
TRAVELLER

THE PIRATES OF DRINAX

Written By Gareth Hanrahan

THE TREASURE OF SINDAL

"Perhaps the greatest Admiral of the Star Guard was also, ironically, the one who presided over its final defeat. Peras was the equal of any of her predecessors in strategic thinking..."

- *The Fall of Salif: A Re-Evaluation by haut-Belzoni*

The Treasure of Sindal is the fifth adventure in the *Pirates of Drinax* campaign. If you are a player in this campaign, **STOP READING NOW!** If you're a Referee, then you should first read *The Pirates of Drinax Campaign* document to get an overview of the campaign.

This adventure takes place in the Tliowaha and Sindal subsectors of the Spinward Marches. The year is assumed to be 1105. The adventure begins on Drinax.

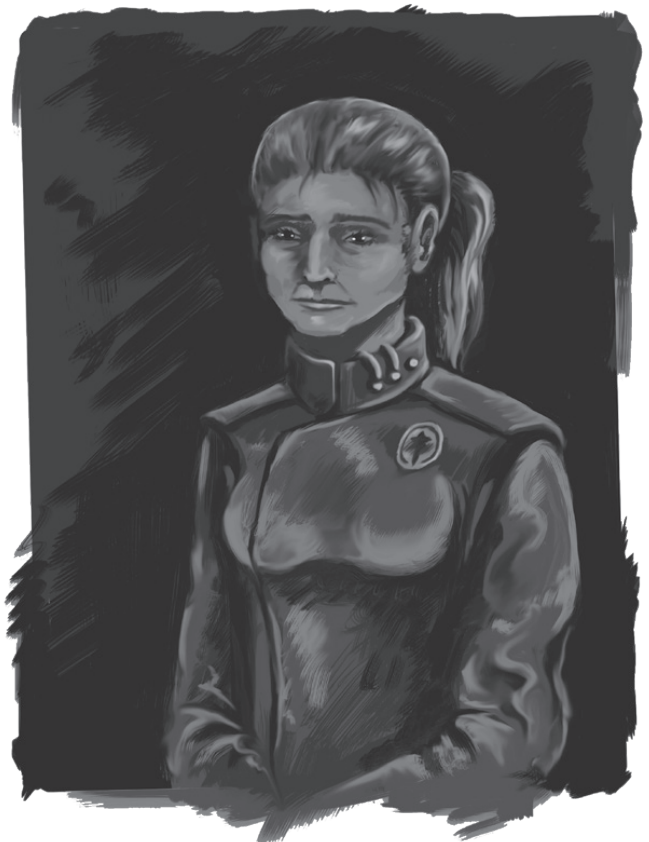
ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

An archaeologist visits Drinax to consult the archives of the Floating Palace. Professor haut-Belzoni believes he has discovered the key to the fabled Treasure of Sindal, a hoard of unimaginable wealth lost in the fall of the old Star Empire. Unfortunately, a band of pirates learn of the professor's discovery, and attempt to kidnap him.

With or without the professor, the chase is on. The professor's research indicates that finding the treasure hoard's location requires visiting four worlds in Sindal subsector – Noricum, Number One, Thebus and finally Ace – before its final location can be unlocked. With three other pirate bands also hunting the treasure, the characters must play their enemies off against each other in order to find the Treasure's last resting place.

Background

The glorious Empire of Sindal endured for a thousand years, and ruled over much of the Trojan Reach. The old Emperors of Sindal were proud and generous; their descendants were proud and cruel, and kept order through orbital bombardment and biological weapons. Subject worlds that refused to pay the ruinous taxes demanded by the Star Dragons were blasted into oblivion from high orbit. In time, the Sindalian provinces rose up en masse, supported by rebels within the Star Guard, and the empire tore itself apart in civil war. Old Noricum, the former seat of the Emperor, was destroyed. Parts of the empire survived – worlds like Albe or Drinax had the strength and technology to hold onto some territory – but for the rest of the sector, the fall of Sindal brought an end to interstellar rule of law.



It was a cruel irony that perhaps the finest and bravest officer to ever wear the crest of the Star Guard came into her own in that last war. Admiral Gani Peras was a brilliant naval officer, beloved by her crew and feared by her enemies. Both loyalists and rebels courted Peras; her sense of duty demanded that she stay loyal to her oath to the Emperor, but her sense of honour forced her to acknowledge the wholly justified grievances of the provinces. She led the defence of the spinward fleets, slowing the advance of the rebels and ensuring that the war impacted on the civilian population as little as possible. She avoided direct engagements where possible, preferring to use her light Harrier- and Wyvern-class ships to attack enemy supply lines and fuel dumps. Whenever a rebel commander used artillery on civilian targets, though, Peras showed no mercy. The rings of debris that still orbit Homestead and Vume are testament to the wrath of Gani Peras.

Not even a commander of her calibre, though, could stop the civil war. Around the year -1400, her squadron of five surviving ships jumped into the Noricum system – the besieged seat of the emperor. What happened next is a matter of conjecture, but most historians agree that Peras somehow convinced the emperor to hand over the contents of the Imperial Treasury. Some believe Peras hid the treasury somewhere on Noricum; others claim she intended to use the treasury as a bribe to convince the advancing rebels to negotiate. Others believe the Last Loyal Admiral betrayed her oath at the last, and stole the treasury for herself.

Peras returned to her squadron and they jumped out – out of the system, and out of the history books. There were never any confirmed sightings of them again. Peras became another legend of the Reach, gone for two thousand years.

What Really Happened?

What happened to the treasury of Sindal? Who knows! It is probably still buried on Noricum, in one of the planet's death zones, or maybe it was looted by raiders in the sack of the planet all those centuries ago. It does not matter – the treasure was just money, just platinum and iridium and lanthanum and precious metals, shiny things of little importance.

No, what Gani Peras took from Sindal was something much more dangerous. Consider this – for hundreds of years, the Empire of Sindal enforced its will on the outer colonies through orbital bombardment and biological weapons. The mark of the Empire, stamped on a dozen worlds, was a smouldering, radioactive crater. The real treasure of Sindal was the Emperor's personal arsenal of planet-killing weapons. Peras convinced the Emperor that she could set up a doomsday station – if the rebels dared attack Noricum itself, she would use the weapons to obliterate the rebel worlds. The Emperor agreed, but Peras had no intention of actually putting her plan into action. She hid the weapons on a secret naval base, where they have remained to this day.

The imperial archaeologist, haut-Belzoni, has discovered the key to this doomsday station.

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST

Yutal Mirobar haut-Belzoni, FIAS, FIHS, PhD and a dozen other acronyms, hails from the distant world of Regina, far away in the Spinward Marches. He is a professor of archaeology in the famous university there, specialising in historical naval technology. His landmark thesis on Vilani logistics during the Fifth Interstellar War is required reading for those suffering from chronic insomnia.

Twenty years ago, haut-Belzoni obtained a curiosity – a message globe. These devices are common across Charted Space. Each globe contains a secure message and can only be opened with the proper authorisation (or enough hacking skillz). Open the globe without the right key and its contents are instantly erased. This particular globe bore the emblem of the Empire of Sindal and came from the world of Albe (Sindal/0601), one of the most important worlds in the old Empire and now an imperial protectorate. This globe was a message intended for the Duke of Albe, and required Ducal-level clearance to open. Even more astoundingly, the datestamp on the globe showed that it was sent only a few days before the fall of Noricum. Presumably, similar message-globes were dispatched to the other key systems of Sindal, like Drinax but never arrived, lost in the chaos of civil war.

Haut-Belzoni knew the tale of Gani Perot and the treasure of Sindal, and realised the message globe could be the key to that mystery. All he had to do was open it and the one world where the old Ducal-level clearance codes might still exist was Drinax. So, haut-Belzoni took a leave of absence from the university, and went off to seek his fortune.

Professor haut-Belzoni

The professor's a cloistered academic who is out in the real world (or real worlds) for the first time. He's like an enthusiastic spider, all flailing hand gestures and uncoordinated, twitchy limbs. He launches into lectures on obscure topics at the slightest provocation, including a lengthy description of the old Empire of Sindal, the tale of Gani Peras, and the message globe he acquired. He has a letter of introduction from the Chancellor of the University of Regina to the Imperial Ambassador on Drinax, Thao Poluc (see *The Pirates of Drinax*, page 14).

Age 64, 11 terms

STR 5 DEX 7 END 7 INT 10 EDU 13 SOC 11

Admin 1, Advocate 2, Art (antiques) 1, Astrogation 0, Broker 0, Carouse 1, Comms 1, Computers 2, Diplomat 1, Drive 0, Investigate 2, Life Sciences 0, Physical Sciences 0, Social Sciences (history) 4, Steward 1, Vacc Suit 1, Zero-G 0

Unfortunately, all the excitement was a little too much for the professor, and he talked to the wrong people...

Belzoni as a Passenger

If the characters take on passengers and trade goods when they are not buccaneering across the Reach, they may take haut-Belzoni some of the way towards Drinax. The professor pays High Passage rates where he can (not every free trader in the subsector can offer High Passage). He stays on board an Imperial liner bound for the Florian League as far as Tech-World, then switches to smaller ships.

If the characters are not the ones to bring the professor to Drinax, he arrives on board another trader, the Aslan vessel *Tai'ao*.

At Drinax

Thao Poloc insists on King Oleb hosting a state dinner for this honoured guest, and Oleb's happy to do so – it is an excuse to go drinking. The characters are invited (of course, since almost everyone on Drinax can claim one title or another, almost everyone on Drinax is invited too).

During the dinner, haut-Belzoni describes how he found the message globe and how he needs the Ducal codes from the Floating Palace's archives to open it. Obviously, the treasure of Sindal belongs in a museum, although certain expenses may be paid both to haut-Belzoni and the King of Drinax. To be honest, haut-Belzoni laughs nervously, he's planning on making far more money off the book deal – he intends to write a gripping work of real-life adventure about how he found the Treasure of Sindal.

