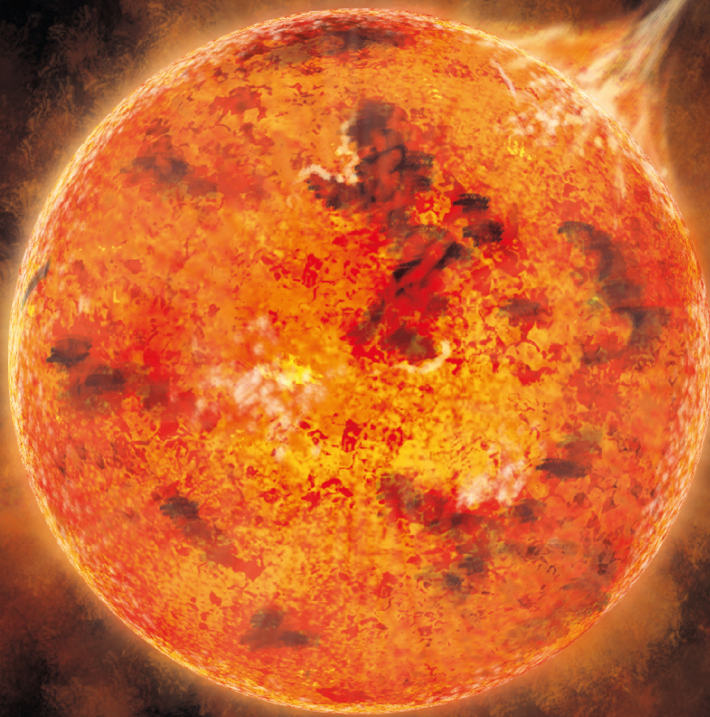


TRAVELLER

BOOK 3 : TOUCHSTONE & AFAWAHISA



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

BOOK 3: TOUCHSTONE & AFAWAHISA

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TOUCHSTONE

Known to the Aslan as Weasuirloaa, Touchstone was until recently a virtual unknown. Lying within the Great Rift or 'behind' it relative to the Aslan heartlands, Touchstone could not be colonised in earnest until the colonies on this side of the rift had matured enough to support a second wave of expansion. Even after that had been achieved, there was a marked tendency to push coreward into regions of greater stellar density than expand along the shores of the rift where opportunities for follow-on colonisation were not as good.

As a result, Aslan ihatei leaked sideways into Touchstone rather than flooding across the sector as had happened elsewhere. Expansion was slow and erratic, with occasional spurts offset by random halts due to conflict or better opportunities elsewhere. Today, some areas of the sector, notably the coreward subsectors, are wholly the territory of Aslan clans and part of Hierate space. Others remain frontiers, although with increasing Aslan activity it is likely that the whole sector outside the rift will eventually be absorbed. Already some expansion into Iphigenaia sector has taken place, however progress will be slow until the Touchstone colonies mature.

Touchstone has not been explored to any great extent by the Imperium or other human states, except for the Zhodani Consulate. The Zhodani are known to have been active in this region of space long before the Aslan arrived, although their interest in regions rimward of their home has never been as strong as the drive to explore corewards.

Several worlds in the sector are said to have evidence of advanced civilisations. It is not clear whether these are all from the same species or culture; accounts of

artefacts found vary considerably. It is possible that some sites are either Ancients settlements or cultures placed on these worlds by the Ancients. A mysterious species named the Kursae may also have left remnants behind.

Given the distances involved and long transits required, conducting any kind of research in Touchstone is difficult; information takes a long time to leak back to the Imperium, or other large civilisations, and common knowledge in the local area might be completely unknown a sector away. Bemused locals have at times watched a huge expedition set down to excavate a site studied a decade ago by another group or ended up rescuing explorers who expected a completely different environment.

Access to Touchstone by human explorers from the major states can be problematic. It is sometimes possible to obtain permission to transit through Aslan holdings in the Trojan Reach but this is always at the whim of large and small-scale politics. Going by way of the Beyond and through what many human spacers call the Touchstone Gap is no more certain to guarantee success but the dangers tend to be more direct and can be deterred by a well-armed ship or avoided altogether by a clever crew. Some Imperial missions transit spinward from Verge sector, crossing the Riftspan Reaches by way of deep-space and gas giant refuelling, while attempting to avoid contact with Aslan vessels.

Many star maps list the Aslan designation for the subsectors of Touchstone but more pronounceable human names have entered common use. These are used except in cases where a subsector or star system is Aslan-dominated, in which case its Aslan name is generally applied.

EKTEIU



SUBSECTOR

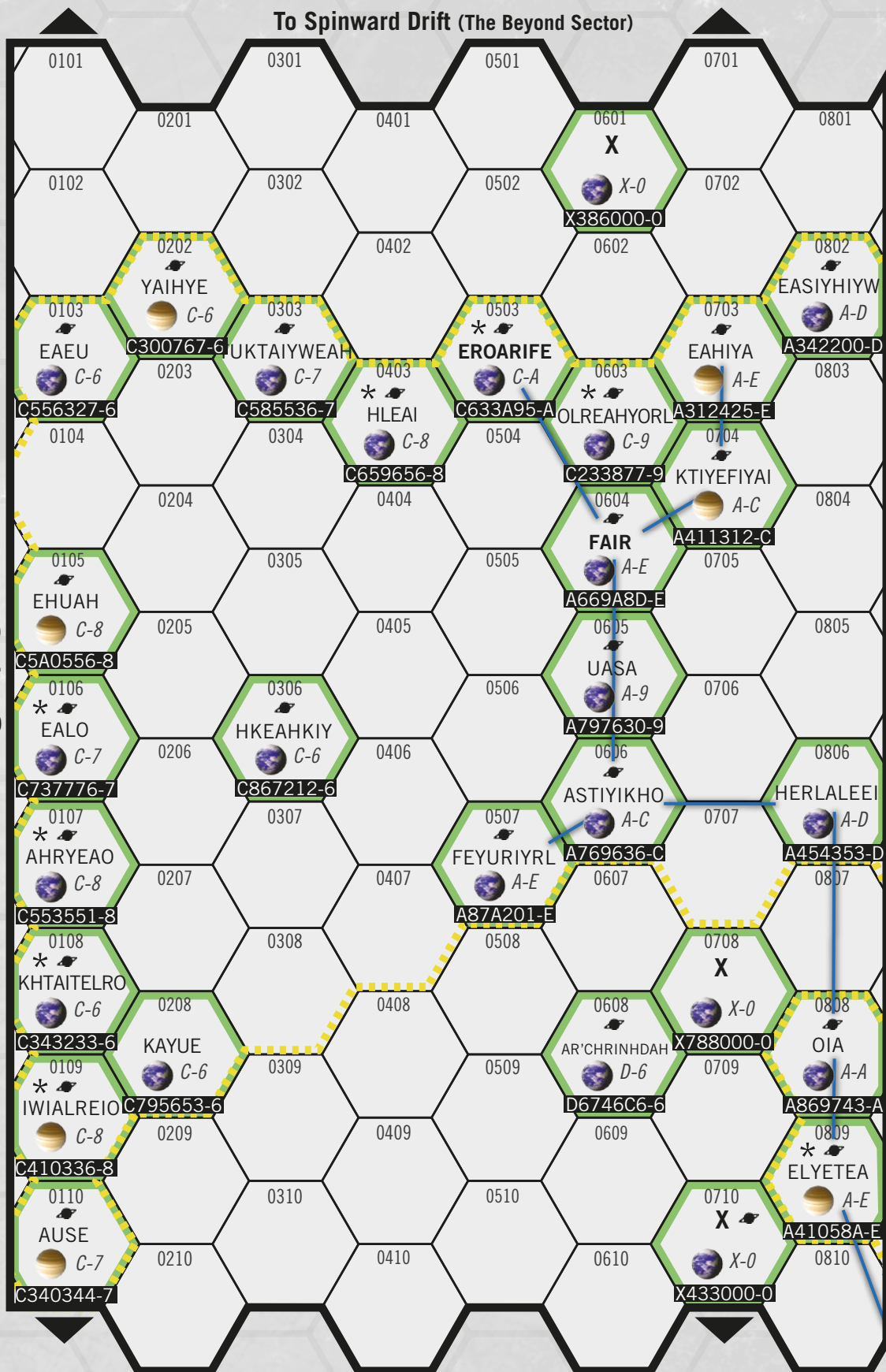
Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	0601		X386000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	0708		X788000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	0710		X433000-0	Po			G
Ahryeao	0107	ACS	C553551-8	Ni Po		Hierate	G
Ar'Chrinhdah	0608		D6746C6-6	Ag Ni			G
Astiyikho	0606		A739636-C	Ni		Hierate	G
Ause	0110		C340344-7	De Lo Po		Hierate	G
Eaeu	0103		C556327-6	Lo		Hierate	G
Eahiya	0703		A312425-E	Ic Ni		Hierate	G
Ealo	0106	ACS	C737776-7			Hierate	G
Easiyhiyw	0802		A342200-D	Lo Po		Hierate	G
Ehuah	0105		C5A0556-8	Ni		Hierate	G
Elyetea	0809	ACS	A41058A-E	Ni		Hierate	G
Eroarife	0503	ACS	C633A95-A	Hi Na Po		Hierate	G
Fair	0604		A669A8D-E	Hi		Hierate	G
Feyuriyrl	0507		A87A201-E	Lo Wa		Hierate	G
Herlaleei	0806		A454353-D	Lo		Hierate	
Hkeahkiy	0306		C867212-6	Lo Ga		Hierate	G
Hleai	0403	ACS	C659656-8	Ni		Hierate	G
Iwialreio	0109	ACS	C410336-8	Lo		Hierate	G
Kayue	0208		C795653-6	Ag Ni		Hierate	
Khtaitelro	0108	ACS	C343233-6	Lo Po		Hierate	G
Ktiyefiyai	0704		A411312-C	Ic Lo		Hierate	G
Oia	0808		A869743-A	Ri		Hierate	
Olreahyorl	0603	ACS	C233877-9	Na Po		Hierate	G
Tuktaiyweah	0303		C585536-7	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Uasa	0605		A797630-9	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Yaihye	0202		C300767-6	Na Va		Hierate	G

A			

Touchstone

EIKTEU SUBSECTOR

To Shiilelagh (Iphigenia Sector)



The Ekteiu subsector is mostly Aslan territory, officially claimed by the Hierate and subject to its protection. However, the Aslan enclave here is distant from the mature colonies of the Riftspan Reaches and effectively beyond assistance from the heartland. Ekteiu is a land of opportunity for *ihatei* but also a dangerous frontier where expeditions go missing and landgrabs are dislodged by unknown forces. Inter-clan feuding and conflict over territory are the two main impediments to further expansion, with hostile locals as a possible further complication.

