist cells and became a mole inside the German air fleet. The socialist conspiracy of which von Reden is a part plans to build a new, socialist utopia on Venus. For this purpose, the position of the terrestrial state powers is to be weakened by a skillfully executed guerilla war. Von Reden saw to it that the main part of his crew were sympathizers with the socialist cause and in July 1887, while flying over the middle of the North Ocean, he announced that he planned to break away from the empire. The few convinced loyalists on board got thrown into the sea along with



the imperial insignia. Following old buccaneer tradition, the German flag was replaced by the Jolly Roger. But under the grinning skull there are neither crossed bones nor sabers, but a hammer and sickle instead. Lieutenant commander von Reden has a sense for the melodramatic. Since his treason the (literally) red pirate has captured airships from all nations, robbed them, and massacred any crew members that refused to defect to his cause. Besides the *Undine*, the pirate captain now has two more airships at his disposal (one Russian and one British) as well as two prototypes of a motor glider a British inventor had planned to test on Venus.

Friedrich Bertram von Reden

Outwardly, Friedrich Bertram von Reden appears to be the ideal German officer – tall, blond, handsome, dashing, and bold. Until his tragic disappearance, the young lieutenant commander was regarded as one of the great hopes of the German air fleet on Venus. There was no officer deemed more capable and honorable. But his superiors' judgment would surely have been different had they known then what goes on behind von Reden's mask of the loyal Junker. Baron Friedrich Bertram von Reden is descended from a long-established noble dynasty from Mecklenburg, but the elite officer and knight of the skies is in truth a fanatic socialist. During his time at secondary school he learned to detest the way in which his fellow aristocrats were treating the working class from the bottom of his soul. Finally, at university, he came into contact not only with the writings of Marx and Engels but also with a radical anarchist cell. Von Reden was very good at obscuring his contacts to socialist and anarchist circles and for a long time he acted as secret sponsor for diverse subversive actions. He believes it to be impossible that there could be a peaceful transition to world socialism. If he had a say in it, Venus would at some point break away from the colonial powers, just like the United States had done a century ago. The only difference being that on Venus no capitalist regime will develop, but a socialist paradise instead! It is not time for that yet, but it is never too early to deploy one's troops. Among his men, the Kapitänleutnant – as he is still called even after his betrayal of the Kaiserreich – is highly popular, and it is easy to see why. Von Reden distinguishes himself by a chivalric fairness one does not encounter too often. If it were not for the chilling unscrupulousness with which he pursues his plans, one might deem him a high-minded man of principle.

Archetype: Soldier **Motivation:** Justice

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Charisma:** 3

Dexterity: 4 **Intelligence:** 4

Strength: 2 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 8

Move: 6 **Defense:** 7

Perception: 7 **Stun:** 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (History)	4	2	6	(3)
Athletics	2	1	3	(1+)
Bureaucracy	4	1	5	(2+)
Con	3	2	5	(2+)
Diplomacy	3	2	5	(2+)
Firearms	4	2	6	(3)
Gunner	4	3	7	(3+)
Pilot	4	5	9	(4+)

Talents

Blind Fight; Attractive; Skill Master (Pilot)

Resources

Status 2

Artefact 2 (Airship)

Rank 2

Flaws

Reformer

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Saber	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Rifle 88*	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L
Revolver	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L

* German military rifle, please use the stats for a Lee-Metford-Rifle, Core Rules p. 223

Secrets of Prehistoric Times

The Crypt of Huolali

"Diamonds! Emeralds! Sapphires! As many as you might hope for! And all we have to do is dig up the carcass of some old skink chief!"

— Karaahn Kashneek. Martian and self-appointed expert in the acquisition of wealth

The legend of Huolali's crypt is persistent in the Ishtar Highlands and attracts adventurers and treasure hunters again and again. *Huolali* is a mythical creature from the legends of the Ishtar Culture and is said to be the ancestor of several tribes. Numerous heroic deeds and marvels are attributed to him. For example, he is supposed to have slain 1000 slobbering nomad warriors because they trampled down the fields of his tribe, or to have hunted down a tyrannosaurus while armed with just a stone knife. Furthermore, he is said to have peacefully unified the Ishtar tribes and to have reigned for "two lives" because he was able to defeat Homa in a wager. In the end, the great chief decided at last to die, as this was supposed to be the natural order of things after all. After his death his friends and his hunting companions gnawed his bones as was customary and buried him along with his possessions in a barrow. His grave goods are thought to be the marvelous spear *Hohua*, the ever-sharp stone axe *Nuono-Holi*, the never-empty beer gourd *Nuiuo*, and a pile of jewels weighing as much as an *opano*. Even though many colonists seriously doubt the truthfulness of the *Huolali* legends, there are many that believe at least in the part concerning the pile of gemstones and set out to search for these treasures. There are countless speculations about the location of the grave of *Huolali*. Belief in the hidden treasure has already caused some resentment between humans and Venusians, as some treasure hunters act ruthlessly and break open every barrow and defile every grave cavern they can find. It could be possible that the story has a kernel of truth, as in former times it really was customary to bury Venusian chiefs with considerable amounts of jewels. Maybe there truly is a Venusian barrow with the treasure of the century out there.



Phan-Phan-Phuoli

"The geometrical accuracy of the buildings at this place still reminds me of the ruins of Karnak or the remains of Old Mexico, despite being not in the least similar to them. Everything in these prehistoric monuments betrays their non-human origin. The bizarre angles, the organic looking frescoes, and the unbelievable geometric pattern in which this site is arranged could not be the product of a human mind. The natives still refuse to cross the outer wall circle."

— Professor Edmond Rinaldini,
in the journals of the Eppendorf-Rinaldini expedition

For over five centuries, the former gigantic metropolis **Phan-Phan-Phuoli** has lain deserted in the jungle. Only a few buildings and the triple ring of fortifications reveal that this was once a powerful city. The human discoverers of the site are the Italian aerial commanders *Emilio Botazzi* and *Vincenzo Tremante*. During the year 1886, they had to make a forced landing with their small surveying vessel because of a storm. In the twilight of the storm, they sought shelter between some dark rocks of strange geometric outlines. It was well after the storm abated that they slowly became aware that they had camped between the ruins of antique buildings decorated with frescoes. Enthusiastically, Botazzi and Tremante copied some of the frescoes and charted the ruins they were able to reach as accurately as possible. Between 1886 and 1888, just a few small groups visited the ruins, only to leave without any results. Finally it was left to the German-Italian *Eppendorf-Rinaldini Expedition*, which reached the ruins four weeks before Christmas 1888, to conduct the first serious archeological excavations in Phan-Phan-Phuoli. Of course the colonists do not know that the city was once known by this name. Usually, it's described as 'the ancient lizard-city'. The expedition discovered some entrances to the inside of the buildings and even managed to remove the mud from several of the rooms. The glyph language which decorates a large part of the frescoes could not be deciphered. Archeologists found remains of a large number of Lizard-men around one big, palace- or temple-like building in the center of the city, who had apparently died during a siege of the building. Professor Eppendorf thinks that these are the remains of an attacking army, while Professor Rinaldini is of the opinion that the inhabitants of the city fell ill with an epidemic and died by the score during prayers at the central sanctuary. As it happens, both are partly correct.

In its time, Phan-Phan-Phuoli was the greatest and most powerful city of Venus. In fact the decayed metropolis still dwarfs the biggest cities of Zhath (see page 161) even today. It was the biggest city that had ever been built by Lizard-men and the political and spiritual center of the lost empire of **Phan**. More than five million Venusians lived here in the shadow of the brightly painted and flower-bedecked towers of a, for Venusian standards, very cultivated society. A veritable Babylon of the Morning Star! All of this changed with the wars, plagues, and volcanic eruptions (see page 170) that befell the population at the end of the two empires *Phan* and *Qun*. The situation began to become grim indeed, as one can see from the drastic images of the more recent frescoes. Hunger-induced riots and attacks from barbarians shattered the metropolis.

The last act of the tragedy of Phan-Phan-Phuoli cannot be read on any of the frescoes any longer – only on graffiti that one of the

few survivors hastily carved into the stone. In all the misfortunes Phan-Phan-Phuoli had to suffer, a variant of the deadly Nuova Pontebba plague was breaking out in the slums. The authorities immediately quarantined the respective districts but it was too late. The disease could not be confined anymore. The Council of Priests barricaded itself with its supplies inside the city's great palace fortress and ordered the infected hordes that wanted to storm the fortress in search of food and healing to be shot. In the meantime, hostile nomad hordes stormed the now unguarded city walls to plunder everything that was still left in the houses ... only to infect themselves with the plague, too. The massacres must have been horrific! The priests of the council in their golden halls managed to survive the atrocities and butchery in the city quite well, but in the end they too did not escape death. Some of them had already caught the plague and so the whole palace population died like the rest of them – with scales rotting off and bursting paunches, desperate and helpless among incalculably valuable treasures. The precious artifacts made of wrought gold, pearls, and jewels are still inside the palace, behind gigantic stone gates with which the priests sealed themselves in. The glyph slab library is also there.

It is difficult to decode the unknown glyphs of Phan, but not impossible. Some shamans of the surrounding tribes still know the meaning of some characters – enough for a good linguist to take a systematic approach in decoding the writing. But one would have to convince them first to talk about the ruins at all – the surrounding tribes avoid the area of the city completely, never mind talking about it. They are descendants of the survivors of the catastrophe, reverted to Stone Age standards, and they associate the ruins with nothing but misfortune, death, and horrible loss. Finally, it is to be noted that the edged towers of Phan-Phan-Phuoli are far from colorless for Lizard-men. The lines of the frescoes are reinforced with color and glare in flashy uoli!

Strange Dwellers and Animals

The Mystery of the JaoÓ

The massive aggressiveness of the JaoÓ (see page 86) against all other Venusians, is, as opposed to the speculations of scientists from Earth, not rooted in culture, but in biology. At some time in the early period of Venusian development a small mutation happened in the line of inheritance of the JaoÓ – their pheromone glands released odors that were slightly different from those of other Venusians. What sounds marginal to us resulted in huge consequences – among the JaoÓ, emotions smell totally different than among other Venusians, which causes misinterpretations of the emotional odors on both sides. It is because the smell of 'outsiders' to the JaoÓ is seldom in accordance with their talking and acting that outsiders appear to be pathological liars and cheats in their "eyes". By contrast, everyone else thinks of the JaoÓ as irrationally deranged. What smells of anger for the JaoÓ smells of a mixture of childish joy and sexual arousal for other Venusians. There's no question how aggressive JaoÓ are perceived by "normal" Venusians.

Ssono-Oa – the Giant Venusian Cephalopod

“The brain of this creature weighs almost eleven pounds and is structured in a much more complex way than those of normal cephalopods are. Of course the size of the organ alone does not say anything about its capabilities, but Banks’s and Saltnier’s reports point to an exceptional cunning of the beast. After all, the animal has played a cat-and-mouse game with the members of the expedition for over a week and drowned half of them in the bogs, skewered them with branches or strangled them with lianas.”

— From the post-mortem report of a strange Venusian cephalopod

Intelligence can take many forms and not every intelligent life form has to be similar to humans in its thinking. This lesson has yet to be learned by the young, spacefaring civilization of Earth. Besides the Lizard-men there is a second, much more ancient species of independent-minded beings on Venus. But because their behavior and their way of thinking are so totally alien, humans have simply missed the subtle signs of their existence until now.