King Obeb declares that the globe will be opened tomorrow, after the dinner.

Dinner Encounters

1. haut-Belzoni corners an unfortunate character and talks to him for an eternity about Vilani logistics. Make a an Average (+0) Carouse, End check to get drunk enough to withstand him; if the check fails, the character insults him so terribly that he reduces the group's Imperial Standing by 1D.

2. Lady Hil, the most influential courtier in the Floating Palace, haughtily suggests if the players are to be part of the Drinaxian navy, then perhaps they should integrate into Drinaxian society. She will sponsor them – but only if they are willing to follow her advice. A character who accepts Lady Hil as a sponsor may increase their Social Standing by 1 so long as she favours them, but may become embroiled in palace intrigue against her rivals.

3. Chieftain Galx of the Vespexers approaches a character. Some of the young Vespexer warriors dream of going into

space. Can the characters find places for them about their ship? The Vespexers have only minimal skills but are eager to learn.

4. An influential merchant from Torpol complains loudly about the increase in piracy. He glares at the characters, and his anger draws the attention of the imperial ambassador, Thao Poloc. Unless the characters defuse the situation, then Poloc becomes suspicious of them, reducing their Imperial Standing by 1D.

5. King Oleb gets drunk and demands that the character with the highest Strength engage in a spirited round of hurricane boxing with him. Hurricane boxing, the king explains, is a new sport he just invented. First, you get a giant floating palace suspended on massive antigravity engines. He's got one of those. Second, you fly into a hurricane. Then, and this is the clever bit, you go out onto the forward topdeck and you have a boxing match. First one to fall off loses. It would be immensely impolite to refuse a royal command, but even more impolite to punch the king to death.

6. The characters spot Faihlakh speaking to Dai Kinear. Dai then approaches one of the characters and flirts with them. While she's genuinely attracted to whichever character she picks, she does have an ulterior motive – she knows a rare telepathic technique that makes it easier for her to read the mind of anyone she has had close physical contact with. The technique gives her DM+2 to any Telepathy checks targeting such an individual.

Stealing the Message Globe

Treacherous players may think about stealing the globe; paranoid ones may worry about someone else taking the precious artefact. Point out that on its own, the globe is useless – without the Ducal Codes, it is a 2,000-year old paperweight.

The players may also wonder why King Oleb does not just take the globe and the treasure. The King is no fool – he does not believe there is any treasure left, so all this fuss is really just to curry favour with the Imperium. While Thao Poloc's busy grubbing around with archaeology, he will not notice Drinax's piratical ambitions; and if the treasure turns out to be real, why then, ships get attacked by pirates all the time. Oleb wants Drinax to appear innocent, and that means co-operating with haut-Belzoni.

Opening The Message Globe

The next morning, a few select dignitaries – King Oleb, Princess Rao, Scholar Voha, Thao Polo, haut-Belzoni, and the characters – are invited into a sealed chamber in the Scholar's Tower. The chamber incorporates TL15 anti-bugging technology, and Scholar Voha assures them there is no chance of anyone eavesdropping on them.

Scholar Voha produces another relic from the archives of Drinax – a second message globe. This one, he explains, was also sent by Gani Peras' fleet to the Ducal Seat at Drinax at the same time as the message went to Albe. The globe was opened at some point in the intervening centuries but all it contained was a string of numbers and letters. Perhaps these numbers are a code; but not one any cryptographer in all those years managed to break. This second globe from Albe may contain the key to the code.

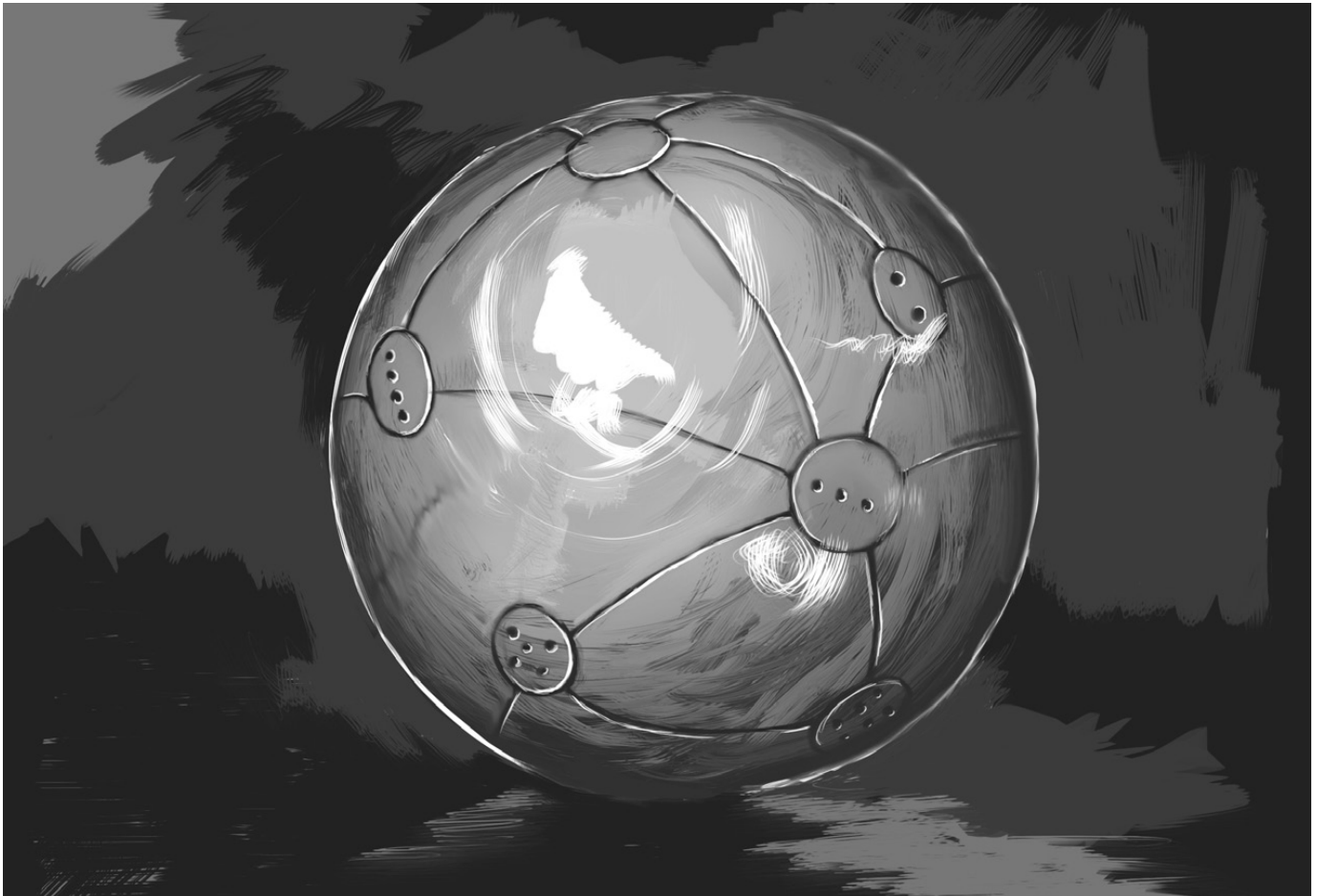
With great ceremony, Voha accesses the computer archives, and King Oleb gives his authorisation. Computer systems built during the days of the Sindalian Empire flicker into life as Oleb enters the codes passed down to him from the dukes of Drinax. The message sphere pops open, and haut-Belzoni examines the contents.

CONTENTS OF IMPERIAL VAULT TRANSFERRED TO
ADMIRAL PERAS' FLAGSHIP.
ADMIRAL PERAS ORDERED TO SET COURSE SPINWARD
ALONG MAIN TO REFUGE.
IMPERIAL FAMILY AND RETAINERS WILL FOLLOW IF
DEFENSIVE LINES AT SALIF FAIL.
KEY DISPATCHED TO THE DUKES OF ALBE, DRINAX,
DPRES AND YGGDRASIL.
SIGNED BY HIS HAND, FELIX STAR DRAGON, EMPEROR
OF SINDAL.

Following that message is a page of closely printed letters and numbers, similar but not identical to the message sent to Drinax, followed by the word ACE.

Haut-Belzoni points out a string of co-ordinates printed at the bottom of the message, and explains they are a date, time, location and verification stamp. It is a genuine message, sent only a few weeks before the fall of Sindal. The location is on Noricum, the old Imperial throne world, but it was not at the Imperial palace. The location is not one he recognises – and he has made a study of Noricum. It must be a previously undiscovered secret base!

The Imperial family died on Noricum; they never followed Peras to the refuge, perhaps because the rebels broke through the lines at Salif (Sindal/0206) quicker than expected. That might also explain why no message-globes are known to have reached Dpres or Yggdrasil - the rebels swept in from the spinward side and may have intercepted the couriers, probably in the Thebus system. The battle of Magg's Moon was one of the last decisive encounters of the war. It might be worth looking for wreckage in that system, or questioning salvage crews and junk dealers on the markets to see if a sealed message globe was ever found.



Analyzing the Codes

Diligent characters may wish to try breaking the code immediately, instead of gathering further information. Doing so is a virtually impossible (-8) Computers, Int check. Finding each subsequent code (from Noricum, Thebus and Number One) grants DM+2.

If successful, the character learns that the 'code' is not a code at all – it is the core dump of the targeting solution for a Sindalian-designed particle beam. This code precisely specifies the relative position of firer and target, as well as the frequency and particle mix for the beam. All the message globes contain slightly different targeting solutions but all are for the same type of particle beam weapon.

Why would Gali Peras send obscure technical data to the Dukes of the old Empire in such haste and secrecy?