There are no coherent reports in the Imperium of what is happening in the spinward-coreward corner of Touchstone but stories persist of all-out war between an alliance of small Aslan clans and some external threat to their holdings, complicated by the fact that supply lines run through neutral space and, worse, territory held by clans quite happy to see the alliance collapse. The constant harassment and delay of reinforcements headed for the trouble zone may hasten the loss of frontier colonies. If the Hierate were to treat the situation as a threat, the conflict could be quickly resolved but at present the local clans are on their own and, at least according to rumour, are not winning the war.

It is not clear whether this threat is sufficient to push deeper into Aslan territory. Those who warn that more developed colonies might be lost are ridiculed as doomsayers, whose pronouncements that the Aslan enclave in the region might be swept into the Great Rift are prompted by cowardice and, worse, lack of faith in their clan. No coherent response from the Hierate is likely in the future.

AR'CHRINHDAH

Ar'Chrinhdah is the closest humans can get to the sound made by the world's inhabitants when they refer to their home. Ar'Chrinhdah is populated by several million Ascondi, who have a mature TL6 society. A few Aslan and humans also dwell in remote areas

of the world; the Aslan are mostly small bands of *ihatei*, rather optimistically claiming they own the planet, whilst the humans are a motley collection of prospectors and explorers who settled down to make a home for themselves.

The *ihatei* have little contact with the Ascondi and, for now, are content to build settlements and lay claim to wide swathes of land, sending messages back to their clan of triumphant seizures of new territory and requesting follow-up missions to establish a proper colony. Already there has been some fighting between *ihatei* groups but most are wise enough to avoid tangling with a well-established local population numbering in the millions.

The humans have more contact with the local Ascondi and in some cases dwell alongside them in Ascondi towns. However, most human inhabitants of Ar'Chrinhdah keep to themselves within small settlements, occasionally trading but otherwise having little to do with the main population. The Ascondi tolerate or ignore these settlements so long as they cause no trouble.

The Ascondi have several cities that appear to be independent of one another. It is not clear how the Ascondi government, if there is one, functions. Some members of society are highly influential, others offer wise advice, which is generally heeded, and some give orders that are always obeyed.

Attitude to the *ihatei* is equally difficult to determine. *Ihatei* who venture too close to Ascondi lands are run off or forcibly dislodged. The TL6 Ascondi of Ar'Chrinhdah are outgunned person-for-person by the well-armed starfaring *ihatei* but are vastly more numerous and apparently heedless of casualties. Although Ascondi do not use 'human wave' style tactics, they are quite willing to sacrifice large numbers of their fighters for a tactical advantage elsewhere, and are relentless once battle begins.



BEYTABEY

(KYAHIYLEAKHAW)

SUBSECTOR

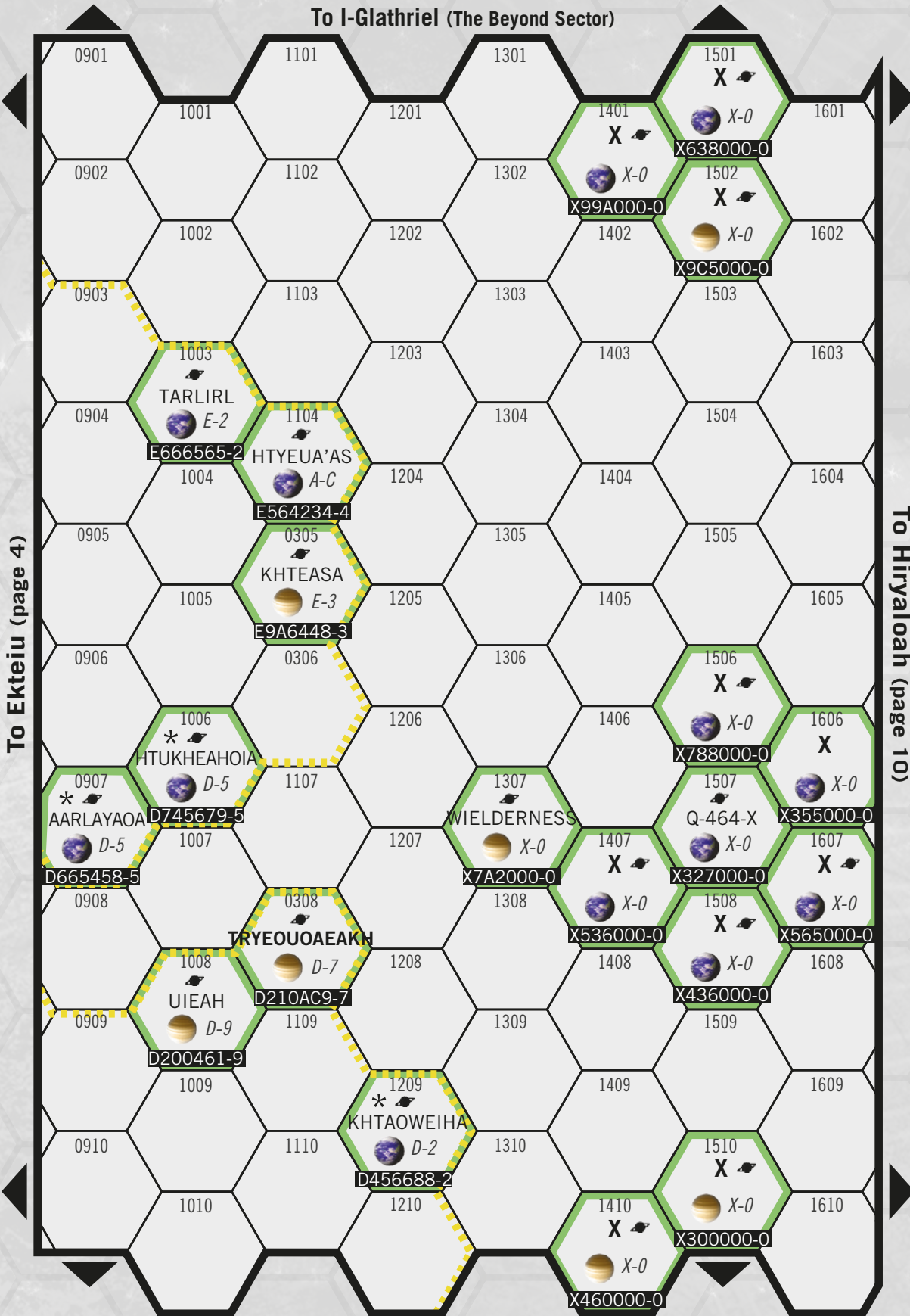
Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	1401		X99A000-0	Ba Wa			G
[UNNAMED]	1407		X536000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1501		X638000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1502		X9C5000-0	Ba Fl			G
[UNNAMED]	1506		X788000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1508		X436000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1510		X300000-0	Ba Va			G
[UNNAMED]	1606		X355000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	1607		X565000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1410		X460000-0	BA			G
Aarlayaoa	0907	ACS	D665458-5	Ni Ga		Hierate	
Htukheahoia	1006	ACS	D745679-5	Ag Ni		Hierate	
Htyeua'as	1104		E564234-4	Lo		Hierate	
Khtaoweiha	1209	ACS	D456688-2	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Khteasa	1105		E9A6448-3	Fl Ni		Hierate	
Q-464-X	1507		X327000-0	Ba			G
Tarlirl	1003		E666565-2	Ag Ni Ga		Hierate	G
Tryeouoaeakh	1108		D210AC9-7	Hi In Na		Hierate	G
Uieah	1008		D200461-9	Ni Va		Hierate	G
Wielderness	1307		X7A2000-0	Ba Fl			G

The Aslan worlds of the spinward side of the subsector they call Kyahiyleakhaw are separated from the main Hierate colonies on this side of the Great Rift by a region almost two subsectors wide. Little is known about this area, other than by inhabitants of nearby worlds, and it is not clear why the Aslan have not claimed it, nor why they pushed past to settle more distant worlds. Speculation focuses on political reasons; clans may have wanted to get well away from their rivals or grab prime real estate before others got there. It may also be that the territorial boundaries shown on the current Imperial maps are wildly inaccurate and this

area is in fact fully claimed and pacified by the Hierate, although this seems unlikely.

The human name for Kyahiyleakhaw subsector is Beytabey, which is a contraction of 'Beyond the Beyond', a reference to early expeditions that arrived in this area by way of The Beyond sector. The trailing side of the subsector provides jump-2 access all the way into Aosola subsector, allowing explorers to visit the sparse worlds on the edge of the Great Rift. Information on this region is patchy and at times contradictory, though it is possible to obtain good data on a nearby system from local trade ships or port operators.

To I-Glathriel (The Beyond Sector)



B			

Touchstone

K'YAH'IM'LEAKHAW SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- Clan Base

- Secure System
- Aslan Hierate Border

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)

Q-464-X

Q-464-X has various names, none of which have made it into the standard databases. Its very thin atmosphere ensures temperatures drop very low at night and begin to rise as soon as daylight begins. Most of the world's water is frozen but the top layer melts every day and refreezes each night, creating a dense fog that blankets everything for the daylight hours. This, and the fact that every surface is wet and slippery with condensation during the day and covered in ice within seconds at night, makes Q-464-X a distinctly unwelcoming place.