Some of the Venusian tribes worship the **Ssono-Oa** as immortal oracles, others fear them as demonic spirits. Trappers and orchid hunters tell stories of predators of almost demonic shrewdness. But in the colonies, people believe the truth behind the stories to be merely cunning animals or the natives’ primitive superstition.

The lizard name Ssono-Oa designates the creatures as ‘waiting divers’ as they are a species of giant bog squids who have a life span of several centuries, or maybe even millennia. Their ‘heads’ – which directly merge with the torso – have a diameter of almost ten feet, or three meters. Their thick, strong tentacles can grow up to 50 feet long (i.e. 15 meters). Ssono-Oa are carnivores and skillful hunters. They live as loners in areas of about 38 square miles, or 100 square kilometers. Because of their amphibious nature, they can cover great distances on land or climbing in the trees. Their preferred prey is fish, small dinosaurs and, rarely, Lizard-men. The Ssono-Oa do not have a beak but several rings of teeth with murderous fangs. This differentiates them from all other cephalopods on Venus. Also, in their bio-chemistry they are radically different from Venusian animals, even different from those from the “World below the World”, which leads to two conclusions: Either the Ssono-Oa are such an ancient species that they stem from a time when the creatures of Venus were still evolving differently, or the Ssono-Oa do not originate from Venus! Their intelligence is downright enormous. Ssono-Oa are born mathematicians and can calculate the most complicated arithmetic operations – for which even the most modern difference engines need several minutes – in just a few seconds. Ssono-Oa never forget anything and take notice of even the most marginal trifles. It is virtually unintelligible why their race never managed to establish a technological civilization. Presumably the Ssono-Oa are not interested in making tools because they perceive themselves as perfect. Their way of thinking is radically different from that of any other species of the inner solar system. Even otherwise ‘unhuman’ species like the undiscovered Selenites or the Ice Dwellers of Mercury think more like humans than the Ssono-Oa do.

For the most part, Ssono-Oa behave like ordinary animals, but they are capable of defending their territory with diabolically clever hunting methods. Additionally, it seems that they can identify technical equipment as such and are capable of deliber-

ately sabotaging it. From a human or Venusian point of view, the behavior of the Ssono-Oa can only be described as “erratic”. One can never know when he or she has incurred the wrath of one of these weird creatures. Even if one has lived side by side with a Ssono-Oa in peace for years, or has even communicated with it several times, it can suddenly become a mortal enemy. Despite their innate foreignness, there are ways in which to communicate with a Ssono-Oa – provided that it has an interest in doing so. The Venusian cephalopods are capable of imitating sounds and speech in a surprisingly realistic way and can formulate sentences. Interestingly, Ssono-Oa are able to learn whole terrestrial languages at dizzying speed, which they usually use to lure their prey into traps. But sometimes they also use this talent to communicate. If it comes to a conversation, one has to deal with the peculiar character and behavior of the Ssono-Oa. They demonstrate enormous talent and cleverness, but also an utterly alien behavior. Ssono-Oa also have the habit of using the voice of their conversational partners and adapting their phraseology – more or less correspondingly. The sentences of a Ssono-Oa are always cryptic and strangely erratic. In some cases, logical responses can be deducted from its words, but normally the Ssono-Oa and its conversational partner talk at cross-purposes or the Ssono-Oa only utters odd slogans before immediately disappearing again. It is a total matter of luck when and how one can get into conversation with a Ssono-Oa. Sometimes, for unfathomable reasons, the cephalopods initiate the contact themselves; in some cases the strange aliens also respond when being spoken to.

Some of the Lizard-men who have managed to get into contact with Ssono-Oa consider them to be mystic oracles and try to draw from them information about spiritual matters, the future, or the distant past. The memory of a Ssono-Oa reaches back centuries and it is capable of roughly predicting the behavior of primitive tribal societies with the help of advanced probability calculations, so much of the information gained by offerings and persistent questioning is actually worth something. In this way, often quite close relationships between Lizard-men tribes and the honored Ssono-Oa develop. Earthlings of course always consider this to be merely Venusian superstition.

The following stats provide an example for a 150-year-old Ssono-Oa who is roaming its territory. Feel free to modify these stats according to age and living conditions.

Ssono-Oa

Archetype: Hunter **Health:** 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 7 **Charisma:** 2
Dexterity: 5 **Intelligence:** 5
Strength: 8 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 **Initiative:** 10
Move: 13 (6)* **Defense:** 10
Perception: 8 **Stun:** 7

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Mathematics)	5	5	10	(5)
Linguistics	5	1	6	(3)
Linguistics (Deciphering)			7	(3+)
Athletics	5	3	8	(4)
Melee	8	6	14	(7)
Stealth	5	5	8**	(4)
Survival	5	3	8	(4)

Talents

Dual Wield 2 (Ssona-Oas can also use Dual Wield when making a Brawl attack)

Direction Sense

Lethal Blow

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	-2	12 L	(6) L
Tentacle	0 N	-2	12 N	(6) N

*Ssona-Oa use their full Move rating for swimming and half their Move rating when on land.

** Ssona-Oa suffer a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

The Qulu

The evolutionary ancestors of humankind are long dead and turned to dust. Is it the same with the creatures from which the Venusians developed a scant few thousand years ago? Earthly scientists have not been able to answer this question as yet. It is astonishing that there is such a huge gap between the Lizard-men and the rest of the fauna of Venus. Out of what did the Venusians develop? And why?

Opponents of the theory of evolution see the supposed fact that on Venus too there is a “missing link” between brute animals and sentient beings as evidence that Darwin’s proposals concerning the origin of species are wrong. But they generously overlook the fact that only a fraction of Venus has been explored and its fauna still has some surprises in store – like the species of the *Qulu*. These half-intelligent lizard beings are the direct ancestors of the Venusians of today and in this way somewhat like the “apes of Venus”. Some five feet in height they are much smaller than the Venusians. The volume of their skulls is much less than that of the highly evolved Lizard-men and their claws are more heavily built. They live deep in the bogs in groups of ten to fifteen. Their diet mostly consists of small fish and amphibians. The Qulu are not known for their peacefulness. They are very aggressive and almost abnormally malicious. In confrontations, they have two strategies: If the enemy surpasses them in size or in number, they quietly and subtly withdraw. If the enemy appears to be weaker, they attack mercilessly. The Qulus’ intelligence is not sufficient to make tools, but they can choose tool-like objects, like edged stones – and throw them accurately. This makes them dangerous enemies – along with their sharp claws, wild maliciousness and their habit of attacking in groups. The relations between the Qulu and the Lizard-men could not be worse. Both species almost instinctively attack each other on sight. Qulu are clever enough to stay away from their enemies’ villages. Those Lizard-men that still know about the existence of the Qulu often prey upon them in organized fashion. It seems logical to suppose that the species has long been extinguished in the territory of civilized Lizard-men like the Ishtar Culture.

Qulu

Animal Companion 1

Archetype: Animal **Health:** 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Charisma:** 1
Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence:** 1
Strength: 3 **Willpower:** 2

Secondary Attribute

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 4

Move: 6 **Defense:** 5

Perception: 3 **Stun:** 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Stealth	3	2	5	(2+)
Survival	1	2	5	(2+)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Claw	1 L	0	7 L	(3+) L
Stone	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N

Natural Phenomena

The Rock Orb Coast

The western coast of MacKenzie’s Island is formed by a wide strip of rocky terrain on which no complex vegetation can thrive. This 3 mile, or 5 kilometer, wide barren plain stretches for 37 miles, or 60 kilometers, and has only been seen by humans from the bird’s eye perspective of their airships. It is generally considered to be some type of mudflat, although this widespread theory has a slight flaw: the tides on Venus are much less pronounced than on Earth, making tidal mudflats essentially impossible. The plain is actually covered by a 10 inches, or 25 cm, deep, verdigris-colored, spongy layer. What looks at first glance like moss is actually a thick mat of protozoic algae. Only few animals inhabit this region. Apart from the odd sporadic wandering lizard, only worms can live in this place, feeding on the layer of algae. Some sea urchins are also found, propelling their soft bodies across the algae and “grazing” on them. Every once in a while, the plain is flooded, but the water never rises higher than three feet (1 meter) above the algae layer.

All over this part of the coast, giant rock spheres are found, whose diameters range from 3 up to 16 feet or so (from one to five meters). These orbs are black in color, and veined with green. Their surface is smooth, as if polished, but closer inspection of these spheres would reveal that they display neither irregularities nor signs of craftsmanship. Are these orbs artificial or the byproduct of some bizarre natural phenomenon? And what is the tough substance the spheres consist of? Such questions are just as hard to answer as the riddle of why this coast specifically is home to such a layer of algae of this size. The Lizard-men living in the vicinity of the Rock Orb Coast believe it to be a land of spirits. Their shamans often seek out the place to meditate, hoping for one of the special visions said to occur more frequently there. Such reports suggest a possible psychotropic effect of the algae. The local lizard people also report that the orbs are actually growing in size ...

The Sargasso of the Airs

It is a well-known phenomenon that in some weather conditions an oily-green, smudgy film settles on the exterior fuselage of airships.

The atmosphere of Venus contains a vast number of smaller algae, plant pollen, and other “aero-plankton”, which can accumulate into proper clouds, especially on calm days. But Venus has more flying flora to offer than a few single-celled algae. So far undiscovered by humans, the astonishing natural wonder of airborne seaweed floats above some regions of the Venusian oceans!

Square-miles-wide fields of this green stuff are held aloft by the gentle winds, intertwined by their stalks and tendrils. The secret behind the floating seaweed’s ability to fly is much more mundane than the complex interactions that give liftwood its floating properties. The seaweed begins its life cycle in the water, where metabolic activities accumulate hydrogen. As the concentration of hydrogen reaches a critical level, the vesicular parts of the seaweed rise into the air, while some strands remain in contact with the ground. A new generation of seed capsules ripens inside the floating parts of the plant and is then carried off by the wind. They drop into the sea when the hydrogen bubbles decompose.

Often, several of these clumps of ‘floating’ seaweed are linked to each other and form one of the above-mentioned giant fields. These “flying islands” are not safe to walk on, since their structures are not stable enough to bear much weight. However, the seaweed fields are the principal food source for a number of insects and flying lizards, forming a unique, “aerial” ecosystem. Zeppelins can get stuck in the fields of seaweed, if circumstances are particularly unlucky. It is more likely that the body of the airship simply pushes the clumps aside. As long as the plants do not get tangled up in the propellers, the risk should be minimal. A swarm of aggressive flying lizards, living close to the aerial field, would be much more dangerous. It should also be noted that the hydrogen within the weed is flammable, so any unsafe use of open flames might turn the field of seaweed into a giant ball of fire. Whoever first discovers this bizarre natural wonder can be assured of undying fame among cytherologist – to say nothing of the profit a hydrogen-producing plant promises...

Alien Lands and Unknown Realms

The Realm of Zhath

“Hear then, what is written upon the walls of the Great Temple: It came to pass that the great darkness came over all the land, for, behold, the people had sinned against those who cannot die. And there came fire, pestilence, and lamentations over those who had sinned. Their jaws broke and their bellies ruptured and they were doomed to die. Only Zhath remained, as it was faithful in the eyes of those who cannot die, and enjoyed their good will. Praise Zhath, as Zhath is the light and the order.”

