

# *The Traveller<sup>®</sup> Adventure*

Vol. 2  
202



*A Science Fiction Role-Playing Adventure*

**Game Designers' Workshop**



# *The Traveller Adventure*

When the crew of the merchant vessel *March Harrier* befriends a wolf-like alien Vargr in the underground city of Leedor, they have no reason to suspect that they are beginning a quest for the secret of a jewelled alien ornament . . . a quest that will take them to an asteroid mining settlement, to frontier trading stations, and to dozens of exotic worlds. But the ornament is intended for more than mere decoration, and the adventuring crew is soon marked by the extra-legal security apparatus of the giant Tukera Lines megacorporation. The crew and their Vargr companion need every skill at their disposal to discover the true secret of the ornament.

**The Traveller Adventure** takes readers on an excursion into the universe of the far future. The scene is set with the introduction of the ship and its crew; included are complete descriptions of their skills and abilities. These travellers set out with the alien Vargr through the teeming underground warrens of Leedor, the cold and lonely asteroid belt, and the trade routes between systems—all drawn in detail as locales for pursuing the startling secret of the Vargr's artifact. Each shifting scene of the excursion is described for the readers and filled with clues and surprises.

This book is presented as a role-playing adventure. Readers assume the fictional identities of the science fiction characters, and—guided by a referee—make their own decisions about pursuing the mysteries they have encountered. All action takes place in the imaginations of the players as they sit around the room, working as a team to solve the riddles put before them.

Play is governed by the framework of rules published in **The Traveller Book**. Alternatively, players may use the compatible rules system from the boxed Starter Edition, Basic Edition, or Deluxe Edition **Traveller** sets. The rules explain and codify the workings of the universe of the far future: starships, weapons, combat, computers, equipment, psionics. The referee and players should be familiar with the rules for **Traveller** before undertaking **The Traveller Adventure**.

This volume contains all the background and specific information for a referee to guide adventuring players through their quest. The referee rewards the players with clues and knowledge about their quest as they successfully pursue their goals. Playing out the complete adventure will usually take several weeks, played in shorter daily or weekly episodes. In addition to this book, play requires **The Traveller Book** (or another **Traveller** rules set), paper, pencil, and two six-sided dice.

Cover illustration by W.H. Keith, Jr.

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# *The Traveller Adventure*

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***TRAVELLER***  
*Science-Fiction Adventure*®  
*in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop



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# Introduction

At the very fringe of the Imperium, in a backwater corner of the Spinward Marches, the Aramis subsector has been an undeveloped and often ignored part of Imperial society for generations. Recently, however, the alien Vargr living just across the Imperial border have begun to acquire a taste for the subsector's exotic and excellent agricultural products, and increased trade is beginning to bring prosperity.

Against this background, two major shipping lines are developing their holds on the trade routes and are now caught in a cutthroat competition for a monopoly on trade and cargo transport.

Into this situation steps the intrepid band of **Traveller** characters that this book is about, ready to embark on the quest of their lives.

## THE CAMPAIGN

**The Traveller Adventure** is a vehicle to transport you and your friends on a journey into the far future. Together as **Traveller** players you will experience a small part of the vast, star-sprawling Imperium, its societies, cultures, and technology. Contained in these pages is an intricate and varied **Traveller** campaign, a complete set of adventures which provides a slowly unfolding drama to explore, investigate, and conquer.

This adventure is intended for use by a group of from 3 to 8 players. Fewer than three players will probably not provide enough variety and group interaction to make the game as much fun as it should be. More than eight players will present the referee with problems in control and may make it difficult for every player to participate fully. It is not necessary for all players to show up at every game session. Those who are absent will miss some of the fun, but the other players can be depended upon to manage the characters belonging to anyone not there for the evening.

This campaign can span a great amount of time. Dedication and nightly **Traveller** sessions can probably finish the events in this book off in a little more than a week, but a better course is to spend the time to enjoy the events and their many ramifications. One of the enjoyable parts of **Traveller** is thinking about what is going on and then making plans in the intervals between game sessions. This campaign can be played in about six weeks of conveniently spaced sessions. Take the time to enjoy it.

### WARNING!

The entire **Traveller** campaign in this book is intended for the use of a referee who will administer it for a group of players. Players who read any part of this book without first receiving permission from a referee risk ruining the entire adventure for themselves and others. If you are a **Traveller** player, do not read any further unless you intend to referee this campaign.

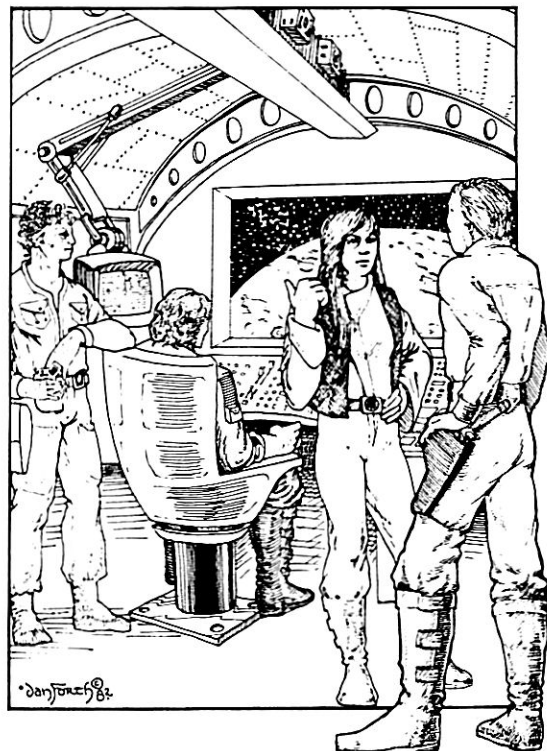
## THE REFEREE

One person (usually the one who has this book) is the referee. The referee is responsible for managing all of the events in the campaign as they occur. It is the referee who determines not only the results of specific actions but also controls which scenarios and situations are to occur and in

what order. From the players' point of view, the referee is responsible for the actions and reactions of the entire universe.

Players have sometimes characterized the referee as a god, responsible for the creation and administration of the world and of the universe. In **Traveller**, this is not totally true—certainly the referee exists outside the bounds of the universe that the travellers adventure in, but he or she is nevertheless limited by the rules and procedures of the game. Instead, think of the referee as an angel (or sometimes a devil) who keeps tabs on the small party of adventurers and hovers over them, monitoring events as they happen.

**Traveller** is the role-playing game of science fiction adventure in the far future. Its essential rules are contained in **The Traveller Book**, Volume One of the **Traveller** bound book series. These same rules are also contained in other **Traveller** rules sets such as **Basic Traveller**. At a minimum, the referee



should have a copy of the rules and be familiar with them. More conveniently, every player should have a copy of the rules. Then, everyone who wants to do something can do his or her own research into the ramifications of the rules and present cogent reasoning and references to the referee when the subject comes up.

Despite the title of this book, it is a campaign. In **Traveller** terminology, a campaign is a string of adventures and encounters with a single thread or plot binding it all together. In order to assist the referee, a synopsis is presented later in this book. The referee's familiarity with the synopsis will help greatly in understanding and presenting the entire campaign.

## BACKGROUND DATA

This campaign is set in the universe of the far future: the same universe described in detail in **The Traveller Book** and in a wide variety of **Traveller** books, supplements, adventures, and games. The following material lays a bare groundwork for the referee and the players.

**The Universe:** Interstellar travel is a reality. Starships, travelling much faster than light, carry merchandise, passengers, and information from world to world, linking worlds separated by many parsecs into economic, political, and social communities. The primary influence on the nature of interstellar society is the jump drive. Jump drive provides the means for starships to travel from star system to star system with comfort, ease, and speed. That speed is not instantaneous; each jump, regardless of the distance, takes about one week. Ships with large, heavy jump drives can jump up to six parsecs (about 20 light-years) in a week, but when such a ship jumps just one parsec, the jump still takes a week. Smaller jump drives have a maximum jump of one or two parsecs and also take a week for each jump.

Electromagnetic radiation (radio, visible light, etc.) travels at the constant speed of one light-year in one year. Communication can proceed faster than that, but only as mail carried on board starships. As a result, the speed of communication is restricted to the speed of transportation, a circumstance similar to that of most of recorded history.

This dependence of communication on transportation forces institutions of interstellar scope to be decentralized. Officials and military officers must have considerable freedom of action; no one can check back with headquarters on every decision if communications outsystem takes two weeks. Entire worlds within the Imperium conduct their affairs with little or no interaction with the higher levels of Imperial government, if only because the slowness of effective communication makes such interaction impossible.

Honor and trust take on new significance when members of a chain of command must depend on subordinates to carry out instructions without direct personal supervision. Greed, ambition, and chaos have great potential when there is such a long delay in communication.

**The Imperium:** Spreading across a vast expanse of stars is the Imperium (more properly, the Third Imperium), ruling more than 280 subsectors and 10,000 star systems. It is more accurate to say that the Imperium rules the oceans of space between the islands that are the star systems and worlds than to say that it rules the worlds themselves. The

Imperial Navy guards the borders against foreign attack, keeps the trade routes free of piracy, and protects member worlds from aggression by other member worlds. The Scout Service encourages trade by publishing accurate planetary and interstellar charts, contacting new markets beyond the borders, and administering the express boat service for swift transfer of information. Other services of the Imperial government include the enforcement of a basic framework of laws governing interstellar commerce, funding of basic research in all branches of science, economic and military aid to member worlds whose internal stability is threatened, and many others. In return for and in support of all the Imperium provides, its member worlds pay taxes.

One significant and everpresent aspect of the Imperium is the network of communications routes that carry business, government, and personal correspondence at the speed of jump. Similar in nature to the pony express of old, this express boat system stations small, fast message-carrying boats (xboats as they are sometimes called) along the major trade routes. Always ready to take a laser spurt of data from an incoming xboat and immediately leave for the next system, the xboat sacrifices everything for speed. An incoming xboat refuels and refits until the next arrival, and then it too is on its way down the xboat routes to the next system.

Paralleling this xboat system are the major trade routes of the Imperium. Trade goes where there is adequate communication to carry orders and confirmations, to carry information and feedback, and to allow the transfer of funds. Worlds on the xboat routes are blessed with solid trade contacts as well as communications.

Express boats, however, do not touch every world within the Imperium; many planets lie well away from the mainstream of communications and commerce. These backwater worlds depend on less efficient means of information transfer and trade. The xboat service sends along messages by scout/courier whenever one is going that way or once enough messages build up. Transport companies service trade routes to worlds that can furnish goods, ore, or products that are in demand. Other worlds must wait for the tramp freighters, the free traders, that carry goods to contracted destinations or on speculation. The problem of delay is everpresent. To travel from one end of the Imperium to the other (say, from Regina in the Spinward Marches to Terra in the Solomani Rim), an individual could spend years (literally two or three years) and a fortune (perhaps Cr1,000,000) on the journey alone. The Imperium's government reels under the strain of governing, protecting, and developing its territory when orders from the capital take nearly a year to reach its borders. However, all is not dark in the Imperium. It has lasted, grown, and thrived for a thousand years. Its citizens, both personal and corporate, enjoy reasonable lives and reasonable expectations of improvement. Its trillions depend on the Imperium for life, stability, and economic well-being.

## THE IMPERIAL CALENDAR

When the Imperium was new, one of the first acts taken by the first Emperor was calendar reform. Cleon I used the fact of acceptance of his new calendar as a measure of a

new world's integration into the growing empire. Those who resisted were subjected to a little more pressure. The calendar remains with us today.

The founding year of the Imperium is numbered the Year Zero, sometimes called the Holiday Year. The first day of that year is Day 1; each year has 365 days. A week is a universally used time period of seven standard days; the term month is also sometimes used, referring to a period of four weeks.

Dates under the Imperial calendar are expressed as a three-digit day (padded with zeros if necessary) followed by a dash and the year number. Years before the founding of the Imperium are negative numbers. For example, Cleon I, first emperor of the Imperium, was born in -57. The Imperium was founded on 001-0, the first day of the Holiday Year. The date 365-999 indicates the 365th day of the 999th year since the founding of the Imperium.

The campaign in this book takes place in the period from 1105 to about 1107. Specific dates appear in adventures, and in library and background data. The referee can determine or make up dates as necessary to fit the progress of the campaign.

## THE TRAVELLER ADVENTURE

This book contains a complete campaign for *Traveller*; its main body consists of a number of adventures of different lengths, some of which advance the central plot and some of which are merely isolated incidents. All are administered by the referee.

Additional chapters provide material to flesh out the universe for both players and the referee. For example, *Library Data* provides material from encyclopedic and reference works of the period for perusal by the players if they decide to research the right subjects. The referee can read the entries at any time and will find the material of interest and of value while running the campaign. Other chapters are short essays on topics of interest. Unless otherwise directed by the material, the referee should use this information to administer the campaign and make it available to the players only at appropriate moments.

**Choreography:** This campaign is not random. Players do not move blindly from one situation to another. Instead, there is an element of choreography; that is, the adventurers' steps should be subtly guided by the referee along the main path of the adventure. The adventure has a plot, although this fact should not be immediately apparent to the participants. The initial adventure, *Leedor on Aramis*, provides several interesting items, all of which can spur the players into the meat of the campaign. Each of these hooks directs the individuals' attention to some aspect of the campaign and will later prove informative and useful.

Further, the layout of the worlds within the Aramis subsector directs the adventurers to some worlds before others. The thrust, then, is for the players to explore or interact with the nearer worlds first. The facts they learn, the friends they make, the deals they find should all prove useful when the campaign comes to a climax.

**Referee's Judgment:** The referee is always called upon to exercise judgment while running this campaign. Additional situations can be inserted as part of the campaign;

they may be used to further define the main campaign track or may simply be adventures outside the continuing chain of events. The addition of events irrelevant to the main plot line may make the campaign more enjoyable, presenting the players with an additional level of mystery. They must determine which events bear upon the main mystery and which do not. Additional events may also make the campaign more realistic; real life doesn't follow a plot line.

## THE STARTING POINT

The *Traveller Adventure* begins on the world of Aramis, capital of the Aramis subsector, situated on one of the major trade routes through the subsector. The Aramis subsector is located in the Spinward Marches, a frontier province on the fringe of the Imperium. Aramis is adjacent to and immediately trailing the Regina subsector (mapped and described in detail in *The Traveller Book*).

In the next two chapters, the Spinward Marches and the Aramis subsector are further described in order to provide the referee and the players information about their social, astrophysical, and historical situations.

The first adventure will take the players on a tour of Aramis.





# The Spinward Marches

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On the extreme spinward frontier of the Imperium lies the Spinward Marches, bordering the Zhodani Consulate and portions of the Vargr Extents. Within this frontier sector are more than 400 worlds; the majority are under Imperial rule, but many are independent, part of small confederations, or governed by the Zhodani. The Imperium has fought the Zhodani in four wars for control of the sector.

The Spinward Marches is one of the Imperium's few remaining frontier areas. Its resources are still largely unexploited, although development is proceeding at a fast pace. The sector has enough high technology worlds to supply the tools needed for expansion and enough population to do the needed work. The Spinward Marches is a strong, vital sector, and has long been a valuable part of the Imperium.

## FIRST EXPLORATION

When the Third Imperium was formed from the Sylean Federation in the Year Zero, the Long Night was brought to an end and a fifteen hundred year interruption in interstellar order was finally over. The Imperium devoted itself to a re-expansion into the territory of its predecessors and initially restricted itself to recontacting the worlds which had formed the original First and Second Imperiums. By about 400, much of the former territory had been regained, and true frontiers for the empire were established.

That is not to say that the Imperium waited 400 years before beginning exploration of previously unknown territory. From the very beginning, the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service sent its survey cruisers beyond the reaches of known space to chart new systems, to find new worlds, and to report back.

In the early centuries of its existence the Imperium used a link and branch system for exploring the stars, contacting worlds and societies, and establishing important bases along the ever-expanding frontier. Links connected the older bases with the newer ones and became highways for trade and transport. Branches emanated from the various bases to touch the scattered worlds that promised resources and markets. It was only natural that the merchant and transport corporations should adopt these same links and branches in their activities. From the main links, these corporations (as well as the independent merchants and the settlers looking for challenge or for a hand in their own destiny) set out to the worlds farther off the mainstream. Fertile worlds were settled, enterprising merchants shipped goods to them and established markets, goods were shipped back in order to pay in that market. Everyone prospered, more or less. The Imperium was expanding.

As the Scout Service moved out from the former Imperial borders, it encountered obstacles. In some cases, it met already established interstellar societies (the Vargr to coreward; the Aslan to spinward) or expanses of low density space (the Greater and Lesser Rifts) or simply out-ran the desire of the merchants and settlers to follow.

One basic link (and a highly successful one) extended from Vland (seat of the First Imperium and still an important trade center) spinward. Beyond Vland was Corridor Sector, stretching between a spur of the Great Rift and the Vargr Extents. Beyond Corridor was Deneb, where a sprawling

complex was established by the megacorporations. While the branches opened up Corridor and Deneb, the Scout Service forged links to the Spinward Marches.

## THE IMPERIAL FRINGE

Scout Service exploration from Deneb carried survey cruisers through a relatively unpopulated region, finally contacting an isolated confederation—the Sword Worlds—and their neighbors beyond—the Darrians. Naturally enough, with established societies at the end of the links, they became major trade routes. The territory on the very edge of the Imperium became known as the Spinward Marches. Originally, the base for commerce was Deneb, but as more and more settlement took place, the focus moved spinward, ultimately establishing itself at Mora.

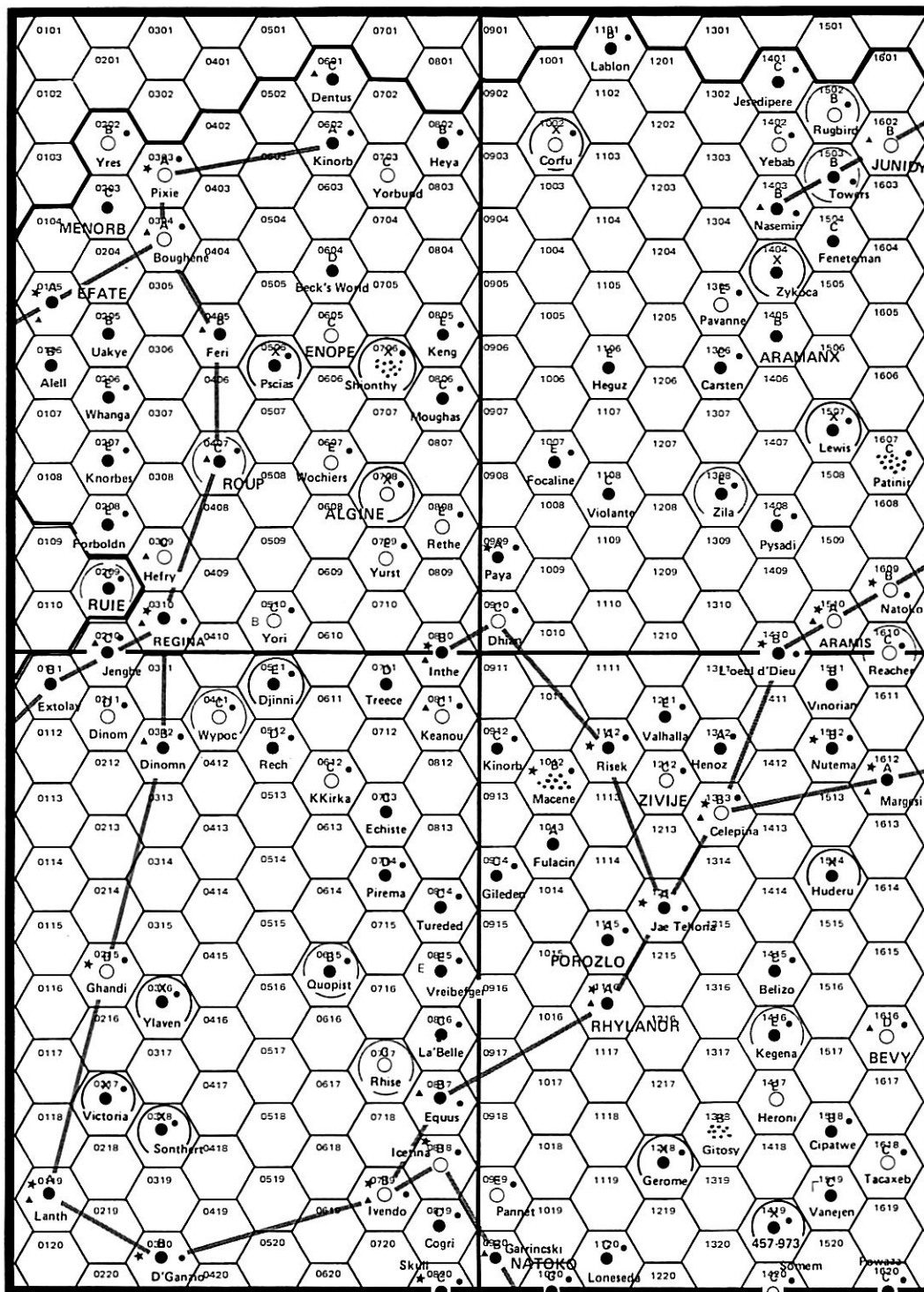
The first major Imperial establishment in the Spinward Marches was at Mora, settled in 60, financed by Ling-Standard Products, and soon a thriving trade center, building new ships, overhauling old ones, and producing other manufactured goods on the side. Mora was the gateway to the Marches.

Mora proved an ideal and fortunate choice. The system lies astride a route linking hundreds of worlds with simple jump-1 connections. This Spinward Main allowed free traders to ply the space lanes in search of new markets, new worlds, and new customers. Often they carried settlers to the more promising worlds, and then supplied them with vital off-world goods in return for metals, minerals, ores, precious woods, and rare foods and spices, as well as artifacts of various cultures for collectors of such things.

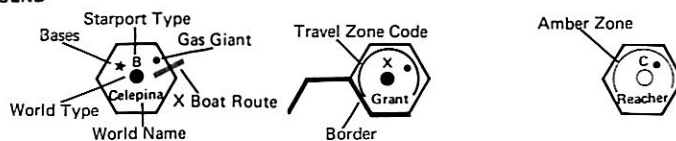
Even as the Imperially sponsored links were prospering, the branches grew on their own. Two major branches grew in the Spinward Marches, each following the Spinward Main. One branch worked its way rimward through the Sword Worlds while the other crept coreward into unexplored space.

The rimward branch extended through a portion of the Sword Worlds at their sufferance, and settlement was greatly inhibited until alternative routes into the area were opened from Deneb sector.

Early on, the coreward branch reached Regina, and that system was settled by 75 (only fifteen years after the first Imperial settlements in the Marches). Regina's dominion grew over several worlds, and it soon became a common



#### MAP LEGEND



#### WORLD CHARACTERISTICS

- No Water Present
- Water Present
- ☼ Asteroid Belt

#### BASES

- ★ Imperial Naval Base
- ▲ Imperial Scout Base
- Independent Base
- Research Station
- Scout Way Station

#### TRAVEL ZONE

- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

#### POPULATION

- Secundus under one billion
- PRIMUS over one billion

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

## SUBSECTORS WITHIN A SECTOR

destination for traders. By 250, Regina had been incorporated into the Imperium along with six neighboring worlds. By 300, the number of Imperial worlds in the cluster had grown to 17. Naturally, the branch leading to Regina became well-travelled; settlement soon followed.

Elsewhere, parts of the Spinward Marches off the Spinward Main remained backwaters. Their relative lack of accessibility restricted the number of ships that could call on them, which in turn kept them from developing at the same pace as the other worlds of the Marches. Even today, these worlds, settled by people intent on separation or privacy, are second-class worlds.

**Subsectors in the Spinward Marches:** Using the standard layout for sectors, the Spinward marches are divided into sixteen subsectors, lettered A through P. The sector chart shows this pattern, and gives the names of the subsectors. The map on page 13 shows a quarter of the Spinward marches, including subsectors C, D, G, and H. Note the relationship between these subsectors and Regina subsector (previously mapped in *The Traveller Book*).

### THE FRONTIER WARS

The settlement of the Spinward Marches proceeded inexorably, with a gradual establishment of Imperial boundaries further and further spinward. By 500, the newly settled areas were adjacent to territories being settled by the Zhodani Consulate in the Cronor subsector. By 550, the two empires had intermingled their settlements, in some cases sharing systems, in others holding neighboring worlds. The differences between the Imperium and the Zhodani heightened tensions, bringing the two sides into conflict and, eventually, open warfare.

**The First Frontier War** (589 to 604) was the first of a series of wars between the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate. The Zhodani had rallied to their side the Vargr of the neighboring Gvurrdown Sector and formed the Outworld

Coalition. The initial attacks caught the Imperium less than fully prepared and quickly expelled Imperial settlements from Zhodani territories beyond the Spinward Marches Sector boundaries. Fighting continued for fifteen years and was characterized by raids against high population worlds deep within the sector. Ultimately, armistice lines were drawn, ceding portions of the Cronor subsector to the Zhodani. Grand Admiral Olav hault-Plankwell had defeated an expeditionary Zhodani/Vargr fleet at Zivije following its raid against Jae Tellona (both in the Rhylanor Subsector). The result crippled the Zhodani capability to prosecute the war fully but also inflicted enough losses on the Imperial squadrons to force a stalemate. The negotiated armistice allowed the Imperium to claim a large amount of previously unincorporated territory to replace the parts of Cronor subsector ceded to Zhodane. Admiral hault-Plankwell claimed victory for the Imperium, while simultaneously castigating the central Imperial authority for its lack of support during the war. Admiral hault-Plankwell's subsequent expedition to the capital and assassination of the Empress Jacqueline began the Civil War (604 to 622).

**The Second Frontier War** (615 to 620) began in the later years of the Civil War, as the Zhodani and the Vargr saw that their stalemated First Frontier War had disrupted the fabric of the Imperium. The disbanded Outworld Coalition reformed and struck again, this time deeper into the Jewell subsector. The fierce initial battles strengthened local resolve, and drew the war out for several years. Grand Admiral Arbellatra Alkhalikoi fought a holding action accompanied with behind-the-lines raids for nearly three years in Jewell subsector. Finally, the sector's shipyards finished construction of several large dreadnaughts, and they, coupled with reinforcements from trailing sectors, enabled a decisive engagement which stalemated both sides. Alkhalikoi accepted the dangerous responsibility of ceding more territory to the Zhodani and of releasing perhaps a dozen systems previously incorporated into the Imperium, rendering them independent.

Alkhalikoi then emulated her predecessor, hault-Plankwell, and moved to the Imperial capital. The Civil War still raging, she met and defeated the remnants of the Central Fleet operating under the command of the barracks Emperor Gustus. Her actions ended the Civil War.

**The Third Frontier War** (979 to 986) marked the end of an uneasy peace that lasted nearly 350 years. In that time, the Zhodani territory in the Spinward Marches expanded to include four new systems (extending down into Querion subsector from Cronor). The Imperium retained Retinae/Querion as an Imperial territory and expanded its holdings in the Five Sisters subsector. In 979, Zhodani battle fleets struck at Jewell and Querion after several years of sabre-rattling. The Imperial reaction was deficient initially, although reinforcements were soon brought into the battle. The Third Frontier War was less characterized by the planetary sieges of previous wars than by commerce raiding, deep thrusts by cruiser squadrons to disrupt shipping, and harassment of civilian shipping.

The damage done to the civil populace and the lack of progress in the war turned public sentiment against the high command and ultimately against the Emperor, who it was



felt was prosecuting the war too slowly. Ultimately, an armistice was reached which ceded systems to the Zhodani in the Jewell subsector and allowed Zhodani occupation of several in the Querion subsector. Moreover, the Imperium withdrew several parsecs from their previous positions, creating a demilitarized region through much of Vilis subsector. With the Zhodani on their doorstep, Retinae applied for, and was granted, disunion from the Imperium. The outcry against the peace settlement when it was announced was enough to force the abdication of the Emperor Styryx. Nevertheless, the settlement created reasonably secure borders along the Zhodani frontier and allowed the Marches to continue with their commerce and industry.

**The Fourth Frontier War (1082 to 1084)** is sometimes called the False War. The war began unintentionally, as a result of an incident near Quare/Cronor, where the Imperium maintains a naval base just beyond the Zhodani border. This triggered a series of naval battles throughout the Jewell and Cronor subsectors. An armistice was concluded after eighteen months of fighting, before the capital had a chance to issue instructions or send reinforcements. The Imperium lost another world (Narval/Cronor), and was forced to accept joint tenancy of Esalin/Jewell with the Zhodani, but it regained two worlds lost to the Sword Worlds a century before.

Today, forces patrol the border on both sides and tension is high, even though the wars have always been confined to the spinward subsectors of the Marches, and their battles have rarely spilled over into the older subsectors. The apprehension of war grows less intense and less important as one moves away from the border.

### ARAMIS SUBSECTOR

While the Spinward Marches were being settled, emphasis was on areas easily accessed by major trade routes. Those systems enjoyed the attention of the Imperium, the

assistance of the megacorporations, and the prosperity that accompanies settlement and trade. Regina was quickly settled. Aramis and Rhyllanor were settled only later. Indeed, by 300, when the rest of the sector was being actively settled, Aramis was still relatively unexplored. The actual arrival of settlers in the subsector depended not on the Spinward Marches but on the trailing Deneb sector.

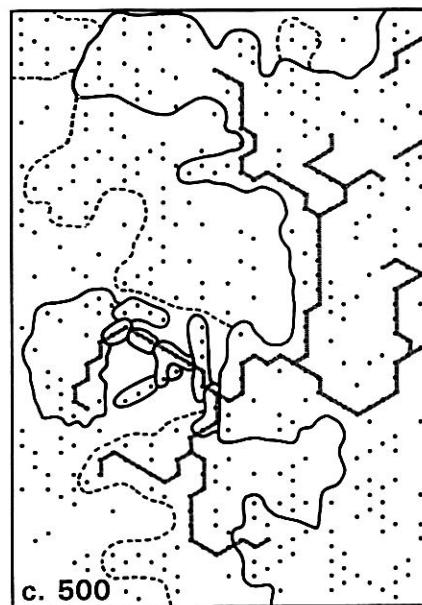
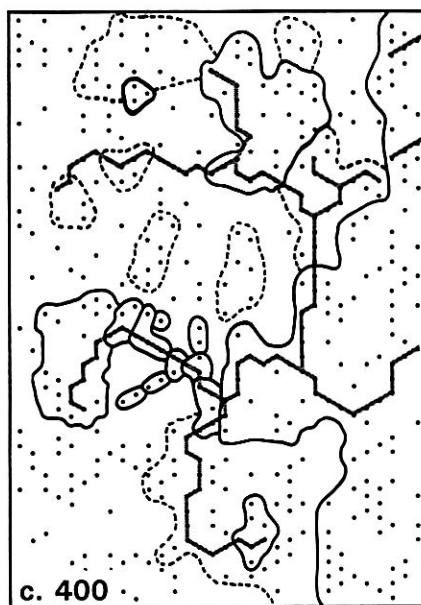
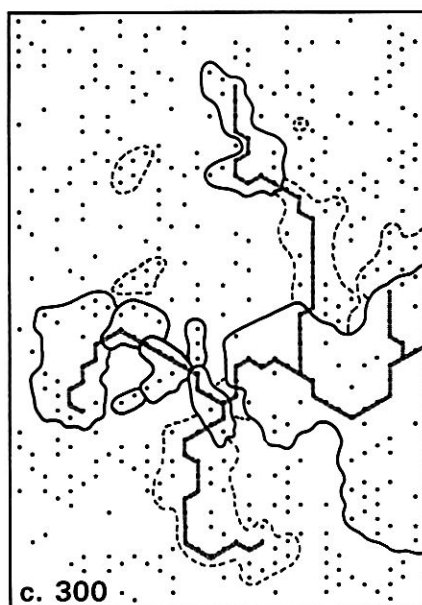
Deneb, having been closer to the old Imperial territories, thus explored and colonized earlier, was the source of secondary expansion, and it provided the many groups of colonists that made Aramis their home.

Until about 300, Aramis subsector was empty. Scattered ships passed through, but few stopped on their journeys beyond to the growing Regina subsector. In 310, the onslaught began. Paya and Dhian were settled from Regina, and still maintain ties closer to Regina than to Aramis. The rest of the subsector was settled from Deneb.

The settlement map for 300 shows the progress of settlement in the Spinward Marches by 300. Major colonization took place toward the center of the Marches (along the primary link) as the Imperium expanded and solidified its trade routes to the Sword Worlds and the Darrian Confederation. One spur of the Spinward Main leads coreward to Regina; many parts of the branch proved worthy of settlement, even without Imperial sponsorship or assistance. Through 300, the Aramis subsector was not worth it.

The settlement map for 400 shows the results of a flood of settlement from Deneb sector. The presence of jump-1 connections from Deneb made settlement from there easier than from Regina. As a result, Aramis' ethnic and cultural ties are with Deneb, not Regina or even Rhyllanor.

The settlement map for 500 shows settlement of Aramis to be virtually complete. The last worlds to be settled were Heguz, Focaline, Violante, and Zila, all unreachable by jump-1. Lablon and Corfu were not settled until nearly 600, after the time of this map.



Settlement of the Spinward Marches  
 - - - settled area

— area under Darrian, Sword Worlds, or Imperial government

— major links and branches

# Aramis Subsector

Aramis subsector is a major agricultural area with substantial markets for its produce among the neighboring Vargr, who find the wide variety of locally produced foodstuffs to be highly desirable luxury goods. The Imperial government has established several trading stations along the border to encourage this commerce, with the ultimate aim of economically tying the nearby Vargr to the Imperium, lessening the chance of their joining the Zhodani in a new war. Produce comes to the stations from all over the subsector; Vargr trading delegations converge on the stations and trade raw materials, metals, and manufactured goods for desirable meats, spices, and other delicacies. Major trading stations are maintained at Lablon, Jesedipere, and Junidy. Smaller stations are maintained at Zila and Focaline for trade in the local products of these worlds.

Focaline's major industry is groat-raising; both cloth and unprocessed groat hair are exported, and groat meat is considered a delicacy by the Vargr.

The wine of Zila has an excellent reputation; recent vintages have been critically acclaimed throughout the Marches. Pysadi, on the other hand, is under a religious dictatorship which forbids the production of alcohol in any form; although Pysadian fruits, especially its skymelons and trakes, are of superb quality, very little wine is made from them, and all of that offworld.

The Aramis subsector is generally divided into three astrographical areas: the Towers Cluster (including all worlds of the subsector connected to Towers by jump-1), the Aramis Trace (Aramis, L'oeul d'Dieu, Reacher, and Natoko), and the Scatters (all the remaining worlds).

| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Location</i> | <i>UPP</i> | <i>Bases</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |                                                        |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Paya          | 0109            | A655241    | 9            | N              | Non-industrial. G                                      |
| Dhian         | 0110            | C9A769D    | 4            |                | Non-industrial. G                                      |
| Corfu         | 0202            | X895674    | 8            |                | Agricultural. Non-industrial. R G                      |
| Focaline      | 0207            | EA88544    | A            |                | Agricultural. Non-industrial. Vargr Trading Station. G |
| Lablon        | 0301            | B646589    | A            |                | Agricultural. Non-industrial. Vargr Trading Station. G |
| Heguz         | 0306            | E66A224    | C            |                | Non-industrial. Water World.                           |
| Violante      | 0308            | C669452    | A            |                |                                                        |
| Pavanne       | 0505            | E210000    | 0            |                | G                                                      |
| Carsten       | 0506            | C427402    | B            |                | Non-industrial. G                                      |
| Zila          | 0508            | E25672C    | 7            |                | Agricultural. Vargr Trading Station. A G               |
| Jesedipere    | 0601            | C775300    | 7            |                | Non-industrial. Vargr Trading Station. G               |
| Yebab         | 0602            | C9A489B    | 7            |                | G                                                      |
| Nasemin       | 0603            | B98A422    | B            | S              | Water World. G                                         |
| Zykoca        | 0604            | X994542    | 6            |                | Agricultural. Non-industrial. R                        |
| Aramanx       | 0605            | B657974    | 6            |                |                                                        |
| Pysadi        | 0608            | C4766D7    | 4            |                | Agricultural. Non-industrial. G                        |
| L'oeul d'Dieu | 0610            | B98A510    | B            | N              | Non-industrial. Water World. G                         |
| Rugbird       | 0702            | BAC5634    | A            |                | Non-industrial. A G                                    |
| Towers        | 0703            | B444448    | A            | S              | Non-industrial. A G                                    |
| Feneteman     | 0704            | C222200    | C            |                | Poor. Non-industrial.                                  |
| Lewis         | 0707            | X427402    | D            |                | Non-industrial. R G                                    |
| Aramis        | 0710            | A6B0556    | B            | A              | Non-industrial. Subsector Capital.                     |
| Junidy        | 0802            | B434ABD    | 9            | W              | Vargr Trading Station.                                 |
| Patinir       | 0807            | C000632    | 9            |                | Asteroid Belt. G                                       |
| Natoko        | 0809            | B582211    | 8            | N              | Non-industrial. G                                      |
| Reacher       | 0810            | C9A8542    | 8            |                | Non-industrial. A G                                    |

Aramis subsector contains 26 worlds with a total population of 31.3 billion. The highest population is 28 billion, at Junidy; the highest tech level is D, at Lewis. All worlds in the Aramis subsector are members of the Imperium.

**Notes:** The column headed *Name* gives the world's name. The four-digit number under *Location* is the hex number of the world on the subsector hex grid. *UPP* is the universal planetary profile. Codes under *Bases* indicate naval and scout bases; *A* indicates both a naval and a scout base; *W* indicates a scout way station. At the far right margin, *G* indicates that the system has one or more gas giants; *A* indicates that the world is an amber travel zone; *R* indicates that it is a red travel zone.

**MAP LEGEND**

Starport Type  
Bases  
Gas Giant  
World Type  
Celestina  
X Boat Route  
World Name

Travel Zone Code  
X  
Grant  
Border

**WORLD CHARACTERISTICS**

- No Water Present
- Water Present
- ✱ Asteroid Belt

**BASES**

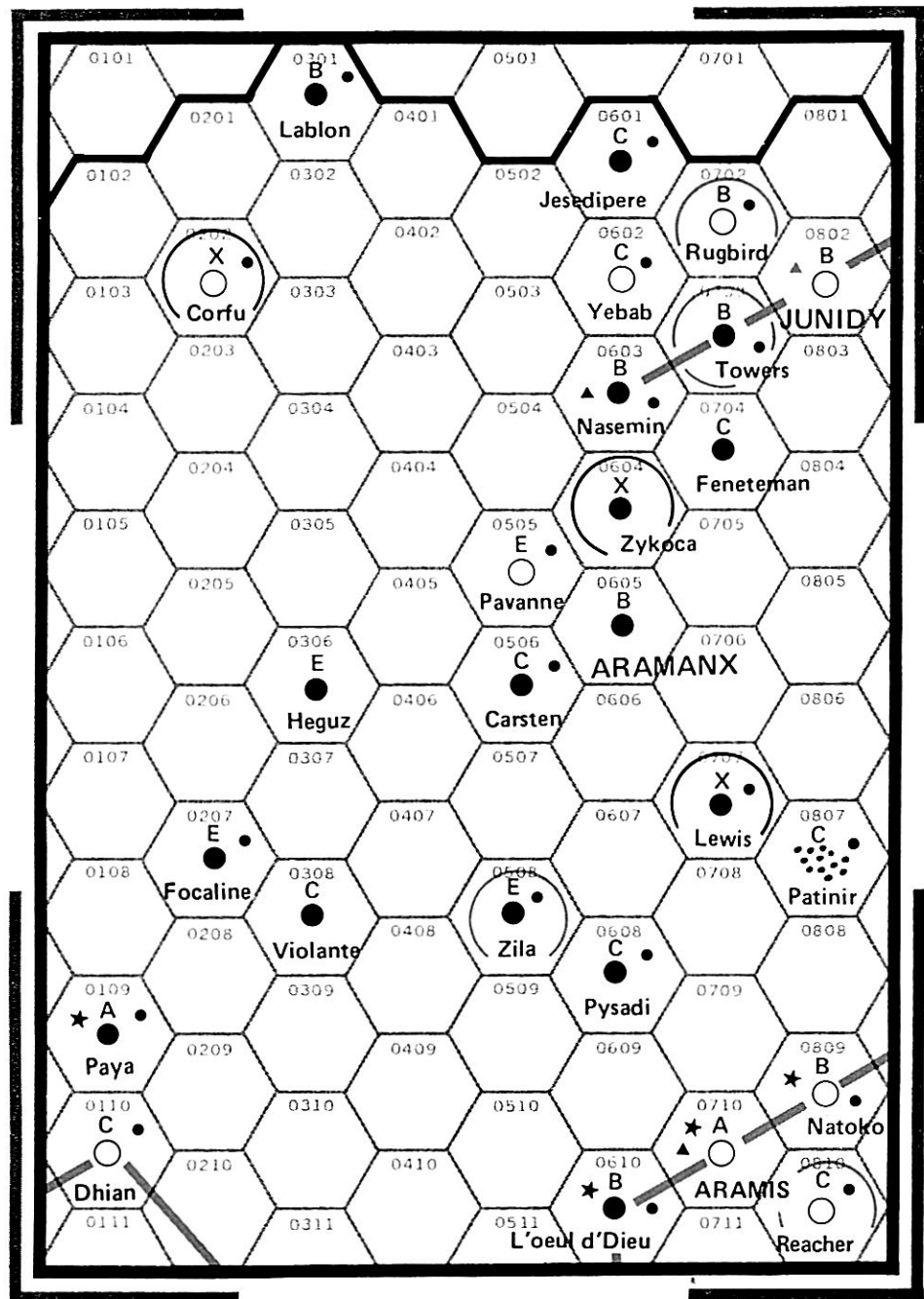
- ★ Imperial Naval Base
- ▲ Imperial Scout Base
- Independent Base
- Research Station
- ▲ Scout Way Station

**TRAVEL ZONE**

- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

**POPULATION**

|          |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| Secundus | under one billion |
| PRIMUS   | over one billion  |



## The Aramis Subsector



## WORLDS OF THE ARAMIS SUBSECTOR

The worlds within the Aramis subsector have a greater range of characteristics than can be expressed only through a universal planetary profile. The following paragraphs elaborate on the individual UPPs and detail additional facts about the various worlds of the subsector. Worlds are given below in alphabetical order.

**Aramanx** is a balkanized world described in the chapters entitled *The Wolf at the Door* and *Kidnapped on Aramanx*.

**Aramis** is the capital of the Aramis subsector, and is described in the chapter entitled *Leedor on Aramis*.

**Carsten** is a lawless mining world whose major resource is radioactives. Ore is found in small pockets near the surface; large-scale mining is not economical, but a population of individual prospectors can make a good living.

**Corfu** is interdicted by the Imperium as a quarantine measure. Approximately forty years ago, a virulent, crippling disease appeared and has since come to affect 5% of the population. No cure for the disease is yet known, although some treatments have been found to relieve some of its effects. The Imperial Scout Service maintains a surveillance post in the system and is working to find a cure. In the interim, access to the world is prohibited.

**Dhian** is cursed with a very repressive government which maintains itself in power by virtue of its monopoly on the production of oxygen (as well as most food). All plants are grown hydroponically in government-owned farm complexes and the secrets of successful farming are jealously guarded. The government restricts technology to very low levels in order to safeguard its monopoly.

**Feneteman** was unpopulated until a few years ago when a survey sponsored by Ling Standard Products discovered deposits of lanthanum. When the concentration was deemed insufficient for commercial mining, LSP released the survey report to the public and offered to rent prospecting equipment in return for an interest in any discoveries. The offer has been sufficient to maintain a small population of fortune-seekers on the world, but without visible results.

**Focaline** is mostly ice-capped, but a few broad open plains provide excellent ranges for goat raising. The plains are crowded with family-owned ranches; indeed, the small usable surface of Focaline is somewhat overcrowded and strict population control is practiced. A trading station for commerce with the Vargr is maintained on Focaline.

**Heguz** is a dangerously mysterious world in the Scatters. Two colonies have been established on this planet, and each has failed for unexplained reasons. The first had 20,000 citizens in 649, but when a supply ship arrived in 650, no trace of the colony remained. Within a few years the colony was reestablished, only to disappear in the early 900s with nearly 70,000 inhabitants. Both were formed around large, floating bases of the type often established on water worlds. Large areas of the ocean floor have been searched, but so far no trace of either colony has been found. An investigative team representing another group of prospective colonists, numbering about 500 and based in orbit, is currently studying the world in an attempt to solve its mystery.

**Jesedipere** is a backwater world on the Imperial border, described in the chapters entitled *Showdown on Jesedipere* and *Exotic Encounters*.

**Junidy** is the most populous world in the Aramis subsector and is covered in the chapters entitled *The Psionic Institute* and *Exotic Encounters*.

**L'oeul d'Dieu** is a water world under the aegis of Sharurshid, a megacorporation specializing in rare trade goods. Sharurshid obtains a variety of exotic seafoods and other products from this world. There has been much pressure to have the world opened up for settlement, but Sharurshid, fearing damage to the local ecosystem, has resisted.

**Lablon** is an agricultural world at the very edge of the subsector; its economy is supported mostly by the sale of agricultural produce to the Vargr through the local trading station. Most of the population of 500,000 lives in small farming towns scattered about the most fertile areas of the four continents. The government is called the Lablon Planetary Cartel; its main duty is insuring that no community exports goods for other than the legally set prices; since the prices are high, there is little resistance.

**Lewis** is an interdicted world holding an estate of the Tukera family and is described in the chapter entitled *Inselberg*.

**Nasemin** is a water world. A large, close moon, a high axial tilt, and an energetic sun combine to produce giant tides and extreme weather effects. The world's stormy seas are the home of a very large and nasty predator which is the source of an anti-inflammation drug which has so far defied economical synthesis. Nasemin's population is primarily occupied with chasing down these predators (called byssals) and excising the gland in which the drug is concentrated. Each yields about 5 kilograms of raw drug. The byssal (a 40,000 kilogram swimming carnivore/killer) regenerates the gland in about a year and can be harvested many times.

The byssal hunters operate in small crews aboard specially constructed submersibles. Much skill is involved in searching for the predator in the ocean depths; the actual capture process is short but dangerous.

**Natoko** is an undeveloped world owned by Tukera Lines and described in the chapter *In Search of Longer Legs*.

**Patinir** is an asteroid belt being mined for its resources; it is described in the chapter entitled *Patinir Belt*.

**Pavanne** is an empty world with no population or current development. At one time, a mining company conducted extensive prospecting on the world but found no economically exploitable deposits. A landing beacon is still maintained by the mining company; it marks the main landing location on the world. Other than the beacon, all that remains are a few abandoned mining camps scattered about the world.

**Paya** is a small, nearly unpopulated world which is the subsector headquarters for Oberlindes Lines. It is described in the chapter entitled *Exotic Encounters*.

**Pysadi** is a religious dictatorship described in the chapter entitled *Pysadian Escapade*.

**Reacher** supports its economy by exporting simple organic compounds, produced naturally in its exotic atmosphere and gathered more cheaply than they can be synthesized elsewhere. The recent introduction of better synthesis technology into the subsector has reduced Reacher's market (Aramis and Patinir, once importers, now produce their own

## The Traveller Adventure

organics), and recent incidents of violence against offworlders have led the Travellers' Aid Society to declare Reacher an amber zone.

**Rugbird** is a world with an extremely insidious atmosphere. The system's population lives in orbital habitats, and the world's considerable resources are exploited by remote-operated machines (heavily coated with resistant materials). Only repair crews, who receive hazard pay, venture down to the surface.

**Towers** was once the seat of government for the Towers Cluster for the few years before the area was absorbed into the Imperium. Towers is an amber zone; its customs include a definite sense of honor and a strict dueling code to right slights and insults. Offworlders are warned to be cautious in their interaction with locals. Even visitors are expected to abide by the local *code duello*.

**Violante** is owned by a consortium of wealthy nobles from Deneb sector, whose ancestors, foreseeing a time when the

## Aramis Subsector

spinward regions of the Imperium would be heavily populated, decided to invest in an unspoiled paradise. The world was parceled into estates with strict controls on population and land use. The world population consists of landowners and their families (about 30% of whom live elsewhere for part of the year), supervisory staff, technicians, and servants.

**Yebab** is the homeworld of a minor race known as Ebokin and is described in the chapter entitled *Exotic Encounters*.

**Zila**, an agricultural world famous for its wines, is described in the chapters entitled *First Call at Zila* and *Zilan Wine*.

**Zykoca** is an agricultural world under interdiction. Local society is extremely xenophobic, and all contact offworld has been suspended. Foreigners are distrusted and have no standing in local society. The world was interdicted after a local mob broke into the starport, killing several offworlders.

# Referee's Synopsis

The plot of this campaign is complex, and this chapter is provided to help the referee understand what is going on. The chapter is divided into several sections.

During the course of the campaign, the adventurers will come into collision with two nefarious schemes. The main one (and the basic driving force of the campaign) is an attempt by a man named Aran Ashkashkur to steal some Imperial naval weaponry and sell it to a group of Vargr corsairs. The other (and secondary) plot is an attempt by the megacorporation Sternmetal Horizons to evade Imperial price controls on lanthanum ore by smuggling. Both schemes are described below.

An important clue to the main plot is a brooch which comes into the adventurers' possession; it is also described below.

Next, a number of non-player characters important to the adventure are described.

After all this information is digested, the referee is ready for a synopsis of the events experienced by the adventurers during the course of the campaign.

The final section gives a brief analysis of the campaign's many elements and their game purposes.

## ASHKASHKUR'S PLOT

Aran Ashkashkur is a high-level employee of the megacorporation Tukera Lines; he is the Aramis subsector head of the Vemene, Tukera's covert security agency. As such, he has tremendous authority and plans to use it to make himself rich.

Ashkashkur's chance comes when the Imperial Navy contracts with Akerut, a Tukera subsidiary, to carry a pair of naval meson guns and the computers used to control them from the Navy's base at Inthe to its base at Aramis. He arranges for the ship carrying the cargo, a *Hercules* class transport called the *Titan*, to pass through Zila on its way to Aramis; he also arranges for a Vemene agent to be on board as chief engineer, using the name Jelika Chan. On arrival at Zila, Chan declares the *Titan*'s jump drives unsafe for further service (having previously sabotaged them). The cargo is moved into an Akerut warehouse until another ship can be found to take it to Aramis.

Meanwhile, Ashkashkur has been busy on Zila. He has purchased a large quantity of scrap electronic parts from a local company and packaged them in crates which are close duplicates of the crates carrying the meson guns. Forging the exterior documentation and security seals is easy for one of Ashkashkur's talents; it is only necessary that they be able to pass a casual examination by warehouse and ship crews. Then he has placed these crates inside slightly larger

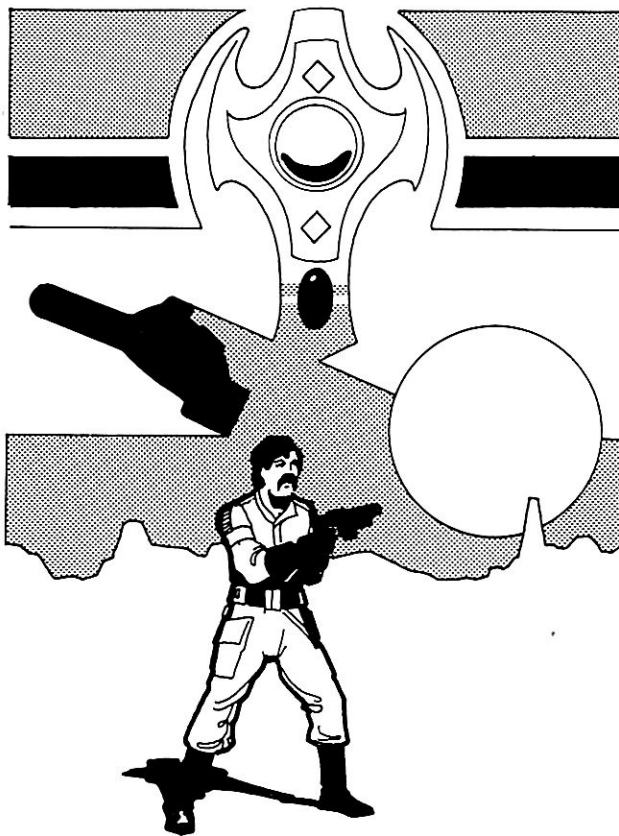
crates marked as farming implements and addressed to Ozarr on Lablon (later changed to Jesedipere for security reasons, explained below), which he then consigns to Akerut for shipment. When the meson guns arrive on Zila, Ashkashkur breaks into the warehouse (an easy job for the

head of the Vemene) and, using a load lifter, switches the covering crates from the dummy meson guns to the real ones.

The next day, another *Hercules* class transport, the *Mammoth*, arrives on Zila and is detailed to carry the meson guns. Ashkashkur arranges to have the *Mammoth*'s chief engineer waylaid and severely injured by Vemene thugs. A replacement is needed, and the only qualified engineer available is Jelika Chan of the now-grounded *Titan*. Her new assignment is to sabotage the *Mammoth*'s maneuver drive upon entry into the atmosphere of Aramis, causing the ship to crash. (Chan is no fanatic—there is plenty of time for the crew to escape in the ship's pinnace.) All goes as planned; the *Mammoth* is almost totally destroyed by the combination of reentry heat, impact

with the ground, and exposure to Aramis' corrosive atmosphere. Even careful analysis of the wreckage fails to show that the supposed remains of the meson guns are merely Ashkashkur's electronic junk. Thus, no theft is ever suspected.

By the time of the crash, another Akerut freighter is well



on its way to Jesedipere with a cargo of "farm implements". Ashkashkur has contracted to sell the meson guns to a Vargr corsair band, the Kforuzeng, for MCr500 in cash. The Kforuzeng, however, will take some time to raise the money (they are also spending heavily to construct a ship, called the *Ozarr*, to mount one of the weapons), and the guns will have to wait for some time in a warehouse on Jesedipere before delivery.

Ashkashkur plans to get the cash and depart immediately in his personal starship for the Imperial core and a life of extreme luxury under a new name.

### STERNMETAL'S PLOT

Because of the recent increase in tension on the Zhodani border, the Imperial Navy has asked for and been granted a freeze in the price of lanthanum produced in the Imperium, in an attempt to reduce the cost of stockpiling this vital resource. Sternmetal Horizons has therefore experienced reduced profits from their lanthanum mining operation in the Patinir Belt. Corporate executives have come up with a plan to make use of the fact that lanthanum imported from outside the Imperium is uncontrolled: they are surreptitiously hiring third parties to transport ore from Patinir and deliver it to Junidy, under false papers stating it to originate at Scangen, a world in the Vargr Extents. There the ore sells to the Navy at a much higher price than Sternmetal can receive through legal channels.

After the ships leave Patinir, they travel to Aramanx, a world heavily under the influence of Sternmetal, where they remain docked until a sufficient period of time passes to account for the trip to Scangen and back.

One of the ships hired to carry ore is the far trader *Wolblutn*, belonging to Captain Roet Bannerji. By accident, it is spotted by a commercial shuttle while loading at Patinir Belt; Bannerji panics and fires on the shuttle with illegal nuclear missiles, crippling it.

Even before this, Bannerji and Sternmetal are under investigation by Eleri Giilaan of Naval Intelligence. So far he has no evidence, merely suspicions.

### THE BROOCH

Early in the story, the adventurers acquire a small jeweled brooch which seems to be of great importance to several different groups, who appear willing to do anything to get it.

The adventurers' brooch is one of approximately 200 pieces produced by Tukera Lines in a research center in Deneb sector, as part of a project headed by a Vargr cryptographer, Gharukh. The project's purpose is to develop a secure means of carrying messages; Gharukh's solution is to disguise the very existence of a message. The brooches are made of howood, which has a high metal content; they can have messages encoded magnetically on them using an ordinary text recorder.

The project is canceled by the Tukera management before completion, and Gharukh suggests recouping some of the investment by selling the brooches to the Uekuez, a Vargr corsair band to which she formerly belonged.

The project's cancellation is the result of another Tukera project set up to attempt to break the brooch's security.

Project researchers develop a detector capable of reading a brooch from up to ten meters away. Gharukh is never informed of this project.

Some time after the sale, the Uekuez are absorbed by another corsair band, the Kforuzeng, who inherit the brooches. When Aran Ashkashkur approaches the Kforuzeng regarding the illegal sale of meson guns, they give him a brooch to use for sending secure messages. Ashkashkur, at this time, is unaware that the brooches were manufactured by Tukera; Deneb sector is outside his jurisdiction.

Ashkashkur uses his brooch to send his final message to the Kforuzeng, setting forth the time and place of the transfer. However, the brooch is stolen in transit by a Vargr emissary, Gvoudzon. It is several weeks before the Kforuzeng learn of the theft, and by that time Gvoudzon is long gone, although they continue to search for him. Later, word reaches Ashkashkur, and he arranges for a Tukera Lines department to send out messages to various institutions (among them the Museum of Aramis) offering to buy an artifact matching the brooch's description; at this time he is not very concerned, since he supposes that the message cannot be read. Just in case, he arranges to change the site of the transfer from Lablon to Jesedipere.

A few weeks later, Gharukh is transferred to the Aramis subsector, and Ashkashkur learns of her project, as well as Tukera's counter-project. Suddenly the missing brooch threatens to expose his secret deal to the Tukera management, and he assigns a team of Vemene agents to search for it. They find Gvoudzon on Aramis, but he is not in possession of the brooch. They are unable to discover that he has pawned it and that it is currently in the Museum of Aramis, having been bought by the curator in response to Tukera's message.

By the time the Vemene learn that the brooch is in the museum, it is gone; it has been stolen, presumably by Gvoudzon, who has again disappeared.

At this point, the adventurers have met Gvoudzon and have smuggled him and the brooch offworld. Ashkashkur, the Vemene, and the Kforuzeng continue to search, occasionally running into the adventurers but never holding on to them.

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following is a short description of all characters who encounter the adventurers more than once, or whose influence behind the scenes is or may become important.

**Aran Ashkashkur** is the head in Aramis subsector of Tukera's covert operations agency, the Vemene. Amoral and devious (traits almost essential for anyone with his job), Ashkashkur has developed increasingly expensive tastes in life, to the point where his high salary is insufficient. For several years he has been embezzling moderate amounts from his





department's budget; as his expenses have risen, it has become more difficult to conceal his crimes from the company. Now he plans one final theft, which should net enough to last the rest of his life.

**Jelika Chan** (this name is merely the temporary alias by which the adventurers will know her) is Ashkashkur's senior field agent, and one of the very few who are in on his entire plot. Chan considers espionage a game; she is thrilled by danger and proud of her talents; she enjoys proving her superiority to others by deceiving them, the more complex the deception the better.



**Roald Bulolo** is director of Tukera's operations in the subsector; he is also ex officio president of Akerut. Bulolo has risen far in Tukera's organization in thirty years with the company, and hopes to rise higher yet. He sees the entry of Oberlindes lines into the subsector as a major threat to his advancement and will use any means available to end the threat.

**Marquis Leonard Bolden-Tukera of Aramis**, nineteenth of the line, is hereditary head of the government of Aramis (the world). This translates primarily into the ability to grant favors, concessions, or jobs, usually in return for a monetary consideration. Most of this is easily handled by a secretary, leaving the Marquis free for other pursuits. This is fortunate, for the Marquis is a useless profligate who spends most of his time enjoying his wealth and social position. The Marquis is married to the Lady Arianne Tukera, a member of the large Tukera family and heir to a large block of stock. Her connections have per-



suaded the Marquis to back Tukera's attempts to maintain its position in subsector trade. He has also, from time to time, meddled in Tukera's local business dealings, generally in an attempt to enforce his sense of fair play; Bulolo resents these incidents, which force him to spend valuable time convincing the Marquis that what Bulolo already wants to do is morally right (difficult because it usually isn't; easy because the Marquis is gullible).

**Dhurgeng**, a high-level officer of the Kforuzeng, is a Vargr of considerable and increasing charisma. He has been promised command of the *Ozarr* (the new ship being built to house one of the meson guns) and its supporting squadron, which will probably become the second most important position in the organization. Consequently, he is devoting his every effort to making certain that the sale proceeds without difficulty.

**Roet Bannerji** is captain of the far trader *Wolblutn*. He is not very bright, is extremely careless, and has a tendency to panic in stressful situations, making his business career a series of misfortunes, although Bannerji usually blames his "bad luck", enemies unknown, or the unfairness of the universe. He thus considers himself justified in anything he does to anyone else—he's only evening the score. Bannerji's debts threatened to overwhelm him three years ago, and he started doing illegal jobs for Sternmetal Horizons; he is now employed full time in smuggling lanthanum for them.

**Eneri Giilaan** is a lieutenant commander in the Imperial Navy, assigned to Naval Intelligence. He suspects that Sternmetal is engaged in something illegal, but has been told by superiors to drop the investigation. (Sternmetal has influence in the government.) Giilaan, in patriotic defiance of orders, has been carrying on in secret and in his spare time. He feels that if he can obtain strong evidence, he can force his superiors to proceed. His main area of effort has been an investigation into the movements of Roet Bannerji, whose carelessness has given Giilaan a number of clues.

**Marc hault-Oberlindes, Baron Feri**, is owner of Oberlindes Lines; he inherited a small merchant corporation and has devoted most of his life to its expansion; he has dreams of making it an Imperium-wide megacorporation. Oberlindes Lines is based in the Regina subsector; present projects include increased trade with the Vargr Extents and further penetration of markets in the Aramis subsector. Oberlindes runs a paternalistic organization; he is extremely loyal to his employees and expects unquestioned loyalty in return. Oberlindes delights in frustrating authority; for example, he once purchased a 60,000-ton Imperial cruiser, ostensibly for scrap, and then proceeded to put the ship (christened *Emissary*) into operation in the Vargr Extents; by fancy paperwork and by playing various groups of bureaucrats against each other, he was able to obtain the ship with its high-powered armaments intact, an action which is against Imperial policy but not strictly illegal provided the ship never enters the Imperium. Oberlindes also bears a grudge against the Kforuzeng. Several months ago, elements of the *Emissary's* crew attempted to take control of the ship and sell it to the Kforuzeng, presumably at their instigation. The mutiny was quelled with the aid of Arllanroughl, but Oberlindes' son, Sergei, was injured.



**Arllanroughl** had a long and



successful career as emissary for the Thoengling Emperor; his final mission was liaison with the Oberlindes trading mission aboard the *Emissary*. After the mutiny he was offered a high position in Oberlindes Lines; the Emperor, in order to strengthen his ties with Oberlindes, granted Arrlanroughl a release from service, and Arrlanroughl has since become Marc hault-Oberlindes' chief assistant. His personal loyalties are to Oberlindes and to the Thoengling Emperor; in any conflict between the two he would be forced into a choice, but so far their interests have coincided.

**Gustav Fireau** owns Fireau et Fille, one of the largest wineries on Zila. Since the death of his wife some years ago, he has become extremely dependent upon his daughter, Lisa. Gustav devotes his time to the wine, assuring that the Fireau reputation for quality is upheld.

**Lisa Fireau**, hard-headed and sensible, runs the family business; it was her idea to break the firm's long-running exclusive export contract with Tukera Lines and attempt to gain Fireau its own interstellar markets.



**Gharukh** is a brilliant Vargr cryptographer recruited by Tukera Lines to head a business communication project. Originally affiliated with a corsair band, the Uekuez, she was drawn away by the promise of high pay, unlimited resources, and the ability to learn Imperial coding technology. She is almost the classical caricature of a scientist, interested in her work to the near exclusion of all else. Because of her work's secret nature, there is little public

recognition (very important to a Vargr), and she will greatly appreciate any accolade which her contributions to the field might earn. She currently has two other motivations worth noting: now considered a security risk, she is kept a virtual prisoner at Tukera's facility on Lewis and is searching for a way out; she also retains loyalties to the Uekuez, and would seek revenge if she were aware that they had been the object of a particularly bloody (and successful) takeover attempt by the Kforuzeng.

## SYNOPSIS

As the adventure begins, the adventurers, who compose the crew of the subsidized merchant *March Harrier*, are beginning a two-week vacation while their ship undergoes its annual maintenance at the starport on Aramis. As they explore the attractions of Leedor, Aramis' only city, two seemingly unimportant events occur.

First, there are news reports of the spectacular crash of the Akerut Lines starship *Mammoth*; the loss of the ship is attributed to incompetence on the part of its chief engineer, Jelika Chan, who is fired.

Second, the crew find a wallet containing a cryptic message, which belongs to Roet Bannerji, captain of the far trader *Wolblutn*. When the wallet is returned to Bannerji, his ship leaves port in great haste. The party is later con-

tacted by Enei Gillaan, who offers to pay them for any information they can tell him, now or later, about Bannerji.

Toward the end of the vacation, the adventurers visit the Museum of Leedor. While touring the exhibits, they overhear a heated argument between the museum curator and a Vargr, ending when the Vargr is thrown out by museum guards. On their way home, the adventurers encounter the same Vargr being beaten by unknown assailants, who flee at the party's approach.

The Vargr, Gvoudzon, tells the story of a brooch which he stole from a Vargr corsair band called the Kforuzeng; he thinks the brooch was used to transfer coded messages between the Kforuzeng and their allies, but he doesn't know how. Gvoudzon ran out of money while on Aramis and was forced to pawn the brooch, which was then sold to the museum; the party witnessed his attempt to recover it. Gvoudzon's attackers were looking for the brooch too; he has no idea why they wanted it or who they were (except that they were humans, not Vargr), but the brooch apparently is more valuable than he had previously known.

Gvoudzon proposes to burglarize the museum to recover "his property", and the adventurers, intrigued, join him. In the process of ransacking the curator's desk, an xboat message is found which indicates that Tukera Lines is also interested in the brooch.

The *March Harrier's* maintenance is now done, and the adventurers smuggle Gvoudzon and his prize offworld to their next destination, Natoko.

Cargos are scarce on Natoko, but the adventurers finally make a deal: in exchange for a cargo carried to Patinir Belt, they acquire a set of demountable fuel tanks which give the *Harrier* enough range to leave the Aramis Trace (a good idea once the burglary is discovered) and head out into the rest of the subsector.

At Patinir, there is another cryptic event. The *March Harrier* comes across a derelict shuttle, apparently a pirate victim. The only survivor dies after speaking a single word: "Wolblutn".

The next stop is Pysadi, home of a religious dictatorship. A Vargr ship captain suggests a profitable cargo: howood, which has become very fashionable on Aramanx recently. (The adventurers have another reason to be interested in howood: the brooch is made of it.) Unfortunately, Tukera Lines has bought up the entire warehoused stock. A government functionary suggests a trip into the interior in search of more, and the party sets out. In the process of locating a howood cargo, the party also comes across and is adopted by a family of anolas, Pysadian animals with useful psionic powers. On their return to civilization, however, the party is arrested; anolas, it seems, are important in the Pysadian religion and only priests may touch them. Still, the anolas have adopted the party, an obvious sign of Mother Pysadi's favor. The situation is resolved (at least to the locals' satisfaction) by drafting one member of the party into the priesthood and ordering the rest to leave the planet.

However, once restored to their ship, the crew are able to effect a rescue of their missing member and, along with the anolas, jump for Zila.

Waiting for a cargo on Zila, the adventurers visit a starport bar, where the conversation turns to the crash of the

*Mammoth*. A starport maintenance worker relates a story of strange goings on concerning the *Mammoth*, her sister ship *Titan* (which also experienced mechanical problems), and Jelika Chan, who was chief engineer on both ships.

Later the same evening, the crew help out in a barroom brawl, in which they make the acquaintance of Marc hault-Oberlindes, head of Oberlindes Lines. Oberlindes charts the *March Harrier* to take himself, his chief assistant Arrlanroughl, and a cargo to Aramanx.

Up to this point, the *March Harrier's* itinerary has been determined by events; generally there has been only one possible destination for the next jump. Once the *Harrier* arrives at Aramanx, the rest of the subsector lies before it. For a time, there is no apparent progress of the main plot as the *March Harrier* wanders from world to world. During this period, events are drawn from *Patrons* and *Exotic Encounters*. The events of *The Wolf at the Door* and *The Psionic Institute* also occur. They happen in no particular order.

On one of their returns to Aramanx, the crew happen to see another news report about unrest currently taking place on the balkanized world. The megacorporation Sternmetal Horizons has been meddling in local politics, and has given military aid to several nations. Many countries are on the verge of war, including Senled (supported by Sternmetal) and its neighbor Lanax. The adventurers are startled to recognize a familiar face in one film clip: Captain Bannerji of the *Wolblutn*. Remembering Eneri Giilaan's monetary offer, they decide to investigate further. They track Bannerji to the Senledi border town of Tavanix as part of a group representing Sternmetal. In Tavanix there is another shocking encounter. Gvoudzon recognizes a Vagr mercenary in the custody of Senled's military police as an old friend, Kfouzorr, who has an interesting story to tell. He has recently deserted from the Kforuzeng, some of whom are on Aramanx as mercenaries in the service of Lanax, under the command of Dhurgeng, a high-level Kforuz officer. The Kforuzeng are planning a raid into Senled, with the aim of capturing the Sternmetal representatives. He believes that Lanax will thereby be able to gain some information damaging to Sternmetal, but he doesn't know what it is. (By now, the adventurers may have some idea.) Another thing Kfouzorr doesn't know is the time set for the attack, but this question is answered by the sound of gunfire outside: the Kforuz raid has begun. The adventurers are forced to flee with Kfouzorr and Bannerji. Their route back into Senled is cut off by the Kforuzeng, and as Kforuz patrols close in, (now searching for Gvoudzon and the brooch as well as Bannerji), their only hope of escape seems to be Bannerji's ship, which is hidden in the wilderness nearby. On the way, under the group's questioning, Bannerji is forced to reveal his connection with Sternmetal and the details of his lanthanum smuggling operation. Just as the party reaches the ship, the Kforuzeng attack; in the fighting, Kfouzorr is killed but the ship manages to take off. The adventurers have several possible uses for the information acquired from Bannerji; some lead to profit, others merely to justice.

As time passes, the adventurers will gradually become aware that something is affecting their minds; they are becoming less able to think clearly. When no physical cause

is detectable, they must turn to psionics. Unfortunately, they will have trouble finding a psionics institute where help may be available. Psionics is illegal in the Imperium and any institute will be carefully hidden. Finally, after a long search, a psionics institute is located on Junidy. The source of the problem is identified: the anolas; a cure is prescribed: give the anolas to the institute. Soon, the adventurers are fully recovered.

Now events again return to a set course when, after wandering through the subsector, the *March Harrier* returns to Zila. Tukera Lines has a monopoly on exports of the famous Zilan wines. Now one of the largest winemakers, Fireau et Fille, wants to break that monopoly. Gustav Fireau and his daughter Lisa hire the *March Harrier* to carry a cargo of Fireau Eiswein to Aramanx. But there are obstacles; the wine must be delivered soon, and the adventurers must contend with the complexities of Zila's bureaucracy in obtaining the necessary export papers. Further, the operation will be threatened if Tukera finds out too early.

Finally, the wine arrives on Aramanx, escorted by Lisa Fireau, and an auction begins. But a Tukera representative, Lorn Denveldt, seems willing to pay a high price for the cargo in order to maintain the monopoly. All seems lost until Denveldt is finally outbid by Marc hault-Oberlindes, who is also interested in breaking Tukera's hold on Zilan wine.

Thwarted, Tukera makes one more attempt at salvaging their monopoly: Vemene agents kidnap Lisa Fireau, demanding a ransom which would bankrupt Fireau et Fille. When the kidnappers discover Gvoudzon among the party, they make a further condition that he be the one to deliver the ransom. Although the adventurers suspect a trap, Gustav Fireau is adamant; the ransom must be paid to secure his daughter's safety. He raises the money with a short term loan against his company's total assets. Gvoudzon, predictably, is also kidnapped and Lisa is not released. Fortunately, the adventurers have been able to discover the kidnappers' whereabouts and a rescue operation is staged. Lisa and Gvoudzon are saved and Fireau's money is recovered. The leader of the kidnappers, before she escapes, is recognized as Jelika Chan, now discovered to be a Vemene operative; Denveldt is taking orders from her.

With Tukera's last attempt defeated, the wine monopoly is broken. In gratitude, Fireau makes the adventurers his exclusive agents for a period of five years, and Oberlindes offers to take over the responsibility in return for a handsome royalty.

For a while, the *March Harrier's* usual business resumes, but reports begin coming in of attacks against Oberlindes shipping. Oberlindes asks the adventurers for help. He believes that Tukera has begun a tradewar, and that his only recourse is to strike back. He has learned the location of a deep-space rendezvous point used by Tukera shipping. The *March Harrier* is fitted with a transponder capable of falsifying Tukera ship identifications, and jumps to the rendezvous point in company with an Oberlindes patrol cruiser. Over the next several weeks they capture a number of Tukera ships. Among them are the *Titan*, sister ship of the *Mammoth*, and a Vemene courier ship; examination of their logbooks and of messages they were carrying reveals much of interest to the adventurers. They learn about Aran



Ashkashkur and further details about his plot to steal the meson guns (although this is not yet clear to them); in particular, they learn of a shipment of "farm machinery" now in a warehouse on Jesedipere.

In addition, they discover that Tukera is carrying on some sort of secret cryptographic project at Inselberg, their private estate on Lewis. The adventurers are sent to Inselberg, disguised as servants, on a spy mission for Oberlindes. On Lewis, they discover the Vargr cryptographer Gharukh, who, although originally a Tukera employee, is now being held prisoner. They burgle Tukera's computer files and escape with Gharukh, who is discovered to be the designer of the brooch. Gharukh is able to read the brooch's message, which provides the final clue to Ashkashkur's plot and reveals that the sale of meson guns to the Kforuzeng is only a few weeks away. Computer information confirms that Tukera itself is unaware of the deal.

The adventurers must race to Jesedipere to attempt to thwart the sale. All concerned—the adventurers, Gharukh, Oberlindes, and Arlanroughl—have many reasons to dislike the Kforuzeng; Oberlindes also sees this as an opportunity to blackmail Tukera's local head, Roald Bulolo, into calling off the tradewar. For blackmail to be successful, the entire operation must be kept secret from the public and the Navy, which makes things more complicated. The adventurers find allies in a colony of Vargr on Jesedipere, refugees from the increasing Kforuzeng raids in the Extents. As the decisive moment nears, Ashkashkur, Chan, Durgheng, and the adventurers all arrive on planet. The final resolution may take many forms, but should end up with the Kforuzeng empty-handed, Ashkashkur captured, Tukera blackmailed, and the adventurers possessed of a good profit.

## CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

As a **Traveller** campaign, this set of adventures provides the five seeds for a good campaign: the basics, gimmicks, pushes, and an enigma to be solved.

**Basics:** The elementary background of this adventure is an extension of materials presented in **The Traveller Book**. The details of the Imperium, its structure, xboat network, and its megacorporations all create a basic framework for this campaign.

This book provides additional materials, including a map of parts of the Spinward Marches and details of its development and settlement. A map of the Aramis subsector and details of its history provide the players and referee with the basics of the territory they will be travelling through. Further details of the worlds in the subsector make it relatively easy for the referee to administer the area involved in the campaign. The chapter entitled *Library Data* further expands and explains details of the universe that is being used.

**Gimmicks:** A certain number of items are made available to the players on account of their hard work, clever planning, and just plain good fortune. When the referee is aware that the player characters actively want or need some item (a specific weapon; a special piece of equipment), then the referee can allow them to institute hard work and clever planning to acquire it.

Four specific gimmicks are dealt with in the course of the

campaign: demountable fuel tanks, anolas, the psionics institute, and an adjustable ship transponder.

Demountable fuel tanks (which become available in the second episode of the campaign, on Natoko) allow the *March Harrier* to venture out into the subsector. Demountable tanks for other ships allow them to move through the subsector as well.

The anolas (which can be found on Pysadi) can contribute their several talents and serve as valuable companions to the group. The male's threat sense can warn of danger; the parentals' calming touch can help steady individuals through difficult situations. As a counter to the benefits of the anolas, the female's powers will eventually prove a detriment.

The psionics institute (which can be found on Junidy) provides the crew with an opportunity to learn of their own psionic potential, and to acquire training that will hone any talents they have.

An adjustable ship transponder permits the crew to change the identification of the *March Harrier*. It is obtained from Oberlindes Lines during the episode entitled *Tradewar*. Use of this device allows the group to penetrate Tukera security or ambush enemy ships.

**The Pull:** The campaign depends on two pulls—a curiosity about the subsector, and a need to make money. Each constantly draws the crew farther into the subsector and deeper into the action. Curiosity is natural; even with a basic knowledge of the subsector, the adventurers should exhibit some desire to see the entire area and learn its details.

The profit motive is equally natural. In order to survive, the group needs money, and the potential of profit in trade within the subsector is extremely strong.

**The Push:** The campaign in Aramis has two pushes—pursuit by the authorities, and the enmity of Tukera. These two pushes are at least partially connected.

Because the initial adventure calls for the theft of the Vargr brooch, the authorities naturally become involved. The degree to which the player characters are pursued depends on how well they have covered their trail in the original crime. Gvoudzon, of course, remains a prime suspect, and is pursued regardless. Pursuit, however, proceeds at a low level, generally in the form of wanted posters and circulars which alert starport and planetary personnel.

The original crime also takes the brooch which Tukera (specifically the secret transport police's head) is interested in finding. As evidence (or if evidence) becomes available connecting the crew with the theft of the brooch, Tukera becomes increasingly involved. This push increases or decreases with the details of a specific situation.

Various encounters with Tukera Lines (including Akerut and the Vemene) can bring the crew to the attention of Tukera officials. Their dislike can serve as a powerful push.

**The Enigma:** From the very beginning of this campaign, the brooch is a puzzle to the players. Through Gvoudzon, they become interested in its concealed message. By the time they have solved the puzzle, they have discovered a plot to run stolen naval weapons to the Kforuzeng across the border. Solving the enigma involves the crew directly in the final steps of the campaign: foiling the gun-running plot, ending the tradewar, and finding profit in the process.



One member of the group will be a Vargr. He will be introduced in the first adventure and then joins the group in its travels. There are two possibilities for the referee in this situation, and careful thought should be given to each of them. First, the referee can allow one player to be the Vargr and to join when the encounter first occurs. Second, the

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referee can play the Vargr as a non-player character.

If the first option is chosen, the referee should single out one player, present him with the Vargr character and background, and have him wait until the encounter situation happens. If the second option is chosen, the referee is faced with the problem of running a character in the adventure and refereeing at the same time. This option places a great deal of responsibility on the referee. The first option is the recommended one.

The Vargr character is Gvoudzon—an emissary and a citizen of the Commonality of Kedzudh.

8. Vargr ex-Emissary                      788766    Age 38  
5 terms (2 as corsair; 3 as emissary)              Cr100  
Infighting-1, Gunnery-2, Liaison-2, Ship's Boat-1,  
Vacc Suit-0, Rifle-1, Auto Pistol-0.  
Currently unemployed.

Gvoudzon's background is rather different from that of the other characters, and the player who takes his part should know that background. In addition, some of Gvoudzon's previous history may become important to the adventure.

**Origins:** Gvoudzon's homeworld is Ksarueso, one of nine systems in the Commonality of Kedzudh in the Firgr subsector, just coreward of the Aramis subsector.

**Career:** Gvoudzon began his career by joining the Kforuzeng, a corsair band whose range spans several subsectors along and just beyond the Imperial border. The Kforuzeng were a relatively small group with an aging fleet of about 20 ships (with an average tonnage of 400 tons). They operated as mercenaries, hiring out to anyone who needed a short-term military force. If jobs were scarce, they raided unguarded worlds and shipping routes for loot.