Not surprisingly there are no permanent residents and no power has claimed the world for its own. Aslan i hatei tend to move on quickly after experiencing a few hours of the misery that is life on Q-464-X. However, there are people here. A handful of small scientific and mining outposts have been set up over the years, most of which were quickly withdrawn. It is thought that the world has good mineral reserves and might make a good industrial site with sufficient investment. For now, however, it is an undeveloped wasteland.

Little is known about native life on Q-464-X. Several species of what have been described as extremely hardy reptiloids exist in the semi-frozen slurry of Q-464-X's surface water layer, crawling out at night to feed until the water melts again. It is rumoured that there are much larger versions of these creatures in some areas, perhaps where conditions are warmer due to geothermal activity or sheltering geographical conditions.

WIELDERNESS

This world's popular name is probably a corruption of 'weird wilderness', which is an apt description. A dense atmosphere of nitrogen and carbon dioxide fuels the growth of rampant vegetation, whilst at the same time cutting down visible light and trapping infrared radiation. The result is a hothouse environment in which insect-like creatures are the dominant form of life on land; it is not known what lives in the seas. Explorers who have penetrated murky jungles of fern-like growth or slogged across deep moss moorlands tell of flying iridescent insectoids, creatures two or more metres in length, along with an indigenous species that can use tools and communicate with one another.

REPTILOIDS

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Reptiloid	8	8 m
SKILLS	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1	
ATTACKS	Claws and Bite (2D)	
TRAITS	Armour (+6), Slow Metabolism (-2), Small (-1)	
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore, Hunter	

The reptiloids encountered by visitors to Q-464-X vary in size from 80-160 centimetres in length, including the tail. Body form is generally thecodontic, resembling a short-nosed, broad-bodied crocodile with extremely powerful limbs. The outer surfaces of the limbs are covered in small, sharp hook-shaped scales to assist in dragging the creature through half-frozen water, while the head is heavily armoured.

The smallest reptiloids are harmless but could cause minor injuries with a claw or bite, although larger creatures can pose a significant threat. Reptiloids congregate in groups of 3-10 or so animals and do not seem to be territorial. They will attack from ambush if they get the chance and anyone venturing or falling into water is also liable to be bitten.





HARDWAY

(HIRYARLOAH)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	1701		X300000-0	Ba Va			
[UNNAMED]	1707		X636000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1709		XA87000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1801		X271000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1803		X110000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1807		X677000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1808		X535000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1904		X226000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	1907		X649000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2002		X638000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2003		X677000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	2006		X380000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	2007		X7A0000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2108		X877000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2109		X437000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	2110		X463000-0	Ba			
[UNNAMED]	2205		X786000-0	Ba Ga			
[UNNAMED]	2207		X692000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2209		X644000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2308		X100000-0	Ba Va			
[UNNAMED]	2309		X536000-0	Ba			
Arihiy'oilew	1805		E566567-3	Ag			G
Easihiyewa	2202		E667212-5	Lo Ga		Hierate	G
Grief	2106		E330300-7	De Ni Po			
Hikhtyerl	2304		E242668-6	Ni Po			G
Htuiauiyeyo	2102		E7A6486-5	FI Ni		Hierate	
Iyaea	2401		E656447-5	Ni Ga		Hierate	G
Khtyakhtalr	2403		E77A552-9	Ni Wa		Hierate	G
Uaseirl	2406		E31076B-7	Na		Hierate	G

To Storm (The Beyond Sector)

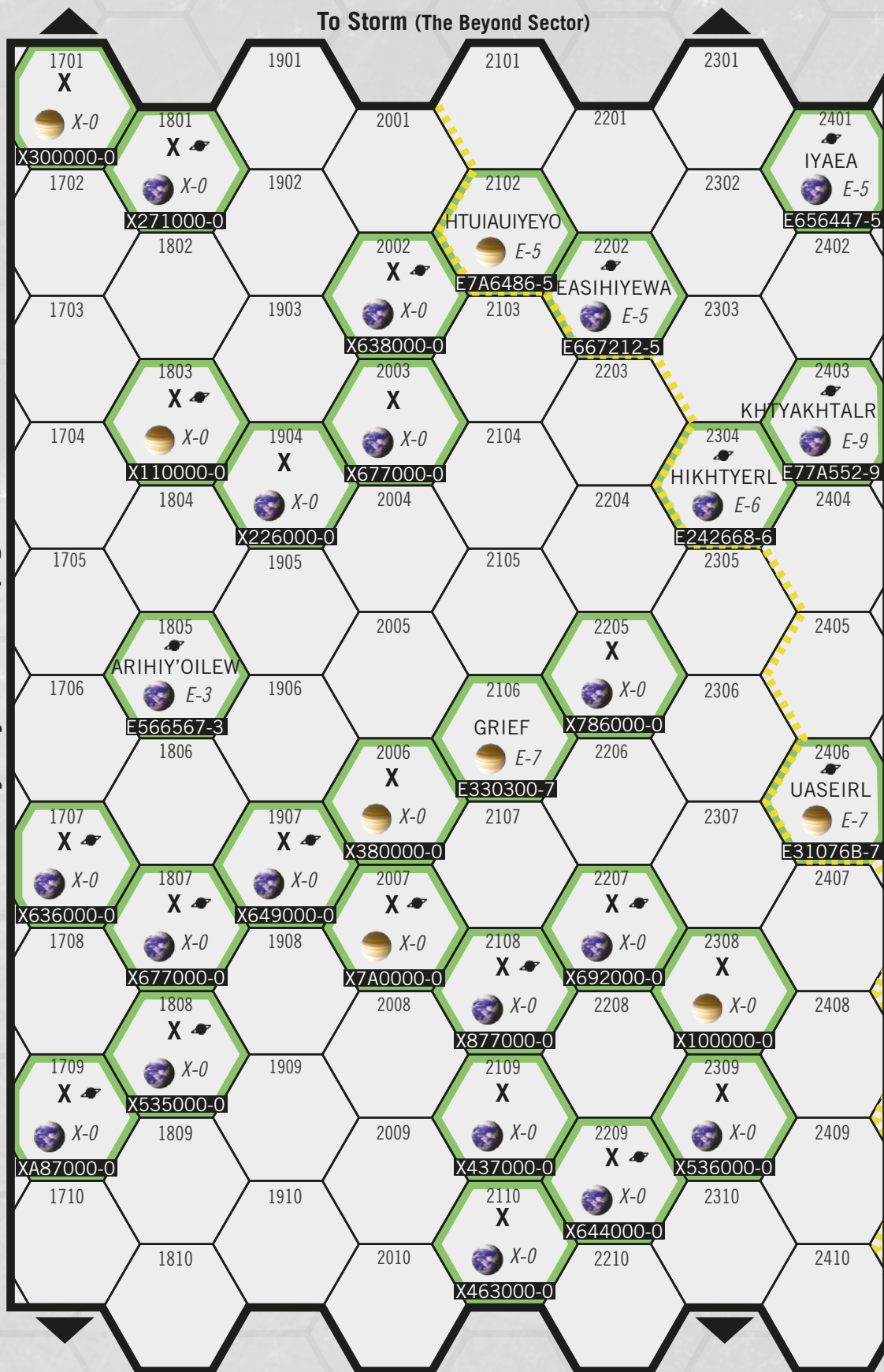
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Touchstone

HIRYARLOAH SUBSECTOR

To Kyahiyleakhaw (page 7)

To Eietori Eaea' (page 13)



Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

Secure System
Aslan Hierate Border

Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

Hardway allegedly gets its human name from the difficulty early explorers faced in reaching the area, although it is possible that a similar-sounding word to the Aslan name was chosen for convenience. The subsector is dominated by a large cluster of star systems that extends spinward into Beytabey (Kyahiyleakhaw). Why this area is not claimed by the Aslan remains unclear; virtually no astrographical data on the area is available in the Imperium.

The trailing side of the subsector is Hierate territory and lies close to the mature colonies of the Trans-Rift region. There, the main hazard is inter-clan politics and the possibility that trade or supply routes can be cut off by an enemy or third-party conflict. This may be the reason why these worlds are underdeveloped by their Aslan owners.

ARIHIY'OILEW

Arihiy'oilew is the Aslan name for a disputed world formerly claimed by human settlers. Colonisation took place centuries ago but the mission was not a success and the survivors regressed to a low technology existence. The arrival of Aslan *ihatei* was inevitable, given the attractiveness of the world and the Aslan were not subtle in their dealings with the human inhabitants. The current human population is ruled by *ihatei* overlords whose vastly superior weaponry enables them to crush all opposition. Some humans have adopted Aslan culture and are elevated above those who have not, creating a three-tier social system. The 'Hierate Humans', as they are known, are hated by other humans and treated with courteous condescension by their overlords.

GRIEF

Grief is the unofficial but commonly accepted name for this world, formally listed on star charts as unclaimed, unnamed and unsurveyed. However, its true status is common knowledge within the local region.

Grief is a harsh but habitable world, with extensive deserts and barren mountains covering much of its surface. Around its few small seas are more welcoming regions where a local ecosystem mingles with various imported species. Among these is a spiny bush that thrives in local conditions and is threatening to choke many water-bearing areas if not contained. The chief barrier to the spread of what is locally known as Griefthorn is distance; it cannot grow in deserts or mountains but if seeds or shoots can cross these barriers to another watered region, a new infestation will develop. The planet's human population are confined to one small area and do not move much beyond it, so tend not to spread the plants. Explorers or overly-hopeful *ihatei* are probably responsible for the slow strangulation of Grief's local ecosystem.

The human inhabitants of Grief dwell in a small downport surrounded by wrecks of starships. They claim these ships 'came to grief' – a common local play on words – by external means and were salvaged but many have signs of combat damage. The Griefers portray themselves as hard-nosed salvagers but are widely suspected of being pirates.

Most wrecks are unremarkable; local small trade ships for the most part. The majority are in a semi-dismantled state, although some are in the process of being rebuilt as salvage craft – albeit oddly well-armed ones. Some of the active salvage craft lie among the wrecks and are virtually indistinguishable from them. There are also some larger and more unusual vessels including at least one big exploration ship and a couple of alien vessels of great age and obscure origins. The Griefers claim they found these ships drifting in space but the location of their starport is not coincidental. Observers have commented that the largest alien wreck has not seen space in millennia. It is obvious that the Griefers set up their facility after finding it on what was at the time an obscure and unclaimed world.