The Quest

Haut-Belzoni declares his intention to travel to Noricum immediately to search for this treasure. If the characters wish, they can volunteer to accompany him; otherwise, Imperial Ambassador Thao Poloc arranges for an Imperial scoutship to be made available to the archaeologist. Either way, King Oleb speaks to the characters privately and suggests they ensure that they secure the treasure for Drinax – without arousing Imperial suspicion. Either they convince haut-Belzoni that the treasure belongs to Drinax, or they steal it, or he meets with a nasty accident. However they arrange it is up to them but they must travel to Noricum, investigate this supposed secret base, then retrace Admiral Peral's route to this mysterious 'refuge' where she brought the contents of the Imperial Vault. Off they go.

King Oleb gives the characters a copy of the Drinax ducal codes on a data module. He warns that the module has a built-in self-destruct – it will automatically erase itself in 12 weeks or if tampered with. It is not that he does not trust them; it is just that they might die horribly in the vacuum of space, and he does not want his Ducal Seal falling into the wrong hands.

The Scoutship

If the characters do not accompany haut-Belzoni, then he travels in a battered old scoutship called the *Confidence*, captained (and all other crew positions filled) by a battered old scout named Jacro Lekins. If the characters are not the ones to capture or destroy the *Confidence*, it gets destroyed by Petyr Vallis' corsairs later on.

The Chase Begins

Three other pirate groups pursue the Treasure of Sindal. These groups are described fully starting on page 17. How do these pirates find out about the treasure map?

Faihlokh's Raiders:

- Dai Kinnear is a telepath; she can read the minds of the player characters or haut-Belzoni. She cannot read the code, but can learn the characters are heading to Noricum.
- Alternatively, the raiders can plant a bomb on the Floating Palace. The explosion causes no lasting damage but in the confusion, Faihlokh grabs haut-Belzoni and steals the unlocked message globe.

Petyr Vallis:

- The infamous pirate captain preys on shipping along the Aslani border. The characters might encounter his ships in any of the Dustbelt worlds from Noricum onwards.
- If haut-Belzoni takes the scoutship *Confidence* instead of travelling with the player characters, then Vallis' ship captures the scout at Noricum or Number One.
- Vallis may also contact the characters directly. If they are successful pirates and have expanded Drinax's reach and prestige, then Captain Vallis may suggest an alliance - he would give the characters access to his network of safe havens and fences if they offer him the same courtesy. If the characters accept, they may roll 1D+2 and move ports that many steps towards Haven status. For example, if they roll a 5, they could move five systems one step towards Haven, or one system five steps towards Haven, or any combination adding up to 5. Accepting an alliance with Vallis reduces the character's Standing with the Aslan Hierate by 2D.
- Of course, while bargaining with the characters, Vallis asks what they are doing out in the Dustbelt...

The Proactive Recycling Company: Learn of the quest at Thebus but may pursue the player characters after that encounter.

Encountering the Pirates

The three pirate bands are the main opposition in this adventure. While each of them has a specific role in the adventure (at Noricum, Thebus and Number One), their involvement does not end there. The pirates may continue to pursue and harass the player characters until defeated or forced to relent.

Missing Message Globes

If the characters fail to find the keys at Noricum, Thebus or Number One, then one of the other pirate groups recovers them instead. The characters then have to steal, capture or negotiate for the key codes at Ace.

NORICUM

The Noricum system is lightly travelled. Even tourist ships avoid the former capital of the Empire – there may be monuments here, but they are deep in the Death Zones.

Optionally, the characters may encounter Petyr Vallis' ships in this system.

The co-ordinates from the Albe message globe lead the characters into a so-called 'Death Zone,' a region of the planet made uninhabitable during the war. This particular region, up in the Black Mountains, got blasted by mutagenic weapons long ago, and there are still live viral cultures on the surface. Get infected by one of those, and you will die of some weird cancer if you are lucky (if you are unlucky, you will beat your comrades to death in a hormone-fuelled rage before dying).

Imperial bases of this sort are sensor-shielded, so the only way to find it is to land and search on foot. The pirates need vacc suits of some kind to survive while searching.

Searching a surface hex: Difficult (-2) Recon, Int or Sensors, Int, 1-6 hours check. The characters must continue to search the surface until they find the entrance to the secret base. Characters may establish task chains to speed their search (for example, Drive and Dexterity > Sensors and Intelligence > Recon and Intelligence to drive a hovercraft across the surface while using its onboard sensors to search the area quickly.)

Avoiding contamination is a Routine (+2) Vacc Suit, End check. One roll must be made each day spent searching. If the roll fails, consult the table below.

Effect	Result
-1	Character is fatigued; DM-2 to all rolls until rested
-2	Slips down an incline, 1D damage
-3	Suit seals damaged; DM-4 to all future Vacc Suit checks until repaired
-4	Suit penetrated, 1Dx50 rad exposure
-5	Suit penetrated, -1 End permanently
-6 or more	Suit penetrated; -2 End permanently, Hard (-4) Medic, Edu check needed within 6 hours to avoid death

A: Small homestead: Questioning the local (with a successful Persuade, Soc check) gives DM+1 to all rolls to find the secret base.

B: Hot Zone: Radiation levels here are higher than normal; 1Dx100 rad exposure.

C: Old Road: Once the characters find this ruin, they can follow it, giving DM+1 to all rolls to find the base

D: Broken ground: DM-2 to Vacc Suit checks.

E: Dam: This former hydroelectric dam barely holds back the water; the lake behind it is clearly much larger than the engineers intended.

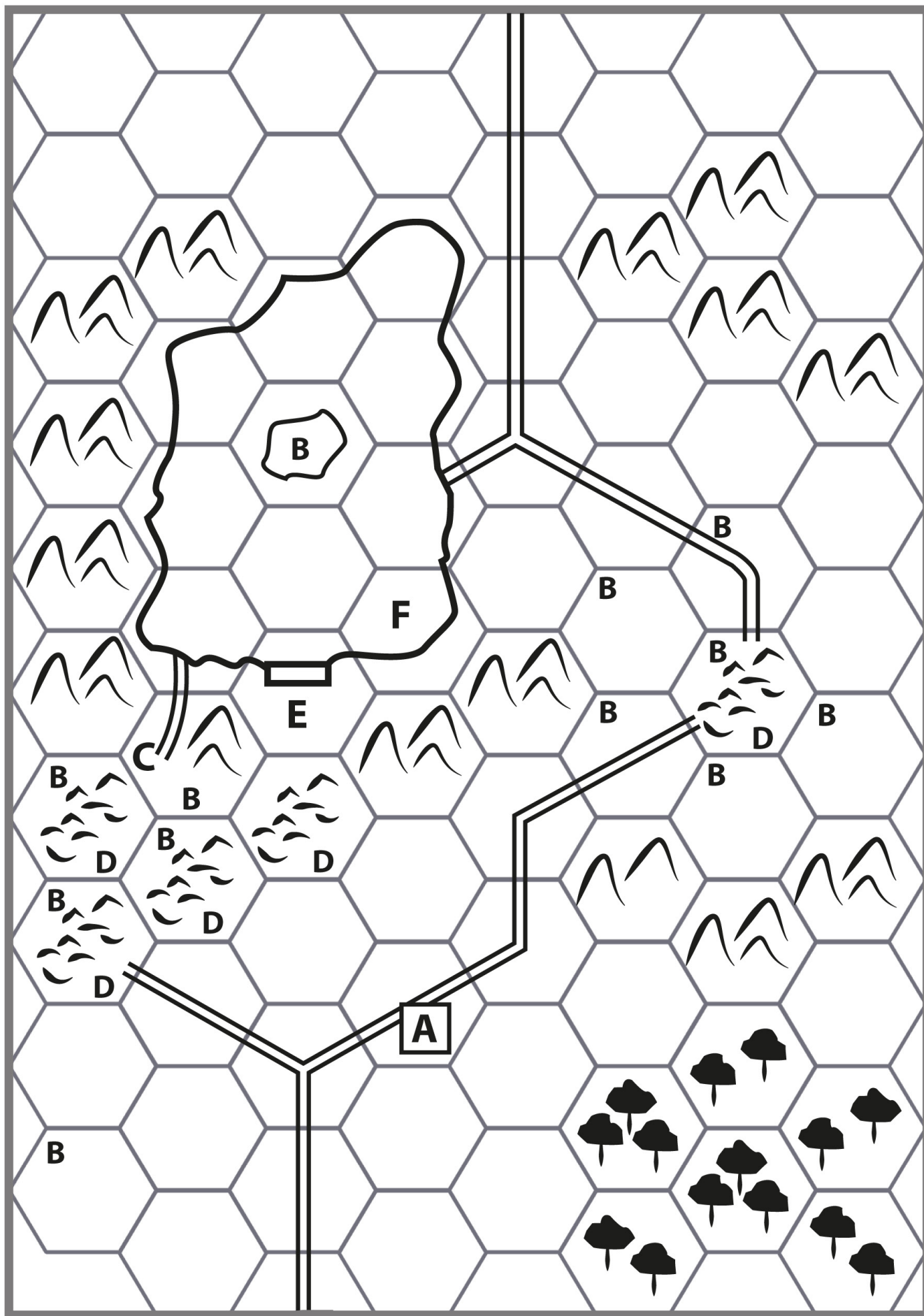
F: Secret Base Entrance: Underwater; the characters must blow up the dam or release some of the water to access the entrance. The base beneath is partially waterlogged.

The entrance to the base is a huge hatch of Bonded Superdense armour, marked with the Star Dragon crest of the old empire of Sindal. Could the treasury lie beyond?