— Excerpt from a religious bark text in the cave libraries of Zhath-Bahao

Location

Based on highly developed trade goods bought from tribes of the Thetis Mountains at the eastern edge of the Russian colony,

many terrestrial explorers of Venus have assumed the existence of a more advanced Venusian civilization in the Diana Mountains. Their assumption is right. The great empire of **Zhath** is the last remaining dominion of the city builders, called Old Ones by the more primitive Lizard-men, and nominally it rules the entirety of the Diana Mountains. This vast territory is home to many millions of Venusians, and teeters on the brink of collapse.

History

Almost 1,500 years ago, some of the Lizard-men living between the Thetis Mountains and the Diana Highlands began to rise above the primeval state of development of their fellow species. At first, alliances between several tribes were forged, supremely coordinating agriculture, hunting, and war. Soon, these tribes began to thrive and formed larger coalitions, eventually founding the first cities. These cities were the foundation of the first real empires in Venusian history. More highly developed and better-organized Lizard-men subjugated or converted the more primitive tribes and expanded their territories. Simple writing systems were created, skilled trades were differentiated further, and castes of priests and bureaucrats emerged, beginning to centralize agriculture. The first steps towards philosophy and science were taken.

A thousand years ago, three great empires had developed, contending for supremacy over the world they knew. The strictly patriarchal **Phan** had built its cities in the Thetis Mountains, the warrior brotherhoods of **Zhath** ruled over the Diana Highlands, while between them lay **Qun**, a realm where trade and bootlegging flourished. For five centuries, these three cultures dominated the surrounding regions. Unfortunately, all of these early empires already carried the seed of their own demise. The Lizard-men developed their agricultural technologies at a slower pace than that required by their population growth. Under the ideal conditions prevailing in the three realms, the population reached dozens of millions, a number which could not be fed by the agricultural means available.

A little more than 500 years ago, the situation in the three empires declined so dramatically that a number of food riots, wars, and revolutions erupted, shattering Qun and Phan. Spreading plagues and a volcanic eruption in the Thetis Mountains further exacerbated the terrible circumstances, all but eradicating any trace of Qun and Phan within little less than a century. Even **Phan-Phan-Phuoli** (p. 156), the center of Phan and metropolis of the three cultures, perished. This event is referred to as the “All-Death Curse”. Only Zhath remained, albeit crippled by the disasters. Refugees from Qun and Phan flooded the few Zhathian cities still intact, while epidemics ran rampant, harvests failed, and primitive tribes threatened the borders. In this dire situation, the political leadership of Zhath was overthrown. The old priesthood, the so-called *Blue Order*, which had ruled the realm as peacefully and fairly as possible, was toppled with the aid of some of the warrior brotherhoods. It was replaced by the more aggressive ‘*Red Order*’, also called the ‘*Mistresses of Time*’. The Red Order managed to restore order to Zhath, but had to rely on rigid, even brutal measures to do so. Even for the standards of early antiquity, the Red Order’s regime was cruel and oppressive, and Zhath continues to suffer from it to this day. For the past 400 years, Zhath has been stagnating, and the formerly thriving, advanced culture has transformed into a cluster of overcrowded metropolises pervaded by constant paranoia. Still, the Red Order continues its building projects, erecting a monumental helical structure to honor the Order in each of the six major cities of the realm. Furthermore, the priesthood had large parts of the jungle

in the central Diana Highlands cleared for a seventh metropolis dedicated entirely in their honor.

Leadership and Society

Zhath is a mix of tribal federation and theocracy. The five old metropolises and the terrain surrounding each are dominated by a tribe whose chieftain-king has sworn allegiance to the "*Truly Immortal Grandmother*", the High Priestess of Zhath. The sixth and newly constructed seventh major city are both governed directly by the Red Order. Basically, the structure of this realm is typically Venusian, but on a different scale.

Zhath is organized very strictly, in almost totalitarian manner. Each individual is assigned its function by the magistracy, a kind of Venusian tribal council. Families are an unknown concept in this society, which is separated into the four castes of *hunters, craftsmen, farmers, and priestesses*. The tribal council is composed in equal parts of high-ranking representatives of these castes, with a chieftain or city-king at its head, chosen by priestly oracle. While the representatives of the secular castes are from the city whose council they are part of, the priestesses are always sent from the capital, ensuring the loyalty of the other cities. The individual castes are subdivided into many smaller specialist and labor groups, which are the individual Zhathians' family equivalent. Within the warrior caste, the subdivision is not determined by service branches, but by the ancient principle of "Hunting Brotherhoods". In Zhath, these brotherhoods have taken on the form of almost occult, fiercely competitive orders of warriors. Each city has a number of these orders, and ritualized "wars", sanctioned by the priestesses, are the usual means to resolve any dispute between them. The rituals and ranks differ between the orders, most of which bear ostentatious names and are characterized by complex rank structures. Even military drill is performed in mystically-informed rituals. This way, the warriors attempt to give themselves a cultivated veneer, glossing over the fact that they are little more than strong-arm thugs for the priestesses. The exclusively female clergy oversees the religious rites for the plethora of Zhathian gods and spirits, administers the realm, controls the population, medical care, jurisdiction, and workforce allocation. The Red Order decides who fulfils which function in the empire of Zhath. Each newborn bears a pattern on their stomach on which the priestesses base their determination as to which profession the child will ply as an adult. It can be assumed that consideration of the planned economy plays a larger part than the gods in this decision for the future life of a child.

Technology

The Zhathians have developed an urban culture with a surprisingly high degree of organization, even though metalworking is largely unknown in their realm. Many of the Venusian cultural techniques prevalent among the more primitive tribes are still in use, but achieving a higher standard of craftsmanship. The invention of lever and pulley technology allows the moving of heavy loads for the erection of monumental edifices. The Zhathians masterfully hew the tuff of their mountain homeland, and many of their cities were chiseled out of the rock over the course of centuries. Innumerable hand-hewn rock faces are decorated with primitive ornaments. The Zhathians also dedicate themselves to the performing arts. In places without mountains or rocks, larger buildings are constructed from boulders brought in from other places, while small huts are erected using the same building tech-

niques common in the Ishtar and Sappho cultures. Mechanical insights are advanced enough for the construction of primitive catapults and spear throwers. Fire and the wheel are known to the Zhathians. The wheel is used in pulleys and similar devices. Fire is a central element of many religious ceremonies and is usually generated by means of complex chemical reactions. The field of chemistry, or rather 'alchemy', is very advanced, giving the Zhathians a rich supply of effective medicines and anesthetic substances, as well as hundreds of drugs and poisons.

The Zhathians have also discovered the influence of chemicals on the development of animals and plants, and are experimenting with the breeding of creatures manipulated in this manner. The

VuahMha

Mother VuahMha is among the few who are allowed to leave and enter the metropolis of Zhath-Uol as they please. After all, she is among the elders of the Eggherder Circle in the Southern Administrative District of her city, and always carries a 'pass' in the form of a wooden cuneiform tile, worn around her neck as a pendant. Her task is to gather rare medicinal mushrooms, which do not grow in the gardens of Zhath-Uol. Mother VuahMha appears senile. She delights in long monologues with the mushrooms she gathers, addressing subjects like washing sheets, polishing eggs, and cutting moss. Most priestesses ignore the babbling crone, and that is exactly what VuahMha relies on.

She disguises herself as a demented fool because she is one of the secret shamans of the New Faith. A few years ago, VuahMha was really nothing more than a simple herb gatherer of the Eggherders. One day, she met a group of adherents of the New Faith in the woods and joined them. From the bottom of her soul, she believes that things in Zhath will only change for the better when the merciful new god replaces the perverted old gods of the Order. Thus, she became one of the most active resistance fighters. She helps refugees escape the warriors of the Red Order to secret camps in the forests, and hides magical talismans of the new god all over the city, to weaken the sway of the old gods. Her most important function is to maintain contact with the friendly primitive tribes allied with her cult. VuahMha is not yet sure whether the New Faith is already a match for the power of the red priestesses, which is why she remains on the lookout for things that might help the resistance. She has begun to hear stories told among the barbarians, stories of a race of tail-less sorcerers, who share the New Faith's belief in a single god of mercy and love. But the stories also tell that these sorcerers are subjugating all tribes they meet with cruel magic. Could these magicians still be helpful? Can establishing contact with them be risked?

ability to control the emotional state of a Venusian by means of aromas is well-known and exploited by the Zhathian authorities. The streets are lined with chemical fires burning 'peacemaking' herbs. Zhathian cities literally reek of 'calm' and 'felicity' – even though most Zhathians have long become indifferent to these smells.

The cultural technique of writing developed a millennium ago. The script consists of primitive pictograms, similar to early cuneiform systems. Writing material is provided by using certain durable tree barks or vertically sliced stalks of Oma Jolima. With increasing frequency, inscriptions are engraved into stone. Zhathian scribes (who are always members of the clergy) usually do not use styli for their work, but use their claws to scratch their characters into the writing material.

Religion

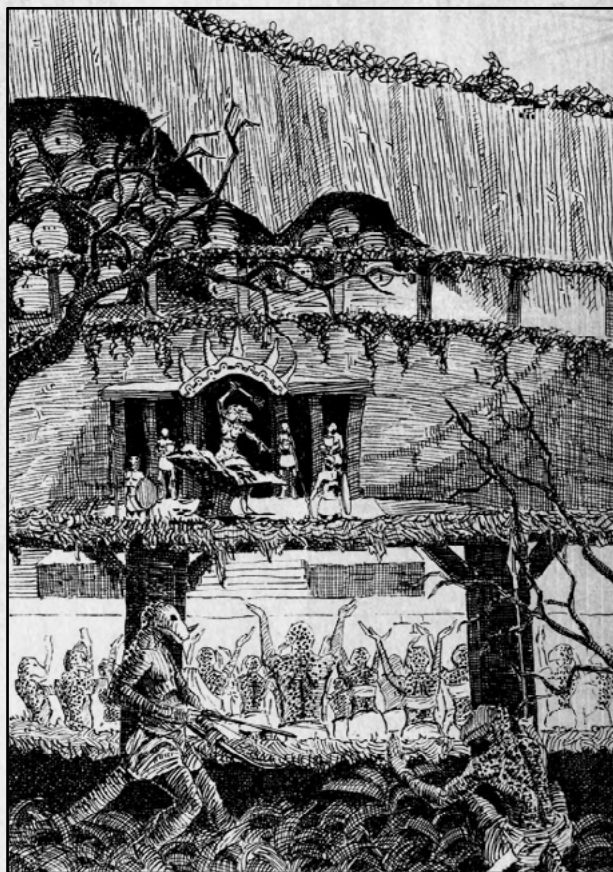
The Zhathian religion is a kind of primitive polytheism, very much resembling the animism of the more primitive Lizard-men with regard to cosmology, and the conception of the afterlife.

The greatest of all gods is **Homahoo**, the god of time and death. Second to him in greatness and influence are **Tamhadaho**, the goddess of justice and the iron hand, **Ssuana**, the god of field crops, **Heheao**, god of stones and architecture, and **Ghzaahr**, the fire god and patron god of warriors. Below these five are ranked a vast multitude of minor gods and spirits.