EIETORL EASA'



SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Afo	2607	N	B84A649-8	Ni Wa		Hierate	
Alriais	3005		C636451-8	Ni		Hierate	
Aseirl	3006	ACS	C538AA8-C	Hi		Hierate	G
Eaha'ekh	2510	ACS	C16069A-7	De Ni Ri		Hierate	G
Ealehkaasal	3104		A455557-B	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Eareihkih	2710	ACS	C669200-6	Lo		Hierate	G
Ektaw	2608		C564855-5	Ri		Hierate	G
Fihyahei	2806		C110678-9	Na Ni		Hierate	
Hkahiiyoukhe	3102	ACS	C323677-6	Na Ni Po		Hierate	
Hkeilryalea	2704	N	B693202-C	Lo		Hierate	G
Hleahiohyo	2902		C855569-5	Ag Ni Ga		Hierate	G
Htaastea	3003	ACS	C9B5ABD-8	FI Hi In		Hierate	
Hwoufeeike	2701		E5646AE-2	Ag Ni Ri		Hierate	
Iyhahkah	2505	N	B7A7644-9	FI Ni		Hierate	G
Kouas	2709	ACS	C7A4464-6	FI Ni		Hierate	G
Kuiy	3010		C77A354-7	Lo Wa		Hierate	G
Oawya	2703		E423498-4	Ni Po		Hierate	
Oikh	3106	N	A301664-C	Ic Na Ni Va		Hierate	G
Takhaia	2507	ACS	C878203-7	Lo		Hierate	G
Truikhtyeh	3004	ACS	C56389E-5	Ri		Hierate	G
Uaseirl	3209		X432400-5	Ni Po			
Yo'auiheiw	3208		A9B7322-9	FI Lo		Hierate	G

Characterised by a central cluster and a small main in the spinward-rimward corner of the subsector, Eietorl Easa' is the outer edge of the main Aslan-controlled region coreward of the Great Rift. A region of uncharted worlds and the Aosola Gulf, a small sub-rift blocking progress along the fringe of the Great Rift, has curtailed expansion in this direction.

Most worlds of the subsector are not heavily developed, with adequate starports at best. In time, these may be upgraded but for the present any movement spinward must come from deeper within Hierate space, adding to the difficulties faced by colonists.

UASEIRL

Uaseirl is a desert-like world with poor natural resources and only the most minimal atmosphere. Despite its relative worthlessness, it was the subject of a landgrab by several clans about a century ago. This occurred much in the manner of a bidding frenzy during an auction, with the desire to win obscuring the fact that the price had gone far too high. As a result, large numbers of colonists were dumped onto Uaseirl in a haphazard and chaotic fashion, after which their parent clans hastily withdrew their burned paws and left the new colonies.

Infighting among the colonists was inevitable, further hampering growth of infrastructure and industry. After several decades, the situation began to calm down,

with stability gradually emerging from the wreckage of colonisation. By that time, no parent clan was willing to sink more resources into the pit that was Uaseirl, but equally none were willing to relinquish their holdings. The local population are left to their own devices whilst their clans pressure them to somehow make the world a success and prove they were right all along.

There is evidence of earlier habitation on Uaseirl and of some enormous disaster. A titanic crater near the world's south pole is surrounded by smaller strike sites, suggesting the world was hit by a very large asteroid in the past few hundred thousand years. The few scientists who have visited say there is reason to believe that Uaseirl once had a slightly thicker atmosphere and may have lost most of it during the impact. The world's primitive ecosystem also became completely extinct at that time.

The usual conclusion drawn from such events is that the Ancients bombarded the planet with something very large during their Final War but the impact occurred more recently than this. There are vague reports of crude structures built from high-technology materials, of a sort that survivors might construct when trying to survive after a crash. Perhaps Uaseirl once had a colony of some unknown species, or perhaps the impact was not an asteroid at all but a starship. If so, an element of the crew must have survived for a time despite conditions that wiped out the rest of the ecosphere.





ASLAN FRINGE

(A EKHYOLYOOUL)

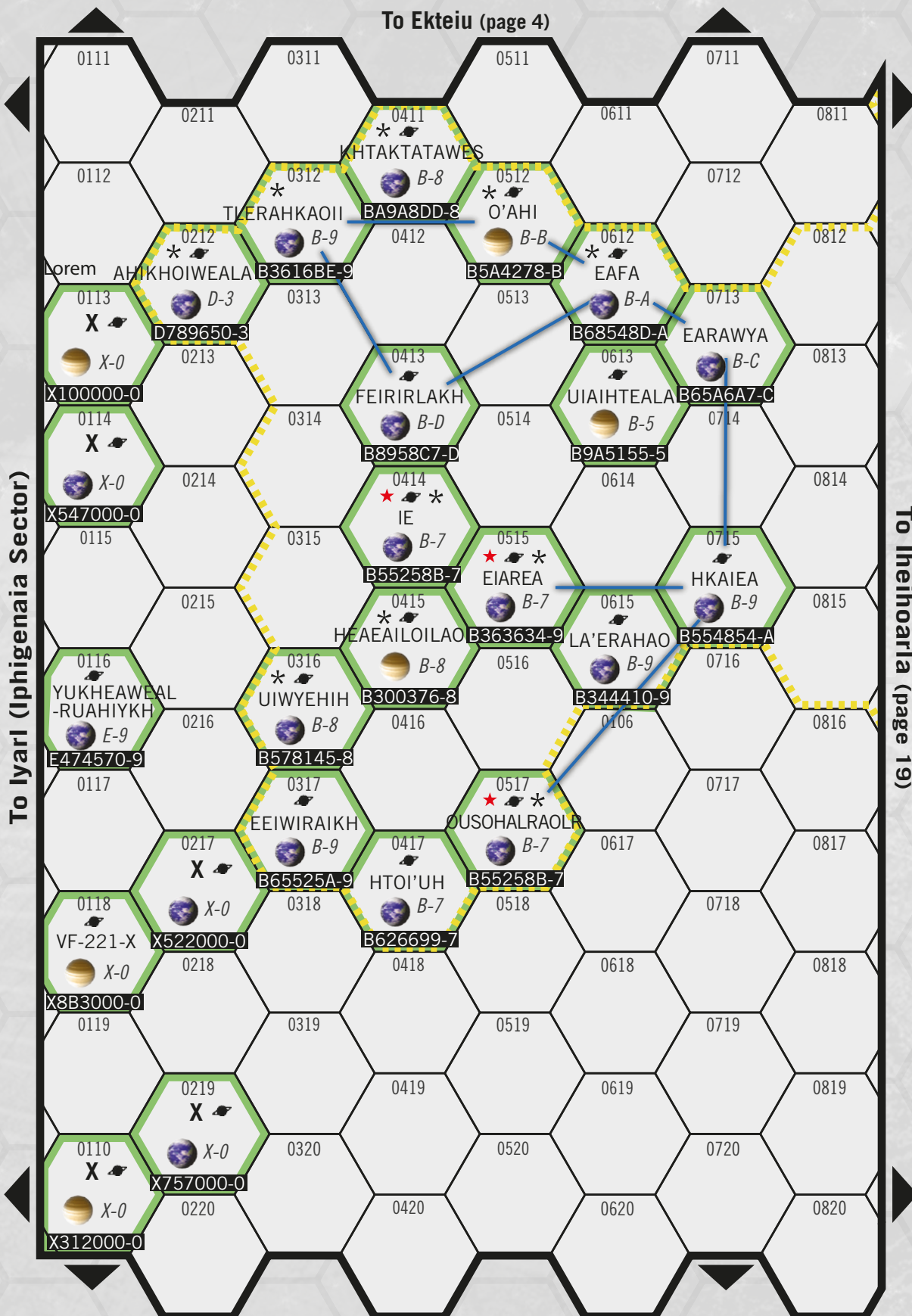
SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	0113		X100000-0	Ba Va			
[UNNAMED]	0114		X547000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	0120		X312000-0	Ba Ic			G
[UNNAMED]	0217		X522000-0	Ba Po			G
[UNNAMED]	0219		X757000-0	Ba Ga			G
Ahikhoiweala	0212	ACS	D789650-3	Ni Ri		Hierate	G
Eafa	0612	ACS	B68548D-A	Ni Ga		Hierate	
Earawya	0713		B65A6A7-C	Ni Wa		Hierate	
Eeiwiraikh	0317		B65525A-9	Lo Ga		Hierate	G
Eiarea	0515	N	B363634-9	Ni Ri		Hierate	G
Feirirlakh	0413		B8958C7-D			Hierate	G
Heaeailoilao	0415	ACS	B300376-8	Lo Va		Hierate	G
Hkaiea	0715		B554854-A			Hierate	G
Htoi'uh	0417		B626699-7	Ni		Hierate	G
Ie	0414	ACS N	B55258B-7	Ni Po		Hierate	G
Khtaktatawes	0411	ACS	BA9A8DD-8	Wa		Hierate	
La'erahao	0615		B344410-9	Ni		Hierate	G
O'ahi	0512	ACS	B5A4278-B	FI Lo		Hierate	G
Ousohalraolr	0517	ACS N	B235469-B	Ni		Hierate	G
Tlerahkaoii	0312	ACS	B3616BE-9	Ni Ri		Hierate	
Uiiaihteala	0613		B9A5155-5	FI Lo		Hierate	G
Uiwyehih	0316	ACS	B578145-8	Lo		Hierate	G
VF-221-X	0118		X8B3000-0	Ba FI			G
Yukheawealruahiykh	0116		E474570-9	Ag			G

E			

Touchstone

A EKHYLOYOOL SUBSECTOR



- 🪐 Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- * Clan Base

To Earluiloiw (page 28)

Secure System
Aslan Hierate Border

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Trade Route

As with Ekteiu subsector, directly to coreward, Ekhyolyooul contains an enclave of Aslan colonies with largely unexplored worlds lying to spinward. The Aslan worlds lie right on the shore of the Great Rift, blocking further expansion. The *Tlaukhu* maintains two naval bases in the centre of the subsector but these are woefully undermanned and absorb significant resources just to keep supply lines open. Certainly, they do not justify their existence in terms of ships based there or contribution to local security.