Gvoudzon spent three terms in the Kforuzeng, rising steadily to the rank of force leader. However, nine years ago, the Kforuzeng were shaken by a hotly contested change in their power structure, with Gvoudzon in the minority faction. In order to retain some of his position and charisma, he left the Kforuzeng and found a new group to join—the Aegzaeng.

The Aegzaeng were in the same business as the Kforuzeng and share the same range. Their fleet was even older and smaller, with about ten ships averaging 300 tons each. They were equipped more for ground than space operations. Often, cooperative arrangements were formed between the two groups (as well as with others) in order to provide the proper forces for a large or specialized mission.

Because of Gvoudzon's former position with the Kforuzeng, he was able to secure a job as emissary from the Aegzaeng to the Kforuzeng, coordinating details of combined operations (especially the negotiation of fees) and straightening out misunderstandings.

During the next eight years, the Kforuzeng grew in size and power as Gvoudzon watched from the sidelines. He saw the Kforuzeng absorb several smaller bands and grow still larger. (A particularly bloody takeover, that of the Uekuez, earned them a reputation for ruthlessness.) By raiding Vargr worlds and then offering the same worlds protection from

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corsairs for a price, they established an income base. They further increased their income by extracting tolls from merchants for safe passage between the Imperium and the Thoengling Empire. They even negotiated a deal with Tukera Lines to provide protection for some of Tukera's shipping routes. They used their money to acquire newer and larger ships, which extended their range and power still further.

Two years ago, Gvoudzon saw what the future held: sooner or later, the Kforuzeng would absorb the Aegzaeng, eliminating Gvoudzon's job and striking a major blow to his charisma. He began putting his affairs in order and quit at the end of the term.

**The Brooch:** Approximately six years ago, the Kforuzeng instituted a communications system in which messages were somehow secreted in jeweled brooches carried by their emissaries. The system was used for internal communication and for communication with their emissaries to other corsair bands. Gvoudzon and other emissaries became aware of this system as it became standard procedure for the Kforuzeng. Sometimes, Kforuzeng emissaries would ask Gvoudzon to carry a brooch back to their headquarters.

Gvoudzon had always been fascinated by the brooches, which, in addition to their main function, were very beautiful. Unfortunately, the Kforuzeng kept track of each brooch, and there was no way for Gvoudzon to get one. However, in Gvoudzon's last days with the Aegzaeng, an opportunity arose. A Kforuz courier *en route* from the Imperium (Junidy was mentioned) delivered a brooch to the Kforuz emissary at Aegza headquarters for transfer to Kforuz headquarters. The emissary was busy at the time and asked Gvoudzon to carry the brooch. Gvoudzon agreed, packed his possessions, took passage offworld, and was never seen again.

**Recent History:** After Gvoudzon's informal resignation, he took a variety of odd jobs as he wandered aimlessly from world to world. His journey took him generally toward the Imperium. With no clear destination in mind, he took working passage (usually as a gunner) on various ships heading away from Kforuz territory.

At Aramis, Gvoudzon ran out of money and was forced to pawn his rifle, his blade, and the brooch (all he possessed of value) for enough to live on until he could find a job. Within a few days, he found a short-term job ferrying cutters to orbit for Naasirka, and earned enough to live on and to redeem his goods. When he returned, the brooch was gone. The proprietor insisted that he had held it for the required period of time before selling it, although Gvoudzon disagreed. He was able to determine where the brooch was sold: to the museum across the corridor.

He went to the museum to get his property back, but they threw him out. Then, on the way back to his rooms, he was set upon by unknown assailants. They wanted to know about the brooch; Gvoudzon, stubborn as usual, refused to





talk and probably would have been killed had the questioning not been interrupted by the approach of the party from the *March Harrier*, who then met Gvoudzon for the first time.

All this has led Gvoudzon to believe that the brooch contains a more important message than he had previously thought. At least, that's the only theory that seems to make sense of his recent experiences. Still, he would never have guessed

that the Kforuzeng were powerful enough to have him followed inside the Imperium, so far from their home territory.

**Personal Preferences:** Gvoudzon's tastes may help the crew decide what cargos to buy if they decide to trade with the Vargr. His preferences are fairly typical.

In food, Gvoudzon likes fresh meat (his favorite is goat) and tasty fruits. He likes both of them raw and highly spiced. Novel spices are highly prized. In drink, he likes wine and knows a bit about some of the more popular varieties, but he actually prefers beer most of the time.

Gvoudzon also shares with other Vargr a taste for fine, bright (some would say gaudy) clothes. Fine fabrics, especially in bright colors and flashy designs, are in great demand.

**Additional References:** Gvoudzon's knowledge includes a wide variety of information which he will not volunteer until events make it relevant. In game terms, the referee should not make it available to the player until this time. Gvoudzon knows the information contained in the library data entries on Commonality of Kedzudh, Thoengling Empire, *Emissary*, and goat.

The player should also be familiar with the information contained in the Vargr character generation system.

## EQUIPMENT

The group is the crew of a fat trader (the 400-ton subsidized merchant *March Harrier*) currently calling at the starport on Aramis. Beyond any specific equipment that the group has from mustering out benefits, the player characters have no reason to buy or seek equipment before they begin their first adventure. There should be ample time during the first adventure for the group to shop and find any specific items of equipment which they feel that they will need.

Indeed, the first adventure will begin, in all probability, with just such a shopping expedition into Leedor, with many of the required events happening as a matter of course.

## BEGINNING THE CAMPAIGN

It is the responsibility of the referee to control the events of the campaign and to work the participants into the situation gradually. Initially, the players will have enough on their hands anyway—equipment to buy, the city to explore, and patrons to seek out. Placing the game situation in front of

them gradually, as it is called for, is the best way to begin the campaign.

## FRIENDSHIP

A basic assumption for this campaign (and, really, for almost any *Traveller* campaign) is that the group of player characters are friends and are involved in a mutual effort to explore the universe, find more friends, adventures, money, power, and information.

These friends are now on Aramis, the site of the first adventure.

## THE USES OF DIE ROLLS

As players in a *Traveller* game venture out into the universe, they immediately face a wide variety of circumstances and situations. Many times, procedures already exist for the resolution of a situation (for example, combat, animal encounters, or patrons), but if not, the referee is thrown back on his or her own resources in handling the problem. There are several reasonable and efficient methods of dealing with unexpected situations. These include use of personal characteristics, situation throws, and reaction throws.

**Personal Characteristics:** Many cases can be resolved by looking at the character's personal characteristics (strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, and so on) which are appropriate to the situation. For example, in lifting or forcing large objects, strength might be most appropriate; a more delicate situation could depend on dexterity.

The referee should instruct the player character to throw the characteristic or less on two dice. The higher the characteristic, the greater the chance of accomplishing the goal. Relatively easy situations might call for rolling the sum of two characteristics or less; harder situations might have a positive DM to reduce the chance of success.

**Reaction Throws:** Any non-player character can make a reaction throw to determine relative disposition and reaction to the adventurers (see Reactions, *The Traveller Book*, page 102). This reaction number can also be used as the required throw or less for the individual to assist or help the group. DMs for appropriate skills are allowed, or for common background (such as both non-player character and player character having served in the same service).

In addition, the referee can rarely go wrong in implementing a DM of +1 or -1 for some miscellaneous item which the players suggest, such as friendliness or appearance of affluence. For example, if the adventurers are encountering an express boat pilot and one player character comments that she has always admired the efficiency of the xboat service, then the referee can easily allow a DM +1 for the exchange. Too many such DMs can easily ruin a game, so moderation is advised.

**Situation Throws:** In the absence of any other guidance, the referee may always resort to the situation throw. When an incident first occurs, throw two dice to determine its relative severity. A low roll means that it is easy, a high roll means comparative difficulty. The number achieved is now the situation number. The player characters involved, when they attempt to deal with the situation, must roll the situation number or higher on two dice. They are, of course,





allowed DMs based on any appropriate skills. Tools, assistance, and equipment may also provide beneficial DMs; weather, haste, adverse environment, or other handicaps may impose negative DMs. It is even possible for a referee to make the situation number greater than 12, thus making success impossible unless the players can provide necessary skills or tools with DMs to get their throw also above 12.

**Example of Throws:** An adventurer (46797A) has experienced a malfunction in the drive room of her vessel. The situation seems hopeless at the moment, and she is forced to abandon ship. The air lock hatch, however, is warped shut. A quick resolution to the problem is to state that she must roll strength or less to force it open. After several unsuccessful rolls, she casts about for a pry bar to help her. The referee arbitrarily rules that the bar allows  $-4$  on the die roll (the referee could guess or roll one die for the result). On the next roll, the adventurer is successful; then she makes her way to the ship's locker for her vacc suit. Grabbing a survival pack, she proceeds to abandon ship. She knows that the drives cannot stand the strain much longer, and that she must get out immediately. The referee decides that the drives will explode on  $9+$  in the current turn,  $8+$  in the next turn, and so on. The referee decides that the character's last minute repair attempts have been partially successful, and he increases the needed roll by her level of engineering skill (2) to  $11+$ . The adventurer needs to find a survival kit before she leaves the ship, but one extra turn will be needed to gather it up. The referee rolls to see if the ship explodes this turn ( $11+$ ). It does not, and she grabs the survival kit. On the second turn, she cycles through the air lock while the referee checks for an explosion again ( $10+$  this time); once more the ship remains intact. On the third turn, while the character is drifting away from the ship, the referee rolls  $11$  and the drives explode ( $9+$  was needed).

The distress call from her radio attracts a local asteroid miner. He is required by custom and law to pick her up, but may not like being diverted to an unprofitable rescue mission. The referee rolls two dice for his reaction: the result is 4. She must now convince him to take her to the local

starport so that she can arrange salvage of her ship. She may add any applicable skills, such as streetwise, bribery, even  $-1$  for intelligence  $9+$  if the referee thinks this appropriate. Obviously, in a situation such as this, repeated requests will not be possible (or they may be allowed, at  $-1$  per additional request). Probably she only gets to try once. Even with DMs totalling  $-3$ , she rolls an 8, which does not convince the miner to go out of his way to help her. She is stuck on his ship until he finishes his prospecting run of (the referee rolls one die) 4 months. Judging by his reaction roll to her, he'll probably make her pay for room and board as well.

### SECRECY

Die rolls may be performed either secretly, by the referee, or openly, by the players. Sometimes, the adventure of the scenario is reflected in the die rolling and the characters really need to be able to throw the dice themselves. Other times, the referee and the scenario are better served if the players are not aware of the exact rolls to be made. Sometimes the purpose or even the existence of die rolls should be concealed.

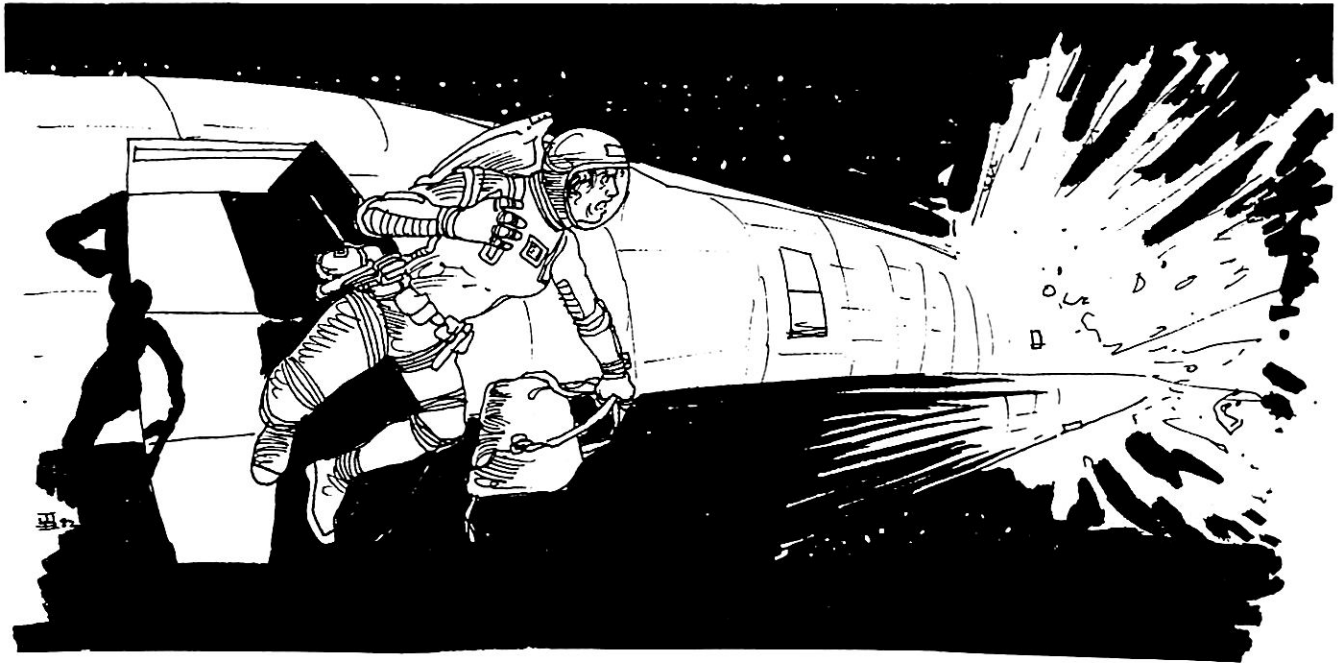
An important principle to remember is that die rolls should not be allowed to get in the way of the game. If the players are thinking about their die rolls rather than about what is "really happening" in the game, the referee should consider increasing the number of secret die rolls.

**Open Die Rolls:** The referee should generally allow the players to perform their own combat die rolls and rolls for other simple actions in which success or failure is immediately visible.

**Secret Die Rolls:** The referee should keep secret all die rolls whose outcomes are not immediately visible and those whose chances of success, if known, would reveal things the characters should not know. For example, the referee should perform all rolls if the characters are gambling at a casino, in order to allow the possibility of the house having rigged the tables.







### REFEREE'S NOTES

*The Traveller Adventure* is written in chapters, but this does not always mean that a flow of events leads from one chapter to another in a specific order. Though this is true in many cases, it is not a constant. Here are some particular points to keep in mind.

After *First Call at Zila*, the adventure moves into a period of random wandering. At some point, if the opportunity presents itself, *Wolf at the Door* and the various sections of *Exotic Encounters* can be run, but there is no specific time requirement for either. Interspersed throughout this period are patron encounters; the referee can use those provided in the chapter, or make up his own. It should be remembered that, to the players, there is no way to tell a key plot element from a casual diversionary scenario. Patron encounter situations are not covered as fully in the text, but should be developed by the referee into situations as detailed as those covered in various included adventures.

The period of random wandering ends with the beginning of *Zilan Wine*; after *Kidnapped on Aramanx*, random adventuring proceeds concurrently with the initial events of *Tradewar* until the growing tempo of the situation involves the *March Harrier*. Once again, adventures proceed in a set order, building towards climax and resolution in *Showdown*

on *Jesedipere*.

Finally, there is the question of the chapter entitled *The Psionic Institute*. This adventure is triggered randomly, by the gradually worsening condition of characters under the influence of the family of Pysadian anolas acquired in the early stages of the campaign. If the referee so desires, he can influence the start of the situation by introducing some element which will reveal the existence of the characters' problem. This probably should be done and solved before the events leading to the climax begin to build. The conclusion should not be cluttered by too many externals.

At all times, the referee should strive for the most balanced adventuring possible. Events should not be too fast-paced—players may have to wait several sessions between one important revelation and the next. But each session should be kept exciting and interesting by whatever means are available. If things are running down, a patron or a spur from Sternmetal or Tukera can get things moving in the right direction again. When this happens, follow up by introducing something of potential importance (or seeming importance) to the plot, even if it's only a patron encounter connected to Oberlindes or Tukera. Spark some interest in one of the main plot lines, and the campaign will pick up speed again.

# Leedor on Aramis

This chapter is the first in a series of adventures that will take the intrepid band of travellers deep into the Aramis subsector in search of the answers to a puzzling brooch of unknown origin. This adventure is the beginning of the quest and contains clues that will prove of importance (and be explained later) in the campaign, if the players are alert and resourceful.

**For Referees Only:** This entire adventure is for the **Traveller** referee only. Players should not be allowed to read any part of the adventure except when specifically instructed by the rules. Certain maps and floor plans may be useful for the players in the course of their activities; in such cases, they may be shown to the group or even photocopied for constant reference.

**Date:** This adventure begins with celebration of the new year. If possible, the referee should begin the campaign on the date 001-1105. Other years or even other days may be substituted if the referee desires.

**Place:** This adventure takes place in the city of Leedor on Aramis, capital of the Aramis subsector of the Spinward Marches.

## ARAMIS

Situated on the Aramis Trace and giving its name to the region as well as the subsector is the world of Aramis (0710-A6B0656-B), trade center and subsector capital. The planet is some 9500 km in diameter, swathed with a swirling corrosive atmosphere that makes life on its dry desert surface intolerable. Nevertheless, the world boasts a population of nearly 620,000, almost all contained within the tunnels of its only city: Leedor. The city is the personal fief of the Marquis of Aramis, and all important posts and contracts are let on the Marquis' sufferance and can be cancelled at his whim.

**The Deserts:** Few people live outside of the city of Leedor; those who do maintain weather monitoring stations or scientific data collectors, or rove about in ATVs prospecting for exploitable mineral deposits.

**The City:** Leedor is underground, tunnelled into bedrock and often following the now empty veins from which ore has been extracted. The city's population pursues many occupations: mining, local and subsector governmental bureaucracy, life support for the city, light manufacturing, working for the local shipyard and starport, and various jobs at the scout and naval bases. The city is a comfortable home and a reasonable provider for hundreds of thousands.

**The Starport:** Aramis has a type A starport with an associated naval base, scout base, and shipyard (operated by the megacorporation Naasirka).

## THE ADVENTURERS

The band of adventurers has gradually come together over the course of the past several months—each hiring on at a different time as crew for the *March Harrier*, a 400-ton subsidized merchant that serves the worlds of the Aramis Trace (and some worlds into the Rhyllanor subsector that are accessible by jump-1). The ship's subsidy contract is owned by a blind trust based in Regina, and the crew has broad discretion in selecting cargos, destinations, and charters, provided only that basic financial and contract obligations are met. The referee should make the data and deck plans in the chapter on the *March Harrier* available to the players.

If the pregenerated characters are being used, play can

begin. If the players have generated their own characters, they should decide among themselves (based on skills and experience) who holds which specific crew positions. If specific skills are not available for one or more posts on the ship's crew, then that lack becomes one which the crew must fill through hiring.

The *March Harrier* has been running its assigned route in the Aramis Trace for something over five years. Under its subsidy contract, it must serve its route 70% of the time and is free to serve other worlds, take charters, or otherwise leave its subsidy route for the remainder of the time. It has built up a credit of 80 weeks and can begin operations outside of the Aramis Trace at any time. The ship retains its responsibility to remit half of its revenues to the subsidy holder (payable at any starport type A, B, or C).

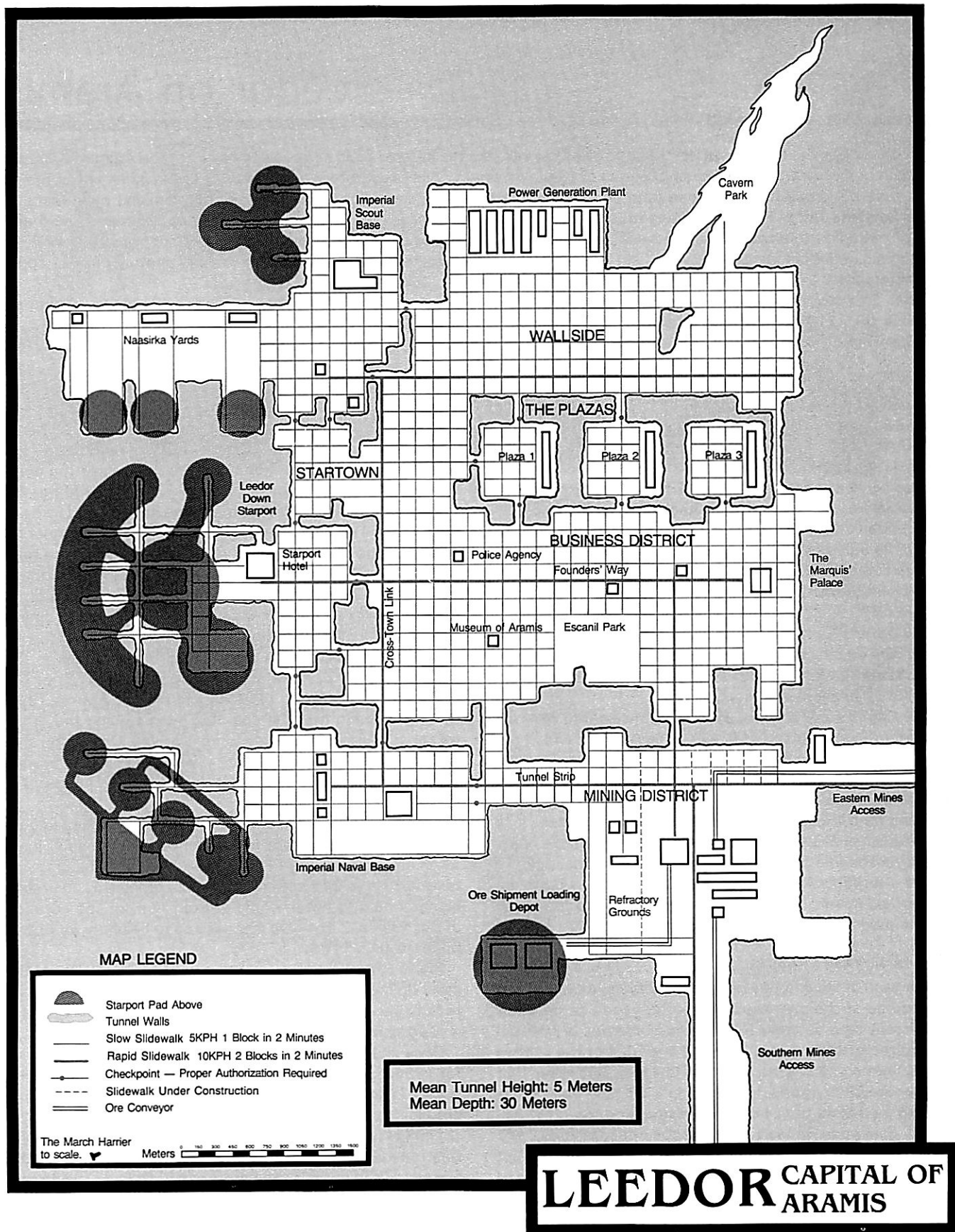
The major stumbling block to leaving the Aramis Trace (and the reason that the ship has been serving the Trace for three years) is the ship's jump-1 drives. Unless the ship can acquire jump-2 drives (prohibitively expensive) or at least additional fuel tanks to allow two successive jumps, it is stuck on the Aramis Trace.

**Annual Overhaul:** The *March Harrier* was just turned over to the Naasirka shipyard for its annual maintenance (paid for in advance—some Cr101,300). Although the crew retains access to their staterooms on board the ship, everyone has moved into hotel rooms in Startown for the duration of the overhaul. The ship is supposed to be ready for operations on 013-1105.

**Some Entertainment:** The maintenance situation puts the crew on its annual paid vacation. A local agent is prepared to book passengers and cargo for the ship and assign them a destination based on the best cargo he can find.

Once that detail is taken care of, the group can set out for almost two weeks of diversion and revelry. Although Leedor is not the most exciting of places, it does hold some promise as a reasonably entertaining and interesting city.

The first day of the group's stay in Leedor is New Year's Day, one of two holidays common to most worlds of the Imperium (the other is the Emperor's Birthday). The streets and parks are crowded with celebrants and a festive atmosphere pervades the city. Since Leedor is not bound by natural cycles of light and darkness, the celebration con-



tinues for the first 24 hours of the new year. Halfway through the celebration, the Marquis makes a speech from the balcony of his palace, expressing the usual sentiments of hope for prosperity in the coming year, success for Aramis and the Imperium in all its endeavors, and continued health for the Emperor.

The next two weeks provide the group the chance to shop for equipment they may feel they need, to look for patrons who might help them in their quest for profit and adventure, and to listen for rumors of interest.

**Referee's Notes:** This beginning provides the players with a structured situation in which to find things they want and to seek out assistance in the form of patrons and rumors within the structure of the rules. Time should pass inexorably and move into the last days of the vacation without finding a patron. Some rumors may be encountered. Reasonable equipment of tech level B or less should be available, provided it does not violate law level 6.

Demountable or collapsible fuel tanks (the rationale for the next adventure and a probable item on the group's want list) are not available on Aramis due to a work backlog at the shipyard. If the referee thinks it necessary, a rumor may direct the group to Natoko.

Natoko, in any event, should be their destination after leaving Aramis. This can best be accomplished by informing the group that their best cargo offer (a major cargo of 200 tons) is for Natoko.

In the interim, the group can explore the many wonders of the city of Leedor.

### ARAMIS DOWN STARPORT

Situated on a mesa in the lee of a large mountain range, Aramis Down starport is (on the surface) simply a well-lit patch of bedrock and a few phased-array detector towers. Flanking the main landing pad are smaller, similar pads for an Imperial Naval Base, an Imperial Scout Base, and the Naasirka Shipyard. Only a very few squat buildings poke their roofs above the rock level—to contain back-up systems that require a line-of-sight to the landing pads. Studded throughout the landing pads are a series of airlock hatches, sturdily reinforced and shielded; properly aligning a ship with one of these hatches allows the crew and passengers to leave and enter a warren of tunnels that form the starport itself without becoming exposed to the corrosive atmosphere of Aramis. At greater intervals are larger cargo hatches that allow offloading freight and goods in suitable protective containers. Finally, there are several lift elevators which can lower entire ships into large chambers away from the corrosive atmosphere for the offloading of delicate cargo, live animals, or unprotected goods. The Naasirka yard has several of these elevators for convenience in ship repairs, and the *March Harrier* is in one of Naasirka's underground bays.

**The Starport Terminal:** Ships that call at Aramis are principally interested in the starport where goods are offloaded, passengers discharged, new passengers found, new freight contracted for, and commodities bought and sold for speculation. The starport enjoys extra-territoriality; individuals who make use of its facilities are not subject to the laws of Aramis, provided they do not leave the protective

confines of the starport.

The terminal contains offices, customs inspection stations, and a hotel for those who prefer to stay outside Leedor; crews often live in their ships and order supplies delivered from the city.

**The Naval Base:** The Imperium maintains a small naval base and the 219th Imperial Cruiser Squadron (CruRon 219) operates its forces from Aramis. The naval base includes landing pads, basic repair and damage control facilities, and living and training areas.

**The Scout Base:** The Imperial Interstellar Scout Service maintains a base on Aramis. The base supports the express boat tender in the system, provides the local xboat messages office (where messages may be deposited for forwarding), and supports a fleet of 2 to 7 scout/couriers which forward messages to worlds not on the main routes.

**The Naasirka Shipyards:** Naasirka, a megacorporation involved in communications equipment and small craft, operates the shipyard facility at Aramis. Although the yard is capable of building starships, its major occupation is the overhaul of ships in order to meet their annual maintenance requirements.

### THE CITY OF LEEDOR

Leedor grew up in the wake of the extensive mining at this particular point on Aramis. The mines were the reason for the establishment of the starport, and their empty shafts soon became used as quarters, storage, business locations, administrative offices, and sites for supporting operations. Today, the mines have extended far beyond the city, following the veins into the mountains. What was left behind has become the city of Leedor.

Leedor sprawls, just as the mines sprawled. The city is defined by a major east-west thoroughfare called Founder's Way. This avenue leads from the starport to the Marquis' Palace. Flanking the way is the business district filled with shops, stores, and warehouse outlets. To the north are residential areas, Startown for the drifters and spacers, the Plazas for executives and the well-to-do, and Wallside for the more ordinary citizens. To the south is the mining district connected to the main tunnels leading to the mines.

The city is small in area and originally expanded without rhyme or reason, remaining relatively small in population. During the Civil War, Aramis' mines produced crucial supplies of materials for the manufacturing complex at Rhyllanor and were occupied by Imperial Marines for a time in order to keep them producing. In the prosperity following the war, Leedor expanded, and the Naasirka yard was engaged in the production of express boat equipment for several decades. Now the economic boom has passed, but Leedor still enjoys a prosperous lifestyle.

**The Slidewalks:** In the period following the war, Leedor went through a period of renewal and many of its older, shabby areas were renovated. In addition, the old access tunnels were straightened and equipped with slidewalks. Slidewalks are a people-transport device intended to cut down on the number of vehicles required in the congested corridors of Leedor. Typically, corridors are about 20 meters wide, with six meters on each side given over to sidewalks to give access to the various entrances along the corridor



walls. The central 8 meters is occupied by two 3-meter slidewalks moving in opposite directions, separated by a 2-meter buffer of sidewalk. Each slidewalk extends the length of a city block (about 150 meters) before ending at the intersection. Sliders then walk across the intersection and board the slidewalk for the next block.

Most slidewalks are slow (about 5 kph) and offer no real advantage over walking, except for the energy saved in standing rather than walking. Long trips through town can be made easier by virtue of the fact that the slidewalk is free and goes everywhere.

Some basic thoroughfares (Founder's Way, Cross-Town Link, Wall Street, and Tunnel Strip) have an elevated strip that makes 10kph without breaks at intersections and thus provide faster transport to various parts of the city. As a result, most individuals use the major thoroughfares to move to an area of the city and then walk to their destination.

Because the slidewalks cannot handle the transport of large amounts of goods for sale, consumption, or distribution, a limited number of small electric trucks are operated by transport companies. The slidewalks are stopped (actually, they run intermittently and are stopped without warning) for several hours each day (midnight to 6 AM of the Imperial standard day) in order to allow the trucks to move through the city with deliveries. Private operation of the small flatbed trucks is not allowed, and all driving is in the hands of local licensed transport companies.

The elevated major thoroughfares run at all times; since their operation will not interfere with the movement of the trucks, they need not be stopped.

**Air Tax:** Because the environment within the city of Leedor is entirely self-contained and replenished through the municipal air plant, the city has adopted an air tax to defray the costs involved. All individuals entering the city (through the starport, any one of the bases, the shipyard, or through the mine tunnels) are called upon to pay a basic air tax of Cr10 per day spent within the city.

The collection booths will issue a bracelet which indicates payment of the tax and the expiration date. Bracelets are chemically coded to turn yellow 48 hours prior to expiration, and orange 24 hours prior to expiration. They turn red when the tax payment period has ended.

It is considered severely ungracious to utilize the air and facilities of the city without paying a fair share of the costs. To avoid embarrassment, locals generally renew their air tax bracelets before they turn orange (they receive credit for the unused portion when it is turned in).

The local enforcers will tend to stop individuals with yellow or orange bracelets and warn them that their air tax will expire shortly; they automatically stop anyone with a red bracelet and arrest the individual on a charge of tax evasion. When throwing for police harassment in Leedor (6 – daily), impose a DM of – 2 if bracelet is yellow, – 4 if it is orange, and – 6 if it is red. Local citizens will be apt to refuse services to anyone wearing a red bracelet. The city keeps computer records of air tax payments, and anyone (especially a visitor) whose tax payment is delinquent for more than a month may be visited by police. When leaving Leedor, bracelets may be turned in to a checkpoint attendant for credit on unused days remaining.

The air tax is not charged for individuals who remain in the starport or who transfer directly to the naval base, the scout base, or the shipyard.

## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There are four major residential areas in Leedor: Wallside, the Plazas, the mining district, and Startown.

**Wallside:** The major middle-class residential area in Leedor is Wallside. It includes large numbers of apartments separated by small parks, schools, and stores providing food and sundries. A great deal of business is conducted from these apartments via computer terminal. The standard of living in Wallside is relatively high.

**The Plazas:** These are three areas of upper-class residential apartments and estates. Separated from the city proper by a restricted number of entrance ways, the Plazas are small areas isolated from the everyday routine of the city. Each of the three separate areas has its own parks, guards, and facilities. The Plazas are for the idle rich, the powerful executives, and their families. Entrance is allowed only upon invitation from a resident.

**The Mining District:** Here are the slums of Leedor. Some portions are no more than unfinished rock walls, while others are haphazardly partitioned by curtains or foam packaging material. In many cases, the slidewalks are not functioning or have never been installed. Non-residents are advised not to enter the area or, if they must, only in groups of four or more.

**Startown:** The edges of Startown are indistinct. Closest to the starport are a variety of establishments that cater to the starport trade, supplying food and drink, entertainment, spacefarer's goods, and novelties from Aramis. The quality of Startown improves the farther one goes from the starport gate until (several blocks away) one finally finds quality lodging and decent food.

## BUSINESS DISTRICTS

The city of Leedor has three business districts: Downtown, Startown, and the Mining District. Startown and the Mining District are also residential areas.

**Downtown:** This area flanks Founder's Way and is the city's major commercial district. Prominent corporations, banks, and stores maintain quarters along Founder's Way; the most prestigious locations are closer to the Marquis' Palace and directly on the Way. Other companies must be satisfied with stores farther afield.

**The Mining District:** If one cares to visit it, this area can be the source of reasonable bargains, if one is not too scrupulous about buying stolen goods or receiving substandard items.

**Startown:** Catering as it does to the spacefarer, Startown has a greater variety of goods of direct interest to them including vacc suits, basic life support items, and other equipment for spaceships and their crews.

## THE MARQUIS'S PALACE

At the head of Founder's Way is the Marquis's Palace—an elegant structure built in the years following the Civil War and the Second Frontier War. Unlike other structures in the city—which rise floor to ceiling within the tunnel—the palace

is built under a domed portion of the old mines and has a roof and clear space between the roof and the ceiling of the tunnels. Spectacularly lit, the palace is a showplace of beauty as well as a seat of government.

**The Marquis of Aramis:** As an Imperial noble, the Marquis Leonard Bolden-Tukera of Aramis holds his patent directly from the Emperor, although the channels of allegiance provide (and require) fealty to intervening nobles between him and the Emperor. The Marquisate is a hereditary position which, on Aramis, has made him ruler of the planet.

The Marquis owes allegiance to the Count Knowln of Celepina (in nearby Rhylanor subsector), who in turn owes allegiance to the Duke of Rhylanor, one of several Dukes in the Spinward Marches.

The Marquis, as head of the feudal technocracy of Aramis, grants a variety of subordinate positions in city government to citizens of Aramis and Leedor in return for money, pledges of loyalty, and other services.

### OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Leedor is full of interesting places and things to see. The two weeks that the group spends in the city should probably be full of opportunities to see new things and meet new people.

**The Mines:** Visitors have an opportunity to see large scale ore extraction in progress.

**Cavern Park:** At the north end of the city, situated just beyond the residential district of Wallside, is Cavern Park—a natural cavern encountered early in the mining history of the city. The natural beauty of the cave led to its preservation (actually, about two-thirds of the cavern was destroyed by mining and excavation; much of it is now the building-filled portion of Wallside) as a park for all in the city to enjoy. The stalactite/stalagmite formations and the precipitated minerals on its walls and floors make it a thing of beauty. At the entrance to the cavern (a sidewalk leads about half-way in) a souvenir shop sells small electronic flashers—each has a battery that lasts about a half-hour; tourists enjoy observing the fluorescent patterns that the flashers produce. In addition, several walls within the cavern have large sections of fluorescent minerals; a flasher set off to cast a shadow will leave a lingering shadow on the wall, to the delight of visitors.

A warning on the flasher warns its use may be dangerous to the eyes and to exercise care to avoid temporary or permanent blindness. Referee: When the flasher is used in any situation where it is unexpected, throw victim's dexterity or less to avoid temporary blindness (1D minutes). Temporary blindness causes the individual to be unable to run, maneuver with any accuracy, or fire weapons with accuracy. Apply a DM of -6 to hit with gunfire and -8 to hit with blade weapons.

**Downtown:** This area contains theaters with live productions of plays as well as filmed and holographic versions of classic literature. Ticket prices vary from Cr1-10.

**Escanil Park:** In the center of Leedor is a large, serene park (open to a limited number of individuals for a fee of Cr5 each) with live creatures and holographic imitations combined to trick the eye.

**The Museum of Aramis:** The local museum covers the history of the world, as well as showing other interesting facts about the universe.

**The Library:** The starport library contains large amounts of information about the subsector beyond the Aramis Trace.

### SPECTACULAR CRASH

Early during the players' stay in Leedor, all mass media transmissions will be interrupted to report that an incoming freighter in the outer atmosphere has suffered a major drive failure and is expected to suffer catastrophic reentry. All regular programming is preempted for live news coverage of the event. Considerable public interest in the event is in evidence, and many locals comment that nothing like this has ever happened before.

During the next hour, continuous coverage is provided. Information is at first fragmentary, but gradually the following data is confirmed: the ship will not hit Leedor (to the considerable relief of everyone listening). The crew has evacuated in the ship's pinnace and is safe. There is insufficient time for salvage vessels to intercept, match velocity, and effect a recovery. Finally, a naval vessel provides live pictures of the spectacular crash of the vessel, already breaking up from the extreme heat of reentry.

Follow-up news reports that day and in subsequent days provide the following additional information: the ship which crashed was the *Mammoth*, a 5,000 ton freighter of the *Hercules* 8000 class belonging to Akerut Lines. The navy is pressing for an investigation of the crash, as the ship was carrying two type-J meson guns for the naval base on Aramis. Investigation of the crash site reveals little, the combination of a high speed fall from 200 kilometers and the effects of a corrosive atmosphere left little to examine. Questioning of the crew and a formal hearing seem to indicate incompetence on the part of the chief engineer, Jelika Chan. By the time the players depart Aramis, Chan's picture has been repeatedly displayed on televised news programs and an inquiry results in the recommendation of permanently revoking her engineer's papers.

### THE WALLET

The group should have an ample opportunity to tour Leedor for several days, doing whatever they find interesting. Eventually, however, the referee should begin the action of the campaign; it starts simply enough with a lost wallet found by one of the group.

Throw 9+ daily for the group to find a small wallet containing several identification cards, money (about Cr1,000), and a TAS membership card. The owner is Roet Bannerji, listed as an independent merchant captain. The local starship information service lists him as Master of the *Wolblutn*, a far trader currently in port.

Calling the *Wolblutn* for Bannerji produces a confirmation that he is indeed Master of the ship, but that he is not aboard at the moment. In an unguarded exchange, the 4th officer handling the call says Captain Bannerji has gone to see the local manager of Sternmetal Horizons, LIC.

In the wallet is a message on computer print-out paper:



Dear Mr. Smith,

Your vacation reservations have been confirmed, and your itinerary includes Pysadi, Zila, Carsten, Pavanne, Nasemin, Jesedipere, and then the Vargr Extents to beautiful Scangen. Your return journey will be back through Jesedipere to Junidy.

Your cousin on Aramanx has asked that you depart from your itinerary and pick up the additional luggage he referred to in his last letter. He also says that he hopes you will prolong your stay there for several weeks and then travel to Junidy by way of Nasemin.

Enjoy your vacation!  
Walker, Horizon Travel

Calling on the captain later in the day, they are escorted under close guard to the captain's cabin, with no chance to tour the ship. Presenting him with the wallet will produce a momentary check of its contents—he seems to care not about the cards and cash, but about the papers. Throw 6+ for one of the group to notice a sigh of relief once the message is found. He pockets the wallet and expresses gratitude; then he writes out a small voucher and asks the group to join him for supper that night at the Travellers' Aid Society. The voucher is a pass which will gain them admission. As the group leaves his office, he is reaching for the communicator.

**Dinner at the TAS:** Upon arrival at the TAS, the group is shown to a table and the meal begins, although the captain has not shown up. The maitre d' conveys the captain's apologies; he was forced to leave with his ship on short notice. A check of the starport records will show that the *Wolblutn* lifted minutes after the group left the captain's office.

**An Intriguing Offer:** The morning after their dinner at the Travellers' Aid Society, the party is contacted by a man identifying himself as Eneri Giilaan, who asks to meet them at lunch in a small restaurant downtown. When they arrive, he mentions that he was at the TAS the night before (one of the characters remembers him on a throw of 10+), and overheard them mention that they were guests of Captain Bannerji.

Giilaan claims to be a former business partner of Bannerji's who dissolved the association after Bannerji became involved in dealings with Sternmetal Horizons, LIC, a megacorporation which has, in Giilaan's opinion, a record of highly questionable business policies. Bannerji and Sternmetal still owe Giilaan a great deal of money, and he has an interest in keeping tabs on Bannerji's activities.

The adventurers are asked if they would be willing to discuss their association with Bannerji, and he offers them money—Cr100 apiece—if they'll share information on the captain. They are free to answer or not as they please.

If the adventurers are at all helpful, Giilaan goes further, saying that he's very interested in Bannerji. If anyone in the group thinks of anything concerning the captain or his activities, or learns anything new, they are invited to contact Giilaan again through a message service at the Junidy starport. He gives them a card with his name and a code number to access the service. He will see to it that further information is reimbursed suitably. There's no question of his wanting them to do anything out of the ordinary—this is strictly something they should consider if the opportunity arises.

## THE MUSEUM OF ARAMIS

The Museum of Aramis occupies one city block in the underground city of Leedor in an otherwise unremarkable business district. Its walls blend well with the neo-Imperial style (smooth walls with a band of bas-relief sculpture at eye level) of this portion of the city. The museum is situated several blocks off the major traffic routes, but comfortably close to the Escanil Park. On school days, the local educational institutions often bring children to see the exhibits, which are changed frequently. The Museum of Aramis is a science and technology oriented museum, with exhibits on the physical universe and the technological environment in which the citizens of Aramis live.

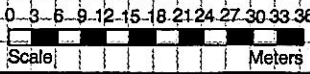
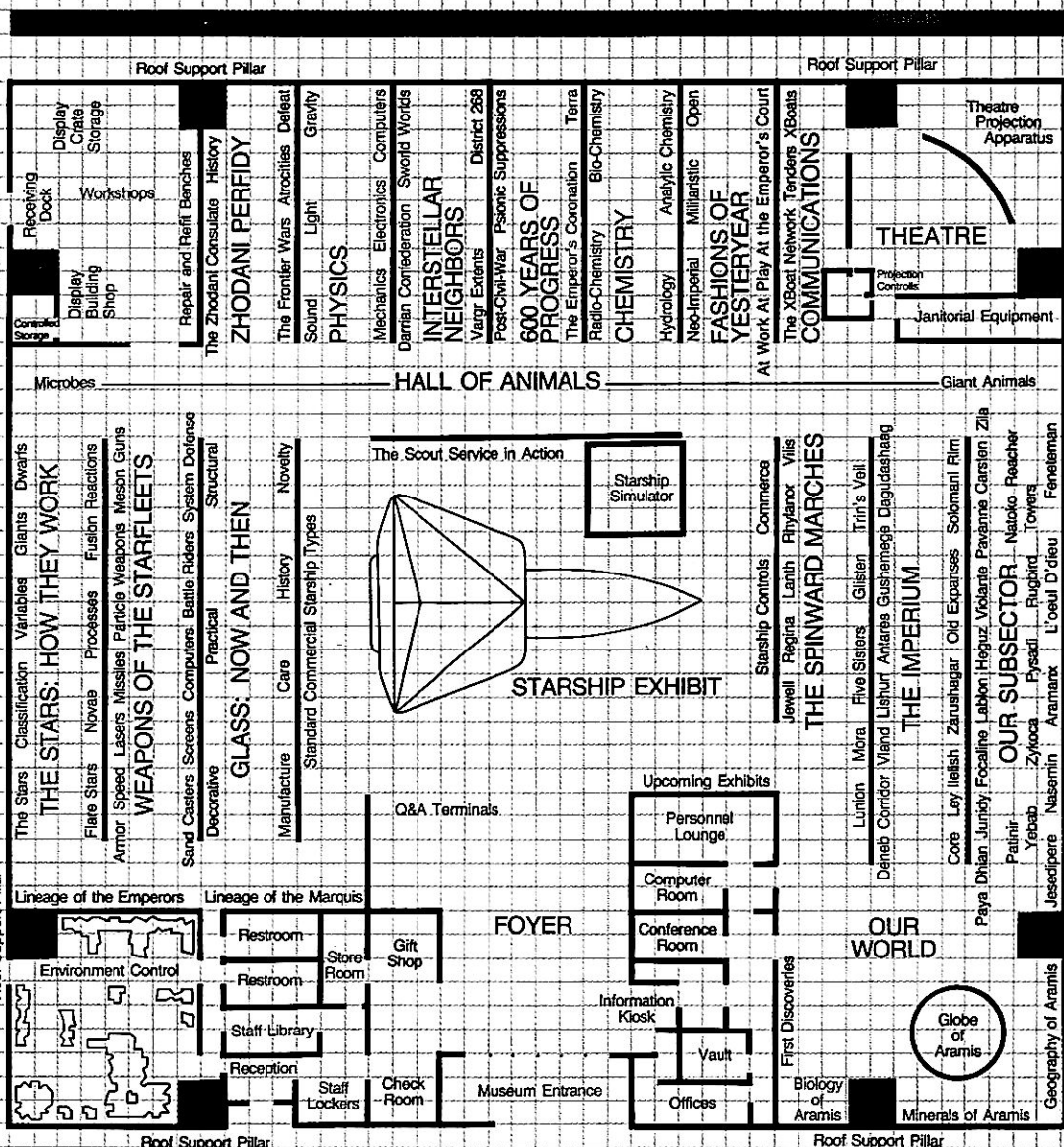
The museum complex entrance leads directly into an imposing foyer providing a dominating view of the major exhibit: an early scout ship of the type which originally surveyed Aramis in 305. Flanking the foyer are the museum offices, gift shop, check room, question and answer terminals, and an information kiosk. Beyond, in the interior of the museum, are many long galleries providing exhibits of interesting aspects of the universe.

Each exhibit in the Museum of Aramis has a prerecorded commentary, which is broadcast to small headsets rented at the entrance to the museum. A visitor dons these earphones and walks around the museum. When the earphones enter the area near an exhibit, they receive the commentary for that exhibit. Different languages have different frequencies, and a visitor can have an earphone set for a given frequency at the time of rental.

Most of the exhibits in the museum are prepared by off-planet agencies (such as large universities, major Imperial museums, government bodies such as the scout service's contact and liaison branch, and special interest groups such as manufacturers' organizations) and are sent on long term loan to small museums such as this one. In this way the museum gets better exhibits than it could prepare on its own.

**The Hall of Animals** contains stuffed animals and





# MUSEUM of ARAMIS



holographic displays of dozens of interesting animals from all over the Imperium. The exhibit stresses how similar environments on different planets can produce animals which are externally very much alike, but which differ radically in other respects.

**Our World** is designed with lower educational levels in mind. The centerpiece of the exhibit is a large globe of Aramis, with the chief points of interest marked with glowing lights. Other displays include a holographic diorama of the founding of the first colony on Aramis. Other displays show plants, animals, and minerals native to the planet, and short presentations of geology, history, and other topics of local interest.

**Our Subsector** contains a holographic starmap of Aramis subsector, more dioramas of major historical events in the subsector, and displays of interesting geological features of the worlds of the subsector. It also contains a large animated map illustrating the products of the subsector and the patterns of interstellar trade, both within the subsector and with other parts of the Imperium.

**The Imperium** is designed to impress the population with the power and majesty of the Imperium, and to instill pride and patriotism in its citizens. The displays concentrate on the history and settlement of the Spinward Marches, and the importance of the region to the Imperium.

**The Stars: How They Work** deals with the birth and evolution of stars and planetary systems. The displays show how fusion works, how elements are created inside stars, and

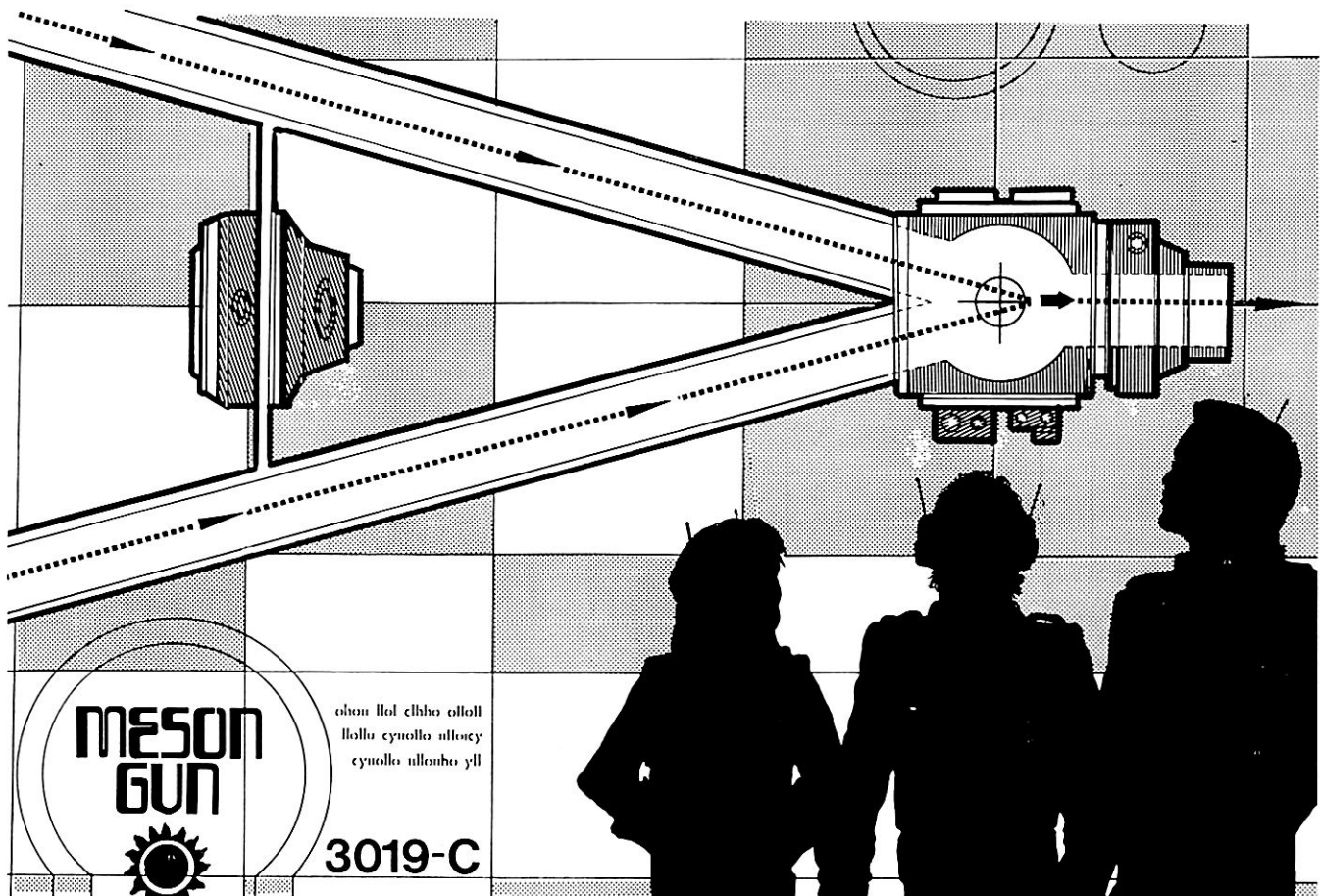
the life cycles of the various types of stars. The exhibit has a magnificent holographic display of the various ways different sorts of stars die.

**Weapons of the Starfleets** is a display sponsored by Ling-Standard, and is designed to acquaint the general public with the various main armaments employed on large starships (and to serve as a subtle advertisement for Ling-Standard's products). A key feature of the display is a scale model of a type J meson accelerator, sectioned in half and labeled with colored lights and holographic gimmicks.

**Glass: Then and Now** is sponsored by the megacorporation Makhidkarun and the Ceramics Institute of Sylea to serve as an advertisement for various manufacturers' luxury crystal products, to display the works of some of Makhidkarun's artisans, and to provide an educational exhibit (and subsequent tax write-offs) for local manufacturers. The displays contain dioramas showing the history of glass manufacture, and hundreds of examples of stained glass window, tableware, crystal sculpture, and other artistic use of glass and ceramic materials.

**Zhodani Perfidy** is a description of Zhodani culture, government, and society, slanted heavily towards the Imperial view. The displays are designed to sway public opinion against the Zhodani consulate, and demonstrate Zhodani aggression with regards to the Spinward Marches. Holographic displays of major battles and scenes of Zhodani atrocities are predominant.

**Physical Principles** is an exhibit aimed at the elementary



school level, and is designed to explain fundamental laws of physics. Exhibits explain the basics by means of animated displays, hands-on exhibits and demonstrations, and simple question and answer games.

**600 Years of Progress** examines key inventions of the last six centuries, with emphasis on the improving quality of life over that span. Small holographic dioramas depict the discovery of each invention; and the commentary knits all of them together into a coherent sweep demonstrating the continual improvement of the standard of living.

**Fashions of Yesteryear** depicts the history of costume from the beginning of history to the present, covering swings of fashion for the major cultures of the Imperium in an interesting and educational way.

**Interstellar Neighbors** deals with the major and minor races of the Imperium, their characteristics, their histories, and how they all live together in harmony. This exhibit is sponsored by the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service's Contact and Liaison Branch as a means of reducing interspecies conflict and misunderstanding.

**Communications** explains the means by which information is sent over distances, with dioramas demonstrating major communications systems of the past and present. Working models of primitive and modern communications devices are available for hands-on study by visitors.

Several parts of the museum are not open to the public. A large environment control area provides ventilation, temperature, and humidity controls for the museum's interior. Several workshops occupy a back room of the complex.

To the left of the main entrance is a small entry from outside leading to a reception room, and on to the staff library, the environment controls, and the restrooms. This entry also provides a rear entrance to the gift shop and check room for employees.

Inside the main foyer, to the right, are the main offices of the museum including conference rooms, a computer room, offices for staff and executives, and a vault for the storage of items not on display.

### THE VARGR ARGUMENT

As the adventurers leave the museum they must pass through the main foyer. The adventurers should stop here for a while, perhaps to buy something in the gift shop, pick up items checked earlier, or to inquire about something at the information desk.

Behind the information desk is a suite of offices for the museum administration. Loud noises are coming from an open doorway; the group can discern the voices of a human and a very angry Vargr.

Human: "I am sorry, sir. The matter is out of my hands."

Vargr: "That brooch is mine. You have no business with it."

Human: "The museum has procured the item through legitimate channels, and our bylaws prohibit disposal . . ."

Vargr: "Bylaws! Thursuth Gha Kfaekh—get me the brooch before I rip your ears off!"

At that moment, two uniformed museum guards appear and enter the office. A few seconds later they emerge, dragging the kicking and screaming Vargr. They pummel the



creature in an effort to keep him quiet and under control. Finally, they throw the individual out the front door of the museum; he picks himself up, steps on the slidewalk, and is soon out of sight.

One of the party notices a tall individual loitering at the front entrance who immediately stops reading a magazine and walks off in the same direction as the Vargr.

If the group elects to follow the Vargr as well, throw 10+ per block to lose their quarry. The Vargr will proceed to the Cross-Town Link and then to Startown. In all probability, the group will not be able to follow the Vargr all the way to his cheap room in a small hotel in Startown.

### THE WAYLAI D VARGR

Some hours after losing the trail of the Vargr, the adventurers will wander through the city taking care of their own business. That business may take them to the business district, Startown, one of the local bases, and perhaps the shipyard. Ideally, the encounter should take place in Startown, but can easily be administered in the business district.

From down a service corridor littered with trash comes a low moan. In the dim light can be seen a Vargr sprawled across several fibre boxes. He has been soundly beaten.

Throw 11+ for one or more (1D-2; minimum 1) assailants to still be present standing over the Vargr. If so, a fight may follow as the assailants make their exit.

The Vargr has been severely wounded in the course of the beating, and is now unconscious. The ideal choice is to take the Vargr back to the group's ship or to a hotel room. There, he can be nursed back to health and persuaded to tell his story.

The Vargr, after competent medical care, is sufficiently recovered to talk to the band of adventurers. If Gvoudzon is a player character, the player should be introduced now and should tell his story to the others; if Gvoudzon is a non-player character, the referee should tell the story.

**The Assailants:** Gvoudzon's attackers cannot be identified from any evidence at the scene. However, one of the thugs is tall and seems familiar. If the players don't figure it out on their own, the referee should tell them that this person is the one who followed Gvoudzon from the museum.

Although there is no way for the adventurers to find out, these thugs are Vemene agents: members of Tukera's covert security agency. The local Vemene office received a bulletin from its headquarters on Junidy about a month ago, directing them to watch for Gvoudzon, observe him if found, and locate the brooch. When Gvoudzon was spotted (only in the last few days), they sent an immediate notification to Junidy and surveillance began.

Agents have been following Gvoudzon constantly since then. When the decision was made to move in, Gvoudzon's hotel room was ransacked while other agents searched his person and questioned him.

When the assault was foiled and the thugs sent fleeing, the Vemene lost track of Gvoudzon's location. They are maintaining surveillance where he works (the Naasirka shipyards), his hotel, and the starport. If he returns to any of these places, they will tail him.

If any of the group is seen in Gvoudzon's company by Vemene agents, the entire party is in deep trouble. They will almost certainly be identified and traced to the *March*

*Harrier*. The *Harrier* will be traced from port to port, and the Vemene will turn its resources against the adventurers. These resources are large enough that they will almost certainly succeed in recovering the brooch. For this reason, it is imperative to the adventure that the Vemene not connect Gvoudzon with the rest of the group.

The thugs attacking Gvoudzon didn't get a good enough look to identify any of the adventurers, but that won't happen again. Gvoudzon must not return to his room, to Naasirka, or to the starport and should be kept generally out of sight. If the players don't think of these options on their own the referee must help them.

**The Brooch:** Gvoudzon's brooch is a small, delicately made piece of wood and metal. The metal base is a framework of engraved silver and copper; the main body of the brooch is composed of three pieces of highly polished

howood, each of a different color. Howood is an exceptionally beautiful wood of emphatic grain marked by deep colors. In addition, howood is strongly aromatic, and its scent is pleasing to humans and Vargr. The brooch measures about 50mm by 70mm and is about 15mm thick.

Fastened on the front of the brooch are four gems in a line along its longer axis. The largest is zircon, cut with many facets. The two smaller stones flanking it are also zircon. The oval stone is polished obsidian. None of the gems is of any great value. Inlaid under the topmost of the small zircons is a sheet of some greenish material which fluoresces under ultraviolet light.

At the back is a clasp for pinning the brooch to clothing and a small loop for attachment to a chain.

Very careful examination will reveal two small compartments within the brooch. One is opened by twisting the

clasp counter-clockwise to reveal a shallow depression which could carry a small slip of paper or microfilm. The other is opened by squeezing the silver framework while holding down the chain loop and is a deeply drilled hole. Gvoudzon knows of the shallow depression; the deep hole is unknown but could be discovered by experiment on 12+, DMs +1 if intelligence 10+; +1 if dexterity 10+. Throw once per 15 minutes of experimentation. These compartments are diversions and serve no actual purpose. A radiation counter will register slight radioactivity emanating from a small area of the metal framework; this is also misdirection.

The back of the brooch is polished smooth. Neatly stamped on the surface is the number 86 and no other identifying marks. The brooch exhibits fine workmanship and is worth perhaps Cr2,500 as a piece of jewelry.

## RECOVERING THE BROOCH

Gvoudzon should be anxious to recover "his property", and the rest of the adventurers should be intrigued by the mystery and the suggestion that the brooch might be very valuable to someone. The obvious next step is a burglary. If anyone expresses moral reservations, Gvoudzon should point out that it's only an attempt to recover what rightfully belongs to him.

Clever adventurers will find out as much information as possible and prepare a detailed plan before setting out.

**Research:** The party may decide to do research on the Museum of Aramis and anything else that may seem pertinent. The following information is available through local





## The Traveller Adventure

computer data terminals with about four hours work. Cost for the research is Cr40 per hour.

1. Floor plans for all major public complexes, including the museum.

2. A history of the museum.

3. A list of donors and supporters of the museum, including Tukera (the first small clue of their involvement) as well as many other corporations and individuals.

4. A copy of the museum's standard procedures for treatment of new acquisitions; careful reading will lead to the conclusion that the brooch would probably be in the vault or in one of the workshops.

5. The museum's hours: The museum, like most local businesses, closes down during the six-hour period when the slidewalks are stopped, which is as close as Leedor comes to night.

6. A list of museum employees, which will reveal that there is only one "night" watchman.

**Planning:** Detailed planning of the burglary is of the utmost importance. Plans should include all details of how the crime will be committed. The referee should know exactly what equipment the group will carry on their escapade and how they intend to use it. The group must specify which individuals will participate and which will not. Any attempts to conceal the fact or nature of the crime, establish alibis, or divert suspicion should also be detailed.

**A Fake Brooch:** One possibility which may occur to the players is to conceal the very existence of their burglary by substituting a fake brooch for the original. It should be possible to construct a reasonable imitation; Gvoudzon knows what the brooch looks like and can provide a sufficient description.

Throw 11+ per day to successfully fashion a brooch which Gvoudzon believes will deceive the museum staff, DMs + mechanical skill and + forgery skill. If the fake brooch and the real brooch are placed side by side, on 10+ Gvoudzon's memory was faulty and the fake is not good enough to fool anyone. Otherwise, the fake will survive cursory scrutiny, and the theft will not be discovered for 1D days.

**Execution:** It is easy to assume that the museum will have some elementary protections against burglary. Remember that there were armed guards to throw the Vargr out.

Breaking in an exterior door will trip an alarm unless countered by an individual with electronic skill. Picking the lock on the door (lock pick kit and mechanical skill) will gain entrance without tripping the alarm. Interior doors can be forced by anyone on 9+ (involves a simple slipping of a plastic card into the jamb). The vault door requires access to the computer (throw 10+ per two minutes; DM + computer skill) or cutting with a laser carbine or rifle (it will probably take about 50 shots to get the vault door off the hinges) to open.

Hiding in the museum until after closing is possible. Throw 7+ for one crew member to successfully hide during the final closing procedure, DM - 1 for each additional individual trying to hide. The hidden character can then open a door and allow others in or can make the search alone.

Searching the vault will find the brooch on a throw of 8+ each minute of search. Searching the workshops will find the brooch on a throw of 10+ for each minute of search.

## Leedor on Aramis

The brooch will be immediately obvious if on display in the Interstellar Neighbors Vargr gallery. If kept in the offices, it will be in the center desk drawer.

Roll on the brooch location table to determine where the brooch is actually kept at the moment.

### Brooch Location Table

| Die Roll | Location                       |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| 2        | Interstellar Neighbors Display |
| 3-7      | Workshops                      |
| 8-10     | Vault                          |
| 11-12    | Director's Office              |

**Guards:** The museum has a single night watchman making the rounds every hour. Throw 10+ to encounter the watchman; assume the group has surprise unless they are being very lax in security.

**Unforeseen Circumstances:** Throw 11+ for a researcher to be working late at the museum (either at the Q&A terminals or at the computer itself). This researcher will be scared and thus helpful, but will use the first opportunity to use a communicator to call the police.

**The Director's Office:** Hidden in the center drawer of the director's desk is an xmail message which should interest the adventurers. It is reproduced below.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                         |                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>XBOAT MESSAGE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                         | 1. Date of Preparation<br>335-1104 |
| 2. Addressee<br>MUSEUM OF ARAMIS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3. Destination<br>LEEDOR, ARAMIS/ARAMIS |                                    |
| <small>Instructions: Use the space below for written communications using the standard Anglic character set. The message will be optically sensed and transmitted to the addressee above.</small>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                         |                                    |
| 4. Message Text                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                         |                                    |
| <p>MESSAGE ALERT: THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION, TUKERA LINES, HAS AN URGENT NEED FOR SMALL DECORATIVE BROOCHES OF THE KIND PICTURED ON THE ACCOMPANYING FACSIMILE IN CONNECTION WITH AN ART RESEARCH PROJECT. ANY REASONABLE PRICE WILL BE PAID (TRADE CODE LEVEL GAMMA) FOR PRIME EXAMPLES OF THIS ARTIFACT, IN ADDITION TO A 40 PERCENT FINDER'S FEE. COMMUNICATE BY MOST DIRECT MEANS AVAILABLE WITH TUKERA LINES SUBSECTOR MAIN OFFICE, JUNIDY/ARAMIS. ATTENTION: ART PROJECT.</p> |                                         |                                    |

**The Escape:** Throw 10+ as the group leaves the museum for them to be spotted by someone, possibly the police.



## RESOLUTION

If the group has planned properly, the burglary should have been committed just before their scheduled departure.

**Cargo and Passengers:** The local broker has secured a cargo of 200 tons for shipment to Natoko. The referee should follow standard procedures to determine the number of passengers; there will probably be very few.

**Concealing Gvoudzon:** It should be obvious to the players that Gvoudzon must be smuggled on board the *March Harrier*, to evade both the police and the unknown parties who have been following him.

After its overhaul, the *March Harrier* will be transferred from the Naasirka yard to the starport. As is known to be standard procedure, customs agents will search the ship thoroughly prior to loading cargo. As a result, it will be necessary to keep Gvoudzon off the ship until after the inspection.

Getting Gvoudzon on board without detection will be difficult, and many different plans may be considered by the players. The following are some of the possibilities; imaginative players may think of others.

Gvoudzon could be disguised and board as a passenger. Such a disguise must include documents giving him another identity. To get through customs, the identity must be that of another Vargr actually on Aramis at the time; the starport computer checks all departures against previous arrivals, anyone who attempts to depart without previously having arrived will be detained for questioning. If Gvoudzon takes another Vargr's place, the fraud will be discovered when the other Vargr attempts to leave Aramis and police will be on the *Harrier's* trail; roll 1D for the number of weeks passing before discovery. Of course, it might be possible to bribe another Vargr to sell his identification to Gvoudzon and remain on Aramis for several months. The false identity plan has a definite flaw, however. The number of Vargr on Aramis is small. Once the police (and the Vemene) have established that Gvoudzon is no longer on Aramis, suspicion will naturally fall on the few Vargr who left the planet after the burglary. At most, this plan can only delay and confuse the pursuit.

Gvoudzon could probably prevail on one of his acquaintances at Naasirka (he worked there ferrying cutters to orbit) to take him into orbit to rendezvous with the *March Harrier*. This plan has the disadvantage that the Vemene agents will see Gvoudzon enter the Naasirka yards and never come out; they should be able to find and question the friend. Even

if he knows nothing about the ship that picked Gvoudzon up, starport traffic reports should allow the Vemene to make a good guess as to the *March Harrier's* identity.

Another option is to bribe a customs official to let Gvoudzon into the starport without reporting it. Again, this has the disadvantage that someone knows the truth and may eventually reveal it.

Gvoudzon may be smuggled onto the ship hidden inside a crate; problems arise if customs agents decide to search the crate.

Perhaps the best plan is a combination of the previous two: Gvoudzon could be concealed in a crate and customs officials could be bribed to pass it through without inspection, under the impression that it contains some other form of contraband. The officials have an incentive to conceal their participation in a crime, and at any rate know nothing about Gvoudzon. The only problem with this plan is the risk generally attendant to bribery.

**Police Reaction:** After the burglary is discovered, Gvoudzon is the natural suspect. If he is still on Aramis, it will become even more difficult to get him off. After 10 days of search fails to uncover Gvoudzon, bulletins will be sent to Natoko, Reacher, Vinorian, and L'oeul d'Dieu instructing local authorities to watch for him. If the *March Harrier* does not leave Natoko before the bulletin arrives, there may be problems with local authorities.

If the other adventurers have been seen in Gvoudzon's company or if clues were left at the scene of the crime (fingerprints, for instance) they will be identified as the crew of the *March Harrier* and will also become suspects. A bulletin will be sent immediately (within 5 days of discovery of the crime or of evidence of the *March Harrier's* involvement) to the ship's stated destination, asking authorities to detain the ship. If the *March Harrier* leaves Natoko before the bulletin arrives, the message will be sent on to Patinir (at jump-2) after 1D weeks more delay. Since Patinir's government controls only a small portion of the Patinir system, the *Harrier* may be able to evade further pursuit there.

To the Aramian police, the burglary is not a particularly important crime and major resources will not be expended in pursuit of the perpetrators offworld.

**Next:** The *March Harrier* is carrying a cargo to Natoko, where the next chapter, *In Search of Longer Legs*, takes place.

# In Search of Longer Legs

This chapter is a brief respite intended to provide the band of adventurers with something that they need, and which will allow the forward progress of the entire campaign: fuel tanks that will allow their ship to cross a jump-2 gap in two successive jump-1 hops.

## NATOKO

Natoko (0809-B582211-8) is a moderate-sized world along the Aramis Trace. Approximately 8,000 km in diameter, it has a dense atmosphere and shallow seas covering 20% of its surface.

Natoko is relatively uninhabited; its population is less than a thousand, virtually all employees or dependents of Tukera Lines, which operates a starship overhaul service on the world. Local law level prohibits the grosser forms of violence but generally leaves behavior as a matter between individuals. Natoko's technological capabilities are low (tech level 8), but the starport is capable of performing its routine tasks.

## DISTRESSING NEWS

Upon reaching Natoko, the crew finds that the local starport is jammed with traffic, which it appears to be ill-equipped to handle. Landing at the starport is simple enough, but constant delays and system overload soon show the group that they have a problem. Once cargo is offloaded and any passengers disembarked, the local brokerage agent indicates that all outgoing cargos have already been booked for the next few weeks. The agent goes on to explain that there has been a sudden influx (over the past month) of Tukera and Akerut liners and ore carriers into the system for overhaul and annual maintenance. Indeed, the shipyard is backed up for weeks, and as the ships come out of refit, they take what cargo and passengers there are waiting to go outsystem. There is precious little left for the independents to carry, and a lot of ships are leaving the system empty.

The current choices seem to be get on the waiting list and leave in a month or two with some cargo and passengers or leave the system now, empty.

## A NEW ALTERNATIVE

Later that day, another broker calls the ship with a request that the captain meet him in a local tavern in about an hour. He has a proposition.

The broker, Ulrich Baseru, is a rival of Gyles Honsen, with whom the *Harrier* had been doing business previously. Honsen has established a firm relationship with Tukera Lines by offering kickbacks to the local administrators and giving Tukera preferential treatment in assigning the few cargos shipped out from Natoko.

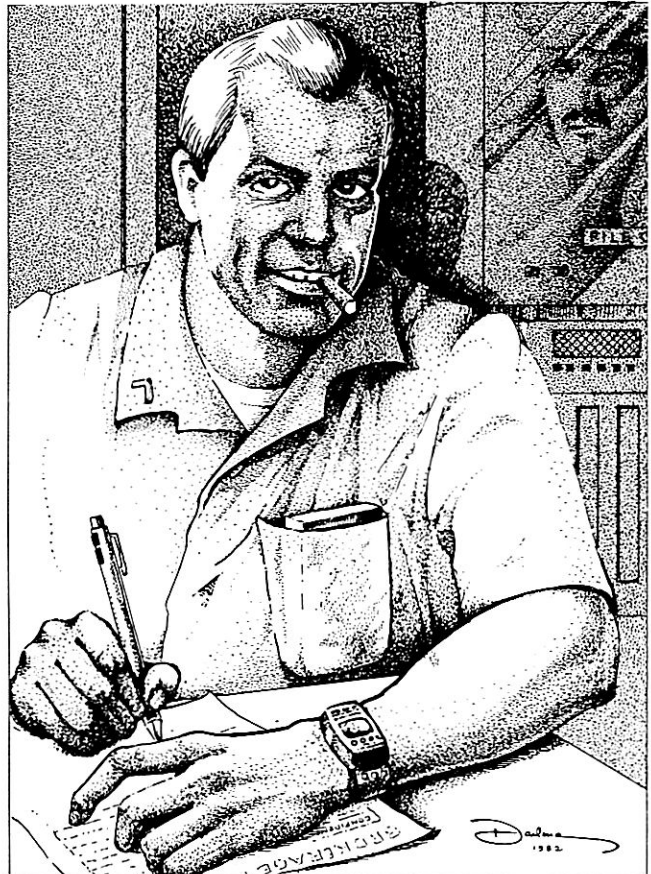
Baseru has been struggling against Honsen's domination of the market for some time. Now he has heard rumors of a potential strike in the Patinir Belt. Such a strike would almost certainly produce large quantities of useful metals

(including silver, some gold, and other useful metals) for consumption by industry. If he can get in on the bottom floor (and he thinks he can), then he can make a double coup—participation in the return based on mining the metals and brokerage commissions for shipment of the goods, hopefully to Natoko and then to Rhylanor subsector for processing. Besides, he wants to show up Honsen.

Baseru is not especially well capitalized; his resources are quite low, and he has always been running second best to Honsen. Nevertheless, he manages to deal with ships passing through Natoko because Honsen funnels his jobs through Tukera.

In this case, Baseru does have some potential. He has three asteroid prospectors in the Patinir Belt currently looking for a lode, and they keep sending him glowing reports, even if they are not totally accurate.

The three prospectors in the Patinir Belt are each in-



dependently seeking out a rich strike, and each has a chance of success or failure. Baseru has supplied each with a stake and has a 30% share in their success if they achieve it. He does, however, need to keep shipping supplies to them.

All three prospectors are running low on supplies, and he needs to provide each with 40 tons of prepackaged supplies within a very few weeks or they will quit and move on. Rather than leave the system empty, he suggests that the group carry the goods for him to Patinir.

### PROBLEMS

Baseru wants the cargo carried for no charge. If pressed, he is willing to pay up to Cr500 per ton for the shipment of the goods.

In any case, he has a better deal. A previous client of his demounted and stored a set of demountable fuel tanks, with a total capacity of 50 tons, in his warehouse and has not returned for them for over 12 months. Since the storage charges have mounted up, he is prepared to sell them to recoup the charges. His price: Cr18,500 (that's the standard price for a year's storage). They would cost Cr50,000 new. If pressed, he's willing to turn them over to the group in return for carrying the goods to Patinir Belt. The last is a fairly good deal; the crew's share of the transport of 120 tons of cargo at standard rates would be Cr60,000, and Cr50,000 (more or less) is a fair return to salvage from this disastrous situation. Besides, the crew has reasons to want to leave the area.

Now the tanks need to be installed. That calls for labor at the local starport, which probably can't handle the job immediately (one week, Cr500). The crew can install them in two weeks for free. Baseru has no additional funds to assist in this task.

**Cargo and Passengers:** Roll for additional cargo and passengers on the correct tables in *The Traveller Book*. However, the indicated numbers are available after six weeks of waiting, rather than one.

Baseru is a difficult wheeler-dealer and is hard to get along with. Handling him would probably not be worth it except that this world holds little for the group to do without him, and he does have demountable tanks on hand.

**Demountable Tanks:** Extra fuel tanks can be installed inside a ship to increase its fuel capacity. They take up space in the ship's cargo hold (regardless of whether they are full or empty), reducing the ship's cargo capacity. Demountable tanks may be fabricated at any class A or B starport in 10 weeks at a cost of Cr1,000 per ton. Once installed, they may be demounted by professionals at any class A, B, C, or D starport for Cr10 per ton or by the ship's crew in two weeks at no cost. Remounting costs are the same. Once demounted, the tanks must be stored and safeguarded; storage costs average Cr10 per day per ton.

Once installed on the *March Harrier*, the tanks reduce its cargo capacity from 200 tons to 150. They would be installed in the center of the cargo

hold, as shown on the deck plans in the chapter entitled *The March Harrier*.

**Off the Subsidy Route:** The players should be aware that once they leave their subsidy route (by going to Patinir Belt) they start using up their 80-week period allowed for travels. At the end of 80 weeks, they will have to return to the subsidy route.

### REWARDS

In addition to acquiring a set of demountable tanks for the ship, the crew of the *March Harrier* can potentially acquire several other benefits.

If any of the prospectors strike it rich, their ship is available to help transport metals outsystem and supplies insystem. That could be a money maker. Moreover, such situations often allow an element of speculation—buying goods cheap, paying cargo prices to carry them, and then selling them at high prices and pocketing the profits rather than splitting the proceeds with the subsidy holder.

**Next:** The *March Harrier* is taking a cargo to Patinir Belt, subject of the next chapter.



# Patinir Belt

This chapter, beginning the adventurers' sojourn off their old subsidy route, features a brush with the trail of the far trader *Wolblutn*.

The chapter begins with the arrival of the *March Harrier* and its crew in the Patinir system.

## PATINIR

Patinir (0807-C000632-9) is an asteroid belt on the very edge of the Aramis subsector. Dominated by a large gas giant, the system has only a few small planets and satellites, all of little importance. Circling the central star, however, is a broad asteroid belt which is the primary source of mineral wealth in the system. In orbit ahead of, as well as trailing, the gas giant are accumulations of asteroids at the Trojan points. These Trojan points are each the site of a self-contained space colony of about 480,000 persons population. Effectively identical, the space colonies each operate a refinery/smelter which processes ore taken from the larger asteroid belt which orbits starward of the gas giant.

The government of Patinir is a select board of directors controlled by the colony owners (descendants and heirs of the original financiers). Local law level is low in the colonies, and non-existent outside the Trojan points. The local technological level reflects a deliberate colony design feature which makes facilities and equipment maintainable even in the event of a technological decline.

The asteroid belt starward contains slightly less than half of the system's population of 1.8 million as miners, prospectors, concessionaires, and a small lawless element. This small population means that even after a century of prospecting, the belt remains virtually untapped, and a ripe source of undiscovered minerals.

## ARRIVAL

The *March Harrier's* arrival in the belt places the ship near one of the two space colonies. The ship's cargo instructions provide for delivery to the trailing Trojan point, and placement in the hands of a local broker: Ghan Siverns.

After docking on a broad exterior platform connected to the colony, the ship captain should ensure that all necessary details at the port of call are taken care of: coordination with local starport officials, payment of the berthing fee, and whatever else is necessary. Then, one or more of the crew can venture into the colony in search of Ghan Siverns. They find his small office in a run-down warehousing complex just outside the starport.

Once business is concluded, Siverns is glad to answer any of the group's questions about Patinir. Business has been slow lately; one reason is the virtual cessation of prospecting for lanthanum. For the past two years the Imperium has been regulating the market price of lanthanum mined within the Imperial borders. The navy pushed for, and received, authorization to set the price of lanthanum at an artificially low level to hold down the cost of a major ship building program. Imported lanthanum was not regulated, for fear of

imports drying up. The result has been a massive increase in imports from the Vargr Extents, especially the mines at Scangen, while Imperial production has declined somewhat and prospecting has all but stopped.

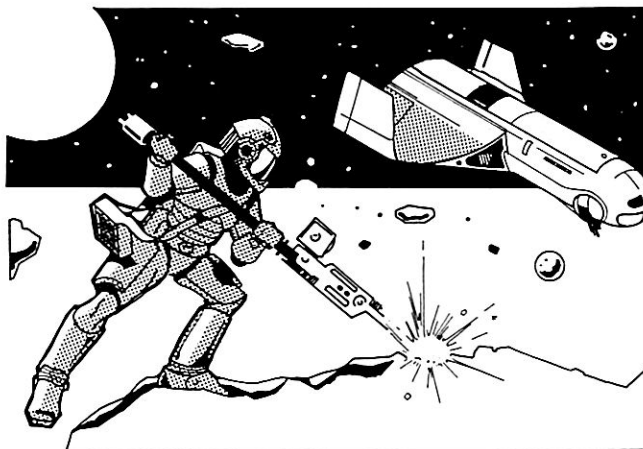
Since many more mundane ore deposits are found by accident by lanthanum prospectors, mineral finds have been down in general.