There used to be a number of different priesthoods and shaman alliances taking care of the spiritual well-being of their Zhathian flocks. Among them was the legendary Blue Order, whose priests ascended the highest peaks of the Diana Highlands to watch (in the few clear moments), the mysterious spaces beyond the clouds and who invented the current calendar system, and probably the art of astrology. Since the Red Order seized power after the 'All-Death Curse', all of these smaller priesthoods have been smashed under the Order's iron heel, at best surviving in persecuted, sectarian circles. The priestesses of the Red Order claim to be the only intermediaries between the Venusians and the supernatural world. As they act on behalf of the supreme Lord of Time, they also insist that they are able to 'command the time'. The Order exploits the comparatively underdeveloped sense of time of the Venusians and has outlawed the keeping and writing of time for all non-clerics. The priestesses are the only ones in the realm allowed to keep calendars and count longer time periods than days, which makes them the exclusive long-term organizers of the realm. To this end, the Red Order uses mathematical knowledge obtained from the Blue Order during its destruction.

At the heart of the Zhathian state cult is an enormous, primitive water clock under the highest temple tower of the capital Zhath-Lhool. The clock consists of giant stone calendar disks set in motion by a system of wooden water wheels. Since they cannot fully comprehend many of the Blue Order's insights, the priestesses do not believe that the clock measures time, but that it actually makes it. The priestesses live in constant fear of the clock coming to a standstill, as has happened before, during the 'All-Death Curse', when Qun and Phan were destroyed. They believe that Homahoo will punish the Lizard-people with horrible disasters, unless they make sure the clock continues its perpetual motion.

Sacrifices of Lizard-people are common in Zhath. The blood toll extorted by the priesthood almost approaches Aztec levels. Prisoners of war from the primitive tribes, criminals or Zhathians chosen by lot are brutally sacrificed for every possible occasion. The annual sacrifice to the highest gods in Zhath-Lhool is of special significance. During the ceremony, the sacrifices are first



blinded, before they are castrated and ground to death between the stone calendar disks. Not only Homahoo is offered sacrifices. The other gods are given their due by means of varying, but always gruesome, methods. Sacrifices to Tamhadaho are flayed alive, gifts to Ssuana are stomped into the ground by farm ceratosaurs, or strangled, while sacrifices to Heheao are tied to rocks and rolled off hillsides. Interestingly, Ghzaar, the god of fire, is not appeased by burnt offerings. His sacrifices are sliced alive with obsidian blades. The sacrificial rites do not just serve religious purposes. The Red Order also uses the sacrifices as a perverted means of population control. If censuses show that there are too many Zhathians, more sacrifices take place than in time of lower population numbers. The Order hopes to prevent overpopulation, which once before brought the realm to the edge of collapse.

One of the most pressing problems for the Order is the loss of internal unity. Although it purports to be a monolithic power, it is continually rent and torn from within by power struggles, cabals and philosophical disputes.

The Seven Metropolises of Zhath

The pillars of the Zhathian realm are the seven mighty metropolises dwarfing the mass of smaller settlements. The new capital of **Zhath-Gahapa** is the most enormous building project of the Lizard-men since the demise of Qun and Phan. Zhath-Gahapa is purely a prestige project instigated by Lualolis and consists mainly of monumental buildings. The commoners live in huts.

Zhath-Lhool, the old capital of Zhath is surprisingly small and quiet. Since the governmental machinery has been re-settled in Zhath-Gahapa, the metropolis is dwindling. Only the sacred clock cannot be removed from the city, as it is firmly connected to the cave system underneath the city.

Zhath-Uogho-Nah is the economic hub of the realm. This trading metropolis is located in proximity to the new capital, close to the center of the realm on a high plateau framed on two sides by gigantic waterfalls. The inhabitants of the city have invented the water mill and are widely recognized as particularly resourceful craftsmen.

Zhath-NaoJhaUo is the only seaport of Zhath. Every day, hundreds of fishermen set out to sea from here to supply the city, which long ago became too over-populated to feed all its inhabitants by field crops.

Mighty **Zhath-Bahao**, the 'City of Trees' resembles an enormous military camp. Outside the city, heavily guarded gates lead to the 'Land without Time' (p. 166), which makes the city the perfect staging post for *Laluolis's* pointless crusade. Due to the food consumption of the soldiers stationed here, Zhath-Bahao faces a hunger catastrophe.

Zhath-Uol is often referred to as the 'City of Glyphs', and was not originally founded by the Zhathians. It is the last remainder of Qun, conquered 500 years ago by Zhath. The Zhathian population here mingles with descendants of the inhabitants of Qun and the refugees from Phan. The latter's custom of painting their homes with uol-colored glyphs gave the city its new name.

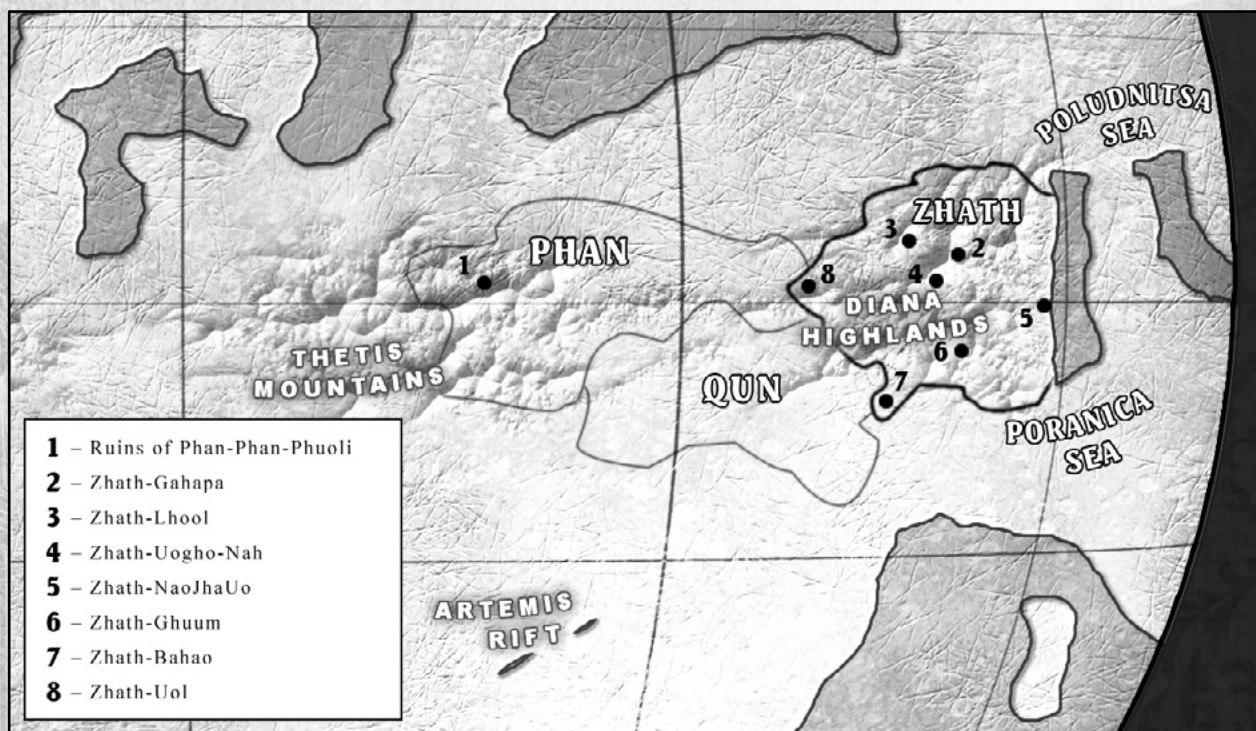
Zhath-Ghuum is the smallest of the Zhathian cities. Although it has the smallest population of all the major settlements in the realm, it occupies the largest area among them. The city consists of a hodgepodge of smaller villages and meadowlands, all surrounded by a long, circular wall.

Current Situation

Zhath considers itself to be a beacon of civilization surrounded on all sides by enemies. Interaction with tribes outside the reign of the Sacred Capital is exclusively hostile. This siege mentality is not wholly unwarranted, as the barbarian tribes who looted Qun and Phan after their fall also want to see Zhath subdued to pillage what remains. Zhath is in dire straits. Schemes inside the Red Order have put the juvenile '*Venerable Grandmother*'

Laluoli on the throne. A small group of high-ranking priestesses assumed Lалуoli would be weak and easily manageable, and they made good use of poison and promises to see her elected as High Priestess. They soon came to regret it. Lалуoli proved to be the most tyrannical and merciless creature to lead the order for a long time past. Soon after taking power, she removed the older priestesses who had put her at the helm. Lалуoli plans to end the age of darkness in which Zhath currently languishes, no matter the cost. She has been trying to purge the order of internal strife by means of a veritable execution mania. As inventiveness is the key to the future in Lалуoli's opinion, she has started the construction of a new capital and presses ahead with it manically. She believes that once Zhath-Gahapa is complete, the realm will prosper again, too, even though the sacred clock cannot be removed from Zhath-Lhool. The Venerable Grandmother has a plan for this problem. She is among the few who have understood that the clock is nothing but a simple machine, and she has arranged for a new clock to be built in Zhath-Gahapa.

Despite her cruel dedication, she also makes mistakes. The construction of Zhath-Gahapa devours enormous resources which are needed elsewhere, causing supply shortfalls in other cities. Lалуoli has also weakened the military defenses of her realm by sending an entire army on a suicide campaign to the 'Land without Time' (p. 166), where her warriors are tasked with exterminating the 'unnatural' creatures living there. The scavenging nomads beyond the borders, who are by far the more serious threat, have discovered the current weakness of Zhath and are intensifying their raids on villages and outposts. As Lалуoli prefers to manage her megalomaniac prestige mega-projects instead of taking care of the "menial" tasks of government, it comes as no surprise that many of the conflicts between individual cities and warrior orders have re-emerged. The Red Order cannot put out the fires of insurrection all around quickly enough, and scores of conspirators are devising assassination plans. It is unlikely that the Red Order would be able to agree quickly on a successor after the death of the High Priestess, and her assassination would be followed by nothing but more chaos. Meanwhile, the city of Zhath-Uol, led by the charismatic warrior-chieftain **Gili-Huoa**,



The New Faith

A regime like that of the Red Order never stays unopposed for long. For five centuries, the realm has been languishing in a stifling haze of herbal smoke, under the claw of the Priestesses. Just as long, the people have been suffering terror and oppression. But slowly, resistance is stirring. Outside the cities, a wiser, more peaceful monotheistic counter-cult has emerged, based on natural mysticism, the purer and simpler belief of the more primitive tribes in Homa, and a crude form of “astrology” revolving around the observation of clouds. Rumor among the common people is that the female hermits carrying the New Faith of Homa, the One God, into the cities are the returned descendants of the Blue Order.

Whether or not that is true is impossible to say. In any case, the sermons of true brotherliness and altruism give the desperate the hope they need. The cultists of the New Faith try to improve the lives of their fellow Venusians by means of good deeds wherever they can. Of course, this spiritual competition is a thorn in the side of the Red Order. The cult of the New Faith, whose center is said to be in Zhath-Uol, has to operate cautiously. Meetings are held in clandestine places, and adherents only know each other by secret symbols like the blue dot on the wrist. Recently, the unknown leaders of the cult have realized that it is necessary to be bolder. The cult liberates Venusian prisoners from the clutches of the Order, helps dissidents escape to secret hiding places in the swamps, and keeps winning over more and more common Lizard-men to its cause by subtle means. The cultists only shy away from assassinations (so far). To date, the New Faith is only a small flickering light of hope. But it is growing, and it even has won a few sympathizers among the upper ranks of society.

plans to secede from the realm. In the side streets and the caves of the common people, the situation remains as miserable as it has been for centuries. Only the outlawed New Faith gives the oppressed a glimpse of hope and optimism. And more and more rebel preachers speak of open revolt! All in all, the situation is at breaking point.