The human name for this subsector is derived from the fact that it is the outer edge of Aslan expansion in the region. Other names have been used in the past and once the borders of the Hierate are pushed out a few more parsecs it may acquire a different title on human stargharts. For now, however, it is the Aslan Fringe in both name and fact.

VF-221-X

VF-221-X is the very definition of a hellworld. Its corrosive atmosphere covers a barren landscape of acid-scorched rocks, interspersed with small seas of deadly liquid. Attempts have been made to study the world, but are hampered by difficult conditions. Similarly a mission to set up an exotic-chemicals extraction plant was lost under mysterious circumstances sometime between 1083 and 1098. It is known that a test plant was set up and a workforce at least a hundred strong began preliminary extraction. Samples were shipped out and the green light was given for a second phase of construction.

The development never occurred, as the engineering team and all their equipment went missing. It is not known if they arrived on VF-221-X or met some disaster

en route. The test plant went out of contact around the same time and has not been located by explorers. It is possible that the abundance of exotic chemicals on VF-221-X may attract future attempts to create an on-planet facility but the place has acquired a bad reputation that will make it hard to attract workers.

Elsewhere in the system, Alo'hei have been sighted, congregating close to the system's inner gas giant, dipping into its atmosphere to feed or perhaps just enjoying it. Individuals will sometimes leave groups and fly close to the star, puffing out their 'feathers' to absorb solar radiation before returning. The Alo'hei seem indifferent to passing starships, although one exploration vessel did report being 'vigorously nudged' when it approached close to an individual.

YUKHEAWEALRUAHIYKH

Yukheawealruahiykh is essentially a war zone. Despite its atmospheric taint, Yukheawealruahiykh is a desirable world with a well-developed ecosystem, ideal for expansion by Aslan clans. Not surprisingly, several have claimed the world and landed troops to prove it. Some clans negotiated permission to deploy their own forces to Yukheawealruahiykh but most are attempting a landgrab using whatever their *ihatei* can scrape together. The result is a multiway brawl with a whole planet as the prize. The more organised groups have managed to construct what might be considered proto-cities and established a small industrial base to support further expansion. The *ihatei*, on the other hand, are working out of ramshackle camps and often forced to relocate by superior forces. The conflict has been characterised by guerrilla warfare in regions between the proto-cities, with the occasional set-piece battle between more organised factions.



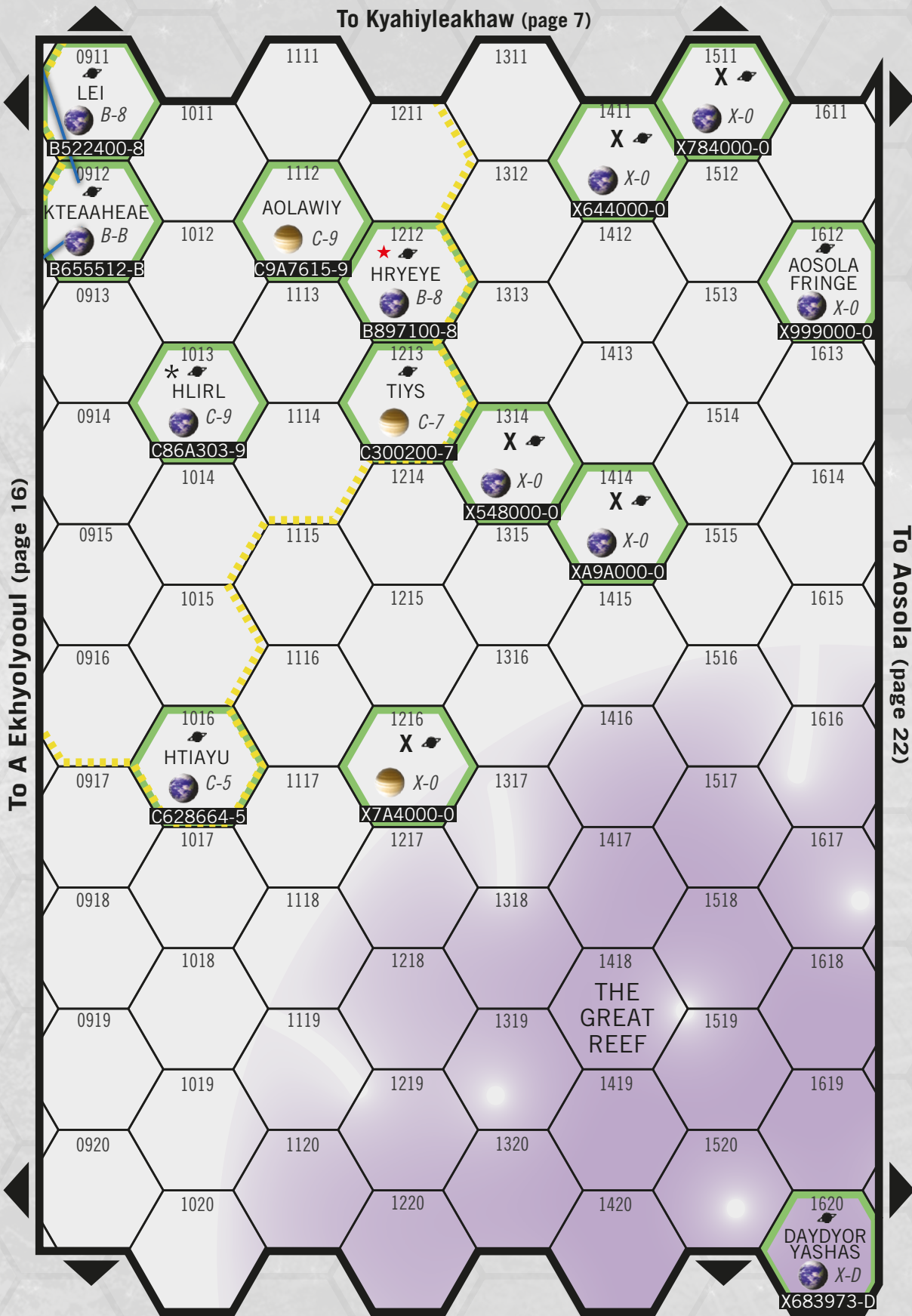


RIFTSHORE

(IHEIHOARLA)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	1216		X7A4000-0	Ba Fl			G
[UNNAMED]	1314		X548000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1411		X644000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	1414		XA9A000-0	Ba Wa			G
[UNNAMED]	1511		X784000-0	Ba			G
Aolawiy	1112		C9A7615-9	Fl Ni		Hierate	
Aosola Fringe	1612		X999000-0	Ba			G
Daydyor Yashas	1620		X683973-D	Hi Ht			G
Hlirl	1013	ACS	C86A303-9	Lo Wa		Hierate	G
Hryeye	1212	N	B897100-8	Lo		Hierate	G
Htiayu	1016		C628664-5	Ni		Hierate	G
Kteaheae	0912		B655512-B	Ag Ni Ga		Hierate	G
Lei	0911		B522400-8	Ni Po		Hierate	G
Tiys	1213		C300200-7	Lo Va		Hierate	G



	F	

Touchstone

IHEIHOARLA SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- * Clan Base
- Secure System
- Aslan Hierate Border
- Other Naval/Tlauku Base
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Trade Route

Containing a mix of Aslan and non-aligned star systems, Riftshore is of low strategic value. A chain of refuelling depots across the rift to Oheerl in Hlakhoi sector was at one time planned, which would have opened the region for rapid expansion. This plan never came to anything, however, and Riftshore remains a frontier and a backwater.

Ships out of the Zhodani Consulate have from time-to-time been encountered in the subsector and those nearby. Although far from home, the crews of these vessels do not display the typical signs of fatigue and stress that characterises a long-ranged exploration mission, giving rise to speculation that the Zhodani might have a base in the region. Given the Zhodani penchant for long-distance exploration and their ability to mentally adjust personnel to circumstances, it is just as likely that these ships have transited all the way from the Consulate.

AOSOLA FRINGE

Despite lying just outside Aosola subsector, Aosola Fringe is named for it rather than its own subsector. A large, wet world with a dense atmosphere, Aosola Fringe has little land above sea level that is not jagged mountainside or dense rain forest. According to available records, little exploration has been undertaken but expeditions have reported flattened areas where less-than-subtle starship crews have used weapons to clear a landing site, although it is not clear what these ships were doing on Aosola Fringe. Theories range from *ihatei* seeking land or pirates hoping to create a secure base, to treasure-hunters hoping to find evidence of a lost civilisation in the wreckage they created upon landing.

DAYDYOR YASHAS

Daydyor Yashas is a Droyne world. Little is known about its culture or government, although the latter probably follows the usual Droyne caste system. There seems to be no starport as such, however the Droyne cities are estimated at a mature TL13.

Despite being somewhat dry, Daydyor Yashas is a very habitable world with a dense atmosphere. It has been put forward as a candidate for the original Droyne homeworld,

although not as a strong contender. Its conditions are such that Droyne can fly using artificial wings as their own vestigial wings could never support their weight even in a very thick atmosphere. Many Droyne do fly, often soaring between the slender spires of their cities amid more conventional grav-vehicle traffic.

Although Daydyor Yashas does not have a starport as such, each city has a landing area, normally used for grav vehicles but large enough for a ship of up to 400 tons or so. The Droyne of Daydyor Yashas have never been observed to operate a starship out of their homeworld, although Droyne ships in the region are often assumed to have originated there. This is at odds with the fact that the people of Daydyor Yashas seem to have no interest in space travel; they are quite willing to send a grav vehicle in a low-orbit trajectory to reach another city at speed but have no true spacecraft.

Another oddity of Daydyor Yashas is that the world is inhabited by Chirpers as well as Droyne. This is highly unusual; indeed, scholars believe it to be a unique situation. The two races are physically more or less identical but Chirpers are of low intelligence and tend to live simple lives in the outback. There are tribes of wandering stone-age Chirpers here and there but most of those on Daydyor Yashas live in agricultural villages.