Inside the Base

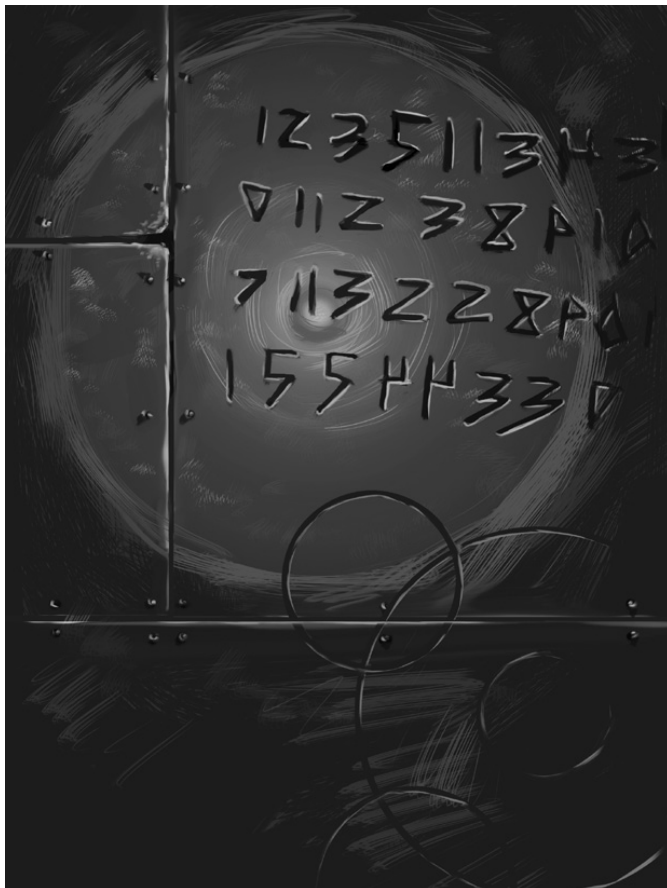
Exploring the base, the characters quickly realise the following:

- This was a military depot or arsenal, not a base. There are lots of silos and vaults, and relatively few barracks or work areas. It was clearly designed to store something valuable.
- They are not the first people to visit. The base was looted long, long ago. Probably multiple times, in fact. Almost everything of value is gone; they are wading through waist-deep toxic water for nothing.



Searching the base reveals a secret door leading into an undisturbed section. This vault is also empty of any treasure but they do find something curious. Standing on a pedestal is a naval particle cannon, identical to the ones on the *Harrier*. It is about three metres long, so getting it out will not be easy, but it is apparently intact.

Burnt into the ferrocrete wall opposite the cannon are two cryptic messages. First, there is a long string of digits, similar to the ones found in the message globe; it is another particle beam firing solution. Second, there is a set of jump co-ordinates, depicted in an old-fashioned way occasionally used by the Star Guard of Sindal. Vectors and co-ordinates in jump space do not map to normal space in an easily comprehensible way but the Star Guard used a notation of interlocking hyperspheres to show relative positions. A successful Astrogation, Edu check translates the diagram into something more conventional - it is a jump solution for the Ace system (0109/Sindal).



The Pirates

Meanwhile, Faihlokh and his raiders waited for the characters to find the base. Now that the entrance is uncovered, the Aslan and his pirates swoop in to capture whatever the characters find. Faihlokh's tactics are simple - if the characters left any crew on their ship, he has one of his ships attack them to draw

them away, while his second ship lands outside the base and he leads a squad in to storm the place and capture the treasure.

Assuming Faihlokh wins, of course, the treasure is a bit disappointing - one particle cannon does not a fabled treasure hoard make. It is like opening Tutankhamun's tomb and finding a rusty dagger. Infuriated, Faihlokh initially feels like taking his anger out on the player characters, but Dai Kinnear convinces him to just seal them in the base and leave. After all, there were another two message globes that never reached Dpres or Yggdrasil - maybe they show where the treasure was taken by Gani Peras.

If the characters defeat Faihlokh and the Aslan is not able to escape with his life, then Dai Kinnear surrenders and offers to switch sides. She wants to be on the winning team and believes the player characters could use an adept telepath.

Escaping the Base

It is easier to find an exit from the base than an entrance. A few hours' searching finds a flooded tunnel that leads outside. The characters have to swim underwater (or walk underwater, if they still have vacc suits), requiring an Athletics, End or Vacc Suit, End check to escape.

Moving On

The next part of this adventure takes place in the Thebus system, where the courier ships carrying the message globes to the other two duchies were attacked by rebels more than two thousand years ago. Several clues point in this direction.

- Any character who consults library data or possesses Social Science (history) 2 or more knows that after the fall of Salif, the rebel forces attacked Thebus and Noricum. Based on the timing of the messages being dispatched from Noricum, the couriers would have been in the Thebus system around then.
- Professor haut-Belzoni can suggest checking out the Thebus system.
- Any character with a Streetwise score of 2 or more, or who has made a study of pirate gangs of the Trojan Reach, has heard tales of the Proactive Recycling Corporation, a group of scavengers and thieves who operate out of the obscure Thebus system. They know the wreckage fields better than anyone.
- Dai Kinnear knows about the Proactive Recycling Corporation and can also suggest checking out Thebus.

THEBUS

The void preserves.

A ship that died two thousand – or ten thousand – years ago is almost indistinguishable from a ship that perished only a few days ago. Oh, there are differences, of course. Hydrogen leaks out of fuel tanks; radioactives decay; micrometeorite craters pock-mark the hull. If a ship's orbit brings it close to the system's primary, then the expansion and contraction of metal can, over centuries, damage and crack the hull. For the most part, though, the ship is preserved by the void.

The crew, too, may be eerily intact despite the passing centuries. Radiation and cold kill the bacteria that would otherwise devour the corpses, at least on the surface. The decay happens *within*. The corpse of a long-dead space traveller looks like an ice-encrusted mummy, as the moisture in the surface layers of skin gets leached out as ice. Touch the corpse, though, and it falls apart; it rotted from within centuries ago, despite the preservation of the surface.

Long, long ago, in the Thebus system, two mighty fleets clashed. Both wore the emblem of the Star Dragon of Sindal, that same emblem that hangs behind King Oleb's throne in Drinax. The remains of those two fleets – united once again in destruction – orbits the Thebusian star 700,000,000 kilometres out, a floating graveyard for perfectly-preserved corpses.

Thebus lies on the Dustbelt Main, one of the most-trafficked belts of stars in the Sector. Even a low-tech Jump-1 raider from Tyr or Acis can make it out here to wrench chunks of refined metal and high-tech salvage from the wrecks. The fleets were skeletonised centuries ago. There are still a few hulks floating out in the void. Tourist liners heading for the Florian League sometimes fly by the largest intact wrecks, so bored Imperial nobles can admire the ruins.

Other, smaller wrecks have escaped scavengers until recently. A giant 50,000 ton warship made a much more tempting target for a scavenger than the remains of a 100-ton courier...

... unless that courier holds the key to a fortune.

The Distress Call

As soon as the characters jump into the system, they detect a distress call emanating from close to the third planet in the system, a gas giant named Olo according to the old charts.

+++Signal GK, Signal GK. Um, is there anyone out there? This is the yacht *Lyonesse II*. We seem to be a little off course. Signal GK, need assistance+++

Signal GK was the Vilani equivalent of SOS; it is rarely used these days, and is most commonly encountered near the core systems of the Imperium. This ship must be very far from home.

The yacht is nearly 10,000,000 kilometres away from the player characters' vessel; flight time at 3-g acceleration is around 10 hours. En route, the characters can interrogate the crew of the *Lyonesse II*. They learn:

- The ship is owned and operated by a noble, Baron Caruda, who comes from an obscure world in Deneb. (Modika, if they ask). He was en route to the Florian League on board a liner, but thought he would stop off at Thebus to go hunting.
- He tried scooping fuel from the atmosphere of the gas giant, but damaged his ship in the attempt. He is not a technical person, so he is not quite sure what is wrong. Lots of the little lights on the control thingy have turned red. Is that bad? The chap who sold him the ship assured him it was really easy to fly.
- Caruda tells the characters whatever they want to hear to lure them closer. If they ask for a reward, why, he happens to have several thousand credits on board to pay for emergencies. If they ask about a 2,000-year-old Sindalian courier, why, he happened to spot just such a ship when he was trying to scoop fuel.

As the players may quickly realise, Caruda's lying to them. He is not a noble, and he is not in distress. He belongs to the Proactive Recycling Company. The recent increase in pirate activity cut into the PRC's profits, so they set up the *Lyonesse II* as a make-shift Q-Ship – bait for any pirates who jumped into the Thebus system.

The Confidence & Haut-Belzoni

If the unfortunate archaeologist is still operating independently, then he insists on going to the aid of the stricken *Lyonesse II* and runs straight into the ambush.

The Ambush

The PRC's plan is as follows:

- The yacht lures any prospective pirates in close to the gas giant.
- If they dock with the yacht, then the four pirates in boarding vacc suits waiting in the airlock storm the docking ship and try to take it intact.
- Meanwhile, three other pirate ships – two Pirate Interceptors and a Bug-class Salvage Hauler (see *Book 6: Scoundrel*) emerge from behind a nearby moonlet and spring the trap.

- President Yang is on board the first Interceptor, the *Invigilator*. Her sister ship, *Death's Actuary*, is under orders to protect Yang's ship at all costs.
- If the battle goes really badly, then the yacht can be sacrificed – its jump drive is shot and irreparable, so it can be used as a fireship. There is a rack of nuclear missiles in the cargo bay that can be detonated, inflicting 6D damage on any ship within Close range.

Negotiating with the PRC

The PRC are not bloodthirsty. They just do not want competition in their star-turf. If the player characters are willing to negotiate, or offer a deal, then the PRC are willing to listen.