The Helenean Realms

“On the fifteenth day of our flight, we saw something remarkable on the sea below us – three ships. None of the cockleshells used by the natives, but real ships, reminiscent of Greek triremes but still different somehow – with fan-shaped sails and elegantly curved forms. I am sure that they saw us, too.”

— Fyodor Ilyin, Second Officer of the airship *Krasnodar* in his account of the last Russian South Ocean expedition

Geographic Location

The climate at the South Pole of Venus is a bit drier and more temperate than elsewhere on the planet. It offers perfect conditions for the development of an advanced culture on its rocky coasts and the innumerable islands of the Sea of Helena, where several young empires have flourished, whose cultural and technological development far exceeds those of any of the other Venusian peoples. None of them, however, come close in size to Zhath. These lands are called the “Helenean Realms”, and its inhabitants are referred to as ‘Heleneans’. Both terms were coined by the American professor *Neil Rogers*, who examined artifacts from the southern hemisphere and established the theory of highly advanced cultures, which he named the ‘Helenean Realms’ after the only vaguely explored Sea of Helena. The inhabitants are, of course, ignorant of our name for their homelands and simply call them the ‘civilized world’.

History

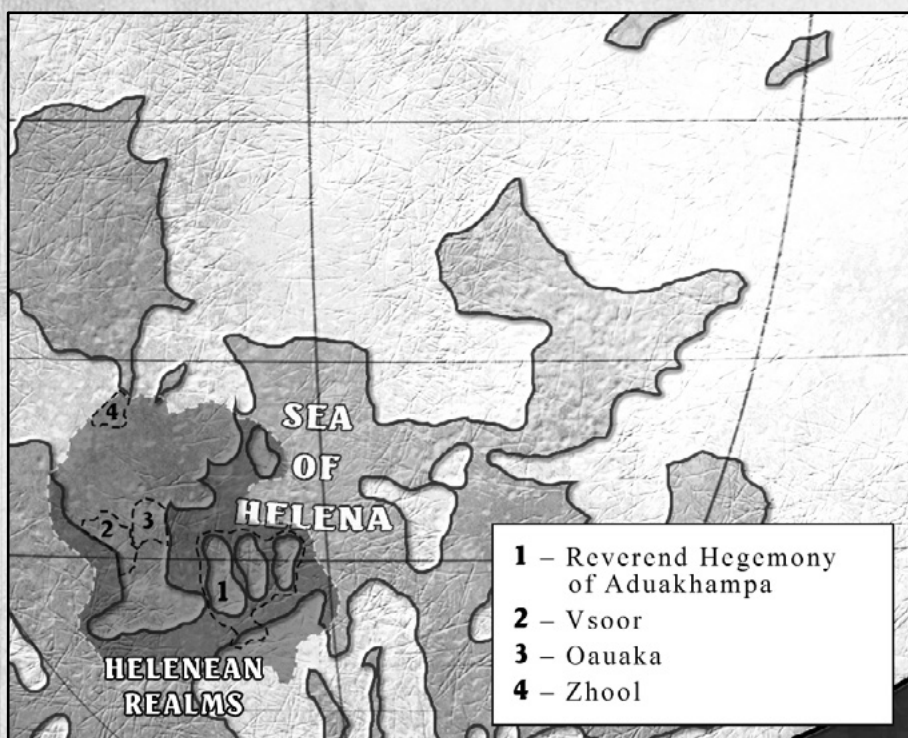
About 800 years ago, some of the more advanced tribes on the isles and coastlines progressed to higher, more complex cultures, all of them competing with each other. Soon, it became clear that only those with superior tactics and better strategies would prevail in war. For the first time in this part of Venus, the Lizard-men discovered the principle of technological advancement. An arms race for new weapons and ideas began, which continues to this day and would eventually elevate the Heleneans from the Neolithic Age to a higher level of civilization. Hedges became walls, reed boats were replaced by galleys, hunting spears by swords, and primitive tribal councils by a complex authority resembling that of Earth during antiquity. This age of change has seen only rare moments of calm in the Helenean realms, and their political structure is incredibly dynamic and violent, with innumerable wars raging in ever-shifting coalitions since the inception of the empires. The result is a history which could hardly be more confusing and chaotic.

Currently the dominant force among the realms is the ‘**Reverend Hegemony of Aduakhampa**’, a powerful state exacting tribute from almost all the other states. Meanwhile, other realms like the freedom-loving **Vsoor**, cruel **Oauaka**, mystery-laden **Sudoha**, and sedate **Zhool** continue to butcher and war among each other. Recently, an enigmatic new sect has taken hold among the states. Called the ‘*Disciples of the Shining One*’, it is secretly trying to gain traction among rulers and generals.

Society

Like all Venusians, the Heleneans have a marked preference for planned economies, which is why most of their states are tightly organized. However, the typical structures of elder council rule as found in the primitive tribes are hardly recognizable today. A number of highly differentiated professions, and the complex administrative structures developed by many of the states, have almost made the simple practice of stomach pattern readings obsolete. Instead, a type of school system has been put in place, in which a young Venusian is assigned a profession based on talents.

On a state level, the Heleneans have produced numerous forms of government. In all cases, some type of people’s assembly plays a role, but the details vary significantly, ranging from dictatorships and theocracies to republics. Most realms are ruled by tyrants, clerics, and kleptocrats well-versed in the arts of treachery and



plotting. During diplomatic negotiations, it has become fashionable to create as much herbal smoke as possible and spread perfumes of all sorts, for which religious motives are pleaded, but which mostly serves to facilitate tactical tricks, lies, and betrayal.

Helenean justice has a tendency for cruelty, and torture methods are varied and inventive. Verdicts are often reached by oracle and drawing of lots, or by ordeals.

On the whole, Helenean culture appears Janus-faced. On the one hand, Heleneans produce great works of art, clever (by Venusian standards) inventions, literature, and philosophy. On the other hand, they are capable of malicious cruelty and ferocious brutality. Possibly this is just a trait of their civilization.

Although they are constantly quarreling, one thing unites all Heleneans: their disdain for all the "unenlightened" tribes outside their own "civilized" world. Heleneans are aware of their cultural superiority over the peoples surrounding them, and assume that these outsiders must all be brutish and stupid. Some states have even "invented" slavery and impose it preferably on primitive tribes.

Technology and Cultural Advances

The Heleneans command technical knowledge unmatched among the inhabitants of Venus. Their craftsmen and architects are able to create objects and edifices of immense beauty and elegance. Everywhere, except for the most remote villages, the sticky, clumsy round huts have been replaced

by stable, often multi-story stone buildings. Larger constructions, like assembly halls, palaces, or temples, often feature porticos and cleverly structured gardens. Most designs are rotund and are inspired by organic forms.

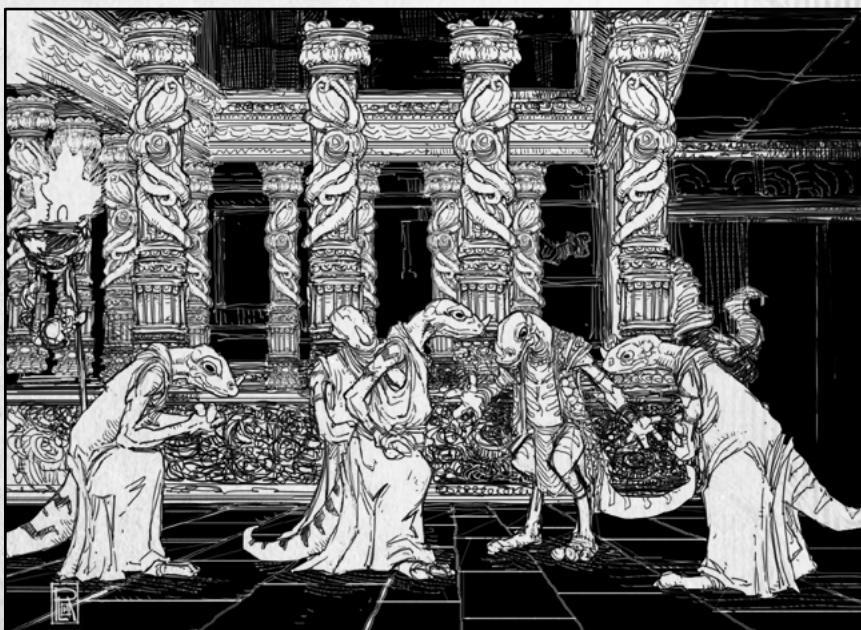
The Heleneans also excel in seafaring endeavors. Simple galleys are fitted with reinforced ram bows for naval battles. Trading vessels similar to the Roman *corbitae*, and swift trimarans with several masts are in use. At the moment, trained marine dinosaurs are being experimented with to propel ships. This is still causing great problems, since the animals are very hard to domesticate.

Apart from spears and bows, the Heleneans also use swords with obsidian or mother-of-pearl blades. The jewel of their weapons technology is a primitive precursor of the crossbow (similar to the Greek *Gastrophetes*), invented more than a century ago in Vsoor.

These weapons are considered the best 'means of communication' with 'unenlightened' tribes. Larger engines of war are also known, among them catapults and siege towers.

It is fascinating that this civilization, whose cultural level matches that of Earth's antiquity, has no knowledge of metalworking. The Heleneans use many types of bioengineered materials, such as specially cultivated and chemically treated woods, or tempered mother-of-pearl. For their production, they rely on refined methods of Venusian "alchemy". As they know and frequently use fire, they can create chemical reactions unavailable to less advanced peoples. Volcanic obsidian and homegrown crystals are also used.

The Helenean civilizations are familiar with the first manifestations of a monetary economy. Some states use carved mother-



of-pearl disks as coins and currency counterfeiting has also been “invented”.

Numerous writing systems are in use among the Helenean realms. Although the majority of Venusians are illiterate, which holds true for the Helenean states, there is an abundance of literature in the form of epic poems, mythological texts, and philosophical treatises. Theater is another established art form and often serves religious purposes. The first stringed instruments are being used for the composition of music, which can only be described as horrific to the human ear.

Some states use their own calendar systems for counting the years, which is problematic because the length of a ‘year’ is not based on the actual Venusian year, as the Heleneans are versed in neither astronomy nor astrology. The length of the year follows the growing seasons of various plants, the schedule of religious holidays, the mating season of the queen, or similar relatively fixed points, which can actually shift considerably. In consequence, the lengths of the years do not match in the various calendars currently being used.

Religion

Just as in politics, Helenean religion is a confusing and complex affair. The primeval tribal religions have developed into different sects, denominations, and philosophies, struggling for spiritual hegemony. Some pray to a pantheon of many gods, others revere a single deity, while others worship creation itself instead of personalized spirits, in a type of pantheism. The idea of “human” sacrifice has been abandoned by most of the cults. Only the Hegemony adheres to a sacrificial rite, in which the priests of the capital plunge a slave into a nearby active volcanic crater once a year.

The *State Cult of the Hegemony* officially serves Homa, but has lost its true spirituality long ago. Other important cults include the *State Cult of Vsoor*, worshipping the sea spirits and providing spiritual care to mariners far beyond Vsoor, the itinerant *Oracle of Hunters of HuDuu* or the new *Sect of the ‘Disciples of the Shining One’* proclaiming the new age of a shining god descended from heaven. The most important aspect in which the Helenean religions differ from those of other Venusians is the invention of the ‘devil’. Without exception, all cultures assume the existence of one or more antagonists epitomizing evil. Some priestesses exploit this belief to frighten their followers into submission. Why the Heleneans, of all Venusians, have come up with this notion is unknown.