## DERELICT SHIP

In the next day or two, the travellers spend their time with the ordinary details concerned with the ship in port. Initial contacts concerning cargo and passengers are disappointing, and it appears that profitable traffic is minimal.

Late in the second day, Siverns presents himself at the ship and wants to talk to the captain. The supply shuttle which normally carries supplies to one of his prospectors is overdue and he wishes the *March Harrier* and its crew to help out. He needs the 40 tons of prepackaged supplies delivered to the site and at least a cursory search made for the missing supply shuttle. Siverns can only pay Cr1,000 for shipment of the supplies, but promises to look for a cargo in their absence and waive his usual broker's fee. The crew may either accept or decline Siverns' offer. If they decline, they will ultimately (in six weeks) locate a cargo at standard cargo rates out-system. If they accept, they will encounter the derelict ship.

The trip to the prospecting site takes four days and is uneventful. On the return leg, however, an extremely weak broadcast distress signal is detected, badly garbled by solar interference. The required course change takes several hours and brings the *March Harrier* to the wreck of the supply shuttle.







Boarding the ship reveals extensive battle damage. The bridge and drives are both shattered and there is a very high general level of radioactivity, indicating damage from a nuclear missile. The crew should be aware that exposure for more than fifteen to twenty minutes could cause illness.

A brief search of the ship uncovers the distress transmitter, a small automatic version run off of batteries, and one surviving crewman in the cargo hold. He is vacc suited and living off of bottled oxygen, but on the verge of death from radiation poisoning.

Bringing the survivor back to the *Harrier*, the crew begins the return trip to the colony. After a few hours the man revives briefly from his comatose state and manages only one word, "Wolblutn", before they arrive at the colony.

Return to the colony will bring a round of interviews with the local authorities, and eventually a ship will be dispatched to investigate the wreck further. While the authorities are interested in the crewman's final word, they frankly doubt that it could be used to build a case in court, and given his condition may not have had anything to do with the apparent pirate attack. After they have thoroughly debriefed the *March Harrier* crew, and Siverns has vouched for them, they

are released.

Siverns does have one good piece of news, however. Another of his friends has been successful in prospecting, having discovered a lode of raw gemstones which could bring him a good price on Pysadi. He has already established a tentative bargain, and now asks the *March Harrier* to carry the cargo to Pysadi for him. He has 100 tons and will pay standard freight rates.

**Referee's Note:** If the players later wish to check on the *Wolblutn*, they will find that it filed a flight plan from Aramis consisting of jumps to Pysadi, Zila, Carsten, Pavanne, Nasemin, Jesedipere, and then out of Imperial space into the Vargr Extents. Several weeks later it will return by way of Jesedipere with Junidy as a terminus. The flight plan is filed in conjunction with a license to import lanthanum ore from Scangen. Patinir does not appear on the flight plan. One of the characters should notice that this is identical to the vacation itinerary listed in the message in the captain's wallet.

**Next:** The *March Harrier* now has a cargo and is bound for Pysadi, where adventure awaits in the next chapter.

# Pysadian Escapade

This chapter takes the crew of the *March Harrier* to Pysadi, a world in the Scatters of Aramis, and confronts them with dangers arising from the world, its culture, and its society. It begins upon the ship's arrival in the Pysadian system.

## PYSADI

Pysadi (0608-C4766D7-4) is a small world (some 6400 km in diameter) with a standard, tainted atmosphere and seas covering about 60% of the planetary surface. The atmosphere, tainted due to the presence of gaseous components which cause giddiness, loss of coordination and mental control, and eventual death in many offworld life forms, makes it necessary for humans and Vargr to wear a filter mask. A cheap, reusable filter mask is available locally at a cost of Cr10 each. The planet is frequently visited by starships in need of fuel, thanks to its convenient location between Aramis and Aramanx; despite this frequency of contact, the world is properly considered a part of the Scatters, and is treated as a backwater.

The planet has a population of 1.9 million, most of which is clustered in the fertile valleys of the world's major continent, Mere. These valleys are separated by mountain ranges which serve as natural game preserves; most communities on the planet supplement food crops by hunting and trapping expeditions. The cities on Pysadi are primarily religious communities, serving as focal points for the public services operated by the all-encompassing Mother Church.

The Mother Church is an authoritarian religious institution dedicated to the management and control of the entire world. This religious dictatorship vests power in the Epopt—generally regarded as a figurehead—and an advisory council of priests who actually carry out the routine tasks of government. Society is tightly controlled, but the people are generally contented and unaware of the pervasive influence of their church government. A strict law level prohibits guns (and frowns on weapons in general), greatly restricts freedom of movement and action, and absolutely forbids (due to religious strictures) the manufacture, sale, or consumption of alcohol.

Pysadi has a tech level of 4, and is generally an agrarian society. A farming world, Pysadi's economy is centered around agriculture in the fertile valleys of Mere, supplemented by stock raising, fishing, and hunting. The church makes use of excess agricultural products to guard against future periods of famine and drought, or to sell offworld in exchange for imported goods. All church members are expected to voluntarily contribute such excesses, and this is usually the case. The church has been known to extract these contributions by force when necessary.

The planet has only one land-mass of continental size, plus a scattering of small islands. The continent, Mere, is the center of population (more than 97% of the people live there). The world's capital, and largest city, Sadi, is located on Mere's east coast, and is linked to the various farm communities of Mere by a network of rail lines.

**Mere:** Pysadi's sole continent is a mountainous region dominated by a central plain. On the shores of the calm waters of the Womb Sea, an almost landlocked body of water, the city of Sadi serves as the focal point for the church, the government, and the economy; it is also the location of the only starport on the world and the hub of the Merespan railroad network.

The central plain of Mere is small and relatively infertile, and has been allowed to remain grassland used mostly for small herds of grazing stock. Pysadi's farmland is found in the fertile mountain valleys, where a cool, gentle climate and the runoff from the mountain heights combine to produce excellent conditions for agriculture. Grains and fruits from Pysadi's valley farms are grown for local consumption and contributed to the church, which expects them. Pysadian produce is famed far and wide for taste and quality.

**Communities:** The continent is widely, if sparsely settled. In all, there are nine towns and about forty settlements, plus the city of Sadi, on Pysadi. Most communities are located in the valleys, along the rail lines. Towns (averaging about 20,000 population, with an additional 20,000 or so in outlying farms) are situated at the ends of various rail lines, and serve as granaries, church centers, and rail maintenance depots. Settlements are much smaller, and consist of little more than a train station, a place of worship, and a few other buildings needed to act as a focal point for the 3-5,000 people who live on farms within a 60 kilometer radius of the settlement proper, and perhaps twice that many in isolated holdings at greater distances.

**Sadi:** With a population of 200,000, Sadi is far and away the largest population center on Pysadi. In addition to housing the Epoptial Palace of the Mother Church, and with it the planet's governmental center, Sadi is the economic hub of Pysadi. Trade through Pysadi Starport, the rail net, and the Mother Bank—a church-affiliated institution which controls everything from money supply to the ownership of commodity markets and the railroads—all are vital to Sadi's role as the central pillar of the planetary society.

The city is divided into three districts, plus the starport (which, as an offworld enclave subject to the rules of extrality, is completely independent from planetary control). The districts which comprise Sadi proper are described below.

*The Old Town* is the original city, established as an interim settlement in the early stages of the planet's colonization. Situated near the starport grounds, it consists of crowded blocks of buildings squeezed between large plazas and parks. The plazas belong to the church; some contain church administration facilities, others hold the many imposing places of worship which are found throughout Sadi,

while a few are quiet, secluded, open areas given over to fountains and ponds, trees, grass, and other aesthetically pleasing elements. Parks, on the other hand, are surrounded by massive brick walls, and are plainly marked as being off limits to any but church-authorized persons. Guards are posted at the securely barred gates, and questions about the parks elicit only the briefest replies, usually to the effect that these are areas where religious instruction is carried out.

*The Business District* lies beyond the Old Town, closer to the harbor and its many wharves. The main rail terminus of Sadi is located at the heart of the business district, which is mostly composed of church-owned warehouses and granaries. Produce from the country is offloaded from ships or trains, stored in these large facilities, and dispersed back to the communities at need or transferred to the starport for shipment offworld.

*The Suburb* is an enlargement of the city built to handle the gradual increase in population which has occurred over the year. It consists of well-designed houses clustered around local churches and complexes of stores and administrative offices. The suburb's residents are primarily connected with the massive church bureaucracy.

**Architecture:** Buildings intended for human habitation on Pysadi have been shaped by the special nature of the planet's ecology and culture. The atmospheric taint, which is dangerous due to its unsettling effect on the human brain, makes it necessary that all buildings be sealed and equipped with filtering devices that screen out the dangerous components. Persons inside these buildings are able to dispense with filter masks.

On the other hand, the principles of Pysadian religion and culture encourage communication with nature. Courtyards (sometimes open, sometimes enclosed by glass and filter-conditioned) are common, as are large expanses of windows designed to allow the best possible view. These elements combine to make Pysadian architecture highly distinctive in nature.

**The Mother Church:** The religious beliefs of the Pysadian populace are appropriate to their agrarian society. The religion is a form of world worship which treats Mother Pysadi as the giver of all things. Peace, cooperation, and communion with nature are stressed as ideals all people should strive for. The faith of the Mother Church runs strong and deep, from the lowliest farmer to the Epopt himself. Hypocrisy is not a characteristic of any facet of the church, which undertakes its duties seriously and has by and large done a good job of handling its responsibilities. Though rigid in its control over Pysadi, the church is perceived as beneficial and actually does act for the good of the community.

Of the Mother Church's many unusual practices, the one best known among offworlders is "Communion with Mother Pysadi", in which, with attendant ceremony to set the proper mood, a worshiper takes a few breaths of unfiltered air; short exposure can bring about a state of religious euphoria; longer exposure can result in oracular visions of Mother Pysadi.

The hierarchy of the Mother Church is headed by the Epopt, who rarely exercises more than nominal control over

society. Real power is vested in the next level, an advisory council of priests who control church and government activities. The composition and number of this council varies, but a core of five influential members, heading up the five major branches of the government, are of most importance. The five branches include:

*The Distributory*, which runs shops and distribution media.

*The Productionary*, concerned with agricultural production.

*The Propagatory*, which handles education, particularly religious education.

*The Offeratory*, concerned with the collection of offerings (i.e. taxes)—generally collected in kind (grain or meat, sometimes labor).

*The Salvors*, who act as the enforcement arm of the church.

Many aspects of the church are to some degree secret, or at least not widely known off Pysadi. Inner rituals of the church and priesthood, the details of the planetary economy and the actual political hierarchy within the advisory council are among those things which are not generally known—or discussed—by the average citizen, particularly with offworlders.

**Railroads:** The MereSpan RailLine is the major transport system on Pysadi. Emanating like spokes from the city of Sadi, rail lines connect the city to the various outlying communities. Along most lines, the railroad is a single track; low-priority trains are shunted onto sidings to allow those with a higher priority to pass in either direction.

The railroads are operated and maintained by the Rail Corps, a hereditary group (augmented as needed with new recruits) descended from the original rail construction workers who established the railroads in the early days of settlement on Pysadi. The Corps is responsible, under the auspices of the Productionary, for maintaining and repairing every kilometer of track, and for the operation and maintenance of the trains themselves.

The most common type of train carries both cargo and passengers, and runs once per week on each spoke. Trains can achieve speeds of 110 kph, and generally take six days to make the round trip out from Sadi and back. The trains do not run on Senday; a train will remain in whatever settlement it happens to stop in for an entire day in such cases. These stops are welcomed by the settlement so favored, as they bring visitors and news that would otherwise pass on without stopping for more than the briefest of halts.

**Referee's Note:** Though trains theoretically have a schedule, these are so frequently disrupted as to be random. Throw 1D to determine the number of days before a train is due to leave Sadi. It spends 3 days travelling to the end of the line, and 3 days on the return journey. If Senday falls at any point of the trip, the train does not move that day. On each trip, there will be a one day delay (due to rail repairs or a higher-priority train) on a roll of 7+. Train passage costs Cr12 per hex one way, or Cr20 per hex round trip.

**Other Transport:** While railroads are ubiquitous, Pysadi is much less progressive where other forms of transportation are concerned. Roads are primitive at best, and vehicles more advanced than carts or wagons are rare. ATVs, groundcars, and similar equipment are considered an offense

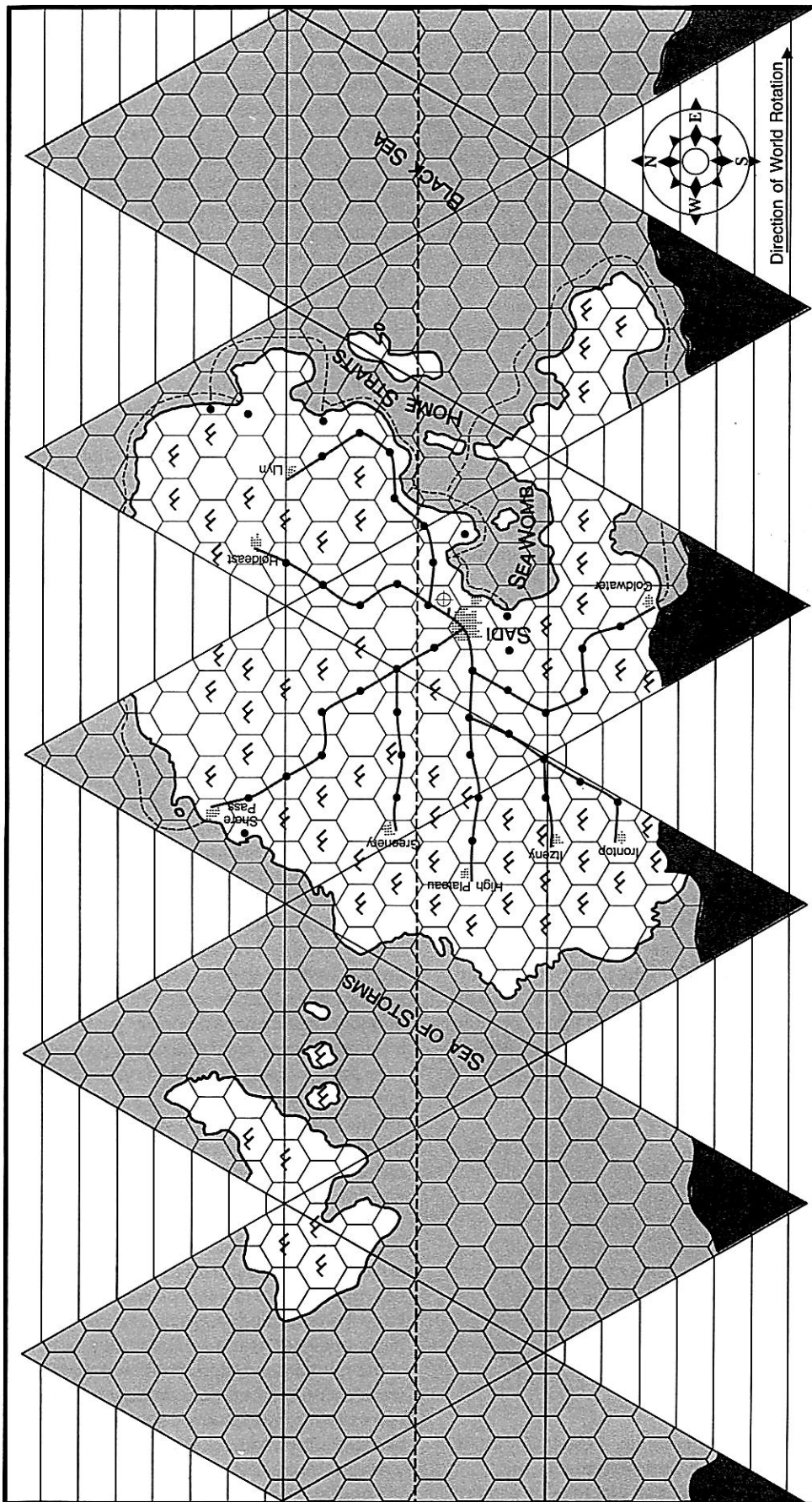


# Terrain Key

Each hex is 575 kilometers



**Movement Rates:**  
The number next to each hex is the hours spent crossing it.  
A — on foot (includes rest)  
B — on train on rail  
C — by boat at sea



Address:  
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Regina  
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Imperial Interstellar  
Scout Service  
Survey Office  
Cartography Section

**Additional Notes:**  
Agricultural  
Non-Industrial  
Gas Giant in System

**PYSADI: ARAMIS-0608 C4766D7-4**



to Mother Pysadi, due to the damage they cause to ground cover and other factors. They may be used around the city/starport complex in relative freedom, but use outside the city is definitely out of the question.

Most other forms of transportation are regulated by the church's tight control over movement. Permits are required to operate any starship, ship's boat, grav vehicle, or aircraft anywhere on the planet, except for approaches to and from the starport. The reasons for this have never been made clear, but violation of these restrictions can result in heavy fines and/or confiscation. It should be noted, however, that Pysadi has little detection apparatus and no local naval forces, so their ability to enforce these restrictions is limited. Nonetheless the visitor who flouts authority in this fashion can expect an unpleasant welcome if he is foolish enough to return.

**Sea Lanes:** Some sea transport exists on Pysadi, primarily along the coast. Heavy bulk cargos are often shipped by sea in large ocean-going barges. Barges average 10 kph, and generally lay up on religious days in observance of the prohibition on work. Generally, barges do not carry passengers, but a captain can sometimes be persuaded to carry a group for a small fee (perhaps Cr100 each).

**The Map:** The map of Pysadi shows the world using a geodesic map grid dividing the world into hexagons and triangles. If cut out and folded, the map would create an icosahedron (a twenty-sided polygon) which approaches a globe in shape.

Each hexagon measures approximately 575 kilometers across, and can be used to judge scale and distance. Within each hexagon is one or more terrain types, showing the nature of the area.

The players and referee can use the information on the map to determine the time and distance required for various journeys.

The terrain key indicates the types of terrain and shows the movement rates expected for the terrain type and means of transportation being used. For example, the clear terrain movement rate for individuals is 220 hours per hex (on foot). The rate takes rest into account, assuming that walking takes up half the time (11 hours per day) and that characters rest for the remaining 11 hours. The resulting speed is about 5.5 kilometers per hour, reflecting a lack of roads or paths on Pysadi; crossing a clear hex takes 10 days. Rail and boat movement rates do not assume any need to rest.

If no movement rate is listed next to a terrain symbol, use the movement rate listed for other terrain types in the hex.

**Time:** The local day is 22 hours long (about 11 hours of day and 11 hours of night). The week of seven days is ended by a day of rest (Senday) on which no business is transacted. Throw 1D+1 for the current day of the week when the *March Harrier* arrives on Pysadi; if it is Senday, even the starport will be closed to traffic in deference to local sensibilities, and the ship will have to remain in orbit an extra day.

## ON PYSADI

The starport at Sadi is unremarkable: a class C installation capable of routine services and reasonable repairs if necessary. Upon arrival, routine duties will take up the first

day in port. Cargo must be unloaded, any passengers discharged, and routine paperwork filed with the port warden. On the second day, the group should be able to select its next destination, and make an appropriate announcement so that new cargo and passengers can be acquired.

A skeleton crew should remain with the ship. Typically, this would require the captain and the steward, but the captain may instead assign any two officers capable of handling cargo loading and passenger bookings as well as maintaining the security of the ship. Once this detail is taken care of, the investigation of Pysadi can begin. For Cr50 per day, the starport will assign someone to perform these tasks, thus freeing up the entire group.

The starport itself provides a few items of interest: three ships are currently in port—two Vargr traders and a Tukera freighter.

The Tukera freighter crew is uncommunicative and acts quite superior; its captain and crew disdain talking to a common independent trader ship. Someone should suggest looking up Tukera and Akerut in library data; Tukera generally does not service worlds in the Scatters, leaving such service to Akerut. The two Vargr traders are the *Thuksirra* and the *Ghuthuth-Aeg*. If Gvoudzon participates in contacting them, allow a DM of +2 on the reaction table. A reaction of 8+ will produce conversations and perhaps some information exchange.

*Thuksirra's* captain is just finishing a week on this world buying preserved meats, which he intends to take with him back to the Extents. Some of these meats are delicacies on his homeworld and will bring a good price.

*Ghuthuth-Aeg's* captain comments that the Tukera ship is buying howood lumber. In fact, they have bought up all local stock or the Vargr captain would have purchased some himself. Howood has become very fashionable for certain jewelry and small furniture on parts of Aramanx and is temporarily commanding high prices. A good profit could be turned on one or two cargos, as normal suppliers have been unable to meet the upsurge in demand caused by the fad. He also says that he came here delivering a consignment of decorative inlays from Violante, intended to embellish the interior of some local churches. Actually, the consignment was just in passing, as he is carrying candied fruits from Focaline back to the Extents.

The group, in an otherwise routine call, has the opportunity to make a good profit if a cargo of howood lumber can be acquired. As there is no regular supply, an expedition into the wilds of Pysadi is required in order to obtain the tonnage needed to make it worthwhile.

**In Sadi:** The city, of course, has few of the facilities which are likely to appeal to visiting starship crews. The starport has the only bar on the planet, Smitty's, and the need to import everything it stocks makes the prices ridiculously high, even for star port bars. (A common joke at the port is the recommendation that anyone who wants to get drunk should skip the bar, go outside, and take off his filter mask. It's cheaper, more intoxicating—and usually safer than the booze Smitty stocks.) Most other entertainment options are even more limited.

The Old Town district provides some potential for tourism

and sightseeing. The broad plazas are beautiful and aesthetically pleasing, the churches interesting as examples of Pysadian architecture. Characters engaged in tourism will probably also notice the mysterious, walled-in parks, but will be able to find out little about them.

The Suburb is a strictly residential district, and does not welcome offworld tourists. Unless specifically invited there, the group is unlikely to find the Suburb a good place to visit—and common sense should tell them this (rolls of intelligence or less should allow the referee to let the players know this, if they are considering such an excursion).

For a merchant crew, the Business District is likely to be the area of greatest interest. Here they may search for cargo to ship offworld, or browse through shops for souvenirs of their visit. The usual procedures for cargo and speculative trading can be followed. Characters should also be encouraged to remember their conversations at the starport, and follow up on Howood as a possible specific cargo. The Business District provides a number of possible leads on this subject.

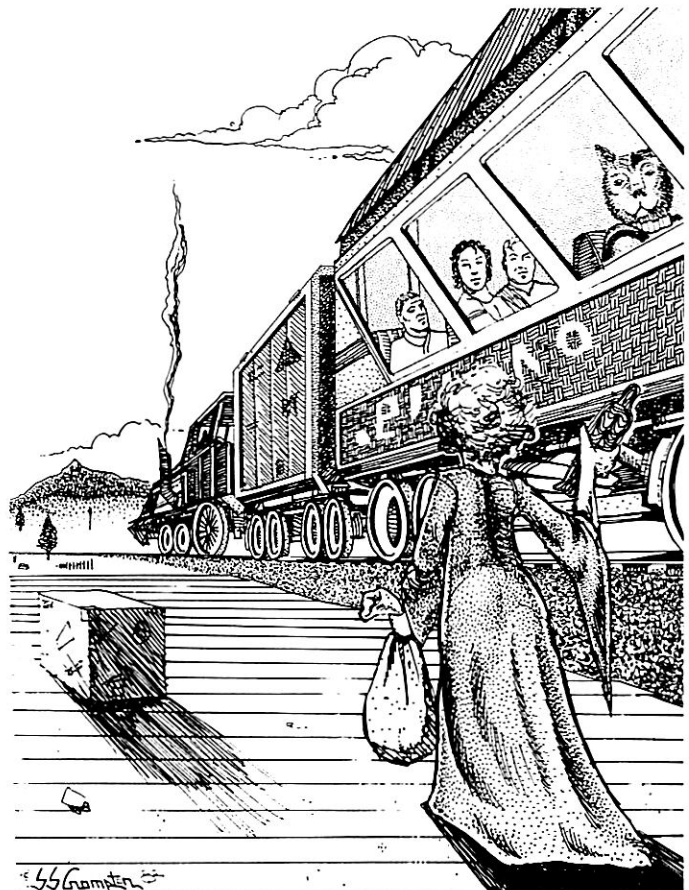
The local warehouse has no howood in stock. They usually do, but it is all gone at present. Sufficient persuasion (bribery, liaison, admin, or streetwise would all help) can convince the warehouse clerk to elaborate. The warehouse usually only stocks a ton or so of the wood; this was all bought up a week ago, and loaded on the Tukera ship at the starport, which by now has left the planet for a new port of call. The clerk can also pass on the library data information on howood if no one has consulted it as yet. Finally, he indicates that the town of Itzeny, in the southern mountains, is the source of the best howood on Pysadi.

A minor bureaucrat at the Productionary, anxious to please foreign traders in hopes of turning a profit for the church, will gladly fill the group in on details of the howood trade. It is a gathered material, virtually impossible to cultivate and difficult to acquire. Because howood is incredibly strong and tough, concentrating minerals from the rocky soil in its trunk bark, howood gathering is more akin to mining than it is to lumbering. Trees are felled by blasting at the roots; the crystalline cellular structure causes the toppled tree to break along various faults when it falls. Pieces are gathered up and shipped to Sadi, where they are exported, or used locally to produce decorative wood carvings and other works of art (a process that requires vast patience and the kind of grinding and polishing usually associated with gem-cutting). The bureaucrat goes on to say that prices charged by the individuals who gather howood are often high (due to the risks involved), but there is nothing to prevent anyone—even the offworlders themselves—from carrying out a lumbering operation and saving these costs, provided they observe proper church procedures with regard to permits and forms, and provided they make the usual “offerings” connected with the export of such material (“offerings” will amount to Cr250 per ton).

A visit to a representative of the Salvors will give the adventurers access to information concerning permits required for a lumbering expedition. Travel is restricted greatly on Pysadi and travel permits are required for each member of the party. The kind of temporary permits that transients like themselves would use are one-way permits, issued for

a trip to a specific town or settlement. To return, a visit to the local Salvors would be required for another permit for travel back to Sadi. Permits of this type cost Cr10 per person, and failure to have them can result in heavy fines and penalties. There is no possibility at this time of granting any kind of permission to take the *March Harrier* or any other vehicle away from the starport, should players inquire about this possibility. Permits are also required to acquire explosives, which are essential for howood lumbering. This permit (costing Cr50), and the explosives themselves, should be obtained at the town where they are to carry out the lumbering, since the church frowns on the transport of dangerous materials by train or ship. As long as these legalities are observed, he says, there should be no problem at all.

Finally, as the adventurers are travelling through the Business District, their attention should be attracted by an elderly woman at an open-air stall, hawking her stock of souvenirs and trinkets. From the stream of sales talk about “blessings of Mother Pysadi”, “natural beauty blended with patient craftsmanship”, and “the needs of a poor old woman who has given everything to the Mother Church”, one or more of the party will pick out a reference to howood. The old woman does indeed have various small works of art carved and polished from howood. If questioned, she is unlikely to respond directly, but she may answer questions if the party begins bargaining seriously for one of her carvings. She will ask Cr50 for it, but from experience and the activity at other booths it is clear that haggling will be



the order of the day. As the haggling continues, the woman will confide that her carvings were made by her nephew, a farmer named Baraatsa, who lives near Itzeny and often gathers howood for shipment to the city. He keeps back the best pieces, however, and he and his wife both do carvings of various kinds as a hobby. In the end, if they buy the carving, the old lady will further confide that Baraatsa is considered the most successful howood gatherer in Itzeny, and makes quite a bit of money from his sideline. The actual selling price of the piece will be between Cr30 and Cr50, depending on the decision of the referee or the course of actual, played-out haggling.

## TO ITZENY

There is no difficulty in securing travel permits and train tickets for a trip to Itzeny. The trip follows the procedures outlined for rail travel on Pysadi.

Itzeny is located in a mountain valley at the end of the rail line. The town has a resident population of around 200, mostly railroad personnel, church staff, and some agents of the Distributory. The remainder of the population associated with the town live on scattered farms situated up to 100 kilometers away in all directions. Local transport is virtually nonexistent, with beast-drawn wagons being the primary method of transport.

In town, the group should first visit the local church, to validate their travel permits (which were checked three times on the journey from Sadi), and to inquire about explosives. The church is a small but architecturally imposing building; adjacent to it is a walled park with barred gates and a salvor guard outside. Inside the church, the adventurers are conducted to a small office, where another salvor takes care of their needs. He is friendly and cooperative, issuing the permits without any great difficulty, and willingly answering questions concerning howood lumbering, obtaining explosives, and finding Baraatsa. He gives all the guidance the group needs, and the party should leave with the definite feeling that the church government is far less terrifying than they might have expected, and that this man in particular is a good friend to have in town.

Acting on the salvor's advice, the party can acquire several kilograms of explosives (more than enough for their needs) for a cost of Cr200. They can also find Baraatsa (who will have been recommended as the man to see by the salvor, even if the party doesn't ask about him), or rather one of his sons, who has brought a wagon-load of grain into town. The son will invite them to the Baraatsa farm, about 20 kilometers from town, for a meal, a night's sleep, and help in their quest.

Baraatsa is equally cordial. A garrulous and friendly man, he entertains lavishly and is more than willing to talk about howood (and many other things). It is harvest time just now, and he cannot spare anyone to help the party, but he is in no way adverse to giving them all the help they need to go out on their own. He provides them with a stand of howood trees on the mountain valley wall. All he asks in return is that the party bring him a few choice pieces for his hobby, and follow his usual custom of scattering the seed pods of each tree they fell, "returning to Mother Pysadi the treasure she has given us", as he puts it.

## AT THE HOWOOD GROVE

The group can set out to explore the area in hopes of finding a howood grove. The instructions they have been given are sufficient to take them to the mountain valley wall and the forest at its foot; the grove is within the forest.

**Setting Out:** The forest is 20 kilometers from Baraatsa's farm, and about 30 kilometers from town. It will be necessary to rent wagons and teams in town, and to purchase supplies. Wagons cost Cr30 per day each, while supplies are at usual rates. A wagon will carry 3 mass tons of howood; given the wood's density, about four wagon loads will equal one displacement ton of cargo. This will cost Cr250 to ship by rail to Sadi; with all the permits, the church offerings, and other expenses incurred, a ton of howood (with an established value of Cr1500, and a potential of much more on Aramanx) will cost the party less than Cr1000 to harvest . . . a fair chance for profit.

**The Valley Wall:** Moving in the slow, lurching wagons, it will take most of a day to reach the forest. It will be obvious that a search of the forest will be more practical on foot, so the wagons should be left behind.

The forest is alive with animal life—roll on the animal encounter table once every three hours. Every hour, a 9+ is required for the group to catch sight of a gnarled howood tree set against the cliff face that rears above the valley floor. Gvoudzon's enhanced Vargr sense of smell gives a DM+1. (It would usually be DM+2, but Gvoudzon may only remove his filter mask for short sniffs, and will become increasingly intoxicated as the search wears on.)

When the grove is finally located, it is on a cliff-edge swept by winds about 200 meters above the valley floor. A narrow trail, impossible for wagons to climb, leads up to this ledge. After 1D hours, the group will be able to find a suitable trail to allow the wagons to approach the base of the cliff.

The grove itself is a stand of straight, tall trees, except for a few near the edge of the cliff which, exposed fully to wind and weather, have been twisted and gnarled into fantastic shapes. The adventurers can select the trees they wish to work on, and begin their lumbering operation.

**Lumbering:** To fell a howood tree, an explosive charge is set in a hole dug at the base of the tree, between the roots. The charges have a 30-second fuse, which gives time for all concerned to scramble for cover. A charge takes only a few minutes to set. When the fuse is lit, the referee should roll 2D for the effects of the blast. On a roll of 8+, a mishap of some sort will occur with the primitive explosives; DMs -1 if an ex-Army character sets the charge and -JOT skill.

If a mishap occurs, roll 1D and consult the table below.

### Blasting Mishaps Table

| Die | Result                                                                                                                                           |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Fuse goes out.                                                                                                                                   |
| 2-3 | No explosion. Every round, roll a 10+ for the charge to go off.                                                                                  |
| 4-5 | Early explosion. Characters not already in safe positions (those involved in setting the charge) must roll dexterity or less to avoid 2D damage. |
| 6   | Bad charge. Explosion is weaker than it should be, and the tree is not brought down.                                                             |



When a tree is brought down, it breaks along weak lines in the structure of the wood. This generally still leaves the tree in pieces too large to handle, but 1D additional charges can be placed to break it up further by exploiting weak spots. Generally, a tree can be reduced to manageable pieces within 1 hour. Wood may be transported to the wagons in one of three ways. It can be carried down the ledge by hand, a process that takes 20 man-hours per tree (1 man takes 20 hours, 2 men take 10 hours, and so forth). If instead it is lowered down the cliff face by ropes, it takes 15 man-hours per tree. Wood can be dropped over the side into the clearing below, taking only 6 man-hours per tree, but this can shatter good pieces of wood and cause wastage;  $2D \times 5\%$  of any given tree will be lost in this fashion.

One wagon will take the wood from five trees (assuming no wastage). The process should continue until the players have completed their load. Animal encounters should still be implemented on a regular basis. It is not advisable for the party to attempt to continue their work at night.

During the course of the expedition, either during the search for the grove, or during the lumbering operation itself, the referee will be called upon to inflict a specific encounter on the group, one which will be of great importance to them. It should take place casually, as if part of the normal encounter process.

**The Anolas:** As the group goes about their business, one of them will notice a family of anolas feeding high in a nearby tree. The referee can describe the family as five variously-colored animals similar to monkeys, but with twin tails. As soon as the anolas sight the group, they will all swarm down from the tree and fearlessly approach, seeking food or petting. The players should perceive their approach as friendly, not threatening in any way.

The animals leave the trees and cluster around a few of the crew. The referee can role-play the animals to show their cuteness and likeability in as much detail as he can stomach, as they playfully check in crew members' pockets for food, sit on their shoulders and stroke their hair, or otherwise demonstrate their affection. They show their intelligence (about that of a dog) in simple, innocuous tricks, such as the theft of a crew member's hat or tools. The referee should be careful to allay the fears of cautious players concerning possible dangers such as poison or disease (a character with medical skill can determine the animals' harmlessness through a quick examination).

One of the anolas—the female—will be especially endearing, as she is capable of generating a feeling of affection. This will not be a sudden or particularly intense feeling, but characters should be told that the mother anola is especially appealing.

The anolas will tag along after the group, no matter how well they respond to the animals. Their presence will not be especially noticeable after the first contact, but the family will remain nearby, and one or another of the animals may

periodically intrude looking for food, play, or affection. When the next animal encounter is due, the referee should again implement a specific encounter (though preserving a flavor of randomness to discourage any suspicious feelings).

The encounter begins when the male anola suddenly becomes agitated and begins to moan in a loud and distinctive fashion, and the rest of the anolas will promptly stiffen in fear and climb quickly into the nearest tree, chattering in agitation. The male will follow, and will peer rigidly in a specific direction.

His threat-sense has detected the approach of a large carnivore/chaser, which suddenly enters the grove from the direction the male anola indicated. The animal will attack,

but the players should be sufficiently forewarned to defend themselves. If possible, the referee should choreograph the encounter in such a way as to wound one of the characters fairly severely.

Once the encounter is over, the parental anolas will cluster around the wounded character, and around any character attempting to give first aid. It should be made clear that the wound is dangerous, and that treatment must be prompt and correct in order to save the stricken character. The presence of the parental anolas, however, will provide a calming influence. The wounded character will experience a feeling of safety and well-being, and the characters rendering aid will find that the calming touch of the parentals enables them to work faster

and more competently than they would normally be able to. Die rolls should still be required, but the referee may ignore the results on this occasion and announce that the first aid was successful. All concerned should be told that it was the calming parentals who made the difference in this moment of crisis.

These characteristics will probably be sufficient for the group to decide to take the animals with them. If they do, the anola family will particularly adopt the wounded character; the female will frequently perch on the character's chest or shoulder as he or she rests and recovers. If the party





does not choose to take the anolas, they will continue, as before, to follow the group.

#### AN OFFENSE AGAINST THE MOTHER OF LIFE.

If the group passes by Baraatsa's farm to give him the pieces of wood he asked for, they will find Baraatsa much as before, genial and talkative. He will welcome the party, and be in the midst of inviting them to another generous feast, when his attitude suddenly undergoes an abrupt change.

It is up to the referee to keep from revealing the exact reason for Baraatsa's sudden reaction. Perhaps the wood stacked on the carts shows signs of having been mishandled some way, in a fashion Baraatsa regards as sacrilegious. Or it could be that the adventurers have in some way, by word or gesture, offended the customs or teachings of the church (did someone mention working yesterday—a holy day?). These suggestions will present themselves as possible reasons—especially if players zero in too quickly on the anolas, which by this time have tagged along so long that they are hardly noticed by the adventurers.

In fact, of course, it is the sight of the anolas which has upset Baraatsa—specifically, the sight of anolas touching and being touched by members of the party. Only consecrated priests of the church may touch an anola, sacred to Mother Pysadi. The characters, however, do not yet realize this—they are too busy being confronted by the suddenly cold and angry farmer, who demands that the adventurers leave his land at once. He frequently traces symbols, apparently of a religious nature, in the air, and is heard muttering words such as “abomination”, “an offense against the Mother of Life”, and “sins of these Motherless offworlders” under his breath. He will not explain himself, or indeed speak at all coherently; it is plain, however, that he and several sturdy sons and farm hands will enforce the demand for the party to leave if necessary.

As the adventurers drive away, they may notice Baraatsa and one of his sons conferring; moments later the boy mounts a fast riding beast and spurs across the fields, heading in the direction of town.

**Return to Itzeny:** If the group does not go by the way of the farm, a similar encounter should take place as they approach or enter the town. A passing local, friendly enough at first meeting, turns agitated and sanctimonious upon noticing the anolas, and is seen afterwards talking to others.

The party will, of course, suspect that trouble lies ahead, and will begin making plans to avoid it. It is impossible for them to get out of the need to visit the church, for the permits must be acquired in person.

The characters may be careful and leave the anolas behind. Unconfined, the affectionate little animals will continue to follow them, as they have been doing constantly. They may be confined in some way, either with a view to temporarily getting them out of the way, or in order to smuggle them aboard the train and keep them. This will work—but not for long.

On visiting the church, the group will again meet the salvor who was so friendly on their first visit. He continues to be extremely helpful, welcoming the group back and inquiring as to their success. It is only after the group is thoroughly

at ease, filling out forms and talking cheerfully with this friendly official, that the salvor springs his trap. At a sign, five other salvors—the entire “police force” for the town—enter the room, barring the doors. Three of them are armed with revolvers, as is the party's friend, and all are trained warningly on the group. The referee should indicate that violence is unlikely to win the group anything, as they are outgunned and completely taken by surprise.

If the anolas are with the group, the salvors (themselves priests) will take the animals away from the characters. But if the anolas were left behind, Baraatsa's son, and/or others who have seen the party with the animals will be called in. After stating that they have seen the offworlders touching “the holy family of Mother Pysadi”, they are dismissed, and the salvors will demand to know where the animals are. Attempts to deny knowledge or evade questioning will lead the salvors to believe that the animals have been injured or killed—and the penalty for this is death. Faced by this, the characters should reveal the location of the animals. Salvors will be sent to fetch them back to the church.

The salvor official explains briefly that the anolas are sacred to the church, and that the adventurers have committed a very grave offense through their contact with the animals. The party must be held until the town's head priest can decide what should be done. In the meantime, the party will certainly not be mistreated. They are taken to a small dormitory under guard, and locked in. Strangely, the anolas are allowed to stay with them. If this is commented upon, a salvor will say that “it is not for us to alter the choice of Mother Pysadi or her holy family”. On that ominous note, the adventurers are left alone.

Means of escape do not present themselves—the dormitory is sturdy, the doors strong, the windows triple-thick (against the atmosphere) and barred.

The next morning, the priest is brought to them. He is elderly, and talks in a fatherly, patronizing fashion. He begins by providing the group with background information—the material presented as generally known facts, church teachings, and church information in the section on anolas below. He will answer questions and seem to be at pains to make the adventurers understand everything they can about the importance of these animals to the church. Though his manner is friendly, it should be plain that the



priest is doing his best to justify a decision which may not be pleasant for the party.

## ANOLAS

The original settlers of Pysadi encountered the small furry anolas in the course of their exploration and settlement of their world. Unknown elsewhere, the animals were endearing, harmless, and easy to care for. In addition, their family structure seemed perfectly reflective of the settlers' religious philosophy. In the course of several decades, many anolas were adopted by families as pets. Over time, the anolas became accepted as sacred animals and were ultimately made the responsibility of the church.

The church has long maintained small groups of the species, kept in walled parks. They are bred in captivity, with their numbers supplemented by occasional wild anolas captured and adopted. Sadi and each of the nine town churches have such park areas. The sacredness of the animals makes discussions of the anolas, their habits, or any aspect of their lives rare, and it is not surprising that the adventurers have had little or no exposure to the existence of the little beasts.

There are four distinct categories of information regarding anolas: generally known facts available through library data or conversation, church teachings, secret church knowledge known to the priests (some of which may be made known to the characters), and referee's information which is used to manage the activities of the anolas in the presence of the players.

Pysadians asked about anolas speak of them as symbols of Mother Pysadi and of the sacred values of their religion. Few, however, are willing to discuss anolas at length and prefer to terminate a conversation rather than be forced to talk about them. In the rare instances where a short conversation occurs, locals will far more easily confirm information than volunteer it. What they can confirm is that anolas are kept in the parks, anolas are sacred animals in their religion, individuals cannot own or keep them (the church has this responsibility), and that they are very cute.

**Church Teachings:** The church on Pysadi teaches that anolas are the embodiment of the qualities of the world in one perfect family. Much as people must work together, the anolas work together in harmony and perfection. The male is the protector and provider; the parentals are the gatherers and the caring parents; the female is the mother and the one who binds the entire family. All work together to care for the children and bring them into the world.

Each anola contributes to the well-being of the whole; each has a part in the overall progress of the family. The unique characteristic of the anola is that each member of the family has the opportunity to serve in all roles. The male becomes a parental and then a female in turn. Each is able to contribute to each aspect of the family.

The church on Pysadi treats this example of the anola as an ideal: each member of society can and should contribute in all possible ways to the good of society. While humans may not progress through the phases of the anola literally, humans may also make contributions in many different aspects of their lives.

**Church Information:** The church has integrated the anolas

into its religious rituals and they figure intricately in church activities.

As the sacred animals of the church, anolas are raised in the sheltered parks in the city and in similar parks in each of the world's ten towns. These parks are carefully landscaped and are filled with trees and clearings. Surrounding the park is a large brick wall intended to keep other animals out as well as to mark the boundary. The parks are in actuality cemeteries; Pysadians are buried in unmarked graves in these parks.

Anolas live in comfort and ease, with selected priests assigned to live with them, providing for their needs. These priests grow quite attached to the anolas (and the anolas to the priests as well).

The caretaker priests are selected by the anolas themselves. The animals respond better to some people than to others; those whom they respond well to become caretakers and look after the animals. Such caretaker priests, of course, do little of the actual labor themselves. The menial tasks are performed by apprentice priests on the grounds.

The church is aware that anolas also live in the wild. Strict teachings prohibit citizens from approaching wild anolas; the people are taught to allow the wild anolas to live out their lives without interference. In some few cases, the church has allowed a rural family to retain a group of anolas which it has rescued or found, but only until a family member joined the priesthood and brought the anolas to one of the parks to live.

Anolas can eat almost any food that humans can. One anola will eat about 10% to 20% of what a human eats; an anola family generally consumes about the same amount as one human.

**Referee's Information:** Prior to their contact with anolas in the wild, there is a slight chance that the adventurers will be exposed to the existence of anolas on Pysadi. Though they are not a general topic of conversation, there is a possibility (roll 11 + once per day) that someone from the *March Harrier* crew will hear the word "anola" in a conversation. It will be said with great reverence, and the term "holy family of Mother Pysadi" may be applied in the same sentence.

There is also a chance (roll 11 + ) that characters passing near a walled park in Sadi or an outlying town may catch a glimpse of one or more anolas in the trees of the park.

Members of a strange species which has developed several unusual methods of protection and survival, anolas are excellent examples of the fascinating diversity of nature. Their protection mechanisms are two-fold—a family structure and the development of special talents.

The anola family structure is reproduction-oriented, and designed to protect slowly-maturing young. The female is the oldest member of the group, and her primary purpose is bearing young. Three parentals (of varying ages) serve to care for the young, as well as to help gather food such as berries, nuts, and fruit. The male is the youngest of the group.

Reproduction is a difficult activity for the female and she generally dies before the fourth litter is born. When the female dies, a pheromone she produces is no longer present.

In reaction to this, one of the parentals (usually the oldest) undergoes changes which make it female and becomes the new female in the family. At the same time, the male in the family undergoes changes which make it a parental.

The litter of (usually) three cubs is raised by the parentals until about six months of age, and are then set out into the world. At about this time, the family recruits a new male in order to complete its structure. Males are never recruited from the litter just born. Males roam the forest freely and alone until they join a new family.

Anola females bear one litter per year once they turn female, which occurs about the fifth year, and die before they are ten. In very rare cases, an anola male will live alone, without a family, for several years. Once an anola male joins a family, the process of going through parental to female begins.

**Special Talents:** Anolas have a variety of special talents which protect them from harm. These talents are sex-linked, and are fairly automatic in their operation. Males have a threat-sense which detects the presence of danger. Parentals are able to calm by touch. Females have the ability to create affection. These talents are explained in greater detail in the section entitled *Anolas in the Game*.

An anola captured by the adventurers will adapt to the group very swiftly, and will follow typical behavior patterns for the various phases. A complete group will produce a litter of cubs within about one year. A partial group will progress through the various phases based on its composition. In the absence of a female, the eldest parental will become a female, and the male will become a parental (the group will seek a male to join it). A lone parental will become a female. A lone male will remain a male.

Anolas are not intelligent, having mental capabilities

roughly equal to that of a Terran dog (*Canis familiaris*).

Anolas are native to Pysadi and prefer its particular type of tainted air. They do not require the contaminant, however, and can breathe standard atmospheres without ill effects. They do not adapt to other types of tainted air.

## ANOLAS IN THE GAME

Once the anolas have been discovered and taken offworld by the adventurers, the referee must be able to administer them believably and reasonably. The following section provides a guide.

**The Anola Group:** The group consists of a female, three parentals, and a male. Their ages are indeterminate, but it is safe to assume that the male is about a year old, the female about eight (already having borne two litters), and the parentals are aged five, six, and seven.

The female can be expected to have a litter of three cubs within about a year of being picked up; after that, she will die. The oldest parental will become the new female and the male will become the youngest parental. Within about six months, one cub will become the group's male. The other two will remain immature until about a year old, when they will also become males. The excess males will take the first opportunity to leave the group.

Since a lone anola on a strange world has no hope of finding other anolas, the crew should be encouraged to find a way of helping. This may entail sending the anola back home to Pysadi on a ship going that way or carrying it home themselves. It is also possible for the group to put together several anolas (from different litters) and form a new group. The new group could be placed in the care of scientists on other worlds or given to individuals who want them.

**Males:** The anola cub leaves the group within a year of birth. Just before leaving, the young cub turns male. In the wild, the young male lives alone, looking for food and wandering great distances. This wandering behavior helps distribute genetic material over wide areas. The male anola makes use of his own talent to protect himself while alone. The male can detect the presence of a threat at distances of up to 200 meters. While alone, the animal uses this warning to hide or flee.

Referees should be able to portend threats to the adventurers when the anola is present by indicating the low moaning sound. The warning is also accompanied by a scent released by the male.

The anola male's threat sense is psionically based; the animal is attuned to detecting a peculiar pattern present in threatening animals. As such, it can detect animals that may be stalking or preparing to attack and it can detect humans or Vargr who are considering violence. It cannot detect purely physical danger such as poisonous atmospheres or falling rocks.

**Parentals:** The anola parental is one of three in the typical anola group. One parental cares for one cub in a litter of three. Parentals also spend much of their time gathering food from trees or plants or searching for small larvae in the dirt.

Parentals have a responsibility for the safety and security of the cubs in their care and, as a result, they are capable of calming the immature animals in order to avoid attracting predatory animals (the threat sense of the male alerts the





parentals as to when this is especially important).

Referees can implement the calming touch of the parentals when they affect individual player characters as well as the young. The calming touch serves as a tranquilizing agent, soothing an individual without fogging the senses. As a result, the referee should be able to implement a DM of +1 or +2 for such activities as shooting, delicate manipulation, or careful action: activities which are normally subject to disruption because of nervousness.

The anola parental's calming touch is not psionic. The effect is nearly immediate and continues for a few seconds after the touch is released.

*Females:* The anola female is the oldest of the animals in a group. The female mates with the male and produces one litter of three cubs about once a year. Because the birth process is very difficult, the female usually dies shortly after the third litter is born. Some females live to have five or even six litters while some die after the first litter.

The female anola is the focus of the anola family. Her talent is the ability to radiate a feeling of comfort, security, and affection which attracts those around her, and which keeps the family safe and content. This talent generates a strong feeling of affection and closeness, which grows into a very strong bond.

Unfortunately, this power has a negative effect on most sophont species. The constant feeling of safety and comfort promoted by the female's psionically-based talent eventually, over a prolonged period of time, dull the mental processes and cause an increasing apathy and inertia. The individual so affected shows many of the signs of a premature senility—confusion, slowness or disorganization of thought, etc. Affection for the anola family is unabated, and characters may frequently find themselves absent-mindedly playing with, petting, or caring for the animals. But the ability to react rationally and utilize the brain is very much reduced.

This is a subtle and gradual process. At first, the group will notice nothing special about the female anola; she lacks both the threat sense of the males and the calming touch of the parentals. It may be some time before the female power begins to exert itself at all, in a general feeling of well-being. This is difficult to simulate in the game (it wouldn't do just to say "you feel very good"). Instead the referee must resort to some subterfuge to simulate the feeling.

The referee should indirectly cultivate the feeling that the female anola is lucky. When a problem arises and a die roll must be made, the referee can refer to the female anola and indicate that her presence helped favorably influence the roll. ("Boy, you guys were sure lucky the female anola was around. You wouldn't have made the throw otherwise.") In point of fact, the anola has no influence on any roll, but the referee should foster this feeling. This will promote the proper attitudes in the players to parallel what their characters feel—affection, security, and just a hint of complacency as they begin to feel they can do no wrong under the "protection" of the anola family.

As time passes, the anolas should generally become so much a part of the crew that they are hardly noticed. The notion of luck and the effects of other abilities should remain, but should become almost second nature to all. It is at this time that the negative effects begin to show

themselves.

All characters in close proximity to the anola family (and especially to the female anola) will begin to suffer adverse effects 1D months after first picking them up on Pysadi. The time is different for each character. When the indicated time has elapsed, a character's intelligence rating will go down by 1 point. The referee should make a saving throw (endurance or less) to represent the character's chance of resistance to the anola's influence: a positive DM equal to the number of months which have passed since acquiring the anola should modify this saving throw. If the throw is not successful, the intelligence loss takes place.

One character in the group will have been "adopted" by the anolas family. This character (the one designated as "chosen" by the priests on Pysadi) will be more constantly in contact with the entire family. The parentals will most often help this individual in applying skills, and the referee should imply that the "luck" of the female is especially strong for him or her. But the characters will also be more strongly affected by the negative aspects of the relationship; the saving throw has an additional +2DM applied at all times, and the intelligence loss is -2, not -1.

The characters will not be aware of this intelligence loss. It is recorded secretly by the referee. The decline is so gradual that no one in the group will be aware of any great change. However, it will make itself felt as time goes on. Throws against intelligence will begin to fail more often than usual, and the referee may deliberately begin withholding information that might normally be useful—representing inattention or confusion. Rolls against intelligence should be instituted to allow completion of relatively simple tasks (putting on a vacc suit properly, or making a routine landing)—in these cases, applicable skills should be used as negative DMs (augmented as needed by the parental anolas) to represent the fact that familiar tasks may still be handled by rote. Any way the referee can think of to simulate a gradually growing problem is suitable, including adverse DMs in surprise situations, adverse modifiers on the reaction table to represent the negative reaction engendered by vagueness or abstraction, and so forth.

These effects will be slow. Referee judgment is called for. The cumulative effect will eventually become noticeable, but it should not be a sudden revelation—more a gradual feeling that things aren't going too well. Eventually, characters will realize something is badly wrong.

One way they will definitely discover the problem is through the decline of a character's intelligence to a "1" rating. This is as low as it can be pushed. When it happens, the character is considered to have been so badly affected as to be, in effect, temporarily rendered incapable of independent thought or action. The other characters might discover the individual on watch one morning, staring off into space and unable to respond to any sort of stimulus or danger. The character will still be capable of eating, taking care of himself, and occasionally taking care of the anolas—though he may have trouble deciding what to have for dinner or which suit to wear! But in situations where thought or action are required, he will not be able to function without help, and the player should be barred from contributing ideas or plans to the rest of the group.

When this stage of the campaign takes place, the stage is set for the events outlined in *The Psionic Institute*.

**Adventuring with the Anolas:** The anolas enjoy travelling with the crew and moving about with them. They weigh 3 kilograms each, and of course add to the weight load carried by an individual (though they may shift from person to person or even move independently from time to time). The arboreal creatures can cling to humans (or Vargr) with ease and will not fall off even if the host is running.

Special equipment will be necessary for the anolas in the same places characters need it—filter masks in tainted atmospheres, compressor masks for very thin atmospheres, even vacc suits. It would even be possible to have special compartments built into characters' vacc suits to hold the anola, thus preserving contact with parentals. Cost for specially fabricated equipment will be roughly equivalent to costs for standard human-designed items (a vacc suit modification, however, would cost only Cr1000 per vacc suit).

### THE PRIEST'S JUDGMENT

After explaining the situation to the adventurers, the priest extends a gentle offer. The group has two choices, he says; the church will be understanding, and will not force their decision in any way. They are invited to set aside their burdens and live out their lives as patrons of this family of anolas here in Itzeny, since the anolas, and hence Mother Pysadi herself, have clearly chosen the adventurers.

However, the priest goes on, he is sure that the party would find the retired life of the priesthood confining after their travels, and he would not blame them at all if they turned down this offer of peace and contentment. Therefore, in return for an offering, the party will be free to leave Itzeny and Pysadi without further difficulty or interference. The adventurers, conditioned to the concept of "offerings" as money, will begin to breathe a collective sigh of relief . . . until the priest speaks again.

Addressing the character who was wounded in the forest—and who has remained the favorite of the anolas since—the priest makes a sign in the air similar to that made by Baraatsa in the farm encounter. "We have seen the actions of the Holy Family," the priests say. "You have been Chosen." The character so addressed will be required to stay on, no matter what, though all his colleagues may go free. No arguments will be tolerated. If necessary to make their point, salvors in filter masks will open the windows of the dormitory. The maskless adventurers will quickly succumb to the atmosphere and pass out. When they awaken, they will be on a train, accompanied by two armed salvors, and already a long way from Itzeny. Their companion will be gone, presumably still at the church—a fact which the salvors will cheerfully confirm.

The party will be escorted, first to a salvor office for confirmation of travel passes, and then to the starport, once the train arrives in Sadi. Before they cross the extrality line, they are informed that they are no longer welcome on Pysadian soil, and will be denied permits or papers should they visit again. Having denied the benefits offered by Mother Pysadi, they have forfeited their right to remain on her surface.

### RESCUE OPERATION

Back at the starport, the adventurers must take stock of their situation. The salvors, with their usual regard for fairness and justice, have delivered the howood cargo to the ship; servicing and refueling is completed. But it is unthinkable to leave a companion behind—there being no legal way to end this problem, thoughts must turn to an illegal solution.

A rescue operation will take a certain amount of planning and care. First, though Pysadi is primitive by most standards, there is a need for speed and daring. The best plan would probably involve taking the ship to Itzeny, since Pysadi has no local navy or other defenses. There is a chance that the government, putting pressure on the starport authorities, could force one of the ships in port (the two Vargr traders) to take action, but quick action should outpace the slow wheels of bureaucracy.

Details of the raid are up to the group. The referee may pass on helpful suggestions, remind the group of specific facts that might help them, and so forth, as desired. They should be rewarded for cleverness—for realizing, for instance, that the overall slowdown (even at the starport) of the Pysadian holy days can make their raid all the more unexpected.

The referee should also discourage acts of gratuitous violence. Pysadi is a member of the Imperium. In theory, this means that anyone who breaks Pysadi's laws and then flees the world must be pursued by Imperial authorities and extradited to Pysadi. In practice, Imperial authorities will not devote effort to searching for those who violate any local laws which are considered barbaric or irrational by the mainstream of Imperial society. Unless the adventurers commit other crimes in the process of rescuing their companion, they need not worry about the law once away from Pysadi. Minor destruction of property might occasion a small fine if the *Harrier* ever returns to Pysadi's starport (although it would be advisable not to leave the area of extrality). However, if the rescue results in major property damage or, especially, loss of life, the authorities are likely to pursue, and the adventurers will be in big trouble. The referee should make sure that all these points of law are familiar to the players.

Non-violent solutions are not lacking. The party has already seen what the planet's atmosphere can do when breathed unfiltered. A breach in the church wall would quickly incapacitate everyone inside, allowing the party to strike fast and stage the rescue. The referee should encourage other solutions as well, but can feel free to drop in hints or suggestions if the party seems stymied. Gvoudzon, if a non-player character, could be an excellent pipeline for such ideas.

**The Atmosphere:** In situations where Pysadi's tainted atmosphere is breathed by unprotected individuals, the effects of the taint are handled as follows: 1D damage points are applied every four combat rounds to the endurance of the breathing character; when endurance reaches zero, he passes out.

If a breach is made in a sealed building, the gradual diffusion of tainted air will proceed outward from the breach in an expanding hemisphere at a rate of five squares each com-

bat round. Interior walls are not sealed, though they may slow the diffusion of the air. Individuals in the building will not suffer the effects of the taint until they begin breathing it.

While breathing the tainted atmosphere, characters are likely to become giddy, doing foolish and unpredictable things. Mental control is lost gradually. To simulate this, affected characters may attempt to take action as they would normally. However, they must roll their intelligence or less to complete the action; failure of the roll causes them to do something unexpected (laughing uncontrollably, firing a gun off into the air, etc.) Moreover, intelligence is reduced each round at the same rate as endurance. When intelligence reaches 1, the character is helpless, even if he is still conscious.

Prolonged exposure to the atmosphere is not particularly harmful. Most fatalities caused by the tainted air are the result of foolish acts committed under the influence of the gas.

A map of the church grounds is provided to help the referee and the players carry out the rescue attempt. The exact course of events will be up to the interplay between players and referee.

**The Church at Itzeny:** The church is a relatively small structure, being built to serve a fairly remote community. Like all religious buildings on Pysadi, the church has two functions; it is a place of worship, and it serves as a local center for government and administration.

Churches on Pysadi are not places of communal worship. Religion on the world focuses on the relationship of family

and self with the Mother of Life, and it is personal, rather than group worship which counts. Thus, although most churches have small meeting halls, these buildings are not built to house all the thousands who might be part of a particular flock.

The following serves as a key to the floor plans given for the church.

**1. Steps:** An imposing series of steps leads to the church entryway.

**2. Entry Hall:** This area is dominated by a stairway leading up, and is decorated with murals, hangings, and statuary representing religious scenes—mostly relating to Man interacting with Nature. Doors open to two hallways, and to areas 3 and 5.

**3. Meeting Hall:** This area is two stories tall, and holds seating sufficient for 150 people. At one end, a simple raised platform serves speakers addressing the Hall.

**4. Offices:** These are mostly used by priests representing the Propagatory and the Offeratory.

**5. Government Office:** A large waiting room, with counter space for persons filling out or filing forms, etc.

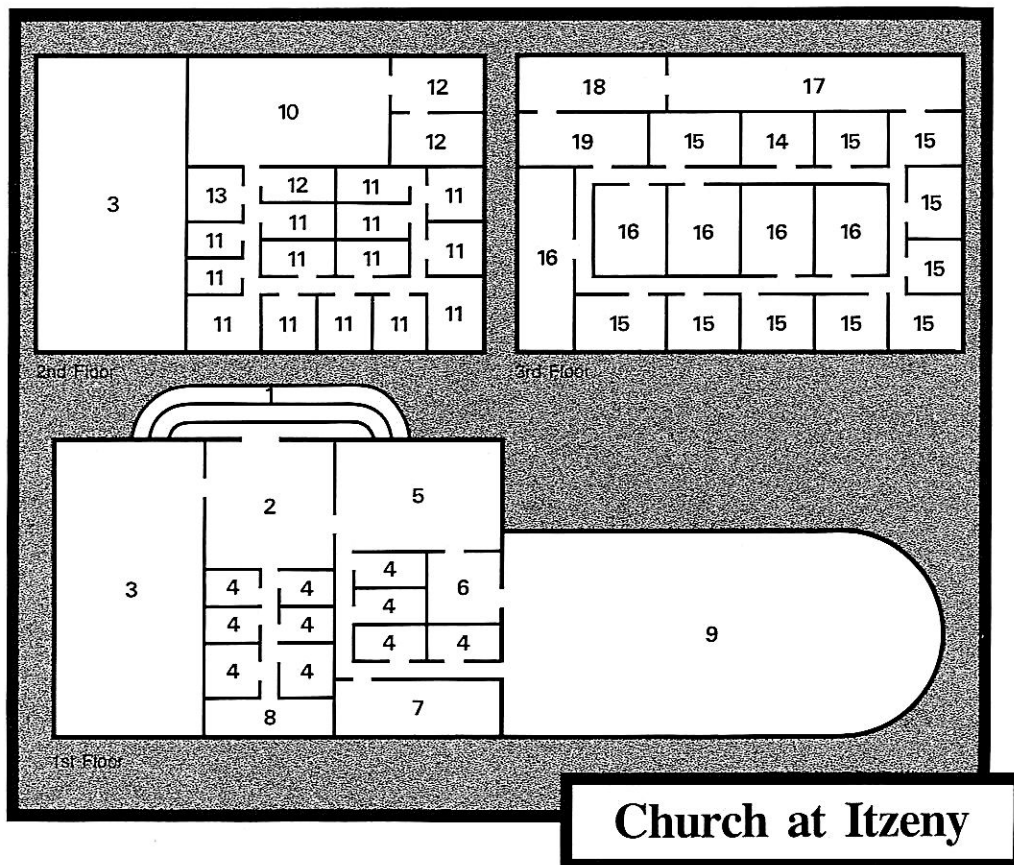
**6. Salvor's Office:** This office is a large room, with space for several visitors. Windows overlook the park.

**7. Dormitory:** This area is used to confine persons on a temporary basis.

**8. Common Room:** Area used by church personnel for short breaks, etc.

**9. Park:** Walled, guarded area used as cemetery and home for church anolas.

**10. Prayer Room:** Large chamber for public meditation and





prayer.

**11. Offices:** These are smaller offices, many of them unused, for various aspects of church and government business.

**12. Private Chambers:** These rooms are used for private consultations between priests and members of their flock on spiritual matters.

**13. Church Library:** A combination library and study used primarily by church personnel, but open to anyone.

**14. Stairwell.**

**15. Private Rooms:** These are the domiciles of various important priests and officials, or rooms reserved for important visitors.

**16. Dormitories:** Large sleeping chambers shared by up to ten junior members of the church staff.

**17. Dining Area:** Communal eating facilities.

**18. Kitchen.**

**19. Storerooms.**

At any given time, there may be up to 50 people within the church. There are a total of six full-time salvors in the church, though other priests may be appointed to the post if the need arises. Most of the time they are armed with their staves of office—treat as a cudgel. The church "armory", a locked cabinet in the Chief Salvor's office, contains three revolvers, used at very rare intervals when the staffs are not sufficient to enforce church authority.

**After the Rescue:** When the party stages the rescue attempt successfully (and it is quite unlikely that they will fail), they will be able to assist their comrade into the ship and escape. It should be noted that the anolas will still be in the dormitory where the *March Harrier* crewman is held; they may be taken, or may attempt to follow. If the players want to take them along, thanks to their unusual powers, they should be encouraged. The referee may wish to subtly cast doubt on a decision to leave them behind (an ominous "You're sure you don't want to take them?") to simulate the slight but growing hold the animals have at this time. Decisions should not, however, be forced, merely encouraged.

#### REFEREE'S NOTES

It is possible that the situation on Pysadi will not develop exactly along the lines blocked out in the text. For example, sufficiently cautious adventurers could go to amazing lengths to avoid any sort of contact with the anolas; if sufficiently backed into a corner, they might desire the use of force to settle the matter . . . and, unless the referee steps into the picture and intervenes bluntly, such a course neatly shatters the entire structure of this chapter.

There are, however, loopholes. If the group ignores the anolas, give them a spur—another demonstration of their useful powers, perhaps coupled with a hint that these interesting animals might be worth money.

At all costs the referee must stay flexible. Remain impartial, but do everything possible to ensure that each adventuring session is interesting and exciting. Don't let a group of players defuse an adventure by behaving in a totally unbelievable fashion (killing everything that could possibly be a threat, for instance)—but try to encourage and reward shrewd decisions and give them every chance to make a correct one (or an incorrect one).

If, despite everything, the players refuse to have anything to do with the anolas, the referee must either adapt the chapter to fit—perhaps the group might be induced to violate a different religious prohibition, of which there are many on Pysadi—or reduce this world to the status of a minor incident (after all, there are plenty of other adventures ahead).

**Next:** From Pysadi, the possession of a cargo potentially valuable on Aramanx and the possibility of official pursuit spreading from Aramis invite the group to make a jump further into the Scatters. Two choices present themselves, but one, Lewis, is an interdicted world. Far better is Zila, one jump away, a world famed for its wines and poised on the edge of the Scatters.

At Zila, the adventurers will have a chance to learn interesting new things and perhaps acquire a valuable friend and ally.



# First Call at Zila

This chapter concerns the *March Harrier*'s first visit to Zila, in which the adventurers learn more about the crash of the *Mammoth* and gain a new friend.

## ZILA

Zila (0508-E25672C-7) is a small world with a thin atmosphere and seas covering more than half its surface. Three major continents cover its southern hemisphere, while one major continent is in the northern hemisphere. Zila's population is 66 million distributed mainly on the southern continents. The local government is a participatory democracy, but with an extremely limited electorate. Suffrage is limited to land owners, and even then only to those who hold 1,000 or more acres. In fact, a parcel of land consisting of 1,000 acres is seldom broken up once owned, and is referred to commonly as a "ballot". Families holding several "ballots" generally distribute them among the family members. Zila's law level is high, but is an accepted fact of life. The planet's tech level is 7, lower than average, but sufficient to make life comfortable. Zila is an agricultural world with a trading station to encourage exports to the Vargr.

Arrival at Zila places the crew of the *March Harrier* at the world's only starport, where they may take care of the basic details of cargo unloading, berthing costs, and minor paperwork. Following that, the entire group can move out into town for some recreation.

At the starport boundary gate, the guard insists that each character read and sign a warning placard before leaving the grounds. The placard cautions that Zila is considered an amber travel zone, and that individuals venturing into the world outside place themselves in potential danger. Zilan law level is C, sufficient for individuals to be detained on slight pretext; local legal machinery is slow and often tedious. Individuals are cautioned to exercise extreme care on Zila lest they fall afoul of the law. The official indicates that quite a few travellers languish in Zilan jails; it would be prudent to retain a lawyer before any trouble came up.

Just outside the starport gate is a transport station; regular trains carry travellers and workers the few kilometers to the city. Billboards and signs around the station exhort the virtues of certain law firms, promising immediate attention to any problem and fast results in the event of arrest. Several offices are staffed in the station.

Visiting one of the law offices reveals that it is a recruitment office: the actual law offices are in the city. In the office, a clerk stands ready to sign up individuals for stand-by legal coverage. For Cr100 per week per person, the law firm will provide legal representation and intercession in the event of problems with the police. An additional Cr70 per week provides a waiver of additional costs that might be necessary, such as bail, gratuities, and filing fees.

If anyone signs up, the clerk will provide each client with a small collar button and warn that it should be worn at all

times. He says that it alerts the police that legal coverage is available. He points to his own collar button and says he is never without it. A small identification card provides communicator code numbers and contact names in the event that there is a legal problem.

## A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

The Class-E starport facility on Zila offers very little in the way of entertainment or distractions; most starship crews and trading station personnel visit any of several bars in the Startown district of Crescence. The strip is essentially similar to other Startown districts on other worlds, though it is smaller than many. But it's still a place where visitors go to have a good time, and where the enforcers travel in squads, not pairs.

Barhopping is not at all unusual, and starport personnel particularly recommend the Dead Spacer, a bar readily identified by the painted picture of a vacc-suited figure, his faceplate shattered, which hangs over the door. Most visiting ship crews go there; it's a clean place with a friendly atmosphere and a pretty fair understanding with the enforcers.

When the adventurers visit the bar, it's doing a slow but steady business. A few individuals—mostly starport workers, by their clothes—are at the bar, chatting with the bartender. Two tables are full, too, one with a number of ship crewmen in Akerut uniforms, the other occupied by a handful of Oberlindes Lines personnel. All in all, the atmosphere is relaxed and easygoing; though the two tables are well apart and seem to be ignoring each other studiously.

As the adventurers enter, one of the starport workers—a maintenance mechanic who helped service *March Harrier* when she first landed—recognizes the group and offers to buy them a drink. He and the bartender team up, and begin alternating asking questions and telling stories. The group is made to feel very much at home. The gist of the conversation is contained in the rumors outlined below; the referee may spin out the encounter for as long as desired, to promote a more colorful atmosphere.

**The Bartender:** The bartender warns the players once again about the restrictive nature of law enforcement on Zila. Although the police don't interfere much at his establishment, harassment is common. He recommends that the characters subscribe to a legal service, and relates several amusing anecdotes showing the difference such a service can make.

If the topic turns to cargos and trade, the bartender tells the group about Zilan wine, and offers them a chance to sample some. He charges Cr1 per glass, a very reasonable price; a bottle bouthg on Zila costs Cr5-10 locally, but can go for as much as 10 times as much offplanet. Trouble is,



Akerut Lines holds the exclusive license to export wine from Zila, a monopoly they seem certain to keep.

**Disgruntled Maintenance Worker:** Mention of Akerut attracts the attention of another starport worker, who asks if anyone has heard more about the crash of the Akerut freighter *Mammoth*. Only a few short bulletins arrived here, and a little news from the far trader *Wolblutn* when it was in port a couple of weeks ago, but nothing very complete.

The adventurers, of course, can fill him in, since they were on Aramis when the crash took place. The worker tells them a few details about the *Mammoth* that were not known at Aramis as the conversation turns general.

*Mammoth* came to Zila for a standard wine pickup only a few days after another Akerut freighter, the *Titan*, landed for refueling while en route from Inthe/Regina to Aramis with a military cargo. *Titan*'s chief engineer reported that her ship's jump drives were in bad need of repair, refusing to certify the ship for jump before a complete overhaul. Because *Titan*'s cargo had a military priority, it was transferred to *Mammoth*, which was quickly refueled and then dispatched to Aramis and a rendezvous with fate. *Titan*, once repaired, eventually took *Mammoth*'s wine shipment to Aramanx, one of the best markets for Zilan wine in the region.

Three things bother the mechanic. First, he had carried out a maintenance inspection on *Mammoth*'s drives and certified them in top shape. He fears that the drive failure will

put a black mark on his record, and could dead-end his career.

Second, the mechanic was involved in the overhaul of *Titan*'s J-drives after *Mammoth* departed. He swears her chief engineer must have been totally incompetent, and wonders how she ever earned her papers in the first place. Most of the drive wear seemed to be relatively recent, the result of extreme low temperature metal fatigue. "Only an idiot," he proclaims, "would leave L-hyd valves open after a jump—it's one of the first things you learn." But this, apparently, is what *Mammoth*'s engineer did.

The mechanic also comments on a last point. *Mammoth*'s regular chief engineer was an old hand, well known at the starport. But during the ship's layover, the CE was waylaid in an alley by some local thugs and roughed up. He was in the hospital for six weeks, and when *Mammoth* was due to lift, the vacancy was filled by none other than *Titan*'s chief engineer herself. The mechanic is sure that this bumbler—who, he understands, was newly assigned to *Titan* at Inthe, and unknown to any of the regulars on board—probably did something equally incompetent to cause the *Mammoth* crash. Pulling her engineer's papers was letting her off far too easily.

**A Brawl:** During all this discussion, the Akerut crewmen at the nearest table have plainly been hearing bits and pieces, and are seen casting sidelong glances towards the bar. One of the Oberlindes crew also seems to have taken notice; he comes over and invites the characters to join his group at their table and swap some news.

The Oberlindes group is a friendly bunch. They're very frustrated just now; their ship, the *Margin of Profit*, broke down five weeks ago. The problem is too complicated for the local starport to cope with, and it's distinctly possible that Akerut has put some pressure on the starport to stall the parts orders, just to cause trouble. (Akerut and Tukera, one of the Oberlindes people remarks, aren't too happy with recent Oberlindes expansion into the Aramis subsector.) Normally a five-week vacation wouldn't be so bad, even on Zila, but this trip the ship's got VIPs aboard—old man Oberlindes himself and his chief assistant, Arrlanroughl.

Before things get much further, the group notices that the rest of the bar has fallen silent. A couple of Akerut crewmen, plainly a little worse for drink, have sauntered over near the table. They begin to make loud comments to each other, calling the *March Harrier* a "fat sow too slow to win anything but a garbage contract, and so old that it's only the rust that holds it together."

If any of the adventurers seem on the verge of taking action, they'll be restrained by Oberlindes crewmen, who don't want any trouble. But the restraint doesn't work for long, because the wits from Tukera continue, saying, "But it's a good thing the *March Harrier* turned up—maybe we can give her the garbage run and have *Margin of Profit* hauled off with the rest of the refuse." At this, the Oberlindes crew jumps into action, and a brawl breaks out.

Resolution of the fight should be up to the referee. Within minutes, the brawl is broken up by arriving enforcers. It will be quickly established that it was the Oberlindes characters and the adventurers who started the brawl—even if this hadn't been the case, Tukera/Akerut is responsible for most



of the bar's offworld business, and the bartender has no desire to let a good nature interfere with sound business sense. The crew and their Oberlindes companions will be hauled off to an all-night lockup, where they face fines of Cr100 each, plus 1D x Cr250 in damages.

### A VALUABLE FRIEND

The next morning, even before any of the legal services can intervene to assist the characters, they are bailed out of jail, along with the Oberlindes crew. All their fines are paid, and the damages as well.

Their benefactor is none other than Marc hault-Oberlindes, the owner of the line. Having heard of the fight, he and Arllanroughl made arrangements—which involved a lot of cash—to smooth things over. He felt he owed it to the group for getting them involved in the ongoing enmity between the Oberlindes and Tukera lines. Anyway, he wants to make them an offer he thinks will be worth their while.

Oberlindes Lines currently bases their Aramis subsector operations at Paya; now that Oberlindes is expanding its business in the subsector, it requires a more centrally located headquarters. He and Arllanroughl are currently in the process of personally supervising the opening of new Oberlindes offices, to be established at Aramanx starport. Unfortunately he, Arllanroughl, and a cargo of computer records and other material have been stalled here at Zila for several weeks.

He wants to arrange passage for himself and Arllanroughl, plus their cargo (50 tons) through to Aramanx. He's willing to pay well—high passages to Carsten and Aramanx for each, plus a guarantee to pay for *March Harrier's* whole cargo space for the whole trip. Thus, with a partial load, they receive as much as they normally would for a full one, and that's not a deal to be casually ignored. All Oberlindes asks for in return is speed—as much speed as *March Har-*

*rier* can make, even if it means skimming fuel at Carsten and passing up a planetfall there.

If the adventurers agree, Oberlindes and Arllanroughl will board soon thereafter, and have their cargo shifted. Their voyage to Aramanx is uneventful. In the end, they can deliver Oberlindes to the orbital port facility around Aramanx, having earned a fair sum of money and a potentially good friend in merchant circles, to boot.

**Next:** Up until this point, the *March Harrier's* actions have been largely dictated by the limits of their ship and the cargos available. At this point, however, the first part of the campaign ends, and the crew is free to choose the direction in which they wish to go. If they turn down Oberlindes' offer and remain at Zila, they have a choice between returning to their subsidy route (not wise because of the continued chance of legal action for past exploits), head Spinward to try their luck in the Scatters, or head towards Carsten and the Towers Cluster.

If they are at Aramanx, this decision has pretty well been made for them. At any event, they now depart for a time from the carefully directed course of the campaign. The next four chapters, *Patrons*, *The Wolf at the Door*, *Exotic Encounters*, and *The Psionic Institute*, cover a variety of possible adventures which can come their way as they wander. Some can impinge on the main flow of the campaign, while others are totally unrelated.

To start them off, generate a cargo or choose a patron from the next chapter. Note: if the party is at Aramanx, it would also be possible (though in no way required) to begin immediately with *The Wolf at the Door*. The order of occurrence of the chapters that follow is not important, up until *Zilan Wine*, which may begin whenever the referee wants to end the period of wandering.

# Patrons

The patrons in this campaign serve many purposes. Some make minor journeys and excursions possible. Others help divert the players from their true goal. Patrons add flavor to the continuing thread of the campaign.

## PATRON ENCOUNTERS

The following patron encounters may be used whenever the appropriate patron type (noble, terrorist, etc.) is rolled on the patron encounter table, or the referee may choose one for himself. Some of the encounter situations are likely only on a restricted group of worlds; if so, this will be stated in the referee's information section.

In each patron encounter, the referee should provide the players' information to the players but keep the referee's information secret. The referee's information includes a range of possibilities regarding the true nature of the encounter. The referee should choose one of these; if desired, this may be done randomly by rolling 1D. Because there are several possibilities, some of the patron encounters may be run more than once with the players' information altered slightly to disguise them.

### Rare Vintage

*Patron:* Noble

*Players' Information:* Wine is a constant attraction to connoisseurs. The rarest (and, many say, the best) of wines, *Tokaj Eszencia* from old Earth itself, is unavailable, being reserved by Imperial mandate for the Emperor and his family. For the diligent connoisseur, however, many other extremely good wines are available.

One such wine is Zilan *eiswein*. From time to time, the Zilan trake crop suffers an early freeze. When this happens,

they are immediately picked, transported to the winery still frozen, and pressed into wine. They make a unique, high quality wine of great value and extreme rarity.

The group has been contacted by a wealthy connoisseur who wishes to obtain a quantity of Zilan *eiswein*.

*Referee's Information:* This encounter may occur on Towers, Aramanx, or Violante. This wine becomes available on Zila only rarely. To come upon any sizeable lot of *eiswein* on Zila is nearly impossible. Tukera Lines, through a subsidiary on Zila, constantly bids up the price, and no one else ever gets the stuff. It gets transshipped by Akerut from Aramanx to Junidy, and then on to the big worlds, where it is snapped up by vintners at very high prices. To succeed, the group will have to locate a dealer with a large enough stock.

The patron wants 100 bottles within ten weeks and is willing to pay up to Cr2,500 per bottle upon delivery for top quality vintage (individual years vary greatly in quality because the wine deteriorates over time). He will not pay if delivery is late.

When looking for Zilan *eiswein*, the throw is local population code or less for each week of search (DM - 2 for each subsequent week of the search). Success results in the location of 20-120 bottles. Asked price for each bottle is Cr400 plus 1D times Cr100.