Convincing the PRC to deal is a Very Difficult (-4) Diplomacy, Int check with the following DMs:

- +1 if the characters did not attempt to pirate the yacht
- 2 if the characters attacked the yacht, and surrendered when the trap was sprung
- +4 if the characters attacked the yacht and forced the PRC to retreat
- +1 if the characters offer to share the Treasure of Sindal with the PRC once they find it.
- +1 if the characters agree not to attack ships within 6 parsecs of Thebus.
- +1 if the characters are Tolerated by the Imperium (Imperium Standing of 6+)
- +2 if the characters are Allied with the Imperium (Imperium Standing of 20+)
- 1 if the characters are an Irritant to the Imperium (Imperium Standing of -6)
- 2 if the characters are Infamous in the Imperium (Imperium Standing of -21)
- 4 if the characters are an Enemy of the Imperium (Imperium Standing of -40)

The Junkyard

Also in orbit of Olo is the PRC base, a junkyard of spare parts and wrecks ostensibly salvaged from the thousand-year-old remains of the battle. Anyone who scanned the junkyard closely might detect some suspiciously recent components among the old parts (of course, anyone who tried that would quickly end up as spare parts themselves).

If the characters negotiate with the PRC – or escape the ambush and force a surrender – they can visit the junkyard and search the wreckage for the remains of a Sindalian courier. President Yang admits they found just such a ship a few years ago, but never bothered hauling her back to the junkyard. She was too badly damaged to be worth reclaiming. Why do the infamous Pirates of Drinax care about a two-thousand-year-old casualty of the Battle of Thebus?

The Courier

The wreck of the courier floats far beyond Olo, on the fringes of the system some 900,000,000 kilometres further out. Flight time is likely to be several days. When they locate the wrecked ship, they can search the debris field with an Sensors, Edu check, or board the wreckage and search it by hand to locate the message globe. The globe is still miraculously intact, clutched in the gloved hand of a pilot who has been dead for two thousand years.

Opening the globe using the codes given by King Oleb reveals – another string of numbers. Again, these are the configuration codes for a Sindalian particle beam weapon, followed by the word ACE.

The courier's computer systems were fried in the battle, but the black box recorder is intact and can be recovered. The black box contains a record of the last few minutes of the ship's life. The courier jumped from Noricum to this system, hoping to rendezvous with an escort flotilla. However, the rebel fleet had already broken through the lines at Salif, and the courier's sensor screen filled with enemy IFF signatures. A lucky shot breached the fuel tanks, preventing her from jumping ever again. She turned and tried to run, but ended up on a vector leading out of the system. She has been floating in that same direction for two thousand years, which brought her to this lonely grave out here in the void.

Importantly, there is a clue in the black box recorder. The other courier ship – the one carrying the globe bound for Yggdrasil – radioed a coded message, announcing that it was going to try a jump to the neighboring system of Number One.

She must still be there.

NUMBER ONE

If the characters have not already encountered Petyr Vallis, then his ships are in this system.

Finding one wrecked ship after two thousand years was a miracle. Finding two beggars belief. The characters cannot just scan the system in the hopes of finding the wreckage of the courier. Fortunately, they can narrow the search considerably if they think about the state of affairs all those centuries ago. Haut-Belzoni can provide useful historical perspective, as can a consultation of library data on the system.

While Number One's population numbers in the millions now, back then it was just a small prison colony with only a few thousand inmates; it was the underwater dungeon of the Emperors of Sindal. There was only a single settlement on the planet, the old prison itself. If a courier ship jumped into the system, damaged and carrying a precious cargo, there is only one place it might have gone to find shelter – the prison dome, deep beneath the ocean waves.

Dragonsdome

Dragonsdome is the oldest settlement on Number One; it grew up around the prison. Today, it is a trading post and mining colony with a population of half a million, ruled by a Warden. Dragonsdome controls the planet's starport, which stands atop a mountain that rises steeply out of the ocean five kilometres north of the dome. If the characters land at the starport, they can take a submersible funicular that runs down into Dragonsdome.

Once in Dragonsdome, the characters must visit the court in order to gain access to the dome's records. They are not the only offworlders at the Warden's Court – Petyr Vallis' agent Hokmar is here too, and he spies on the player characters' actions. For example, if the characters locate the wreck of the courier or say something that might damage their reputation with the pirates of the Trojan Reach during their audience with the Warden, Hokmar reports this information back to Vallis.

An Audience With Warden Rannib

The Wardenship became a hereditary position hundreds of generations ago. Warden Rannib (Keeper of the Keys, Governor-General by Appointment of the Star Dragon, Grand High Chokey, Administrator of the Starport and Lord-Regent of the World of Number One) is an eight-year-old girl. While her advisors and viziers make most of the decisions, Rannib's enchanted by tales of pirates, so she wishes to meet with the characters herself.



To be precise, Rannib's enchanted by tales of pirates getting their just desserts. Number One suffered attacks from raiders from Oghma, Acis and Tyr within living memory, and hatred of pirates runs strong among the population. Stories about pirates getting flung in the dungeons or keel-hauled in vacuum are bedtime reading for the young Warden.

In order to convince Rannib to let them consult the prison archives, the characters need to impress Rannib by telling tales of their heroic battles with pirates with the Perform skill, persuading her they need her help to stop pirates with Persuade, or befuddling her with a barrage of legal jargon through Advocate are all possible options. Alternatively, the characters can bribe a vizier with Cr. 7,000 (+/- Effect x 1,000 of a Streetwise check).

The Dome Archives

The archives of Number One date back more than two thousand years. Fortunately, they are in excellent condition, due to a social movement that held sway three hundred years ago, in which Dragonsdome claimed pre-eminence over the other domes by emphasising its ancient culture and status as first settlement. Many Sindalian-era computer files and documents were transferred to imperishable everglass to preserve them for eternity.

A successful Investigation, Int or Social Science, Int check digs up the relevant record. According to the files, a damaged courier ship landed on Number One a week after the Battle of Thebus. The pilot was accused of 'breaching a secure area' and incarcerated together with 'all his belongings' in a part of the prison called Dragon's Deep. Reading between the lines, the Warden of the prison back then was clearly unsure which way the winds of history were blowing, so he chose to hide the courier in the deepest part of the ocean. If the Sindalian Emperor had triumphed, then the Warden could have sped the courier on his way after sorting out the bureaucratic misunderstanding. Of course, as it transpired, the rebels won, so the Warden concealed the evidence of any Imperial presence on his world and declared his support for the rebel cause.

Dragon's Deep is an underwater chasm five hundred kilometres north-west of Dragonsdome. Back when this place was a working prison, cruel wardens used Dragon's Deep as the ultimate in solitary confinement. Prisoners would be placed into pressure-resistant bathyspheres and plunged into the darkest depths of the ocean, to hang from thin cables until they had atoned for their misdeeds – or until the warden ordered they be killed. Those unfortunates would hear the cables detaching from their spheres, then feel the sickening fall as they plunged even deeper into the stygian waters, until finally the pressure crushed them into oblivion.

Exploring Dragon's Deep

The Deep is much too, well, deep for conventional submersibles. The characters must hire a specially designed deep-sea submersible. Most of these vehicles are used for prospecting on the sea bed, but with a Streetwise check, the characters find one vessel, the *Barnacle*, that they can hire for a mere Cr. 5,000, complete with her captain, Balamira Greenfell.

Balamira Greenfell

Greenfell's a lifelong resident of Number One; she's never even been to the surface. The thought of being out in the *open*, with nothing between you and the vacuum of space but a little *gas* is terrifying. She only feels safe when she's got at least a few thousand tons of water over her head. She's been a prospector and explorer for years, and lives on board her little *Barnacle*. The submersible is definitely lived-in, with washing strung between control consoles and breakfast being cooked on the reactor casing. It is rather like plunging into the hostile depths of the pitiless ocean in someone's one-bed apartment.

Age 46, 7 terms

STR 8 DEX 6 END 8 INT 6 EDU 5 SOC 3

Admin 1, Broker 2, Carouse 1, Comms 1, Computer 0, Engineer (power plant) 1, Gambler 2, Mechanic 2, Navigate 1, Remote Operations 2, Seafarer (submersible) 3, Vacc Suit 2

Playing Greenfell: Cackle. Roll the submarine upside down. Scream 'we're all going to die' whenever the players look too comfortable. Find morbid humour hilarious.

Exploring Dragon's Deep: *Barnacle* cruises across the abyssal plane, hugging the sea floor. Her thrusters churn up the silt, disturbing the titanic gigaprawns that are the apex predator on Number One. After eight hours, the submarine arrives at the Deep and drops down, her hull creaking under the strain of the mounting external pressure. Even stranger creatures swim past the viewports – colonies of spherical crystal-jellies, bioluminescent custard eels, bug-eyed axecrabs with their vicious bludgeoning limbs. In time, the descending *Barnacle* leaves the riot of undersea life behind.

Outside, the characters glimpse the occasional bit of wreckage, likely the remains of old bathyscapes. Greenfell happily tells the characters they still sometimes put people to death by pressure-crushing on this planet; it is, for example, the mandated sentence for convicted space pirates.

The Barnacle

Vehicle	TL	Skill	Agility	Speed	Crew & Passengers	Open/Closed	Armour	Hull	Structure	Weapons	Cost (Cr.)
<i>Barnacle</i>	7	Seafarer (submersible)	-1	80kph	1 Crew, 6 Passengers	How many open-topped submarines do you know?	10	6	8	Manipulator Arms	100,000



Locating the Courier: The *Barnacle* has a Hull of 8, but cannot endure the pressures of the Deep indefinitely. To find the courier, one character must make a successful Difficult (-2) Sensors, Int, 1-6 hours check. Failing inflicts an amount of damage on the Hull equal to half the number of hours spent searching (so, searching for 4 hours inflicts 2 damage). This Hull damage is only temporary, as it represents the added stress and strain of resisting the added weight of water – if the ship returns to a safe depth, then the lost hull can be restored with a Mechanics check. However, if the ship suffers actual damage while under pressure, the temporary damage becomes normal damage.