Important Realms and the Current Situation

The Helenean Realms currently consist of 45 individual entities. Most powerful among them stands the **Reverend Hegemony of Aduakhampa**, whose heart is located on the island of Aduakhampa. Heleneans consider it the greatest empire in existence, partly because its capital *Hadahaa Soha* is the largest metropolis known to them. The empire collects tributes from almost all bordering states, which, combined with numerous pearl shell beds and a caste of skilled artisans, has created immense wealth. The Hegemony possesses a strictly organized military, commanded by a warrior nobility visibly fallen into decadence only recently. At the head of the realm stands an Emperor elected from the circle of nobles. The Emperor’s quarters are located in the *Chrysokoll Palace* in Hadahaa Soha. It is rumored that Emperor **HaOmathi** has been mortally ill for some time. In truth, he is long dead. Since tradition dictates that the entire inner circle of the court is to be entombed

Apart from the weapons of their more primitive relatives (p. 79), some special weapons are used in the Helenean Realms.

Helenean Crossbow: This lethal contraption is similar to the ancient Gastraphetes, a precursor of the crossbow. In contrast to a normal crossbow, the flight groove is anchored to the shaft on guides and is used to cock the weapon. For this, the user forcefully presses his stomach against the upper end of the weapon, so that the locked bowstring is pushed upwards to its retained position by means of the flight groove placed on the ground. In this way, the weapon can store and release a much greater force than a simple self bow.

Ranged Weapon	Dmg	Str	Rng	Rate	Spd	Weight
Helenean Crossbow	3 L	2	82/25*	½**	S	5.5/2.5*

* US customary units (ft., lbs.) / metric system (m, kg)

** Characters with the Instant Reload Talent double the rate of this weapon

Helenean Stone Sword: This intermediate form between a flattened, paddle-like club and a sword is found in all realms skirting the Helena Sea. Averaging three feet (or one meter) in length, the rectangular wooden shaft is fringed by a brutal, serrated blade made from obsidian or mother-of-pearl. The *macuahuitl* of Central American peoples is a terrestrial counterpart of the Helenean stone sword. In contrast to the Aztecs and their allies, the Lizard people of the Helena Sea also carry their weapons on the parade grounds, as they are much lighter and more stable, thanks to the use of Oma Jolima in the shaft.

Melee Weapon	Dmg	Str	Spd	Weight
Stone Sword	3 L	2	A	2 lbs./1 kg

with the dead emperor, the highest-ranking courtiers maintain the illusion that the ruler is still alive. Slowly, priests and possible heirs are growing suspicious. But there is another danger threatening the realm. The island of Aduakhampa is volcanically instable, and even though there has not been an eruption in well over a thousand years, the next volcanic event could sink the island.

The most powerful enemy of the Hegemony is **Vsoor**, a republic with an Athenian-style democracy, ruled from the eponymous capital. The *popular assembly* of Vsoor convenes annually at the Synod, a structure resembling an amphitheater decorated with 900 columns of tourmaline and violet sugilite. The Vsoor are famous for their moral principles, and infamous for their inquisitiveness. The population is obsessed with gladiator fights and boat racing, with some events even combining both. This might be one reason why this realm produces the most able seafarers among the Heleneans. One of their sea voyages has even led the Vsoor past the *Island of the Winged Gods* (which had heretofore been the westernmost

point of the Helenean world), and the three returning ships out of an initial 25 brought back news of an undiscovered mainland. Further expeditions west are currently on hold, as Vsoor is embroiled in a bloody war with the empire of **Oauaka** in the east, whose fanatical headhunters serve the Hegemony. The diplomats of the Hegemony have offered to call their vassals in Oauaka to heel in exchange for a substantial payment to the Chrysokoll Palace. The Synod has rejected the offer as extortion, and now war rages not just with Oauaka, but also with the Hegemony itself. Spies were sent to all realms paying tribute to the Hegemony, tasked with instigating unrest and insurgency, conducting secret diplomacy, and negotiating with the primitive tribes at the 'edge of the world', who have suffered greatly at the hands of Hegemony slavers. Born of one of these tribes is **Ghoo-Hua**, a mighty mercenary warrior fighting like a wolf for the armies of Vsoor in Oauaka. He has led the Vsoor forces to the gates of the cave sanctuary of Oauaka. Should he manage to kill the oracle of the headhunters, a thousand-year-old Ssono-Oa residing in the caves, the war against Oauaka will probably be won. It would also most likely mark the end of the Oauaka, as the headhunters' spirituality is strongly linked to the prophecies of their mollusk 'god'.

Judhoa HuaheMa - Conqueror of the Western Seas

When only six of the 25 ships which had set out from Vsoor to explore the western seas remained, the ship masters anchored off an unknown coast and discussed their course of action. The captains decided to have three ships return to Vsoor, while the other three would attempt to go further west. These three ships were under the command of **Judhoa HuaheMa**, one of Vsoor's boldest and most competent naval commanders.

The noble Judhoa stands head and shoulders above his fellow Venusians and is famous for balking at neither risk nor sacrifice for his goals. His subordinates fear him for his wild, aggressive resolve; his officers praise his wisdom. Humans would first notice how much more sophisticated than other Venusians he appears. There would be few cracks in his highly cultured demeanor, and barely any hint at the streak of pragmatic cruelty he shares with many of the great warriors of terrestrial antiquity. At the moment, his ships are at anchor in a bay off a mainland unknown to other Venusians. Without significant moral qualms, his marines have subjugated a smaller tribe they are now exploiting as labor for the construction of a fortified outpost. From this outpost, Judhoa intends to plan his next steps, after the sighting of a large flying fish has divided the expedition. Most consider the fish a warning from the gods for venturing so far west, and want to return home. Judhoa and his most loyal officers will not allow that, and the acquisitive captain is determined to solve the mystery of the flying fish, be it mighty work of sorcery or, as his learned scribe Huahal implies, a strange creature of the far west.

At the same time, in the remote northern realm of **Zhool**, whose half-savage inhabitants can hardly be called civilized, giant flying fish have been observed in the skies. The ruling priest caste considers it a sign of the coming cataclysm of the world. Although they consider the 'cataclysm' a spiritual phenomenon without actual damage, the term is translated as 'end of the world' further south, where the flying fish are consequently somewhat more feared.

A new phenomenon spreading throughout all the realms seems to be connected to these fears. The **'Disciples of the Shining One'**, masked priests hiding their stomach patterns under flowing robes, are originally from a small realm in the jungle, at the edge of the Helenean Realms and without any importance in their history. According to the Disciples, a new glorious god descended from heaven in their realm and revealed to them the splendor of a new age. The 'Shining One' – a creature of strange appearance unseen by any mortal before – has power and wisdom beyond imagination. The fact that he came to Venus riding on a flying fish leads many mystics and philosophers to believe that the Zhool prophecies are right. The bizarre rites and sermons of the Disciples seduce many, but others mistrust them deeply. Wherever they appear, they try to gain footholds in powerful positions and influence politics. They do not shirk away from dark measures, including poison, murder and cruel schemes. Those who oppose them and survive tell of strange magic, blades harder than the sharpest obsidian, and magic wands killing at great distance with flame and whipping noise.

The World Below the World

"Down, down, deeper down – where eyeless hunt and creepers frown. Down, down, to the realm of emerald-crown – where eyeless dance and creepers drown. Whaha! Whahahaha!"

— Babbling chant of a British orchid hunter gone mad

Since primeval times, numerous Venusian tribes have believed that there is another strange land below their feet, where bizarre creatures and outlandish ghosts dwell in darkness. Humans often dismiss such notions as 'primitive conceptions of the afterlife'. Others take such ideas as indications that Venus is actually a hollow planet, and that any stories of the 'world below the world' convey details of the inside of Venus. Both opinions are wrong. The 'world below the world' is indeed real, but it is not located beneath the planet's crust, but 'only' underneath the surface jungles. The Venusian jungles are millions of years old and incredibly fertile. As on Earth, new plants grow on the remains of dead vegetation. Not all flora on Venus decomposes entirely, but is sometimes petrified by unknown chemical processes, creating a fascinating phenomenon: While the lush forest kept growing upward, millions of years saw the development of layer upon layer of enormous cavities underneath the 'new ground'. Everywhere on Venus, the earth beneath the deepest rainforests is honeycombed by cave systems spreading across countless thousands of square miles. Truly a 'world below the world', as the few Venusians who have visited it call this parallel realm.

The Path to the Underworld

The forest layer above the caves is barely discernible from normal Venusian jungles, except for a few peculiarities. Above the giant



caves, the forest floor looks noticeably dry and devoid of rocks and stones. Larger bodies of water are rare, as most water trickles down into the caves. The ground itself is covered by a layer of roots or humus. Any leaves falling from the trees get caught in the tangle of roots and decompose into humus, in which smaller plants and new trees grow and join the network of roots. The mixture of roots and earth creates an astoundingly solid layer of up to 100 feet, or 30 meters, in thickness. In most places it is stable enough to support whole herds of sauropods, but there are more fragile spots, where heavy dinosaurs or vehicles can fall through. Caves and passages giving access to the lower levels of the forest are plentiful, some of them natural, some washed free by severe rainfall, others created by burrowing animals. Such entries into the underworld never stay open very long, as the rapid plant growth quickly covers them.

The caverns underneath the humus layer can reach titanic extents. Even smaller caves reach ceiling heights of 160 feet, or 50 meters; most can be between 330 and 660 feet (100-200 meters) high and form halls spreading across several miles. This is made possible by the strongly connected roots and tree trunks stabilizing the 'ceiling' and supporting them like the pillars of a cathedral. Wood on Earth would be unable to develop such strength, as it lacks the hardness and stability of Venusian timber. The musty natural caves are impressive by themselves, but it is even more fascinating that many of the large cavities are interconnected. The largest continuous cave complex is located close to the realm of Zhath. It is estimated to be roughly the size of Australia. The caves are not evenly distributed at the same level, and there are some spots where several caves are stacked on top of each other.

Inhabitants of the Underworld

In many places, the ground of the caves is flooded or covered in viscous slime or humus from the 'ceiling' of the cave. In contrast to the surface, the caves are not shrouded by a constant mist. As no sunlight falls onto this strange world, none of the plants there rely on photosynthesis. But this 'world below the world' is far from lifeless. The cyclopean roots and the slime are home to an abundance of mushroom species and plants resembling Earth's anemones. Tentacle rhizomes spurt from the ground, iridescent balls of gelatinous mass share space on the columns with terraced polypores, while gooey tangles of mycelia and slime molds are suspended from above. The eternal shadows are faintly lit by the bioluminescence of some species of fungus and their spores, floating through the humid air as a glowing fog. Day and night are unknown in the underworld, which is instead wreathed in eternally unchanging twilight. The fauna of these places is as bizarre and repulsive as its flora. Instead of the large reptiles ruling the surface of the planet, giant arthropods are at the top of the food chain in the 'world below the world'. The mighty *emperor dragonflies* (p. 97) and the *stilted horror* are the only life forms of the underworld that see daylight from time to time. They are far from the largest animals living on Venus. The slimy lakes and ponds are home to millipedes of up to 30 meters in length. Gigantic blind praying mantises the size of small Tyrannosaurs lurk in the shadows, waiting for prey consisting of boar-sized woodlice and the cattle-sized larvae of the emperor dragonfly. The slime on the ground is inhabited by large, starfish-like organisms evolved to digest their prey alive and hunt with lightning-quick reflexes. Even leeches and slugs grow to the size of seals down here.