1-3. If pressed, the patron will advance Cr10,000 to cover initial expenses. The referee should do this only if the players are extremely short of capital. Upon delivery, he will examine the labels, open and taste one or two sample bottles, and pay the balance owed.

4-5. As 1, but the patron will judge the wine to be of average quality. He will pay Cr2,000 per bottle.

6. The players have been taken by a dishonest dealer and sold inferior wine in bottles with counterfeit labels and seals. Upon tasting the wine, the patron pronounces it garbage. He will refuse to accept it, but will not demand his deposit be returned.

### Line-up

*Patron:* Police

*Players' Information:* While wandering through the city, the group is stopped by a local police officer. He has noticed that one of their number looks very much like a local criminal, recently arrested. The officer would like to have the character included with others in a line-up when they try to have the criminal identified. The officer realizes that the character is innocent, and promises that nothing will come of this.

*Referee's Information:* This scenario may take place on Aramanx or Junidy. There are always risks involved in this sort of situation. Refusing to cooperate will not result in any



## The Traveller Adventure

## Patrons

trouble, but will mark the group as “uncooperative” with the local police.

1-4. The miscreant is successfully identified, tried and convicted. The police are grateful for help in creating a tight case. The group has gained a favorable reputation with the local police.

5. The witnesses are not able to make a positive identification. The case must be dropped, and some of the officer’s displeasure is transferred to the group. They have gained an unfavorable reputation with the local police.

6. Crossed signals result in the identification of the character as the criminal. 1D days pass before the matter is resolved.

### Ancestors

*Patron:* Researcher

*Players’ Information:* Aramanx was settled in 388 in the cascade of settlement which resulted in the Towers Cluster. The exact sequence of settlement of the various worlds is unclear from available records, but it is known that there was a leapfrog effect: settlers from the Deneb sector settled down on Junidy and Towers. In the next generation, some groups from Towers and Junidy then moved on to Nasemin. This continued settlement meant that some records were necessarily lost.

The group is approached by an aged gentleman, who has been selected by his family (extended family; about 250 people) to research the exact sequence of settlement and seek out details of previous generations of this family. Ultimately, the information will satisfy his curiosity and may provide income for him through royalties.

This geneologist is retired and relatively well-to-do. He can afford approximately Cr10,000 per week for a year.

*Referee’s Information:* This scenario may take place on Aramanx or Lablon.

The geneologist needs to trace his family’s progress during a period of upheaval and rapid change more than 600 years ago. Centralized records could provide clues, but they are in the archives on each world by now and the searching will probably have to be manual.

1-3. The information is on Nasemin and Junidy. The family has been moderately successful, with several hitherto separate branches. Throw 11+ per week per world to determine if the information is present.

4-5. The family left Aramanx in a dispute which split it. One branch went to Towers and the other to Junidy. After this period of time, the reasons for the dispute are unknown and meaningless. All are happy to be brought together again. If the group has assisted the researcher well, they can provide the following benefits:

The family on Towers includes a broker-4 who will act for the price of a broker-1.

The family on Junidy has nothing immediate to provide. On the next call to Junidy, the family offers their hospitality and any reasonable assistance they might be able to provide.

6. The family left Aramanx as a group, concealing its destination. They left not early on, but in 810, during the psionic suppressions, leaving behind their property and most of their fortune. Much of the fortune has since been dissipated, but there remains a small account hidden away.

Throw 10+ per week on Aramanx to discover the account. Once found, the account may be claimed by the geneologist provided he can demonstrate his ancestry. It amounts to Cr950,000.

The Psionic Institute on Junidy will have set a routine tracer on this account and will attempt to contact the researcher and his family once it knows of them.

### Air of Rebellion

*Patron:* Terrorist

*Players’ Information:* The group is approached by a pair who identify themselves as freedom fighters from Dhian. They will pay three times standard rates to have themselves and 10 tons of cargo landed on Dhian at a location well away from the starport. Upon landing, they will pay an additional Cr20,000. They will answer no further questions.

*Referee’s Information:* This scenario may take place anywhere. The government of Dhian is equipped to tech level 6, the referee must determine exactly what equipment is available to the planetary forces.

1-2. Not suprisingly, the cargo is food, life support equipment, several portable shelters, and arms for the establishment of a resistance movement on Dhian. If all goes well, the *March Harrier* might be hired for other runs. There is a possibility that the Dhian government has discovered the rebel’s landing zone. Roll 12 exactly for the landing zone to be surrounded by government troops.

3-5. As 1, but the chances of getting caught are greater. Roll 8+ for the landing zone to be surrounded.

6. As 1, but the government has complete knowledge of the rebel plan and knows the group’s approximate arrival time and landing area. The landing zone will be surrounded.

In all cases, the referee must determine the size of the government forces and the course of events depending upon the players’ actions.

### Pyramids

*Patron:* Professor

*Players’ Information:* The group is approached by a well-dressed gentleman who is engaged in cataloging the occurrence of pyramids in the Aramis subsector, much as he has already done in the Regina and Rhylanor subsectors. Although he can prove a connection with the Imperial University at Rhylanor, he hastens to point out that this project is privately funded and is not sponsored by the university in any way. He is looking for any evidence of pyramids in this subsector and has a hypothesis that they are a consistent remnant of an interstellar society pre-dating known history.

The patron wants to buy passage to the following worlds (sequence is not important): Aramanx, Feneteman, Focaline, Jesedipere, Junidy, Lablon, Natoko, Pavanne, Paya, Pysadi, Towers, Violante, and Zila. Since he is not on a schedule, he is willing to buy a middle passage and accompany the ship wherever it goes for the next few months.

*Referee’s Information:* This scenario can take place anywhere. The professor’s connection with the university is as a doctor of literature. He has no expertise in archeology or any related science. Any character with even a rudimentary knowledge of the history of this region will recognize his theory as hogwash. Nevertheless, he offers to pay in cash, and seems harmless enough.





1-2. After some time (throw 7+ per week), the professor will confide some of his background, including the fact that his brother is Duke of Rhylanor. This fact may prove useful to the group later on. He leaves at the first world with pyramidal structures on it (throw 8+ per world).

3. As 1, but several months after the professor leaves, the group will receive a message indicating that the professor has died and left them Cr100,000 as a token of his thanks for their kind assistance. This assumes the group treated the professor well during his sojourn with them.

4-6. The professor will continue with the ship until he gets to a world with pyramidal structures on it (determine as above). He will, from time to time, replenish his funds by cashing bank drafts at starports along the route.

### Moving Day

*Patron:* Noble, Smuggler

*Players' information:* A noble contacts the group, and announces his wish to hire their ship for passage to his Violante estate. He will require all 150 tons of cargo space for the move. He will also need all passenger staterooms, and all low berths since he will be moving his entire household staff as well. He will pay standard rates and a Cr20,000 bonus.

*Referee's Information:* This scenario may begin on Focaline, Junidy, or Lablon.

The patron is a noble who has fallen upon hard times, and has turned smuggler. Concealed within the walls of the many cargo modules he is bringing along are considerable quantities of drugs, some illegal, some subject to a very high tariff.

1-2. Throw 9+ for customs officials to inspect on arrival in system. Then throw 12+ for each of three modules they check. If the drugs are found, then the ship is held over while a complete inspection is made. Local penalty for accessory to smuggling is a Cr100,000 fine.

3. Throw 8+ for the ship to be inspected in orbit on arrival at the starport. But the inspector seems more intent on getting a bribe than on looking too hard. The patron will pay.

4-5. Throw 9+ for the ship to be inspected in orbit by customs officials. Throw 12+ for each of four modules to be checked. Penalties are as above.

6. At the first sign of a possible inspection the noble and his retinue attempt to take over the ship and flee. Personal combat within the ship or space combat with the revenue cutter (50-ton modular cutter) may occur.

### Special Delivery

*Patron:* Spy, Courier

*Players' Information:* In a dark alley, the group finds a small man who has been beaten to within a millimeter of his life. He is still protecting a small package wrapped in paper. Before he loses consciousness, he asks that this important package be delivered to the Oberlindes Lines Office at the starport. His papers identify him as an Oberlindes employee. He has Cr10,000 and three blank high passages.

*Referee's Information:* This scenario may take place on Violante, Carsten, Aramanx, Towers, Jesedipere, or Lablon. This man is an impostor, feigning injury (roll 8+ for the medic, if present, to discern this). The tickets are good, as is the money the man has. His ID is forged; he is not an Oberlindes employee, but a Vemene agent.

1-3. The package is a bribe to an Oberlindes employee in the local office. The package contains Cr25,000 and instructions to the employee. The Vemene agent has chosen this roundabout way of delivering the payment because he believes Oberlindes operatives are following him. If they are, he reasons, they will now concentrate their attentions on the group instead of him.

4-6. The package is a bundle of marked bills from a recent kidnapping engineered by the Vemene organization. A spy in the Oberlindes organization is to introduce the money into petty cash. The purpose is to implicate the local Oberlindes office in the crime. Naturally, if the group keeps the money, they will be implicated when they try to spend it.

### Go for Broke

*Patron:* Broker

*Players' Information:* In the course of dealing with a broker at a commodities market, the group is presented with a proposal. Because of certain inside information which she has, she wants to buy cargo space and commission the ship's captain to sell merchandise for her at the next destination. She will pay 20% of the profits, over and above normal transport charges, for this service.

*Referee's Information:* The broker, because of her ties to a local brokerage firm, is in a fine position to profit from her inside knowledge. The ship captain might do well to follow that lead, by doing as the broker wants, and also buying and selling the same things.

1-4. All goes well. The broker buys 100 tons of textiles at Cr1200 per ton. It sells for Cr5100 per ton at the next world. This deal only happens once.

5. The broker's information is flawed. Whatever goods are purchased will sell for the same price at their destination.

6. The broker's information is totally wrong. Any goods purchased will sell for 30% less than their purchase price.

### Express Mail

*Patron:* Naval Officer

*Players' Information:* The local newstapes have been headlining the recent pirate raid on an outlying settlement

in this system and the local population is understandably upset about the prospect of future raids. Indeed, the world government has requested an Imperial naval ship in system to undertake defense of the system until the pirate menace has been eliminated.

The group is somewhat surprised when a naval officer calls on their ship at the starport. His cloak conceals his uniform and he asks for an interview with the ship's captain.

*Referee's Information:* This scenario is best administered in a world in the Scatters; it would seem unreasonable that it could happen in a more populated area. Suggested worlds are Violante, Focaline, Heguz, and Lablon. Jesedipere and Pysadi are also possibilities.

The officer indicates that he is second in command of the Imperial Navy Ship *Crotalus*, a one thousand ton destroyer escort with a crew of 14. This current assignment (system defense and pirate eradication) will require the *Crotalus* to remain here for some time. The officer needs a message carried to the naval base at Paya, and will pay twice the going rate.

1-2. The officer is the son of the Paya naval base's commander, and the urgent message is a birthday greeting (father and son are very close). Roll for reaction by the base commander to determine his response to the group's assistance to his son.

3-4. The officer is due to appear before a promotion board at Paya if he is to be promoted this year. The message is to his father (see above), asking that orders be issued transferring him from the *Crotalus* to Paya.

5-6. The officer is a spy and the message contains vital military secrets (encoded, of course) to another agent inside the naval base at Paya. This will be discovered upon delivery on a roll of 8+. After 1D months of investigation, the players will be cleared of any participation in the spy ring, but the base commander will remember them in an unfavorable light.

### Electronic Bestiary

*Patron:* Technician

*Players' Information:* In the starport terminal, the group notices a traveller burdened with two large, heavy suitcases. His coat is shabby, the cases scuffed, and he looks somewhat bewildered.

A friendly approach will reveal that Tukera has overbooked this particular starship and bumped him from his stateroom after he had already boarded. As a matter of fact, three crewmembers simply stormed into his stateroom and removed him and his baggage depositing them both rather roughly in the main concourse.

*Referee's Information:* This scenario may take place on any world with a Tukera office. The man (a computer expert for a small firm based in the Deneb sector) is going to the next world on the group's itinerary and would like to book passage with the group since there is no other available transport for days.

He has been told that if he files a claim for his unused ticket, it will only be refunded after a period of three days, and he must claim it personally. His schedule will not permit a delay of that length. This shy, somewhat introverted man has been treated very poorly and is inwardly fuming.

Saying he has a plan for revenge, the man suggests the

group follow him to a secure location. Once there, he opens his briefcase. It contains three proprietary developments from his company: he calls them a ferret, a bug, and a phage. With the group's assistance, he intends to recover his money from Tukera using these items.

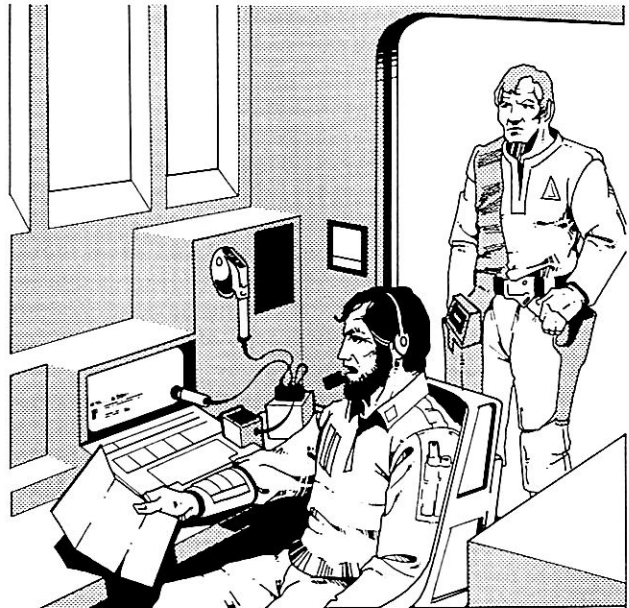
The bug is capable of determining if a computer terminal is being monitored. As long as the bug gives a clear reading, the terminal may be used without fear of detection by most security programs.

The ferret is a seeker. Once set for a certain item of information, it seeks out the particular item and determines its location or locations.

The phage is an eater. It can be set to any piece of information, and it lodges itself in the system, carefully deleting certain data on a continual basis. Upon discovery, it self-destructs.

The computer expert intends to use these devices to get back at Tukera. The bug checks out a terminal that is safe. The ferret looks for mention of his name and ticket; then he recodes that part to call for immediate repayment (or at least reissuance of the ticket). The phage is his own little revenge; he intends to set it to delete some important records, such as payroll data or the instructions to pay the rent every month.

To carry out his plan, he will need access to a Tukera terminal. If necessary, the group can break in at night. More likely, the ship captain can indicate to Tukera that he needs to check some scheduling and as a courtesy he can be directed to a private booth. The expert might have to be disguised in order to get into the booth, or perhaps he will give instructions on how to use the items.



If the affair is successfully concluded, the expert (if asked) will produce copies of the items (one of each) and give instructions on their correct use (but, of course, the players will not be able to copy them). Imperial government computer systems are immune to the effects of these devices.

1. The group manages to locate a safe terminal, and the revenge plan proceeds without difficulty.

2-5. The only terminal with access to Tukera's systems

is in a restricted area of the starport complex and there is considerable risk involved. The group will be caught on a roll of 8+.

6. No suitable terminal can be found except in the offices of Tukera itself. The group will be caught on a roll of 6+.

### Last Ride Home

*Patron:* Belter, Rogue

*Players' Information:* As the group is taking on passengers for their next voyage, they are approached by a shabby, gaunt man in grimy miner's coveralls. He explains that he's been prospecting for several years now, but has reached the end of his money and his health. Now he just wants to give up his wandering life and get a last ride home.

Though he cannot buy the price of the passage up front, the patron's brother, one of the starport warden's chief assistants at Aramanx starport, will be glad to cover the passage when they arrive—in fact, the patron is fairly sure, he can pay them double the usual passage price, just for the trouble they'll have to go through on his behalf.

*Referee's Information:* (This situation may begin on Carsten, Feneteman, or Patinir.) The patron is a likeable and entertaining passenger, and makes himself well-liked during the trip to Aramanx. Because he is not paying his passage up front, he will be amenable to changes of route, should this become necessary for transport of paying passengers or lucrative cargo. Of course, his brother will only pay for the price of a direct passage from the planet of origin to Aramanx.

1. All is as represented. Upon arrival, the double passage is paid. In addition, the patron's brother, who has considerable authority at the port, is very grateful. He becomes a source of inside information concerning potential cargo, ship movements, and the like, and he may throw business to the adventurers any time *March Harrier* is at Aramanx.

2. The patron's brother has been put in this situation before, and is tired of it. He grudgingly pays the price of the passage, but not the double passage offered. In addition, he takes out some of his irritation by putting *March Harrier* at the very bottom of the list for service, refueling, cargo loading, and so forth. As it is a busy week, the ship gets bumped several times, and loses 1D days over and above the usual one-week turnaround time.

3-5. The patron is a con man who often uses this scam to get from one system to another free. There is no brother, and the patron will do his best to give the group the slip early on. If watched closely, he may not be able to escape, and the players can do as they wish. Should they turn him over to authorities, they will not be paid, since he currently has no funds available. He will, however, offer to put them in touch with some contacts on Towers or Nasemin who might be able to throw some lucrative business their way—if they let him go.

These contacts can be used as a +1 streetwise in dealing on the planet, or can be the lead-in to another patron encounter (notably *The Trade*, *In the Money*, or *Air of Rebellion*).

6. As above, but patron is also a fugitive from justice on the world where he was picked up. If turned over to the police, the characters will receive a Cr250 reward, and may be able to bargain their way out of any trouble they've got

ten into there. If they do not turn him in, they will have been connected to his escape on an 8+, and be considered accessories.

### The Trade

*Patron:* Smuggler, Rogue

*Players' Information:* Smuggling, though subject to harsh controls by planetary authorities and periodic suppression by the Navy, is widely considered to be less of a crime than a minor peccadillo. Most merchants hold that rules concerning contraband and customs duties are made to be broken, and have considered smuggling (or "the Trade") to be nothing more than a potentially profitable, if somewhat risky, business.

Most of the Aramis subsector is relaxed about duties and import restrictions, but there are a few notable exceptions—most particularly Junidy, which has placed a number of high import duties on various offworld imports, including liquor, pharmaceuticals, and certain highly priced spices.

The group has been contacted by a colorful local merchant with a reputation for bending the law to suit her own needs, with the object of having them transport a cargo of duty-free liqueurs to Junidy.

*Referee's Information:* (This adventure may begin on Towers, Feneteman, Nasemin, or Jesedipere.) The patron has a regular contact on Junidy who handles distribution of smuggled goods. This individual operates one of Junidy's smaller landing fields (a class-E facility on the southern continent); it is theoretically possible to evade, bribe, or outbluff the local revenue service, land at the small fields, unload the cargo, and depart again. This sort of thing is done all the time.

The Junidy contact has already paid a sizeable sum against the delivery, and will pay more when the cargo arrives. The patron's costs to date have been fully covered by the advance; she proposes that the balance, Cr25,000, be considered the *March Harrier's* fee upon delivery of the ten tons of cargo. If pressed very hard, she will pay Cr5,000 in advance, but no more.

1-2. All goes as planned; the revenue service is fully occupied elsewhere and does not challenge the incoming ship, trusting to planetary customs officials (at the landing field used these men are in the pay of the cargo's recipient) to catch any infractions. The adventurers collect their money, and earn a worthwhile contact with the Junidy underworld (use this as the equivalent of streetwise-1 in addition to other available modifiers, in cases where information or contacts are needed on Junidy). The smuggler may approach the group for further runs at a later date.

3-5. Upon entering the Junidy system, the crew hears reports of a new crackdown on smuggling. The local planetary navy is rigidly enforcing a new order funneling traffic through Junidy's two major starports, and is executing numerous spot checks. Once *March Harrier* has entered the system, she will be quickly contacted by local authorities; to leave the system again will invite suspicion and possible problems later. If the ship leaves again, future visits (at least those made under the same transponder code) will be subject to considerable harassment from authorities. If, on the other hand, the cargo is dumped in interplanetary space, *March Harrier* avoids trouble with the authorities, but incurs



the wrath of the intended recipient, who will attempt to exact payment and/or revenge from both the smuggler and the crew.

6. The situation is basically as above, except that *March Harrier* has no advance warning of the tightened controls. A revenue ship (a patrol cruiser) will attempt to board for inspection. Subsequent events may flow as the referee desires; the penalty for evading customs duties is confiscation of all cargo, a fine of  $2D \times 1,000$  credits, and possible temporary impounding of the ship for up to 30 days. Subsequent harassment will also continue each time the crew visits Junidy.

### Interview

*Patron:* Writer, Reporter

*Players' Information:* The adventurers are approached by Carlos Morlain, a well-known media personality from Aramis. His news reports are carried not only on Aramis, but also on several other worlds through the TNS. The group will be familiar with him from their stay on Aramis.

The patron wishes to take passage to Violante, a world divided into estates owned by wealthy nobles and nouveau riche landowners. He seeks an interview with Viscount Kaanagil, retired Imperial politician and diplomat, who recently served on an important commission involved in negotiations with the Zhodani. He has papers and clearances granting him permission to land at the viscount's private landing field, conduct an interview, and then leave. He will pay twice the cost of normal high passages for a round trip.

*Referee's Information:* (This scenario may begin on Zila, Paya, Dhian, or Focaline.) Carlos Morlain is an ambitious individual, determined to get a good story.

Viscount Kaanagil, an intensely private individual, has never before granted a public interview. He values his privacy highly, and his estate is well protected by bodyguards and advanced security systems. Violante exercises tight controls on visitors; ships are not permitted to land anywhere but the starport without authorization, and transportation from the port to any of the secluded estates is hard to come by, at best. With authorizations, however, *March Harrier's* launch will be permitted to land.

1-2. All is as it appears. The Viscount has decided to speak out on the Zhodani threat to the subsector, and so has broken his long rule against granting interviews. The passage price is paid as promised.

3-5. The patron's authorizations, though accurate enough to fool the starport control and the Viscount's own security people, were faked. He has deliberately forged them to get access to the estate in the hopes of forcing an interview. The Viscount is furious; not only does he refuse the interview, but he also arranges to have local authorities stop *March Harrier* and conduct a thorough, extremely close, and exacting examination of the ship's papers, equipment, and so forth. This delays the ship by  $2D$  days, and results in fines for a variety of minor infractions, amounting to  $2D \times Cr100$ . A character may apply admin skill to reduce the die roll.

6. The Viscount has agreed to give the interview. However, the patron never shows up. He actually came to Violante in search of scandal among the idle rich, and used the interview request only to gain entry to the world.



Morlain returns to the launch one day late, carrying a new suitcase, which he hides somewhere on board. The suitcase contains various tapes, photographs, and documents purchased by Morlain from servants, which would be embarrassing to several of Violante's most prominent noble families if published.

Morlain's arrival will be followed within a few hours by a visit from the planetary police, who will detain him for questioning and search the ship thoroughly (without telling the crew what they are looking for or why). If they find nothing, Morlain will eventually be released; if they find the suitcase, he will be imprisoned; in either case, the *March Harrier* will no longer be welcome. If the crew find the case and turn it in, they will receive a number of rewards from anonymous benefactors.

### Temptation

*Patron:* Embezzler, Swindler

*Players' Information:* The party is approached by a middle-aged businessman. He is nervous and apprehensive, and desperately wants to get off-planet. He will eventually break down and admit that he has just embezzled a large sum of money—he doesn't say how much—from his employer. He offers Cr500,000 to the group if they'll carry him to a planet where he can lose himself—preferably Junidy or Towers.

*Referee's Information:* (This situation may begin on Aramans, Carsten, Jesedipere, or Lablon.) By agreeing to transport the man, the party become accessories to the crime. He is carrying Cr5,000,000 in two suitcases.

1-2. All is as represented. The man works for a comparatively large electronics firm. They have not yet discovered the theft, and will not be able to connect it to *March Harrier*. If turned into authorities, the party receives congratulations, but no real reward.

3-4. The individual embezzled the money from Oberlindes Lines. He reveals this to the adventurers during the passage. They may decide to turn him in to solidify their relationship with Oberlindes. If so, they receive 5%—Cr250,000—as a reward, as well as improving their standing in the eyes of Oberlindes.

5-6. He embezzled the money from Akerut. At the next world visited, a Vemene agent will take passage and will attempt to steal the money back during jump; he may also attempt to kill the embezzler if it can be made to look like an accident. Akerut has chosen this method rather than informing the authorities because public knowledge of the embezzlement would cause a loss of business.

#### In the Money

*Patron:* Rogue

*Players' Information:* Shortly before departure, the group is approached by a well-dressed individual who claims to be a local merchant. This man wants to travel to the ship's next destination on a high passage. He pays up front, in cash. When he comes on board, he is accompanied by several heavy trunks and cases, which he will not allow access to for any reason. They have plainly cleared the starport customs office—they are liberally stamped with various approvals—so there is no reason to be particularly concerned.

*Referee's Information:* (This situation can begin almost anywhere.) The passenger is not, in fact, a merchant; he is a counterfeiter moving his operation to fresh ground. His luggage contains a sizable supply of freshly extruded money, plus plastic, solvents, dyes, and other paraphernalia of his profession (see the library data entry on Imperial currency). This went through customs with the aid of a liberal application of bribes (also counterfeit). Naturally, the money paid for the passage is no good.

1-3. During the period prior to arriving at the ship's destination, someone in the group will realize that some of the money has been counterfeited. If they can track the money down to its source, they can catch the criminal—who will part with large amounts of his faked currency. Or



the party can turn the patron in to the authorities.

4-5. No one in the group notices the forgery. Someone they deal with, however, does notice it; unless they can locate the perpetrator (still aboard *March Harrier* at the time of discovery), the party will be accused of passing bad money.

6. Nothing is noticed until long after the patron has disappeared. At some point (at the referee's discretion) the group will be caught passing a forged banknote, and must face the consequences.

# The Wolf at the Door

This chapter involves the adventurers in a dangerous situation in the face of Vargr corsairs on a backwater world, and presents them with the opportunity to solve the mystery of Captain Bannerji and the *Wolblutn*.

The situation can begin during any visit to the orbital starport at Aramanx.

## ARAMANX

Aramanx (0605 B657974-6) is a balkanized world at the edge of the Towers Cluster, colonized in the 400s by settlers from Junidy. The initial colonists were a utopian group who attempted to eliminate warfare by returning man to a simpler state of existence. The technology required to construct fusion power plants, gravitic drives, and nuclear bombs was renounced, leaving the colonists at tech level 6.

As later generations spread out across the planet, schisms developed and war was reintroduced; gradually, under the pressures of nationalism, all of the old beliefs died except for the traditional hostility to new technology. Now even that is fading as offworld contact begins to make high technology the price of national survival, although a large segment of the population in every nation remains hostile to the new ways (and to the offworlders who bring them).

The planet is an average sized world with a thin atmosphere; 70% of its surface is covered by water. The five major continents include a varied, but generally rugged terrain which has further encouraged the world's characteristic balkanization.

Aramanx has a population of 1.6 billion people spread across eight major, and at least twenty minor, mutually independent nations, each with its own government, laws, and society. The overall law level of 4 applies strictly to the orbital facility which serves as the starport for Aramanx. This class B port, completed only within the last ten years, was financed by a consortium of Imperial commercial concerns at the urging of Sternmetal Horizons, LIC, which has a heavy interest in Aramanx.

It is only in the years since Sternmetal Horizons first began to open the world to extensive offworld contact that the planet has begun to advance, but it remains incapable of producing fusion power, grav technology, or even primitive atomic weapons. Extensive industrialization has kept pace with the rapid population growth of the last century or so, and Aramanx is widely believed to be perched on the edge of a crisis period which could see the world blossom into a rival to Aramis or Junidy, or explode into a dangerous and world-encompassing war.

Sternmetal Horizons, LIC, has recently (within the last decade) embarked upon a program of exploitation of Aramanx along ambitious lines. Deciding that a straight economic takeover of the planet would (given the complexities and variety of politics and political bodies on the world) involve too great an outlay of funds, Sternmetal has systematically invested in Lovrenyi, a smallish (population 37 million) industrialized nation in the midst of the most heavily industrialized and settled continent. Sternmetal has

introduced a small but well-equipped mercenary contingent to supplement indigenous Lovrenyi troops, with the plan of defeating the conventional armies of the major powers, thus enabling imposition of terms favorable for a wholesale infiltration of their economies by Sternmetal investment.

The Sternmetal plan did not quite work out as anticipated. Three brief and almost bloodless campaigns extended Lovrenyi influence considerably at the expense of several neighbors, but their army became bogged down in a partisan war in the mountainous areas of Renitza, to the north of Lovrenyi. The slowdown in the timetable of conquest gave several other nations, possibly with the secret backing of some of Sternmetal's competitors, time to hire their own mercenaries to act as deterrent forces. Many of these are still present.

Currently, the situation of Aramanx is one of watchful tension, particularly in the area around Lovrenyi. Several states remain technically at war, and periodic raids and short thrusts are common. For the most part, however, most nations on Aramanx are holding back for fear of lighting the fuse which will set off the "Powderkeg of the Towers Cluster".

## BHEROVEN

The linked continents of Bheroven and East Bheroven dominate Aramanx in geographical and political importance. Sixty percent of the planet's population, and over eighty percent of its industry, is centered on these two continents. As the political map of Aramanx shows, the two continents are divided into four major powers (five when Lovrenyi's budding empire is counted) and a number of smaller nations maintaining a tenuous survival, threatened constantly by their larger neighbors.

On Bheroven proper, two major powers—the Republic of Lanax (which is governed by a self-perpetuating oligarchy) and the Union of Senled (a democracy currently under a martial law situation)—are of most importance. Lineeza, another major power, straddles Bheroven and East Bheroven, but is largely occupied by persistent border threats from Staxl, which is further east still. In addition, of course, there is Lovrenyi, which now dominates the minor powers of Dalelo and Renitza, plus several smaller nations in the same region. This combined power amounts to another major country, but internal problems (particularly in Renitza) continue to hamper Lovrenyi's organization. A scattering of lesser states on the north coast completes the picture of Bheroven's political structures.

The military junta of Lovrenyi, backed by Sternmetal money and the prestige of their expanded armed forces, has



recently concluded an alliance with Senled, largely directed at keeping the latter from intervening in the delicate situation in Renitza. Though the alliance is basically one of mutual non-aggression and friendship, reports of secret terms have surfaced. These would seem to call for a partition of the petty northern states, and economic aid (provided by Sternmetal) for Senled's fragile and tottering government. The alliance is also designed to freeze out Lanax, which has a tradition of enmity towards Senled, and is now faced with the possibility of fighting both its neighbors in a crisis situation. Although a paper agreement between Lanax and Lineeza exists, independent observers widely believe that the latter would probably not honor its commitments in a crisis.

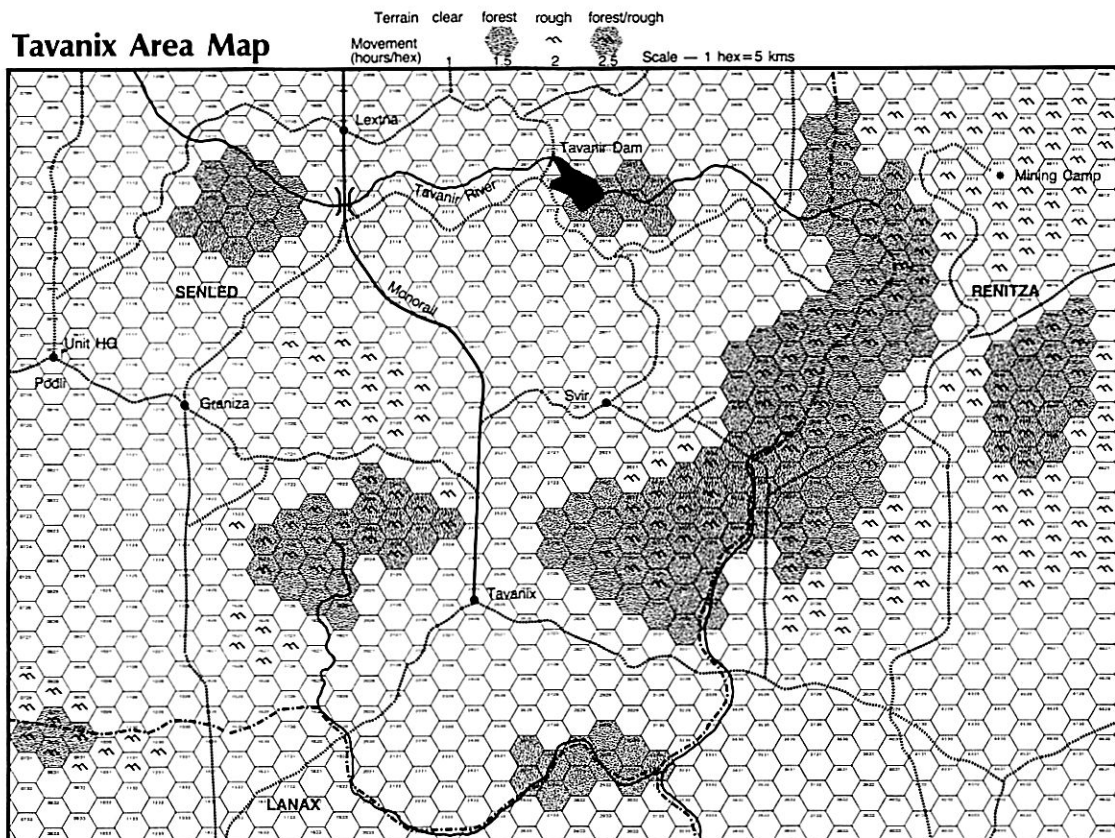
For the past year, a fitful undeclared war has been waged along the frontier between Senled and Lanax. This war has largely consisted of a series of raids staged back and forth across the border. Both sides have hesitated to do more than simple retaliatory actions, fearing that a more general mobilization of forces will trigger a major confrontation. Thus the raids, though sometimes conducted on a large scale with fairly severe effects, are not perceived as an immediate cause for alarm. Peace talks, sponsored by Lovrenyi and mediated by offworld representatives appointed by the Starport Board of Governors, are now in their eighth month, but suspicions that the mediators are themselves interested in obtaining an advantage on Aramanx have tended to hinder substantial progress.

**The Terrain of Bheroven:** Bheroven is divided roughly in half by the Vendor mountain chain, which cuts in a diagonal slash from southwest to northeast, and helps define the

borders of Lanax, Senled, Lovrenyi, Renitza, and Staxl. The mountains are not themselves particularly imposing (Mt. Zairin, the highest peak on the continent, is a relatively small 3276 meters above sea level). Much of the surrounding terrain, however, is rugged, and still includes considerable areas of wilderness despite the burgeoning of population and industrialization on the continent.

**Senled:** The Union of Senled, which occupies the northwestern quarter of Bheroven, is one of the oldest and most powerful of the states on Aramanx, though it has recently fallen on hard times. An abortive coup staged nine years ago by dissidents (whom many believe were supported financially by Sternmetal Horizons) came very close to toppling the rather weak government of President Deneel Zarqod. In the wake of this coup, the nation suffered heavily; strikes, riots, and a general economic upheaval were followed by repression and martial law, which were made more difficult by intermittent outbreaks of war or near-war with neighboring Lanax. The nation has thus far weathered the storm, but is now close to the brink of collapse. Recent economic aid from Sternmetal Horizons (following the treaty with Lovrenyi) has begun to renovate the economy somewhat, but inflation continues to run at something over 90% per year, and martial law restrictions are still in effect.

The military forces of Senled (26 divisions of infantry and several armor brigades) have been augmented by three regiments of mercenaries brought in from the Regina and Rhylanor subsectors. Of these, roughly two-thirds are deployed along the Lanaxian border, with the remainder in other border provinces or held in a central reserve around the capital.



**Lanax:** Long established as a rival to Senled, the Republic of Lanax has the strongest conventional military force on Aramanx, and dominated Bheroven politics until the rise of Lovrenyi. Originally a representative democracy headed by an Administrative Council which selected three triennially elected, co-equal heads of state, Lanax underwent a period of political upheaval some seventy years ago that ended in a major political reform. Though the outward forms of government remain as before, power is essentially vested strictly in members of the Klaven family, who dominate the elections in such a way as to return family members to at least two of the three seats of the triumvirate each term. The Council now serves as little more than a rubber stamp, and the "republican" forms of popular representation have been reduced to little more than a shadow of their former power.

Lanax is economically prosperous, and the Klavens have reigned with a relatively loose hand in most areas of personal freedom. It is a fairly popular and stable regime (though by no means as well-loved as the first Klaven governments, in the years when the talented family provided badly needed leadership in the dark days of the Fourth Bheroven Wars). Now growing increasingly isolated diplomatically, the current government has quite correctly foreseen the threat posed by Lovrenyi and its growing alliance, and has taken action to offset the menace.

The army of Lanax, after a progressive building program, now includes some 40 infantry divisions (including specialty forces such as the North Mountain Division and several amphibious units), plus twelve armored divisions. In addition, Lanax has secured the services of a number of offworld mercenary units (apparently with the support of a Sternmetal competitor, Ling-Standard Products). These forces include an armored brigade, a company of commandos, and, most recently, several contingents of Vargr corsairs. The armed forces are concentrated most heavily in the region where Lanax, Senled, Lovrenyi, and Renitza come together, though the entire border is adequately garrisoned, as well.

#### ARAMANX STARPORT

The welter of different nationalities and loyalties on Aramanx made it inevitable, perhaps, that starport facilities would never be established on the planetary surface. The orbital starport, secure from the potential problems of a final explosion in the delicate political and diplomatic situation, is able to deal with all nations on an equal, impartial footing.

Starships are not permitted to land on Aramanx save at their own risk, and the technology of the planet makes any form of service or supply out of the question. Usual procedure calls for ships to dock at Aramanx starport (or enter orbits near the facility), and then use shuttles to gain access to the planetary surface. All of the major powers, and many of the most important minor ones, are serviced via shuttle on a daily basis, usually to each nation's capital city. Shuttle passage costs Cr8 per person, or Cr15 per person for special runs, made once each day, to specific cities. The cheaper version takes 1D × 30 minutes to reach any particular destination, since a normal shuttle will make several stops at different cities.

Attitudes toward offworlders vary considerably from

place to place (although every nation has its quota of anti-technologists). Senled, for example, is characterized by a certain degree of xenophobia, thanks to a general feeling that it was offworld interests which brought about the economic and political problems of the nation. Lovrenyi, and several of the less militant states on the other continents of the world, have a much less hostile reaction. Despite the force of tradition and the meddling of Sternmetal Horizons the people of Aramanx are coming to realize that their future rests with the stars, not with a planet increasingly subject to competition, paranoia, and outright hostility.

#### A BAD BEGINNING

Arriving at Aramanx starport, the *March Harrier* and her crew go through the usual routines—customs and health inspections, cargo and passenger discharges, and so forth. Routine consumes their first day in port; it is not until the next day that they have a chance to begin looking into other opportunities.

Unfortunately, they have reached Aramanx at a particularly bad time. Several large Tukera ships have recently left port, taking most of the available cargos with them. The port warehouses have few cargos left, and those which are still present have been reserved by Oberlindes Lines, which is expecting a vessel in soon from Junidy. It is only a temporary situation . . . but in the interim *March Harrier* is losing money.

Nor does the usual recourse of patrons seem to work out. The group can seek prospective employers in any of several bars or lounges—Concourse 3 and the Worldview bar are both highly recommended as places to visit to meet people and hear the news—but nothing of interest turns up.

One night, however, the Worldview does pay off. As a service to visitors, the bar assembles major news reports from the various major cities on the planet's surface, and plays these constantly, thus allowing interested customers a chance to catch up on the often confusing affairs of Aramanx. After a particularly bad day of searching for employment or cargo, some of the adventurers, relaxing at the bar, take notice of a particular story.

\*\*\* Tavanix, Union of Senled—A brief protest by citizens' groups against offplanet interests in Senled was broken up



by military police and regular troops today. The riot was sparked by the visit to this frontier town of a touring party sent by Sternmetal Horizons to assess the situation along the Lanaxian border in the wake of last month's clash between a brigade of Senled's light infantry and Vargr mercenaries in the employ of Lanax.

The Sternmetal representatives declined to comment on the riots. An official government spokesman deplored the incident, saying, "There has been too much bad feeling toward offworlders these past few years, but we must all realize the need to bury the past and look to a future of freedom, economic recovery, and national security."

The touring Sternmetal commission is scheduled to remain in Tavanix for another week, meeting government and military officials, investigating several important frontier installations, and visiting the newly completed reservoir on the Tavin River near the town. \*\*\*

This news report is in itself of no particular interest. During the course of it, however, scenes showing the arrival of the Sternmetal party at the town show a clear view of a familiar face—Captain Bannerji, of the *Wolblutn*, is in the Sternmetals group, having traded his uniform for a business suit and attache case.

If the party is still interested in Eneri Giilaan's offer of money in exchange for further information, they may see the opportunity to change a bad beginning into a worthwhile turn of events. Three weeks at least remain until they can expect a worthwhile cargo, barring a stroke of unforeseen luck. What better way to use the time than to look into the mystery of Captain Bannerji's sudden appearance, far off his scheduled route, and apparently in the employ of Sternmetal Horizons?

## TO TAVANIX

A shuttle flight from Aramanx Starport brings the party to Seniek, the capital of the Union, where an airstrip has been converted for use by incoming small spaceships carrying visitors and occasional cargos. It should be noted that the shuttleport is owned and operated by the government of Senled, and is not subject to extraterritorial protection—travellers are subject to the martial law regulations of Senled from the moment the shuttle touches down. The military and civilian personnel at the starport treat all aboard with a great deal of disdain, delaying them with petty questions and a host of trivial harassments.

Eventually (assuming the adventurers don't do anything to complicate the situation) the party is passed through. Inquiries will establish that Tavanix lies some 2300 kilometers away from Seniek. It can be reached by road, by monorail, or occasionally by commercial air flight. The latter service is subject to periodic interruption by incursions from Lanax, and is generally considered unsafe.

Characters can buy rail tickets for Cr8. A groundcar costs Cr2 per day (Tavanix is about three days away), or can be purchased for Cr750. Tickets on an air flight go for Cr15 per person. Prices are extremely low for the adventurers, due to the weakness of the local economy; interstellar credit goes a long way in Senled.

The trip to Tavanix is uneventful, regardless of the means used, though reports of aerial incursions over the border

ground commercial air traffic for 2D hours (a fact which adventurers will learn of through radio broadcasts if they are not themselves travelling by plane).

## TAVANIX

The frontier city of Tavanix (population 81,000) lies a scant 30 kilometers from the Lanaxian border (and is less than 50 kilometers from the border with Renitza/Lovrenyi). Capital of the province of Tavinira, the city (and the province) has passed back and forth between Lanax and Senled several times in the last three centuries and was once (about 90 years ago) briefly independent of both. By and large, however, the people have considered themselves Senledian in culture and society throughout that period, and welcomed their return to the Union at the close of the Fourth Bheroven War 66 years ago.

Since the most recent period of economic collapse, international tension, and martial law, Tavanix has managed better than many other parts of the country, a surprising situation considering the proximity of Lanax and the occasional frontier incidents that have characterized the past few years. In fact, however, it is that very proximity to danger which has helped the province and the city to stay afloat. The threat of war is very real here, and resistance to martial law edicts is far less than in other parts of the country. Heavy military recruitment for local forces and the stimulus of the military presence in the area have reduced unemployment and kept the economy somewhat better balanced than elsewhere.

This does not mean that Tavanix is particularly well off. Unrest is far from unknown, and periodic raids, bombings, or long-range shellings are an all too common occurrence. In many ways, Tavanix resembles a city under siege, the people hungry, the town marred by fresh scars, the military presence constantly visible.

## AN ENCOUNTER

Arriving in Tavanix, the adventurers may find themselves the center of unwelcome attention. If they have not taken time to conceal their offworld origins (and this will be impossible unless Gvoudzon is separated from the party), all reactions from locals will be subject to a DM of -2. Moreover, reaction throws of 4 - may lead to a gathering mob and a considerable chance of violence. Recent announcements have indicated that offworld mediators (largely controlled by Sternmetal) have been pursuing lines in the peace talks in Lovrenyi which could lead to Tavinir province being ceded to Lanax in return for certain economic considerations—mostly favorable to offworld investment. At present, natural xenophobia has flared into an ugly problem.

Gvoudzon, too, causes adverse reactions; a DM of -3 is applied to any dealings he is involved in, though this is not in addition to the reaction modifier above, but instead of it. Vargr are particularly unpopular in Tavanix just now, as Lanax has been employing a band of particularly ruthless and rapacious Vargr mercenaries along this stretch of the frontier for some months. This will become apparent to the party in the course of their dealings in town.

Inquiries concerning the Sternmetal Commission will lead



them to the Provincial Governor's mansion, now largely converted to a command post for the 2nd Armored Brigade, which is based in the town. Indeed, as part of the martial law decrees, the Brigadier in charge of the unit has recently assumed the governorship, the duties of which he delegates to various staff officers.

It is not difficult to make an appointment to see the Sternmetal representatives. On arriving at the mansion, however, there is a problem—a disturbance in the outer office of one of the captains in charge of public liaison. The adventurers, waiting for their appointment, witness a sudden scuffle, and are shocked to realize that the military police called to arrest the troublemaker emerge dragging an angry, protesting Vargr. And on seeing Gvoudzon, the Vargr shows shock, recognition, and pleasure, and calls upon Gvoudzon to assist.

Gvoudzon knows the other Vargr. He is Kfouzorr, an old and trusted friend of Gvoudzon's when he was an Emissary with the Aegzaeng. Gvoudzon's first impulse will be to rush forward and demand his friend's release, and the player should be told that it would be out of character to do otherwise.

Reactions to this, and to other characters' attempts to intervene, should be dealt with normally; things should not be allowed to proceed to an actual fight, but may get sticky; a captain can be permitted to come on the scene and call off overly zealous MPs, if the adventurers antagonize them too far.

The officer says that this Vargr, obviously from the enemy's mercenary forces, came to him with an implausible story of "striking out on my own", rather than be subjected to "further blows to my charisma". A bigoted and not particularly knowledgeable officer, the captain does not believe the Vargr's story, not understanding the alien psychology behind it. He sees no further than the possibility of a clumsy subterfuge, and has refused even to hear the remainder of the Vargr's story.

The characters (but not Gvoudzon) may be able to make the captain understand the possibility that Kfouzorr may be telling the truth, and should be heard before he is locked up.

**Kfouzorr's Story:** Kfouzorr addresses his first remarks to Gvoudzon. "It is as you foresaw, friend. The Kforuzeng mastered us soon after you left; our officers left or were demoted in Kforuz service. I have been on the staff of Thane Dhurgeng, who commands a battalion of Kforuz mercenaries on this world." The Vargr turns to the captain. "It is because of my position that I learned of plans that might be of interest to you. I feel the need to be free of the Kforuzeng—I will never rise high with them. Perhaps my information will win me asylum and transport out of their reach?"

The captain refuses to make any commitments, but Kfouzorr goes on with his story. Time, he says, is short. The Kforuzeng are planning another raid, one which will be launched in much greater strength than previous ones. That raid is aimed primarily at capturing the Sternmetal Horizons representatives, with a secondary purpose of destroying Senledi forces based around Tavanix. Lanax plans to use the Sternmetal representatives as useful bargaining counters in the coming negotiations; Kfouzorr thinks they have some kind of inside information on these Sternmetal people that

can be used as leverage through the threat of public exposure of some shady deal.

The only thing Kfouzorr is not sure of, at this point, is the precise timing of the attack. It is more likely, however, that it will come quickly—possibly very quickly, now that he has deserted, in the hopes of catching them off guard.

At first, the Senledian officer is uncertain as to what to do. He soon reaches a decision of sorts—to pass the problem to higher authority. The adventurers were scheduled to see the Sternmetal people, an appointment they are now late for . . . so they, and Gvoudzon's friend, can now get that chance, to warn them of this new development. Once their reactions are known, the captain will be in a position to judge things better. He sends the offworlders on, with some MP escorts, and returns to his office to begin consulting higher authority.

### ATTACK

The group is brought to a conference room, where two of the Sternmetals people are waiting. One is Bannerji, who recognizes the adventurers—and becomes agitated. But before anything can happen, it is too late. A series of explosions sounds outside, followed by a rattle of machinegun fire and the sounds of sudden battle. The Kforuz raid has begun—and the adventurers are caught in the middle.

**Escape from the Mansion:** Several hits by shells or small missiles are scored against the mansion, and part of the ceiling collapses. Each character must roll dexterity or less to avoid taking 2D damage from falling rubble. When the dust clears, they see that one of the Sternmetal people is dead. Bannerji's leg has been pinned by a ceiling beam, and he implores them to assist him. The beam is heavy, and the angle awkward; any three characters can average their strength together; this number or less must be rolled on 3D to free Bannerji. One attempt may be made each round.

When Bannerji is extracted, he proves to have a broken





leg. Once again he pleads, begging to be taken out. An adventurer can help him (reduce speed by half and treat each as encumbered), or a litter can be improvised and carried by two adventurers, both encumbered, at normal walking speeds.

The Kforuz strike was carefully planned and well executed. Attacks by fast aircraft have already badly damaged the vehicles and emplacements around the mansion. Two platoons of Kforuz troops, landed from helicopters loaned by Lanax for the attack, are advancing on the mansion proper; the confused and weakened detachment garrisoning the mansion stands little chance of holding long against the well-coordinated mercenaries, whose weaponry is several tech levels above that available to the Senledians.

The adventurers will have little idea as to what is happening. They may stay in the mansion, or they may attempt to escape, as they desire. From the mansion they will hear sounds of fighting both to the east and to the southwest. After 2D minutes (roll separately for each direction), characters who are paying attention to the action will notice that the sounds of the combat are definitely getting closer. After another 1D minutes, a few Senledian soldiers will be seen falling back, occasionally turning to fire or attempting to rally other refugees to fight. After another period of 1D minutes, Vargr troops will come into sight at long range.

The Vargr will advance as rapidly as possible on the mansion. Normal combat rules should be applied. During any given combat round, 2D Vargr from each platoon in sight will fire lasers, which may hit the adventurers if they are in the area.

If the adventurers are at all bright, they should have ample

time to escape from the mansion grounds, even carrying Bannerji. Local forces will be too busy to take notice of them. No vehicles will be available, as the aerial attacks crippled most, and the remainder have been taken by fleeing locals or are being used by the military.

During their escape, the adventurers will have an opportunity to seize some weaponry (as civilians, they've had none up until now, thanks to the high local law level) and other supplies from the various stockpiles around the mansion. Available weapons (with ammo) include rifles, auto rifles, auto pistols, and SMGs. Cloth armor is also available in the form of flak jackets—these are treated as cloth + 1 for protection purposes. Virtually any other kind of equipment (subject to the restrictions of tech level) or supplies may be found, but the shortness of time may cause difficulties in finding any particular item. When characters are searching for something specific, they may find it on a roll of 9+, with one roll allowed every five minutes. Each searching character may make a separate roll.

In addition, each character rolls 1D during the search. The table below shows the type of supplies the character finds (regardless of whether the specific throw is successful).

#### *Die Items found*

- 1 Food and water. Food is packages of concentrated, dehydrated rations. Water is contained in 1 liter canteens.
- 2 Medical supplies. Most of the contents of a standard medical kit can be assembled from stocks at hand.
- 3 Camping Gear. Includes several standard tents, cold weather clothing, backpacks, etc.
- 4 Electronics. Includes medium range communicators, an electronics tool kit, infrared goggles, electric torches, and spare parts.
- 5 Ammunition. Miscellaneous ammo for various weaponry. Includes some explosives, and reloads for all of the weaponry discussed previously.
- 6 Miscellaneous Gear. This might include such items as tool kits (any kind), various appropriate personal devices, various sensory aids, or other gear the referee feels the party may need.

Each player should determine specific items of equipment to be searched for separately and secretly, unless the group takes time out to discuss what they will need (this will take 5 minutes of game time, and a real-time limit should be imposed).

Results of rolls—whether or not specific items are located, and the nature of randomly discovered supplies—should also be determined in secret (the characters must scatter to search). If the referee so desires, allow two or three characters to be within shouting distance of one another at any given time on a roll of 7+, to allow some limited pooling of resources. Also, characters may tell everyone of their discoveries when they reassemble, and can decide to go back for an item—but this will take 1D minutes more. Each character is limited by the standard carrying rules in how many supplies or pieces of equipment can be brought away.

The referee is encouraged to play up the atmosphere of this situation. The smoke and confusion of battle, strafing runs by aircraft or helicopter gunship, the fall of mortar shells, and the inexorable approach of the Kforuz troops should combine to make the adventurers extremely nervous as they scramble for safety. The desire to flee immediately should be set against the possibility of scavenging some useful equipment before the roof caves in. If too much time is spent, some of the characters may have to act as a rear guard, allowing the others to escape. A great deal of latitude is left to the referee in implementing this portion of the adventure, to accommodate as many alternative approaches to the situation as possible.

The whole group—including Kfouzorr and Bannerji—should eventually get clear. They will find themselves cut off from a return to Tavanix and facing the prospect of a hike through the wilderness to escape.

## OUTSIDE TOWN

Once the party escapes from the immediate area of the mansion, they will be able to take stock of the situation. In a hastily improvised camp, they have a chance to more fully explore their options. As the characters begin to lay their plans, Kfouzorr, with his inside information, may have to shatter some illusions.

**Kfouzorr's Information:** The Vargr is able to state quite definitely that a return to the city is not wise. The Kforuzeng attack on the mansion was only the spearhead of a much larger operation; a mobile column has crossed the border and will be moving toward Tavanix in support of the initial attack. Fighting will continue around the town for some time—at least until Senled can bring reinforcements up—and it will not be a healthy neighborhood.

Moreover, the party is now likely to be a target of considerable interest. Not only is the hapless Bannerji a Sternmetal representative, and thus of interest as a hostage . . . Kfouzorr, as a deserter, will also be quite a drawing card. Most importantly of all, however, Gvoudzon is in danger from his former colleagues. Kfouzorr does not know why, but the brooch Gvoudzon stole when he fled the band is wanted very badly, and the Kforuzeng will do anything to get it—and Gvoudzon—back. At least one of the Kforuzeng entering the palace must recognize Gvoudzon's lingering scent; the detachment contains a number of Vargr who know him well. Knowing the rewards that have been promised for his return, Kfouzorr is sure that a pursuit will be mounted immediately.

Finally, Kfouzorr adds, there is another likely problem. Other Kforuz forces were assigned to cut the monorail and road north of Tavanix, and a second Lanaxian mobile column was to take Graniza and the bridge south of Lextna. He believes that there are other forces in the operation too, but he is unaware of their missions. He thinks that the main enemy force (aside from the immediate area of Tavanix) is to the north and west, because the purpose of the mission was to pin the Senledi forces based around Tavanix against the Renitzan border. This move will make any retreat to the north or west (back to the rest of Senled) very dangerous.

The group should feel free to strike out in any direction desired, based on this information. They may still wish to

return to town, or they may decide to strike cross-country to find some other Senledian town or military unit, there to arrange a way back to the capital. Referee interference should be kept to a minimum at this point. However, the adventurers should be kept aware of Bannerji, and every opportunity should be presented for the group to question him. If necessary, before they become too committed to any one course of action, Kfouzorr may pointedly begin asking questions about him—why is he being dragged along? What use is he? This should remind the adventurers of their original intentions, and may promote an interrogation.

## THE SHIP CAPTAIN

Bannerji is not made of very stern stuff. He doesn't stand up well to pain, and the possibility of being left behind terrifies him. If the adventurers seem willing to use such methods on him, he will quickly break down. He will answer questions, spill information unsolicited, and try almost anything to ingratiate himself to the party.

**The Captain's Story:** Bannerji was an independent trading captain until about three years ago, when he fell on hard times. In need of money, he came into contact with a representative of Sternmetal Horizons and began doing odd jobs for them. He frequently hauled cargo for them in instances where the company was clearly engaged in extra-legal proceedings—arms shipments to Lovrenyi, smuggling, and so forth. His reputation as a reliable doer of dirty deeds grew, and Sternmetal began making even more use of him, and a few others like him.

Recently, a new set of jobs came up. Because of tensions along the frontiers, and the threat of war with the Zhodani Consulate, the Imperial government has begun imposing restrictions on the price of domestically produced lanthanum, a mineral vital to the function of jump drives—and hence of importance in the general naval buildup in the Marches.

Sternmetal does a great deal of business in lanthanum mining, and the company was threatened with some losses at the prospect of a price ceiling. But there is a loophole—a thoroughly illegal but viable loophole—which Sternmetal has taken advantage of. Price ceilings are imposed only on domestic lanthanum—not on imported ore. Vargr and human traders do a good business in imports from the Vargr Extents . . . and the price of this ore is rising as the Navy diverts more and more to military use.

The company's subsector manager has forged an elaborate plot to take advantage of the situation. Shipments of ore mined in the Patinir Belt and other locations, normally subject to the price ceilings, are being passed off as imported ore from Scangen, a planet in the Vargr Extents just across the frontier. Sternmetal mines the domestic ore, transports it on ships like Bannerji's, and carefully forges itineraries and other documentation. The ships then are hidden for a period of time to match that required for a trip to Scangen. The vessel—with its cargo of ore—shows up at Junidy at the proper time, there to sell the ore at the going market rate for imported lanthanum. The ship-captain passes the money on to Sternmetal, and receives a sizeable payment. Everyone profits—except, of course, the government which wanted the lower prices.



*Wolblutn*, Bannerji's ship, is currently engaged in this kind of run. Having left Aramis with an itinerary officially taking the ship to Pysadi, Zila, and on through the Towers Cluster to Scangen, Bannerji proceeded instead to the Patinir Belt and picked up his load. When a supply shuttle stumbled upon his ship, Bannerji panicked and fired, putting out a spread of highly illegal nuclear missiles into the intruder.

Bannerji made his way as quickly as possible here to Aramanx, where his ship is to be hidden during the time of his supposed passage to Scangen and back. Within Lovrenyi's budding empire, the company has established several small installations, used as mining camps. One of these, in the mountains of Renitza, also has some maintenance facilities for ships, although this is not generally known.

While *Wolblutn* has been on Aramanx, most of her crew has been staying at the mining camp. Sternmetal's short-handed planetary manager pressed Bannerji into service with a team being sent to study economic possibilities in Senled in the interim period before *Wolblutn* is ready to leave.

**Corroboration:** Kfouzorr is able to indicate that Bannerji's story about the Sternmetal plot must be essentially correct. It fits in with things he has heard, but never fully understood before, in his work under the Kforuzeng. The major purpose of the raid—the taking of some Sternmetal personnel—was tied into a need to gain proof of the company's complicity in some plot of this type; Lanax could use the information to win concessions in the current peace talks.

**Bannerji's Plea:** In the course of the questioning, Bannerji will plead with the adventurers not to abandon him to the

mercies of the Kforuzeng, who are widely known for their ruthlessness. He can help the party, he says, if they will help him in return. He has a way offplanet that will keep them clear of the Kforuzeng and the forces of Lanax, and will be completely safe.

*Wolblutn's* landing area is not far across the border in Renitza—a matter of some 120 kilometers away. Bannerji can help them get there, and help them evade the Sternmetal personnel and their Lovrenyi troops at the mining camp nearby. With the help of the adventurers, Bannerji can get *Wolblutn* into orbit. He now plans to skip out on Sternmetal and get away from this entire business. He'll promise almost anything if the party will agree to do things his way.

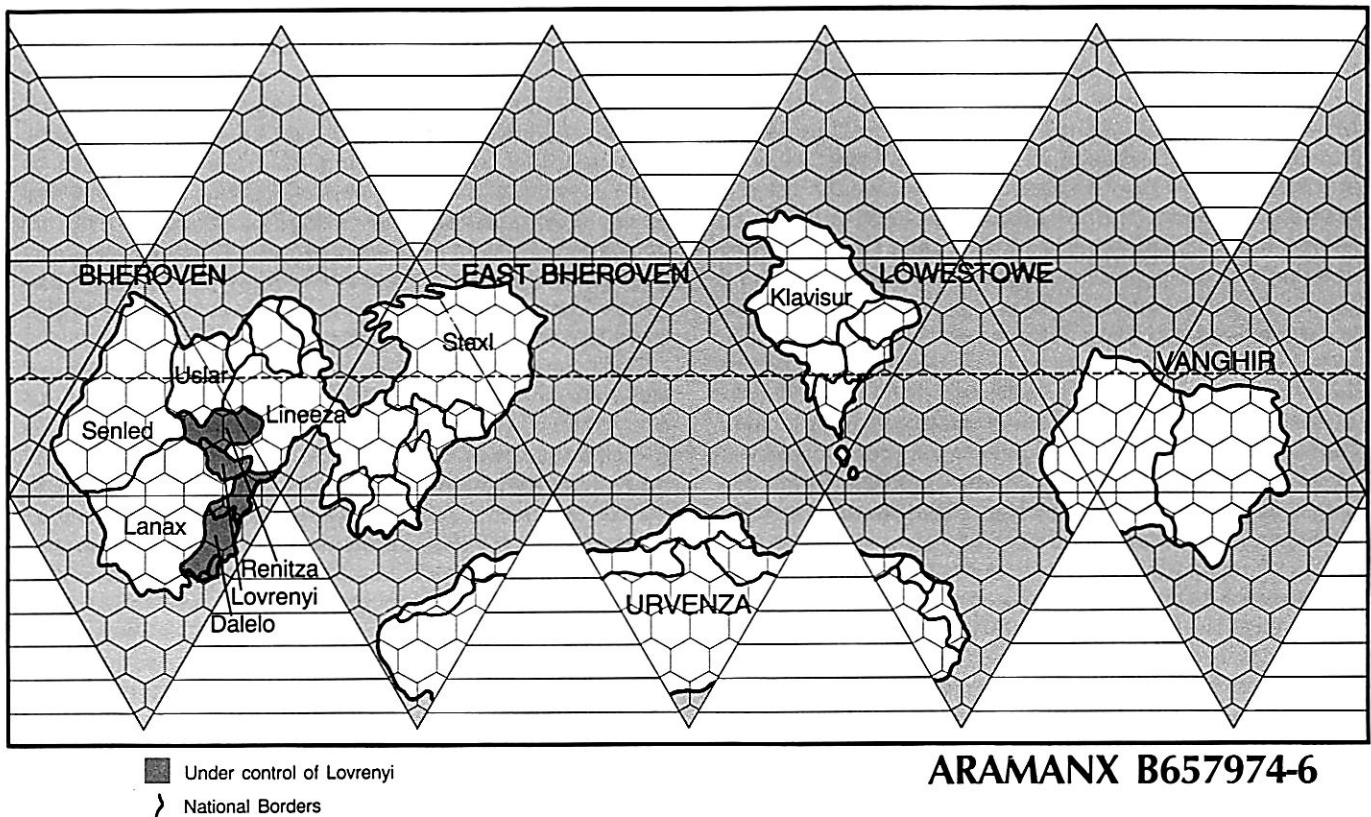
**Referee's Note:** Actions are still up to the adventurers, but they should be strongly encouraged to take the course outlined by Bannerji as offering the best hope of escape.

If at any time, the adventurers mention Eneri Giilaan to Bannerji, he will not be aware of the name. He has never had a business partner, nor does he know Giilaan if described.

### ALTERNATIVES

Should the group decide to return to Tavanix, the city will soon be cut off. For 2D + 5 days skirmishing will continue all around the town. Escape is possible on foot or by vehicle; the overall chance of getting past enemy lines is 3 + . Each day, however, there is a modifier applied; DM - 1 on the second day of the siege, DM - 2 on the third, and so forth. If desired, an escape attempt through the closing lines can be developed by the referee in greater detail.

The city will surrender at the end of the period specified.



Kforuz and Lanaxian troops will occupy the town, and the adventurers will be in great danger of capture.

If the group decides to travel cross-country to some location other than Bannerji's ship, use the procedures outlined in the section on cross-country travel.

**Enemy Troops:** Lanax holds the area east of Graniza and south of the Tavanir River, although their troops have not passed east of Tavanix or Svir. Lanaxian troops will be encountered at every road junction and supply convoys will be encountered on the roads. A Kforuz platoon has blown up the bridge south of Lextna and holds the south side, while Lanaxian troops have captured the dam and the eastern bridge. Senledi troops and mercenaries based around Podli are counterattacking along an arc 20km northeast to southeast of Graniza, against Senledi infantry entrenched in the rough and wooded country between Graniza and the monorail. Troops will almost certainly be encountered in the battle area, along the Tavanir, and at road junctions. Encounters are less likely in other areas, but the referee should use encounters where necessary to convince the players that retreat toward Senled would be difficult. However, if the party does manage to reach the north bank of the Tavanir or the friendly lines around Podli, they will be safe.

The remainder of this adventure deals with the prospects afforded by Bannerji's ship, and the difficulties encountered along the way.

#### FLIGHT CROSS-COUNTRY

Starting from Tavanix, the adventurers may try to make their way overland in hopes of escaping the Vargr and their Lanaxian supporters. The referee should make use of the map provided of the Tavanira frontier; movement proceeds as outlined in the movement rate key.

**Time:** Aramanx rotates once every 18 hours. The area around Tavanix, at this time of year, experiences roughly 12 hours of daylight and 6 hours of darkness each day. Characters may travel no more than 10 hours per day, however, owing to the needs of rest and sleep.

**Animal Encounters:** Roll for animal encounters on the appropriate table once per hex entered; roll for another encounter in each hex in which the party spends the night. In a hex containing both rough and forest terrain, use either encounter table as desired.

**Terrain:** Clear terrain actually includes a varied mixture of open plains, farmland, and lightly wooded areas. While travelling in open terrain, there is a chance (roll 8+ each hour) of encountering a farmhouse or other signs of civilization. The party may approach these to gain supplies or other assistance, using normal reaction rules or other procedures to resolve their activities.

Forested areas are wilderness regions. It is much less likely that people will be encountered (roll 10+ once every 2 hours).

Rough terrain represents rugged hill country. Movement in these areas is greatly restricted, and encounters with people virtually nil (except as directed by specific instructions later in the adventure).

Rivers are swift-running, steep-banked, and difficult to cross. Bridges exist wherever a road or the monorail line crosses a river and at the Tavanir Dam. Fords can be found

by searching; a ford is discovered on a roll of 9+, allowed once per hour. If three successive rolls do not locate a ford, it does not exist in the hex.

**The Frontier:** If characters attempt to cross the border into Lovrenyan-occupied Renitza, they may be subject to encounters with border patrols or other military forces. Both bridges crossing the river into Renitza will be garrisoned (3D soldiers, armed to tech level 6); their orders are to turn away anyone who attempts to cross over the border. Players may wish to attempt some form of persuasion or coercion; this may be resolved as the referee sees fit. Border posts or patrols of similar size will be encountered in hexes along the border if an 8+ is rolled (DM-2 in forest, DM-3 in forest/rough terrain).

**The Kforuz Pursuit:** A platoon of Kforuzeng has been detailed to track Gvoudzon down, now that it is known that he is in the area. The platoon is supported by two helicopters equipped with IR gear, which direct the searches from the air.

Every 3 hours, the referee should determine the chances of having the party spotted. A copter will pass over the area on a roll of 8+. A secret roll is made to determine if it spots them—a 7+ is needed, generally, to do so. Modifiers can be applied to take into account such factors as the tactics skill of the adventurers, the terrain (DM-3 in forest), and the stated actions of the adventurers. Most of these modifiers are purely in the domain of the referee.



If the adventures are spotted, Kforuz troops arrive in the area 1D hours later, and begin an intensive search of the hex where the party was sighted, and every adjacent hex. Aerial searching in that area increases to one roll per hour, and a ground search will reveal adventurers in those hexes on a roll of 10+ once every hour. Ground search parties will consist of a squad—8 Vargr armed with laser rifles. In addition, if intensive searches discover the party, the remainder of the platoon (totalling 4 squads plus an officer and an NCO) will arrive in that hex in 1 hour.

The Kforuzeng will cross the frontier if engaged in an intensive search, but, if eluded, will not continue searches in Lovrenyan territory. The platoon has orders to capture (if possible) Gvoudzon and Kfouzorr and, if they discover Bannerji, will want to capture him as well. They have no such compunctions concerning the adventurers.

Kforuz activities are very much up to the referee to implement in detail. They should serve as a continual threat, but probably should actually be encountered only one or two

times. An exciting effect might be to arrange an encounter near the border; as the adventurers seek to escape, the Kforuzeng make a last effort to trap their quarry. Once the adventurers do finally elude them, their threat is ended—though the adventurers may well continue to take precautions against them.

**More News:** Some time during the trek, Kfouzorr will tell Gvoudzon what he knows about the recent activities of the Kforuzeng. The biggest news is that they are building a large warship, the *Ozarr*, at great expense. The ship is being built to house a large meson gun, which is strange because Kfouzorr has no idea where the Kforuzeng could get one. They are also in great need of money to complete the ship, which is why they hired out a battalion to Lanax.

### THE MINING CAMP

Deep in the Renitzan hill country, Sternmetal's Lovrenyi Mining Camp #5 has been established to search for various useful ores and heavy metals. This camp is also used periodically as a staging area for Sternmetal's ships involved in extra-legal activities.

Bannerji's ship is hidden at some distance from the camp so that it will not be discovered by casual inspections or by workers not permitted to know the truth.

The camp holds 20 guards assigned by the Lovrenyi Army, 50 workers, and a small contingent of Sternmetal employees (18 at present, including members of Bannerji's crew). Only the Sternmetal personnel are aware of the mining camp's secondary function. Security is tightly maintained, and roving patrols of four men each, all armed with SMGs, are dispatched to wander the perimeter of the camp. Adventurers near the camp will encounter such a patrol on a 10+, the roll being made once every 2 hours.

In actual fact, there is no great need to approach the camp, though Bannerji may mislead the group in hopes of having them captured. The ship itself is located nearly a kilometer from the camp, concealed under a camouflage covering. Once they reach the ship, it takes 2 man-hours to clear this covering away, after which the ship may take off. It has been fully serviced, and all alterations have been carried out.

### BANNERJI'S BETRAYAL

During this stage of the adventure, Captain Bannerji will do his best to betray the party. His claim to want to skip out on Sternmetal is utterly false; he has too much respect for the megacorporation's long reach to even consider such an action. Rather, he has been biding his time in hopes of betraying the party, thus accomplishing a successful escape from the Kforuzeng without actually allowing the adventurers—who now know the truth of the Sternmetal plot—to escape to tell their story.

Bannerji will first attempt to mislead the party and bring them into the mining camp (or at least into range of the perimeter patrols). Hopefully the adventurers will be wise enough to check the area out carefully first, and will not put all their eggs in one basket. If they seem to be heading into certain destruction, Kfouzorr can suggest a reconnaissance, as he strongly mistrusts Bannerji.

If some or all members of the party are captured by the

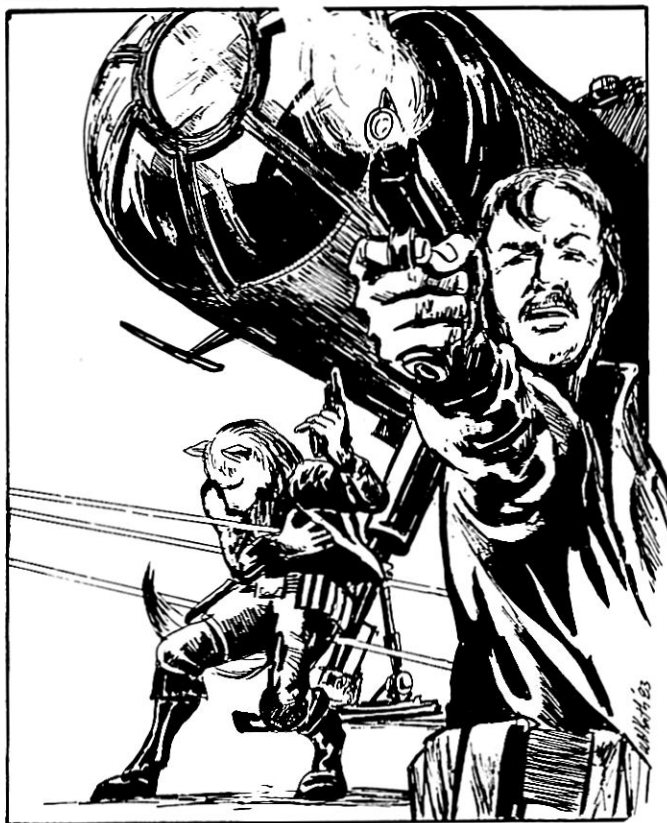
patrols, they will be held prisoner in the camp, and an escape/rescue attempt may be in order. Should they manage to avoid this, some scouting or further pressure on Bannerji will reveal the location of the ship. But the captain will still harbor surprises; if all else fails, there is an auto pistol concealed in a hidden compartment under one of his control consoles; he will find an opportunity to get at this (he will insist on being at the controls on takeoff, and is needed to feed in appropriate codes to deactivate the ship's anti-hijack programs) and with it attempt to force the players to do his bidding.

### THE KFORUZENG STRIKE

Before the adventure ends, the Kforuzeng make a final appearance. Having traced the progress of the party, and being aware of the Sternmetal mining camp, they have determined that this is the planned destination of the group. They mount a raid, using the pursuit force, to try to stop the adventurers once and for all.

If the party was captured by Sternmetal, this sudden raid provides them with an opportunity to escape. Should they have avoided this, the Kforuzeng attack as they are preparing to get the *Wolblutn* free of its covering and off the ground. In either event, the adventurers should, with some difficulty, be able to make good their escape. In the course of the attack, however, Kfouzorr will be hit and mortally wounded.

Gvoudzon should be greatly upset and now has a motive to seek revenge upon the Kforuzeng, and especially Dhurgeng, the leader who ordered this operation which resulted in Kfouzorr's death.





## RESOLUTION

Assuming the party makes it safely into orbit aboard the *Wolblutn*, they have several options.

**Blackmail:** It would be possible to blackmail Sternmetal with the knowledge gained of their illegal scheme. Sternmetal's subsector offices are on Junidy, and a blackmail scheme would have to be focused here. Sternmetal is quite likely to pay well for silence, but they are also a ruthless organization, and adventurers could find that the wrath of Sternmetal is not an easy thing to shake. Future encounters, which could include attacks, vandalism, or pressure exercised through officialdom, should reflect this situation.

**Eneri Gilaan:** The players may wish to make use of the message drop they have been given to pass their information to Gilaan. Gilaan is actually an officer in the Imperial Naval Intelligence Corps. If they do this, they will receive a substantial reward—Cr5,000 apiece—as well as the possible use of Gilaan as an acquaintance within Navy circles.

**The Authorities:** If the adventurers decide to turn over their information to the authorities (they will be directed to the nearest naval base), no reward will be paid, since, after all, the group is just doing its duty as loyal citizens, but they will gain credit with the Navy.

**A Sternmetal Rival:** Any of Sternmetal's competitors will be interested in the news, and will pay up to Cr50,000 for it. They will also agree to keep their source confidential, thus avoiding the danger of catching Sternmetal's eye.

Once the adventurers escape from Aramanx, they will probably want to get rid of the ship and should be encouraged to do so—the stolen ship can be traced. The ship will attract attention from the starport authorities, since it appeared from the planet with no record of having ever arrived. Enforcement personnel will discover a stock of nuclear missiles, and the ship will be impounded. If Bannerji is still alive and with the party, he will be subject to a long imprisonment (even if the lanthanum scheme doesn't come out). The adventurers will be held for 1D days, but verification of the salient points of their story will result in eventual release.

The referee may have to explore other alternatives in response to player actions. It is not, however, advisable to allow them to profit much from the use of *Wolblutn*.

## A NEW DESTINATION

Back at the starport, the adventurers find that a cargo is ready; the referee should select a new world for the adventurers to visit and give them a cargo for that destination.

## ENCOUNTER TABLES

|                |     |                     |        |       |           |                      | Roll 10+  |
|----------------|-----|---------------------|--------|-------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Clear Terrain  |     |                     |        |       |           |                      | Reactions |
| Die            | Qty | Animal Type         | Weight | Hits  | Armor     | Wounds & Weapons     |           |
| 1              | 6   | Reducers            | 50     | 15/ 7 | none      | 8 claws              | A7 F7 S1  |
| 2              | 6   | Grazers             | 25     | 12/ 8 | none      | 7 hooves & teeth     | F2 A8 S2  |
| 3              | 3   | Intermittents       | 100    | 19/ 7 | none      | 8 horns & teeth      | F7 A7 S1  |
| 4              | 7   | Grazers             | 100    | 21/ 8 | cloth     | 7 horns              | F3 A4 S2  |
| 5              | 4   | Eaters              | 6      | 5/ 7  | none      | 4 claws              | A6 F7 S1  |
| 6              | 1   | Killer              | 100    | 17/11 | none      | 7 claws & teeth      | A5 F4 S1  |
| River Terrain  |     |                     |        |       |           |                      | Roll 9+   |
| Die            | Qty | Animal Type         | Weight | Hits  | Armor     | Wounds & Weapons     | Reactions |
| 1              | 5   | Hijackers           | 6      | 6/ 6  | none      | 4 claws & teeth      | A7 F5 S1  |
| 2              | 1   | Intermittent        | 25     | 8/ 6  | cloth + 1 | 6 claws & teeth      | F7 A4 S1  |
| 3              | 13  | Grazers             | 50     | 12/ 5 | none      | 7 hooves & horns     | F5 A3 S2  |
| 4              | 1   | Grazer              | 800    | 27/ 8 | none      | 22 hooves & teeth    | F2 A8 S2  |
| 5              | 1   | Amphibious Hunter   | 800    | 20/ 6 | none      | 17 thrasher          | A3 F5 S1  |
| 6              | 1   | Killer              | 100    | 17/11 | none      | 7 claws & teeth      | A5 F4 S1  |
| Forest Terrain |     |                     |        |       |           |                      | Roll 8+   |
| Die            | Qty | Animal Type         | Weight | Hits  | Armor     | Wounds & Weapons     | Reactions |
| 1              | 1   | Intimidator         | 25     | 17/ 6 | none      | 7 hooves             | A5 F2 S1  |
| 2              | 1   | Intermittent        | 12     | 10/ 3 | cloth + 1 | 5 claws & teeth      | F8 A9 S1  |
| 3              | 1   | Flying Intermittent | 1      | 4/ 0  | none      | 5 hooves             | F8 A6 S1  |
| 4              | 1   | Intermittent        | 25     | 13/ 3 | none      | 7 hooves & horns     | F8 A5 S1  |
| 5              | 1   | Flying Eater        | 3      | 5/ 5  | none      | 2 claws + 1          | A4 F4 S1  |
| 6              | 1   | Pouncer             | 25     | 14/ 7 | none      | 8 stinger            | A0 F0 S1  |
| Rough Terrain  |     |                     |        |       |           |                      | Roll 9+   |
| Die            | Qty | Animal Type         | Weight | Hits  | Armor     | Wounds & Weapons     | Reactions |
| 1              | 3   | Hijackers           | 800    | 26/17 | none      | 20 horns & teeth     | A5 F8 S1  |
| 2              | 10  | Grazers             | 400    | 15/ 8 | none      | 8 horns & teeth      | F4 A8 S2  |
| 3              | 1   | Intermittent        | 12     | 7/ 3  | none      | 5 hooves & teeth     | F8 A8 S1  |
| 4              | 1   | Filter              | 25     | 5/11  | mesh + 1  | 7 horns              | F7 A0 S0  |
| 5              | 6   | Hunters             | 25     | 9/10  | jack      | 11 teeth             | A1 F8 S1  |
| 6              | 1   | Chaser              | 200    | 14/10 | none      | 17 claws+1 & teeth+1 | A0 F6 S2  |

# Exotic Encounters

In the course of their travels through Aramis subsector, the crew of the *March Harrier* have the opportunity to meet a variety of truly unusual patrons. Interstellar travel has led to meetings with some strange alien races; and even humans, isolated on strange worlds away from the mainstream of civilization, have evolved cultures quite unlike the familiar, everyday society which is the accepted norm of the Imperium.