The Droyne interact with the Chirpers in a limited way, trading foodstuffs for mass-produced tools. Neither seems to envy anything of the other's lifestyle; Chirpers are totally uninterested in city life and Droyne seem entirely content with their technological lifestyle. Some Droyne, however, do act as protectors for the Chirpers, helping when disaster hits but Droyne warriors armed with fusion guns have been spotted fighting alongside Chirpers using spears and bows. It is known that the Droyne of Daydyor Yashas do not tolerate mistreatment of Chirpers by visitors.

Numbers of Droyne and Chirpers are difficult to estimate but the size of the cities suggests a population in the hundreds of millions. The Chirper population is impossible to estimate with accuracy but is likely to be larger than that of the Droyne.

AOSOLA



SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	2212		X572000-0	Ba			G
[UNNAMED]	2411		X676000-0	Ba			
Forbidden	2114		X120000-0	Ba De Po			
Rraerrgdzakaek	2211		C4665A4-A				G

Aosola subsector contains four uncharted (at least according to official databases) star systems and lies entirely outside of Aslan territory. The Aslan name is used by humans as it is more pronounceable than most Aslan words. The Aosola Gulf, located in the spinward-coreward part of the subsector and extending to coreward, is considered a sub-rift by many cartographers. Although there is no real distinction to be made between one region of empty space and another, the gulf does have a higher density of rogue comets and planetoids than the deep rift.

FORBIDDEN

Forbidden is, according to stories at least, a deathtrap. A tiny world, little more than a dwarf planet, Forbidden's surface is riven by deep fissures containing ruins of hidden cities. These are thought to be very old, perhaps predating the Ancients, and were obviously built by a starfaring society. Forbidden seems to be tectonically and volcanically stable but a few sketchy reports tell of weak or unstable surfaces, crumbling canyon sides and hazardous outgassing that has claimed the lives of explorers. Just reaching the ruins requires a dangerous surface transit as the fissures are too narrow to accommodate a starship. Once inside, explorers must deal with millennia of decay and damage caused by others trying to get into the cities. There are no reliable reports on what was found, although one expedition claimed that part of one city was still inhabited and the locals were powerful but friendly. It is not known if these were a remnant of the original inhabitants or someone taking advantage of vacant real estate.

RRAEERRGDZAKAEK

Rraerrgdzakaek was colonised by an expedition from the Vargr Extents three centuries ago. It is not clear what prompted this enormous relocation and the people of Rraerrgdzakaek are not known for being generous with details (if indeed they know much about it). There are rumours that the Vargr were fleeing a defeat and needed to get far away from their enemies but given the distances involved this would have been an extreme solution. A more credible theory suggests the Vargr were followers of a religious order whose leaders launched the expedition for reasons of their own. The early records of the colony are fragmentary but contain references to an internal dispute that led to the overthrow of the former leaders.

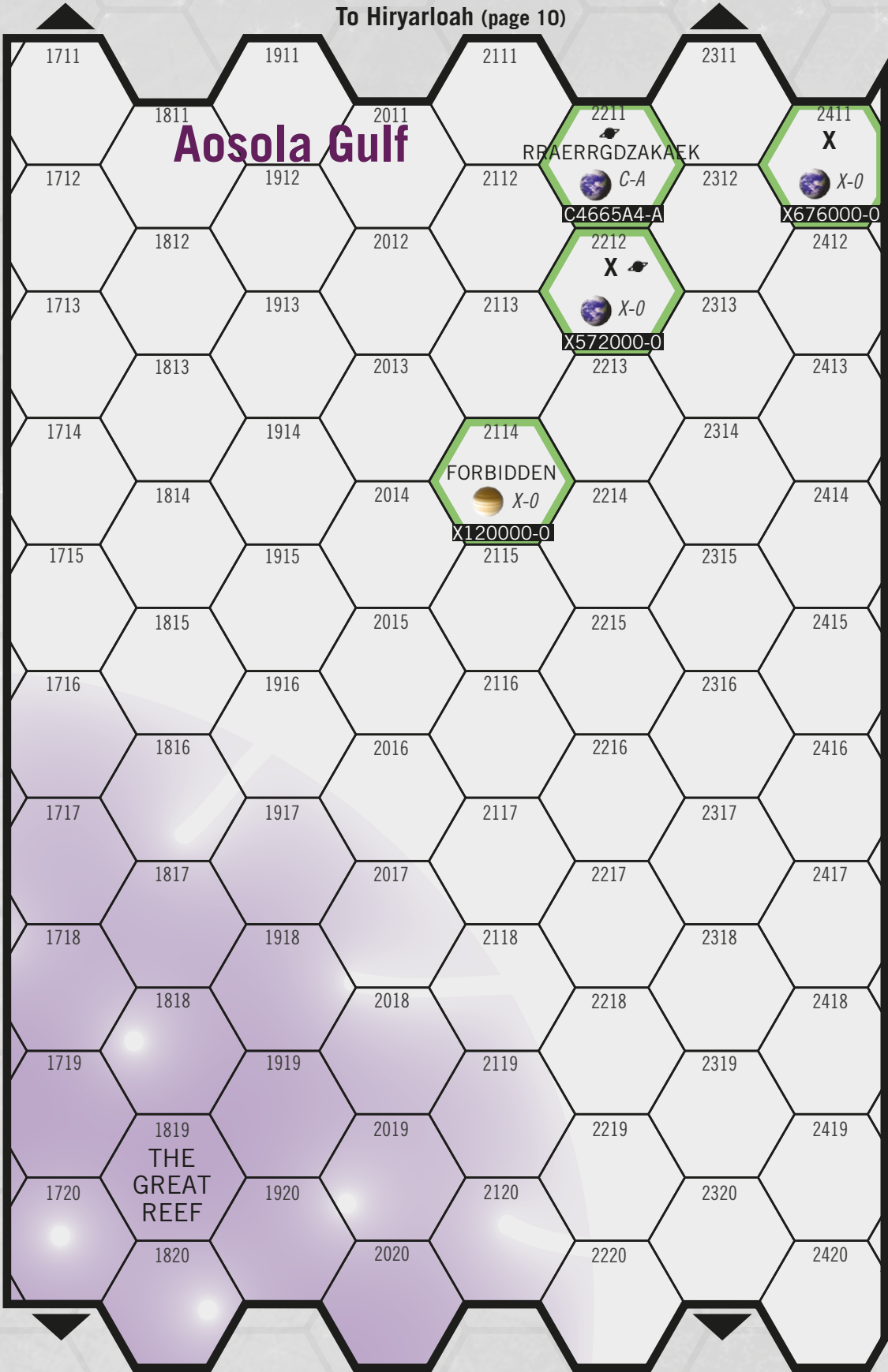
At around the same time, missionaries – mostly Vargr but not all – began appearing on nearby worlds preaching doom and disaster. Some managed to create a small following and today there is still a remnant of what might have been the original cult on Rraerrgdzakaek. The tenets of this religion are unclear, but there are overtones of great disaster overtaking the whole of Charted Space. Day-to-day, the cult is not extreme, preaching loyalty to the leaders and unity in the face of danger. It is possible an original extreme version of the cult was moderated after its leaders were overthrown, leaving today's resilient society.

		G	

Touchstone

AOSOLA SUBSECTOR

To A Iheihoarla (page 19)



Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

Secure System

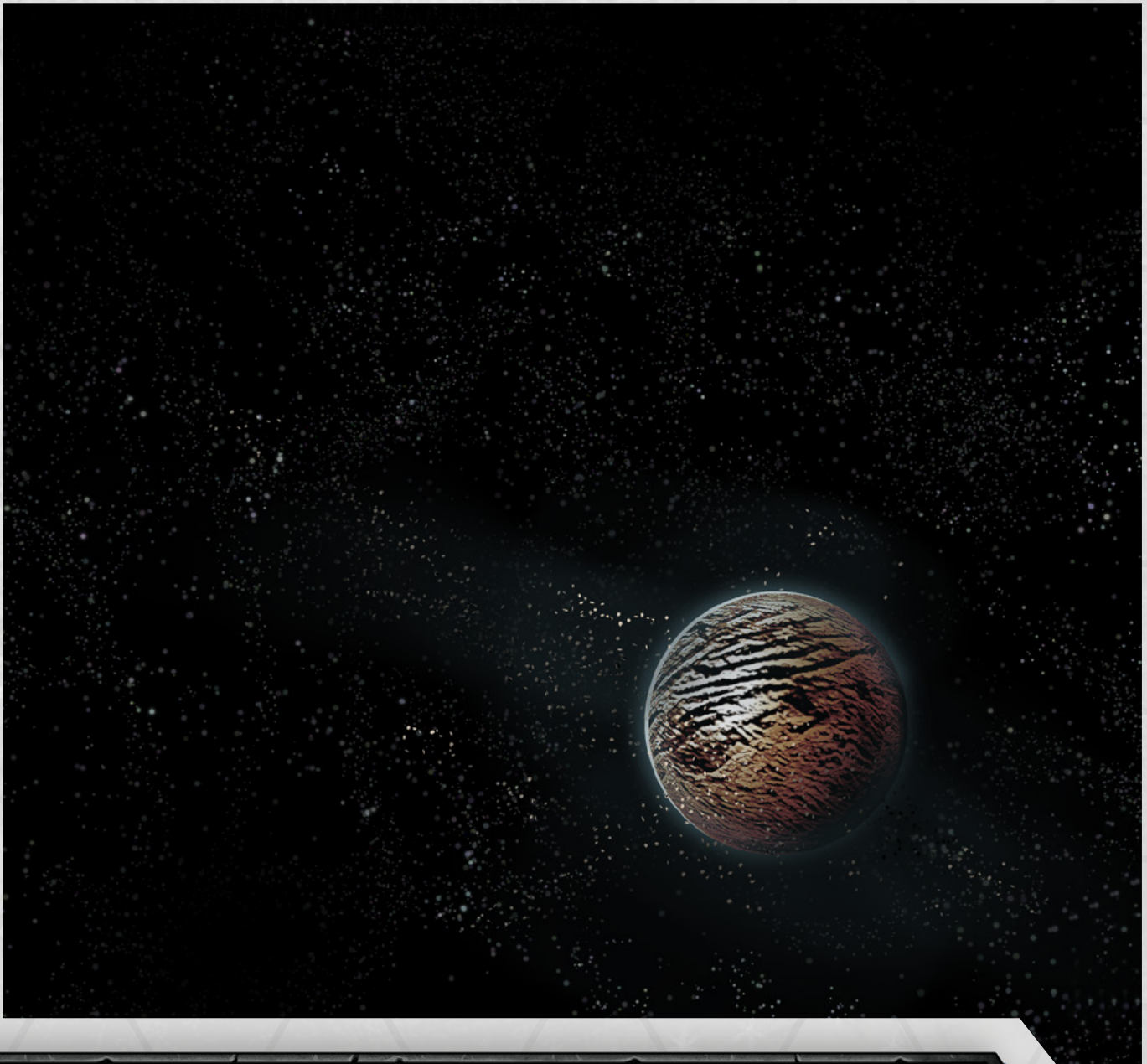
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

The people of Rraerrgdzakaek are mostly Vargr with an intermixing of other races, mainly humans, fully integrated into society. Culture could be described as militarised but this is not entirely accurate. It is true that citizens are members of reservist groups but most are trained for emergency response rather than combat. Weaponry is common, though the society is peaceable.