Apart from the really big beasts, the underworld harbors innumerable smaller life forms. Bugs, roaches, snails, worms, and similar creatures feast on the organic waste dropping from the underside of the humus layer. Some of them are even potentially dangerous, such as the 'Swarming Death', a species of finger-long worms living in large groups, which are able to consume their prey within moments. The most peculiar being down below is the flying jellyfish – medusas who grow in the foul puddles, where they absorb fermentation gasses which are lighter than the surrounding air and allow them to float. Most species of jellyfish drift lazily through the caverns, glowing with a blue light and preying on small animals unlucky enough to come into contact with their venomous stingers. One species, however, targets larger animals, corroding their skin with acid before sucking bodily fluids through the resulting wound – all said, rather unusual behavior for jellyfish.

All in all, the ecosystem of the surface is so little alike to that of the 'world below the world', that one could be on another planet. The creatures of this cave world are distantly related to the animals and plants of the surface, but look entirely different. If paleontologists conducted research on Venus, they would quickly find out that the life forms of the depths are similar to the beasts which inhabited the planet before the current age of reptiles. The 'world below the world' gives a vague idea of what Venus must have looked like millions of years ago. It can be assumed that some of the evolutionary ancestors of such exotic beings as the stilted horror or the emperor dragonfly have survived down here.

The Gri

Within the dark caverns and cyclopean halls live the Gri, a curious race of humanoid beings covered in bioluminescent spots. Their eyeless faces, squat physique, and white chitinous scales hint vaguely at their relation to the Lizard-people of the surface. Instead of a stomach pattern, the Gri only have an empty, brilliant white section of soft flesh.

Eons ago, some tribes from the surface settled in the 'Land without time'. Some of them had been pressed by overwhelming enemies, others wanted to solve the spiritual mysteries of the underworld, some were driven purely by audacity. Several thousand years have passed since. The bizarre conditions of the Venusian underworld have left their mark on the new settlers. With each passing generation, the Gri deviated further from their relatives on the surface. Their scales lost all their color and skin took on a wet gleam. Their stature became distorted, their eyes withered and eventually disappeared, to be replaced by new, different sensory organs with which they now 'see'. Whether their changes follow the natural course of evolution or have been brought about artificially is unclear. The Gri believe that powerful spirits altered the appearance of their forebears.

The physical changes also caused the Gri to lose their ability to speak like the surface dwellers. Their jaws and voice boxes have changed their shape too much, and the Gri language consists of a number of shrill screeches and guttural growls, but is no less complex than surface Venusian. Only their pheromone secretion is largely similar to that of the surface Lizard-people, which makes the emotions of a Gri quite easily readable for a surface Venusian.

Tools, Weapons, and Technology

Most Gri technology appears to be limited to the same Neolithic level as the surface dwellers. Of course they use materials gathered in their environment for the manufacture of tools and weapons. Spear points are made from horn and chitin, Oma Jolima is unknown to them. Instead, they use the thin limbs of giant insects. Even the secretions of the arthropods are used, sometimes even serving as huts to the Gri. For this, they inflate the slime of certain giant insects by means of small pipes, and then 'cure' the bubble by adding chemicals. Afterwards, they cut openings into the hardened shell and use it as a milky, half-transparent home. Gri villages are made up of whole clusters of these structures, adhering to root pillars.

Society and Religion

The society of the 'subterraneans' is only superficially similar to that of the Lizard-men, and shows an astounding complexity for a population living under seemingly primitive conditions. This suggests that the Gri must have been in contact with a more advanced civilization. Each Gri tribe is characterized by a complicated tangle of various professions and occult commitments, without any differentiation between profane tasks and priesthood. Each Gri has a 'lay' job like craftsman, hunter or farmer and is also schooled in the relevant religious practices.

Like the surface dwellers, the Gri believe in a plethora of spirits, whose presence is marked by their smell. The emperor dragonfly figures prominently in their faith and is regarded as the messenger of the highest-ranking Gri spirit – 'He at the center who bears the emerald crown'. This spirit inhabits the body of a Gri and

lives with many other Gri-shaped spirits in constructs resembling cities, governed by the precepts of what can only be termed an advanced culture. The home of 'Him at the Center who bears the Emerald Crown' is supposed to be located at the deepest point of the 'world below the world'. At the core of this myth might be an advanced Gri culture (formerly) existing in the deep. The fact that Gri tribes live in unconnected cave systems appears to prove that they sometimes travel across the surface to colonize new caverns. Other scientists might assume that there are even deeper cave systems below the tree root cavities, connecting all the caves with one another.

A typical Gri Hunter

Health: 20

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Charisma: 1**
Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence: 2**
Strength: 3 **Willpower: 1**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative: 5**
Move: 6 **Defense: 5**
Perception: 5 **Stun: 2**

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	3	3	6	(3)
Brawl	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	3	3	6	(3)
Survival	2	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception)

Flaws

Primitive

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bow	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Stone knife	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Journeys to the Underworld

Colonists usually laugh off the fantastical native stories of the 'world below the world'. Sooner or later, they will notice the truth behind some of the strange tales. Recently, an Italian patrol securing the perimeter of the colony observed an unlucky sauro-pod falling through a thin section of forest floor. The hole is to be more closely examined shortly. In the Russian colony, a plantation worker delivered the dead body of a Gri to the doctor of a trading post – as payment for several bottles of rubbing alcohol. Since this grisly delivery, speculation has run wild regarding the origin of the strange creature. Is it really an inhabitant of the underworld? And what about the fist-sized gems American traders report to have bought from nomads? Allegedly, they had been found below ground. Could that be true?

Expeditions into the 'world below the world' are not without their dangers, even by Venusian standards. The first prerequisite is a stable entry point to the underworld, like a hole blown into the forest floor, or the accessible burrow of an animal. Natural entry points are usually tight mazes full of unpleasant creatures, making even the initial entry very interesting. Arriving at the bottom of the ground layer, travelers will encounter other problems. Unless they are lucky enough to find themselves near a climbable tree root, the 'exit' ends in a drop between 160 and 660 feet (50-200 meters). Taking enough rope for such heights is absolutely

recommended. Sufficient armaments should be carried, as the animals below the ground are just as aggressive and voracious as the carnivores on the surface. Visitors should be wary of the viscous, lichen-covered slime puddles, which can be more dangerous than quicksand. The small and great lakes of the underworld are easily traversed by boat.

The dim light conditions, which are less bright than an advanced, misty dusk on Earth, require the use of powerful light sources. Rühmkorff-lamps or electric arc lights are delicate and heavy, but should be preferred over torches. More sensitive souls will also need respirators or filter masks to ward off the miasmatic stench permeating the countless primeval and organic caverns, which is not only revolting but also actually harmful after long exposure.

The only other things required for a venture into the depths of the Morning Star are a certain measure of valor and a moderate contempt for death. Venusian guides are not to be trusted. Even the tribes who know of entry points from the surface never dare to wander more than a few hundred meters into the strange world below. Should the expedition encounter Gri and not open fire immediately, another problem presents itself. How do you talk to someone whose anatomy prevents them from speaking either Venusian or human languages? It could be helpful to study the gestures and fog calls shared by Gri and surface Venusians.

Venusians and the "World below the World"

Although the underworld is located under only a small part of the surface of Venus, many tribes, with the exception of nearly all the sea peoples, know fairy tales and legends about a realm beneath the ground. Only few know the facts concerning this strange place, and truths learned generations ago are mingling with the usual half-truths of wonderlands and haunted places.

Depending on the storyteller you ask, the "world below the world" is the abode of ancestral spirits, where there is no time and nightmares dwell, or where everything is shining and cheerful and nobody suffers from hunger. Practical facts are nowhere to be found. The peoples of Venus who actually have access to the underworld do not enter it for good reasons, and few have ever seen a living Gri. The tribes at the edge of the Russian colony, for instance, fear the subterranean world as a place full of nightmarish creatures. They would never descend into the known access holes of their own accord, which does not prevent their chieftains from throwing the banished and condemned into the lightless shafts.

The primitive Gula tribes have a little more contact with the 'world below the world'. Several Gri tribes are living in their vicinity, or rather under their feet, with whom they socialize peacefully. Even though the Gri 'look strange and cannot talk properly', they are not treated differently from other neighboring tribes. Thanks to this relatively close contact, the Gula know that the Gri are not a supernatural species. However, they are regarded as mysterious and powerful warriors for living voluntarily in such a dark place. The Italians have not heard much of the contact between the Eastern tribes and the Gri, as their contact with the tribes is infrequent at best. The tales of fearless, pale warriors are thought to apply to some nomad tribes living farther east.

Only the heavily armed warriors of Zhath have gone 'far' into the world below the world. The Red Order fears the underworld

and calls it the 'Land without Time', as neither day nor night is known there. The rulers of Zhath consider the subterranean realm and its creatures a vile abomination, which should not exist. For centuries, they only sealed off the entrances with stone gates, guarding them zealously. Now, the new 'Venerable Grandmother' Laluoli has decided to put an end to the "Land without Time" and has sent an army with catapults and combat dinosaurs into a bloody war of extermination into the deep. In their fight against the 'unnatural', which includes anything living below ground, several Gri villages have been wiped out, provoking resistance from the inhabitants of the underworld. Laluoli is not aware of the gravity of the conflict she has entered into, just as she does not realize the sheer size of the 'Land without Time'.

Other Peculiarities

The Silver Shadow

Since that day in 1887 when 'It' appeared, right besides HMS *Medea*, jumping out of the water, circling the airship several times only to disappear with immense speed into the mist, there have been new sightings again and again. 'It' is the 'Silver Shadow', a silvery object of 50 feet, or 15 meters, in length, shaped like a ray. According to reports, it can move with high velocity in water as well as in the air. The strange thing performs aerial maneuvers that seem to defy every known law of airship construction. The phenomenon is always accompanied by a sonorous humming. There has been a cluster of sightings of the unidentified flying object in the area of the British colony. In 1887 alone, the 'Silver Shadow' has been sighted 18 times. In the first half of 1888 the apparition seemed to have vanished, just to return in the autumn of the same year in a wave of 27 sightings. Many observers agree in describing a sort of 'translucent cockpit' at the front of the object as well as a means of propulsion at its rear end consisting of two propellers that rotate in opposite directions. Mr. *Martin Crenshaw*, who claims to have seen the 'Silver Shadow' several times now, maintains, however, that the object is a kind of animal that is after his bau-bau liqueur. Mr. Crenshaw's reports have been printed in many newspapers, without any mention of the bau-bau liqueur though, and in this way, the Silver Shadow has also found its way into cryptozoology.

Is there an intelligent life-form hidden on Venus whose scientific knowledge is centuries ahead of that of humanity? Or is there a group of earthly scientists who are secretly testing novel super technologies on Venus? Maybe the 'Silver Shadow' is really just the "fastest giant flounder of the planet" as the British satirical magazine *Punch* recently claimed. The phenomenon has so far inspired numerous newspaper articles, several scientific papers (one of them, in the *Lancet*, was about the effects of drunkenness in the border colonies of the Empire), and finally the book "*Silver Shadow – Flying to New Spheres by Moral Power*". The latter was written by August Höppken, a failed theosophist from Kassel, Germany, who claims in his book that the 'Silver Shadow' was the vehicle of a race of extradimensional angels propelled by the 'moral energy' of its pilots.