When such a patron is encountered, much of the group's contact with that patron is shaped by the nature of the race and culture in question. These situations, unlike the usual patron encounter, revolve around these questions of evolution, society, and behavior, and are here grouped under the special heading of exotic encounters.

Like the patron encounters presented earlier, the four exotic encounters in this chapter are provided as examples of the types of situations that might arise when dealing with members of unusual races or cultures. The referee should feel free to implement different exotic encounters, and does not need to run through all of the ones provided here. Only one—*Scent of Fear*—is even marginally related to the overall plot of the campaign, and is far from essential to the resolution of any adventure in this book.

## SCENT OF FEAR

Type: *Non-human Race*

Jesedipere (0601 C775300-7) is a medium-sized world with a standard, tainted atmosphere and seas covering roughly half the planetary surface. Primarily a trading post for contact with nearby Vargr worlds, Jesedipere has recently become the site of a substantial refugee camp set up by

Vargr fleeing from the rapid expansion of the Kforuzeng. Additional details regarding the world are given in *Showdown on Jesedipere*.

**The Patron:** At Jesedipere's starport the crew are approached by a Vargr, Vuzuege, who pleads for them to grant her a favor. Vuzuege is one of the leaders of the Vargr refugee settlement. The scout service staff on Jesedipere has been unable to extend any official help to her refugees (though they have unofficially done everything within their power to help the Vargr camp); decisions have been referred to higher authority. In the meantime, the Vargr on Jesedipere are near disaster. Inadequate food, medical supplies, and other necessities pose a great danger to many, and, as Vuzuege puts it, the scent of fear is in the air.

Vuzuege wants to plead her case before the scout administrators at the IISS way station on Junidy. But to do so she needs transportation—and she cannot pay. She asks the adventurers, as an act of charity, to grant her request and carry her to Junidy. Once there, she will find another way back, perhaps with a shipment of supplies from the Torenlee Foundation, which has organized a relief effort and manages to periodically send a ship in.

Vuzuege will freely admit that she can seek her passage to Junidy on the next such ship. But they are infrequent and completely unscheduled; she needs to make her appeal now. Her community has nothing to give in return but friendship and a promise to remember help which is received.

The adventurers can accept or reject Vuzuege's pleas as they desire; in either case, there is no immediate consequence. However, if the Vargr on Jesedipere are contacted again (see *Showdown on Jesedipere*), Vuzuege's friendship serves as a boost in winning the cooperation and support of the refugees.

## A POINT OF LAW

Type: *Non-human Race*

Yebab (0602 C9A489A-7) is a large, chilly world with an exotic atmosphere composed of methane, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and various trace elements. Just over 40% of the world's surface is covered by water. This strange world has given rise to a totally alien ecology, including an intelligent



species, the minor alien race known as the Ebokin (singular: Eibokin).

The Ebokin culture is an extremely conservative matriarchy. Laws are complex and all-encompassing, covering nearly every aspect of life in great detail; a large bureaucracy is required to interpret the effects of these complex laws on everyday life. Laws may only be changed by a Grand Council of adult females (equivalent to a constitutional convention); this drastic step has been taken only a few times in the last century. On the last occasion, some 50 years ago, the council became deadlocked and failed to implement any of the minor legal changes submitted for consideration.

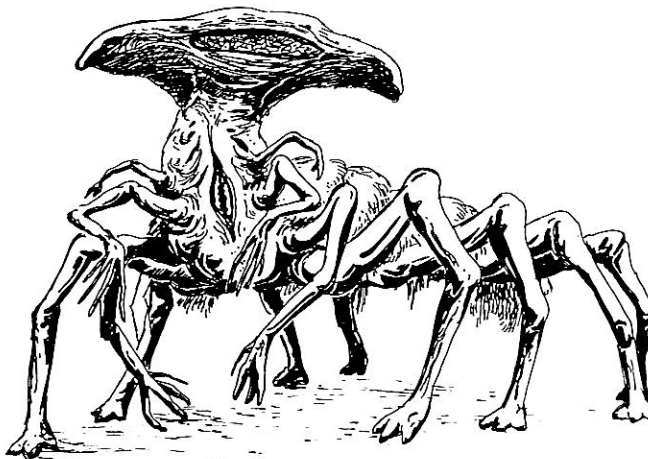
Ebokin conservatism is also evident in their dealings with the outside universe. Yebab is a member of the Imperium and all Ebokin are Imperial citizens, but members of the species seldom leave their world, and Ebokin society has been very slow to absorb Imperial technology. The world's native industry approximates tech level 5, but numerous imported products made at tech levels 6-7 are in common use. Yebab has a native population of nearly 700 million, with about 20,000 humans in residence, mostly around the starport.

**The Patron:** While calling at Yebab, the adventurers are contacted by a government official, the Eiyekob Bi Yekobak (roughly "Fifth Speaker to the Lawless", an ambassador or foreign minister). An important trade conference is to convene on Junidy at the end of the month, revolving around the determination and implementation of new trade policies for the Towers Cluster region for the next several years. Yebab is currently represented on Junidy by a small Ebokin delegation. Unfortunately, the head of that delegation, an official with a rank of "Sixth Speaker to the Lawless", must be made cognizant of the most recent interpretations of those portions of the Law which bear on trade.

According to the dictates of the Law, the Sixth Speaker must be informed of these rulings in person by an Eibokin of higher rank. Distasteful as travel offworld is, the Fifth Speaker must make the journey to Junidy, convey the information, and then return. The Speaker wishes to charter passage to Junidy for herself and a retinue of six other Ebokin—the servants and retainers called for by Law for a personage of her rank. Usual charter rates, plus special expenses that may be incurred, will be paid.

**Special Considerations:** To undertake this charter, the crew will have to take several factors into account. First, it is absolutely essential that each Eibokin have an individual stateroom—the Law requires a period of total privacy for all each day. This means that large crews (seven or more adventurers) will have to shift to double occupancy for some persons. This will prove irritating, and may cause extra tension aboard the ship.

Next, quarters for the Ebokin must be conditioned for their use, with a higher gravity setting, an atmosphere mix simulating Yebab's, and a reddish-orange, dim lighting for each cabin. Moreover, they cannot be confined to their cabins for the entire voyage—the Law would not permit that either; this means that they will actually take over an entire area of the ship, either the forward passenger lounge and the cabins associated with it (the most logical, since all seven could live in this area), or the aft section and the



galley. The entire area they take over must be properly conditioned. This setup will necessitate the installation of temporary airlocks at each appropriate iris valve. Emergency airlocks normally used for boarding derelict ships can be rigged for this purpose, at a cost of Cr1000 apiece.

Ebokin dietary requirements are such that they must bring along their own stores of food. A temporary second galley must be installed (Cr5000) to allow the crew and the Ebokin to prepare meals separately. Luckily, one of the Speaker's retainers is a cook/steward for the aliens, and there is no need for the adventurers to attempt to master the intricacies of the Law as regards the preparation or service of food or other aspects of the mistress-servant relationship existing in Ebokin culture.

**Referee's Information:** Travel in the company of this Ebokin delegation will be, to say the least, trying. Like most of her kind, the Fifth Speaker to the Lawless is a petulant, self-centered, and demanding individual. The crew can expect frequent calls from her—several each day—complaining of a variety of minor problems. These will fall into two basic categories: failure of the ship to adequately simulate Yebab's environment (the lighting is too strong or too weak, the atmosphere smells and tastes entirely wrong, the gravity seems set at too high a level, etc.), and failure of the ship or crew to allow the Ebokin to obey the precepts of the Law. This latter category of complaints will usually focus on inadequacies of the ship (the stateroom is too cramped to allow performance of the proper Ceremony of Greeting required when a junior craves audience with the Fifth Speaker, for instance). However, the crew themselves will be subject to Ebokin complaints, for they expect all around them to obey the Law in all their dealings with the Speaker and her retinue. This, of course, is simply not possible, for Ebokin law is not grasped without intensive study and effort.

In addition to the annoyance caused by the presence of the fussy Ebokin, the crew will be plagued by other petty problems during the passage. These range from the inconvenience attendant upon donning oxygen tanks to move from one part of the ship to another to a lingering smell that occasionally defies the airlock arrangements (methane is defined as a colorless, odorless gas, but Yebab's atmosphere has enough other complex organics to make it offensive to the human nose). Once the Ebokin are gone, the area conditioned for them will continue to be a source of unpleasant



olfactory sensations for some time to come, and will require a great deal of close and thorough attention to ultimately eliminate.

Finally, these conditions pose a bit of danger for the ship and crew. Methane (swamp gas) has the property of combining with oxygen explosively if sufficient percentages of both gases are present. Small amounts of methane or oxygen could leak back and forth as the temporary airlocks are used; ultimately, this could lead to a problem. Once each day, there is a chance (9+) of an explosion occurring. If it does, the referee should determine the location, severity, and effects of the explosion. A brief fire may follow. This incident could injure crewmembers or passengers (2D damage), and though it does not threaten the ship as a whole, it can pose a major problem to be overcome. After the first explosion, increased care and safety measures will reduce the chance of explosion to 12+ per day.

The adventurers, arriving at Junidy, deliver their passengers in time to conduct their briefing of the Sixth Speaker. They must then return their passenger and her retinue to Yebab, whereupon they will be paid. Payment will be as agreed, but will be made with a great show of reluctance and no small amount of haggling, the Ebokin claim-

ing that various expenses are not valid because service was insufficiently performed or not in accordance with the Law. If the group sticks to the letter of the original agreement in these negotiations, they will ultimately be paid in full. If they give in on particular points, the Ebokin will press to remove even more charges from the total balance due.

This situation, for the most part, is a set of irritants to be overcome more than a specific adventure. It calls for minimal action from the crew, but gets them familiar with the concept of alien thought and psychology.

#### SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

Type: *Non-human Race*

Junidy (0802 B434ABD-9) is a small world with a very thin atmosphere and ocean coverage of approximately 40%. It is a high-population world; nearly 90% of the population of Aramis subsector is concentrated on the planet. Roughly half of this population of 28 billion is human, while the other half is comprised of a minor alien race native to the planet, the Lllelwyly, often called "Dandelions" or just "Dandies" by humans.

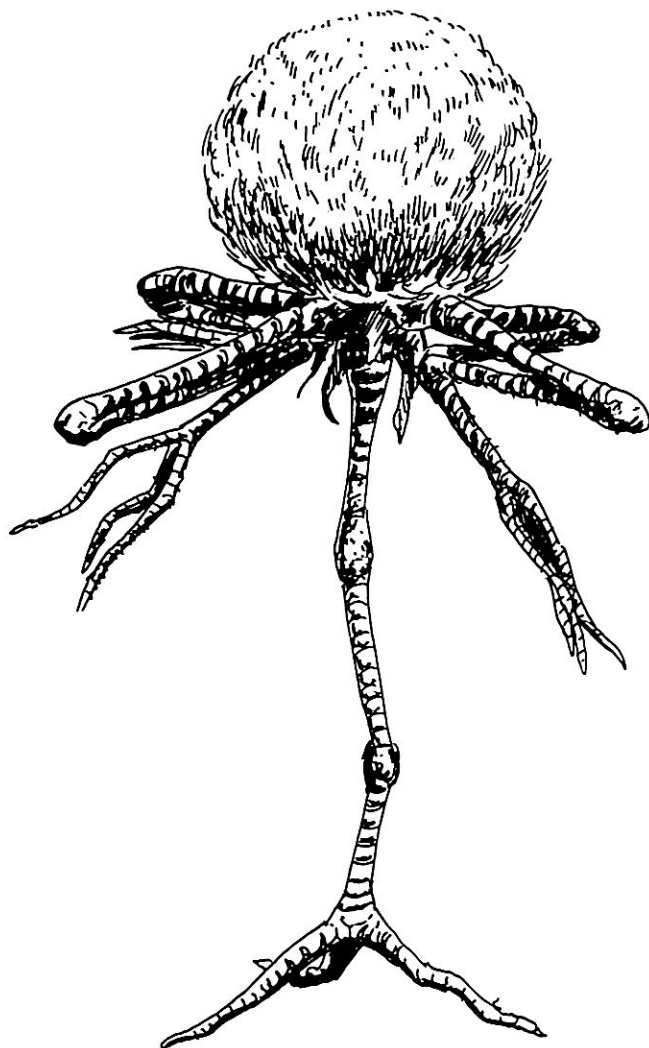
When humans first arrived on the world, the Dandies had achieved a thriving tech level 3 culture which dominated most of Junidy's northern continent. Human settlements were established on the southern land-mass, but, in the years following the Civil War, competition for land became acute. Sporadic violence, guerrilla raids, and even open warfare broke out. The period of confrontation ended when the two races, with the encouragement of the Imperial Marines, established a world government which gave an equal presence and voice to both races in ruling functions. This government is still in existence today, though over the years application of the principles of equality has been somewhat uneven at times. The world's current government is headed by a non-charismatic leader whose policies have led to the establishment of an extremely oppressive law level. Many of these laws have had the effect of reducing the political and economic freedom of the Dandies more severely than that of humans on Junidy, and resentment has lately been building once more. Government claims of complete equality between the two species are now largely perceived to be a sham, as there is no unified, integrated structure to the co-dominium. Humans run human affairs, Dandies run Dandy affairs, but all are still answerable to the (human) governor-general and his staff of (mostly human) advisors.

*Note:* Further information regarding Junidy is available in the chapter entitled *The Psionic Institute*.

**The Encounter:** During a stopover at Junidy, the adventurers are caught in the middle of the growing tension between the races. As the ship is preparing to leave the planet, after cargo and passengers are all on board, a maintenance check is ordered from the starport control tower. Six individuals—two humans and four Dandies—come out to the ship carrying tools and other equipment, and ask to be admitted to the drive rooms and bridge for a final inspection of some systems checked during the ship's stay on the planet.

Shortly after they are permitted on board, each of the technicians produces a weapon and moves to a strategic point to attempt to seize control of the ship.

**Referee's Information:** The technicians are legitimately



employed by the starport, but are also secret members of an organization determined to win full equality for the Dandies and some changes in the restrictive and repressive government of Junidy.

They have seized the ship as a dramatic demonstration of their plight and aims. Their spokesman, one of the Dandies, demands that the government make a number of major concessions. If they do not, the technicians will rig *March Harrier's* drives to overload and explode, causing a blast that would seriously damage several nearby ships and starport installations. All of their hostages aboard the ship would be killed.

The resolution of this situation depends upon the adventurers. They may attempt to take action of some sort; the referee should determine the chances of success for the plan they come up with and act accordingly. If the adventurers fail or choose to do nothing, government commandos will eventually launch an assault on the *March Harrier*, seeking to overcome the terrorists before they can react to the threat.

In either event, the flow of the situation should be dictated by the referee's judgment of what will make the most exciting outcome.

#### CHARTER TO CRATERSEA Type: *Exotic Human Culture*

Paya (0109 A655241-9) is a medium-sized world with a diameter just under 9600 kilometers and a thin atmosphere. About half the world is covered by deep, stormy seas, while the continents are rugged and mountainous. Settled by colonists from Rethe and Inthe in the Regina subsector, Paya grew quickly, ultimately reaching a population of some 12 million people before disaster struck thirty years ago.

The disaster was in the form of an asteroid strike which hit the southern continent, where the majority of the population was located. Without their own space technology, the planet had neither warning nor hope of salvation. In the wake of the strike, disrupted weather patterns, increased seismic activity, and the total collapse of a coherent, organized society quickly claimed the majority of those people who survived the strike itself.

Relief efforts were mounted by the Imperial Navy out of Inthe/Regina, and a few survivors were taken off. One group, however, refused Imperial evacuation and laid claim to the planet as the sole remaining legitimate owners.

This group, an isolated community of some 500 eccentrics from a tiny mountain settlement on the northern continent, formed the complete membership of the Society of Evolutes. This organization, a pseudo-religious group dedicated to the principle of improving humaniti through the scientific principles of selective eugenics programs, withdrew into isolation from the rest of Paya when it became clear that there was no future for their aims and goals within the mainstream of Payan society.

With the destruction of the main colony, the Society took the view that the way was being paved for the creation of their own ideal world, in accordance with their principles. They have divided the entire planet into 18 districts, each belonging to a family of 20-50 persons. From this base, they have set out to re-populate Paya.

A few years after the catastrophe, Oberlindes Lines came on the scene and saw in Paya an ideal base of operations for an expansion into the Aramis subsector. Oberlindes offered to lease ground for a starport, and built a new facility to replace the one lost in the asteroid strike. Shortly thereafter, the Imperial Navy, seeking a base in the Scatters, also sought to lease land for extensive construction. The payments from these two offworld leases, though quite reasonable by the standards of the offworlders concerned, made each and every Payan citizen fabulously wealthy by anyone's standards.

Since that time, the Payans have continued their eccentric but determined progress toward their ideal of society. Using advanced robotic systems, the Payans have concerned themselves with extensive engineering and building projects designed to provide an ideal base for the future population of the planet. Since they intend to repopulate the world themselves, offworld immigration is not permitted. Payans have been known to hire offworlders and convert them to the viewpoints of the Society, allowing them to immigrate, but such conversions have been extremely rare over the entire 30-year history of Paya since the catastrophe (or "rebirth", in contemporary Payan usage); a potential convert must fit the Payan genetic ideal and must be receptive to the extremely odd Payan customs.

**The Patron:** On Nasemin (or possibly Towers or Junidy, as the referee desires), the adventurers are approached by Cai Calula, who styles himself "The Chosen of Cratersea". Calula is a Payan, head of his family and chief of the Cratersea district on Paya (which takes its name from the water-filled impact crater which marks the site of the former colony. Despite this, Calula is a young man, aged nineteen; he only recently took his posts. Even among the eccentrics



of the Society, Calula stands out as a man of considerable eccentricity.

Calula's two greatest passions are the construction of Calulopolis, his personal city on the shores of Cratersea, and an extensive collection of various types of vehicles from all over the subsector. The former is supervised by junior members of the family; in pursuit of the latter, the Chosen of Cratersea periodically travels from world to world in his private yacht, making extravagant purchases and enjoying the finest life imaginable.

The Chosen has just completed the purchase of two ATVs, a jet aircraft from Zila, a G-carrier, and a 20 meter ketch from Nasemin. The total cargo amounts to 130 tons. Unfortunately, Calula's yacht, the *Golden Paradise*, suffered from a severe drive breakdown a week before. The Chosen is impatient to return to Paya with the new pieces for his collection, and in his impatience he wants to charter the *March Harrier*.

Calula will pay generously—five times the generally accepted charter rates for a one-way trip to Paya. Calula is accompanied by three travelling companions: his sister Lana, his bodyguard Thoren, and another woman, Celia, whose status is initially unclear to the crew. The group is also accompanied by four valet robots programmed for a variety of routine functions.

**Referee's Information:** On the surface, this charter presents an excellent chance for profit and few difficulties or problems. There are, however, some considerations that may cause particular trouble.

Calula is possessed of a mercurial temperament and a whimsical sense of humor, but is volatile and unpredictable. He may in a short space of time shower money and gifts on a character, and then turn around and demand the punishment of the same individual for some trivial fault.

Certain particular areas of conflict may arise. One of these is Celia. The Payans, whose central tenet is the superiority of their gene pool, have made "be fruitful and multiply" a key part of their lives; however, Payan women, at work building the new Paya, have neither the time nor the inclination for the disabilities of pregnancy. The solution is the hiring of thousands of host mothers from offworld.

Celia is a young miner's daughter from Feneteman who was attracted by the offer of high pay for little effort, and signed a five-year contract to bear five of Lana's children. Unfortunately, she failed to note another duty of a Payan host mother, which is to serve as a concubine to her client's male relatives; Calula in particular has taken a fancy to her. This clause of her contract is in sharp conflict with her conservative upbringing, but she still has three years to go on her contract.

Celia, therefore, is likely to appeal to the adventurers to help her escape. If they do so, and Calula finds out, he is fully capable of venting his anger in a variety of ways. For example, he might well use his influence at a starport to have

*March Harrier* harassed, fined for insignificant violations, or even impounded on some trumped-up charge.

The Chosen's sister, Lana, is somewhat less unstable than her brother, though she is still thoroughly Payan in beliefs and upbringing. If the adventurers can keep on her good side, Lana can exercise a restraining influence on her brother that will keep them safe from the worst of his outbursts. If she suspects that the adventurers have helped Celia escape, her actions will be motivated more by the desire for financial restitution than by revenge. The three years remaining on Celia's contract might be purchased from Lana, if she is not otherwise offended, for as little as Cr150,000.

Assuming they reach Paya without angering the Chosen overmuch, the crew faces one more major problem. Calula will take a fancy to the *March Harrier*. Calling it "quaint" and "fun", the Chosen will want very much to buy the ship (he offers MCr250) and add her to his collection. The adventurers may be more than willing to accept this offer, thinking that it will represent a chance to make an enormous profit. However, the Chosen soon makes it clear that the offer also requires the crew to stay on in his service, tending to the ship, continuing as his personal crew, and so forth. They must, of course, adhere to the precepts of the Society—which feels that a superior mind and body are the result of a strict and highly specialized diet, a prohibition on alcohol and all forms of narcotics (even mild ones), and a variety of other restrictions that will be unappealing to the adventurers. In addition, as Calula's employees, they would be completely at the mercy of his changeable whims and moods.

Calula is not used to being denied anything. If he is turned down, he will first increase the monetary offer; then he will grow angry, shouting threats and insults. Eventually, he will order them away from Cratersea (where they landed to offload the cargo). After they leave, he is perfectly capable of calling the starport and reporting the *March Harrier* for some crime—possibly the theft of some item or items awarded as gifts. The authorities will be honor bound to explore the accusation, though everyone assumes Payans to be at least a little bit crazy.

It is more than likely that the adventurers will be able to talk their way out of serious trouble. The starport is owned and operated by Oberlindes Lines, and by quoting authorization codes (which are used in cargo transfers and the like) that prove their past association with the company, the crew will be able to enlist their sympathy and support. In the end, by returning the items in question, the crew can clear themselves of the entire situation, and still come through with a clear profit.

A flight in the company of the Chosen of Cratersea provides a short period of comic relief from the rigors of adventuring, and goes a long way toward teaching the group that human cultures can be as odd as any alien one.



# The Psionics Institute

This chapter occurs on Junidy, the highest population world in the subsector. The planet is a likely candidate for a psionics institute, and the crew of the ship may search for the organization there in an attempt to rid themselves of the mysterious disease which has stricken them.

## A MYSTERIOUS PROBLEM

This chapter does not begin according to a set time or other framework. It depends upon the crew's gradually worsening affliction brought on by the presence of the anolas acquired on Pysadi.

As discussed in that chapter, the female anola's talent, the ability to radiate comfort, affection, and security, has a serious negative influence on sentient beings. In game terms, the increasing feelings of apathy and complacency are represented by a lowering of the character's intelligence rating, taking place very slowly over a period of months. Eventually, however, the effects become serious.

The adventurers will probably not become aware of the problem until it is obvious. One of the characters may have intelligence reduced to 1, at which point he loses the power to make decisions or think independently. Another possibility is that some encounter, resulting in a close call, will bring a character in for medical treatment; or a character may be asked to take a medical examination in the face of some accident or near-accident in operating the ship or performing some duty. In either of the latter cases, the characters will be quite healthy—but the referee should supply the four-digit number (strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence) that accurately reflects the character's current condition. The character will be shocked to realize that the intelligence rating is not what it should be.

At this point, they may begin to consider the problem and what might cause it. The idea that it might be a disease of some sort should be encouraged. At this stage, any thought that the anolas might be responsible should be avoided. If brought up by players, the referee should put them at ease—unless a secret roll against the player's intelligence indicates that the character, as well as the player, has the wit to consider the possibility. Still, this is a long shot, and without some kind of proof, players will be reluctant to discard the useful anolas.

**The Medical Option:** Thorough medical examinations will not find the problem's cause. (It will be hard to convince most doctors that there is a problem.) Whether tests are conducted with *March Harrier's* medical kit or at a gigantic hospital, the crew will run into a blank wall. There is no physical explanation for what is happening.

This, however, should suggest the alternative solution—that the problem has to do with the mind. And there is a group within the Imperium who understand the mind and its workings, though they are shunned and reviled by all. That group is the psionics institute; finding a branch of the institute may be the group's only hope of discovering the source of the problem which threatens them.

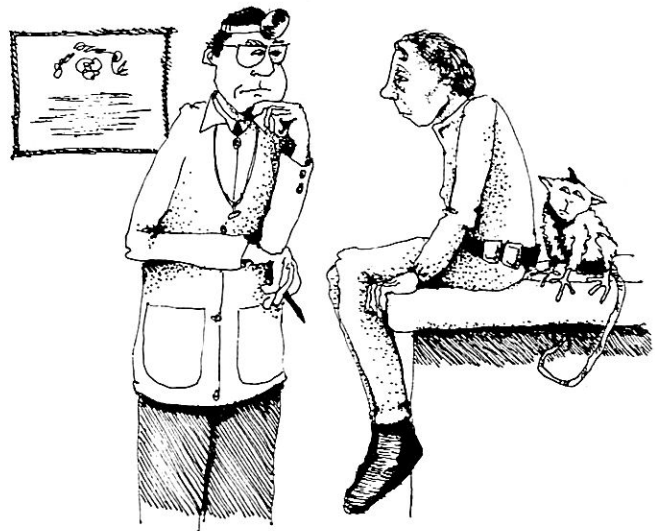
Psionics institutes flourish on worlds with high populations. They may send agents or recruiters to other worlds, but the high population level is essential if the organization is to find a suitable level of new recruits. High population also cloaks the presence of the institute with a sea of citizens. In the Aramis subsector, there are two worlds which are likely candidates for a psionics institute: Aramanx (population 1.6 billion) and Junidy (population 28 billion). Aramanx has no institute; Junidy does.

Individuals searching for the psionics institute on Aramanx will have no luck, although they may find a clue that leads them to believe that one will be found on Junidy. This scenario details the events that will take place should the characters seek the institute on Junidy.

## PSIONICS

Psionics is an illegal science in the Imperium. Once it was looked upon as nothing more than a parlor trick, unworthy of legitimate scientific investigation. Several hundred years ago, however, the science came of age and a systematic investigation was begun into the powers of the mind. That research gave rise to many institutions devoted to various aspects of psionics. Throughout the Imperium, psionics institutes were established to test for psionic talent, train those with talent to use it wisely and well, provide employment for trained psionics, and educate the public.

**The Psionics Suppressions:** As the power of the psionics institutes grew, so did the jealousy and fear of the non-talented majority. By the later 700's, the science of psionics



was experiencing growing disfavor; the many expressed reasons for the disfavor all masked the basic fears of the non-talented majority. In 800, psionics was suppressed by the Imperial government.

Imperial charters for psionics institutes were revoked. Property was confiscated. Individual institute officers were persecuted. The entire psionics movement went underground. Unfortunately for the suppression campaign, the very nature of psionics meant that it could not be eradicated. Enough psionically talented persons could always detect their pursuers to insure that training and use could continue. Individuals might be captured, but enough escaped to keep psionics alive.

**The Institutes:** Having been driven underground, the psionics institutes have assumed cover identities to conceal their true nature in records, data banks, and the minds of the population. Some institutes are church affiliated—as monasteries or isolated retreats. Others are remote, exclusive recreational facilities, often masking their true activities behind a profitable resort. Still others are totally secret hideaways. The task of locating an institute is a difficult one because of their concealed nature, their psionically talented guardians, the fact that such a search is unfashionable, and also because patronizing an institute is illegal. It is impossible to know even if there is a psionics institute on any specific world.

## JUNIDY

Junidy (0802-B434ABD-9) is a small world with a very thin atmosphere and approximately 40% ocean coverage. Its population of 28 billion is about evenly split between humans (who began to settle here in about 350) and the Llellewyloly (called by humans Dandelions or Dandies), an intelligent race native to the world. The world is currently under a non-charismatic leader at the head of a government administering a very oppressive law level. The local tech level (9) is sufficient to maintain a comfortable living standard.

Junidy is a high population world; nearly 90% of the population of the entire subsector is concentrated on the planet. Junidy is situated on an xboat route connecting the world to major centers in Deneb sector. There are an Imperial naval base, a scout service way station, and a trading station here.

The planet's land area is roughly divided into a northern and a southern continent. When humans first arrived, a thriving tech level 3 Dandy civilization covered much of the northern land mass, but the south continent was sparsely populated. Human settlement was initially concentrated in the unoccupied south.

Following the Civil War, humans began moving into the north continent, competing for land with the Dandies, which resulted in tension between the races. Sporadic violence, guerrilla raids, and even open warfare broke out. The period of violence ended when the two races, with the encouragement of the Imperial Marines, established the present world government: a co-dominium with equal presence of both races in ruling functions.

The Dandies of Junidy are well-adapted to Junidy's environment. A Dandy has five multi-jointed limbs which function as hands and feet interchangeably; main sensory organs

are also located on the limbs. The spherical central body is covered with long, coarse hair. Dandelions are named for their fancied resemblance to a Terran weed, accentuated by their habit of standing motionless on one limb with the other four folded against the body; in this stance (which conserves heat during Junidy's cold nights) they resemble flowers on long stalks.

Both continents now have high populations of both races. Humans tend to live in large cities. Dandies live in the countryside, although they visit the cities often to conduct business.

Strict equality of facilities is enforced on Junidy. Public communicator booths have handsets for both humans and Dandies, hotels have sleeping and seating accommodations for both races.

Encounters with Dandies are roughly equivalent to human encounters. Dandies approached without the ritual formulas appropriate to their stations will become annoyed, often ignoring the character or retreating to the one-legged stance. Learning to identify the various marks of status and learning the proper forms of speech are beyond the ability of a casual visitor. Other than that, Dandies can be treated by the referee as roughly human.

Dandies are not known to have psionic abilities.

## FIRST CLUES

Looking for the institute calls for imagination and thought. The adventurers may use their skills to subtly look for information about the psionics institutes. That search forces them to look indirectly, as direct listings or references to it are not available. An indirect search involves use of library data terminals, local interviews, histories, and idle gossip.

**The Library Data Terminal:** Using the local library data terminal on Junidy provides access to a variety of interesting details about the world. At a cost of Cr40 per hour, the user can obtain rapid video search of the data banks and make hard-copy print-outs of relevant discoveries. Private booths allow a discreet information search.

The search takes somewhat over three hours and produces the following pieces of information.

**Psionics (Legality).** The practice of psionics is a first-degree felony punishable by total forfeiture of all assets (including life and body). Failure to report a psionic individual to the authorities is a second-degree felony punishable by forfeiture of all financial assets.

**Psionics (Psionics Institute).** Outlawed organization established in 640 to train psionic individuals. Suppressed through invalidation of its Imperial Charter in 803, with all lands and assets forfeited to the Imperium. The lands lay vacant for fifty years, ultimately being transferred to the University of Junidy. In conjunction with new construction, the old psionics institute buildings became part of the south continental campus of the university.

**Psionics (Final Report of the Commission for the Suppression of Psionics, 888).** This report, in three parts, chronicles the eradication of the institute and imprisonment or execution of its former members.

Part one is a general indictment of psionics activities as anti-social, non-productive, and unacceptable. A variety of crimes against society are detailed in an effort to present

the case against psionics.

Part two reports the organization of the psionic institute on Junidy, including its property and assets, its personnel structure, and its activities. Included in this part are several maps showing institute lands (the main institute offices and training school on the south continent, several hundred square kilometers on the polar ice cap, and a remote mountain retreat on the north continent). Also included is an overview of the training provided the individual students. All of the information is couched in negative, maligning terms.

Part three covers the efforts to root out the institute and the punishments meted out to the institute's members. The trials held for individual members are covered in transcript.

An appendix to the report describes the activities of the commission in preparing its report. The commission still exists, although now in only a skeleton form. It is now under the administrative control of the psychology department of the south continental campus of the University of Junidy.

**Psionics (Dandies).** Dandies are not psionically talented. There is no record of Dandies ever exhibiting controllable psionics abilities.

**Local Interviews:** Asking directly about psionics is a dangerous occupation. Subtract 4 on the reaction table for any encounter where such questions are asked. In addition, apply a DM of -1 on the legal encounter roll for that day.

Subtle questions may prove more rewarding. Individuals can more easily ask about local history, the university system on Junidy, government, legal statistics, and even personal opinions. Persons may find it possible to discuss psionics if the subject is brought up by the interviewee. The following information can be obtained from local interviews.

- No one hears much about psionics these days.
- Other worlds are known to have psionic problems, but not Junidy. The major problem here is racial tension between humans and the Dandies.
- There was a report of a psionic being caught several years ago, but there was nothing much said about it later.

**Literature:** A variety of works deal with the psionics suppressions era and its aftermath. These works include historical novels, video shows, recordings, photograph albums, songs, poems, documentaries, and lectures. The works approach the suppressions from many different points of view, but all agree that psionics is evil; ultimately, even the positive psionic characters come to a bad end.

**Gossip:** Occasional contacts with locals may produce discussion of psionics in terms of gossip. It is a strong insult on Junidy (as on most worlds in the Imperium) accuse someone of having psionic power. Crewmembers may hear of psionic officials, corporate officers, or random individuals. Following up such leads will bring no useful information, but may cause a confrontation with authorities curious about the group's interest in psionics.

## MAKING THE SEARCH

Once the group has investigated the potential for a psionic institute, the referee should draw or describe a map of the world showing two major continents (north and south), a large northern ice-cap, a smaller southern ice-cap, and a few scattered islands.

From the map, the group should be encouraged to note

potential sites for the psionic institute. Four areas present some promise, at least as a start: the northern ice-cap territory formerly owned by the institute, the main institute offices on the south continent, the remote mountain retreat formerly owned by the institute, and, possibly, the remote islands in the ocean.

Travel on Junidy must usually be by public carrier, most commonly by high speed monorail overland. Such transport costs Cr0.1 per kilometer and can generally reach any major location on the planet in less than a day. From major monorail hubs, ground cars can be hired for Cr50 per day.

**The Polar Cap:** One of the last unpopulated areas on Junidy is the north polar cap. It is the site of a few scientific research stations, and a colony of Isolationists who maintain their own community away from the disturbances of mainstream civilization.

Visiting the Isolationist colony on the polar cap will be difficult, if only because the colony does not react well to visitors. Paying bribes of Cr1,000 to Cr6,000 per visitor will finally allow a visitor pass. Visiting the place will produce no visible results, and the group will become discouraged within thirty hours.

**The Islands:** A remote archipelago is known as a lawless area of the world not well patrolled by the authorities.

The remote islands are difficult to reach by local transport, but can be put under surveillance from orbit. Virtually the only activity of any note is the opening of a copper mine on one island. The area is accessible by air/raft or by launch. A license from the local authorities must be obtained before the journey can be made; this would cost Cr300 and require a reasonable pretext.

The copper mine is newly established and has only an initial set-up crew present. There is no indication of a psionics institute there.

**The Mountain Retreat:** A private ranch deep in the mountains of the north continent, the retreat was purchased from the Imperium by a wealthy investor and is now a home for his family (currently fifth generation).

A visit to the retreat is difficult because of extensive security precautions around the ranch. There is little traffic in or out, and the place is strictly what it says it is.

**The South Continent:** Because psionics can conceal itself, it is possible that the institute simply relocated itself, and is still somewhere on the south continent. In such a case, a place to start is at the original offices of the institute.

Searching for the institute on the south continent calls for the group to travel to the south continent. Any possibilities that come to mind could be followed up, but ultimately the group can seek out the Commission for the Suppression of Psionics at the University of Junidy.

Investigating the university social sciences campus leads ultimately to the psychology department, where no one has heard of the Commission for the Suppression of Psionics (CSP). Pointing out that the commission is supposed to be here will initially get no results. A kind word and admin skill, however, can get an answer from a secretary who remembers that the head of the experimental psychology section of the department holds the chairmanship of that commission as an extra duty. Professor Dariran is a busy man, but he will make an appointment in which he can



discuss the CSP's work. He insists that the institute no longer exists here, and finally takes the group to see the records room. If the group has a male anola with it, its threat sense triggers and the animal becomes agitated, but only for an instant. (Dagiran briefly considered having the party done away with, then put up a psionic shield upon noticing the anola's reaction.) The professor comments that he rarely sees anolas; they are seldom allowed off Pysadi.

Escorting the party to the documents room, he stands aside as they enter. Once inside, he stands against the door while several white coated lab assistants enter from other doors. After a short interval of uncomfortable silence, the professor motions the group through another door. It leads to a large amphitheater. The entire group moves onto a large stage and all take places at a large round table.

Professor Dagiran welcomes them to the Psionics Institute of Junidy. He explains that he has had each of the group carefully examined, and only after examining their motives have they been allowed to know the truth.

**The Institute:** Professor Dagiran explains that, when the suppressions started, it was fairly easy to weasel some of their own number into the suppression commission. Few other people really care about the details of psionics suppression. The institute keeps up the appearance of vigilance and maintains an excellent cover in the process.

### THE SOLUTION

After 1D days of psionic probes and tests, the institute staff will definitely connect the problem that led the adventurers to the institute with the presence of the anolas. The true nature of their powers should now be revealed. The institute will be interested in studying the animals, and, since a psionic block is among the first skills any psionically trained individual develops, the staff will be immune to their effects.

Under normal circumstances, the institute would ask for money. In this case, they will waive fees in exchange for

the anolas (which, of course, would be almost priceless, due to the impossibility of procuring them off Pysadi). The professor will also talk to the group about other potentials they can derive from association with the institute.

**Recovery:** Once the group gives up the anolas, recovery will begin. It is much quicker than the gradual losses which originally debilitated the party, but there are problems associated with the process.

The recovery period for each character lasts 1D months with certain modifiers. These include: reduced intelligence 7+, DM - 1; reduced intelligence 2-, DM + 1; endurance 9+, DM - 1; character was anola's "favorite", DM + 2. The time is never reduced below 1 month; the time is kept secret from the characters.

This time should be compared to the number of intelligence points to be recovered; the recovery proceeds at a regular, even pace over the span of time involved. For instance, the recovery of 4 intelligence points over the course of a month gives an average rate of 1 point per week; to recover 3 points over 6 months gives an increase of 1 point every 2 months.

Throughout the period of the recovery, the character will be subject to some minor but traumatic problems, similar to symptoms of withdrawal. The most notable effects are a reduction of dexterity and endurance by 2 points each, and an adverse reaction to the loss of the "calming touch" of the anola parentals. This reaction takes the form of a loss of confidence in performing various tasks; characters must make a saving throw of intelligence or less when they use any skill, with failure resulting in halving (round fractions up) of the skill level. These effects pass when the recovery is completed.

### PSIONICS TRAINING

The professor is aware that there are occasional travellers from offworld who seek out the institute and its training. He indicates that it is possible to be examined here if they desire. Standard rates and times apply. Those who take the examination must enroll in the university and become students as a cover.

Psionics training is expensive and time consuming. Unless someone has a very great psionics rating, such training is probably not advantageous at the moment. However, the professor extends an invitation to all to return for training at some point in the future, once they have raised the money and have the time to spare.

Even if the group does not take advantage of the opportunity for an exam and training at the moment, the professor is willing to take some time out to discuss psionics in general; he so rarely has visitors who are open minded.

The professor's conversation provides answers to any basic questions about psionics that the player characters might have.

The *March Harrier* crew has narrowly avoided a very real danger, and now stands ready to continue their adventures within the subsector. Starting at Junidy, they should continue the course of their wanderings, with patron encounters occasionally guiding them into new encounters, until the referee chooses to move into the final phase of the campaign.



# Zilan Wine

This chapter concerns the *March Harrier's* second landing on Zila, in which a seemingly simple business deal turns into a very educational encounter with bureaucracy. More information about Zila may be found in *First Call at Zila*.

## KILLING TIME

Merchant crews are constantly searching for something new to do on planetfall liberty, and one member of the *March Harrier's* crew discovers that one of Zila's major wineries, headquartered near the starport, is offering free wine-tastings. The combination of the words "free" and "wine" rapidly convinces everyone that this is an excellent way to spend an afternoon.

The winery is Fireau et Fille, one of Zila's "big three". Zila has a reputation, not undeserved, for quality wines. In part, it comes from the wines themselves, but a large part of the mystique is the result of massive advertising. Tukera Lines holds an exclusive agency with all three of the largest winemakers and holds an effective monopoly on offworld sales of Zilan wine. Advertising on high-population worlds throughout the Spinward Marches and Deneb Sector touts Zilan wine as an exclusive (and high-priced) symbol of affluence.

Upon tasting the wines of Fireau et Fille, the adventurers are pleased to discover that advertising is not the sole reason for the success of Zilan wine; any merchant could sell a hundred shiploads on any well-populated world.

After the winetasting, a young woman approaches the adventurers and invites them to enter her office, just down the hall from the sampling room. She is Lisa Fireau, the "Fille" in Fireau et Fille. She has overheard their conversation and gathers that they are a merchant crew; if so, she has a business proposition.

## A CARGO

In order to understand Lisa Fireau's proposition, the adventurers need a brief explanation of the politics and economics of winemaking on Zila. Tukera owns a virtual monopoly on wine exports due to three long-term contracts signed several decades previously with the three great winemakers: Signal, Delatest, and Fireau. In return for exclusive export rights, Tukera pledged a vigorous advertising campaign, a promise they have kept.

However, Tukera has taken the profit from their wine monopoly and invested it in land on Zila, thus becoming an increasingly important political, as well as economic, force. All three of the major houses fear for their continued independence but are uncertain of their options.

Fireau's contract, negotiated a year before Signal's and three years before Delatest's, expires within the next two weeks. Lisa and her father, Gustav, have decided not to renew. Tukera, suspecting this, is preparing to ship bulk loads of a newly-issued house label, raised and aged on Tukera-owned Zilan lands. Billed as equal in quality (which it isn't) but less expensive (which it is, since Tukera con-

trols the prices) than wines of the major houses, the Tukera wine will be put on the market to force Fireau and the other houses to come to a quick agreement.

Fireau has few options. Tukera has bought up large quantities of all the house's major vintages; they can flood any market Fireau tries to enter with the same wines at lower prices than Fireau can afford to sell them. In these last two weeks of the contract, Lisa expects considerable pressure, probably including quite a bit of outright coercion and violence. Worst of all, a quarterly tax payment will be due soon, and it can be met only by making a big sale, plunging deep into debt by borrowing money, or by signing the Tukera contract. If Fireau is forced to sign, the other two wineries will certainly submit and the Tukera monopoly will be assured; with Tukera's house wines coming onto the market, the major houses could be forced out of business or absorbed by Tukera within another decade.

There is one option, however, of which Tukera is unaware. Occasionally, an early freeze hits Zila's wine country, which can ruin the trake crop. However, if the trakes are picked quickly and processed while still frozen, the resulting wine, called eiswein, is of uncommon excellence. Zilan eiswein is highly prized on Zila as the best of all wines; although it has never been exported in quantity, Tukera has purchased and released a few bottles offworld to enhance the Zilan mystique.



Now Lisa comes to the point. Very recently, a large and particularly fine vintage of eiswein has come of age in the Fireau winery. No one outside of Fireau et Fille knows of this vintage and, most importantly, Tukera has no stockpiles. If a shipment of this wine could be taken offworld and sold on the open market, the Fireaus should be able to take advantage of Tukera's own advertising to bring a fantastically high price. The money should be enough to cover the company's taxes and should enable them to keep operating for a time free of Tukera's influence. Further, this will be the first foot in the door for direct export of other wines, and Fireau should be able to hold out long enough to become established in the markets. The Tukera house label should be unable to compete in quality or, if Fireau can handle its own sales, in price.

Lisa's offer is simple. She wants the *March Harrier* to carry a cargo of eiswein, plus two passengers (herself and a trusted employee) to Aramanx, where the shipment will be sold and arrangements made for continued dealings. In exchange, *March Harrier* will be cut in for 10% of the sale price of the eiswein. This deal offers an excellent profit potential.

If the adventurers agree, Lisa takes them in to see her father (who, once matters are explained to him, thanks the adventurers profusely), papers are signed, and the success of the venture is toasted in Fireau Eiswein '98.

**Complications:** After the initial euphoria wears off, there are practical problems which must be dealt with. First, Tukera must be kept in the dark; they might be able to stop the operation if they found out, either through legal pressure—they exert great power in the government—or by force. Secondly, the eiswein is currently located at the winery, some 2000 kilometers from the starport. Shipping the wine to the starport is fraught with peril, for it leaves the shipment open to possible hijacking by Tukera or seizure by the government in payment for the Fireau's due taxes.

The solution is to fly the *March Harrier* to the winery, load the cargo there, and depart. But this, on Zila, is not as simple

as it sounds; Zila's bureaucracy makes it difficult for deviations from the usual routine to be accomplished. Several different permits, forms, authorizations, and dispensations are required to gain permission for the ship to land away from the starport, load a cargo not passed through normal customs channels, and so on. It will be necessary for the crew to begin obtaining these permits immediately, while Lisa and her father travel to the winery to prepare the cargo.

The *March Harrier* should leave within the two weeks remaining on the Tukera contract. Once the contract expires, Tukera will be free to begin marketing their own wine and Fireau will quickly lose all sources of revenue. When this happens, Fireau will be forced to borrow against assets to pay bills. Once the eiswein is on its way, Lisa should be able to raise money against the shipment's expected sale price, which will keep her from having to mortgage or sell property.

## GETTING STARTED

Since Fireau et Fille has never exported before, Lisa's knowledge of the process required is rather sketchy, but she will tell the adventurers all she knows.

**The Forms:** In order to legally fulfill all the requirements for export, the *March Harrier* crew must obtain five documents, properly signed and countersigned.

**Form 17, Special Landing Permit:** This gives the ship the right to land at some point away from the starport (designated on the form) on a specific date. It requires signatures from three appropriate officials.

**Form 82a, Customs Declaration/Export Authorization:** This describes the cargo ("wine"), the amount carried, the value, destination, and so forth. It requires two signatures.

**Form 29, Waiver for Pre-launch Inspection:** This form is obtained from the starport and allows the ship to pick up a cargo after leaving the landing field. It requires one signature.

**Form 106, Local Landing Permit:** This form must be obtained from the authorities of the province where the landing is to take place (Polykarp Province). It requires two signatures.

**Form 11/2, Application for Visa:** This form is required for Zilan natives to leave Zila and return. Two are needed: one for Lisa and one for Boris Dree, her employee. Each visa requires two signatures.

Unfortunately, Lisa doesn't know which officials issue and sign these forms.

**Offices:** Lisa can supply the names and locations of the government bureaus which are most likely to be concerned with the forms needed, as well as two other agencies which might be able and willing to assist.

**Zila Trade Authority (ZTA):** Located at the Administrative Complex in Crescence, the ZTA deals with customs, import/export quotas, and other mercantile affairs.

**Bureau of Offworld Affairs (BOA):** Located at the Government Towers in Crescence, the BOA conducts liaison with offworld corporations or individuals.

**Department of Commerce (DoC):** Also located at the Government Towers, the DoC is charged with administration of all Zilan commercial, mercantile, and economic affairs.

**Zila Port Authority (ZPA):** This is the Imperial office at Zila





Starport, charged with the administration of the port, including pre-launch inspection of ships.

**Provincial Government Administrative Offices (PGAO):** Each province has an administrative center; the PGAO for Polykarp Province is located in the provincial capital of Amali.

**Imperial Consulate (IC):** Located in the north quarter of Crescence, the consulate is the diplomatic office that sees to the welfare of Imperial citizens, particularly offworlders.

**Merchants' Guild (MG):** Located at the starport, the Merchants' Guild is an association that looks after the interests of offworlder merchants on Zila.

**What to Do:** Although she doesn't know the specifics of this particular process, Lisa is experienced in dealing with Zilan bureaucracy. The first step is to determine what agency issues each form. Standard procedure is for the issuing clerk to send the filled-out form through channels for various signatures, but there is no time for that. The adventurers must also find the officials empowered to sign each form—sometimes as many as three different individuals—and induce them to sign. The wheels of bureaucracy must be greased in order to make them turn more quickly. Sometimes a properly worded appeal will do; sometimes, a suitably discreet offer of cash is effective; sometimes, an official's help may be gained by a night on the town. Whatever the means, everything must be accomplished quickly and without Tukera becoming aware of it.

## TIME AND TRAVEL

Time passes inexorably as the party seeks to gain the proper documents. Each day, they will attempt to penetrate further into the bureaucratic maze, while both time and space limit the number of their contacts.

**Periods:** Each day is divided into four periods: morning, afternoon, evening, and night. No meetings are allowed at night; all officials are assumed to be sleeping. Meetings are not permitted in the evening, but officials may be entertained. Office hours are during the morning and afternoon, and meetings or phone contacts may occur. Officials may also be entertained in the afternoon (lunch).

**Sleep:** The crew must sleep one period in every four. Generally, this will be at night. In some circumstances (for instance, if the crew sneaks out to burglarize offices at night) it may be necessary to sleep during some other period. It is possible to skip one sleep period completely by rolling endurance or less; more than one is not possible. If a sleep period is skipped, the individuals involved will suffer a DM of +1 on all reaction rolls and rolls against intelligence until he sleeps again.

**Travel:** Movement between the various locations to be visited will consume time. The starport, Government Towers, the Administrative Complex, and the Imperial Consulate are all in the city of Crescence and movement from one to another takes 1/4 of a time period. Movement between offices in the same area takes no time. (In Crescence, the crew will be sleeping at the starport, either in their ship or at a starport hotel, and thus will begin every day there.) Visiting the provincial capital, Amali, takes one full period by commercial jet, at a cost of Cr180 one way or Cr325 round trip. It may be necessary to take accommodations in



Amali to conduct business over a period of several days.

## MEETING OFFICIALS

There are 47 officials listed in this chapter (in the next section) for the adventurers to meet and interact with. Among the 47 are the officials who must issue and sign the five forms; other officials are provided to help the adventurers find the proper officials or just to get in the way. Each official's listing gives a number (to help keep track of them all), his position, notes on the techniques which will help in influencing him, and statements of what he will do routinely and what he will do if his aid is enlisted. The first problem, though, is contacting the proper officials.

**Splitting Up:** The adventurers may split up into several groups to help their search, but the groups may not exchange information until they come back into contact with each other.

**Initial Contacts:** At first, there are only two ways of finding officials: calling one of the offices or going there in person. Calling the office puts the character in contact with that office's receptionist (officials #1-7); visiting the office produces a random encounter, usually the receptionist but occasionally someone with more authority. All contacts other than receptionists and random encounters are the result of referrals from other officials.

**Phone Calls:** Calling someone on the phone allows only limited interaction; the caller may receive all information routinely given out by the official, but no special help may be received and forms may not be issued by phone.

**Meetings:** Meeting an official in person (going to his office) allows full interaction; the official may be influenced by all available means and may be induced to give any help of which he is capable.

**Types of Officials:** For the purposes of classification, there are three types of officials: receptionists, clerks, and higher officials (all others). A receptionist may be called or visited any time. A clerk may be called or visited any time if the

party has discovered his existence (through random encounter or referral). Higher officials may not be called and may be visited only by appointment.

**Making Appointments:** When a helpful official refers the party to a high official, he makes an appointment for them to meet the official. The appointment is set for 1D – 1 working time periods (morning and afternoon only) away. For example, an appointment made in the morning for five periods away would take place in the afternoon of the day after the next day. If the appointment is made with the help of official #40, 42, 46, or 47, the appointment is 1D – 2 periods away. It is always at least one period away. If the party declares themselves unable to keep that appointment, a later time will be set; roll 1D + 2. Failure to keep an appointment will cause the official's attitude (see below) to drop by 2.

**Random Encounters:** Each day, one member of the group will have a random encounter; if the group has split up, only one portion of the group has an encounter. Any portion of a group which does not have a random encounter will merely encounter a receptionist. To determine a random encounter, roll 2D on the random encounter table which corresponds to the group's current location, with a DM equal to the highest level of streetwise or admin skill of any character in the group. A random encounter counts as a meeting.

**Time:** All these events take time. A meeting with a receptionist or a phone call takes ¼ of a period. A meeting with a clerk takes ½ of a period. A meeting with a higher official takes ¾ of a period. Random encounters take no time. Events may not overlap into the next period; for example, if ¼ of a period is remaining, there is time for a phone call, but anything which takes longer may not begin until the next period.

**Referee's Information:** For the aid of the referee, here are the officials who may issue or sign the various forms; the adventurers, of course, must work to get this information.

**Form 17:** This is issued by the clerk in the Import/Export Control Department of the ZTA (#8) or the clerk in the Office of Registration and Licensing of the DoC (#18). It must be signed by the Administrator of the Import/Export Control Department (#32), the Assistant to the Administrator of the Bureau of Trade and Commerce of the DoC (#34), and the Chief Supervisor of the Aeronautics and Space Administration of the BOA (#33).

**Form 82a:** This is issued by the clerk in the Customs and Immigration Department of the ZTA (#8) or the clerk in the Export Licenses Division of the DoC (#17). It must be signed by the Trade Relations Coordinator of the BOA (#35) and either the Administrative Assistant for Customs and Inspection of the ZTA (#31) or the General Supervisor of the Export Licenses Division of the DoC (#36).

**Form 29:** This is issued by the clerk at the Starport Customs Desk of the ZPA (#15) and must be signed by the Customs and Immigration Supervisor of the ZPA (#26).

**Form 106:** This is issued by the clerk in the Special Permits Bureau of the PGOA (#16) and must be signed by the District Administrator of the 14th District of Polykarp Province (#37) and the Deputy Inspector of the Provincial Enforcement Bureau (#38).

**Form 11/2:** This is issued by the clerk in the Bureau of

Travel and Export of the DoC (#20) and must be signed by the supervisor in the same bureau (#30) and the supervisor in the Division of Offworld Relations of the BOA (#25).

## THE OFFICIALS

The list of officials includes individuals from all levels of the bureaucracy on Zila.

The following format explains the description of any particular official.

**0. Clerk in the Port Warden's Office (ZPA).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr50. Administration/Liaison, + Leadership. Entertainment (Cr20). Opposite sex (– 1); military (+ 2). *Routine:* Explains that the Port Warden's Office does not issue any forms. *Help:* Refers the crew to a clerk in the Zilan Trade Authority Customs Department (#18). *Tukera* 10 + . 9A6.

The crew has encountered official #0, who is identified as a clerk in the Port Warden's Office. The clerk is employed at the Zilan Port Authority office at the starport. The official's initial attitude is set at 6 (unreceptive). If bribed, the official will cost Cr50 (a shrewd judge of character could tell that the clerk would fall in the Cr40-60 range). A character using either admin or liaison skill (but not both) could favorably influence the clerk; leadership skill, however, adversely affects the roll.

The clerk will respond to offers of entertainment, which will cost Cr20 per person (for normal entertainment). Members of the opposite sex get a DM of – 1 in dealing with the clerk, but members of the military (army, navy, or marines) get a DM of + 2; apparently the clerk has a dislike for authority figures.

Routinely, the clerk will do very little for the crew, but if the individual is favorably impressed by the crew, they are referred to another office which might help them. The clerk's roll to leak information to Tukera Lines is 10 + . The clerk's intelligence, education, and social level are set at 9, A, and 6.

Before the encounter, the referee must determine the official's sex (1-3 male, 4-6 female); it is also a good idea (although not necessary) to determine the official's name.

**1. Receptionist at the Zila Trade Authority (ZTA).** *Attitude* 3. *Bribe* Cr50. Streetwise, Leader, + Liaison. Entertainment (Cr10). Vargr (+ 3). *Routine:* Refers questions on customs form (82a) to clerk at the Customs and Immigration Department (#8). Refers questions on permits (Form 17) to clerk at the Import/Export Control Department (#9). *Help:* Refers the crew to the Administrative Assistant for Customs and Immigration (#31) as a higher official who can assist them. *Tukera* 12 + . 557.

**2. Receptionist at the Imperial Consulate (IC).** *Attitude* 12. *Bribe* Cr15. Streetwise, Leader, + Admin/Liaison. *Routine:* Will make the following referrals: visas: clerk in the Visa Section (#43); general assistance: Vice Consul for Citizenship, Protection, and Welfare (#45); mercantile assistance: Vice Consul for Shipping and Mercantile Affairs (#46). *Help:* Nothing. *Tukera* 10 + . 465.

**3. Receptionist at the Zila Port Authority (ZPA).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr40. Administration, + Leadership. *Routine:* Refers

questions on Waivers to a clerk at the Customs Desk (#15). *Help:* Can identify proper departments for other forms and questions. *Tukera* 10+. B77.

**4. Receptionist at the Department of Commerce (DoC).** *Attitude* 11. *Bribe* Cr50. Administration/Liaison, Streetwise, +Leadership. Entertainment (Cr 30). Scout Service (-1); merchants (+3); opposite sex (-2). *Routine:* Refers questions on visas to a clerk in the Bureau of Tourism (#11); refers questions on customs forms or permits to a clerk in the Bureau of Trade and Commerce (#10). *Help:* Refers visa questions to a clerk in the Bureau of Travel and Export (#19), instead of the Bureau of Tourism; refers questions on Special Landing Permits to a clerk in the Office of Registration and Licensing (#18). *Tukera* 7+. 898.

**5. Receptionist at the Bureau of Offworld Affairs (BOA).** *Attitude* 8. *Bribe* Cr40. Administration, Streetwise, +Leadership. *Routine:* Refers questions as follows: customs forms: clerk in the Trade Relations Division (#12); permits: clerk in the Aeronautics and Space Administration (#13); visas: clerk in the Division of Offworld Relations (#14). *Help:* Can inform the crew that the Bureau does not issue forms, but can countersign them. *Tukera* 11+. 997.

**6. Receptionist at the Merchants' Guild (MG).** *Attitude* 3. *Bribe* Cr25. Administration. *Routine:* Refers questions to a clerk in the Planetary Relations Department (#39). *Help:* Refers the crew to the Assistant to the Executive Director (#41). *Tukera* 11+. 876.

**7. Receptionist at the Provisional Government Administrative Offices, Polykarp Province (PGAO).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr50. Streetwise. Entertainment (Cr20). Opposite sex (-2). *Routine:* Refers all questions on permits to a clerk in the Special Permits Bureau (#16). *Help:* Refers the crew to the District Administrator of the 14th District of Polykarp Province (#37), who can countersign a Local Landing Permit. *Tukera* 12+. 856.

**8. Clerk in the Customs and Immigration Department (ZTA).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr10. Administration, +Streetwise/Leadership. *Tukera* Lines (+1); opposite sex (+1). *Routine:* Issues Form 82a, the Customs Declaration/Export Authorization. If filled in and sent through channels, it will be approved in 1-6 weeks. *Help:* Refers the crew to the clerk's supervisor (#21), who may be able to speed the process up. *Tukera* 12+. 885.

**9. Clerk in the Import/Export Control Department (ZTA).** *Attitude* 10. *Bribe* Cr50. Leadership. Entertainment (Cr20). *Routine:* Issues Form 17, the Special Landing Permit. Normal processing time is 1-6 weeks, perhaps longer (2D-1). *Help:* Refers the crew to the clerk's supervisor (#22). *Tukera* 11+. AA7.

**10. Clerk in the Bureau of Trade and Commerce (DoC).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr20. Administration, Streetwise. *Routine:* Indicates that this department doesn't handle the forms in question. *Help:* Refers the crew to a clerk in the Export Licenses Division (#17) for the customs form. *Tukera* 9+. 2B4.

**11. Clerk in the Bureau of Tourism and Immigration (DoC).** *Attitude* 7. *Bribe* Cr20. Leadership. Zila Patriot (-2); offworlders (+2); opposite sex (-1); merchants (+1). *Routine:* Points out that passports are not issued by this department. *Help:* Refers the crew to a clerk in the Division

of Offworld Relations (#14). *Tukera* 13+. 984.

**12. Clerk in the Trade Relations Division (BOA).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr35. Administration, Streetwise/Liaison. Entertainment (Cr10). Vargr (+3); merchants (-2). *Routine:* Indicates that this division is not responsible for issuing forms. *Help:* Refers the crew to a supervisor (#23). *Tukera* 10+. 5A4.

**13. Clerk in the Aeronautics and Space Administration (BOA).** *Attitude* 12. *Bribe* Cr40. Administration/Leadership, Streetwise/Liaison. Entertainment (Cr50). Opposite sex (-0); offworlders (-2). *Routine:* Regrets that the permit requested cannot be issued through this office. *Help:* Refers the crew to a supervisor (#24). *Tukera* 11+. 597.

**14. Clerk in the Division of Offworld Relations (BOA).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr30. Streetwise/Leadership. Entertainment (Cr10). *Routine:* Indicates that visas are not issued through this office. *Help:* Refers group to a supervisor (#25). *Tukera* 9+. 885.

**15. Clerk at the Starport Customs Desk (ZPA).** *Attitude* 10. *Bribe* Cr25. Liaison, Leadership, +Administration. Entertainment (Cr50). Merchants (-1). *Routine:* Issues Form 29, the Waiver on Pre-launch Inspections. It takes 1-6 days to process through channels. *Help:* Refers the crew to the Customs and Immigration Supervisor (#26). *Tukera* 8+. 768.

**16. Clerk in the Special Permits Bureau (PGAO).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr80. 2x Administration, Streetwise/Liaison, Leadership. *Routine:* Issues Form 106, the Local Landing Permit. Through normal channels; this will take 2-12 weeks to process. *Help:* Refers the group to a supervisor (#27), who may be able to speed things up. *Tukera* 13+. 459.

**17. Clerk in the Export Licenses Division (DoC).** *Attitude* 8. *Bribe* Cr35. Administration/Liaison/Streetwise. *Routine:* Issues Form 82a, Customs Declaration/Export Authorization. Processing time is 1-6 weeks. *Help:* Refers the crew to a supervisor (#28). *Tukera* 10+. A86.

**18. Clerk in the Office of Registration and Licensing (DoC).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr60. +Administration/Liaison, +Leadership. Entertainment (Cr10). Offworlders (+1); op-





posite sex (-2); Vargr (+0). *Routine*: Issues Form 17, the Special Landing Permit. Processing time is 3-8 weeks (1D+2). *Help*: Refers party to a supervisor (#29), who may be able to speed up the process. *Tukera* 10+. 676.

**19. Clerk in the Bureau of Emigration (DoC).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr50. + Streetwise. Entertainment (Cr25). Merchants (+3). *Routine*: Indicates that this office only issues one-time visas to individuals moving off-planet and renouncing citizenship. *Help*: Refers group to a clerk in the Bureau of Travel and Export (#20). *Tukera* 10+. 688.

**20. Clerk in the Bureau of Travel and Export (DoC).** *Attitude* 7. *Bribe* Cr60. Streetwise/Liaison. Entertainment (Cr10). Offworlders (+2); Zila patriot (-1); Vargr (+1). *Routine*: Issues Form 11/2, Application for Visa. These take 1-6 days to process (2 visas are processed separately). *Help*: Refers the party to a supervisor (#30). *Tukera* 9+. 286.

**21. Supervisor in the Customs and Immigration Department (ZTA).** *Attitude* 3. *Bribe* Cr100. Administration, Leadership, + Streetwise/Liaison. *Help*: refers the crew to the Administrative Assistant for Customs and Immigration (#31). *Tukera* 10+. C66.

**22. Supervisor in the Import/Export Control Department (ZTA).** *Attitude* 4. *Bribe* Cr80. Liaison, Leadership. Entertainment (Cr20). Merchants (+1); Vargr (-0); gambling (-2). *Help*: Refers party to the Administrator of the Import/Export Control Department (#32), who can sign the Special Landing Permit. *Tukera* 9+. 9A6.

**23. Supervisor in the Trade Relations Division (BOA).** *Attitude* 8. *Bribe* Cr150. Streetwise. Entertainment (Cr20). Opposite sex (+3); Vargr (-1). *Help*: Refers the party to the Trade Relations Coordinator (#35), who can countersign the Customs Declaration/Export Authorization form. *Tukera* 8+. 647.

**24. Supervisor in the Aeronautics and Space Administration (BOA).** *Attitude* 4. *Bribe* Cr10. Streetwise, Leadership. Opposite sex (-0); Zila patriot (+2). *Help*: Refers the crew to the Chief Supervisor of the ASA (#33), who can countersign the Special Landing Permit. *Tukera* 9+. 9A3.

**25. Supervisor in the Division of Offworld Relations (BOA).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr120. Leadership/Liaison, + Streetwise. *Help*: Will sign Form 11/2, Application for Visa without waiting for normal process of bureaucracy. If the group does not have a form, the official will direct them to a clerk in the Bureau of Travel and Export (#20). However, they must make another appointment and gain help again for this official to sign. *Tukera* 11+. 896.

**26. Customs and Immigration Supervisor (ZPA).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr10. Entertainment (Cr20). Opposite sex (-2). *Help*: Will sign Form 29, the Waiver on Pre-launch Inspection, without waiting for usual channels. *Tukera* 11+. B56.

**27. Supervisor of the Special Permits Bureau (PGAO).** *Attitude* 10. *Bribe* Cr240. Administration, Streetwise, + Leadership. Entertainment (Cr25). Vargr (+3); offworlders (+3); merchants (+1). *Help*: Refers the crew to the Deputy Inspector of the Provincial Enforcement Bureau (#38), who can sign a Local Landing Permit. *Tukera* 11+. 476.

**28. Supervisor in the Export License Division (DoC).** *Attitude* 4. *Bribe* Cr20. Streetwise, + Leadership. *Help*: Refers the crew to the Export Licenses Division General Supervisor (#36), who can sign a Customs Declaration/Export Authorization form. *Tukera* 8+. B73.

**29. Supervisor in the Office of Registration and Licensing (DoC).** *Attitude* 4. *Bribe* Cr60. Administration/Streetwise, + Liaison. *Help*: Refers the crew to the Assistant to the Administrator at the Bureau of Trade and Commerce (#34). *Tukera* 8+. BA7.

**30. Supervisor in the Bureau of Travel and Export (DoC).** *Attitude* 8. *Bribe* Cr50. Administration, + Liaison. Entertainment (Cr25). Military (+1); merchants (+3). *Help*: Will sign Form 11/2, Application for Visa, submitted outside normal channels. *Tukera* 10+. B56.

**31. Administrative Assistant for Customs and Immigration (ZTA).** *Attitude* 7. *Bribe* Cr60. Streetwise/liaison, Leadership, + Administration. Military (+1); opposite sex (-2); Vargr (-2). *Help*: Affixes signature to Form 82a, Customs Declaration/Export Authorization (if the form has not already been signed by official #36). If the crew does not have a form, the official calls for one from the clerk and signs it on the spot. *Tukera* 8+. 786.

**32. Administrator, Import/Export Control Department (ZTA).** *Attitude* 8. *Bribe* Cr160. Administration, Liaison. Entertainment (Cr20). *Help*: Will affix signature to Form 17, Special Landing Permit. If the crew does not have a form, the official will direct them to the clerk in the Department (#9) or to the DoC (no specific official), which also issues forms. The official will automatically sign the form during the party's next appointment. *Tukera* 9+. 846.

**33. Chief Supervisor, Aeronautics and Space Administration (BOA).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr100. Administration/Leadership, Streetwise/Liaison. Entertainment (Cr30). Opposite sex (-1); gambling (-1). *Help*: Will sign Form 17, Special Landing Permit. If the crew does not have a form, the official will direct them to the clerk in the Customs and Immigration Department (#8) or the clerk in the Office of Registration and Licensing (#18). However, they must make another appointment and enlist the official's help again before the official will sign the form. *Tukera* 9+. 4A8.

**34. Assistant to the Administrator, Bureau of Trade and Commerce (DoC).** *Attitude* 7. *Bribe* Cr40. 2x Administration, Streetwise/Liaison. *Help*: Will affix signature to Form 17, Special Landing Permit. If the crew does not have a form, the official will arrange another appointment and will give them a signed form at that time. *Tukera* 12+. 697.

**35. Trade Relations Coordinator (BOA).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr50. 2x Administration, Streetwise, + Leadership. *Help*: Will affix signature to Form 82a, Customs Declaration/Export Authorization. If the crew does not have a form, the official will direct them to the ZTA or the DoC. They must make another appointment and gain the official's help again before the official will sign the form. *Tukera* 11+. 628.

**36. General Supervisor, Export Licenses Division (DoC).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr90. Leadership, + Administration. Entertainment (Cr50). Opposite sex (-1); *Tukera* Lines (-1). *Help*: Will sign Form 82a, Customs Declaration/Export Authorization form (if the form has not already been signed by official #31). If the crew does not have a form, the official will call for one from the clerk and sign it on the spot. *Tukera* 8+. 899.

**37. District Administrator, 14th District, Polykarp Province (PGAO).** *Attitude* 9. *Bribe* Cr100. Administration, Streetwise/Leadership, + Liaison. *Help*: Will affix signature

to Form 106, Local Landing Permit. If the crew does not have a form, the official will direct them to the receptionist (#7). The official will automatically sign the form at the next meeting. *Tukera* 10+. 4A5.

**38. Deputy Inspector, Provincial Enforcement Bureau (PGAO).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr40. Administration, Leadership, + Liaison. Entertainment (Cr20). *Help:* Will sign Form 106, Local Landing Permit. If the crew does not have a form, the official happens to have a blank one available, and will sign it. *Tukera* 10+. 786.

**39. Clerk in the Planetary Relations Office (MG).** *Attitude* 10. *Bribe* Cr40. Leadership, + Streetwise. *Routine:* Refers questions as follows: Special Landing Permit: clerk in the Aeronautics and Space Administration (#13); Customs Declaration/Import Authorization: clerk in the Export Licenses Division (#17); visas: clerk in the Bureau of Travel and Export (#20); Waiver of Pre-launch Inspection: clerk at the Starport Customs Desk (#15); Local Landing Permit: clerk in the Special Permits Bureau (#16). *Help:* Refers the party to the Director of the Planetary Relations Office (#40). *Tukera* 8+. 6B5.

**40. Director of Planetary Relations Office (MG).** *Attitude* 4. *Bribe* Cr215. Administration, Streetwise. Entertainment (Cr50). Opposite sex (-2); gambling (-1); offworlders (-1). *Help:* Refers the crew to the Export Licenses Division General Supervisor (#36), the Trade Relations Coordinator (#35), or the Assistant to the Administrator at the Bureau of Trade and Commerce (#34). Each counts as a separate favor. The official's help in setting the appointment up gives a DM of -1 when dealing with the official in question. *Tukera* 7+. 8A6.

**41. Assistant to the Executive Director (MG).** *Attitude* 9. *Bribe* Cr10. Streetwise, + Administration. Vargr (-1). *Routine:* Refers the crew to a clerk in the Planetary Relations Office (#39). *Help:* Refers the crew to the Executive Director (#42). *Tukera* 8+. 6A5.

**42. Executive Director (MG).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr300. Administration, Liaison, Streetwise/Leadership. Entertainment (Cr80). Merchants (-2); opposite sex (-1); offworlders (+0). *Help:* Can arrange appointments with most high officials (#31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36). Help in arranging the appointment also grants a DM of -1 in dealing with the official. Each official counts as a separate favor. *Tukera* 6+. 38A.

**43. Clerk in the Consulate Visas Section (IC).** *Attitude* 11. *Bribe* Cr40. Administration, Liaison, + Streetwise/Leadership. Entertainment (Cr10). *Routine:* Refers visa questions to the Receptionist at the Department of Commerce (#4). *Help:* Refers the crew to the Vice-Consul for Visas, Pensions, and Veterans' Affairs (#44). *Tukera* 8+. 877.

**44. Vice-Consul for Visas, Pensions, and Veterans' Affairs (IC).** *Attitude* 7. *Bribe* Cr140. Leadership, + Administration. Military (-2). *Help:* Refers the crew to a clerk in the Bureau of Travel and Export (#20). *Tukera* 11+. 955.

**45. Vice-Consul for Citizenship, Protection, and Welfare (IC).** *Attitude* 5. *Bribe* Cr200. Administration, Streetwise, Leadership. Opposite sex (-1). *Help:* Refers the crew to the Imperial Consul (#47). *Tukera* 7+. 489.

**46. Vice-Consul for Shipping and Mercantile Affairs (IC).** *Attitude* 6. *Bribe* Cr40. Liaison, Streetwise. Entertainment

(Cr25). Merchants (-1); Navy (+3); Tukera Lines (-2). *Help:* Can set up appointments with several higher officials (#31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36), giving a DM of -1 in dealing with the official in question. Each appointment is a separate favor. *Tukera* 5+. A58.

**47. Imperial Consul on Zila (IC).** *Attitude* 7. *Bribe* Cr350. Administration, + Streetwise. Offworlders (-1). *Help:* Can set up appointments with any higher official (#31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38). Gives a DM of -2 in dealing with the official in question. Each appointment is a separate favor. *Tukera* 9+. 75A.

Random Officials Encounter Table

| Die<br>Roll | Location         |                |          |      |                |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|----------|------|----------------|
|             | Admin<br>Complex | Govt<br>Towers | Starport | PGAO | Con-<br>sulate |
| 2           | #1               | #4             | #3       | #7   | #2             |
| 3           | #1               | #4             | #3       | #7   | #2             |
| 4           | #1               | #4             | #3       | #7   | #2             |
| 5           | #1               | #4             | #3       | #7   | #2             |
| 6           | #1               | #4             | #3       | #7   | #2             |
| 7           | #1               | #5             | #15      | #7   | #2             |
| 8           | #1               | #5             | #15      | #7   | #2             |
| 9           | #8               | #5             | #15      | #7   | #2             |
| 10          | #9               | #5             | #15      | #7   | #2             |
| 11          | #8               | #5             | #15      | #16  | #44            |
| 12          | #9               | #10            | #6       | #16  | #44            |
| 13          | #8               | #12            | #6       | #16  | #45            |
| 14          | #9               | #11            | #6       | #16  | #45            |
| 15          | #8               | #13            | #6       | #16  | #46            |
| 16          | #9               | #14            | #6       | #38  | #46            |
| 17          | #21              | Choice<br>DoC  | #39      | #38  | #47            |
| 18          | #22              | Choice<br>BOA  | #39      | #7   | #47            |



## DEALING WITH OFFICIALS

Once the adventurers have managed to meet an official, they must deal with him. One member of the group must be designated as the spokesman in each meeting; all others present may only watch.

An official will always provide any routine information. Some officials can offer several types, depending on the questions asked by the group spokesman. An official will not volunteer information not asked for unless his help is enlisted. Issuance of forms is also a routine duty.

To receive other benefits, including signatures, most referrals to higher officials, and routine information not asked for, the group must convince the official to help them. Every official has a listed reaction, which represents his general attitude toward the public (and may be described using the terms found on the reaction table). In order to gain an official's help (i.e., to get him to perform anything other than his routine actions) the players must roll his reaction or less on 2D; there are a number of possible DMs, explained below. If the modified roll is less than his reaction, the official will help immediately; if the roll exactly equals his reaction, the official promises to help, but needs time to work; help will be given 1D working time periods after the meeting (and another meeting is scheduled for then).

Reactions are rolled once per meeting; if a roll fails, the group must wait for another meeting to roll again.

**Bribery:** Each official has a bribery price, given in the listing. If that price is paid, the spokesman's bribery skill is used as a minus DM on the reaction throw.

However, individuals with unfriendly attitudes are harder to approach. An official may not be bribed if the sum of his attitude and the spokesman's bribery skill is less than seven. If such a bribe is attempted, it will be rejected; roll 3 – for the attempt to be reported to higher authorities.

If the offered bribe is less than the requisite amount, the referee should make it apparent that the official wants more. If the offer is ten times or more greater than the listed amount, roll 6 – for the official to decide that the group is engaged in illegal activity, with varying consequences; otherwise, the offer is accepted.

Each bribe is offered for a single purpose and the same official may be bribed for several things. For example, an official may first be bribed to help; a further bribe may then be offered to keep some part of the dealing secret. Each bribery attempt is conducted separately; prices will vary according to the referee's judgment, but should always be within plus or minus 25% of the value given. When bribery is used in a situation in which the official must respond over a period of time rather than during the meeting (for example, if silence is being bought), roll the official's reaction with bribery skill as the only DM to determine whether the individual will stay bribed or will just pocket the money.

**Skills:** The spokesman's administration, streetwise, leadership, and liaison (for Vargr characters) skills can be used to assist in getting an official to help. The specific skills which are useful are given in each official's listing; generally, the level of the skill is used as a negative DM on the reaction throw.

Some officials react very strongly to specific skills. If the skill is preceded by  $2 \times$ , the DM is twice the skill level; for

example,  $2 \times$  Administration means that a DM of – twice admin skill may be used.

However, some officials are unfavorably impressed by certain skills. If the skill is preceded by a +, use of that skill gives a positive (unfavorable) DM equal to the level.

A listing of two skills separated by a slash (for example, Administration/Liaison) means that the official will respond to either skill but not to both.

Skills are not applied automatically. When dealing with an official, the spokesman chooses which skills he wishes to apply.

**Other Traits:** Some officials have other personal traits, quirks, and weaknesses which may be exploited (or which may hinder relations). All such traits are included in the official's listing, together with a DM to be applied to the reaction roll. For example, if an official's listing includes *opposite sex* (– 2), then a female spokesman dealing with a male official would receive a DM of – 2. Of course, + DMs have an unfavorable effect. Some traits have a DM of  $\pm 0$ ; these have no effect on die rolls, but are used when players attempt to learn what will influence an official; see below.

Most traits are self-explanatory, but some which may not be are given below.

**Gambling:** This trait will be applied if the adventurers, in the course of entertaining the official, take him to a gambling establishment.

**Tukera Lines:** This trait will be applied if the official is given reason to suspect that the adventurers are associated with Tukera Lines; it is applied in the opposite direction to the one given (a + DM becomes a – DM, and vice versa) if the official is given reason to suppose that the adventurers are working in opposition to Tukera.

**Zila Patriot:** This trait will be applied if the adventurers make statements complimentary to Zila or give reason to suppose that they are working in Zila's best interests; it is applied in the opposite direction if the adventurers make disparaging remarks or seem to be working against Zila.

Application of the various traits is generally automatic, except when the official would have no way of knowing that they apply. For instance, a trait like merchant (+ 1) would be applied automatically only if the spokesman's appearance makes it obvious that he is a merchant (if he is wearing a uniform, for example); if the spokesman mentions that he is a merchant, the DM would also be applied. The referee should determine in advance how the various members of the group habitually dress so that the appropriate DMs may be applied automatically.

**Entertainment:** The group may decide to try entertaining an official: taking him out to dinner, plying him with drinks and a good time, and so on, all in the hopes of gaining a helpful reaction. If entertainment is a possible means of influencing an official, it is stated in the listing along with a price; for example, *Entertainment* (Cr30).

There are three types of entertainment. All follow the same basic procedures but differ in cost and effectiveness. Basically, the indicated cost is paid for the official and for each member of the crew engaged in the activity.

**Lunch:** When an appointment is set up for the afternoon (or when visiting a receptionist or clerk in the afternoon), the adventurers may propose that business be settled over



lunch. Any official susceptible to entertainment will accept. Lunch costs half the indicated amount and gives a DM of -2 to the reaction throw. It consumes the same amount of time as a meeting with that official.