The Courier

The Sindalian courier-ship is still intact. She is encased in a shell of everglass to protect her from the ocean and the pressure, but over the two millennia, flaws in the shell let some water in, and the ship will never fly or function again. Still, the message globe may still be inside.

The characters have three options. Firstly, the *Barnacle* can dock with the courier and use its manipulator arms to cut away the everglass over the ventral airlock. The characters could then cross onto the courier and recover the message globe. The danger is that the loss of the everglass shell will cause the ship to crumple under the pressure.

The second option is to send a remote-controlled prospecting drone instead of a character. The problem with this plan is the drone only works underwater, so the characters would have to flood the ship, possibly hastening its destruction.

The third option is to raise the ship to the surface of the ocean, and then recover the globe using conventional means.

Breaching the Courier: The courier can survive 2D minutes before being destroyed by the pressure. Flooding the ship to use a drone costs 1D of those minutes. Finding the message globe requires a Recon, Dex check, but the character's maximum DM from his Characteristics and Skills cannot exceed his Vacc Suit or Remote Operations skill, depending on whether he is searching manually or using the drone.

Any characters on the courier when it collapses are almost certainly killed (6D damage per round).

If the courier is destroyed before the characters recover the message globe, they still have a chance to save it. A successful Sensors, Int spots it tumbling into the depths along with the rest of the wreckage. The *Barnacle* can dive even deeper, allowing a character to try grabbing for the globe with the submersible's manipulator arms. Grabbing the globe requires a

successful Remote Operations, Dex check; each attempt costs the *Barnacle* a point of temporary Hull damage. Should the characters lose the globe into the darkness of the ocean, then the Treasure of Sindal is forever lost.

Depth Charges

As the characters return to the surface (possibly while towing the wreck of the courier), Greenfell detects objects tumbling down towards them – depth charges! Each charge inflicts 4D damage if it explodes near the submersible; while Captain Greenfell is at the helm with her Seafarer skill, the player characters could set up task chains to help her dodge incoming depth charges.

After a few near misses, the characters receive a narrowcast sonic message from another submersible. Who's attacking the characters? Pick the most appropriate of the following attackers:

- **Petyr Vallis:** The pirate learned of the characters' scheme through a combination of rumours in the pirate underworld, and a report from his agent Hokmar. Now, he wants the message globe, or at least a share of the treasure.
- **Faihlokh:** The pirate followed the characters from Noricum, and now wants the second message globe.
- **Warden Rannib's Guards:** The dome authorities realised the characters are notorious pirates, and now intend to send them to the bottom of the ocean.

The characters can either cut a deal with their attackers, or try to escape. Escaping requires a series of opposed tests between the attacker's Sensors, Int and the submersible pilot's Seafarer (submersible), Int. The submersible needs to accumulate an Effect total of 4+ over multiple rolls to escape detection.

Opening the Globe

The third message globe was originally bound for the world of Yggdrasil, which was once another regional capital of the Sindalian empire. Again, the globe contains only a string of code that the characters recognise as configuration and targeting data for a Sindalian particle beam, and the word ACE at the end.

ACE

Ace stands for Argon-CO² Environment, a reference to the unbreathable atmosphere of the planet. As on Number One, the population live in domes and tunnels. Unlike Number One, however, the people of Ace are extremely vulnerable to attack from orbit – one missile can breach a dome and expose the interior to the toxic atmosphere.

Electrical discharges in the upper atmosphere of Ace create fantastic light displays. A religious group called the Sages of Ace divine the future in these lightning-blue aurorae.

Dead Ends

The characters may try scanning the system for a courier wreck, or consulting the authorities on Ace, such as they are. Scans detect nothing. No surviving institution on Ace dates back to the Sindalian empire, although the oldest domes and tunnels were constructed back then. Checking records and archives fails to find any trace of a visit by a courier.

The Rivals

Any surviving pirate groups – Faihlokh's gang, the Proactive Recycling Company, Petyr Vallis' group, or any other pirates who have become involved in this treasure hunt – arrive in the Ace system soon after the player characters jump in.

If rivals captured one or more of the message globes, then the characters need to either work out a way to acquire the data in those globes, or else come to a deal to share the treasure. If the characters got all the globes themselves, then they need to work out the solution to the treasure map before their rivals arrive and try to take the secrets by force.

The Secret

Each of the four message globes contained targeting data and firing solutions for a particle beam.

The atmosphere of Ace reacts with brilliant light displays to an electrical discharge.

A particle beam works like an electrical discharge.

So, take four ships, all armed with particle beams. Program them with the data from the message globes. Press the firing control. The beams follow the instructions left by Gani Peras some two thousand years ago, sweeping through the atmosphere of the planet below. The sky lights up with brilliant bursts of light. As the beams move and modulate, the patterns become more complicated, interacting and interfering with each other until the nature of the map becomes clear.

The combination of four particle beams in the atmosphere of Ace projects a map five hundred miles wide across the sky. The map is a starchart. A location two parsecs coreward of Ace is highlighted. There is nothing there according to official charts, so the characters would be jumping blind into deep space.

But faint hearts never won the Treasure of Sindal.

We Don't Have Four Ships!

To unlock the map, the characters need four particle beam sources. Normally, that means four ships fitted with particle beams. The characters could get away with building some jury-rigged satellites fitted with particle beams, battery packs and computers (requiring a Mechanics check, 1-6 hours, and Cr. 5,000 in parts, in addition to the particle beam weapon). Alternatively, the characters can bargain with the rival pirates for the use of their particle weapons.

Note that the closest source of particle beams for purchase is Salif.

Making the Jump

Jumping to the listed co-ordinates requires an Astrogation check with a taking 10-60 minutes, as per the rules described on page 141 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. If other pirates are present and are not allied with the player characters, throw 2D for each of them. On a 6-, they do not attempt to jump. On a 7-9, they attempt to jump and take 10-60 minutes to complete the astrogation calculations. On a 10+, they try to hasten their calculations, accepting a -3DM in order to complete the calculations within 1-6 minutes (assume each pirate ship has a base +2DM to Astrogation unless otherwise stated).

If a pirate ship fails the Astrogation check, throw 2D again. On a 10+, the pirates jump anyway despite the incorrect calculations, and misjump. If the Referee wishes to bring those adversaries back again, assume they misjump somewhere in the Reach. Otherwise, they are never seen again.

Optionally, the Referee can make the Astrogation check secretly, so the players are unsure whether or not they are jumping to the right location. A failed check results in a misjump.

THE HIDDEN STATION

A successful jump brings the characters to a lonely outpost in the void. Old starlight illuminates an antique space station, with the crest of the Sindalian Star Guard clearly visible on the hull. Mercifully, the characters also detect a large reserve of hydrogen in the station's fuel tanks; clearly, this place was used as a secret refueling depot by the Star Guard more than two thousand years ago.

As the characters approach the docking port, an automated message activates and plays over short-range radio.

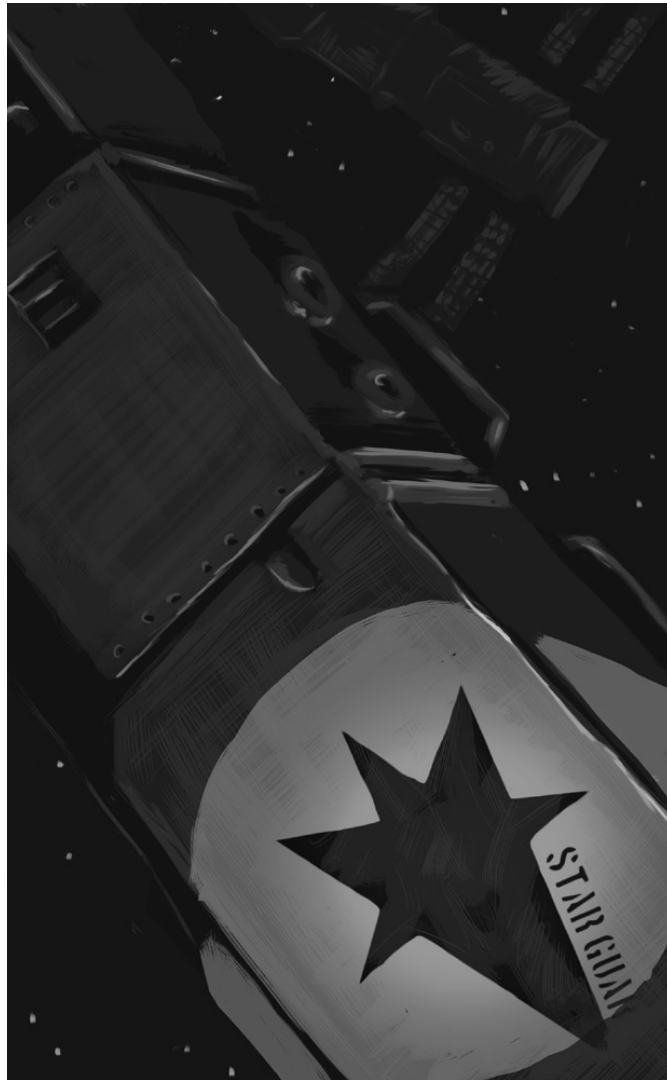
This is Admiral Gani Peras of the Star Guard. This station is off limits to unauthorised personnel. If you attempt to dock, this station will automatically self-destruct. Officers of the Star Guard with Ducal-level clearance, transmit your authorisation codes before attempting to dock.

The same codes used to open the globes can deactivate the station's autodestruct. Transmitting those codes triggers another message from Gani Peras.

This station holds the contents of the Imperial Vault of the Star Dragon. I implore you, use this treasure with wisdom and humility. The mistakes of the old dynasty must not be repeated. I have done my duty to Humaniti; I ask you to do likewise. I bid you good luck. Admiral Gani Peras, signing off.