Rraerrgdzakaek's small and very basic starport is home to a flotilla of in-system vessels and receives visits from offworld traders on a frequent, if irregular, basis. Most visitors find the people of Rraerrgdzakaek friendly but grim and intense. They are always keen to hear news of the outside universe and often come over as disappointed upon hearing that some distant war or economic downturn has come to an end.

The Vargr-dominated society of Rraerrgdzakaek is not the first civilisation on the world. Cities were built in the distant past by some intelligent species and materials indicate a level of technology that could have reached space or even other star systems; certainly, these former inhabitants did not originate on Rraerrgdzakaek. Their fate remains unclear, as the cities were abandoned rather than destroyed, but millennia of decay make conclusions hard to support. It has been suggested that these ruins might have originated with the Ascondi or Kursae, although this is merely conjecture.

No offworld investigation has been launched into the ruins, whilst the local population has only a passing interest. They do seem a little smug at times, living atop the ruins of a former civilisation that died out. Perhaps they feel this validates their prepared-for-anything mentality.





IKL

(IKAIRLEAH)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	2513		X312000-0	Ba Ic			
Ealriysilrai	2711	ACS	C673ACD-A	Hi In		Hierate	G
Rayraleck	2516		X251000-0	Ba Po			G
Uiye	3011		D3245DC-7	Ni			

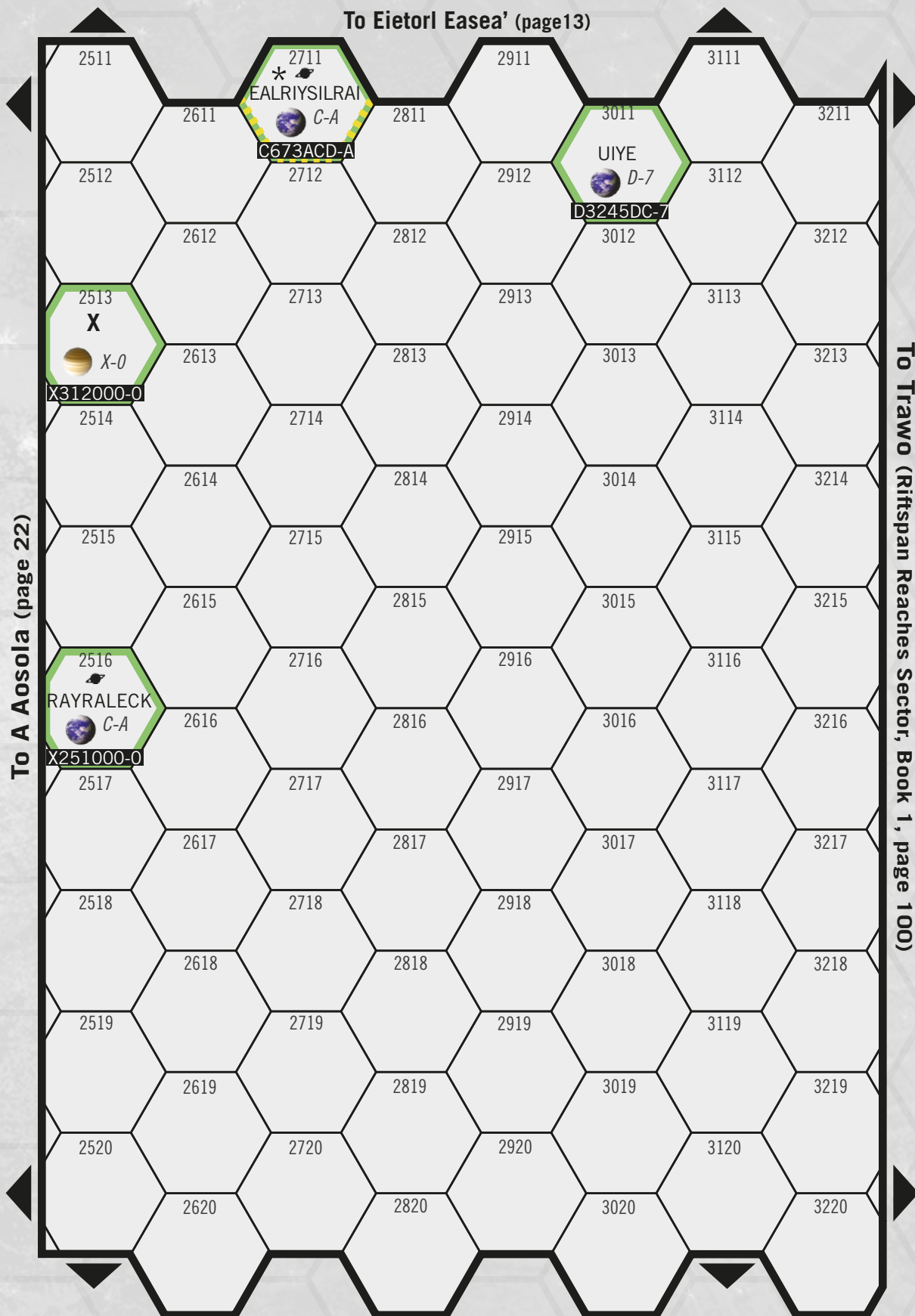
The IKL subsector clearly derives its name from an abbreviation of the Aslan name, Ikairleah. The subsector is mostly empty space, with a handful of star systems relatively easy to access from the coreward shore of the rift. This region was the subject of the seven-ship Rikakihr-Dehnehror Expedition, a Darrian mission intended to chart the star systems of the subsector. Beginning in 1079, the expedition met a surprisingly friendly reception from local Aslan clans, although its progress was slowed by a need to trade scientific advice, training and solutions to problems of safe passage, fuel and supplies.

The expedition produced cursory charts of the nearby rift shore before venturing into less accessible worlds of the subsector. Two ships were lost in the rift, with another traded (in very badly damaged condition) to one of the nearby Aslan clans. The other four eventually returned to Darrian space where their findings continue to be analysed. A follow-up mission was announced in 1102 but has yet to materialise.

The ship that remained in Aslan hands has been sighted several times, usually serving as a reconnaissance platform – essentially a high-technology spy ship. It is known to have ventured into the rift on exploration missions but is probably in very poor repair and unsafe to operate.

UIYE

Uiye is inhabited by a mix of races including humans, Droyne and a few Aslan. Its population are confined to three environment-controlled cities, with a central 'holy palace of governance' between them. Popular belief has it that the cities are arranged in a perfect triangle with the palace at the exact centre but this is in fact not the case. There is nothing mystical about the layout of settlements on Uiye; the cities are built on suitable ground with sufficient water. The human segment of society is rigidly controlled by the religious elite, with Aslan and Droyne occupying a niche not investigated by outsiders. The world religion is complex and very strict, with outsiders allowed only into the immediate area around the starport. It is claimed that the holy order of Uiye knows a great deal about the ancient history of the region and has gathered many secrets. Wilder tales speak of mysterious priests with access to starships that could not possibly have been built with technology available on Uiye, undertaking voyages of discovery across the sector, returning with further secret knowledge or descending en masse upon some remote location to do... something.



			H

Touchstone

IKARLEAH SUBSECTOR

- ☾ Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- * Clan Base

- Secure System
Aslan Hierate Border

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)

RAYRALEHK NORELZAPEH GIHMASOLEM (RAYRALECK)

Rayralehk Norelzapah Gihmasolem – ‘the place to which we came in search of knowledge’ is a Darrian colony established with great difficulty around 1090. It was presumably intended to serve as a staging point for further expeditions but no more Darrian exploration ships arrived in the area.

The colony is small but was well provided with equipment and defences and has withstood several attempts to annex or plunder it. It is generally known as Rayraleck, a corruption of its Darrian name with unfortunately insulting connotations in one of the local dialects. A handful of small starships operates out of Rayraleck’s port, some Darrian and others independent.

Rayraleck’s manufacturing base is very small but as a source of high-technology goods, starship spares and unusual items of Darrian design, it is increasingly becoming a factor in the local economy. The colonists continue to pursue a scientific agenda but a shift in attitude is underway. Some colonists are clearly homesick and worried about what prevented the expected follow-up mission. Others are more interested in learning about and developing their new home than preparing to support an exploration mission that might well have been permanently abandoned.

If a new expedition does arrive in the area, its leaders might find themselves at odds with the colonists of Rayraleck. They will be expecting a base camp from which to operate and may instead find that equipment they expect to use has already been repurposed.



FAR CORNER



(EARLUIOIW)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Caplis	0221		C341300-A				G

Far Corner subsector has only one star system, associated with the scattering of worlds to spinward. Some of these systems are occasionally visited by ships out of the Regency of Muirimi, two subsectors distant in Iphigenaia sector but few have pushed into Far Corner. The vast empty expanse of this subsector and Black Sky (Taikhahriysea'yoruh) to trailing have proven a barrier to exploration of the Great Rift in this direction.