**Evening Entertainment:** Evening entertainment must be proposed during a meeting. First, the reaction roll for help is made. If the roll is successful, there is generally no reason to attempt entertainment; if the roll fails by 3 or more (for example, a roll of 10 when 7 - was needed), entertainment may not be offered. If the roll fails, but by 2 or less, offers of entertainment will be accepted. Evening entertainment costs the full stated amount. At the end of the entertainment, there is another roll for help, with an additional DM of -4. Evening entertainment consumes the entire evening period of the day on which it is offered.

**Extended Entertainment:** At the conclusion of evening entertainment (before the die roll), the crew may propose extending the entertainment. The official accepts on a throw of greater than his social level. If he declines, there is no adverse effect; if he accepts, the entertainment is continued for the night period, at an additional cost of double the stated amount for all concerned. The DM for help becomes -6. If the adventurers do not propose extending the entertainment, roll the dice anyway; on a roll of 12 exactly, the official proposes it, and failure to agree results in the loss of any benefit from the evening's entertainment.

## LEARNING ABOUT OFFICIALS

There are a number of ways in which characters can take stock of an official, hoping to determine more about his motivations. Areas which may be explored are initial attitude, bribery price, skills likely to be of use, and special traits.

In general, characters will be limited in their abilities to make assessments of this type. The group's spokesman is allowed one roll of intelligence or less per meeting (also once during evening entertainment and once during extended entertainment) to determine something about any one area. The player can try for specific information or might merely want to know if his character notices anything. In the latter case, the referee should determine the area in which the character may make observations and then roll for the actual result. A table is provided for this purpose, although the referee may choose any area he wishes.

|                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Initial Attitude:</i> The referee |                                    |
| 1 Initial attitude                   | should not give the number, but    |
| 2 Bribery amount                     | should give a short verbal         |
| 3 Useful skill                       | equivalent, using the reaction     |
| 4 Trait                              | table as a guide. Failure of the   |
| 5 Non-useful skill                   | throw will result in a judgment of |
| 6 Other information                  | attitude which is off by about     |
|                                      | two in either direction.           |

**Bribery Amount:** Bribery skill should be used as a -DM on the throw for this. The referee should give the correct value within about 25%. Failure of the throw will result in a guess which is wildly incorrect.

**Useful Skill:** The referee should give the skill which is most useful in dealing with the individual. Failure should give a skill which has no effect.

**Trait:** The referee should give the trait (and a direction—

like or dislike) which is likely to affect the outcome of the meeting. Failure should give a non-existent trait. Note that some traits have a DM of 0; these are traits of the official which he does not allow to influence his decisions. Nevertheless, they do exist and can be spotted by a successful roll, although in this case they are deceptive.

**Non-useful Skill:** The referee should give the skill which is most harmful in dealing with the official or, if there are none, should state that a commonly useful skill is irrelevant. Failure should result in an irrelevant skill appearing harmful.

**Other Information:** This includes the official's willingness to be entertained, his social level, likelihood of leaking information to Tukera Lines, etc.

**Collective Insight:** The rest of the characters in a meeting (everyone except the spokesman) may make a second, collective attempt to determine some worthwhile factor. Roll against the highest intelligence present, with a DM of - the number of characters in the group. However, the second factor is not revealed to the spokesman. The information may not be shared unless the spokesman's conversation with the official is interrupted (roll the official's attitude or greater for him to become irritated, resulting in his attitude decreasing by one), or if the official leaves the room or is otherwise distracted (referee's decision). A chance to successfully resolve an encounter may go out the window because the spokesman doesn't pick up the same signals as the rest of the group.

**General Information:** In addition to die rolls for information, the referee should be guided in his conduct of the meeting by the official's various characteristics, so that players who are paying close attention will get some idea of the official's motivations (and especially his attitude) from the referee's description of events.

## AFTER THE FIRST MEETING

After the crew have kept their first appointment with an



official, they may make new appointments with his secretary by phone. If they were successful in enlisting the official's help, the new appointment is for 1D – 2 working periods in the future; if they were unsuccessful, the appointment is for 1D periods in the future.

After every failed roll to enlist an official's help, the official's attitude drops by one; if the roll fails by 3 or more (for example, an 8 where 5 – was needed), the official will refuse to see the group again unless the appointment is made by one of four officials: the Director of the Planetary Relations Office of the MG (#40), the Executive Director of the MG (#42), the Vice-Consul for Shipping and Mercantile Affairs of the IC (#46), and the Imperial Consul on Zila (#47).

### EXAMPLE OF A MEETING

The referee has an opportunity to use the brief descriptions of the officials to provide interesting situations for the **Traveller** players in this adventure. The following is a strictly by-the-rules, but nevertheless wrong, way to handle a typical encounter.

"You have just met official #0, a clerk in the Port Warden's Office. His attitude is unreceptive—that's a six. Admin or liaison skill will affect him. So who wants to talk to him?"

Two players speak up; one has Admin-3, the other Liaison-1. The admin wins out.

"OK, roll to see if he'll help."

The player says, "I need a 9 – , right? The clerk's reaction roll, with a DM of – 3 for the skill?"

"Right."

"I rolled a 5. What does the clerk say?"

"He says you should talk to official #18, a clerk at the Trade Authority."

"Right—Let's go!"

Although this is a technically correct way to handle the rules, there is a great deal more that can be done to represent the encounter in a more interesting, less mechanical fashion. First, the referee takes stock of the character description, noting the initial attitude of 6, and rolls a die for the official's sex. Then the group is told, "In the Port Warden's Office, there's only one clerk on duty. He seems rather bored, and doesn't look particularly interested when you come in."

The players now have a quick discussion to sort out who will do the talking. Charlie's character is an ex-Army officer with leadership skill (Leader-2) and admin skill (Admin-1). Mary's character is an ex-Scout with Streetwise-1 and Admin-1. Fred, an ex-merchant, has no skills that seem particularly worthwhile. Charlie decides to take the lead, since he seems to have the most skills.

"OK," Charlie says. "I'm going to explain the situation to him. What can I tell about his reaction to us?"

The referee rolls 2D against Charlie's character's intelligence. Unfortunately, Charlie's character has an intelligence of 5, and the roll, 12, is too high. In answer to Charlie's question, the referee says, "He's listening to your story. He seems interested enough" (thus implying a reaction level of 8). At the same time, perhaps on a slip of paper, the referee notes the results of a second roll for the rest of the group. They pick up on a potential personality quirk.

Fred's character has the highest intelligence (a 9); the referee rolls a 10, with a DM of – 2 for the fact that two characters comprise the group not involved in the conversation. They receive a note that says: **THE CLERK DIDN'T SEEM TO LIKE CHARLIE'S CAPTAIN'S BARS MUCH**—they saw a flickering glance and a brief look of distaste, which Charlie's character didn't happen to notice.

Charlie decides to pull out all the stops. "Let's not waste any time," he says. "I'm going to use all of my admin and leadership skill to persuade this guy to help us out."

The referee has him roll 2D. The result is a 6. Charlie thinks he's home free (attitude = 8; 6 minus DMs for admin and leadership should be well under 8). But the referee knows differently . . . the actual modified die roll, a 9, reflects negative modifiers for Charlie's army background and his leadership skill, and a favorable modifier for the admin skill. Looking back at Charlie, the referee says: "The clerk isn't being very cooperative. He says, 'You army guys think you've got everything your way all the time, huh? Well this is my office, buddy—and you're out of luck. We can't do anything for you.' " The clerk's response, in fact, is so negative that the group is not going to have any luck at this counter again.

Note that if the same rolls had been made by Mary or Fred, the clerk would have cooperated (Mary would have had a modified result of 4, – 1 for having a female character and – 1 for her admin skill; Fred's result would have been a 6, unmodified). And if Charlie had not pushed so hard—by leaving out the leadership skill, for instance—the result might still have been negative, but the clerk might have been approached again, perhaps with greater success, by someone who knew he didn't like the military.

By carefully setting up the character and personality of each official, the referee can instill a real sense of interaction.

### THE TUKERA REACTION

There is a constant threat that Tukera will become aware of the group's activities, and take action to keep Fireau et Fille from achieving their goal.

Each time an official is dealt with, there is a chance that, through carelessness, ignorance, or malice, the individual will let news of the *March Harrier's* current activities leak out to a Tukera-connected source. Every official has been assigned a number representing the chance that this will occur. There is a DM of – 3 if the group gained the official's help and – 1 if they did not gain his help but did not antagonize him (a roll 3 or more greater than his attitude).

Of course, if the official has been bribed to remain silent (and stays bribed), no information will be passed on.

When Tukera learns of some action by the characters, they will make a response. The nature of that response, however, will depend on just what they know. This is largely left in the hands of the referee. Basically, they know anything passed on to them by officials. If an official has been arranging passports, and tells Tukera this, they will be aware that Lisa Fireau and an employee are going off-planet. Their response might be to threaten her. By filling out customs declarations, the characters may make Tukera aware that they will be shipping wine, and become targets for threats and/or violence. And so forth.

Tukera's response may take a number of forms. The following are suggestions.

**Shadow the Group:** Tukera may begin following the group and attempting to learn more of their activities. There is a chance (roll 8+) that they will be noticed during any particular time period by alert adventurers. Once shadowing begins, there is a DM of +3 on the roll for an official to give information to Tukera.

**Intimidate the Fireaus or the Adventurers:** Thugs may break up Fireau property, threaten Gustav, Lisa, or one of their employees, or otherwise apply pressure. They may threaten the adventurers or attempt to damage the *March Harrier*.

**Exert Government Pressure:** Pressure on the Fireaus would probably involve agitation which would bring tax collectors down on the winery sooner than expected, throwing the schedule off. Once this happens, there will only be 1D days left before a freeze is put on all Fireau assets, including the eiswein. If Tukera begins exerting pressure on the bureaucracy, there is a chance that any official the crew meets will already have been influenced by Tukera. When the individual is first met, the roll for information leakage is used to determine whether this has happened. If so, the official's initial attitude is reduced by 2.

**Attack the Fireaus or the Adventurers:** Thugs set upon and attempt to injure one of the Fireaus, an employee, or one of the crew.

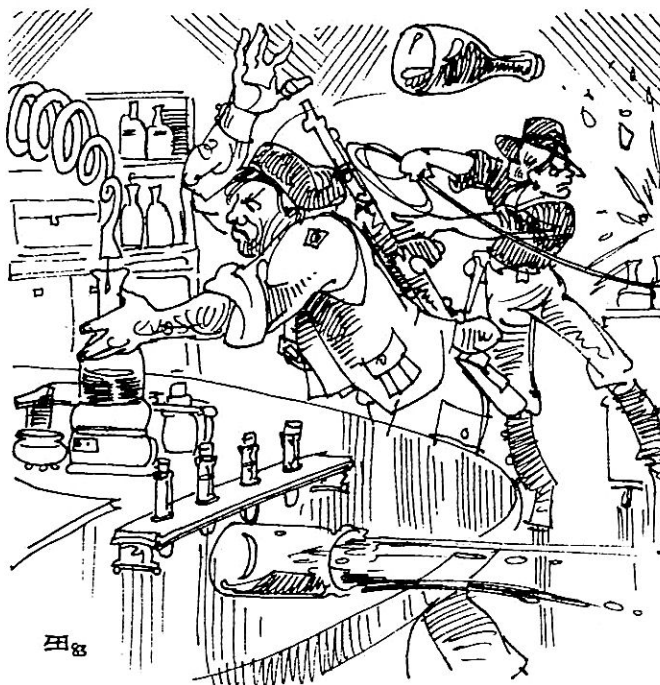
**Strike at the Winery:** This will take place only if information leaks out concerning the Special Landing Permit. Tukera will take action to attack the Fireau winery and eliminate the shipment before it can be taken away.

The referee is encouraged to create other possible Tukera responses which seem appropriate, and apply them as best suits the flow of the adventure.

The resolution of specific Tukera actions is up to the referee, based on the decisions of the players. A slowly developing mood of desperation should be built as the group slowly works its way through channels on Zila. They will become aware of the Tukera interest, and realize that they may be compromised.

When, eventually, Tukera amasses complete information and decides to move against the winery, the group should have some advance warning—they will be attacked by a band of thugs, who will boast of the coming attack on the winery. If the characters can defeat the thugs, they have a chance to get back to *March Harrier*, fly to the winery, and attempt to load the cargo. This may require them to act illegally, before they have all the proper forms and authorizations. If so, both the authorities and the Tukera agents will offer a threat of danger to the crew.

It is a 2-hour flight from the starport to the winery. The referee should secretly determine the time of the Tukera attack (1D × 30 minutes after *March Harrier* lands), and the reaction time of local law enforcement officials (also 1D × 30 minutes). The 150 tons of cargo will be ready to load when the ship lands; loading proceeds at a rate of 5 tons every 5 minutes. It is possible that adventurers, assisted by a handful of Fireau employees (there are 8 present at the winery) could continue to load the ship and also attempt to hold off the Tukera thugs. Once the police are sighted,



however, *March Harrier* must leave; Fireau will be in enough trouble without having to explain a gun battle between the police and the *March Harrier*.

The arrival of the police will put an end to the Tukera attack; the authorities will not be in the pay of the company.

This scenario, of course, represents a "worst case" situation. With luck, the adventurers can conduct their business in such a way as to avoid both Tukera and the displeasure of the planetary authorities. It should be noted that the planetary authorities have no space craft, and hence cannot pursue the adventurers if they violate the law. They can, however, make it extremely unpleasant should the group return to Zila on a future occasion. If the group does come back, they will be subject to fines amounting to 2D × Cr250 for miscellaneous violations.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

During the course of this adventure, players may come up with ingenious ideas for meeting officials, influencing them, or otherwise speeding along the course of events. For example, a player may propose that a character take an official's secretary to lunch, and there pump the individual for information about his boss. If successful, some of the boss's traits might be revealed, allowing the group to zero in on appropriate methods of dealing with the official. A character with computer skill might check the local computer banks for information on the official with the same purpose (but this should not be made too easy). The referee should always be open to suggestions from the players concerning solutions not covered in the rules. Such attempts should always be in keeping with the characteristics, skills, and experience of the characters, and should also reflect accurately human nature and the real world in general.

One major possibility is that the crew will turn to obviously illegal means to achieve their goals. There are several ways that they might decide to take advantage of the general



situation by committing a crime of some sort or another.

**Burglary:** Blank forms may be noticed while in several offices, and could prove tempting. Such attempts must take place at night. The referee will have to provide floorplans for the buildings in question, as well as other requisite details.

**Bribery:** Although bribery is common on Zila, it is still illegal. The punishment for bribery (or attempted bribery) is a Cr250 fine. Once a character is caught, however, the entire party is subject to additional harassment (police encounters now occur twice per day).

**Forgery:** If the party were to forge an official's signature on a form, there is little chance that it would be discovered. In order to successfully forge a signature, the forger must have an opportunity to see the official's real signature; while there is some chance of accomplishing this during a meeting, it is generally essential to procure a copy of the signature for extended study. The roll to successfully forge a signature is  $8 +$ , DMs + forgery skill,  $-3$  if the signature was seen for only a short time. If the roll is  $4 -$ , the forger will be aware of failure. Otherwise, unsuccessful forgeries will be discovered when the document is examined by the authorities, leading to a fine of Cr800 and continued police harassment.

**Blackmail:** An official's weaknesses might be exploited by blackmail. Any official placed in a compromising position, with supportive proofs available, may be blackmailed. (The referee should be the judge of what a "compromising position" is, but Zilan society is rather straight-laced, and not overly tolerant of misconduct of any sort). To determine the success of a blackmail attempt, the weakness being exploited (bribery, the opposite sex, etc.) should be determined. The DM gained by this weakness is applied to a roll made against the official's social level. If the roll is less than social level, the official will agree to cooperate in exchange for the proof of misconduct. No further dealings with this official will be possible.

**Police Encounters:** The legal situation on Zila is described in more detail in *First Call at Zila*. The comments on the legal situation on the planet in that chapter apply here as well.

**Weapons:** Carrying any weapons when questioned by an enforcer is grounds for immediate arrest, confiscation of the weapons, and a jail term of 3D days (DM of  $-5$  if the character has retained legal counsel). If the group is caught while engaged in burglary or blackmail (or any other serious crime), similar terms apply.

## REFeree's CHECKLIST

In administering this adventure, this checklist may help the referee remember all his responsibilities.

### 1. Each Day

A. Resolve morning activities, including phone calls, travel, meetings with clerks and receptionists, and appointments with higher officials.

B. Resolve afternoon activities, including all of the above, plus lunchtime entertainments.

C. Resolve evening activities, including entertainment.

D. Resolve night activities (if any).

### 2. Each Meeting

A. Create the official. Read the basic description, add name, sex.

B. Resolve meeting according to the actions of the players.

1. Determine spokesman.

2. Check for insight on the part of spokesman and rest of group.

3. Allow group to interact with official.

4. Determine applicable DMs.

5. Roll for reaction.

6. Give help, if successful.

7. If unsuccessful, allow invitations to entertainment.

C. Determine if the official leaks information to Tukera.

D. Decide on Tukera response.

## CREATING NEW OFFICIALS

The referee may wish to create additional officials, either for use in this situation or in similar adventures on other planets. This system can effectively represent many kinds of bureaucratic dealings, including both government and business interaction.

In order to construct new descriptions of officials to be dealt with, follow the steps outlined below.

Number, title, and location must be set by the referee. Roll 2D for attitude. Bribery level is set at a  $2D \times$  social level (round to nearest Cr5); if the official's position is supervisor or above, multiply by 1D. Skills which affect the individual are determined by rolling  $4 +$  (on 1D) for each of: Administration, Liaison, Streetwise, Leadership. On a roll of 1, exactly, the skill affects the official unfavorably. Traits are established by rolling  $1D - 2$ . This gives the number of specific traits to be applied (from 0-4). The referee should compile an appropriate list and choose as he or she sees fit, or possibly introduce a random factor. The specific DM for each trait is determined by rolling  $1D - 3$ , for a range of  $-2$  to  $+3$ .

Entertainment may be selected as one of the official's traits. Determine the price by taking  $(1D - 1) \times Cr10$ , with a DM of  $-5$  (results never less than 1) for social level  $5 -$ , and a DM of  $+4$  for social level  $9 +$ .

Routine duties and available help must be set by the referee, according to the relationship between officials.

Other factors (such as the chance of the official leaking information to Tukera used in this adventure) may be introduced as desired.

Background includes usual rolls for intelligence, education, and social level. Only social level is important in this adventure, but in other situations the other stats could come into play. Intelligence and education can also be used to give an impression of the official's general aura as the individual is being dealt with. Another element is sex (male on 1-3, female on 4-6 for humans). Generally, any type of embellishment desired can be used to enhance the developed official.

**Next:** Having taken on her cargo, *March Harrier*, with Lisa Fireau and her companion Boris Dree on board, is now en route to Aramanx. There they must complete the attempt to save the Fireau winery, and will have to cope with another crisis as well!

# Kidnapped on Aramanx

This chapter follows the crew of the *March Harrier* back to Aramanx and the conclusion of their delivery run with Lisa Fireau and her shipment of Zilan wine. But the reach of Tukera Lines is a long one, and the adventurers must soon face the megacorporation's efforts to stop the Fireaus and all who assist them. The adventure begins as *March Harrier* arrives at Aramanx.

## WINE AUCTION

As the crew completes the usual formalities of arrival, Lisa and Boris Dree begin making contacts at Aramanx starport and start work on arrangements to sell the wine. In order to get the best possible price, she arranges an auction of the cargo at one of the starport's large meeting halls, inviting various merchants, both local and interstellar, to attend.

While she is arranging this (with the help of some of the crew), she is approached by a Tukera representative, one Lorn Denveltdt, who offers her Cr50,000 per ton for the shipment (he was informed of its arrival by a fast Tukera ship out of Zila). Lisa, determined not to allow Tukera to buy up a stockpile of this vintage, refuses.

Four days later, the auction is held—but all concerned immediately know there is trouble. Although the auction was limited to representatives of specific companies invited by Fireau (with Tukera decidedly excluded), Lorn Denveltdt shows up at the assembly hall. Tukera has been appointed to represent three of the merchants Lisa did invite, thanks to the application of some typically strong pressure by Denveltdt. The adventurers are powerless to stop him from taking his place among the bidders.

As the auction opens, bids begin at Cr150 per bottle (Cr22,500 per ton) and rapidly rise to Cr225 per bottle. Then the various local merchants begin dropping out. When Denveltdt bids Cr250 per bottle (Cr43,750 per ton), it looks very much like Tukera will carry the day after all.

But fate intervenes at that point. From a vantage point far back in the hall, a familiar voice raises the bid to Cr260 per bottle. Denveltdt counters with Cr265; this is raised to Cr275. Denveltdt goes to Cr300. The opposition goes to Cr310. At this point Denveltdt asks for a chance to halt the auction while he consults with his superiors to get additional money authorized, but this need not be allowed—and Denveltdt, not capable of raising any higher without outside authority, goes down in defeat. The other bidder comes forward.

The victor of the auction proves to be none other than Marc hault-Oberlindes; as he issues Lisa a check for the *March Harrier's* cargo, he comments that it was worth any price to see Tukera discomfited—especially when this plainly threatened their monopoly on Zilan wine exports. The total price for the wine is Cr54,250 per ton—10% of which will now go to *March Harrier*.

Lisa, optimistic about the future for the first time, now proceeds to begin setting up local connections for further business at Aramanx, following up contacts with all of the

merchants who attended the auction. She continues to stay aboard *March Harrier*, shuttling by launch to and from the starport each day.

One evening, however, she fails to turn up at the starport docking bay to meet the launch.

## KIDNAPPING

The action is so totally unlike Lisa—who has been quite regular in her comings and goings ever since the ship arrived—that the adventurers are soon worried, as is Boris Dree, her companion. Dree, a contemporary of her father's, is almost an uncle to her; he is sure that her failure to return in time is ominous.

As the adventurers check into her movements, they begin to share Dree's fears. They eventually learn that Lisa was last seen in the company of two men and a woman boarding a private shuttle that filed a flight plan for the planetary surface a short time later. One of the men answers the description of Lorn Denveltdt, the Tukera agent from the wine auction.

A few hours later, a message is delivered to the *March Harrier*: "If you wish to see Fireau alive again, arrange payment of Cr20,000,000. You will be contacted."



The adventurers take stock of the situation. Dree indicates that Gustav Fireau can raise the ransom—but only by liquidating Fireau et Fille. Father and daughter are close, and he will certainly do whatever is necessary to get her back. But there is no certainty that the kidnappers will keep their end of the bargain—particularly if they are actually Tukera agents out for revenge against the winery. While he recommends getting in touch with Fireau on Zila, and setting the wheels in motion for paying the ransom, Dree also feels that every other available option should be thoroughly explored, as well.

The starport authorities can trace the shuttle and its passengers, but the news is not encouraging. The shuttle landed at a small port in Klavisur, a large nation on the continent of Lowestowe. Klavisur has always stayed aloof from offworld contact, and extradition procedures are limited and drawn out. When the authorities investigate further, they discover that the kidnappers have travelled to an island off the coast of Klavisur. Under Klavisur's law, wives are under the complete legal guardianship of their husbands, and any question of her being held against her will is totally irrelevant. This makes any hope of extradition extremely slim.

The starport authorities indicate that their hands are completely tied; everything is really up to Fireau. Oberlindes, hearing of the kidnapping (starport news services have gotten hold of the story, and it is now common knowledge on the orbital facility), puts a jump-5 Oberlindes fast courier at the disposal of the adventurers in order to send word to Fireau in the shortest time possible. A wait of just over two weeks ensues, as the group waits to learn what Fireau's decision regarding a ransom attempt may be.

During this time, the adventurers will be able to secure and study information on Klavisur, and on the island villa where Lisa is being held. They will also be contacted by the kidnappers, this time by viewphone. Lisa is the only one visible on the phone, but an off-screen voice does most of the

talking. This call proves Lisa is still alive and unharmed; the kidnappers establish that they will wait three weeks, but not a day longer, to hear the decision on whether or not the ransom will be made available.

While this call is taking place, Gvoudzon will come into range of the phone's vision pickup at least once. When he does so, the kidnapper's spokesman falls suddenly silent, then curtly tells them to wait. The phone's sound is suddenly muted for several minutes.

When the kidnapper turns the sound back up again, he asks a surprising question. "Your Vargr companion is an emissary, is he not?" Without pausing, he continues. "We will deal through him—and only through him." After reiterating their requirements, the kidnappers promise to be in touch again in three weeks' time. The call ends.

### RANSOM

The Oberlindes courier returns eighteen days after leaving, and carries as a passenger Gustav Fireau himself. Fireau has the ransom, which he has raised by taking out a short-term loan against the winery's assets. If the loan is not repaid soon (with 10% interest), the winery will be forced to close.

Fireau appeals to the adventurers. He wants his daughter back . . . but he wants, too, to save the winery. If there is any way to do both, Fireau would like to help them to try it. He promises to do anything in his power in exchange for their help.

By this time, the thought of a raid on the villa to rescue Lisa will surely have presented itself to the group. Gustav, however, requires that the ransom be paid as a first step; if Lisa is returned, then a raid can be attempted to recover the money, but Lisa's safety is the first priority, and ransom offers a chance to recover her without danger.

### A TRAP FOR GVOUDZON

When the kidnappers contact the party on the day of their deadline, they will arrange for the ransom to be delivered by Gvoudzon (who is to travel alone) to the commercial shuttleport in Ulfrey, the capital of Klavisur. Here he is to await instructions.

The adventurers will of course suspect a trap, but Gustav is adamant: the ransom must be delivered despite all risks. The adventurers may not do anything to jeopardize Lisa's return, although they may try other things—hiding weapons or tracers on Gvoudzon's person, following him from a suitable distance, making contingency preparations for a raid on the villa, and so on—which do not affect the money transfer.

Gvoudzon is eventually instructed to leave the ransom amid a pile of crates in one of the small warehouses at the shuttleport. As he is doing so, he is set upon by a number of thugs directed by a man dressed in black. If Gvoudzon went without backup, he will be quickly subdued and captured. If help from the other characters is available, the thugs and their leader quickly fade from the scene. Captured thugs only know that the black-clad man and a woman hired them for this job. The man in black will not be taken.

If Gvoudzon is captured, the characters will quickly be aware of the fact. The kidnappers plainly had no intention





of liberating Lisa, preferring to use the ransom drop as a way for getting the Vargr into their power. Gvoudzon will be taken to the villa if captured. If not, only fast action is likely to save Lisa Fireau.

Regardless, it will become clear even to Gustav that a raid is now the only option.

Note that, if Gvoudzon is taken and has the brooch in his possession, the kidnappers will take it from him.

## KLAVISUR

Largest nation on the continent of Lowestowe, Klavisur is a powerful state which dominates the northern hemisphere of Aramanx. With a population of 217 million people, Klavisur's constitutional monarchy is one of the most liberal governments on Aramanx. The nation has attempted to remain aloof from the tangled web of alliances and the rising threat of world war which have gripped the planet over the last few years; the isolationist policy has also carried over into the country's dealings with offworld interests. Although there is regular contact with the starport, there are few diplomatic ties. Klavisur is the only nation on Aramanx which is not a member of the Imperium.

By and large, the country is a haven for conservatism and traditionalism. In many areas of social and philosophical interaction, Klavisur is far behind the other major powers on the planet. Women remain second-class citizens, and the representative government is dominated by a rather narrow base of eligible voters—mostly large landholders or wealthy gentlemen with control of large portions of major towns or cities. The nation does, however, have a technology comparable to the rest of Aramanx, and is rapidly industrializing. That, and the country's manpower reserves, make this prosperous nation a potentially important political voice in the overall struggle for control of Aramanx, despite the present reluctance of the country or its leaders to become involved in affairs away from their isolated portion of the world.

## THE ISLAND

Zenfalen Island lies some 85 kilometers off the eastern coast of Klavisur, and has been controlled by that nation since the first rise of divergent nationalism over 500 years ago. A tiny island, Zenfalen has never had much significance, being by and large a haven for fishermen. In recent years, the island became the property of Lord Magistrate Vernor, a powerful and wealthy landholder well known as the leader of the Progressive Party in the Kingdom's Grand Council. The Lord Magistrate maintains a small villa at the eastern end of the island, although he rarely uses it. It is usually reserved for important guests, and is frequently used by offworld visitors who wish to conduct business with the Lord Magistrate. (It is believed that Vernor's fortune and political influence derive from the backing of various offworld corporations, who stand to profit if Klavisur is brought into closer contact with offplanet interests.)

The villa supports one town, Falenza, population 3,150. A supply ship calls at the island once a week on its way to the Granstol Archipelago, site of a cluster of extensive fisheries.

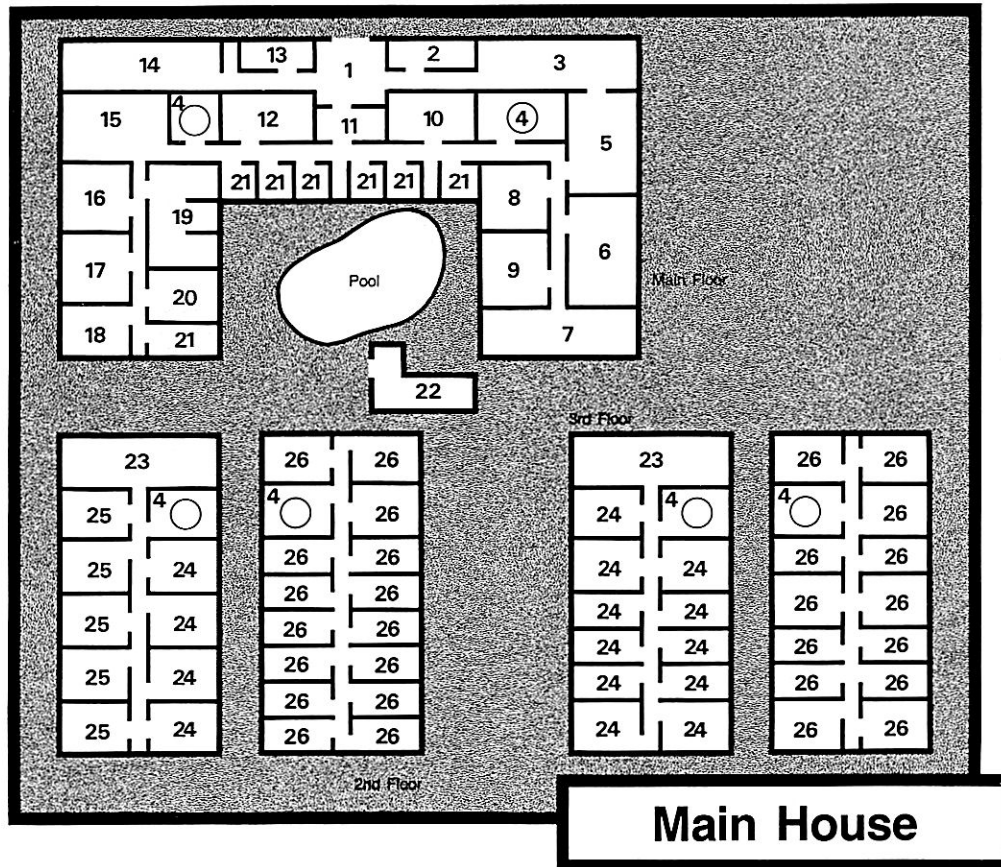


## THE LORD MAGISTRATE'S VILLA

The villa lies nearly two kilometers by road from Falenza, a difficult and tortuous route at best. Perched atop a steep cliff overlooking the sea, the villa is isolated and easy to protect. The villa is surrounded by a high stone wall which completely cuts off the peninsula on which the estate lies; behind the villa, a wide hunting preserve serves the Lord Magistrate's guests.

**Interior Layout:** Inside the main house, the room layout is as shown on the floor plan. A description of the rooms' contents is given below.

1. *Entry Foyer:* A wide, stately room with high ceilings. Halls open to left and right.
2. *Guest Lounge:* Small sitting room to accommodate visitors waiting to see the Lord Magistrate.
3. *Servants' Lounge.*
4. *Stairways:* These spiral staircases run all the way to the top of each three-story wing.
5. *Grand Dining Hall.*
6. *Kitchen.*
7. *House Servants' Dining Room.*
8. *Breakfast Room:* A smaller dining area used on informal occasions.
9. *Pantry:* Extensive storage for food and supplies.
10. *Ballroom:* A small area set aside for dancing. The wall connecting this room with room 11 can be removed to extend the space available.
11. *Reception Hall:* Used mostly for formal affairs, this room can be opened into a much larger one by removing the walls to rooms 10 and 12.
12. *Ballroom:* A small area set aside for dancing. The wall connecting this room with room 11 can be removed for extra space.
13. *Entertainment Room:* Sitting room containing radio, an imported video recorder, holographic movie projector, and similar items.



## Main House

**14. Lounge:** An informal sitting room with a view of the estate gardens.

**15. Formal Entertainment Hall:** A rarely-used lounge area for formal occasions.

**16. Study:** A quiet room with two writing desks as well as lounges and similar furniture.

**17. Game Room:** The room includes several large game tables used for various local games of skill.

**18. Trophy Room:** A sitting room decorated with trophies, hunting weapons, and other memorabilia.

**19. Library:** Three large bays are formed by bookcases; the room is rarely used.

**20. Music Room:** The room includes various musical instruments.

**21. Office/Study:** Each of these rooms accommodate small office areas for the Lord Magistrate's staff to use during his visits to the estate.

**22. Pool House:** Supplies for the pool, plus laundry facilities and storage are all located here.

**23. Master Suite:** Bedroom with bath, dressing area, and sitting room all connected.

**24. Small Guest Room.**

**25. Large Guest Room.**

**26. Servant's Room.**

**Staff:** The villa as a whole (including game keepers, gardeners, etc.) has a staff of over 100 servants; some 40 of these are actually employed in and around the main house. Not counted in these totals are the 30 troopers who guard the estate. These men, soldiers of the Royal Army,

are armed with rifles, and guard the gates and the docks, and patrol the perimeter wall to keep out trespassers. Having been placed at the disposal of the Lord Magistrate's guests, they are also used to provide guards for the main house as well.

### RESCUE

When the adventurers decide to mount their rescue operation, all planning will be left in their hands; the execution will depend largely on their interaction with the referee. The guidelines below reflect consideration of specific importance.

**Guards:** At any given time, four guards will be present at the main gate, two at the docks, and two at the rear gate. One is posted in the hallway outside the rooms where Lisa, and Gvoudzon, if he has been captured, are held. Single guards also roam the perimeter, at any given point; there is a chance of 9+ of encountering such a roving guard.

**Lisa:** Lisa Fireau is held in the main house. Aside from the guard outside her door, there are no special precautions or restraints to hamper her.

**Gvoudzon:** If Gvoudzon has been taken, he will be kept under guard in one of the small guest rooms on the second floor. His treatment will vary according to whether or not he had the brooch when captured. If he did, his treatment has been indifferent. If not, the kidnappers have interrogated him several times to learn its whereabouts, and 2D points of damage have been inflicted on him.

**The Kidnappers:** There are four kidnappers all told, a

## The Traveller Adventure

woman and three men. Although she does not exercise her authority in the presence of the locals, the woman (who will be recognized as Jelika Chan when the adventurers see her) is in command. Lorn Denveldt is one of the three men and is under her authority. When the rescue begins, the referee should locate each kidnapper somewhere in the building. Suggestions include any of the study or lounge areas, various bedrooms, or the rooms where Lisa and Gvoudzon are being held.

**Points to Remember:** The kidnappers will not hesitate to use Gvoudzon or Lisa as bargaining counters, and will threaten to kill either or both if they can force the adventurers to desist. The planning of the operation must be precisely worked out to avoid such an outcome.

In the course of the fight, Jelika Chan should be able to escape. She can take either a motorboat from the dock or a car from the parking area. In either event, time will be pressing—at the first sign of trouble, government forces will be alerted to assist the island's small detachment—and Chan will be able to make good her escape.

## INFORMATION

Upon completing the rescue, the adventurers will learn several things, either from a captured kidnapper or from Lisa Fireau.

First, the kidnappers do indeed work for Tukera Lines. They are agents of the Vemene, Tukera's security and espionage arm, which is an important branch of the Tukera organization in situations involving intelligence work and the implementation of "enforcement" on reluctant clients and potential rivals. The Vemene have a widespread, elusive network, headed by the district office on Junidy (headed by Aran Ashkashkur).

Lorn Denveldt, Tukera's agent in charge of wine sales on Aramanx, called in the Vemene after his failure first to buy the wine cargo outright and then to outbid the competition. The senior Vemene agent then on Aramanx, known to Denveldt as Arion Jamail (an alias), planned and executed the kidnapping; in fact, Jamail was senior to Denveldt in the Tukera organization and, once brought in, took control of the entire operation, and Denveldt was placed under her orders.

The adventurers will recognize Jamail as Jelika Chan, the engineer who was held responsible for the crash of the *Mammoth* on Aramis. Jelika Chan, the inept engineer, has now turned out to be a highly competent Vemene operative, as well.

The original plan had called for Lisa to be released upon payment of the ransom, since this would be quite sufficient to break the Fireau winery—the purpose of the whole kidnapping plan. This was altered when Chan recognized Gvoudzon. Although she didn't tell her subordinates the reason, the first priority now became gaining possession of the brooch. (Note: if Gvoudzon and the brooch fell into the hands of the Vemene, the brooch should be recovered during the rescue, perhaps dropped during Chan's haste to get clear.) Plainly the brooch is of great importance, for the Vemene risked everything involved in the Fireau case to secure the brooch. For the moment, however, they have failed.

## Kidnapped on Aramanx



## RESOLUTION

On returning to the Aramanx starport, Lisa and her father are reunited. Gustav Fireau is overjoyed, for he has recovered his daughter and saved the ransom money. Now the Fireaus can return to Zila, pay back the loan, and continue the business free at last of Tukera's interference.

The Fireaus name the adventurers their exclusive agents for the exportation of all Fireau wines for the next five years, a generous reward for their efforts. At the same time, Marc halt-Oberlindes, who has kept tabs on the kidnapping situation since the news first leaked, appears to make an offer. Since the adventurers will be hard-pressed to actually handle the wine export from Zila, Oberlindes wishes to undertake all shipping distribution on their behalf, paying the group a 1% royalty on all sales. Since this figure will be far higher than what the adventurers themselves could earn with their limited cargo-carrying abilities, the deal is a good one.

Oberlindes also meets the group in private. In the course of several encounters, *March Harrier's* crew has impressed him with their ability to handle difficult situations. He wants them to know that Oberlindes Lines, which is gaining clout in the subsector, will be an ally they can call on from time to time—as he hopes he can call on them now and again. For starters, Oberlindes will purchase their subsidy contract from its current owners. Their new subsidy route will be the entire Aramis Subsector. Although they still must pay half their revenue to the subsidy holder, their freedom of movement is greatly increased.

Gustav and Lisa Fireau, leaving Dree behind to finalize relations with Oberlindes, return to Zila in the Oberlindes courier that brought Gustav to Aramanx; before they leave, Lisa presents the adventurers with a special case of wine—five dozen of the very best of Fireau et Fille's vintage eiswein. If served to a collector or connoisseur of wines, the individual will remark on its quality (and the adventurers can expect a favorable reaction modifier in their dealings with such a person). This wine can easily sell for Cr250-Cr350 per bottle.

**Next:** Having completed their dealings with the Fireaus, the crew can now return to their interrupted merchant wanderings. But soon there are stormclouds gathering on the horizon, as Tukera Lines prepares to unleash a powerful threat against Oberlindes Lines, beginning in the next chapter, *Tradewar*.



# Tradewar

This chapter introduces the crew of the *March Harrier* to the concept of commercial warfare and involves them in a variety of activities as they deal with the rival transportation companies of the subsector. This adventure may begin at almost any location within the Aramis subsector; indeed, the first steps are parts of ordinary trade.

The Imperium is held together by the starships that travel from world to world in pursuit of profit. Imperial naval forces protect and patrol space, but they cannot be everywhere at once. The transport companies are the real key; they carry the cargo and passengers to their destinations.

In Aramis subsector, transport is in the hands of just a few companies: Tukera and its subsidiary Akerut, Oberlindes Lines, and Imperiallines. Obviously, the idea of trade competition can be carried to extremes, and in the vast expanses of space those extremes can be a form of war.

**For the Referee:** The concept of tradewar provides the rationale behind this adventure. Even if the concept has not been presented to the group yet, they are sure to be curious about it once the raiding starts.

## COMMERCIAL WAR

Competition between companies has existed since the first two merchants tried to sell to the same customer. Through much of history, companies have been subordinate to the rule of law and have kept their competition within certain bounds of propriety. Competition took place in the marketplace, and included advantages of price, service, or quality. It dealt with advertising and location, reputation, and real or supposed advantages.

In the Imperium, the rule of law is sometimes tenuous. In the vast distances between the stars, the long arm of the law is sometimes not quite long enough, and companies can go beyond competition in the normal sense — into tradewar.

**Tradewar:** Economic war between business entities, especially megacorporations, that extends beyond the customary peaceful means of competition in the

marketplace is termed tradewar. Tradewar is a practice which brings companies directly into physical conflict, involving destructive raids, industrial espionage, and other violent acts.

**The History of Tradewar:** The tradewar concept is an old one, tracing its beginnings to the struggles of the Long Night. On old Earth just before spaceflight, giant corporations competed with each other in the marketplaces of Earth's industrial society. That society was highly regulated, and competition was civilized, restricted to price wars, industrial spying, and advertising.

The advent of space travel took corporations to a new frontier, infinitely more difficult to police and regulate than any world surface. Companies began to resort to occasional violence to gain commercial advantage. The collapse of the Second Imperium removed all restrictions; tradewar began to resemble ordinary war, and these corporate wars contributed to civilization's collapse. The experience of the Long Night established the principle that tradewar that escalated to violence needed some controls; the result is a fairly well-established set of unwritten restrictions on tradewar, generally adhered to by all parties, which both control tradewar's excesses and lend it an air of legitimacy.

Violence being generally illegal, tradewar is practical only in situations where its perpetrators can assume there will be no reprisals from the law. Sometimes, a company with great resources can bribe or coerce government into looking the other way. More often, tradewar's violence finds a setting on the frontiers of the Imperium or beyond its borders. Since the Imperial navy and other law enforcement arms cannot be everywhere at once, tradewar cannot be eliminated as an outlet for corporate rivalry.

Imperial megacorporations and corporations are known to resort to tradewar when it is practical, but always with certain assumed limits in force.

First of all, any company's customers (as well as all innocent bystanders) are considered exempt from the effects of tradewar. Violence cannot extend to them, they may not be injured or killed, and their property may not be damaged as an incidental effect of any tradewar action.

Employees of either company are considered soldiers in



the war and are fair game. Equipment and installations of either company are considered fair targets.

Second, since the object of tradewar is to disrupt the enemy company's operations, there are no restrictions on actions against the enemy's mercantile operations. Similarly, the resultant effects of tradewar on customers (lost shipments, delayed deliveries, etc.) are accepted, even intended, in the effort to destroy the rival. This is an exception to the previous rule. In many cases, insurance will cover some or all of the loss.

Third, the conduct of tradewar must not become such a cause that the original aims have been forgotten. Once a company begins to win a tradewar campaign, the other side must be allowed to withdraw and continue its operations elsewhere. Expenses must be watched and the cost of totally destroying an enemy company is usually greater than is justified by the resulting gains.

**Current Usage:** Tradewar is considered an important part of commercial rivalry. Where it is possible for a company to engage in tradewar practices with little possibility of being caught or punished, it remains in the range of options available to the ambitious manager.

However, tradewar is expensive and the rewards must equal the possible expenditures. As a result, the decision to begin tradewar with a rival company usually rests with the head of the company (or the subsector manager in the case of a megacorporation). Almost always, the board of directors or higher managers must also approve.

Usual goals for tradewar are to completely control specific markets or trade routes, or to drive the rival company from a specific field (such as electronics or pharmaceuticals).

**Private Enterprise:** It is hard to keep secret the fact that a tradewar is brewing. Authorities may not be able to do anything about the situation, but a tradewar cannot be totally concealed. Unconnected elements (jobless mercenary units, Vargr corsairs, local criminal bands, etc.) often take advantage of tradewar situations for their own profit by faking tradewar raids on corporations. For example, a jobless mercenary unit could undertake a raid on a transport company installation. By taking care not to injure civilians and observing the general restrictions of tradewar, they can make it appear that they are engaged in a tradewar raid against the company. In the course of their destruction of the facility, they could cart off equipment, cash, and goods that they could use or resell elsewhere. The retaliation against the raid is directed against the enemy company, not the actual raiders. Carefully done, such false tradewar raids can be lucrative and virtually risk free. To guard against betrayal if a member of the raiding party is captured, leaders often tell their followers that this is a hired-on tradewar raid, keeping the true motives of the unit to themselves.

**False False Colors:** Companies involved in tradewar have come to realize that false raids sometimes occur and are careful to analyze raids against them for just this reason. Thus, the strategists have evolved the false false raid; that is, one where the company performs a tradewar action while attempting to give the appearance of a false raid. For example, a criminal band could be persuaded to undertake a raid against a chemical company research facility and given a free hand in destroying and looting the place. At the same

time, a few picked individuals (perhaps loaned to the raiders or advising them) concentrate on copying secret documents in the main vault. If the group can make the main vault look untouched, then the victim may never know that certain secrets or formulae have been compromised.

Tradewar action generally consists of a series of covert raids against the enemy company. Open assault is virtually never advisable, if only because it provides bad press and it is difficult to conceal the responsibility for the action. Instead, the enemy company is frequently hit at distant, remote locations with a view to crippling their activities by means of raids. Raids can achieve a number of objectives. The primary use is to destroy enemy company property, increasing their costs in time and money as they continue their ordinary business activity. Destruction of such property also costs the business customers if it interrupts ordinary service for even a short time. Raids are also used to obtain information; a strike may have as its purpose the gathering of trade secrets, useful information, even customer lists, which are then used in more mundane competitive actions. Finally, raids can be intimidating, especially if successful. They force the enemy to arm and fortify in anticipation of further raids, and since they cannot predict where the next raid will occur, the company is forced to pay a high cost to protect a large expanse of installations.

## THE FIRST RAIDS

Over the course of several weeks, the news bodes ill for Oberlindes and for the group. The following reports should be made available through normal news channels. Check off each news report (perhaps with pencil in the margin) to note that it has already been received.

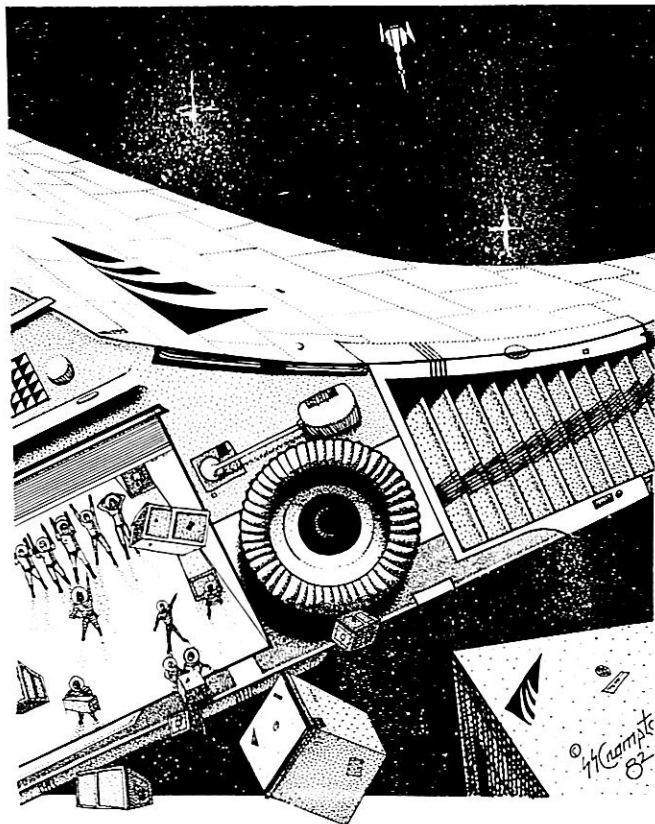
Each message is marked with a number to indicate the week it is sent. The rules below on plotting messages should be used to time delivery.

**Week 1: ARAMANX (TNS)** Pirates today attacked cargo carrier *Grand Tour* as it left the Aramanx system, succeeding in ransacking the ship, disabling the drives, and then abandoning the ship before jumping beyond the range of local defense vessels. Casualty reports have not been made, but it is estimated from communications monitors that three crew are dead and more than half a dozen injured. It is expected that salvage and rescue operations will be completed within three days.

Piracy in the subsector has been virtually non-existent since a spate of raids occurred in the Lewis area in 1090.

**Week 3: Communique (Oberlindes Paya to captains of Oberlindes Lines ships)** The unprovoked and unforeseen raid by unknown pirates on the cargo carrier *Grand Tour* has created some concern among Oberlindes Lines crews. The best method of alleviating that concern is to provide all details and allow crews to act accordingly. It is standard procedure for OL to provide complete details of such accidents and situations as soon as the details become available.

*Grand Tour* was approached by a patrol cruiser signalling for a routine quarantine check-out, and ceased acceleration to comply. Upon being boarded, the crew was confronted by armed pirates and ordered to aid in the ransacking of the ship. Three crewmembers in the drive room resisted, and were gunned down before the drives were disabled. Five



crew were pistol-whipped for various reasons having to do with resistance to orders by the pirates.

The ship was saved by Oberlindes vessels which responded immediately, but not before the raiders left by jump. The entire cargo of bulk plastic was dispersed in an act of vandalism through the cargo doors, and the pirates took approximately MCr2 in equipment, funds, and goods.

No blame has been attached to crew for their actions; the dead and wounded are to be memorialized by Oberlindes Lines for their efforts.

**Week 3: PAVANNE (TNS)** Oberlindes Lines far trader *Llewellyn* was attacked by unidentified raiders today as it maneuvered to protect a ship's boat which was itself under attack. In a preliminary report, *Llewellyn* indicated that she moved to assist a ship's boat which was fleeing a patrol cruiser, and after coming between the two, came under fire from both ships. Upon receiving unexpectedly heavy fire from the far trader, the ship's boat was taken aboard by the patrol cruiser and they jumped outsystem.

*Llewellyn* reports no damage and has provided pictures of the raider to the authorities.

**Week 5: NASEMIN (TNS)** The Oberlindes Lines trading station on Nasemin was burned to the ground in a fire of suspicious origins yesterday. The facilities were a total loss, including approximately Cr400,000 in cash and negotiable instruments and Cr650,000 in goods in storage, according to an Oberlindes spokesman. There were no casualties.

**Week 6 Communique (Oberlindes Paya to captains of Oberlindes Lines ships)** *Llewellyn* reports being sucked into a situation where two ships played at being in a fight and then turned to attack whoever stepped in to assist.

This sort of thing has happened before, and will happen

again. The captain of *Llewellyn* is to be commended for his quick thinking, including concentration of fires on the closer and more vulnerable target (the ship's boat) in the situation. It was only the *Llewellyn*'s extremely heavy firepower (three lasers, three missile racks) that allowed her to intervene in the first place, and stand up in the second.

**Week 7: TOWERS (TNS)** Oberlindes Lines today stated that *Wallen Bar*, a 400-ton Oberlindes-owned merchant, was overdue from Feneteman, giving hijacking as the most likely reason. The company had no further comment.

**Week 8: Communique (Oberlindes Paya to captains of Oberlindes Lines ships)** The recent fire in the Oberlindes facilities at Nasemin provides evidence that a concerted effort is being mounted against Oberlindes Lines to reduce profits and increase expenses. It appears that the offices were ransacked prior to being torched and that all items of value were taken (approximately Cr400,000) before the fire.

All ships are advised to be aware of passage serial numbers, especially those written from Nasemin with numbers 450-89 as prefixes. They are stolen and should be treated as void; notify local authorities and nearest company office immediately.

**Confidential to Captains:** A tradewar situation appears to have started and evidence is that either Tukera or Akerut is responsible. Treat contacts with either corporation with extreme care.

**Week 10: Communique (Oberlindes Paya to captains of Oberlindes Lines ships)** *Wallen Bar*, posted officially as a possible hijacking, is believed to be lost with all hands due to sabotage from agents of Akerut operating on Feneteman. Effective immediately, all ships are instructed to implement stringent cargo and service monitoring procedures in order to avoid a similar situation.

**Referee's Note:** These transmissions are used to build up the background of the tradewar situation. They should be interwoven with other events (and should not, at first, be accorded any particular special significance). The referee may wish to add to these reports, with stories of other incidents. There also might be additional reports coming in after week 10, if the referee wishes to extend the overall time span of this period of the campaign.

The referee should fill the period before and during the initial tradewar reports with other incidents, such as any portions of *Patrons* or *Exotic Encounters* which have not yet been used, or similar events of his own devising.

Eventually, on a week sometime after the tenth week, and in the wake of a great deal of tradewar activity, a message to the *March Harrier* (see below) will be transmitted, beginning the actual flow of this adventure situation.

## PLOTTING COMMUNICATIONS

Every message originates somewhere. Once it begins, it progresses to nearly every location that wants to hear it, although at a relatively slow pace.

Messages travel on whatever ships are available at the jump rate of the carrying ship. A message is likely to travel farther in a week from an A starport than from an E starport. Each week, consult the message transmission table for each message. A message will move from the world it is on to all worlds up to the distance specified on the table for



that combination of origin and destination starport types.

Message Transmission Table

| Origin<br>World | -----Receiving World----- |   |   |   |   |   | Chance of<br>Transmission |
|-----------------|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
|                 | A                         | B | C | D | E | X |                           |
| A               | 4                         | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | 4+                        |
| B               | 3                         | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 5+                        |
| C               | 2                         | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 6+                        |
| D               | 1                         | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 7+                        |
| E               | 1                         | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 8+                        |
| X               | 1                         | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 9+                        |

If a message has no way to leave a world by normal means, the referee should roll to see if it is carried somewhere anyway, using the chance of transmission roll given for that type of starport on the table. Possible destinations are all worlds at up to twice the distance given on the table (4 parsecs maximum). Roll once for each world (in any order), stopping at the first successful transmission or when all worlds have been rolled for.

For example, a message originating on Towers would be carried to all A starports within 3 hexes (none), all B starports within two hexes (three worlds), and all other starports within 1 hex (two worlds), except type X.

A message originating on Heguz (starport type E) is received by all adjacent worlds (there are none). Because such a message cannot be transmitted through normal channels, the referee rolls for each eligible world (all A or B starports within 4 hexes and all C, D, or E starports within 2 hexes), succeeding on 8+. If successful, the message is carried to the world. For Heguz, the roll can be made up to three times (until successful), once for each world within range.

In addition, the *March Harrier* carries any messages it receives. If the *March Harrier* picks up a message on Heguz and then jumps to Carsten, the message is carried there.

Messages should be plotted until they are no longer necessary. Such a point is reached once they have been received by the crew of the *March Harrier* and by anyone else who is important, such as Oberlindes Lines headquarters on Paya.

**Oberlindes Fast Transmission:** Oberlindes maintains fast courier ships which carry any important news from point to point within the subsector. Any messages that arrive at an Oberlindes station are carried at jump-5 to Paya. Oberlindes communiques are carried to all Oberlindes stations at jump-5 from Paya. There are Oberlindes stations at Paya, Violante, Carsten, Aramanx, Nasemin, Towers, Jesedipere, and Lablon.

**Xboat Transmissions:** Once messages reach a world on the xboat route, they move at jump-4 to all worlds on the route, and are retransmitted elsewhere according to the table. Dhian and L'Oeul d'Dieu are connected by a round-about xboat link; when a message arrives at one, it will be carried to the other in four weeks' time.

**Time:** Each message carries a date which marks the number of weeks elapsed since an arbitrary start date for the tradewar set by the referee. In practice, this would be translated to an appropriate game date (i.e. 079-1106). When the referee decides to begin the tradewar reports, the date of the first transmissions will occur at the given inter-

vals. They should always be assigned a date of origination; this gives the adventurers a feel for the delays inherent in interstellar communication.

### A MESSAGE FROM OBERLINDES

At some point after the tenth week of the tradewar reports, a message is transmitted which is of particular importance to the adventurers.

**Week (variable):** *Communique (Oberlindes Paya to March Harrier)*. Personal and confidential. Leaving Paya for Oberlindes Aramanx. Arrive three weeks. Request your rendezvous there at earliest convenience. Need your services. (signed) Oberlindes.

From their past contact with Oberlindes, the adventurers will be aware that any task he wants performed will pay well; no additional motivation should be necessary to draw them to Aramanx.

Throughout the voyage to Aramanx, there is a chance that Tukera raiders may attack. *March Harrier's* loose association with Oberlindes has been noted; so too have previous encounters (such as the Zilan wine incident) which have marked *March Harrier* as a foe. It is not general knowledge that Gvoudzon and the brooch are of any particular importance; only a handful of top Vemene operatives are aware of this so far.

An attack, therefore, would follow the basic tenets of any tradewar operation, and would primarily be directed at the destruction of *March Harrier's* cargo plus, perhaps, vandalism to the ship's systems or drives. Each time a normal starship encounter occurs, it will prove to be a Tukera raid on a die roll of 9+. Resolution should be by the normal starship combat rules.

If an attack occurs, and is successful, *March Harrier* may suffer serious damage—both in the battle and during the subsequent boarding action. Rescuing ships will arrive 1D hours after the ship first sends out a Mayday call; these can provide parts and assistance for jury-rigged repairs. Later, a more complete repair job will be required.

Win or lose, an attack will certainly leave the crew in a receptive frame of mind when they finally do reach Aramanx and hear what Oberlindes Lines has to offer.

### A PROPOSITION OF INTEREST

Whether or not they are attacked en route, the adventurers will ultimately reach Aramanx starport once more. Here, after the usual formalities of arrival, they can contact the Oberlindes office. An appointment is made for the following day; the entire crew is invited to attend.

**The Briefing:** The appointment is kept in a private conference room, dominated by a wide window which looks out into space. Framed in the window, the group can see a number of starships in parking orbits near the starport, and occasional small craft flitting back and forth among them.

Arrianroughl conducts the meeting, explaining that Oberlindes has been tied up overseeing the conduct of an investigation into an attack against the Oberlindes freighter *Bottom Line*, the victim of the latest ambush of this growing tradewar situation. This leads the Vargr into a review of the recent attacks. He goes over each report in turn, summarizing the evidence that Tukera has decided to block the

expansion of Oberlindes operations in Aramis subsector by the strongest means open to them.

Oberlindes, Arrlanroughl says, has decided that the company must begin striking back. Losses cannot continue to be one-sided. Although Oberlindes Lines has nowhere near the resources of Tukera, it may still be possible to make this tradewar so unprofitable that Tukera will back down. That, at least, is the hope behind a plan Oberlindes and Arrlanroughl have evolved.

That plan needs good people to carry it out—people who are tough in a fight, who can be relied upon to keep up their end of things. From past encounters, and particularly the Fireau kidnapping incident, Oberlindes thinks the *March Harrier's* crew will be the ideal people to carry out this plan. They are not employees of Oberlindes, and are not really involved in the dispute. Considerable danger may be involved. But Arrlanroughl reiterates the confidence Oberlindes has in them, and promises to see them well-compensated if they will participate. If they do, they won't be carrying cargo or passengers for several weeks, but will be paid enough to cover the loss. In addition, fuel, supplies, life support, and other routine expenses will all be carried by Oberlindes Lines. Finally, there will be a certain amount of profit accruing from these planned operations . . . and 10% of this will go the *March Harrier* as well.

If and only if the crew agrees to these terms, Arrlanroughl will turn to an explanation of what Oberlindes intends.

Through a lucky break, Oberlindes Lines has gained access to a part of an Akerut shipping schedule before an erase order purged the computer it was stored in. This fragment gave the coordinates of a breakout point used by jump-1 Akerut ships travelling from Feneteman to Aramanx (and vice versa). The coordinates are in hex 0705 of the subsector map; this region of open space is so vast that, under normal circumstances, it would be impossible to locate the breakout point.

Akerut ships which use the point have to spend several hours shifting fuel reserves and testing jump systems before resuming their voyage (just as *March Harrier* must do during double jumps with her demountable tanks). During this time, the ships are vulnerable, unable to run. The standard coordinates are assigned by Akerut to allow the company to trace overdue ships, narrowing a potential search area in case of some disaster. The point is also, apparently, a frequently used rendezvous for Tukera courier ships, especially those in the service of the Vemene.

For a short time—until ships become overdue enough to cause concern—it will be possible for Oberlindes to cause considerable damage to Tukera by exploiting this deep-space secret rendezvous, now no longer a secret. A series of ambushes at this point can act as a clear beginning to the Oberlindes counterattack.

Oberlindes wants to use the *March Harrier* to help out in this counterattack. The basic plan calls for a two-ship team—one ship a well-armed patrol cruiser that can bring almost any Akerut ship down in a short action, the other a decoy to spring the trap before the hapless victims can realize their danger and escape. Oberlindes wants *March Harrier* in the latter role.

It is a job that is not without its dangers, of course, but

Arrlanroughl goes on to point out steps that have been taken to minimize those dangers. The most important of these is a highly illegal but extremely useful device, a transponder that can shift to several different settings. Transponders are an essential piece of equipment on interstellar vessels. Sealed, tamper-proof devices, they send out an identification of the ship—its name, registry, and important statistics—when a signal is sent to the ship from an outside source. This provides a permanent and theoretically unbeatable way of registering starships.

Actually, of course, transponders are neither tamper-proof nor unbeatable. But it takes excellent resources or very good connections to alter a transponder. The Oberlindes device is even better—at the touch of a button, the transponder can be set to any one of three different ID codes.

Arrlanroughl proposes to mount the device aboard the *March Harrier*. It will contain three settings—*March Harrier's* normal code, the data from a totally fictitious vessel of the same size and class, registered to Akerut, and a third, null setting which will return no data when a signal is sent. When acting as a decoy, *March Harrier* will be able to assume a false identity, becoming a "friendly" ship long enough to get close to the victim. The other setting can be used for confusion, or can be reprogrammed later if other alternate identities are needed.

A third ship, the *New Horizons*, an Oberlindes-owned free trader, will also join the expedition to carry extra cargo and to take messages back to Aramanx if necessary. A deep-space rendezvous has been set up in the Aramanx system to receive captured Akerut ships. All three ships must carry extra personnel to serve as skeleton crews to pilot captured ships to the rendezvous. With double occupancy (cramped but bearable), the *March Harrier* can carry 18 extra crew, the patrol cruiser 14, and the free trader 16, for a total of 48. The standard Akerut freighter can make a single jump with a skeleton crew of 4 (pilot, navigator, and two engineers), so as many as twelve ships could conceivably be taken.

**The Disguise:** The transponder can be a very useful tool. False signals will completely fool any other ship, space station, or ground tracking crew until such time as *March Harrier* comes into visual contact. This occurs when the range between the ships drops to 100 kilometers or less.

If the disguise is to be made total, the external identity of the ship can be altered, as well. This must be done well away from any sign of civilization. Materials—paint, insignia, etc.—cost Cr300; it takes 10 person-hours of work in vacc suits in zero-G conditions to make the requisite alterations (8 person-hours on the ground). Should disguise work be done, the ship could effectively close the range to actually link with another ship without having the deception penetrated. Should the ship later want to return to civilization, it will of course be necessary to restore external markings to their original configuration, with the same expenditure in time and materials.

Any particular setting of the transponder can be reprogrammed to a new identification by any person or persons with skills of electronics-2 and computer-2. In the absence of such individuals, Oberlindes can provide assistance as needed. The basic code identifying *March Har-*

*rier* should never be eliminated, until and unless a new set of ship's papers is acquired to match some new identification—not an easy task, given the number of different documents connected with a starship's usual operations.

**Preparing the Riposte:** The briefing concluded, Arrlanroughl accompanies the crew on a brief inspection of *March Harrier*. He takes down several notes, and eventually comes out with a number of recommendations. First, he will have the port give *March Harrier* the full annual maintenance treatment (even if she is not due for it) in order to be sure all systems are fully operational.

Next, he indicates that *March Harrier's* computer may not be up to the rigors of space combat. To fully take advantage of combat situations, he suggests that the present Model/1 computer be replaced by a Model/1 bis, which provides a superior capacity for running programs simultaneously. He offers to cover the installation cost for such a computer (Cr4,000,000), with the understanding that the crew will pay back half this amount out of their 10% profits (or half their total profit, whichever is lower). At the same time, they will be provided with software—including the programs selective-3, predict-3, and maneuver/evade-1—to round out their fighting ability.

Finally, he introduces the crew to the captain of the *Guardian*, the patrol cruiser which is to accompany them. Arrlanroughl further indicates that the *March Harrier* crew will be in command for purposes of tactical decisions, although *Guardian's* captain, who is responsible to Oberlindes Lines, makes the ultimate decisions on disposition of cargo and other non-battle-related matters. This balance of responsibilities looks after company interests while still preserving for *March Harrier* the ability to call the shots once they have to move into danger as a decoy.

For two weeks, then, preparations can be made. Additional equipment or supplies can be sought out (but is strictly the responsibility of the crew—Oberlindes Lines has already invested a great deal in this venture), and specific plans and procedures worked out. The characters should be heavily involved in such planning . . . after all, their safety will depend on the precision and coordination of the attacks they launch.

Eventually, all is in readiness; *Guardian*, *March Harrier*, and *New Horizons* jump from Aramanx to take up their position at the Akerut rendezvous point. The counterattack is about to begin.

## RIPOSTE BY OBERLINDES

The Akerut rendezvous provides an opportunity for a series of possible engagements. A number of factors are common to all.

**Encounters:** In the course of a given week, 1D Akerut ships will break out of jump at the coordinates. The referee is responsible for determining specific times of arrival for each. Most ships encountered will be *Hercules* class freighters, but a few (roll 6 exactly on 1D) will be type S scouts serving as Vemene couriers. During the course of the raiding it is also necessary to implement two specific encounters (discussed later in the chapter)—which may require an alteration in the purely random encounter process.

**Resolution:** Each combat can be resolved using the standard rules of Traveller ship-to-ship combat. In some cases, the referee may want to ignore detailed representation in the interest of avoiding repetition or saving time. Often, a surprise attack will result in a quick surrender by the victim.

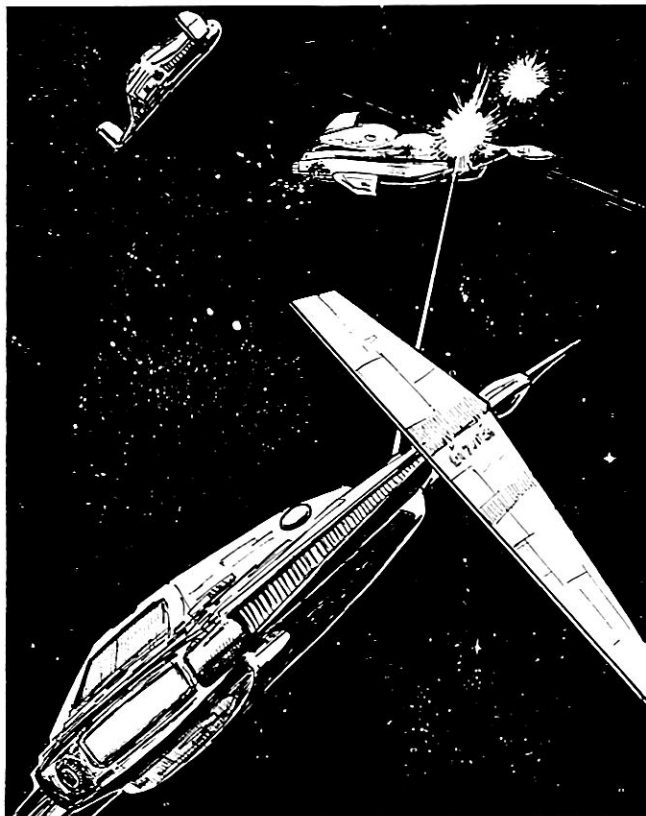
**Captured Ships:** Captured ships which still have both jump and maneuver capability will be given skeleton crews and will jump to the Oberlindes rendezvous point. If either drive is inoperative, repairs will be attempted, succeeding on 9+ for each drive (or the referee may allow more detailed resolution of repairs). Ships which cannot be repaired must be towed away from the rendezvous point and destroyed, after first removing surviving crew and the most valuable portions of the cargo. Crew may be put into low berths or locked in empty staterooms, to be shipped out on the next captured ship. Valuable cargos worth saving will consist of 3D tons, at a value of 3D × Cr100,000 per ton (or choose from the trade and speculation table). Intact ships will carry nearly full cargos (80% of capacity, with 50% consisting of major cargos, 25% minor cargos, and 5% incidental cargos); use the trade and speculation table to determine their natures.

**Time Span:** Operations at this point will not be able to continue indefinitely. The group can count on about three weeks between their first attack and the end of their operation (one week from their first capture to its scheduled arrival at its destination, one week for the Akerut office there to become worried, and one week for an investigative force to jump to the rendezvous). After that time, Akerut will begin re-routing their ships; the only thing likely to show up after three weeks is an Akerut patrol cruiser or two. Thus, after three weeks, *Guardian* has orders to call off the operation. There is a chance that a patrol cruiser will arrive before the *Guardian* leaves (due to a security leak or to extremely fast action on the part of Akerut). Roll for 11+ each day during the last week for this to occur.

**Specific Encounters:** In the course of their raids, the ambushers will be presented with two specific targets of particular importance to the course of later events. In each case, the encounter will proceed normally, but, during the disposition of the cargo and other loot, information of particular interest will be unearthed.

**The Courier:** One of the ships taken will be a Type S Scout/Courier, the *Nebula*, used for courier work by the Vemene. When its computer records are scanned for information of potential interest, a specific communique is found which relates to *March Harrier*. Sent by a Vemene agent on Aramanx and signed "Sylvie Mobutu" (Jelika Chan?), the message is addressed to Ashkashkur, on Junidy. *March Harrier* has been watched closely since the discovery that Gvoudzon and the brooch were on board. The ship was recently overhauled at Aramanx, a move sponsored by Oberlindes Lines. Further movements not certain, but it seems that *March Harrier* is now in the employ of Oberlindes. It may be possible to stage an ambush by a Vemene ship, under the pretext that this is just part of the tradewar; if it can be arranged for one or two officers to be part of the "inner circle" there will be no reason to have word of the brooch spread any further. She will take all possible action to resolve this action speedily, and closes by wishing





Ashkashkur luck and "a speedy fruition of our plans."

Also on board the Vemene courier is a logbook showing the ship's most recent movements. *Guardian's* captain draws the group's attention to a series of trips made between Aramanx and Lewis several months ago. The courier ship was involved in ferrying in material transferred to Aramis subsector from a Tukera research facility in Deneb sector; Lewis, an interdicted world where the Tukera family maintains large estates, was established as the new site of the project. On one of the trips, the courier carried as a passenger a female Vargr, apparently connected in some way with the project.

*The Titan:* The other mandated encounter will be an Akerut merchant vessel of the *Hercules* class, the *Titan*. The characters may recall the name, and a search of the ship's log will tell them why—*Titan* was involved in the mysterious circumstances surrounding the loss of *Mammoth* on Aramis.

The log shows that *Titan* was originally assigned to carry two meson guns from Inthe/Regina to the naval base on Aramis. *Titan* was grounded at Zila by damage to the ship's drive, discharged its cargo for transfer to the *Mammoth*, and thus set the stage for *Mammoth's* dramatic crash.

Following repairs, the ship took on a cargo of farm machinery which providentially turned up at Zila starport, totalling roughly the same tonnage as the transferred cargo. This was ultimately delivered to Jesedipere.

A check of the cargo manifest annex to the log shows that the cargo taken aboard at Inthe/Regina consisted of two Type-J meson guns and two fibre-optic computer fire-control systems. This cargo, disassembled, was shipped in 18 shipping modules totalling 2,050 tons. The cargo was transferred to the *Mammoth* at Zila starport on the recom-

mendation of Lt. Commander Warren, a Navy representative accompanying the shipment.

Three days after the drive repairs were completed, the *Titan* loaded a cargo of farm machinery from a planet-based firm for shipment to Jesedipere. This cargo was contained in 20 shipping modules, and totalled 2,100 tons. The consignor is listed as Swartemann and Closter General Equipment, LIC, headquartered on Zila. The consignee is identified only as Ozarr.

Another computer file, containing a record of communications to and from *Titan*, has some interest as well. A message sent out during the ship's layover at Zila includes a report addressed to Aran Ashkashkur, head of the Aramis branch of the Vemene, Tukera's security organization. This message was apparently coded before dispatch, and is marked as a high-security item.

In the report, the captain indicates that, following Ashkashkur's orders, the meson gun shipment was picked up at Inthe/Regina on schedule and carried by Ashkashkur's new route via Dhian, Paya, Violante, and Zila. He then discusses the drive breakdown and the decision to transfer the shipment to *Mammoth*.

The message goes on to indicate that Jelika Chan, Ashkashkur's operative, transferred to *Mammoth* after an accident to the latter ship's chief engineer. *Titan's* captain goes on to report that, as Ashkashkur desired, no one else aboard knew of Chan's Vemene affiliation. However, the captain points out the fact that Chan's lack of skill was largely responsible for *Titan's* drive malfunction, and suggests that in the future the Vemene assign personnel competent in their cover assignments as well as their actual ones.

These various pieces of information may help fill in certain gaps, and lead the party one step closer to solving the mystery first sparked by the loss of *Mammoth*.

#### REFeree's NOTES

Once the operation at the Akerut rendezvous is concluded, the expedition can return to Aramanx.

Any investigation into the firm of Swartemann and Closter on Zila will reveal that the company does not manufacture farm machinery. They are wholesalers of electronic subcomponents. If detailed information on their dealings with Tukera Lines is sought, it will be revealed that a large shipment of surplus and damaged electronics components, amounting to some 2,100 tons, was indeed shipped off Zila aboard the *Titan*. The cargo was paid for in cash and was to be shipped to Lablon. Interestingly enough, the cargo was actually stored at a starport warehouse for five weeks before finally being loaded aboard *Titan*. Swartemann and Closter had nothing to do with a change in the shipping destination; it might have been arranged by the customer, who had a copy of the manifest and shipping forms, and might have made the arrangements through Akerut.

**Next:** With the return of *March Harrier* and her consorts to Aramanx, the tradewar now prepares to enter a new phase. Oberlindes is happy with their work, and wants to follow up this first success with another. Lewis and the Tukera estates at Inselberg beckon; here the adventurers will find more danger . . . but more answers as well.

This chapter takes the crew of the *March Harrier* to the interdicted world of Lewis, where the Tukera family maintains their private estates at Inselberg, on a covert mission to learn secrets stored in the Inselberg computer files; it also presents the adventurers with the opportunity to solve the mystery of the brooch along the way.

## ESPIONAGE

The adventure begins with the return of *March Harrier* to Aramanx after the conclusion of her tradewar raids against Tukera. Once the crew, along with *Guardian's* captain, have made their reports, another briefing is called. This time it is conducted by Marc hault-Oberlindes himself.

He begins by congratulating the group; they have more than lived up to his hopes for them. Now he would like to employ them on another mission of a more delicate nature. The same arrangements as before hold true with regard to payment, although there will be no booty from this raid. This time, Oberlindes needs information—for it will be information that will best enable the company to survive (and hopefully win) the tradewar.

This new raid will be against the Tukera family estates at Inselberg on Lewis. Secure behind an Imperial interdiction decree, the Tukeras keep much of their corporate information at these estates; Oberlindes wants to gain access to it. He cannot flout Imperial decrees with a major tradewar attack, as Tukera has done to several Oberlindes facilities, but it would be possible to take advantage of some loopholes discovered in the security arrangements at Inselberg to slip a few people onto the estate, tap into Tukera's computer files, and discover their plans and secrets.

**Referee's Note:** If the adventurers have already decided that a raid on Lewis might be profitable, they should be given the chance to suggest the idea to Oberlindes, who will agree eagerly and supply information and help in circumventing the Inselberg security system. In either event, the adventure can proceed as described here.

## LEWIS

Lewis (0707-X427402-D) is a small world with a diameter of approximately 6400 kilometers, a very thin, tainted atmosphere, and large oceans covering three-quarters of the surface of the planet. A young world, Lewis is one of several satellites of the only gas giant in the system.

The world has a population of just over 73,000 persons, mostly farmers. There is no government established on the world; among the farming communities family ties predominate—a system which has worked very well for several generations. A D-class starport facility exists on the world (as well as several smaller landing fields of even lower quality); this is controlled by the Tukera family and reserved for their use.

Lewis was, indeed, entirely owned by the Tukeras for quite some time, but, about 150 years ago, a Tukera baron in need of funds was forced to sell off some of the family lands to outside settlers. This community flourished for quite

some time; recently, the family has been attempting to recover those lands and the ownership of the world. After several unsuccessful efforts to force the independent settlers to sell out, Tukera interests at Court (with the support of Marquis of Aramis) have managed to have the planet interdicted. A special access dispensation allows family members to come and go as they please, but all trade and outside contact has been cut off, isolating the settlers. So far they have shown an amazing degree of self-sufficiency, but the Tukera family still believes that the increasing hardships of this isolation will eventually compel them to give up and sell their land.

The Tukera estates at Inselberg on Lewis are isolated from the main areas of settlement, surrounded by desert and protected from intrusions by an excellent security organization. The nearest town is some 100 km away. Inselberg's facilities enjoy a tech level of D; the settlers are limited to a much lower level of technology (7).

## THE MISSION

Oberlindes and Arllanroughl have worked out a plan to get a small group of people into the estates at Inselberg. The Tukera family on Lewis has long recruited its menial help from Zila. It is felt that offworlders better serve the family's needs than would hiring from the local population on Lewis (particularly given current tensions). As the family owns a minority interest in Central Hirings, SA, an employment agency on Zila, and has so many other interests on the world, servants for the estates at Inselberg are hired strictly through the agency and transported to Lewis in company ships.

There is a loophole in the screening process used to ensure the reliability of servants hired by Central Hirings—some well-placed graft can influence one of the agency's people and get applications approved. Oberlindes has found this loophole, and is now prepared to exploit it. Several members of the group can assume identities as natives of Zila, and get themselves hired on as replacement servants destined for Lewis. Even Gvoudzon presents no problem, as Zila has a small Vargr population and Tukera, for some reason yet unknown, frequently requests that Vargr be hired. A Tukera ship will take their new servants to Inselberg, past all of the security measures, to take up their duties there.

Once inside, the party is to find a way to tap into the computers at the estate and discover as much as they can about Tukera plans and intentions. They are also to look for secret information of any kind that might give Oberlindes an edge in the tradewar situation. More sets of coordinates like the



ones used for *March Harrier's* recent raids would be one excellent example of the kind of information needed.

Upon completion of this task, the party is to make their way to a rendezvous at the lanthanum mines near the estate. *March Harrier*, using the Tukera transponder code and operated by a minimal crew (two of the adventurers), will set down here to load ore, and will remain until the rest of the group can reach the rendezvous (or until a deadline to be set by the crew, after which the mission will be presumed to be a failure).

Once picked up, the group will deliver their information to Oberlindes at Aramanx, thus completing the mission.

## EXECUTION

An Oberlindes courier transports those adventurers who are chosen for the covert penetration of Inselberg to Zila. Two characters—one with piloting skill, another with engineering—should be left with *March Harrier*. (If preferred, all adventurers can go on the mission, and *March Harrier* can be given a new skeleton crew by Oberlindes.)

The hiring procedures on Zila go along without a hitch, thanks to some judicious bribery by an Oberlindes agent. The adventurers are hired; a Tukera ship departs for Lewis with them aboard 1D days later. At Inselberg, they are assigned jobs and given a few days to settle into their new routine.