Exploring the Station

There are two other ships docked at the station. Both are identical to the *Harrier* given to the player characters at the start of the campaign, but both ships require extensive maintenance and refitting before they can fly again. They were stripped of all spare parts; at a guess, to provide for a third *Harrier* that left here with Gani and her crew. There is no clue as to where the Great Admiral went after the war.



The fuel tanks contain some 20,000 + 2D x 1,000 tons of refined hydrogen.

In the main cargo bay of the station, the characters find the treasure of Sindal, the treasure that Gani Peras brought from Noricum on the eve of its destruction.

The treasure stands in mute ranks, line after line of warheads.

The Sindalian empire's strength was not in gold or jewels or spice or iridium; it was in atomics and plague bombs. Gani tricked the last emperor into giving up his doomsday retaliatory strike.

The Treasure

There are 24 atomic warheads and 24 plague warheads, each designed to fit a torpedo launcher. The atomic weapons, while devastating in effect (treat them as double-strength nuclear torpedoes, inflicting 8D ship-scale damage (400-2,400 normal damage) are very much secondary to the punitive plague. These artificial viral and bacteriological weapons were developed at the high end of TL14, and so can overcome most commonly available countermeasures. In game terms, if a plague weapon is dropped on a populated planet, roll 2D and apply the following DMs:

- +1 per TL below 14, -1DM per TL above 15
- +2 per extra warhead deployed
- DM equal to the population level of the planet
- 2 if the planetary population is dispersed (agricultural planet, garden world)
- +2 if the planetary population is especially concentrated (asteroid, hostile atmosphere)
- 2 if the planet has a sizeable alien minority population
- 4 if the planet has a majority alien population

If the result is 11+, that planet's population is wiped out entirely. On a result of 8-10, reduce the Population score by 1D (remember, the Population score is an exponent, so a drop of 2 means a 99% mortality rate). On a 5-7, reduce the Population score by 1 (90% mortality). On a 4-, the plague does not kill enough people to warrant a change in the planet's status, but still causes a mortality rate of 1Dx10%.

For example, Petyr Vallis drops six plague warheads on the Aslan world of Khusai (Tliowaha/0403). The DMs are as follows:

- +10 (five extra warheads)*
- +2 (TL12)*
- 6 (Population 6)*
- 2 (Agricultural)*
- 4 (Majority Aslan)*

For a total DM of +0. On a throw of 8+, he kills millions of Aslan.

A planet struck by a successful biological attack may fall into chaos even if the population survive (Government Type becomes 0, Law Level becomes 0), and/or be designated a Red Zone.

The use of weapons of mass destruction against a civilian planetary population is an abhorrent crime. Should the characters use a weapon openly, it counts as a double-strength Atrocity if used against a world not aligned with a great power (including worlds of the opposing power), and a octuple-strength Atrocity if used against a world of a great power (so, Petyr Vallis' Imperial standing would drop by 2D if he bombed Khusai, while his Aslan standing would drop by 8D).

Formerly allied worlds may also turn against the characters if they are discovered to have used WMDs.

Finding a buyer for the punitive plagues is unlikely, at best – these goods are literally toxic.

The Treasure Hunters

What do the various hunters do if they discover the Treasure of Sindal?

- **haut-Belzoni:** reports the discovery to the Imperium. Within six months, an Imperial Planet-class Cruiser, the *Sentinel*, arrives from Tobia to take custody of the weapons.
- **Faihlokh's Company:** try to sell their share on Theev. Faihlokh's found dead in an alley on Theev a week later; the weapons end up in the hands of one of the warring worlds on the Dustbelt Main, like Tyr or Acis.
- **The Proactive Recycling Company:** sell the location of the weapons to the Imperium for a nominal fee.
- **Petyr Vallis:** deploys the weapons against the Aslan Hierate, targeting key worlds like Tliowaha.
- **The Player Characters:** that is up to them. Do they bury them? Sell them? Blackmail worlds with them? Or do they repeat the follies of Sindal and Drinax, and use them to keep their allies in line...

APPENDIX 1

THE PIRATE GANGS

These three pirate gangs exemplify three different sorts of piracy. Faihlokh's Raiders are desperate thugs who fell into piracy hoping to get rich quickly. The PRC are a legitimate company taking advantage of the lawless Reach to supplement their income through piracy and mercenary work. Vallis' Company are pirates in name only – they see themselves as heroes fighting an oppressive invader.

Faihlokh's Raiders

The raiders are a small pirate band, operating primarily in the Borderlands subsector. They possess two ships – a 100-ton scout called *Lucky Misjump* and an Aslan-built *Eakhau* trader, the *Tai'ao*.

Lucky Misjump (Scout S Class, *Traveller Core Rulebook*, page 115), 100 tons, Hull 2, Structure 2, Armour 4, Jump 2, Thrust 2, Double Pulse Laser Turret

Tai'ao (Trader *Eakhau* Class, *Alien Module 1: Aslan*, page 82), 400 tons, Hull 8 Structure 8, Armour 0, Jump 2, Thrust 1, 4x Pop-Up Turret (Turrets #1 & 2: Beam Laser x2, Turrets #3 & 4: Particle Beams)

Faihlokh: An Aslan warrior, exiled from his clan for dishonourable conduct, Faihlokh stole a clan trading ship and went into the Reach to seek his fortune

Age 34, 4 terms

STR 11 DEX 8 END 12 INT 6 EDU 7 TER 0 SOC 6

Astrogation 1, Battle Dress 2, Comms 1, Drive 0, Engineer (power) 2, Flyer 0, Gunner (Turret) 3, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Heavy Weapons (Man-Portable Artillery) 2, Independence 2, Leadership 2, Melee (axe) 1, Recon 2, Tactics (Space) 2, Tactics (Ground 2), Tolerance 1, Vacc Suit 0

Equipment: Combat Armour (Armour 15), Reaver's Axe (4d6), Heavy Machine Gun (4d6+4, auto 8)

Dai Kinnear: Dai comes from the primitive world of Marduk, a tribal planet that fears outsiders. She is a powerful natural psion, and her powers were honed by a secret sect on her world that inherited traditions from one of the old Psionic Institutes. When she sensed Faihlokh's alien mind, it awoke in her a desire to travel and explore space. She's become a surprisingly adept spacefarer.

Age 26, 2 terms

STR 6 DEX 8 END 7 INT 8 EDU 5 SOC 4 PSI 12

Animals 0, Astrogation 1, Awareness 2 Broker 1, Carouse 2, Deception 1, Engineer 0, Gunner (turret) 1, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Investigate 1, Mechanic 1, Medic 0, Navigation 1, Persuade 2, Pilot 0, Recon 1, Survival 2, Telepathy 3, Telekinesis 0, Vacc Suit 0, Zero-G 0

Equipment: Flak Jacket (Armour 6), Body Pistol (3d6-3)

Proactive Recycling Corporation

The PRC started out as a rescue and resupply service for traders and tourists on the Imperium/Florian League trade route. If a ship got into difficulty, the PRC would sent out a search party with spare parts and technical supplies to repair it. If the damaged ship was too badly damaged to repair, they would pay the owner a nominal sum and salvage it for spare parts. A few years ago, when their supply of parts from the Imperium ran dry, the PRC turned to piracy to restock their reserves. 90% of the company's income comes from legitimate repair and salvage, but they also prey on other pirates, tramps and free traders.

The PRC currently operates six ships out of their base on Olo:

Invigilator: (Pirate Interceptor, *Book 6: Scoundrel*, page 97): 200 tons, Hull 4, Structure 4, Armour 4, Jump 1, Thrust 3, Turret #1: Particle Beam, Turret #2: Beam Laser x 2

Death's Actuary: (Pirate Interceptor, *Book 6: Scoundrel*, page 97): 200 tons, Hull 4, Structure 4, Armour 4, Jump 1, Thrust 3, Turret #1: Beam Laser, Grapple Line Turret #2: Beam Laser x 2

Cicada: (Salvage Hauler, *Book 6: Scoundrel*, page 103): 300 tons, Hull 6, Structure 6, Armour 0, Jump 2, Thrust 1, Turret #1: Pulse Laser x2, Turret #2: Sandcaster, Missile Launcher

Scarab II: (Salvage Hauler, *Book 6: Scoundrel*, page 103): 300 tons, Hull 6, Structure 6, Armour 0, Jump 2, Thrust 1, Turret #1: Pulse Laser x2, Turret #2: Sandcaster, Missile Launcher

Lyonesse III: (Yacht, *Traveller Core Rulebook* page 126): 200 tons, Hull 4, Structure 4, Armour 0, Jump 1, Thrust 1, Pop-Up Turret #1: Pulse Laser x 3

Bigjob: (External Cargo Trader, *Book 6: Scoundrel*, page 93): 300 tons, Hull 6, Structure 6, Armour 0, Jump 2, Thrust 2, Pop-Up Turret #1 & #2: Missile Launcher x 2, Pop-Up Turret #3: Sandcaster, Pulse Laser

President Yang: The current head of the corporation, Yang is an intensely pragmatic man. His followers joke that his brain is slaved to the accounting computer, as he evaluates every situation according to how it will benefit the company. He can be charming and effusive when he wishes, but the cold calculations are always there behind his eyes.

Age 46, 7 terms

STR 8 DEX 6 END 8 INT 10 EDU 11 SOC 8

Admin 4, Astrogation 2, Broker 3, Comms 1, Computers 2, Deception 2, Gambler 1, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Medic 2, Persuade 2, Recon 1, Remote Operations 2, Tactics (Space) 2, Vacc Suit 2, Zero-G 3

Petyr Vallis' Company

In a relatively short time, Vallis has managed to rally a sizeable flotilla of ships together from worlds that fear the Aslan Hierate. The young captain has a crazed vendetta against the Aslan, but most of his followers are more interested in claiming booty and slowing the Aslan expansion into the Trojan Reach.

While Vallis claims the loyalty of some eight ships, only four are within range to play a part in this adventure.