The City of Glass and Silver

On Venus, strange stories and legends are never scarce. One of the most bizarre examples might be the myth of the “city of glass and silver”. As with many stories in the colonies, no one knows exactly whether this city is based on reality or a feverish fantasy. According to the story of three adventurers, somewhere deep in the jungle there is a lake, and at its shore towers a winding rocky pillar of incredible magnitude. The rocky pillar broadens at its upper quarter, and on its top stands a translucent dome fashioned out of sparkling glass and crystal, spanning buildings, halls, and towers made of sparkling silver.

The sight is said to be so fantastic and surreal that those who saw the city of glass and silver were stunned at first. The architecture does not stem from any known culture, and the technology necessary to build such a city must be extremely highly developed.

Of course, nobody really believes in the existence of the city – except for the three unlucky fellows who claim to have seen it so far. All three of them saw it on different occasions. Simon Vargas, a CS American pioneer and merchant of Mexican heritage, was the first to discover the city, in 1884, but blamed it on a severe feverish infection he was suffering from when he trekked through the wilderness and which he barely survived. In 1886, orchid hunter Bertram Ohnsorg arrived at the lake of the city of glass and silver. Ohnsorg has spread the story in every tavern of the colony ever since, but the drunkard was always believed to be rather fickle and hardly reliable. He died in the spring of 1888, dead drunk, when he drowned in a puddle. In the same year, the young Irish Calhum Buckley stumbled upon the pillar, where he met some Lizard-men who seemed to worship the city as the seat of the gods. He befriended the natives and learned that the domed city is supposed to be older than any living thing. No one has ever

entered or left it. Only once in a while, spheres of light can be seen whirling around the dome, like swarms of fireflies. Buckley carried a small camera and took a photograph of the fantastic construction. Shortly after his return to Fort Collingswood, his photograph caused quite a sensation. Vargas, who is now a wealthy man, but bound to a wheelchair due to an accident, heard of this photograph and got excited. His phantasies seemed to have been real after all! He met Buckley, and the two men started preparing an expedition financed by Vargas. But then things went wrong... One morning, Vargas was found murdered, and Buckley, son of an Irish convict, is now a suspect. The photographs of the city, which the British administration now believes to be counterfeits, disappeared. Callum Buckley will need help if he does not want to end up at one of the old kalsa trees in Fort Collingswood... hanging by a rope around his neck.

Venus Throughout the Ages

In the timeline below are listed the most important and significant (but not all) dates of some millennia past. Throughout the thousands and millions of years before this, Venus has seen Martian and other civilizations, such as the Ssono-Oa, upon its surface and changing the course of its history. Who knows which secrets from ancient times might be revealed by future researchers ...

7000 BC

A species of weak saurian, living in packs, discovers the use of tools and develops a language. The first Venusians emerge.

3000 BC

The predecessors of the *Gri* migrate into the ‘world below the world’.

400 AD

The first true high cultures of the Lizard-men emerge around the Diana Highlands. They build the realms of *Zhath*, *Phan*, and *Qun*.

Around the Year 900

Dawn of the cultural heyday of the Three Realms.

Around the Year 1100

Without contact of any sort with the realms of the Diana Highlands, the Helenean Realms emerge, constituting a second conglomerate of primitive high cultures.

Around 1450

An unlucky combination of bad harvests, volcanic eruptions, and epidemics strikes the Three Realms. Phan and Qun succumb to the All-Death Curse and perish. Only Zhath remains. Revolutions cause the downfall of the theocratic ‘Blue Order’ and replace it with the ‘Red Order’.



Around 1500

The Western Ishtar Tribes develop into a Neolithic agricultural society.

Around 1550

The ambitious realm of *Aduakhampa* initiates a series of savage campaigns against the other Helenean Realms.

Around 1750

The ‘Qualabaho’, the leader, god, or prophet of the Western Ishtar Culture vanishes without a trace. His disappearance sets off numerous religious conflicts.

As of 1800

The Carada-Quaha expand and install an ‘empire’ based upon colonial exploitation and subjugate many of the other Western Ishtar Tribes.

1850

Emergence of the ‘New Faith’ in Zhath.

1873

On January 14, the Armstrong Expedition sets out to Venus and fails. MacKenzie is supposed the only survivor.

1874

On July 3rd, the Collingswood Expedition leaves Earth and gets stranded on Venus. The survivors found a first settlement, which later develops into *Fort Collingswood*.

Laluoli becomes priestess of Zhath.

1876

On July 3rd, *The Times*’ rescue mission sets out for Venus; failing at first, the crew succeeds in establishing close contact with the natives.

The Red Order under the leadership of *Laluoli* decides on a large-scale campaign into the “world under the world” to wipe out the “perverted creatures” living there.

1878

The German Heidelberg Expedition that had set out on March 17th arrives on Venus and successfully returns to Earth. *Venusstadt* is established.

1879

Laluoli prompts the construction of the city *Zhath Gahapa*. 50,000 laborers begin their work at the center of Zhath, clearing the jungle and erecting colossal monuments.

Alberta is established.

1880

Establishment of *Sherwoodton*.

The German Empire initiates the organized development of the Venus colony.

The first Russian expedition under command of Admiral Sergej Ivanovich Semjukov arrives on Venus. Establishment of *Venogorod*.

Badenburg and *Neu-Regensburg* are founded.

Founding of the *German Society for Cytherography*.

Between 1880 and 1883

The inhabitants of *Venogorod* disappear.

1881

After the first Italian expedition, the Italians claim the Sappho Plateau. *Nuova Firenze* is founded. Generale *Sebastiano Schiazza* is declared governor of the colony.

Advised by the German Colonial Association, the Emperor decides to grant companies tax relief and other advantages if they settle on Venus. Technology company *Siemens* is the first to take advantage of this offer.

The murder of the Tsar causes a temporary setback for Russia’s colonial ambitions.

1882

Gerhart Freiherr von Racknitz is made Reichskommissar of the German Venus colony.

The chemical company of *Bayer* establishes a branch on Venus.

The first human baby is born on Venus (*Luise Müller*, *Venusstadt*).

1883

The Russians return to Venus under the command of Cossack Major *Zakhar Petrovich Nikanov* and claim the Aphrodite Mountains.

1884

Nomad warriors murder an important Venusian counsellor of Great Britain. This incident becomes the occasion for the first genocide on Venus executed by humans – Imperial troops almost entirely wipe out the murderers’ tribe.

A bloody war breaks out in the Helenean realms between *Vsoor* and *Oauaka*.

MacKenzie is found in the jungle and returns to Earth.

Mysteries

1885

British big game hunter *Sir Lionel Pendergast* accidentally discovers the 'rejuvenating' effect of the prototaxites. The first prototaxites specimens are exported to Earth, initiating the 'mushroom frenzy' that has lasted ever since.

BASF establishes a branch in Neu-Regensburg.

Eugene Crawford is made governor of the British colony.

1886

The entire population of *New Birmingham* dies of unknown causes.

US-American *Venusian Mercantile & Trading Company* establishes *Finnegan's Landing*.

The 'Amazon settlement' *Themiscyra* is established.

Botazzi und *Tremante* discover the ruins of the ancient city of *Phan-Phan-Phuoli*.

Strange phenomena appearing in the sky cause turmoil in the Helenean Realms. The cult of the shining god starts to spread.

Emperor *HaOmathi* of *Aduakhampa* dies. The inner circle of his court, however, preserves the fiction of the ruler still being alive in order to avoid sacrificial burial with him as tradition demands.

1887

The Mormon colony of *Zion* is established.

First sighting of the mysterious 'Silver Shadow'.

On Earth, there are rumors about a Venus colony of Polish nationalists.

Grand duke *Vladimir Alexandrovich Romanov* is made governor of the Russian colony.

A so-far unknown epidemic kills the inhabitants of the Italian outpost at *Nuova Pontebba*.

1888

The *Fraserbay Massacre* evokes utter horror everywhere on Venus.

Construction of the *suspension railway* begins in *Venusstadt*.

The men of the US mining settlement of *New Colorado* disappear.

To counter the German suspension railway project, the *British-Venusian Light Railway* is planned.

Ancient ruins are discovered near *Montagna* after a landslide.

The first opera house of the planet is opened in *Nuova Firenze*.

Kapitänleutnant *Friedrich Bertram von Reden* and his garrison desert to become pirates in the name of socialism. The authorities do not suspect anything of this crime – Von Reden's zeppelin *LS Udine* is officially declared missing.

MacKenzie dies in London from a lung disease. The autopsy reveals that the "hero of the Morning Star" certainly succumbed to an infection, but he also showed wide-ranging mutations of his entire inner organs. The scientists are puzzled. There are no publications on MacKenzie's mutations.

1889

The construction of the *Cosmodrome Alexandrograd* begins.

Consule General *Conte Alfredo Linardi* arrives on Venus.



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SPACE

1889

Everything Jules Verne could have written.
Everything H. G. Wells should have written.
Everything Arthur Conan Doyle thought of,
but never published – because it was too fantastic.

From before the beginnings of history, mankind had spun tales and wondered about that bright point of light named for the Roman goddess of love: Venus, the enigmatic, ever-shifting star of evening and of morning. Yet more recently, scholars speculated what might be hiding beneath the swirling clouds of Venus. Then, the first pioneers started their journey into the ether, and found the Morning Star to be a deadly Garden of Eden. The first expeditions entered a world resembling an Earth 150 million years past. Steaming jungles, treacherous swamps, and stormy oceans cover its surface. Giant dinosaurs dominate the planet, and in the midst of these primeval beasts, strange and alien Lizard-man peoples fight for survival. Despite its hostile nature, thousands of human colonists have already been lured to Venus, searching for resources, treasures, new territories and more ...

With this source book you and your fellow players can now plunge into the “green hell” of the Morning Star! Try your luck as a soldier-of-fortune in the pioneer settlements and the wilderness of Venus. Or perhaps as a scientist, exploring the wonders of a new world. As a colonist you can create a new home far away from Mother Earth. As a secret agent you might want to intervene in the dangerous and bloody game of the great powers. Or you can choose to play a Venusian warrior defending his homeland against the cold, emotionless invaders from beyond space. It’s up to you!

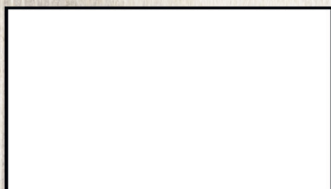
This source book tells you everything you need to know about the settlements of the four nations represented on Venus - Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Russia – as well as some minor powers and stakeholders: only here can you glean what they have established so far, what they are up to in the future, and which dark crimes they are trying to cover up. You’ll also learn about everyday life in the colonies and settlements, the exploitation of natural resources, and the conflicts that arise among the colonists.

Also included is an extensive chapter on the “Ha”, as the Venusians call themselves. This source book provides all the information needed concerning the culture, the biology, and the young civilization of the alien Lizard-men that allows you to portray a Venusian authentically during play. Of course, you will also find extensive material on the unique flora and fauna of the Morning Star – not only new monsters to trouble your player characters, but also the innumerable exotic biological treasures flourishing on Venus.

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Last but not least, we will also unveil many a secret that still lies hidden beneath the misty shrouds of the Green Planet.

The deadly swamps of the Morning Star await you!



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