Duties assigned will include those of cook, mechanic, driver, and several openings for valet to various individuals on the estate. Gvoudzon will be given a special assignment as a valet and general servant for Gharukh, a job which will

separate him from the rest of the party. Skills should determine who gets what jobs; no particular skill is needed for valet work, although steward skill will allow superior performance and less chance of embarrassing mistakes.

Quarters will be assigned to the group in the servants' area of the estate. Initially, the pressure of learning their new duties will leave them with little free time. Within ten days or so, however, they will begin to have some free time; one day out of every six will be a light-work day in which they will be able to do some surreptitious investigation. (These days vary for each individual, and are assigned on a rotating basis. Each person should roll 1D for every six-day period; the numbers show the light work day designated for that individual.) Gvoudzon will be reunited with the others each time one of these light days occurs, being brought back from his duty station at the Retreat by air/raft for some time off.

**Risks:** There will be no suspicion of the characters as long as they do not act in a fashion which would arouse such suspicion. Because servants are often difficult to find, and because the characters are new at Inselberg, their employers will tolerate some minor deviations from acceptable behavior (such as wandering around, minor inattention to the job at hand, curiosity, etc.), as long as they do not cause trouble. Once the group actually begins to carry out its mission, there is a chance they will be noticed and suspected of wrongdoing; a corresponding reaction by family members or other servants may be generated by such activity.

**Carrying Out the Mission:** On their first arrival at Inselberg, the adventurers will know nothing about the layout of the estates. Over the course of several days, they will become acquainted with the grounds and the buildings in which they work. As they do so, they will be able to begin planning their attempt against the computers.

Computer terminals can be found both in the company site complex and in several rooms of the main house (see the descriptions of the various parts of the estate later in this chapter). All terminals tie into the same network. Once a computer terminal is activated, it is not easy to access files; roll 10+ during any particular 5-minute period to release data of potential use (with a plus DM equal to computer skill of the operator). Security programs make it possible to set off tamper alarms through random searches; this takes place on a 4+, again rolled every five minutes, with a negative DM equal to computer skill.

Once each day prior to their break-in, characters may have the opportunity to observe a family member working at a computer terminal, and may be able to pick up useful information on code words employed by the system. Roll a 7+ each day for some member of the group to gain such information; each such advantage is an additional DM that can be applied to the rolls for operating the terminals successfully.

If the anti-tamper programs are triggered, the terminal will shut down, and alarms will sound to attract the attention of guards to the terminal where the attempt was being made. The guards will respond in 2D minutes, in whatever numbers the referee may feel are suitable.

**Gvoudzon's Discovery:** When he is separated from the others, Gvoudzon is assigned to work at the Retreat, where Gharukh and the cryptography project are based. Most of



his working time is spent at the Retreat, but he is periodically returned to the main part of Inselberg for time off, like other Vargr in attendance on the cryptographer.

When he does return to Inselberg and meets his colleagues, Gvoudzon has important news. Gharukh, he says, is a cryptographer of considerable intelligence and apparent skill. Gvoudzon has seen, in her possession, a duplicate of the brooch; he thinks Gharukh may be able to decipher the message contained in the brooch he stole from the Kforuzeng.

What is more, Gvoudzon adds, Gharukh is being held a virtual prisoner at the Retreat. He has heard her protest at her confinement and at the treatment she has received at the hands of Tukera. Gvoudzon believes she may be persuaded to help without much difficulty, and encourages the party to help him rescue her.

**Raid on the Retreat:** It is virtually impossible for the party to gain access to the Retreat by air/raft. Servants are accompanied by guards when in vehicles, and there are several air/rafts and guard squads stationed at the Retreat who could make an unauthorized approach dangerous. The safest way to conduct the rescue attempt would involve an approach on foot across the desert, followed by a climb up the butte to the retreat. From there, escape can most probably be accomplished by surprising the guards and stealing a vehicle. This can fly them to the rendezvous with the *March Harrier*.

The adventurers will probably have to steal weaponry and other equipment from the estate. Once they have done so, the actual execution of the raid will be carried out through the interaction of the group with the referee, in accordance with the normal rules and the material presented in the remainder of this chapter.

**March Harrier:** Using her fake transponder and generous amounts of fresh paint, *March Harrier* will have little trouble gaining access to Lewis. Once there, landing clearance for the tiny facility at the lanthanum mines can be secured, and a landing made.

Cargo loading, refueling, and the like can keep the ship in port for three days. Oberlindes has supplied forged papers to allow them to pick up an ore shipment (forgery level 7). If any more time has to be spent, an excuse, such as a breakdown or systems problem, will have to be provided. Even this won't allow a great deal more time. The referee should allow 1D days to pass before inquiries to higher authorities begin to arouse suspicion against the *March Harrier*.

Naturally, the best and most exciting adventure situation will arise from the main party being very nearly overdue for their rendezvous (perhaps as a result of the rescue of Gharukh), with a final confrontation with Tukera guards taking place as they pile aboard the ship and try to win clear. Detailed resolution, however, must be left to the referee, based upon the plans and actions of the characters themselves.

## TUKERA'S ESTATES ON LEWIS

The Tukera family is far-flung within the Imperium, although much of it is concentrated in the Imperial core near the capital. Various members of the family have been scat-

tered throughout the Imperium, taken to many locations by the need to supervise parts of the company's operations. Other family members have been granted nobility by the Emperor and have then taken possession of fiefs granted with those patents of nobility.

The Tukera estates on Lewis date back to the late 700's, when a fief on Lewis was granted to a cousin in the Tukera family and he moved into the Aramis subsector to take possession. Originally, the fief was granted in anticipation of extended settlement and colonization of the world as the Aramis subsector grew in importance. The gamble never paid off, and Lewis is less than a prize in terms of return.

Nevertheless, the world did hold certain attractions to the Tukeras and efforts were made to improve their holdings. Tenant farmers were settled on the world; resources were located and attempts made to exploit them. Through about 950, the world was barely holding its own.

In 950, the local Tukera (holding a hereditary barony) suffered some investment reverses and was forced to grant freehold lands to many of the inhabitants because he was unable to meet his commitments to his vassals. Continued investment would have been unprofitable and the world began a down-hill slide. The Tukeras have offered to buy back the lands many times, but with little success.

## INSELBERG

The Tukera estates on Lewis consist of large expanses of desert on the only continent on the world. Within that expanse, three areas are of interest: Inselberg, the Retreat, and the mines.

**Inselberg** is a cluster of large buttes or mesas standing tall and open in the expanse of desert. Their flat tops hold a variety of buildings and structures which serve as living and working areas and as recreation buildings. The sites have been chosen for their scenic beauty, their protection against periodic floods, and their isolation from wild animals and other nuisances. Movement between the various peaks is generally by air/raft.

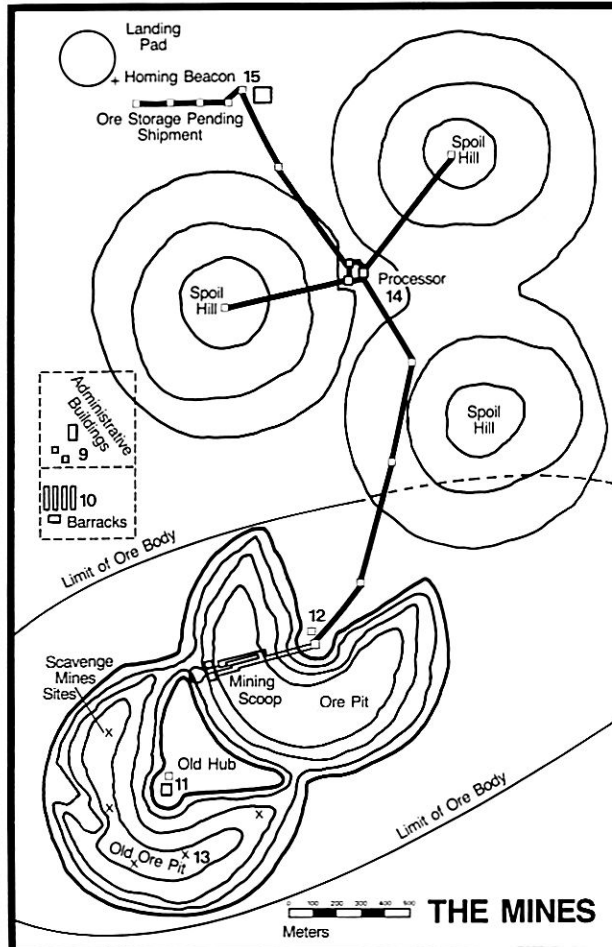
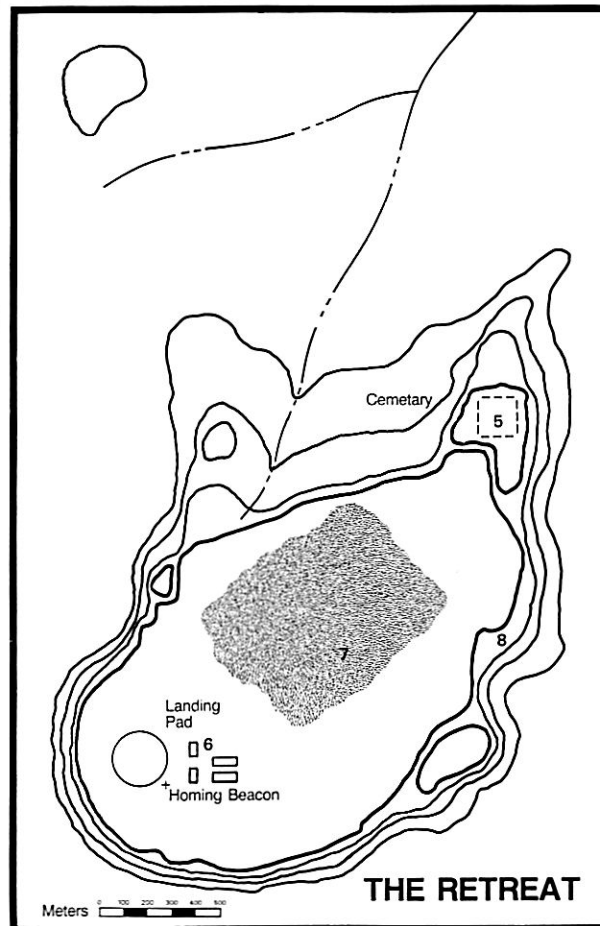
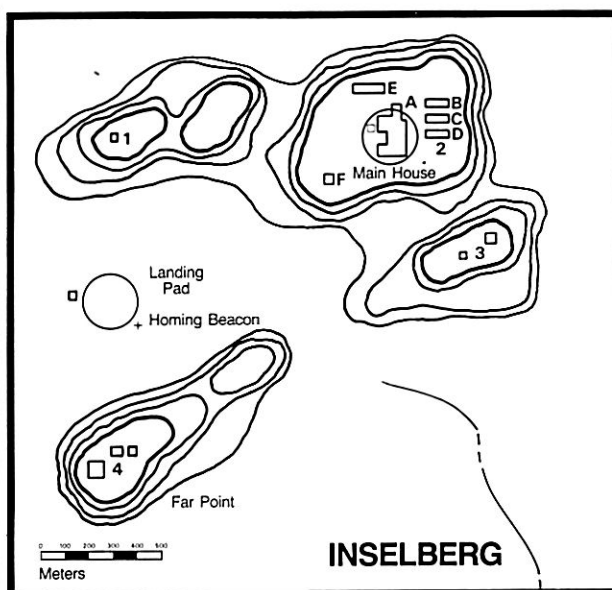
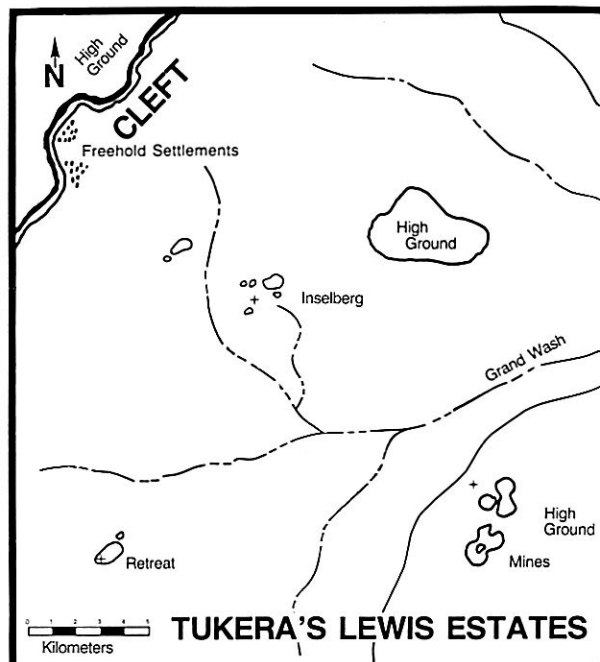
**The Retreat** is a single large butte approximately 12 kilometers out from the main estate buildings. It has long been a park or forest preserve maintained in manicured beauty for the enjoyment of the family. The local family cemetery is at one end of the butte.

**The Mines:** In 840, a local survey discovered a body of lanthanum ore near Inselberg close enough to the surface to allow mining. Although samples of the ore indicated that it was marginally worth mining, no effort to exploit the body of ore was made until approximately 1050, when first excavations were begun.

In 1093, large amounts of equipment were brought in and a large strip mining effort was begun. The mines produce raw ore which is processed into enriched ore for shipment offworld. In addition, the body of ore has been found to have a quantity of mediocre quality semi-precious stones, called "sparkles", which are also sold offworld. Locals can buy permits from the estate to scavenge for sparkles. The stones are sold to the estate, which exports them at a slight profit.

The estate at Inselberg is divided into four general locations.

1. **Warehouse.** This aging stone building was originally



LOCATED ON LEWIS/ARAMIS

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**TUKERA ESTATES**

built as a guest cabin in the early days of the estate. Since then, the main house has grown larger and this building has fallen into disuse. It is used primarily as a storage point for old records (more than 10 years old) and other items which have been outgrown or have fallen from favor but are still too important or valuable to discard. The building is not guarded, although a passing or patrolling guard might notice if someone is there who should not be. Throw 10+ for someone to be noticed each half hour; DMs +1 per level of streetwise, +1 if dexterity 9+.

**2. Main House.** This complex of structures is the home for the Tukera family when it stays here. The main house is a mansion; the outlying buildings are carefully landscaped with trees and shrubs to hide them and contain all the support facilities and quarters for the servants.

*A. The Main House* is a forty room, multi-story dome with an enclosed interior garden, a large reception area, entertainment facilities, and quarters for the family and guests. Access is through several large airlocks. Underground tunnels for servants pass from the dome to the garage and to the utility buildings.

*B. The Servants' Building* contains rooms and living areas for the approximately 40 personal servants who maintain the main house. These servants include cleaning and repair persons, technicians, cooks, and supervisors. This building provides for all the servants' needs, including recreation facilities for their off hours. It is connected by tunnel to building C.

*C. The House Kitchen* contains pantries, kitchen facilities, small repair and stock rooms, and a small vegetable garden for the support of the main house. Servants eat here; prepared foods are sent to the main house by a tunnel leading to the dispensing kitchen in the main house. Tunnels also lead to buildings B and D.

*D. The Mechanical Building* houses the complex's repair and maintenance facilities. A water pumping station services the deep rock well beneath the building. Tunnels connect the building with building C.

*E. The Garage* contains slips for seven air/rafts of various sizes and capacities. At least one is generally available for immediate use; throw 11+ for all air/rafts to be gone at any particular time. Servants are allowed to use the air/rafts if they have a legitimate purpose (which can include personal sightseeing trips on occasion) but a guard must go along as pilot.

*F. The Guard Station* provides constant surveillance of the tip of the plateau; several (1D) guards occupy this small building at all times. From here, guards walk their normal rounds on top of the butte. Actually, the guards are not especially concerned with break-ins or intruders. Instead they patrol the area providing assistance to visitors, helping the servants in their tasks, and noting items which need to be corrected, fixed, or changed.

**3. The Company Site** is a group of two structures housing Tukera company offices and computers, and is used to manage the operations of the mines and other properties on Lewis. Access to this location is by air/raft, although various computer terminals can tie in to the computer from any location in the main house. Confidential documents are held in files in this complex of buildings.

**4. The Far Point Complex** was originally built as an addition for members of the family. In recent times, however, the number of family members has decreased at Inselberg, and the main house now accommodates everyone. The complex consists of three buildings; two are now in disuse. The third serves as a storage facility and armory for the security force (which also maintains a coordinating office here). In the armory are stored a variety of laser rifles and laser carbines, auto rifles, and other weapons and ammunition; a great deal of other useful items are also kept in adjacent storage rooms.

## THE RETREAT

The Retreat is a single large butte topped with a carefully tended expanse of tough native vegetation, including a grove of the world's largest trees. At the south end of the butte are a cluster of buildings once serving as an isolated vacation house for family members to get away from the rest of estate life; these no longer serve their original purpose, however.

From his service at the Retreat, Gvoudzon is familiar with the layout and overall situation here.

**5. The Tukera Family Cemetery** at the north end of the butte is politely fenced by a small iron railing. Inside, simple markers dot the grounds, carved with the names of a number of Tukera family members with dates ranging from 780 to 1104.

**6. The Retreat proper** consists of two small buildings, plus a vehicle garage. One of the buildings (formerly the residence for family members staying at the retreat) is now used to





house Gharukh and her staff (three Vargr and two human assistants, all loyal Tukera employees), a handful of servants, and twelve guards who keep an eye on the project and on Gharukh, and who patrol the approaches to the butte in air/rafts on a constant, regular basis. The other building contains the cryptography lab, computer facilities, and so forth, and was once the servants' quarters.

The garage normally holds five air/rafts (though 2 will be out on patrol at any given time), plus one G-carrier.

**7. The Forest** in the center of the butte is a well-pruned and cared-for preserve. The entire area presents the appearance of a park.

**8. A Small Cave** just below the rim of the butte top is concealed here behind a few shrubs. Gharukh knows about it from some early explorations of the butte (before security around her was tightened to the point that she could no longer go out on her own); it could also be discovered accidentally. It makes a useful hiding place.

**Guards:** The guards at the butte maintain fairly tight security around the cryptography project. Air/raft patrols are made around the butte once every hour; there is a chance (roll 8+) that the adventurers will be spotted by one of these while crossing the desert or climbing the butte. Additional guards and air/rafts would, of course, be summoned in this case.

At the Retreat itself, two guards are on duty at the laboratory at all times, while a third stands guard outside whatever room Gharukh happens to be in at any given time. Gharukh has made one ill-advised attempt to steal an air/raft and flee from Inselberg; the guards are determined not to let this happen again.

Like their compatriots at the main house, guards at the Retreat carry a mix of weapons, including lasers and auto rifles.

## THE MINES

The relatively recent decision to exploit the lanthanum ore deposit near Inselberg has resulted in an open pit mine, a scar on the landscape complete with deep holes and spoil hills around it.

**9. Administration:** The mines are controlled from a small administration compound and office. Surrounded by a perimeter fence standing two meters high and topped with electrified wire, the compound contains a rather bare business office with computer terminals, desks, and other business equipment. Behind the main building is an air/raft service garage and a small storage shed filled with a variety of records and used equipment.

The admin area is open and staffed during daylight hours. At night, the compound is empty.

Connecting the administration compound with the barracks area to the south is a large gate which stands open. To the northeast, the debris forming the spoil hill has extended over the fence, and allows a crossing of the fence without problem.

**10. The Barracks** compound consists of four long barracks buildings, each with row upon row of empty bunks. Only two of the barracks are in use; about half of one building has been modified to contain many small rooms. The basic operation crew lives here and operates the mine by day.

One other barracks building is being used. The administration makes it available to sparkle scavengers; miners stay here as long as they like.

During the Third Frontier War (979 to 986), the Imperial Navy interned approximately 400 Zhodani civilians (all proles; social standing 9 or less) on Lewis at this site, and the internees were used to operate the mine. When the war ended, the Zhodani were repatriated.

**11. The Old Hub** is the former location of the mining scoop pivot for the first open pit. A flat concrete slab and foundation now lies empty at this point.

**12. The New Hub** is similar to the old hub; it is the pivot point for the mining scoop in the newly opened ore pit. The new hub includes a stairway and an access catwalk for the mining scoop. This scoop, suspended by a variety of anti-grav modules, is used to scrape ore from the pit and then transport it to the processor. A catwalk parallels the mining scoop structure and the conveyor to the processor at about 10 meters off the ground.

**13. Scavenge Sites** dot the bottom of the old ore pit. Each scavenge site is a small pit about one meter deep. Many of the pits are accompanied by a sifter cradle used to sift through the dirt for the small (about three to six millimeter) sparkles.

**14. The Processor** is a large refinery mechanism that separates higher grade lanthanum ore from the worthless material of the pits. The spoil is directed to the spoil hills, while the ore is sent to the shipping point.

**15. The Shipping Point** is a storage location where ore is held pending loading on a transport ship. Ships call at this point and are loaded with ore for transshipment to other worlds.

## SCALING CLIFFS

The many rock cliffs that form the sides of the buttes present one method of access to the upper levels. The idea sounds simple: climb up. The following rules govern rock cliff climbing.

Select any 100 meter wide stretch of rock face to climb. Climbing upward involves selecting a path within that stretch. During each five minutes, each climber must throw strength or less, DMs - 1 if dexterity 9+, +1 if dexterity 5-, +1 if carrying any equipment with a length greater than one meter, +1 if climbing at night. If successful, the individual climbs 30 meters (one contour line).

An individual may make one throw for each point of endurance he or she has. Once this endurance has been exhausted, the individual must rest for five minutes before climbing (and making the required throw) in the next five minutes.

If the climbing throw fails, throw dexterity or less to avoid falling, DMs - 1 if strength 9+, +1 if strength 5-. If an individual falls, he or she falls to the bottom of the cliff and takes 2D hits per contour line crossed.

**Climbing Ropes:** Individuals may use climbing ropes for safety. The lead individual is responsible for placing and setting pitons to hold their ropes. Two must be set per contour line; placing a piton requires a throw of strength or less.

If climbing ropes are used, the chance of falling is decreased. Allow a DM of -2 on the throw to fall. If the in-

dividual still falls, throw 7+ for the piton to remain in place; if it does not, the individual falls to the base of the cliff, taking 2D hits per contour line crossed. If the piton does hold, the individual falls 30 meters and takes 3D hits (2D if that takes him or her to the base of the cliff). Placing pitons generates a chance that someone will hear; throw 10+ for a guard to be close (at the top of the butte), and then throw 10+ for him or her to hear.

**Slopes:** In situations where the contour lines are farther than 100 meters apart (in separate boxes on the map), the slope is not steep enough to warrant climbing and can be walked instead with no difficulty.

**Grav Belts:** In the event that the group has grav belts, they may use them to fly to the top of the butte. Doing so is easy and has little chance of injury; there is a chance of detection by guards (throw 9+ for each individual to be detected; DM - 1 if at night).

**Soft Slopes:** Some locations are not rock faces (the spoil hills at the mines; the side of the mine pits) and pitons and ropes cannot be used. However, falling causes only half the damage experienced if falling from a rock face.

### REFEREE'S NOTES

The rescue effort should go fairly smoothly, though there will be several instances when difficulties may arise. The referee is encouraged to add additional pitfalls and problems to be overcome as needed, though the adventure should not be completely derailed by needless competition.

Gharukh, when discovered, is eager to make good an escape, and will shape all her actions to that primary goal. She will admit to being able to read the brooch, and will gladly do so—when she is safely removed from Inselberg. Her knowledge of the routines of the Retreat, added to Gvoudzon's, will aid greatly in planning the party's escape from the butte.

If the referee wishes to encourage it, there is a potential for romance between Gvoudzon and Gharukh. This is quite likely to blossom if both are non-player characters; if Gvoudzon is a player character, Gharukh can become attached to him, while his responses are up to the player. Note that the question is optional, and need not be implemented if the referee would prefer not to deal with the whole idea. It can, however, encourage more true role-playing and character development than is often the case in a typical role-playing game.

### INFORMATION

In the course of their attempt on the Tukera computer files, the adventurers may turn up several pieces of information, some of them seemingly of little value, but actually quite important. Each of the items below is a separate piece of information which can be pulled from the files as described previously. The referee may pass it along in any order desired; those particular items should definitely be passed on before the group is forced to break off by setting off a tamper alarm or being discovered in some other fashion.

1. A correspondence file containing records of communications between Bulolo, head of subsector operations for Tukera and Akerut, and Aran Ashkashkur, director of



the Aramis subsector branch of the Vemene. In a series of exchanges, Bulolo queries Ashkashkur on the *Mammoth* incident. He orders Ashkashkur to conduct a full investigation of circumstances surrounding the crash, managing to imply that it would be best if the accident turned out to be due to Oberlindes-inspired sabotage, rather than Akerut incompetence.

Ashkashkur's reply states that an examination of the evidence suggests that Oberlindes Lines, anxious to expand in the Aramis market, may indeed have been responsible for sabotage of the luckless *Mammoth*.

In a follow-up letter, Bulolo commends Ashkashkur for his prompt work, and orders him to begin plans for a sharp response to Oberlindes provocation—probably in the form of a full tradewar implementation.

Finally, a much later piece of correspondence from Ashkashkur reports his intention to personally look into a security problem at the Tukera depot on Jesedipere. The letter states that he will be arriving there on a specific date (note: the referee should here insert a date 60 days away from the current game day), and that all operations will be handled in his absence from Junidy by his chief assistant there. He will, however, be available at Jesedipere should anything come up that should need his attention.

2. Another correspondence file, this time of letters from Bulolo for distribution to all planetary managers. One letter informs the managers that tradewar operations are being initiated against Oberlindes Lines and that full cooperation with Vemene efforts is essential. Bulolo cites a number of provocations which have led to this step, the last one be-

ing the loss of the Zilan wine monopoly through Oberlindes action.

3. A third file, consisting of letters between Bulolo and the Marquis of Aramis. An early letter from the Marquis questions Bulolo's decision to begin a tradewar, suggesting that honest competition would be more fitting. Bulolo's answer stresses evidence that Oberlindes was responsible for the loss of the *Mammoth*, not merely an act of tradewar, but one damaging to the Imperium; his action, says Bulolo, is merely a protective response. Further correspondence indicates that Bulolo and the Marquis of Aramis will both be at Lewis in a short time (referee: insert a date 30 days or so from the current game date) for some general meetings to discuss policy. The Marquis apparently was not entirely satisfied with Bulolo's response. In all the letters, neither correspondent actually admits that tradewar is being waged by Tukera; all references on both sides are couched in hints and generalities.

4. A confidential report from Tukera cryptography labs at Deneb discusses attempts by scientists there to parallel work on the message brooches developed by Gharukh, the head of the message brooch project.

This report indicates that Gharukh has shown several signs of divided allegiance, and recommends that she be transferred to a more secure and better-supervised site. (An endorsement to the recommendation orders a new cryptographic project to be set up on Lewis.)

**Referee's Notes:** If desired, additional information (including shipping schedules and other potentially valuable information) can also be included. Revelation of this material should be almost off-hand in nature, seemingly a distraction rather than a series of important clues.

#### THE MESSAGE

Gharukh, once rescued, is easily capable of reading the message contained in the brooch. All she requires is a stan-

dard magnetic text recorder and a quarter-credit coin. With a coin taped to it, the brooch will fit exactly into a standard recorder's disk slot, and the message can be retrieved by typing the codeword "presto" (all brooches use the same code). When this has been done, the following message appears on the recorder's screen:

"Greetings:

Our plans have been finalized. I have made arrangements to acquire the material you need for completion of your fleet from a naval shipment. As agreed, this includes:

Two type J LSP meson guns (spinal mount). Net tonnage 1000 tons each.

Two model/7fib computers for fire control and operation. Net tonnage 18 tons each.

Shipments will be diverted as they pass through Aramis subsector, and reshipped to Lablon in modules identified as farm machinery consigned to 'Ozarr.' Total load 2100 tons. Manifests have been prepared under the Akerut corporate letterhead. Export licenses have been procured under the numbers 1107-006750875. Steps are being taken to ensure that the Navy remains unaware of the true fate of the shipment.

As discussed previously, final delivery will await your procurement of sufficient funds. Your officer, Thane Dhurgeng, should meet with me to arrange final transfer details on (referee: insert a date 63 days from the current game date), at the Brokers' Exchange Market, Lablon. Shipment will be stored near the delivery site pending final payment.

Confirmation will follow by an alternate route, as always.

Sincerely,

Aran Ashkashkur"

**Next:** Time is growing short as events move to a climax. It should now be obvious to the players that resolution of the affair will require a *Showdown at Jesedipere*.



# Showdown at Jesedipere

In this chapter, the various gradual revelations made throughout the campaign all come together, bringing the situation to a final climax and a complete resolution. The adventure begins with the return of the *March Harrier* to Aramanx from Lewis after the end of the Inselberg raid.

## THE COUNCIL OF WAR

At Aramanx, the crew is asked to sit in on a planning meeting with Oberlindes and Arlanroughl, bringing Gharukh with them. This "council of war" must come up with the next possible moves, based on the information that has been uncovered, to best win an advantage in the tradewar.

A review of information is in order. It has become plain that Aran Ashkashkur, head of the Vemene, has hatched a scheme to sell two heavy naval guns to the Kforuzeng, a Vargr corsair band of particular ambitions and ruthlessness. From almost any angle, this scheme is plainly one which has to be stopped.

Correspondence has also indicated that Ashkashkur is on his own in this operation—higher Tukera management is unaware of it. They have been duped, just as much as the Navy and everyone else. This gives some leverage against Tukera, for if news of Ashkashkur's dealings were to leak out, the entire company would suffer.

The Marquis of Aramis wants the tradewar ended already, and if Bulolo's main argument—that Oberlindes started the tradewar by sabotaging *Mammoth*—can be disproven by laying the blame on Ashkashkur, Bulolo will be forced to agree to a halt.

Proof, however, is needed. Although there is a great deal of circumstantial evidence, there is no hard proof. Bulolo and the Marquis won't believe the unsupported word of their enemies, nor could Oberlindes follow through on a threat

of turning over information on the scheme to the Navy without more proof than he now has.

To get the proof, Oberlindes appeals again to the adventurers. It has been their work which has led up to this point; now they can take the opportunity to see it through. If, as a result of all this, the tradewar can be ended, Oberlindes will reward them well (though he does not specify any particular reward). There is enough time to travel to Jesedipere before Ashkashkur's scheduled meeting. If they can make it, the adventurers can gather this proof, and hopefully, stop the deal from going through. The ideal result would be the capture of Ashkashkur, the recovery of the meson guns, and physical proof—photographs, recordings, etc.—that the Vemene head was indeed involved in the scheme.

Oberlindes, in the meantime, will see to the other end of the problem. Bulolo and the Marquis are scheduled to meet at Lewis soon, one of the few times that both of these individuals will be together and in a position to allow some bargaining. With characteristic bravura, Oberlindes intends to take an Oberlindes ship to Lewis, violating the interdiction. By some loud and persistent transmissions, he hopes to force a meeting, wherein he can begin to lay out what is known about Bulolo's plot.

Ideally, Oberlindes sees the entire situation leading to a number of excellent developments. In addition to the end of the tradewar and the recovery of the meson guns, there is a chance to foil Kforuz plans (and everyone, Oberlindes



and Arllanroughl included, has reasons to want this to happen), and an opportunity to place Tukera in an embarrassing enough position to wring various other concessions from them.

*March Harrier* must move quickly in order to reach Jesedipere in time (by this point, less than 50 days remain until the exchange date). Oberlindes will make the same arrangements as before to cover expenses and pay for cargo and passenger space. What is important, he stresses, is that *March Harrier* get there in time and carry out this mission. Arllanroughl is sent along to look after Oberlindes interests.

### VOYAGE TO JESEDIPERE

Even at maximum speed, with no turn-around time at Nasemin starport (wilderness refueling at the system's gas giant is possible), the voyage to Jesedipere will take just over four weeks (about 30 days, including the time spent transferring fuel from reserve tanks). This leaves the adventurers with only about two weeks (one week, if they stopped over at Nasemin) to accomplish anything in the way of preparation for Ashkashkur's arrival.

Along the way, the party will have plenty of time to plan their general course of action (though specifics should wait until they are on the spot and able to judge the exact details of the situation). A stop at Nasemin should not be ruled out, since the planet's technological level would allow purchase of more sophisticated equipment than is available on Jesedipere itself. All of these considerations should be thoroughly examined and evaluated; the referee should allow adequate amounts of time for the players to make their preparations.

### JESEDIPERE

Jesedipere (0601 C775300-7) is a medium-sized world with a standard, tainted atmosphere and seas covering approximately half of the world's surface. A backwater world at the edge of Imperial space, Jesedipere has never been exploited, and remains a wilderness. This is largely due to the fact that the planet, a relatively young world, is still undergoing a high degree of volcanic activity. The air is tainted by varying amounts of sulfur and sulfur compounds. Thus the world has not been deemed particularly suitable for any significant degree of settlement or exploitation.

Jesedipere was selected, in the period following the last of the Frontier Wars, as the site of one of several trading stations established in the Aramis subsector to promote trade into the Vargr estates. The class C starport at Jesedipere is the mainstay of this trading facility, and is operated under the auspices of the Scout Service. An ISS detachment, numbering some 15 individuals skilled in interspecies relations, is stationed at the port. Most of the major mercantile companies doing business in the subsector maintain factors and small supporting contingents at the starport. Several of the larger companies, including Tukera/Akerut, maintain separate warehousing and landing facilities at some distance from the main starport, in order to maintain a degree of privacy and security in their dealings.

Jesedipere's population, numbering (at last official census) some 4600 individuals, is concentrated at the small town of Downport, located about five kilometers from the starport proper. These people attempt to make the best living they can by catering to visiting starships. A wide-open planet, Jesedipere has neither an organized government nor enforceable laws. Order is maintained at the starport by Port Authority Enforcers under the auspices of the Scout Service, but outside the starport perimeter fence virtually anything goes. This has made Downport one of the most notoriously unrestrained dens of iniquity in the subsector, where a spaceman can obtain anything from drugs to a deal on a new—and usually stolen—starship. Downport has not been posted an Amber Zone—but it is generally considered to be a town where visitors should be prepared for anything.

A second element of Jesedipere's population—only recently established—is the large refugee camp set up for Vargr who have fled across the border in the face of Kforuz expansion. A colony of approximately 3500 refugees has been established on a large island 250 kilometers distant from Downport. Scout Service authorities on the planet are awaiting official word from Aramis concerning the ultimate fate of these Vargr, who in the meantime have suffered greatly from a lack of medical supplies and food. Relief efforts have been organized by the Torenlee Foundation on Junidy, and the situation has stabilized somewhat, but conditions are still very harsh.

### DOWNPORT

The town of Downport is a small, untidy settlement which lies five kilometers south of Jesedipere starport. Although popular misconceptions frequently paint Downport as containing nothing but bars, gambling dens, and other dives, this in fact is hardly the case. It is true that Joy Street and its environs do indeed contain many such establishments;



on the other hand, however, there are also numerous businesses of somewhat better reputation in the town as well. Warehouses, small trading concerns, and shops offering imported Vargr souvenirs and similar merchandise are also present. In actuality, the district which includes Joy Street is relatively small; it is, however, the best-known part of Downport, and certainly is the hub of Jesedipere's flourishing traffic in smuggling, fenced goods, and other illegal or unsavory activities.

Downport and Jesedipere Starport have been established in one of the more stable regions on the planet, and are not subject to the extensive degree of vulcanism and seismic activity that characterizes some areas. Still, architecture reflects a need for security; most of Downport's buildings are low-set, solidly built domes, capable of withstanding most quake effects, while the starport buildings and structures have been heavily reinforced for the same purposes. No one has forgotten the Downport Quake of 1073, which claimed 250 lives (nearly 10% of the population at that time) and destroyed six merchant ships in port.

### ON JESEDIPERE

On arriving at Jesedipere, the adventurers can begin their final preparations for their coming struggle against Ashkashkur and the Kforuzeng. Involvement of local authorities is not, at this time, a very good idea; secrecy is needed if blackmail of Tukera is to be effective, and in any case the adventurers would have no proof of their claims.

This leaves the adventurers pretty much on their own. Locating Tukera's warehousing facilities and landing field, nearly 1000 kilometers from Downport, is not particularly difficult. Deciding what to do with the knowledge will be. That decision rests with the players, who must determine the best course of action to accomplish their goals. A covert reconnaissance of the Tukera facility would probably be the best option open at this time, but the group should not be forced into such an action.

### THE TUKERA TRADING POST

The Tukera facility is small and simple in layout, lying on a broad plain with few irregularities and virtually no ground cover.

**1. The Landing Field** is an oval-shaped, irregular depression of solidly packed dirt. The perimeter has been built up with earthen embankments, reinforced in places by sandbags and, occasionally, concrete.

**2. The Control Building** contains tracking and communications gear, the field's landing beacon, and offices and conference rooms where meetings and other business can be carried out.

**3. Warehouses** (three of them) hold merchandise on a temporary basis, between its arrival at Jesedipere and transshipment elsewhere. The meson guns are in one of them, still labeled as farm machinery.

**4. The Vehicle Garage** holds two air/rafts, plus a tracked construction vehicle fitted out with a bulldozer blade; this was used to build (and continues to maintain) the landing field. Smaller forklifts and other loading devices are also stored here, along with spare parts, tools, and fuel.

**5. Quarters:** One building serves as the quarters for the facility's entire staff (20 people). Included in the building are kitchen, dining, and recreation facilities.

**6. Ramps:** Three ramps pierce the embankment to allow loading and unloading of cargo to and from the warehouses.

**Personnel:** The 20 individuals at the trading station are Tukera workers of no special significance and know nothing of Ashkashkur's plot. Of course, Ashkashkur can enlist the aid of all the Tukera personnel merely by identifying himself as head of the Vemene to the local Tukera factor.

### SOME OPTIONS

During a reconnaissance of the Tukera post, the adventurers may be able to get into the warehouse where the meson guns are stored and gather evidence—photographs, for instance—of the contents. This, however, does not satisfy the main problems—proving that Ashkashkur is involved, and stopping the transfer. Nor would sabotage be worthwhile, for that, too, would defeat the purpose of proving the Vemene chief's involvement, and thus ending the tradewar.

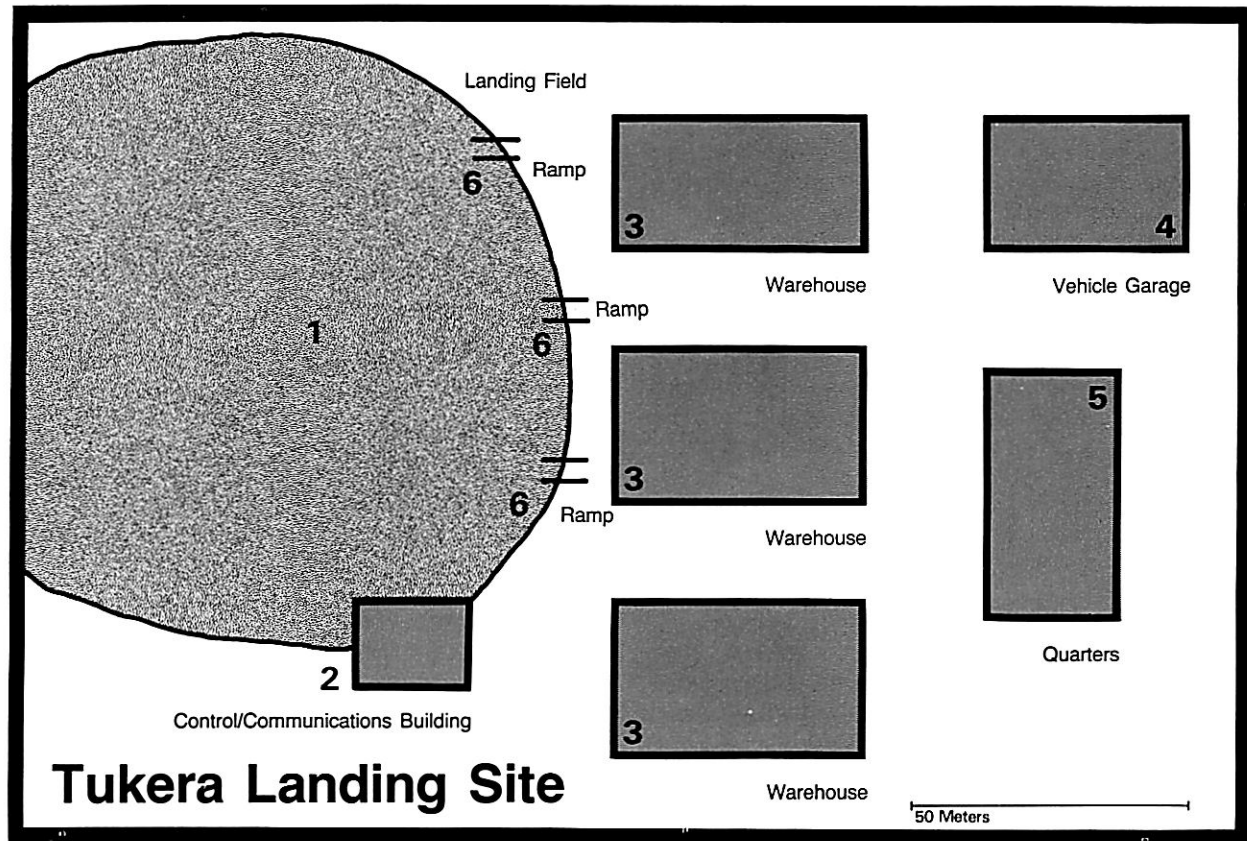
**Referee's Note:** The adventurers may wish, however, to perform some subtle sabotage which will not be readily apparent, but which would make sure that the meson guns would be useless to the Kforuzeng. A character with electronics-2 or computer-3 could damage or remove components sufficient to accomplish this task, given 1D x 15 minutes per meson gun. This option, however, does not guarantee success, for the Kforuzeng could perhaps repair or replace the damaged systems and make the guns serviceable again. A plan like this would be a good back-up option, to be used in case of an emergency, but would probably not be a very wise first choice for completing the mission.

**Raid:** Eventually, the adventurers will probably arrive at a decision to stage a raid of some kind on the landing field during the exchange between Ashkashkur the Vargr. A direct attack would probably not serve their interests best, because of the possibility of failing to penetrate the security and get the proof they need of the transfer. Instead, they need to arrange a method of getting close to Ashkashkur at the crucial moment. Photographs of the actual exchange, clearly showing the Vemene head accepting money for the guns (or, more precisely, for the shipping documents which will identify the Kforuzeng as the consignees of several crates of farm machinery), or showing the parties examining an open crate obviously filled with parts of a meson gun, will be the proof needed. Once this is obtained, other considerations—stopping the delivery of the guns, capturing Ashkashkur, etc.—can be attended to.

**The Refugees:** One option the party may wish to consider is the possibility of recruiting some assistance. In addition to the Tukera employees at the trading station, a number of Kforuzeng can be expected to make an appearance during the exchange, serving as bodyguard for Dhurgeng.

An excellent source of local aid, and one recommended by Arrianroughl, can be found at the Vargr refugee colony on Jesedipere. Dispossessed by the Kforuzeng, these Vargr will be eager to strike a blow against their enemies, and can be persuaded to help. Use the reaction table to determine





the chances of winning their support. The presence of Arrlanroughl, Gvoudzon, and/or Gharukh will each add 1 to the result. An additional DM of +1 is obtained if the party has helped the refugees in the past (see *Scent of Fear* in *Exotic Encounters*).

The Vagr refugees have some weapons, having had contact with several corsairs and arms dealers since their flight in an effort to reorganize and prepare to seek their revenge on the Kforuzeng. A result of 8+ on the table will definitely encourage support to any degree the party may seek. If employed, the refugees must be led by Arrlanroughl (who can command their respect and support). This leaves the adventurers on their own for the final operation.

**Downport:** If the party cares to, they can arrange for some assistance from sources in Downport. One example of such help would be arrangements for transport of Vagr refugees to a point from which they could launch a diversionary attack. Other sorts of assistance may occur to players as they set their plans. Seeking contacts in Downport follows the usual procedures associated with streetwise skill. The referee is urged to use restraint in judging the sort of help which can be obtained in Downport. Thus personal weapons don't pose much of a problem; a stolen starship would present a much different level of difficulty (though a contact might be able to obtain one, considerations of time, expense, and reliability would have to be taken into account, as well).

#### THE EXCHANGE

Two days before the date given in the brooch message, Ashkashkur arrives on Jesedipere. The adventurers will

discover this if they are keeping an eye on the Tukera landing facility, or if they have had the foresight to enlist the cooperation of someone on the starport tracking and control staff to keep them informed of shipping in the system (note: the system presented in *Zilan Wine* for creating officials can be used here to present a well-rounded picture of a typical starport communications operator for this situation).

Ashkashkur arrives on Jesedipere aboard a ship's boat sent down from an orbiting Tukera patrol cruiser. Accompanying Ashkashkur are Jelika Chan and the six Vemene bodyguards. They are accommodated at the station upon landing. The patrol cruiser remains in orbit throughout the period of their stay.

The Vagr arrive two days later. The Kforuzeng send two large transports escorted by two Vagr corsairs to Jesedipere. The squadron is commanded by Dhurgeng, one of the senior Kforuz officers; it was he who commanded the mercenaries on Aramanx. Dhurgeng descends in a modular cutter, accompanied by ten heavily-armed Kforuz bodyguards, to conclude negotiations and payment. The remainder of the squadron will wait in orbit until called for.

Upon his arrival, Dhurgeng will be met by Ashkashkur and conducted to the warehouse, there to inspect the merchandise and conclude the deal. According to plan, the two Vagr freighters would then land one at a time for loading, after which the squadron would return to Vagr space. Ashkashkur, collecting his money, would journey back to Junidy, and there complete his arrangements to disappear for a life of luxury at the Imperial Core.

The adventurers, however, will probably prevent this sort of conclusion to the course of events.

### THE SHOWDOWN

Adventurer plans will have to deal with a number of important factors. During any and all planning sessions, Arlanroughl serves the referee as a means of reminding the group of possible problems, making suggestions, and rejecting plans that seem wildly inappropriate.

First, the group must penetrate the defenses of the station and actually record the meeting between Ashkashkur and Dhurgeng. One good way of doing this would be to arrange a distraction (an attack by the Vargr refugees, for instance) which will cause general confusion. In the midst of the confusion, adventurers may get to the warehouse and stage their photographic ambush.

A second consideration is the presence of hostile starships in orbit. In a matter of a few minutes, the patrol cruiser or the two Vargr corsairs could drop down from orbit and come to the aid of the Tukera station, creating a major hazard to the Vargr refugees (if used) and to the plan as a whole. Those three ships should be neutralized or delayed in order to best protect the adventurers' allies.

One very good possibility would be an ambush, using the *March Harrier's* transponder modification to once again get in the first blow. In this case, it might even be possible to drive a wedge between the patrol cruiser and the Kforuz squadron. By launching an ambush against one of the Vargr ships while disguised as a Tukera ship, the possibilities of a double-cross will occur to the Vargr ship captains, and this could cause the Vargr to fire on the patrol cruiser, doing *March Harrier's* work for her. If this isn't done, some other method of diverting or eliminating the three warships should be considered.

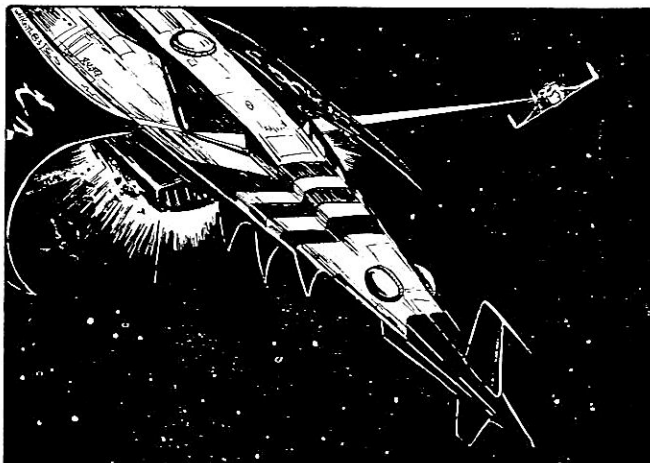
As soon as the fighting begins, Ashkashkur and Dhurgeng will both flee. In all likelihood they will both head for the Vargr cutter, which will be ready for immediate lift-off. If they win free, they will seek to escape to the Vargr squadron and safety.

Whether they reach the cutter or not depends upon the skill of the adventurers and the desires of the referee. An extra edge of excitement can be created if the cutter escapes from Jesedipere, prompting a hasty pursuit and a final confrontation in space. Ultimately, if the adventurers have done well, they should be permitted to catch up with their fleeing foes, board the cutter, and have the satisfaction of a last fight which ends with the capture of Ashkashkur. However, a referee who wants to promote further campaigning against this same background might allow Ashkashkur to escape with the Vargr, lending his great skill in covert operations to the Kforuzeng and remaining a potential source of danger for future confrontations. This is entirely up to the referee.

### RESOLUTION

Following the last confrontation on Jesedipere, a few matters will remain which should be sewn up neatly.

**Ashkashkur:** If captured, Ashkashkur will almost certainly attempt to buy off the adventurers, probably seeking to have them look the other way while he makes good an escape



across the border. Ashkashkur commands excellent resources; cooperation could well make the party very wealthy. On the other hand, aside from any moral questions, could Oberlindes be so easily fooled?

**The Meson Guns:** The meson guns pose a problem; the agreement Oberlindes wants to make with Tukera will require silence on the part of all concerned regarding Ashkashkur's plot, meaning that it will not be possible to call in the authorities and simply return the meson guns to the Navy. Their continuing existence could prove embarrassing to Tukera, and the agreement to end the trade war would probably call for their destruction.

Again, the meson guns offer a temptation to the adventurers. With their knowledge, they could arrange a deal similar to Ashkashkur's. The Vargr, the rebels on Dhian, any of the nations on Aramanx, and many other dissident elements they have encountered could all be made interested in a sale of sophisticated weaponry. On the other hand, Tukera or Oberlindes, if they discovered such double-dealing, could cause the party a great deal of trouble. Such actions would probably not work out well (but could end up the subject of all-new adventures for *March Harrier* and her crew).

**The Kforuzeng:** In the course of the climactic battle, a confrontation with Dhurgeng and some of his bodyguards is almost obligatory. Gvoudzon should be given the chance to avenge himself for the death of Kfouzorr on Aramanx. The Kforuz ships will eventually break and flee back to Vargr space, particularly once Dhurgeng is dead and there is no excuse to stick around and continue fighting it out.

Kforuz plans have been badly shattered. Without the meson guns, *Ozarr* remains an incomplete vessel, and the Kforuzeng a second-rate power. In addition, Dhurgeng's cutter carries a fortune in cash, gems, and precious metals (the MCr500 intended to pay for the meson guns). The loss of this money will be a shattering blow to the over-extended Kforuzeng, and could spell the end of their meteoric rise to power.

On the other hand, the corsairs remain a power to be reckoned with, and the adventurers may find themselves the objects of Kforuz vengeance—again, a fit topic for future adventure situations.

**The Money:** The MCr500 will offer a major temptation to all concerned. The adventurers may decide to get greedy

and attempt to appropriate the lot, but this should be discouraged. There are a number of interested parties involved, and in fairness they should be permitted to share in this bounty. Tukera has suffered financial losses (the *Mammoth*, for example) as a result of Ashkashkur's actions. Oberlindes has suffered considerable damage from the tradewar. If the Vargr refugees assisted in the resolution, their problems could be considerably eased by a reward. The adventurers should have a chance at a share in the money, but shouldn't be given the entire amount.

**Referee's Note:** If further adventures are contemplated, these arguments concerning money earned are especially important. To give each of the party millions of credits to play with is to largely deprive them of a motive for continued adventuring. Rewards must be poised somewhere between a sufficient return for danger and effort and a recognition of what will best serve future adventures as well.

**The Tradewar:** After the Jesedipere confrontation is completed, the proof uncovered by the adventurers will clinch the arguments Oberlindes has already begun. Tukera will scramble to come to an arrangement that will keep Ashkashkur's designs from becoming public; the tradewar will end immediately. It is likely that other concessions—cash settlements for damage, freedom of access to the wine market on Zila, a general opening of Aramis to competition from Oberlindes—will all be granted, as well. Naturally, though, this is really only a temporary truce; tradewar, economic or military, will no doubt break out anew once this crisis has faded away.

**Rewards:** Oberlindes will be more than generous in his final meeting with the adventurers. Until now, *March Harrier* has been tied down to a subsidy payment and the responsibilities that go with it. Now Oberlindes changes that. At the conclusion of the Zilan wine deal he purchased the ship's subsidy contract from its previous owners; now he tears up this contract and sets *March Harrier* and the crew free of all obligations. The unending battle to cover expenses and turn a profit goes on, but is no longer complicated by the need to pay half of the ship's income to a third party every month. *March Harrier* is free now to ply the space lanes as her crew wishes.

In addition to this reward (which is over MCr75 in value, given the current cost of the ship), individual rewards are also a possibility. The amount should not exceed MCr1

apiece, and should probably be much less (see the referee's note, above).

Finally, Oberlindes will continue to offer the group charters or contracts as he can. He and Arrianroughl remain important and useful contacts, who can be exploited in time to come.

**Other Benefits:** One important benefit the party can reap early on is pressure on the Marquis of Aramis, through Oberlindes, to patch up some of the outstanding legal difficulties that face the group. The Marquis can have all charges of a criminal nature on Aramis dropped, and can use his influence to lessen the danger from any Imperial entanglements they may have become involved in. He has no power to interfere in local matters (Pysadi, for example), but can at least reduce the number of problems the group may have to deal with in the future.

Further benefits and rewards are up to the referee, possibly in response to specific requests from the players. In some cases, rewards from the adventure could themselves lead to further encounters and adventures.

#### GENERAL REFEREE'S NOTES

The final chapter cannot hope to cover all the possibilities inherent in the situation, as player responses and activities will be shaped by past experience—and that experience cannot always be dictated in a work of this size and complexity. Thus the burden is heavy on the referee to make sure that this last adventure offers an appropriate conclusion to past adventures in the campaign.

To work, the denouement must be a satisfying culmination of what has gone before. It must be exciting, fast-moving, and end in such a way as to resolve the situation fully, leaving no loose ends (except where the referee intends to exploit a loose end to lead into new adventures). The spirit behind these basic points is far more important than the letter of the adventure text. If the group can reach a conclusion that will be exciting for them, and which will work just as well, then there is no need to work in Vargr refugees attacking or battles in space—they can be ignored, and a more appropriate climax substituted, at the behest of the referee. This is the referee's ultimate responsibility: to make sure that everyone gets the most out of the game. It is within those limits, and no others, that the **Traveller** referee must function.



# The March Harrier

Worlds in the interstellar community need trade in order to support their own economies. Trade provides goods the population may not otherwise have access to, and provides valuable foreign exchange. Interstellar trade is dependent on the transport companies which carry cargo and passengers between systems. Worlds along the major trade and express boat routes are fortunate, in that they are served as a matter of course by large, scheduled freighters and liners. Off the major trade routes, worlds are served by the smaller feeder transport lines.

## THE SUBSIDIZED MERCHANT

Worlds off the major routes have found that ship subsidies can be used to establish dependable trade service. The concept of a ship subsidy involves second-order trade policies. A first-order trade policy is followed by a trading company intent on making a profit; second-order trade policies involve making trade possible without necessarily generating a visible profit. Governments can often be content to have the fringe benefits of trade — such as the higher tax incomes which result when trade increases the local standard of living.

The *March* class subsidized merchant is an example of a merchant ship intended to fill otherwise vacant trade channels for worlds which feel they need commerce. Its large cargo capacity makes it reasonably efficient, although its small jump drives restrict it to jump-1, and thus to worlds which lie within one parsec of each other.

*March* class merchants are produced throughout the Spinward Marches, and have an excellent service record. Available from a variety of shipbuilders, the most notable producers in the Spinward Marches include General Shipyards, Ling Standard Products, GSbAG, and Clan Severn.

**Subsidized Merchant (type R):** Using a 400-ton hull, the subsidized merchant (often called the fat trader) is a trading vessel intended to meet the trading needs of clusters of worlds, usually under a subsidy. It has jump drive-C, maneuver drive-C, and power plant-C, giving performance of jump-1 and 1-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 50 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-1. Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model/1. There are thirteen staterooms and nine low berths. The ship has two hard-points and two tons set aside for fire control. No weapons are mounted. There is one ship's vehicle: a 20-ton launch. Cargo capacity is 200 tons. The ship is streamlined.

The fat trader requires a crew of five: pilot, navigator, engineer, medic, and steward. Up to two gunners may be added. The pilot also normally operates the launch. The ship can carry eight high or middle passengers and thirteen low passengers. The ship costs Cr101.03 (including 10% discount for standard designs) and takes 14 months to build.

**The March Harrier:** The *March Harrier* is non-standard in one respect: over the years, the crew have been able to find weapons for her, and the ship now mounts two turrets, each with dual beam lasers.

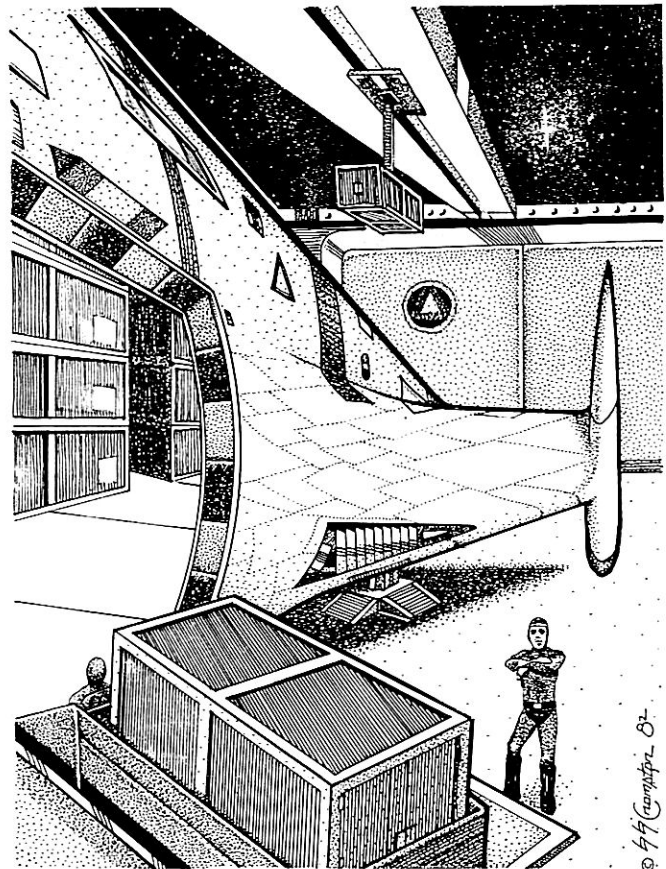
The usual text of a subsidy agreement calls for a ship to service an agreed-upon route for at least 70% of each year;

for the remainder of the year, the ship can undertake charters or service routes to other worlds. In all cases, however, the subsidy holder receives 50% of gross revenues. At times, unscrupulous ship captains circumvent these provisions by smuggling.

## REVENUE BREAKDOWN

The subsidized merchant makes money by carrying passengers and freight for a fee, and spending less than the received amount in fees for ship upkeep and operation. By examining the potential revenues and costs, it is possible to ascertain how much money the ship can expect to make in transport operations. The information below is computed on the basis of one trip per two weeks, and is for one trip.

**Revenue:** The fat trader can expect to make income from four sources: high passengers, middle passengers, low passengers, and cargo. The ship has eight staterooms



available for passengers, and nine low berths for low passengers. Cargo hold capacity is 200 tons.

**Passengers:** With the staterooms full, the ship can carry 8 passengers and expect an income of Cr80,000 for one trip. If all are middle passengers, this income can reach as low as Cr64,000. Vacancies can reduce this income still further.

**Low Passengers:** The low berths can return Cr1,000 per passenger, or Cr9,000 if the berths are full.

**Cargo:** The ship can carry up to 200 tons of cargo, and return Cr200,000 per trip if the hold is filled.

**Costs:** The ship has a series of continuing expenses to be met as it operates. These include fuel, ship payment (or subsidy payment), life support, maintenance, salaries, and berthing costs.

**Fuel:** The ship requires 50 tons of fuel for each trip. Refined fuel is preferred, at a cost of Cr25,000 (Cr500 per ton). Unrefined fuel can be purchased (Cr5,000; Cr100 per ton) at starports, or is available free from gas giants or oceans. Unrefined fuel creates a possibility of drive failure or misjump.

**Ship Payment:** This fat trader is a subsidized vessel, and 50% of its gross income must be paid to the subsidy agent. Payments may be made at any class A, B, C, or D starport. Although the amount due is a large fraction of the total income the ship produces, a standard ship payment would be more: Cr211,000 per trip.

**Life Support:** Life support costs amount to Cr2,000 per passenger or crewmember, and Cr100 per low berth. Assuming a full ship, the fat trader would pay Cr26,900 per trip for life support.

**Maintenance:** In anticipation of annual overhaul, the ship should allocate a portion of each trip's income for maintenance. This amounts to Cr4,042 per trip.

**Salaries:** The crew is paid according to a standard monthly salary scale with bonuses based on skill levels. For the seven standard adventurers provided for the campaign, this amounts to Cr12,500 per trip (half month).

**Berthing Costs:** Berthing costs are unpredictable, but can be approximated at Cr100 per trip.

Assuming a full ship (passengers and cargo) the fat trader can expect revenues of Cr289,000 per trip. Costs associated with that trip amount to Cr215,842 (including the 50% subsidy payment). Net return after costs for the trip is Cr73,158. However, real events do not often run that way. Cargo holds are rarely full; passenger staterooms often carry middle rather than high passengers. The actual business of turning a profit using the fat trader requires careful attention to detail.

**Ship's Operating Fund:** The *March Harrier's* income and expenses pass through a fund managed by the owners of the ship (the captain, the pilot, and the engineer). All salaries, fuel and maintenance costs, and other expenses are paid from the fund, and all income generated by the ship goes into it.

The fund is managed by a board of three. The captain has five shares, the pilot two, and the engineer three. The board votes to decide how money is to be used. Payments to the subsidy holder are the fund's first requirement, followed by other expenses. If there is excess money, the board may

vote dividends to the shareholders.

When the *March Harrier* comes out of the shipyard from its annual maintenance, the operating fund totals Cr112,816.

**The Shadow Fund:** The ship's crew has sources of income which do not, strictly speaking, depend on the operation of the *March Harrier*. The subsidy holder does not receive 50% of the income from these operations, which must therefore be kept separate from the operating fund. This separate fund is called the shadow fund. Most often, this fund is used to purchase cargos for speculation and to buy cargo space for them on the *March Harrier* (paying standard rates to the operating fund). When the goods are sold, the income is placed in the shadow fund.

The shadow fund is also run on the basis of shares. At the beginning of the adventure, there are 100 shares, of which the captain has 20, the pilot 40, the engineer 10, the medic 20, and the gunner 10. The fund's total assets are Cr23,660. Any shareholder may sell shares to any crewmember, and the shareholders may vote to issue new shares to anyone in return for cash placed in the fund. Dividends can also be issued by vote. Each share currently has a theoretical value of Cr232.66. The shadow fund has sometimes loaned money to the operating fund.

## STARSHIP DETAILS

From the exterior, the *March Harrier* is a streamlined, somewhat chunky starship with a modified delta swept wing. Huge cargo doors break the lines of the nose, and form the rear tail area. Smaller loading doors are visible on both sides of the ship, and control room windows on the upper surfaces.

Riding piggyback on the upper surface of the ship is its 20-ton launch.

The ship itself rests on large landing gear pylons which hold the ship at a standard height above the ground. These pylons are capable of "kneeling" to change height and place the cargo deck and bow doors at a better level for cargo loading and unloading.

**Interior Walls:** Interior walls are partitions; they are non-load-bearing panels firmly fixed in place. They are not pressure tight, and cannot withstand a concerted assault. Inflicting 100 hit points on such a wall with an energy weapon will burn a hole large enough for one person per turn to pass through. An explosion which produces 100 hit points will produce the same result. Weapons firing bullets are less efficient at producing this sort of damage: such a weapon must produce 1000 hit points before a person-sized hole is produced.

**Sliding Doors:** Set in interior walls are sliding doors. Such doors save space over conventional swinging doors, and so are standard on most starships. They are not air-tight, and serve merely as privacy screens. They may be broken down in the same manner as interior walls.

Sliding doors are powered, and open completely (assuming ship power is on) when a stud is pressed on the wall next to the door. Sliding doors may be locked (from the other side, from both sides, or by the computer) and a red light shows on the stud panel to indicate a locked condition.

When ship power is off, sliding doors will no longer

# MARCH HARRIER

## SUBSIDIZED MERCHANT

**Tonnage:** 400 tons  
(standard). 5,600 cubic  
meters volume.

**Dimensions:** 46.5 meters  
long by 10 meters high  
by 15 meters wide.

**Wingspan:** 32 meters.

**Crew:** Five.  
Captain/pilot, navigator,  
medic, steward, and  
engineer.

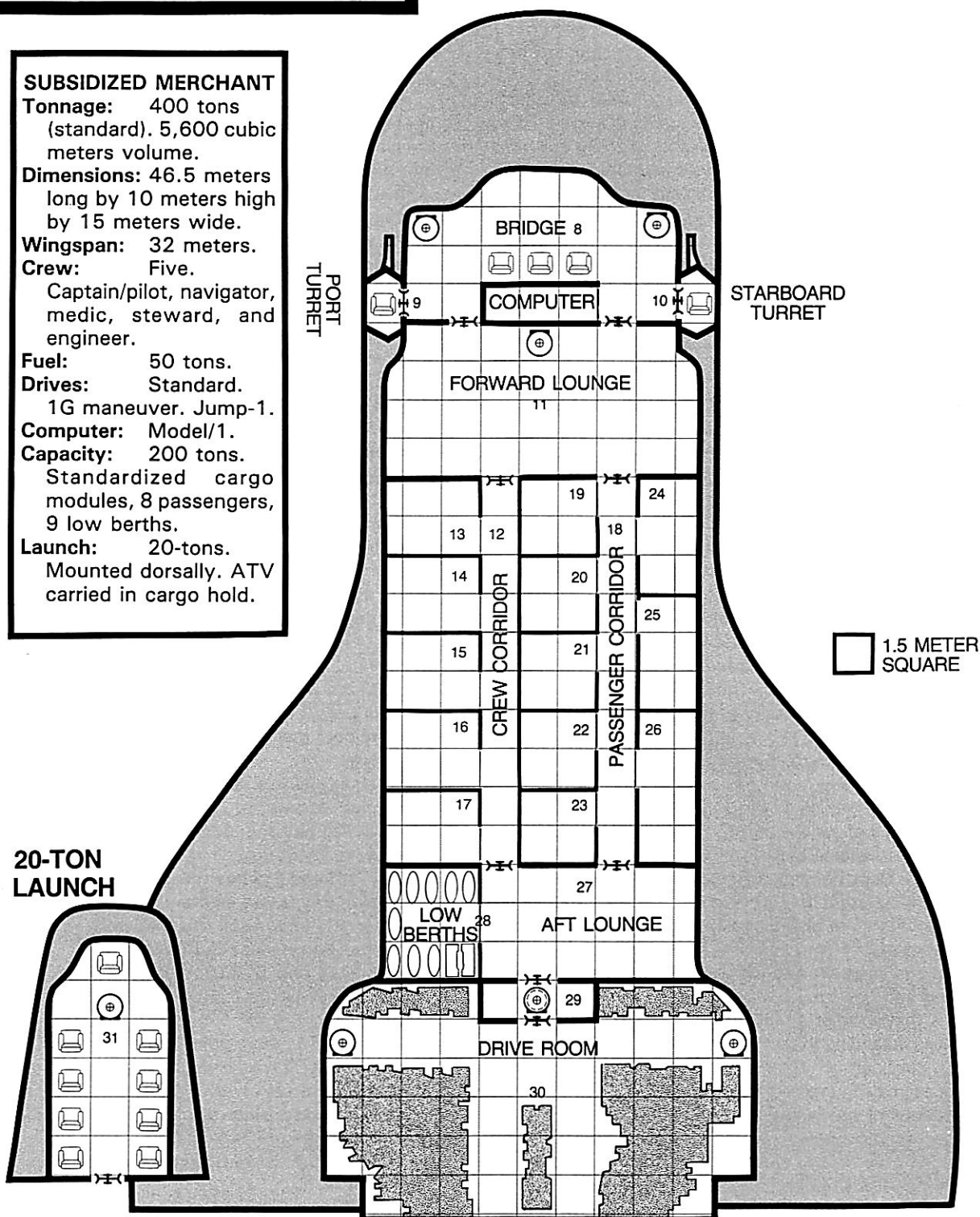
**Fuel:** 50 tons.

**Drives:** Standard.  
1G maneuver. Jump-1.

**Computer:** Model/1.

**Capacity:** 200 tons.  
Standardized cargo  
modules, 8 passengers,  
9 low berths.

**Launch:** 20-tons.  
Mounted dorsally. ATV  
carried in cargo hold.



Upper (Quarters) Deck



operate automatically; they may be overridden by brute force. To open, 10 strength points or more must be applied. (A pry bar adds 4 strength points to the individual doing the work.)

**Bulkheads:** The major structural components of the ship are the bulkheads, and they represent the compartmentalization of the ship for damage control and environment maintenance as well as the outer hull of the ship. Bulkheads are very difficult to destroy; an energy weapon or explosion must produce 1000 hit points in order to breach a bulkhead; bullet-firing weapons are ineffective against them. All deck floors and ceilings are assumed to be bulkheads.

**Hatches:** Hinged pressure doors secured by a handwheel and extending bars. They are not automatic, and are not controlled by the ship's computer; simple sensors will indicate to the bridge if the hatch is open or closed.

**Cargo Doors:** Large hinged doors which fit snugly and pressure-tight. They allow access to cargo areas. Generally powered, and often with extendible ramps, they allow large cargo items to be loaded easily.

## INTERIOR CONDITIONS

Normal interior conditions on the subsidized merchant approximate those of a livable world.

**Light:** Most areas have full intensity lighting available, sufficient for reading with ease. The intensity of lights can be varied by a simple wall switch positioned in each room. The ship's computer can also be used to vary lighting and to monitor its levels. Some areas (such as the cargo deck) may be poorly lit; other areas (such as the bridge) may be lit in red light in order to preserve night vision.

**Atmosphere:** The interior of the ship will normally be pressurized to standard atmosphere with an oxygen/nitrogen mixture. Airlocks may be pressurized or in vacuum, depending on the last use of the facility.

**Temperature:** The interior of the normal ship is about 20 degrees centigrade.

**Plumbing:** Standard, but simple, sanitary facilities (including toilet, sink, and shower) are available in each stateroom, as well as on the bridge and in the drive rooms. Small craft such as the launch, will at least have drinking and waste disposal facilities for use in flight.

**Gravity:** Deck flooring includes integral grav plates which provide a constant 1-G artificial gravity field. Acceleration compensators are also installed and negate the effects of high acceleration and lateral G forces while maneuvering. A ship's passengers cannot normally tell whether they are moving through space or grounded on a planet surface unless they look at a viewscreen.

Notwithstanding the use of grav plates, personnel are normally confined to their staterooms or to acceleration couches in the lounge when the ship is taking off or landing.

Sections of the internal grav plates can be turned on or off, or even reversed, locally or by the computer. The negative grav field is used on the cargo deck to assist in loading and positioning cargo.

The *March Harrier* is typical of the *March* class of subsidized merchants. It is built with two decks parallel to the direction of acceleration. The lower, or cargo, deck contains the main cargo bays, the drives (with the exception of the

power plant), and the attachment points for the streamlined wings. Fuel tankage is carried on the wings. The upper, or quarters, deck holds the bridge, the power plant, weaponry turrets, and the staterooms.

**1. Cargo Deck.** The cargo deck is a 200-ton capacity storage area which is the major purpose of the ship. Constructed specifically for use with cargo modules, the ceiling is 6 meters (as opposed to a standard ceiling height of 3 meters); modules are stacked two high.

The floor of the cargo area is fitted with grav plates, which are reversible. When modules (or other cargo) are loaded, the plates are reversed, and the modules pushed about and into place.

The cargo deck is pressurized, and totally accessible during flight.

The cargo deck is divided into four areas: bow loading ramp, forward cargo section, central cargo section, and aft cargo section.

**Bow Loading Ramp:** Providing direct access to the large bow doors on the ship, this area is usually the last to be filled, and the first emptied, and is reserved for priority cargos. This area is also often used to carry all terrain vehicles or air rafts for the ship.

**Forward Cargo Section:** This area is loaded through the port and starboard cargo doors.

**Central Cargo Section:** This area is the first loaded, and the last unloaded, because it must be accessed through the rear or forward cargo sections. This area is also the standard location for demountable fuel tanks. *In Search of Longer Legs* should provide the *March Harrier* with such tanks. They take up 50 tons of cargo capacity, filling the entire central cargo section except for an aisle down the center (slightly more than the space occupied by 12 cargo modules).

**Aft Cargo Section:** This area is loaded through the rear cargo doors. The starboard rear cargo door is slightly larger than the port door, in order to accommodate a hatch on the centerline.

**2, 3. Port and Starboard Airlocks.** These airlocks provide personnel access to the ship without the need to depressurize any ship compartments. Hatches lead to the exterior, to the cargo deck, and up to the quarters deck.

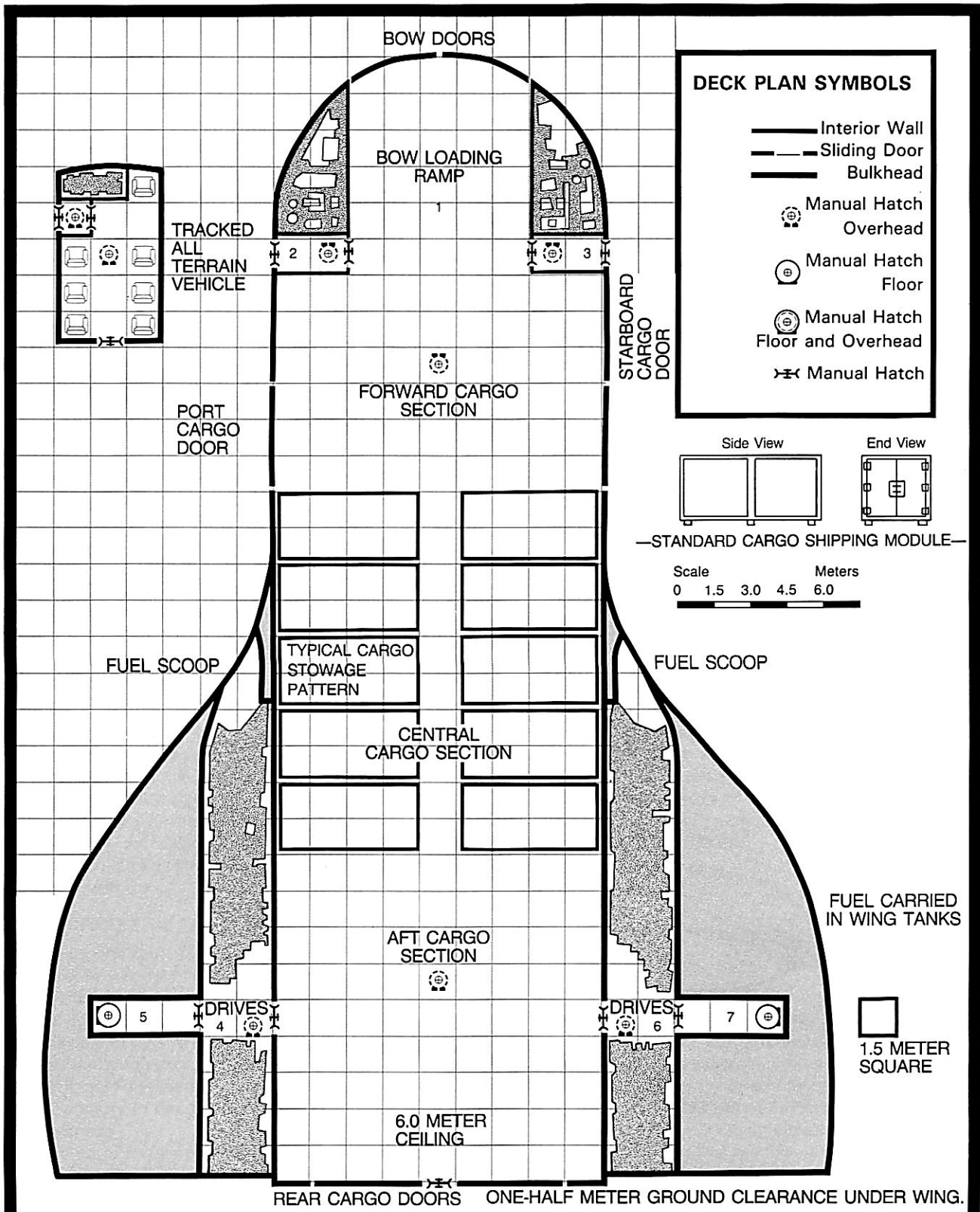
**4, 6. Port and Starboard Drive Chambers.** The jump and maneuver drives are contained in these chambers. An engineer station in each (manned only as needed, and for maintenance) provides local control.

**5, 7. Port and Starboard Interior Wing Walks.** These cramped crawlspaces allow access to the landing gear struts.

**8. Bridge.** The main drive and ship controls are situated on the bridge. Three crew positions are provided (pilot, navigator, and observer). Forward on the bridge are the windscreen and position displays. Behind the crew positions is the ship's computer. Accessible from the bridge are the two turrets, the forward lounge, and the lower cargo deck and airlocks.

**9, 10. Port and Starboard Turrets.** These hardpoint locations allow access to the gunners' positions and weaponry.

**11. Forward Lounge.** This area is a recreation and meeting area for passengers. Meals are served here, and the





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passengers pass much of their time during a journey in this

area gambling, drinking, watching video programs, and just talking.

**12. Crew Corridor.** Access through the length of the quarters deck is along two corridors. The crew corridor is reserved for crew, and provides some privacy for crew members from passenger attention.

**13. Passenger Corridor.** The passenger corridor provides passengers with access to their quarters.

**14-18. Crew Staterooms.**

**19-23. Passenger Staterooms.**

**24-26. Large Passenger Staterooms.** Although staterooms are theoretically identical, some staterooms are slightly larger than others, and they are usually reserved for high passengers.

**27. Aft Lounge.** The aft lounge is generally reserved for crewmembers. It is possible to close off the lounge, and allow access only through the crew corridor.

**28. Low Berths.** The ship's low passage berths are contained in this cramped area. Low passengers are generally revived after other passengers and cargo have been unloaded.

**29. Airlock and Access Chamber.** This chamber allows access to the lower cargo deck and access to the launch carried piggy-back on the upper surface of the ship.

**30. Drive Room.** The drive room contains the ship's power plant, and acts as a bridge between the two drive chambers on each side of the lower deck.

**31. Launch.** The fat trader retains the potential for access to a world surface, even if the ship itself doesn't land, through its 20-ton launch. The launch can carry eight passengers and a pilot, plus 10 tons of cargo. The launch is capable of 1-G acceleration.



# Transport Companies of Aramis

Trade routes don't serve the Aramis subsector, they merely pass through it. The few express boat routes that touch the worlds in Aramis miss most planets. Because Aramis subsector is a backwater, the development of trade within the area has been slow. In many ways, this has been a self-fulfilling prophesy; everyone knew there wasn't any trade, so none developed.