Lionsbane (Cutlass-Class, *Supplement 2: Traders & Gunboats*, page 62): 600 tons, Hull 12, Structure 12, Armour 4, Jump 4, Thrust 4, Railgun Bay-12, Particle Beam Bay-11, Turret #3: Particle Beam Barbette, Turret #4 & 5: Sandcaster, Beam Laser x2, Turret #6: Missile Rack x 3

Vengeance (Blockade Runner, *Book 6: Scoundrel*, page 91): 400 tons, Hull 8, Structure 8, Armour 4, Jump 2, Thrust 3, Turrets #1 & #2: Pulse Laser x 2, Turrets #3 & #4: Pulse Laser & Sandcaster

Stalker (Fast Trader, *Supplement 2: Traders & Gunboats*, page 42): 200 tons, Hull 4, Structure 4, Armour 0, Jump 2, Thrust 4, Turrets #1 & #2: Particle Beam

Dancing Bear (Captured Aslan *Iyeliy Messenger*, *Alien Module 1: Aslan* page 92): 200 tons, Hull 4, Structure 4, Armour 0, Jump 5, Thrust 1, Turret #1: Pulse Laser x 3, Turret #2: Missile Launcher

Petyr Vallis: Vallis comes from a long line of spacefarers; his family have been nomadic traders in the Reach for many generations. A decade ago, when Vallis was a young man, the family flotilla strayed into territory claimed by an Aslan. The Aslan attacked, killing Vallis' entire family. He escaped in a battered scout, and spent the time since rallying support for a secret war against his family's killers. While he hates all Aslan, he reserves a special hatred for the Glorious Empire.

Age 26, 3 terms

STR 9 DEX 8 END 11 INT 8 EDU 9 SOC 5

Astrogation 2, Battle Dress 1, Carouse 1, Comms 0, Deception 2, Engineer 0, Gunner (Turret) 3, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Leadership 3, Mechanic 2, Melee (blade) 3, Pilot (spacecraft) 4, Recon 2, Remote Operations 1, Space Science 0, Stealth 1, Sensors 1, Vacc Suit 1, Zero-G 2

Equipment: Boarder's Vacc Suit (Armour 8), Cutlass (2d6+4), Gauss Pistol (3d6 Auto 4)

Hokmah: A veteran pirate, Hokmah is Vallis' chief counsellor and aide. The old space dog is too fragile to run around cutting throats or firing missiles, but his knowledge of the Trojan Reach makes him invaluable.

Age 122, 25(!) terms

STR 4 DEX 5 END 3 INT 8 EDU 12 SOC 8

Admin 3, Advocate 4, Astrogation 3, Broker 3, Carouse 5, Deception 3, Diplomat 2, Gambler 2, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Jack of all Trades 2, Leadership 1, Mechanic 2, Streetwise 4, Tactics (Space) 3, Vacc Suit 2, Zero-G 4

APPENDIX 2

LIBRARY DATA

Everglass: A synthetic coating to preserve objects. Everglass is extremely resilient (Armour 15), but heavy and brittle. A particular sonic frequency causes molecular bonds to break, turning the solid glass into a semi-solid or a liquid depending on the intensity of the sound.

Punitive Plagues: The infamous Punative Plagues of Sindal were developed in the laboratories at Noricum in the last years of the empire. The old standby of orbital bombardment was no longer enough to keep the outer provinces in line, so the Emperor ordered the development of weapons so deadly that a single bomb would be enough to devastate a planet. The plagues rely on the victim's own immune system, hijacking it and altering it to create new viral antibodies. Every infection therefore creates hundreds of new, entirely different plagues.

APPENDIX 3

WORLDS OF THE REACH

Number One

Settled as an undersea mining colony and prison planet by the Sindalians, Number One should not have survived the fall of the empire. That it not only survived but flourished is testament both to the stubborn nature of humanity, and to the fact that it's hard to leave your home hellhole without jump technology.

The atmosphere of Number One is a toxic goop of insidious gases, with a high concentration of chlorine and cyanide compounds. The population live in settlements on the sea floor, and never emerge from beneath the waves. To live on Number One is to exist in a realm of tunnels, corridors, pumping stations and submarines. The planet's starport is located on a tall mountain, above the worst of the atmospheric poisons.

Patron: Loank Vetis

Reward: Number One becomes a Haven; cut of any profits from the new starport.

Mission: Vetis rules an underwater settlement named Felaka, on the far side of the planet from the starport. Felaka sits on a wealth of mineral resources, including significant deposits of lanthanum and radioactives. The other settlements, though, block Felaka's exports and charge such high customs fees that it's hardly worth bringing goods to the starport at all. Vetis wants the characters to help build a second starport - or rather, *above* Number One.

A starport built on an anti-gravity platform, like the Floating Palace of Drinax, could soar above the atmospheric toxins. Vetis is willing to pay most of the costs of the port, but she needs an investment of at least MCr. 100 from the characters, as well as technical expertise from Drinax or another TL13+ culture. And, of course, someone will have to protect the new starport from attacks by jealous rivals.

Thebus

Like Noricum, Thebus was virtually annihilated in the civil war that brought the Empire of Sindal crashing down. Today, the planet is a wilderness, home to only a few hundred settlers, mostly trappers, prospectors and hunters.

In recent years, Imperial cruises heading for the Florian League have taken to stopping at Thebus. Hunting is a passion for many Imperials, and Thebus is home to a species called the Thebun Lion (technically, it is a mutant produced by the biological weapons used in the war). A lion pelt is one of the must-have souvenirs from a Grand Tour of the Trojan Reach, along with an Ancient relic from Floria or a Tlazolteotl Death Mask (the increasing popularity of hunting Thebun Lions tracks perfectly with increasing hostility towards the Aslan Hierate).

Patron: Ftahkaiw of the Hierate

Reward: Cr. 50,000

Mission: Ftahkaiw is a minor Aslan noble; his second-son Ftahtas set off as an *ihatei* some months ago, but vanished. Ftahtas' ship was found crashed on Thebus. The father fears that his son was stranded on the planet, and is either lost in the wilderness or, worse, hunted like an animal by humans who cannot tell the difference between a sophont and a mutant beast. The characters must break into the hunting grounds and find Ftahtas before his head ends up mounted on the wall of some safari ship.

Noricum

Old Noricum is described in *Alien Module 1: Aslan* on page 183; in brief, the planet was bombed back to the Stone Age by vengeful rebels, and a third of the planet is now utterly uninhabitable. Most of the old Imperial sites were destroyed by orbital bombardment or biological weapons, so few signs of the Empire remain.

Patron: Donus, the Star Dragon, Emperor of Sindal, Protector of the Reach (also, runner-up for 'best in show - root vegetable category' in the Noricum Farm Fair)

Reward: Imperial Blessing (DM+1 to any social interactions with those who still respect the authority of Sindal)

Mission: Pay him Cr. 50. That's it

Donus is the direct heir to the long-dead Emperors of Sindal. He has a better claim on the throne than King Oleb, or the Empress of Yggdrasil, or Duke Gorluun III the Undying, or any other petty noble who claims descent from the Star Dragon dynasty. Of course, the throne of Sindal was destroyed, the empire is long

gone, and Donus' claim is almost meaningless. Empires are made by force of arms, courage and cash, and Donus has a turnip farm, a bad back, and no money whatsoever.

He barely gave any thought to his Imperial heritage until the player characters' activities started people talking about the old Empire. Now, he has started selling his blessing, as well as 'patents of nobility' and titles to worlds that were once part of the Empire. While Donus is a laughable, pathetic figure, he could be a rallying point for enemies of Drinax if King Oleb were to declare himself Emperor.

Ace

Ace (Argon-CO² Environment) is also described on page 183 of *Alien Module 1: Aslan*. The planet's atmosphere is unbreathable, so the population live in domes. Electrical storms and cosmic rays excite the argon in the atmosphere, causing astounding heavily displays and auroras. A religious sect, the Sages of Ace, see these displays as omens to be interpreted.

Patron: Captain Abhi O-Pallux of the Free Trader *Lagrange Lady*.

Reward: Cr. 10,000

Mission: O-Pallux is a trader from the world of Tlazoltteotl, an industrial world that produces huge amounts of consumer goods. Her free trader has a hold full of microwave ovens and food synthesisers - and she has come up with the perfect way to sell them to the superstitious natives of Ace. She came here with a business partner, an ex-raider called Yoaty whose ship had a particle cannon. The plan was simple - she lands and claims that the fates sent her to bring prosperity to the domes, then Yoaty fires his particle beam into the atmosphere, lighting

it up. The natives interpret this aurora as a sign that O-Pallux was sent by the fates, and they start buying her cargo as an act of religious devotion.

Yoaty got jumped by pirates at Salif and his ship was destroyed. O-Pallux needs someone with a particle beam to make her scam work. The player characters (assuming they are flying the *Harrier*) have a particle beam. This could be the beginning of a beautiful religious movement...

Salif

Salif is a rocky planetoid, notably only for being tidally locked so that the same side always faces the system's primary. It barely sustains the eight million people who live in the narrow twilight zone between the freezing nightside and the sunside desert. The ruler of Salif is a former holostar performer, Tisnee Zazzle who inspired a rebellion against the old planetary government; now, she maintains her control over the population through carefully choreographed songs and speeches, promising them prosperity and more living space. Zazzle maintains her youth and beauty through expensive anagathics.

Patron: Tiznee Zazzle

Reward: Salif becomes a Friendly port.

Mission: Zazzle's become immune to her regular anagathics. She needs advanced medical treatment at Albe (Sindal/0601) to tweak her genetic code so she can continue to take the drugs. However, to maintain her mystique, her followers cannot know that she is leaving on medical grounds. Therefore, she wants the characters to 'kidnap' her, bring her to Albe, and then arrange for her to 'heroically escape' after the treatment is complete.