## TRADE ROUTES

There are three general types of trade routes in the Aramis subsector.

**Major Trade Routes:** Aramis has three distinct xboat routes, and the large transport companies follow those routes with their liners and transport ships. One route connects the Towers Cluster with worlds in Deneb sector. Another follows the Aramis Trace to connect Deneb with Aramis' neighbor, the Rhyllanor subsector. A final short route cuts off one corner of the subsector to connect Rhyllanor with a naval base at Inthe in the Regina subsector.

**Feeder Routes:** Unscheduled, but fairly frequent, service can be expected within jump-1 of any world along a major route (for example, service to Feneteman from Towers or to Paya from Dhian). Less frequent service occurs at jump-2 and jump-3. This feeder service allows worlds not on the major routes to conduct trade and communication with the rest of the Imperium, but the service is certainly less dependable.

**Subsidized Routes:** Some feeder routes are established by local governments in an effort to encourage trade. Subsidized feeder routes can most often be expected in groups of worlds such as the Towers Cluster or the Aramis Trace, although they also exist in the Scatters.

**Route Maps:** The maps on the next page show the routes followed by the ships of Naasirka, Oberlindes, Tukera, Akerut, and Imperiallines, the five main commercial carriers of the subsector.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAMIS SUBSECTOR

Because the xboat routes do not serve most of the subsector, Aramis has been forced to develop trade routes which do not follow the express boat lanes.

The Towers Cluster is a relatively cohesive group of worlds, and extensive local trade is carried on by local companies. Although each of these local companies is relatively small, holding only a few ships, their numbers make the trade industry in the cluster almost cut-throat in its press for business.

Because of the presence of Vargr trading stations along the border of the Imperium, there is a continuing flow of goods from the interior of the subsector (and even from other subsectors) to the trading stations. These shipments take the most direct route, which does not show up as any specific marked trade lane on maps. As a result, there is a continuous flow of traffic through the Scatters to the border. This traffic also includes Vargr ships coming into the interior of the subsector to pick up goods themselves.

## THE COMPANIES

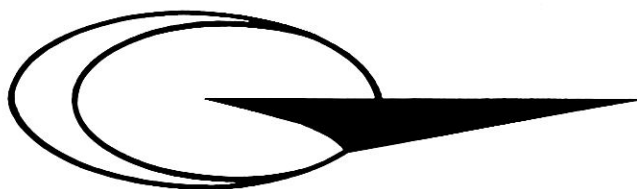
The space transport companies of the subsector include a broad spectrum of businesses. There are megacorporations, corporations of more normal sizes, and even small businesses and individual owners.



**Tukera:** Tukera Lines is a megacorporation providing jump-3 and jump-4 transport for passengers and freight along the already established xboat routes that bind the Imperium together. In some parts of the Imperium (especially older, more established subsectors), Tukera has a virtual monopoly on interstellar transport. In Aramis subsector, because of its (until recently) low economic activity Tukera just provides scheduled service along the xboat routes.

Tukera hires crews who have been trained in its own schools or who are Imperial naval veterans.

Tukera has major offices at Aramis and Junidy, with ticket offices and facilities at all worlds along xboat routes in the subsector (Junidy, Towers, Nasemin, Natoko, Aramis, L'oeul d'Dieu, and Dhian).

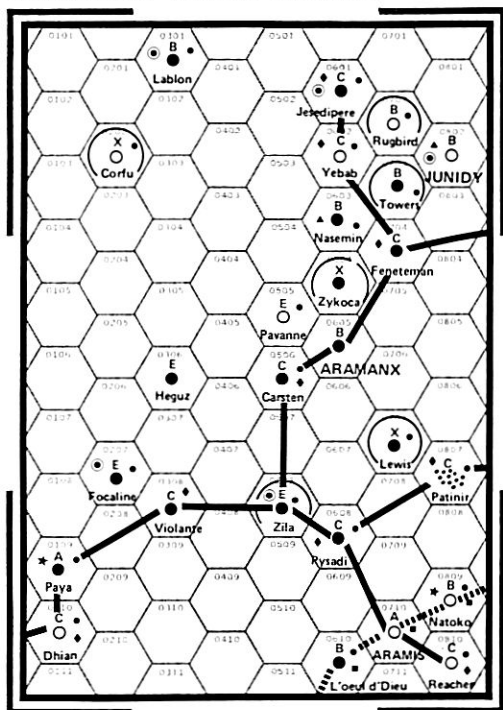


**Akerut:** While Tukera services only the major trade routes, the megacorporation has established a wholly-owned subsidiary in Aramis subsector to provide service along feeder routes and carry cargo to and from the Vargr trading stations along the border. Akerut maintains a fleet of *Hercules* class bulk carriers of 5000 tons displacement (all identifiable by the 800-range serial number stenciled on the hull and their great size). There are perhaps 50 in the Akerut fleet, and they are constantly occupied in shuttling cargos to and from the border.

Akerut prefers to hire Tukera-trained crew, but will accept others if necessary.

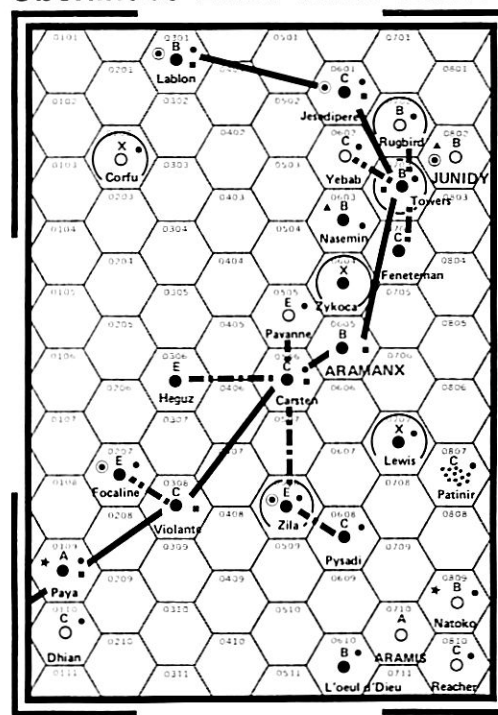
Akerut has a main office at Junidy, with facilities at Lablon, Feneteman, Carsten, Jesedipere, Focaline, Zila, Aramanx, Rugbird, and Aramis.

## Standard Trade Routes



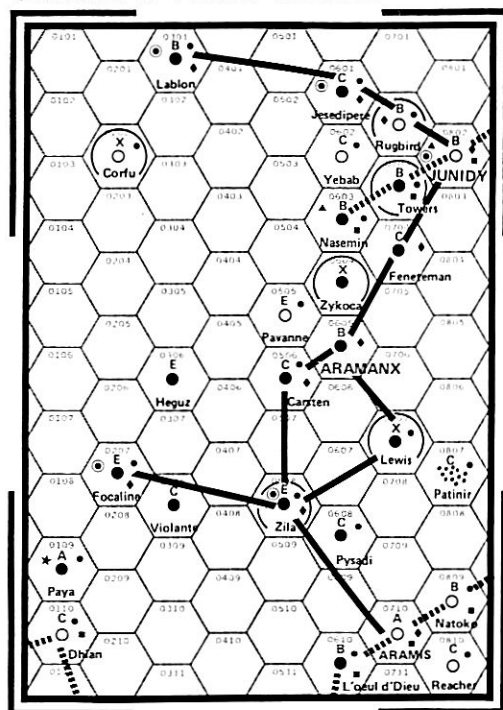
Naasirka ..... Imperiallines  
 • Naasirka Station      ♦ Imperiallines Station  
 ● Vargr Trading Station

## Oberlindes Lines Trade Route

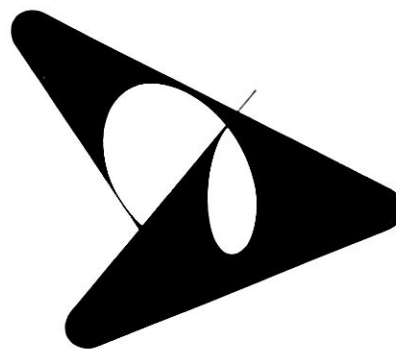


Main Routes ..... Feeder Routes .....  
 • Oberlindes Station      ● Vargr Trading Station

## Standard Trade Routes



Akerut ..... Tukera .....  
 ♦ Akerut Station      ♦ Tukera Station  
 ● Vargr Trading Station



**Naasirka:** Naasirka is a megacorporation which predates the founding of the Imperium. Its emphasis is on computers, and it is best known as the supplier of communications equipment to the xboat service. Other fields it operates in include ship construction (primarily small craft) and software. Naasirka also operates a transport line connecting Vland with Rhylanor.

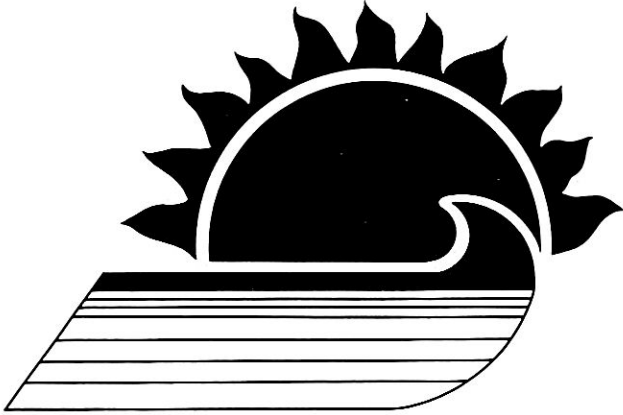
Naasirka will hire any qualified individuals, but prefers scout-trained pilots.

Naasirka has facilities and offices at Natoko, Aramis, and L'oeul d'Dieu.

**Imperiallines:** Imperiallines is a cargo carrier generally serving backwater worlds. It serves as a freight forwarder between minor worlds.

Imperiallines never hires personnel who are not Imperiallines-trained except as low-level office workers.

Imperiallines maintains facilities on all worlds in the Aramis



subsector with class C starports (Violante, Pysadi, Reacher, Patinir, Carsten, Dhian, Feneteman, Yebab, and Jesedipere), as well as a terminal on Aramis. Subsector headquarters is on Dhian.



**Oberlindes Lines:** Oberlindes Lines is a relative newcomer to Aramis, although it has been a family-run transport

business since 487. A major force in transport in the Regina subsector, Oberlindes has recently expanded into the Aramis subsector as a cargo carrier and trader with the Vargr. Oberlindes operations roughly parallel the operations of Akerut.

Oberlindes Lines hires any qualified personnel.

Oberlindes maintains facilities at Paya, Violante, Carsten, Aramanx, Nasemin, Towers, Jesedipere, and Lablon. Its main offices for the subsector are at Paya, although they are in the process of being transferred to Aramanx.

**Imperial Government Carriers:** Mention of trade carriers cannot ignore the Imperium and its many ships. Although not available for commercial carriage, Imperial naval vessels handle government shipments, and often ferry emergency materials to their destinations. The scout service maintains the xboat service which carries messages for business, government, personal, and diplomatic purposes.

**Independents:** Many independent, privately owned companies provide free trader and unscheduled service within the subsector. The companies are too numerous and too changing to list.

**Vargr Traders:** Numerous Vargr trading organizations from beyond the Imperial border travel within Aramis subsector. Some maintain offices at the various Vargr trading stations (at Lablon, Focaline, Zila, Jesedipere, or Junidy), while others merely call at the stations for cargos of opportunity. Most notable of the Vargr organizations are trading corporations from the Thoengling Empire, located several parsecs beyond the Imperial border.



# Ship Directory

There are many different types of starships in operation in the Aramis subsector, and knowledge of their characteristics will be valuable to the adventurers. This chapter should be treated as library data; unless stated otherwise, the information herein is readily available in the *March Harrier's* library program.

This ship's directory shows several ships not included in **The Traveller Book**, and indicates their construction, design, and performance details.

The armament given below for the ships is that carried under normal conditions. During a tradewar, some ships with empty hardpoints might be refitted with additional turrets.

## FORMAT

Each ship listing includes an illustration of the ship and a paragraph description providing details of construction, performance, and crew. There is an additional paragraph of notes and background pertaining to primary operators, general uses, and other data that can be of interest to travellers.

## TUKERA SHIPS

Tukera Lines is a megacorporation. The following two ships are typical of its fleet.

**Long-Liner (type RT):** Using a 1000-ton hull, the Tukera long-liner is a main-route passenger transport serving much of the Imperium. It mounts a jump drive-V, maneuver drive-E, and power plant-V, giving a performance of jump-4 and 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 440 tons supports the power plant and one jump-4. Adjacent to the bridge is a Model/4 computer. There are 50 staterooms and 6 emergency low berths. The ship has five hardpoints and five tons allocated for fire control. Only one triple turret is usually installed; it carries a heterogeneous mix of one beam laser, one missile rack, and one sandcaster. The ship carries one

vehicle: a 20-ton launch. Cargo capacity for the long-liner is 130 tons. The hull is streamlined.

The long-liner requires a crew of 14: captain/pilot, navigator, 6 engineers, medic, 3 stewards, gunner, and launch pilot. The ship can carry up to 24 high passengers (more if another steward is added) and 12 middle passengers. The ship costs MCr526.4 (including 10% discount for quantity production, and 1% architect's fees) and takes 30 months to build.

The Tukera long-liner is a proprietary Tukera Lines design, and is operated on many of Tukera's routes as a standard passenger liner. Built sturdily and intended to last in service for decades, the long-liner maintains a standard of quality service that other lines try to match. Tukera's long-liners are named to recall worlds it serves: *Pride of Vland*, *Deneb Express*, and *Spirit of Rhyllanor*.

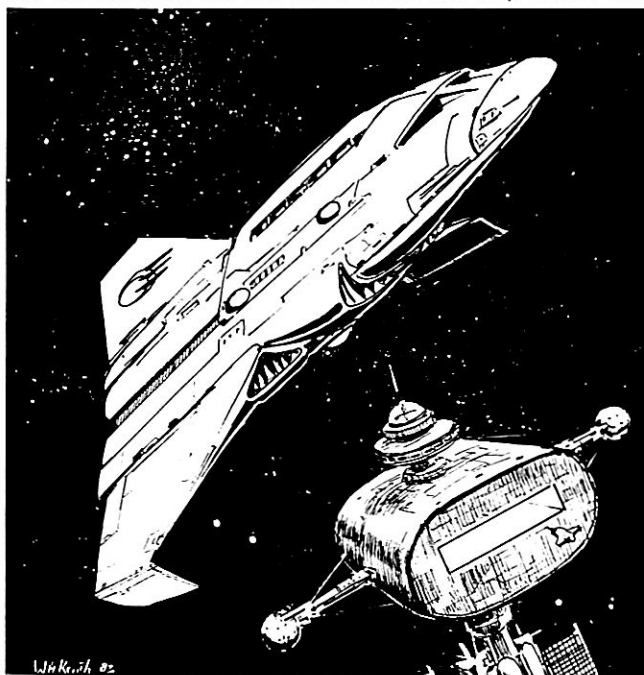
**Freighter (type AT):** Using a 3000-ton hull, the Tukera freighter is a main-route cargo vessel employed in freight transport activities throughout the Imperium. It mounts jump drive Z, maneuver drive Q, and power plant Z, giving performance of jump-4 and 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1240 tons supports the power plant and one jump-4. Adjacent to the bridge is a Model/4 computer. There are 25 staterooms and 5 emergency low berths. The ship has 10 hardpoints and 10 tons allocated to fire control. Only two triple turrets are generally installed; each carries a heterogeneous mix of one beam laser, one missile rack, and one sandcaster. There is one ship's vehicle: a 95-ton shuttle. Cargo capacity for the freighter is 1259 tons; the shuttle can be carried with its 70 ton cargo bay filled as well. The hull is not streamlined.

The Tukera freighter requires a crew of 15: captain/pilot, navigator, 7 engineers, medic, steward, shuttle pilot, and 2 gunners. It can carry up to 8 high passengers and 2 middle passengers. The ship costs MCr809.01 (including 10% discount for quantity production, and 1% architect's fee) and takes 34 months to build.

The Tukera freighter is a standard Tukera transport ship design, and provides freight-handling service along the many Tukera routes within the Imperium. Tukera's freighters sport a variety of names, often vaguely reminiscent of advertising slogans: *Golden Harvest*, *Safety First*, or *Star Lines*.

## IMPERIALLINES SHIPS

Imperiallines is a relatively unknown corporation serving worlds off the main trade routes. Imperiallines ships are not



named; they carry only numbers.

**Frontier Transport (type TI):** Using a 2000-ton hull, the frontier transport is a cargo-carrying freighter employed to serve worlds off the main trade routes. It mounts jump drive-V, maneuver drive-V, and power plant V, giving a performance of jump-2 and 2G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 440 tons supports the power plant and one jump-2. Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model/6. There are 21 staterooms and 10 low berths. The ship has 10 hardpoints and 10 tons of fire control allocated. Installed on the hardpoints are 10 triple turrets, each mounting three beam lasers. There is one ship's vehicle: a 95-ton shuttle. Cargo capacity is 1114 tons (not including a potential 70 tons aboard the shuttle in its cargo bay). The hull is streamlined.

The frontier transport requires a crew of 21: captain/pilot, navigator, medic, shuttle pilot, 7 engineers, and 10 gunners. The ship does not normally carry passengers. The ship costs MCr736.2 (including a 1% architect's fee, and a 10% discount for volume production), and takes 32 months to build.

Imperiallines serves a great many worlds in the Imperium, but most are off the main trade routes. Their frontier transport provides the basic shipping needs to serve such worlds. The high cargo capacity and the elementary performance specs make the ship well-suited for its job.



**Referee's Note:** The following information is not contained in the *March Harrier's* computer and is not public knowledge.

**Frontier Transport (type TJ):** Using a 2000-ton hull, the frontier transport is a cargo carrying freighter employed to serve worlds off the main trade routes. It mounts jump drive-Z, maneuver drive-Z, and power plant-Z, giving a performance of jump-6 and 6G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1320 tons supports the power plant, and allows one jump-6. Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model/6. There are 21 staterooms and ten low berths. The ship has 10 hardpoints and 10 tons of fire control allocated. Installed on the hardpoints are ten triple turrets, each mounting three beam lasers. There is one ship's vehicle: a 95 ton shuttle. Cargo



capacity is 194 tons (not including a potential 70 tons aboard the shuttle in its cargo bay). The hull is streamlined.

The frontier transport requires a crew of 21: captain/pilot, navigator, medic, shuttle pilot, 7 engineers, and 10 gunners. The ship does not normally carry passengers. The ship costs MCr816.2 (including a 1% architect's fee, and a 10% volume production discount) and takes 32 months to build.

Externally identical to the type TI frontier transport, the type TJ is never openly identified as such by its owners. The type TJ fulfills Imperiallines' major covert mission: to provide a jump-6 transport system within the Imperium for material, agents, information, and equipment necessary for various Imperial activities.

Imperiallines equipment is a grimy, dirty assemblage. Under the grime, the ships all look the same; no one gets close enough to see the differences between TI and TJ types, and, as far as the public knows, all the ships are of the TI type.

Imperiallines is a front. It would take a lot of work to see, but through several interlocking companies and holders, ownership finally goes back to an office in the Imperial Household bureaucracy. Imperiallines is a fast-moving secret Imperial courier.

The TI's keep up the charade that the company is a tramp freight transporter. Under various names and using various different ship designs, all with the same specifications, the company has offices in two out of three class C starport worlds in the Imperium. In addition, the company has offices at subsector capitals in many sectors, and calls frequently with goods for many Imperial bases. Imperiallines is the name used in the Spinward Marches.

Standard practice for Imperiallines is to run unscheduled trips. The ship stands ready until its cargo bays are filled, and it then takes off for the next world on its list. Since no one is to say whether the ship is full or not, there is no stopping its leaving. No passengers means fewer restrictions on travel. The short-legged ships handle the cargo hauling; the

fast ships do the actual courier work.

Supposedly, each Imperiallines facility has two ships assigned to it, and they regularly return to that base. Actually, each facility has one jump-2 ship which works out of the base; the jump-6 ships have no permanent home, and instead move from place to place as their missions call for it.

### AKERUT SHIPS

Akerut is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tukera Lines, organized to establish trade and shipping operations in the Aramis subsector.



**Hercules (type AH):** Using a 5000-ton hull, the *Hercules* heavy merchant is a bulk and containerized cargo carrier developed and produced for operations in the Aramis and neighboring subsectors by Akerut. It mounts jump drive-W, maneuver drive-W, and power plant-W, giving performance of jump-1 and 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 510 tons supports the power plant and one jump-1. Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model/2bis. There are fifteen staterooms and no low berths. The ship has four hardpoints and four tons allocated for fire control. Installed on the hardpoints are four triple turrets, each mounting three beam lasers. There is one ship's vehicle: a 40-ton pinnacle. Cargo capacity is 2911 tons. The hull is streamlined.

The *Hercules* heavy merchant requires a crew of 15: pilot/captain, navigator, 7 engineers, medic, 4 gunners, and pinnacle pilot. The ship does not carry passengers. The ship costs MCr985.2 (including 1% architect's fee and 10% volume production discount) and takes 36 months to build.

The *Hercules* is a heavy duty carrier used for both bulk cargo and containerized shipments. The ship is in service primarily in the Aramis subsector, but several examples are also in service with Tukera. Because its jump-1 drives make larger distances difficult, Akerut maintains a supply of 500-ton demountable fuel tanks (valued at Cr500,000; can be mounted in two weeks) at its starport locations within the subsector. *Hercules* ships can be fitted with one, two,

or even three sets of tanks in their cargo holds, thus displacing cargo capacity. Ships in the *Hercules* class carry names suggesting immense size or strength: *Hercules*, *Mammoth*, *Gigant*, *Titan*, *Sampson*, *Broddingnag*, or *Goliath*.

Akerut also maintains several patrol cruisers (type T) in the subsector, each armed with four triple lasers. The cruisers are used as escorts for its cargo vessels, for fast information transfer, and occasionally for transport of tradewar mercenaries.

### OBERLINDES SHIPS

Oberlindes Lines maintains a transport fleet ranging in tonnage from 100-ton couriers to 5000-ton transports. Typical of its fleet is the 1000-ton cargo carrier.

**Cargo Carrier (type CT):** Using the 1000-ton hull, the cargo carrier is a freight transport vessel. It mounts jump drive-Q, maneuver drive-E, and power plant-Q, giving a performance of jump-3 and 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 330 tons supports the power plant and one jump-3. Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model/3. There are 20 staterooms and 10 low berths. The ship has ten hardpoints and ten tons allocated to fire control. Installed on the hardpoints are 3 triple beam laser turrets. There is one ship's vehicle: an air/raft. Cargo capacity is 409 tons. The hull is streamlined.



The cargo carrier requires a crew of 11: captain/pilot, navigator, 5 engineers, medic, and 3 gunners. The navigator typically operates the air/raft. The ship can carry 12 passengers and 10 low passengers. The ship costs MCr410.4 (including 1% architect's fee, and 10% volume discount), and takes 30 months to build.

The cargo carrier is a standard design commissioned by Oberlindes, and is reflective of its total fleet. Originally, Oberlindes outfitted his fleet using naval surplus vessels; when the cargo carrier was designed, it reflected the Oberlindes fleet's predisposition to extensive armament. Oberlindes ships show no consistent system of naming.



# Library Data

Library data entries represent information available in the library program of any ship's computer in response to the correct keywords. The entries given below are of two types: general background information to help the players (and referee) understand the nature of the universe and information on things the players may encounter during the course of the campaign.

Whenever the adventurers have access to a computer with a library program and have a specific subject in mind, the referee should allow the players to read the relevant library data entries.

A great amount of generally known information is contained elsewhere in this book; one way of communicating it to the players is to present it as library data. Information of this sort is found in *The Spinward Marches* and *The Aramis Subsector*, as well as general information on specific planets and other subjects found in the various adventure chapters.

Library data entries marked *restricted* are not available on most computers, and even on computers which contain these entries a special access code will probably be required; it is unlikely that adventurers could gain access to these entries without great effort.

## LIBRARY DATA ENTRIES

**Akerut:** Wholly-owned subsidiary of Tukera Lines, organized to establish trade routes and shipping stations within the Aramis subsector. Akerut gains most of its revenue from cargo transport and trade within the subsector. Approximately 25% of its shipping involves transport of cargos to or from locations outside the subsector.



**Ancients:** A race of intelligent non-humans who inhabited the general region of the Spinward Marches approximately – 300,000. Archeological evidence from excavation of the few known Ancient sites indicates that the race destroyed itself during a 2000 year period of intense warfare which left only ruined cities and shattered planets.

The Ancients were responsible for several major features within or near the Imperium. Many asteroid belts in the region seem to have resulted from the Ancients' war. The multi-world rosette at Tureen in the Vargr Extents has been attributed to them.

The Ancients are generally accepted as being responsible for the wide dissemination of humaniti; for reasons unknown, they transported specimens of humaniti from Terra to at least 40 worlds across a span of some 360 parsecs.

The Ancients were also responsible for the creation of the Vargr through the genetic manipulation of Terran canines.

**Anola (Anola grevii):** An arboreal omnivore native to Pysadi in the Spinward Marches, occurring nowhere else in the wild or in captivity. Anolas are considered holy by the Mother Church of Pysadi. Their export, capture, or study by any but those high in the religious hierarchy is banned. They are kept in special, heavily-guarded garden preserves and are cared for by specially appointed keepers. Killing one of these animals is a capital offense. Although anolas are occasionally encountered in the wild on Pysadi, those close to civilized areas have been taken into the preserves.

Anolas mass an average of 3 kilograms, and are usually between 50 and 75 centimeters in length, including their

two prehensile tails. Since anolas were known only from poorly preserved pelts smuggled off-planet, for many years there were thought to be three species, but as more complete specimens became available, it was determined that the three different types were only different sexual phases of one species.

Respiration is accomplished by paired lungs in the upper chest cavity. The circulatory system is closed, with a pair of two chambered hearts moving the blood. Gas exchange is typical, making use of an iron-based hemoglobin. Details of the neuro-muscular system and the digestive system are not presently available. Anolas are now known to be hermaphroditic, and the three phases are stages in sexual development. Upon reaching maturity, an anola's male system becomes active, the female system remaining dormant. Under certain conditions, the male system degenerates, glands for the nourishment of the young develop, and the male becomes a neuter, or parental. Under certain conditions, the female system of a parental will activate, and the individual becomes a female. Little is known for certain about the details of the reproductive cycle, but the following is currently the accepted sequence of events.

Anolas live in small groups. Five adults is the average size, one male, three parentals of varying ages and one female. Females mate soon after assuming the female phase, and soon bear a litter of three cubs. The birth process is hard, and she is quite weakened from the ordeal for about three months afterward. With each successive litter, the females become weaker, and few survive their third.

When the female dies, it appears that the lack of a certain pheromone triggers the female organs in the oldest neuter into activity, and that neuter becomes female within a few weeks. The change in proportion of the parental pheromones causes the male to become a parental. The group then seeks out a new male as rapidly as possible.



## Library Data

Each phase (male, female, and neuter) has its own distinct pattern of fur coloration, density, and length, caused by hormone changes associated with the shift in sex.

Several universities, zoos, and xenobiological institutes have offered substantial rewards for live anolas. Wealthy animal collectors are reported to offer as much as Cr7,000,000 for a breeding group (five adults, as outlined above).

**Atrake:** Fruity wine produced on Zila from trakes. Atrake enjoys a solid reputation within the Aramis subsector as a quality wine. Trakes grown on Pysadi, however, are acknowledged to be of superior quality to those grown on Zila, and atrake produced from Pysadian trakes is also superior; since winemaking is illegal on Pysadi, the logistics of producing atrake from Pysadian trakes can be complex and the price is correspondingly high.

**Cryptography:** The science of concealing the meaning of a message by the use of codes and ciphers. Codes involve the substitution of other words for entire words or sentences; ciphers involve the substitution of single symbols for the individual letters of a message.



**Currency, Imperial:** The basic unit of legal tender in the Imperium is the Imperial credit. Individual worlds may issue their own currencies, and those currencies may or may not be acceptable on other worlds. Similarly, corporations and megacorporations may issue scrip, and its acceptance outside of the corporate environment is a matter of conjecture. But Imperial credits are accepted everywhere in the Imperium, and in many locations outside of it.

Imperial credits are almost impossible to counterfeit because of their unique method of manufacture. Plastic fibers are combined under high temperature and pressure and extruded as a rectangular bundle of great length. The different colored fibers form the pattern of the bill. It is not printed on but actually made a part of the structure of the note. The bundle is sliced to paper thinness, and a 14-digit alphanumeric (letter/number combination) is added for uniqueness. Credit bills are issued in 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1,000, and 10,000 credit denominations. Plastic coins, manufactured in a similar manner in various shapes, are issued in quarter, half, one, and five credit denominations.

Imperial credits can be bulky in large enough quantities. Bills measure 75 mm by 125 mm; one thousand bills stand 50 mm high and weigh 500 grams.

**Dandelion:** 1) Small flowering plant native to Terra and widely distributed within the Imperium. 2) Colloquial term used to refer to the Lllelweyloly (which see).

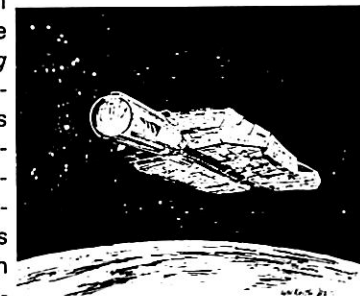
**Ebokin:** Sophont race native to Yebab. Ebokin (singular:

## Game Designers' Workshop

Eibokin) are bilaterally symmetrical and are built low to the ground, with eight legs and four small manipulative arms set close to the head. Adult female Ebokin average .8 meters tall, 1.5 meters long, and 130 kg in weight; males are somewhat smaller. Ebokin society is a very conservative matriarchy, bound by strict, unchanging laws. Ebokin seldom leave their homeworld.



**Emissary:** Ex-Imperial Navy fleet intruder of the *Azhanti High Lightning* class (60,000 tons) currently in Oberlindes Lines service in the Vargr Extents. Somehow, Oberlindes managed to purchase the ship with its weaponry intact, which violates Imperial regulations. Thus, the ship is unable to return to the Imperium. However, the *Emissary* has operated successfully as an Oberlindes flagship in the Extents and has proven effective, by the implied threat of its presence, in protecting Oberlindes shipping from piracy. The *Emissary* is armed with a large spinal mount particle accelerator and considerable secondary weaponry.



**Fibre Optic Computer:** Computer whose logic circuits are constructed from fibre optic conduits. Such computers are less vulnerable to radiation effects than normal electronic computers and for this reason are often used on military vessels.

**Groat:** Herbivore native to Fulacin in the Rhylanor subsector. Individual groats are harmless, but the outer members of a herd will attack any perceived danger in groups.

Groats have been transplanted to several worlds in the Aramis subsector, most notably Focaline.

The goat's shaggy hair (known as groatle) is the most obvious resource it provides. Once sheared, cleaned, and groomed, it has a softness

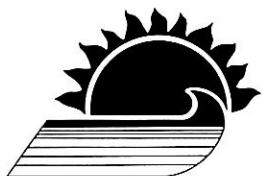


and silkiness rivaling the finest synthetic. In addition, groatle contains a high concentration of metal salts, which has two beneficial effects. First, groatle cloth is proof against most lifeforms which eat other animal fibers (such as various species of Terran moths). Second, a simple chemical treatment brings out an iridescent, shimmering quality which is very attractive. Groats are also raised for their meat, which is highly prized by Vargr.



**Howood:** Extremely dense, striated, lignous material obtained from the trunk of the howood tree, a rare plant native to Pretoria/Pretoria and known to grow on Pysadi and Violante. The trees concentrate metals from the soil in their extremely tough bark. Howood is aromatic and its scent is especially pleasing to Vargr. It is also beautiful; the size, colors, and intensities of its rings and striations vary unpredictably with the characteristics of the environment in which the plant grows.

**Humaniti** (archaic spelling humanity): Collective name for all of the various races of the genus *Homo*, including Solomani, Vilani, Zhodani, and others.



**Imperiallines:** Interstellar shipping corporation serving worlds off the main trade routes of the Spinward Marches. Most class C starports in the Marches are served by Imperiallines.

**Restricted:** Imperiallines is wholly owned by the Imperial family through a devious line of shareholders. Although it engages in real trade, the company's primary purpose is to provide a covert transport and courier system for the Imperial government. Imperiallines uses two outwardly identical ship types: type TI, capable of jump-2, and the secret type TJ, capable of jump-6.

**Interdiction:** The Imperial government interdicts worlds for several reasons, generally on the recommendation of the navy or scout service. Common purposes are to protect a world from outside interference or to quarantine a dangerous world. Interdiction generally extends to one planet in a system; ships may pass through the system but may not call at the planet. In some cases, interdiction may apply to an entire system. Violation of interdiction is a serious crime.

**Kedzudh, Commonality of:** Loose interstellar government in the Vargr Extents. The Commonality dates from 1044, when several world governments joined together in an attempt to suppress piracy. The Commonality government has limited powers of taxation; government institutions include a small navy/police force and a university. Individual worlds conduct their own interior and exterior relations.

**Lanthanum:** A rare earth element, the first of the inner transition metals. Lanthanum is vital to the construction of the inner coils of jump drives.

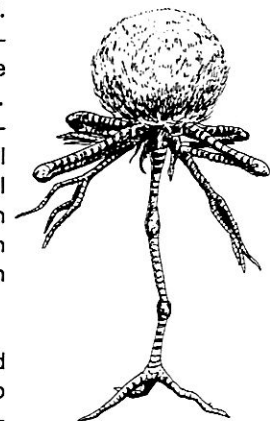
**Ling-Standard Products:** Imperial megacorporation. Originally a mining firm (and still very active in that area), LSP engages in a wide spectrum of activities including (but not limited to) manufacture of electronic equipment of all sorts, ground and air vehicles, starships and starship arma-

ment systems, drive and power systems, computers and software, and small arms. LSP maintains mining and manufacturing facilities throughout the Imperium and beyond.

Stock ownership: Imperial family, 8%; Hortalez et Cie, 26%; GSbAG, 23%, noble families, 8%; Murdoch Holdings, LIC, 8%; other, 27%.



**Llellewyloly:** Sophont race native to Junidy. Llellewyloly have five multi-jointed limbs which function as hands and feet interchangeably; main sensory organs are also located on the limbs. The spherical central body is covered with long, coarse hair. Many body features are adaptations to the extreme temperature variations of Junidy's day. Llellewyloly have a complex society with many dimensions of social precedence; the same individual may be entitled to high status in one situation and low status in another, and to make an error in propriety is a serious matter.



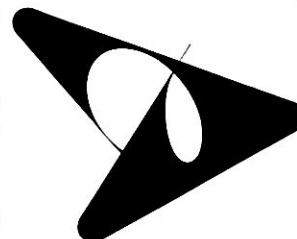
**Marquis of Aramis:** Title granted in 631 by Empress Arbellaatra to Marova hault-Hayashi in recognition of her services to the Imperium in the Second Battle of Zhimaway. The current Marquis, 19th of the line, is Leonard Bolden-Tukera. The Marquis is titular head of the world government of Aramis; he owes direct fealty to the Count Knowln of Celepina. The Marquis is married to the Lady Arianne Tukera, heir to a large block of Tukera Lines stock. They have no children.

**Meson Accelerator:** Weapon which produces a beam of pi neutral mesons travelling at relativistic speeds. By controlling the speed of the beam, the mesons may be caused to decay inside the target, producing intense radiation effects. Since mesons do not interact with matter, ship armor offers no protection. Most large modern warships have meson accelerators as their main weaponry.

**Meson Gun:** Another term for meson accelerator (which see).

**Mother Church:** Religious institution and ruling body of Pysadi. Adherents worship the world itself, believing Pysadi to be the mother of all things. The Mother Church closely controls the lives of Pysadi's people. Alcohol is forbidden.

**Naasirka:** Megacorporation specializing in the manufacture of information storage and processing equipment and software, computers, robots, and other complex electronic





devices. The firm is a Vilani corporation of uncertain lineage, but it is known to have been in business prior to the founding of the Sylean Federation. Naasirka is the largest supplier of communications equipment to the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service's xboat branch.

Stock ownership: Imperial family, 4%; investment trusts, 24%; noble families, 23%; Hortalez et Cie, 11%; other corporations, 14%; Igsiirdi family, 13%; private ownership, 11%.



**Oberlindes Lines:** Imperial trade and transport corporation of the Spinward Marches.

Founded in 487 in the Regina subsector and still strongest there, Oberlindes has recently expanded its service into many other portions of the Marches and the Vargr Extents.

**Sharurshid:** Megacorporation specializing in trade and speculation, with very little manufacturing capability. Sharurshid trades in luxury goods from all parts of the Imperium and many areas beyond. Most rare Terran wines and spirits are carried on the starships of Sharurshid.

Stock ownership: Imperial family, 3%; Sharurshid trust, 46%; Zirunkariish, 13%; Hortalez et Cie, 14%; other corporations, 14%; private ownership, 10%.



**Skymelon:** Pungent, sharp-tasting fruit grown on Pysadi. The skymelon grows on vines which co-exist with trees; the fruit appears in the upper reaches of the branches, making it difficult to harvest. Many farms have induced the vines to grow instead on trellises with overhead catwalks to

facilitate harvesting. Skymelons have a light blue interior color, hence the name.

**Solomani:** Human major race originating on Terra. Solomani form a major portion of the population of the Imperium and of the neighboring Solomani Confederation.

**Sophont:** A general term for an intelligent life form.

**Sternmetal Horizons, LIC:** Imperial megacorporation primarily engaged in mining operations and manufacturing. It produces mostly power generation equipment of all types, including power plants for starships, air and ground vehicles, cities, and industrial installations. Additionally, Sternmetal is the largest manufacturer of food synthesis equipment in the Imperium.

Stock ownership: Imperial family, 2%; Hortalez et Cie, 29%; investment trusts, 32%; noble families, 18%; Antares Holdings, LIC, 19%.

**Thoengling Empire:** Large, centralized state in the Vargr Extents. The Thoengling Empire is one of the most stable of the Vargr states, and has existed in its current form since

792. The Emperor, who has great governmental authority, is chosen for life by vote of an elected Assembly; by law, no member of his family may succeed him. Sons and daughters of the higher nobility are brought up at the Imperial court, where every effort is made to inculcate personal loyalty to the Emperor.

The Thoengling Empire has become a major trading partner of the Imperium and generally supports Imperial interests in the Vargr Extents.

**TNS:** See Traveller News Service.

**Trade Station:** Establishment for the promotion of interstellar commerce. There is no single controlling agency for trade stations; some are established by private companies, on their own or under contract to the Imperium, some are run by the scout service, and others are operated by different branches of the Imperial government.

There are five trade stations in the Aramis subsector operated by the scout service to promote trade with the Vargr. The installations, at Lablon, Jesedipere, Junidy, Focaline, and Zila, serve as clearing houses for merchant dealings. They provide numerous free services: language translation, temporary warehousing, brokerage, computer files of merchant information, a commodity exchange, and others.

**Trake:** Small berry common to many worlds of the Imperium. The trake has a meaty, sweet body enclosing a single large seed and grows on a low, thorny bush. Trakes have been grown in the Imperial core since the time of the First Imperium. Introduced late to the Spinward Marches, they have flourished on only a few worlds, notably Pysadi and Alell, although they are cultivated on many others. See also atrake.



**Traveller News Service:** The major news agency of the Imperium, owned by the Travellers' Aid Society. The Traveller News Service has bureaus on most major worlds throughout the Imperium and representatives at most starports.

**Trojan Points:** In a gravitational system composed of a small body orbiting a much larger one (such as a planet and star or moon and planet), there are two stable points lying in the small body's orbit 60° ahead and behind it; these are called Trojan points. The Trojan points of a gas giant near an asteroid belt commonly collect a cluster of asteroids. The name comes from the first such cluster discovered by Terrans, at Jupiter in the Sol system; the asteroids were named after mythical heroes of the Trojan War.

**Tukera Lines:** Megacorporation which operates a vast fleet of passenger and freight vessels throughout the Im-



## The Traveller Adventure

perium, following the xboat lines. In some subsectors (particularly in the Imperial core), Tukera has a virtual monopoly on long-distance shipping and travel.

The oldest record of the firm is a charter from the government of the Sylean Federation, but family tradition holds the company to be several centuries older.

Stock ownership: Tukera family, 29%; Imperial family, 3%; other corporations, 9%; private ownership, 31%; investment trusts, 28%.

**Vargr Campaigns** (220 to 348): The series of wars, encounters, conflicts, and disputes between the Imperium and the various Vargr states in Vland, Corridor, and Deneb sectors along the coreward edge of the Imperium during its early expansion.

**Vargr Extents:** The territory dominated by Vargr governments, situated roughly coreward of the Imperium, bordering on the Spinward Marches, Deneb, Corridor, and Vland sectors.

**Vemene:** The covert security agency of Tukera Lines. The agency's official mission is to thwart piracy, hijacking, theft, and sabotage directed against Tukera's ships and planetary

## Library Data

installations. Critics charge that the real mission of the Vemene is to suppress Tukera's competition by any means necessary, legal or illegal.

**Vilani:** Human major race originating on Vland. The Vilani were the first humans to discover the jump drive and make up a large portion of the population of the Imperium.

**Xmail:** Messages sent by xboat. Xmail carries information only; material objects may not be sent. The message is digitally coded; xmail costs Cr10 per 20 kilobits per parsec. The message may be sent using a standard Anglic character set (about Cr10 for a 500 word message) or a picture may be reproduced in facsimile (Cr20 for a 200×200 bit matrix). The message is printed out at its destination and delivered by a world's local mail system.

**Zhodani:** Human race inhabiting the Zhodani Consulate, a region far spinward of the Imperium. The Zhodani differ most from other humans in their extensive use of psionics; Zhodani society is tightly controlled by a psionic aristocracy.

The Zhodani have been a constant enemy of the Imperium for 600 years and have made four attempts to conquer the Spinward Marches (the First through Fourth Frontier Wars).

# Vargr Character Generation

Along the coreward border of the Imperium lies the territory collectively called the Vargr Extents. Covering an area of about nine sectors, the Extents are dominated by an intelligent race called Vargr. Physically, Vargr are not very impressive. A typical Vargr is about 1.6 meters in height and weighs approximately 60 kilograms. They are upright bipedal carnivores, rear limbs digitigrade, with hands very similar in size and appearance to those of a human, although there are significant internal differences. They have approximately the same physical parameters as humans and are able to use the same equipment without modification or additional instruction. On the average, Vargr reactions are slightly faster than those of the typical human, but individuals vary widely. Vargr are physically weaker than humans and the construction of their legs puts them at a mechanical disadvantage in combat; they have difficulty in punching or kicking. The Vargr senses of smell and sight are superior to those of humans.

**Origins:** Vargr were for years a puzzle to Imperial sophontologists. Vargr biochemistry and genetic makeup are almost identical with a number of terrestrial animals, but differ radically from most of the flora and fauna indigenous to Lair, the purported Vargr homeworld. Researchers during the early years of the Third Imperium concluded them to be the result of genetic manipulation of transplanted Terran animals of the family *Canidae* and almost certainly the genus *Canis*. The obvious conclusion, which is supported by archeological evidence, is that the long-dead race known as the Ancients was responsible.

## VARGR SOCIETY

Vargr society is characterized by endemic and rapid social change. The key elements which shape Vargr society are a very strong centrifugal (outward or disruptive) force resulting from an emphasis on consensus and informal lines of authority, and an equally strong centripetal (inward or uniting) force resulting from ingrained family-clan-tribe-nation loyalty. Centralized authority is extremely limited at

the upper levels of Vargr society, and actions are based on broad coalitional concerns with a constant splitting and re-joining of dissident factions. Traditionally, this has made it very difficult for more centralized and organized societies such as the Imperium to deal on a meaningful basis with what passes for Vargr states.

**Government:** There is no central Vargr government; indeed, there is no governmental type that can be said to be "typically Vargr". Every conceivable form of governmental organization can be found somewhere in the Vargr Extents. The two states described in *Library Data* (the Thoengling Empire and the Commonality of Kedzudh) are reasonably typical. The only cohesive force in the Extents is a fierce racial pride which causes a slight tendency towards racial cooperation. The higher the level of the Vargr government, the more unstable it becomes because of the difficulty of obtaining consent of all Vargr involved.

**Charisma:** Vargr are gregarious, but their group behavior is characterized by a constant struggle for dominance within the group. The ability to exert personal authority over others derives from an individual's prestige and force of personality. The Vargr have various words to describe this important personal characteristic, but humans call it charisma. Individuals with high charisma are likely to become leaders in groups, even if they do not otherwise have the talent or skill to lead properly. The result is often a charismatic leader who is not truly suited to lead, and a constant splintering of groups as rivals exert their influence over parts of the group and draw them away from the larger whole.

## VARGR PERSONALITIES

Vargr characters vary widely just as do humans. Almost any behavior is permissible, and a great degree of inconsistency is almost required. Vargr have little respect for formal authority. This respect decreases as the authority becomes more remote. Vargr generally have more respect for more informal authority figures (with high charisma) and





are more likely to obey superiors with whom they are closely acquainted than strangers.

Vargr have an intensive racial pride, and are easily insulted. They are prone to enter into fights without regard for possible consequences.

Vargr social organization is difficult to characterize in human terms. Even amongst the most stable Vargr governments, a highly charismatic leader can attract followers for almost anything. The neighbors of the Vargr are constantly the subject of impromptu raids and scattered piracy by bands of Vargr (totally without government sanction, of course) who have been talked into raid, battle, or war by a charismatic leader.

## VARGR CHARACTERS

All Vargr characters begin the game the same way: untrained, inexperienced, and about 18 years of age. Each character is generated with a series of die rolls. He or she then embarks on an abstract career in order to gain skills and experience. Eventually, the character leaves the service, receives mustering out benefits, and is ready to begin adventuring.

**Initial Vargr Character Generation:** Vargr characters are described by six characteristics. Five of the six are the same as for humans: strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, and education. Vargr do not have social standing; instead they have a parallel attribute; charisma.

Vargr strength and endurance are slightly less than those of humans; for these two characteristics roll 2D – 1. Vargr have a slightly higher dexterity; for dexterity, roll 2D + 1. For intelligence and education, roll 2D. Finally, roll 1D for charisma. Record the results on paper.

Values for the six generated characteristics may range initially from 1 to 13. As a result of various modifications, characteristic values may range from 1 to 15. For player characters the values of characteristics may not exceed 15; they do not go below 1 except for the results of calamitous injury or aging.

**The Universal Personality Profile:** Vargr characters use the same universal personality profile (the UPP) as humans. Characteristics are listed as a string of six digits in the order originally rolled: strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, education, and charisma (in place of social standing).

**Naming:** Once generated, the character should be named. The individual player may determine an appropriate name.

**Titles:** Vargr characters do not have titles in the same sense as noble titles for humans. There is no consistent system for the assignment of such titles. However, any Vargr character with charisma of A or greater has enough dominance within a group of Vargr to allow the selection of an appropriate title, and the ability to make that title stick. Acceptance of such a title depends entirely on the charisma of the Vargr character.

## CHARACTERISTICS

*Strength* (2D – 1) is both a general evaluation of the character's physical ability and a specific measure of force which may be applied.

*Dexterity* (2D + 1) measures physical coordination.

*Endurance* (2D – 1) measures personal determina-

tion and stamina.

*Intelligence* (2D) corresponds to IQ.

*Education* (2D) indicates the highest level of schooling attained by the individual.

*Charisma* (1D) indicates relative dominance within a group of Vargr.

## ACQUIRING SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Any newly-generated Vargr character may choose one of these six services (Navy, Corsairs, Army, Emissaries, Merchants, and Loner), and attempt to enlist.

Only one initial enlistment attempt is permitted per character. If rejected for enlistment, he must submit to the draft. Draft is not allowed after age 18. Any character who is discharged may attempt to enlist in a service not previously served in.

**The Draft:** A character who is drafted enters a randomly chosen service. Note that it is possible for a character to be drafted into the very service which had just previously rejected an enlistment. Draftees are not eligible for commissions during their first term of service; they do become eligible during the second and subsequent terms of service if they reenlist.

**Terms of Service:** Each term of service represents a period of four years.

**Survival:** During each term, a character must successfully throw his service's survival throw; failure results in death.

—**Optional Rule:** If the referee or player chooses, prior to character generation, a failure of the survival roll can be converted to injury. The character is not dead; instead he or she is injured, and leaves the service (after recovery) having served only two years of the four year term. The short term is not counted for mustering out benefits.

**Commissions:** Each service (except emissaries and loners) has a commission number; in order to be commissioned as an officer, the character must throw the stated number or greater; DMs may apply to the throw. If the commission is achieved, the character receives rank 1 in the service. A character may attempt to acquire a commission once per term of service until successful, but a draftee may not attempt to acquire a commission in the first term of service.

**Success:** Each term, a character may attempt success; that is, to succeed in some endeavor within the service. Success can provide increase in rank and charisma, but failure can result in demotion, discharge, and loss of charisma. To attempt success, roll 2D on the success table. Each service has a success number and DMs affecting that success throw. On a high throw, the character advances in rank and charisma. On a low throw, the character suffers demotion, discharge, or loss of charisma. A character is eligible for one success per term of service.

In the emissaries and the loners, the non-rank aspects of success (charisma gain or loss, gain of skills, and discharge) still apply.

**Skills and Training:** During each term of service, a character has the opportunity to acquire personal skills and expertise. Allowances are made for the acquisition of new skills based on service, duty, commission, and success.

Skills are acquired by rolling on the acquired skills table once for each skill allowed, using one die. There are four

### VARGR CHARACTER GENERATION CHECKLIST

1. Roll personal characteristics: strength (2D-1), dexterity (2D+1), endurance (2D-1), intelligence (2D), education (2D), and charisma (1D).
2. Select service and roll for enlistment using all applicable DMs.
  - A. If rejected, try draft.
  - B. Roll for survival.
  - C. If not commissioned, attempt commission.
  - D. If commissioned (or loner or emissary), attempt success and consult success table.
  - E. Determine skills allowed.
    - 1) Automatic skills.
    - 2) Acquired skills.
    - 3) Specify cascade skills.
  - F. At age 34+, check aging.
  - G. Roll for re-enlistment and return to 2B if successful.
3. Discharge and Muster-Out.
  - A. Determine benefits.
  - B. If discharged, consider enlistment in new service.
  - C. Record characteristics and skills for later use.

### BASIC SKILL ELIGIBILITY

- For initial term of service . . . . . 2  
 Per subsequent term of service . . . 1  
 Upon receiving commission . . . . . 1  
 Upon receiving success . . . . . 1  
*Note:* Loners and emissaries receive two skills per term of service.

### MUSTER-OUT BENEFITS

- Per term of service . . . . . 1  
 If rank 1 or 2 . . . . . 1  
 If rank 3 or 4 . . . . . 2  
 If rank 5 or 6 . . . . . 3  
*Benefits Table:* DM+1 if rank 5+ or prospecting skill.  
*Cash Table:* DM+1 if gambling or prospecting skill, or if retired.

### HEXADECIMAL NOTATION

| Base-10 | Base-16 | Base-10 | Base-16 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0       | 0       | 8       | 8       |
| 1       | 1       | 9       | 9       |
| 2       | 2       | 10      | A       |
| 3       | 3       | 11      | B       |
| 4       | 4       | 12      | C       |
| 5       | 5       | 13      | D       |
| 6       | 6       | 14      | E       |
| 7       | 7       | 15      | F       |

Use hexadecimal (base-16) numbers to note the six characteristics of the universal personality profile.

### VARGR PRIOR SERVICE TABLE

|             | <i>Navy</i>                          | <i>Corsairs</i> | <i>Army</i> | <i>Emissaries</i> | <i>Merchants</i> | <i>Loner</i> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Enlistment  | 7+                                   | 6+              | 5+          | 8+                | 5+               | 7+           |
| DM of +1 if | Intel 8+                             | Endur 9+        | Stren 10+   | Educ 7+           | Dext 8+          | Stren 6+     |
| DM of +2 if | Char 6+                              | Dext 7+         | Endur 6+    | Char 6+           | Intel 8+         | Dext 8+      |
| Draft       | 1                                    | 2               | 3           | 4                 | 5                | 6            |
| Survival    | 5+                                   | 6+              | 5+          | 4+                | 3+               | 6+           |
| DM of +2 if | Educ 7+                              | Endur 9+        | Stren 5+    | Char 8+           | Intel 9+         | Dext 9+      |
| Commission  | 9+                                   | 8+              | 7+          | —                 | 7+               | —            |
| DM of +1 if | Intel 7+                             | Char 7+         | Endur 6+    | —                 | Intel 8+         | —            |
| Success     | ----- <i>see Success Table</i> ----- |                 |             |                   |                  |              |
| DM of +1 if | Educ 7+                              | Intel 8+        | Educ 9+     | Intel 10+         | Intel 8+         | Intel 9+     |
| DM of +1 if | Char 6+                              | Char 5+         | Char 6+     | Char 8+           | Char 7+          | Char 4+      |
| Reenlist    | 5+                                   | 6+              | 6+          | 5+                | 4+               | 5+           |

Characters cycle through this table during each term of service. The reenlistment die throw is required even if the character does not intend to reenlist (a roll of 12 exactly calls for mandatory reenlistment). All rolls except draft are two-die throws.

### TABLE OF RANKS

|        | <i>Navy</i> | <i>Corsairs</i> | <i>Army</i> | <i>Emissaries</i> | <i>Merchants</i> | <i>Loner</i> |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Rank 1 | Ensign      | Lieutenant      | Lieutenant  | —                 | 4th Officer      | —            |
| Rank 2 | Lieutenant  | Force Leader    | Captain     | —                 | 3rd Officer      | —            |
| Rank 3 | Lt Cmdr     | Staff Major     | Major       | —                 | 2nd Officer      | —            |
| Rank 4 | Commander   | Group Leader    | Lt Colonel  | —                 | 1st Officer      | —            |
| Rank 5 | Captain     | Commodore       | Colonel     | —                 | Captain          | —            |
| Rank 6 | Admiral     | Leader          | General     | —                 | —                | —            |

Loners and emissaries do not have commissions or rank, although the non-rank aspects of success (the success table and charisma increases therefrom) are allowed.

### MUSTERING OUT TABLES

| Die Roll | ----- <i>Benefits Table</i> ----- |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1        | Low Psg                           | Low Psg  | Low Psg  | Low Psg  | Low Psg  | Low Psg  |
| 2        | +2 Intel                          | +1 Intel | +1 Intel | +2 Intel | +1 Intel | +1 Intel |
| 3        | +2 Educ                           | +2 Educ  | +1 Educ  | +1 Educ  | +1 Educ  | Gun      |
| 4        | Gun                               | Gun      | Gun      | Blade    | Blade    | Blade    |
| 5        | High Psg                          | Gun      | High Psg | Blade    | Gun      | Mid Psg  |
| 6        | High Psg                          | Gun      | High Psg | High Psg | High Psg | Mid Psg  |
| 7        | +2 Char                           | Corsair  | +1 Char  | —        | Trader   | Seeker   |

Characters with rank 5 or 6 may add +1 to their rolls on this table. Loners with prospecting skill may add +1 to their rolls. Gun and blade benefits must be declared by type immediately; additional benefits of gun or blade may be declared as skill. Additional occurrences of corsair, trader, or seeker are treated as no benefit.

| Die Roll | ----- <i>Cash Table (in credits)</i> ----- |        |        |        |        |         |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| 1        | 1,000                                      | 1,000  | 5,000  | 10,000 | 1,000  | —       |
| 2        | 5,000                                      | 1,000  | 5,000  | 20,000 | 1,000  | —       |
| 3        | 10,000                                     | 10,000 | 10,000 | 30,000 | 1,000  | 10,000  |
| 4        | 10,000                                     | 10,000 | 10,000 | 40,000 | 20,000 | 10,000  |
| 5        | 20,000                                     | 30,000 | 20,000 | 40,000 | 20,000 | 30,000  |
| 6        | 30,000                                     | 30,000 | 20,000 | 50,000 | 20,000 | 40,000  |
| 7        | 40,000                                     | 50,000 | 20,000 | 50,000 | 20,000 | 100,000 |

Amounts shown are in credits (Cr). No more than three rolls may be made on this table. Retired individuals are allowed a DM of +1 on the cash table. Loners with gambling or prospecting skill are allowed a DM of +1.

## VARGR ACQUIRED SKILLS TABLES

### 1. Personal Development Table

|               | <i>Navy</i> | <i>Corsairs</i> | <i>Army</i> | <i>Emissaries</i> | <i>Merchant</i> | <i>Loner</i> |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 +1 Strength | +1 Stren    | +1 Stren        | +1 Stren    | +1 Stren          | +1 Stren        | +1 Stren     |
| 2 +1 Dext     | +1 Dext     | +1 Dext         | +1 Dext     | +1 Dext           | +1 Dext         | +1 Dext      |
| 3 +1 Endur    | +1 Endur    | +1 Endur        | +1 Endur    | +1 Endur          | +1 Endur        | +1 Endur     |
| 4 +1 Intel    | Bribery     | +1 Intel        | +1 Intel    | +1 Intel          | +1 Stren        | Infighting   |
| 5 Gambling    | Infighting  | Infighting      | +1 Educ     | Bribery           | Gambling        |              |
| 6 +1 Char     | +1 Char     | +1 Char         | +1 Char     | +1 Char           | Gun Cbt         | -1 Char      |

### 2. Service Skills Table

|               | <i>Navy</i> | <i>Corsairs</i> | <i>Army</i> | <i>Emissaries</i> | <i>Merchant</i> | <i>Loner</i> |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 Ship's Boat | Vehicle     | Vehicle         | Vehicle     | Vehicle           | Vehicle         | Vehicle      |
| 2 Vacc Suit   | Vacc Suit   | Vacc Suit       | Ship's Boat | Vacc Suit         | Vacc Suit       | Vacc Suit    |
| 3 Electronics | Infighting  | Infighting      | Vacc Suit   | Steward           | Electronic      |              |
| 4 Mechanical  | Medical     | Blade Cbt       | Infighting  | Medical           | Jack-o-T        |              |
| 5 Gunnery     | Gun Cbt     | Gun Cbt         | Gun Cbt     | Gunnery           | Prospect        |              |
| 6 Gunnery     | Gun Cbt     | Gun Cbt         | Blade Cbt   | Gun Cbt           | Prospect        |              |

### 3. Advanced Education Table

|               | <i>Navy</i> | <i>Corsairs</i> | <i>Army</i> | <i>Emissaries</i> | <i>Merchant</i> | <i>Loner</i> |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 Pilot       | Ship's Boat | Vehicle         | Streetwise  | Electronic        | Streetwise      |              |
| 2 Gun Cbt     | Vacc Suit   | Tactics         | Admin       | Mechanical        | Forgery         |              |
| 3 Navigation  | Electronic  | Electronic      | Liaison     | Navigation        | Bribery         |              |
| 4 Engineering | Medical     | Mechanical      | Navigation  | Engineering       | Jack-o-T        |              |
| 5 Computer    | Computer    | Computer        | Computer    | Computer          | Computer        |              |
| 6 Medical     | Gunnery     | Medical         | Medical     | Medical           | Medical         |              |

### 4. High Charisma Table (allowed only for characters with charisma 8+)

|            | <i>Navy</i> | <i>Corsairs</i> | <i>Army</i> | <i>Emissaries</i> | <i>Merchant</i> | <i>Loner</i> |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 Medical  | Medical     | Medical         | Medical     | Medical           | Medical         | Medical      |
| 2 Tactics  | +1 Char     | Tactics         | Liaison     | Admin             | Jack-o-T        |              |
| 3 Leader   | Leader      | Leader          | Liaison     | +1 Char           | Computer        |              |
| 4 Pilot    | Fwd Obsvr   | Fwd Obsvr       | Leader      | Admin             | Computer        |              |
| 5 Pilot    | Pilot       | +1 Char         | +1 Char     | Pilot             | Pilot           |              |
| 6 Jack-o-T | Streetwise  | Tactics         | +1 Char     | Navigation        | Streetwise      |              |

### VARGR AGING TABLE

| Term of Service | 4     | 5                       | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9       | 10  | 11    | 12  | 13      | 14+ |
|-----------------|-------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------|-----|-------|-----|---------|-----|
| Age             | 34    | 38                      | 42  | 46  | 50  | 54      | 58  | 62    | 66  | 70      | 74+ |
| Strength        | ...   | -1 (7+)                 | ... | ... | ... | -1 (8+) | ... | ...   | ... | -2 (9+) | ... |
| Dexterity       | ...   | -1 (6+)                 | ... | ... | ... | -1 (7+) | ... | ...   | ... | -2 (8+) | ... |
| Endurance       | ...   | -1 (7+)                 | ... | ... | ... | -1 (8+) | ... | ...   | ... | -2 (9+) | ... |
| Intelligence    | ..... | no effect before age 66 |     |     |     |         |     | ..... | ... | -1 (9+) | ... |
| Education       | ..... | unaffected by aging     |     |     |     |         |     |       |     |         |     |
| Social Standing | ..... | unaffected by aging     |     |     |     |         |     |       |     |         |     |

The negative number is the potential reduction in characteristic if the saving throw (shown in parentheses) is not made. Term of service refers to the end of that numbered term; age is the first day of the physical (not chronological) year.

### CASCADE SKILLS

**Aircraft:** Character must immediately select from Prop-driven Fixed Wing, Jet-driven Fixed Wing, or Helicopter.

**Blade Combat:** Character must select a skill from the blades and polearms list.

**Gun Combat:** Character must immediately select a gun from the guns list above.

**Vehicle:** Character must select a vehicle type from Aircraft,\* Grav Vehicle, Tracked Vehicle, Watercraft,\* or Wheeled Vehicle. \*Aircraft and Watercraft each require further selection by the character.

**Watercraft:** Character must immediately select from Large Watercraft, Small Watercraft, Hovercraft, or Submersible.

## RANK AND SERVICE SKILLS

|                        |       |               |
|------------------------|-------|---------------|
| Navy Captain           | ..... | +1 Charisma   |
| Corsair Lieutenant     | ..... | Ship's Boat-1 |
| Army                   | ..... | Rifle-1       |
| Army Lieutenant        | ..... | SMG-1         |
| Emissary               | ..... | Liaison-1     |
| Merchant First Officer | ..... | Pilot-1       |

### BLADES

| Weapon     | +DM | -DM | Wounds |
|------------|-----|-----|--------|
| Dagger     | 8+  | 3-  | 2D     |
| Blade      | 9+  | 4-  | 2D     |
| Sword      | 10+ | 5-  | 2D     |
| Broadsword | 12+ | 7-  | 4D     |
| Bayonet    | 9+  | 4-  | 3D     |

### GUNS

| Weapon        | +DM | -DM | Wounds |
|---------------|-----|-----|--------|
| Body Pistol   | 11+ | 7-  | 2D     |
| Auto Pistol   | 10+ | 6-  | 3D     |
| Revolver      | 9+  | 6-  | 3D     |
| Carbine       | 9+  | 4-  | 3D     |
| Rifle         | 8+  | 5-  | 3D     |
| Auto Rifle    | 10+ | 6-  | 3D     |
| Shotgun       | 9+  | 3-  | 4D     |
| SMG           | 9+  | 5-  | 3D     |
| Laser Carbine | 10+ | 5-  | 4D     |
| Laser Rifle   | 11+ | 6-  | 5D     |

### RETIREMENT PAY

Service of at least 5 terms in the same service merits a pension.

|                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 5 terms                                                  | Cr 4,000  |
| 6 terms                                                  | Cr 6,000  |
| 7 terms                                                  | Cr 8,000  |
| 8 terms                                                  | Cr 10,000 |
| per additional term                                      | +Cr 2,000 |
| Throw 10+ each year to lose the pension in future years. |           |

### SUCCESS TABLE

#### Throw Result

|    |                                      |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 2- | Discharge with -2 charisma.          |
| 3  | Discharge with -1 charisma.          |
| 4  | Demoted one rank.                    |
| 5  | No effect.                           |
| 6  | No effect.                           |
| 7  | No effect.                           |
| 8  | Promoted one rank.                   |
| 9  | Promoted one rank.                   |
| 10 | Promoted one rank with +1 charisma.  |
| 11 | Promoted two ranks with +1 charisma. |
| 12 | Promoted two ranks with +2 charisma. |



tables, each containing different general types of skills. One of the tables is chosen before the die is rolled, and the single die roll determines the specific skill acquired.

Of the four acquired skill tables, the first three may always be used by a character. The fourth is available only to characters who have charisma of at least 6. Characters receive two skills for completing the first term of service; they receive one skill upon completion of each subsequent term of service. Each character receives one skill upon being commissioned. Each character receives one skill each time success is achieved; success is defined as a throw of 8+ on the success table.

Some skills are automatically acquired by a character (without using eligibility) by virtue of rank or service. These automatic skills are listed on the rank and service skills table.

**Reenlistment:** Each character must roll for reenlistment at the end of each term of service. If the roll is successful, the individual may reenlist. If the result is 12 exactly, the character must reenlist. However, if the character has been discharged by failing the success throw, the reenlistment throw is ignored.

**Retirement:** A character may serve up to seven terms of service voluntarily, and may leave after any term (provided mandatory reenlistment — a reenlistment throw of 12 exactly — does not occur). A person may retire any time after the end of the fifth term. Retirement grants the individual an annual retirement pay (in addition to any mustering out benefits); rates of retirement pay are shown in the retirement pay table. Retirement is mandatory for an individual

who has completed a seventh term of service. However, persons who throw mandatory reenlistment must instead serve that additional term of service.

## MUSTERING OUT

When a character leaves the service (for any reason), he or she is eligible for mustering out benefits. The two mustering out tables indicate the nature of these benefits: one provides travel, education, and material benefits, while the other provides cash severance pay. Each table is matrixed by service and a single die roll. When mustering out of the service, a character is allowed to consult these tables based on total terms of service and on final rank.

One benefit roll is allowed for each full term served (if, under the optional survival rule, a character serves only half a term, that term is not counted toward muster-out). Additionally, a character who has received rank 1 or 2 receives one extra roll. A character who has received rank 3 or 4 receives two extra rolls. A character who has received rank 5 or 6 receives three extra rolls and, in addition, may apply a DM of +1 to die rolls on the skills and benefits table. Any character who has acquired gambling skill may add +1 to the die roll on the cash table; any character who is retiring may also add +1; any loner who has prospecting skill may add +1.

A character is free to choose between the benefits table and the cash table, but no one may consult the cash table more than three times during the mustering out process.

**Discharge:** An individual who is discharged because of failure of the success throw is eligible for a lowered level of mustering out benefits. Reduce the total number of rolls by one. An individual is eligible for muster-out benefits each time he or she is discharged.

## AGING

When a character reaches 34 years of age (the end of the fourth term of service) aging begins to take its toll. The aging table must be consulted then, and thereafter at four year intervals. This table shows each of the characteristics affected, and the throws necessary to avoid the effects of aging. If a specific throw is failed, then the reduction indicated is applied to the characteristic.

**Aging Crisis:** If, as a result of aging, a characteristic is reduced to zero, the character is considered to have had an aging crisis and become quite ill. A basic saving throw of 8+ applies to avoid death (subject to a DM for the expertise of any attending medical skill). If the character survives, recovery is made immediately (under slow drug, which speeds up the body chemistry). The character ages (one die equals the number of months in added age under slow drug) immediately, but also returns to play without delay. The characteristic which was reduced to zero automatically becomes 1. This process occurs each time (and for each characteristic) a characteristic is reduced to zero. In the event that slow drug is not available, the individual is incapacitated for the number of months indicated if the basic throw of 8+ is successful.

**Disability:** Characters may quit adventuring when they reach age 66, if any one physical characteristic (strength, dexterity, or endurance) permanently equals 1, or if the sum



of all three physical characteristics equals 10 or less. When a character quits adventuring, he or she leaves the game, taking along all money and possessions. The player is then free to generate a new character. Quitting due to disability is available to allow players to maintain reasonably competent characters.

## CAREER TYPES

The six career types generated here are general careers which exist in Vargr society. The services shown are intended for Vargr; humans may not undertake them.

**Navy:** Members of the interstellar space navy which patrols the space between the stars. The navy has responsibility for the protection of society from lawless elements in the interstellar trade channels and from foreign powers.

**Corsairs:** Members of an armed fighting force which includes integral space transport and ground troops. Corsair bands operate as pirates and mercenaries. They may find temporary employment with a government, but usually do not possess a permanent home.

**Army:** Members of the planetary armed fighting forces. Soldiers deal with planetary surface actions, battles, and campaigns. They may also serve as mercenaries for hire.

**Emissaries:** Individual bargainers or arbitrators employed by Vargr governments and other powers. The fragmentation of Vargr society has resulted in strong need for intermediaries who can assist in resolving disputes.

**Merchants:** Members of the commercial enterprises. Merchants may crew the ships of the large trading corporations, or they may work for the independent free traders which carry chance cargos and passengers between worlds.

**Loners:** Individual Vargr who operate alone. Two typical career paths are included in this category: prospector and criminal.

## SKILLS

The skills presented for human character generation in *The Traveller Book* are also appropriate to Vargr. There are three additional skills: infighting, liaison, and prospecting.

**Infighting:** The individual is skilled in the aspects of close-in combat peculiar to Vargr. It is similar to the human brawling skill.

Infighting allows the use of teeth at close range or claws at short range, with a DM of +2 to hit. In addition, a Vargr receives a DM of +1 if his charisma is higher than his opponent's; Vargr always have a higher charisma than non-Vargr.

Infighting skill also allows surrender by an individual losing the fight if both individuals have infighting skill. The surrender is given by simply quitting the fight and going limp; the winner automatically accepts the surrender. If the winner is of lower charisma than the loser, the two exchange charisma values (but a rise in charisma may not exceed 3 points).

**Liaison:** The individual is trained in the art of dealing with others; this skill is usable in relations with members of military units, citizens in a community, and with alien or foreign cultures.

The individual is trained to subordinate his or her own views and prejudices where they may conflict with those



being held by the individual being dealt with. As a result, greater cooperation may be achieved, and substantial progress in mutual projects made. Liaison is primarily used as a positive DM on the reaction table.

**Referee:** Liaison is similar to both streetwise and admin skills. Streetwise tends to deal with unsavory aspects of society, while admin deals with the formal bureaucratic structure. Liaison is a formal training that spans both, but also extends to contact with alien cultures. Liaison may be used as the equivalent of the next lower level of either streetwise or admin where necessary; thus, liaison-2 is the equivalent of streetwise-1.

**Prospecting:** The individual is experienced in searching out mineral deposits on world surfaces and in deep space.

This skill allows an individual greater likelihood of discovering mineral deposits. In any situation calling for such a search, this skill allows a favorable DM for success. This skill alone is not sufficient for the discovery of vast mineral wealth, but it does provide greater probability of an individual discovering what is there.

**Default Skills:** Often, some characters will have no skills appropriate to a given situation. A journey across a vacuum plain may be called for, and no one has vacc suit skill. In such cases, the referee may indicate that all individuals not otherwise skilled have vacc suit-0. A level of 0 for a skill indicates that the individual can undertake ordinary activities, but is not experienced enough to try dangerous activities or fancy actions. Level-0 indicates an orientation to the skill by an experienced person; it should not be taken as a stepping stone to level-1. Skills appropriate for level-0 are: air/raft, ATV, forward observer, steward, vacc suit, and weapons.

**Maximum Skills:** As a general rule of thumb, a character may have no more skills (or total levels of skills) than the sum of his or her intelligence and education. For example, a character with UPP 77894A would be restricted to a total of 13 combined skills and levels of skills. This restriction does not apply to level-0 skills.

## MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

In addition to the skills acquired while actually in service, the following skills and substantial rewards can be acquired through the mustering out procedures.

**Retirement Pay:** Any character who leaves a service at the end of the fifth or later term in service (unless discharged for failure of a success throw) is considered to have retired, and receives retirement pay as indicated on the retirement pay table. However, each year when the payment is due, that payment and all future payments are lost on 10+ (due to a change in the paying organization).

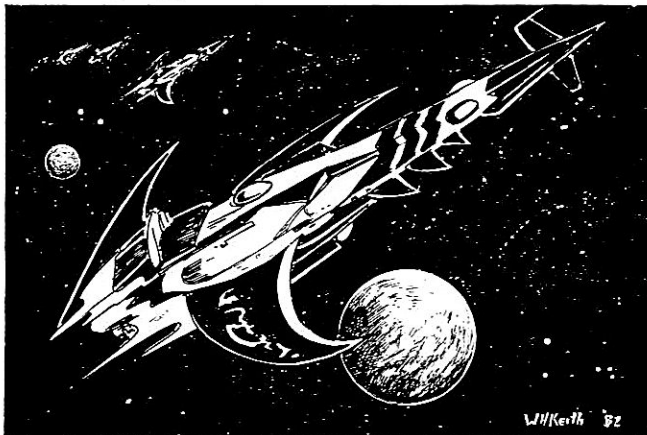
**Money:** The cash table indicates specific amounts of money which become available.

**Passages:** The skills and benefits table includes passages, or tickets, for travel. They include high passage, middle passage, and low passage.

**Material Objects:** The mustering out procedure can provide weapons or starships.

**Weapons:** The benefits table can provide blade or gun, and the character may select an appropriate weapon. If, while mustering out, the same benefit is received again, the character has the option of taking another example of the same weapon, selecting a different weapon, or taking the benefit as +1 in skill in the weapon previously received.

**Starships:** Three types of starship can become available as mustering out benefits: a corsair's raiding ship, a free trader, and a prospecting seeker. These ships are described below. All three types are assumed to be fully paid for; the character is responsible for all operating expenses. After a character has received a starship as a benefit, subsequent such rolls are ignored.



**Vargr Corsair (type VP):** Using a 400-ton hull, the Vargr corsair is an interstellar raiding vessel used by bands of Vargr brigands. It mounts jump drive-D, maneuver drive-K, and power plant-K, giving a performance of jump-2, and 5G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 130 tons supports the power plant and one jump-2. Adjacent to the bridge is a Model/2 computer. There are 12 staterooms and five emergency low berths. The ship has four hardpoints and four tons allocated to fire control. Installed on the hardpoints are four triple turrets: two carry triple beam lasers and two carry triple missile racks. There are three ship's vehicles: two GCarriers, and one modular cutter. The modular cutter has two open modules, and space in the hold is provided for the spare. Cargo capacity is 20 tons.

The Vargr corsair requires a crew of ten: pilot, navigator, 3 engineers, medic, and 4 gunners. The ship can easily carry a crew of 24, which would include raiders or boarding party members. Ship's vehicles are operated by available skilled personnel. The ship does not normally carry passengers. The ship costs MCr213.0696 (including architect's fees and discounts for this standard ship type) and takes 16 months to build.



**Vargr Trader (type VA):** Using a 200-ton hull, the Vargr trader is an interstellar trading vessel typically in use within the Vargr Extents. It mounts jump drive-B, maneuver drive-B, and power plant-B, giving a performance of jump-2, and 2-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 60 tons supports the power plant and one jump-2. Adjacent to the bridge is a Model/1bis computer. There are 5 staterooms and no low berths. The ship has two hardpoints and two tons allocated to fire control. Installed on the hardpoints are two single turrets: each carries one beam laser. There are no ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 72 tons.

The Vargr trader requires a crew of five: pilot, navigator, engineer, medic, and gunner. The ship does not normally carry passengers. The ship costs MCr69.1749 (including architect's fees and discounts for this standard ship type) and takes 12 months to build.



**Vargr Seeker (type VJ):** Using a 200-ton hull, the Vargr seeker is a wide-ranging prospecting and mining vessel. It mounts jump drive-A, maneuver drive-A, and power plant-A, providing a performance of jump-1 and 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 50 tons supports the power plant and one jump-1. Adjacent to the bridge is a Model/1 computer. There

## The Traveller Adventure

are four staterooms and one emergency low berth. The ship has two hardpoints and two tons allocated to fire control. Installed on the hardpoints are two single turrets: each mounts one pulse laser. The weaponry is primarily used for mining operations. There is one ship's vehicle: a ship's boat. Cargo capacity (primarily for ore) is 65 tons. The hull is not streamlined.

The Vargr seeker requires a crew of four: pilot, navigator, engineer, and medic. Additional crewmembers may be added as workers. The pilot operates the ship's boat. The ship does not normally carry passengers. The ship costs MCr42.4503 (including architect's fees, but not standard discount) and takes 9 months to build.

### FORMATS

Vargr characters may be referred to in the same way as

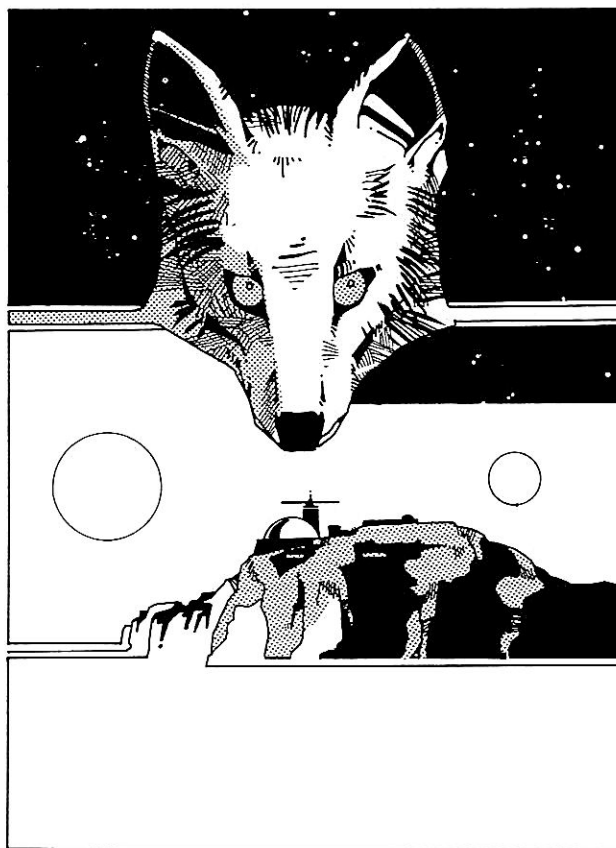
## Vargr Character Generation

human characters. By default, characters are assumed to be human unless otherwise identified. Therefore, Vargr characters should carry the identification Vargr somewhere in the description, preferably before the character's service.

Because Vargr may change services, it is possible for a character to have more than one service; specifying any services previous to the final one is not necessary. If a player does elect to note previous services, they may be indicated after the number of terms served. The example of Gvoudzon shows this format.

1. Vargr Ex-Emissary 788766 Age 38  
5 terms (2 as corsair, 3 as emissary) Cr100  
Infighting-1, Gunnery-2, Liaison-2, Ship's Boat-1,  
Vacc Suit-0, Rifle-1, Auto Pistol-0







## *The Traveller<sup>®</sup> Adventure*

**TRAVELLER**<sup>®</sup>

Science-Fiction Adventure<sup>®</sup>  
in the Far Future

*The underground city of Leedor is just another stop on the interstellar trade route until the crew of the March Harrier comes to the aid of an alien Vargr. They soon discover that the alien's jewelled ornament is more than mere decoration, and the powers pursuing the ornament turn their trading voyage into a mission of danger.*

*This science fiction story is written in the form of a role-playing adventure in which readers assume the identities and characteristics of the starship crew members. A referee, using the **Traveller** rules, guides the players from planet to planet as they uncover clues and seek the answer to the puzzle of the ornament.*

*Play of this science fiction adventure requires **The Traveller Book** (or boxed set of **Traveller** rules), paper, pencil, and two six-sided dice.*