CAPLIS

Caplis is not a welcoming world, with insufficient atmospheric pressure to support respiration without artificial assistance. Its exosphere is very basic, consisting of little more than algae and similar simple forms of life. However, with air of a sort and some water available, the world was habitable enough to be borderline attractive. The only settlement on Caplis is its small starport, which acts as a turn-around point for independent starships operating in the area... or at least this is the story told by its operators.

In fact, Caplis is a freeport of the worst kind, where almost anything can be traded. The proceeds of piracy and raiding are openly bought and sold in the heavily guarded markets of Caplis Starport. Attempts have been made by nearby Aslan clans to eradicate the threat but the colonies of the region are too weak to take on Caplis' formidable planetary defences.

Caplis is not – quite – a pirate haven. Pirates do operate out of its port but are not closely associated with the ruling elite of the world, who are best thought of as completely unethical businesspersons rather than criminals. Caplis will always seek the greatest profit – which may not be purely monetary. Power, influence, information and security are all commodities that can be traded. All can be bought and sold on Caplis and all are avidly sought by its leaders.



BLACK SKY



SUBSECTOR

(*TAIKHAHRIYSEA'YORUH*)

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Allbutbarren	1621		X410000-0	Ba			G
VF-398-X	1530		X78A000-0	Ba Wa			G

The Black Sky subsector, along with Far Corner to spinward, is virtually unexplored by humans. Most of the subsector is an empty gulf devoid of stars, with a lower-than-average density of matter. The exception to this is the area where the rimward parts of these subsectors meet, which has a large interstellar dust cloud with the ominous name Darkcloud. It is not known if there are useable rocky or icy planetoids in the cloud, and it is not dense enough to hide a star, but a rogue gas giant or even a brown dwarf could be concealed.

ALLBUTBARREN

The Allbutbarren system is, as the name suggests, devoid of life and habitable worlds, at least by human standards. Its gas giant, Ardell, is a different story. The upper atmosphere is home to several species, most of which are amorphous creatures resembling huge jellyfish. These are very basic and primitive creatures, which drift on the winds and obtain sustenance from chemicals suspended in the atmosphere. They are preyed upon by creatures described as 'carnivorous clouds' that appear to be a more complex form of life. The remains of a research station, of Aslan origin, were discovered on one of the moons of Ardell by an expedition and funding was sought to refurbish it. However, the study of exotic gas giant life forms failed to attract funding to set up a facility in such a remote location and the project came to nothing.

VF-398-X

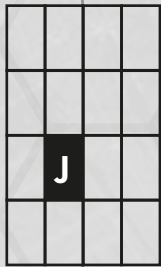
VF-398-X has been visited by at least one exploration mission, which put forward the name Ploosh for the mainworld. This has been adopted only by Travellers with a certain sense of humour. Everyone else uses its formal designation.

Ploosh is a shallow-water world; almost its entire surface is covered in water but this is very shallow over most of the globe. An average depth of just 10 metres is recorded by the only survey on record, with the note that there are areas where it is possible to wade for several kilometres in any direction. There are a few very deep ocean trenches and these contain a wealth of aquatic life.

Some of the trenches have natural tunnels in their flanks, leading deep into the crust to where a second ocean is said to lie. Subject to tremendous pressures, and at high temperature due to radiogenic rocks below and around it, this second inner-crust ocean would be of great interest to exobiologists. Little is known about conditions there other than data gathered from hot-water jets emanating from trench walls, which carry bacteria and similar simple extremophile life.

The surface-level oceans are home to a vast array of aquatic life, including several species of what cannot quite be called flying fish. These exploit the dense atmosphere of Ploosh to fly for great distances and are closer to true flying creatures than fish, although they return to the water to feed.

The shallows are clogged with great rafts of seaweed, home to a variety of surface-dwelling creatures. Most are small, typically crustacean-like in nature, and dependent on the seaweed. Studying them is a problem as it is hard to find a nearby landing site not clogged with seaweed, whilst approaching on the surface requires struggling through the outer fringes of the raft, which is not thick enough to support any weight but surprisingly difficult to push or cut through. The denser areas can be walked upon – carefully – by a human but falling through a weak spot is a constant hazard. The entangling weed makes it difficult to swim; this hazard claimed the lives of several of the first expedition's personnel and is best overcome by grav belts or other technological means.



Touchstone



TAIKHAIRYSEA YORUH SUBSECTOR


To Earluilow (page 28)



To Iheihoarla (page 19)

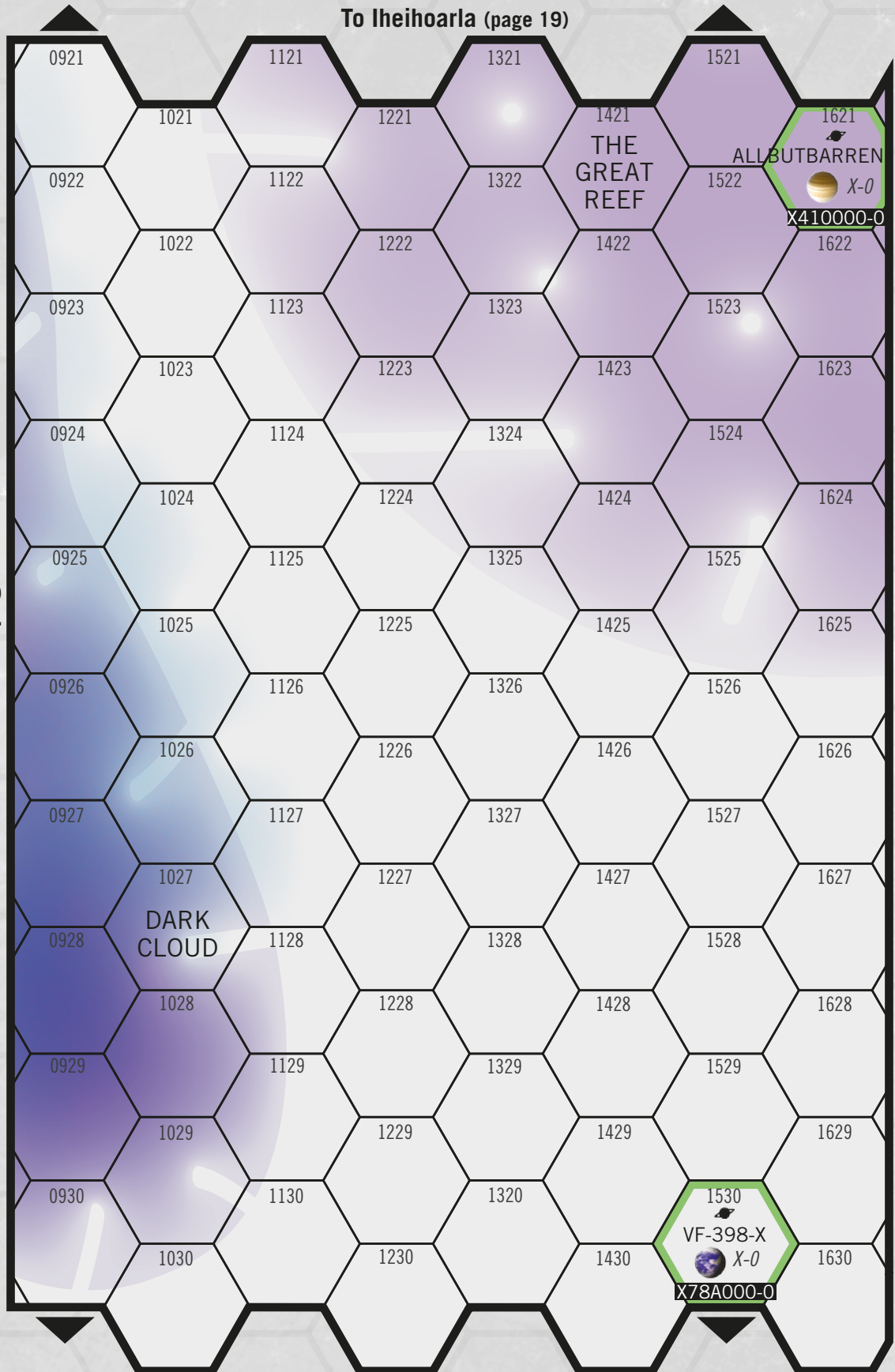
To Tarlaihylr (page 32)

To Hritihtoi (page 38)

 Gas Giant
 B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

 Secure System

 Planet (dry)
 Planet (water present)





JUST ONE

(TARLAIHIYR)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
T-O-1	2022		X578775-2	Ag Lt			G

Just One subsector derives its human name from the fact it has just one star system. Lying deep in the Great Rift, this region of space has rarely, if ever, been visited by explorers.

T-O-1

T-O-1, presumably a corruption of 'the only one' is inhabited by a large population of indigenous humans, who have no reason to suppose they did not originate on the world. Transplanted by the Ancients, these humans now have a TL2 culture subdivided into numerous states. Conflict between these states is common, not least because the world lacks much usable land. Nations are found on larger land masses, with outposts on island chains. These colonies are essential to the major economies, supplying resources unavailable at home, and change hands from time-to-time through conflict or complex inter-state deals.

T-O-1 is known to its inhabitants as 'the world' and they are, for the most part, unaware of the wider universe. The occasional exploration ship has visited their planet but tales of such encounters are generally disbelieved, as are claims that there are islands with mountains of gold just over the horizon. The nations of T-O-1 are avid explorers, sending expeditions ever further across the

world's vast oceans. Sooner or later they may find the ruins of an ancient civilisation; their original home on the planet in fact, which was destroyed by a series of earthquakes a few hundred years after the Ancients left them to their own devices.

The original settled island chain was largely abandoned, with scattered survivors rebuilding their civilisation and population elsewhere over the millennia, but small numbers of people still dwell on these remote islands. They are more primitive than the other nations and largely unaware of the wreckage buried beneath millennia of soil.

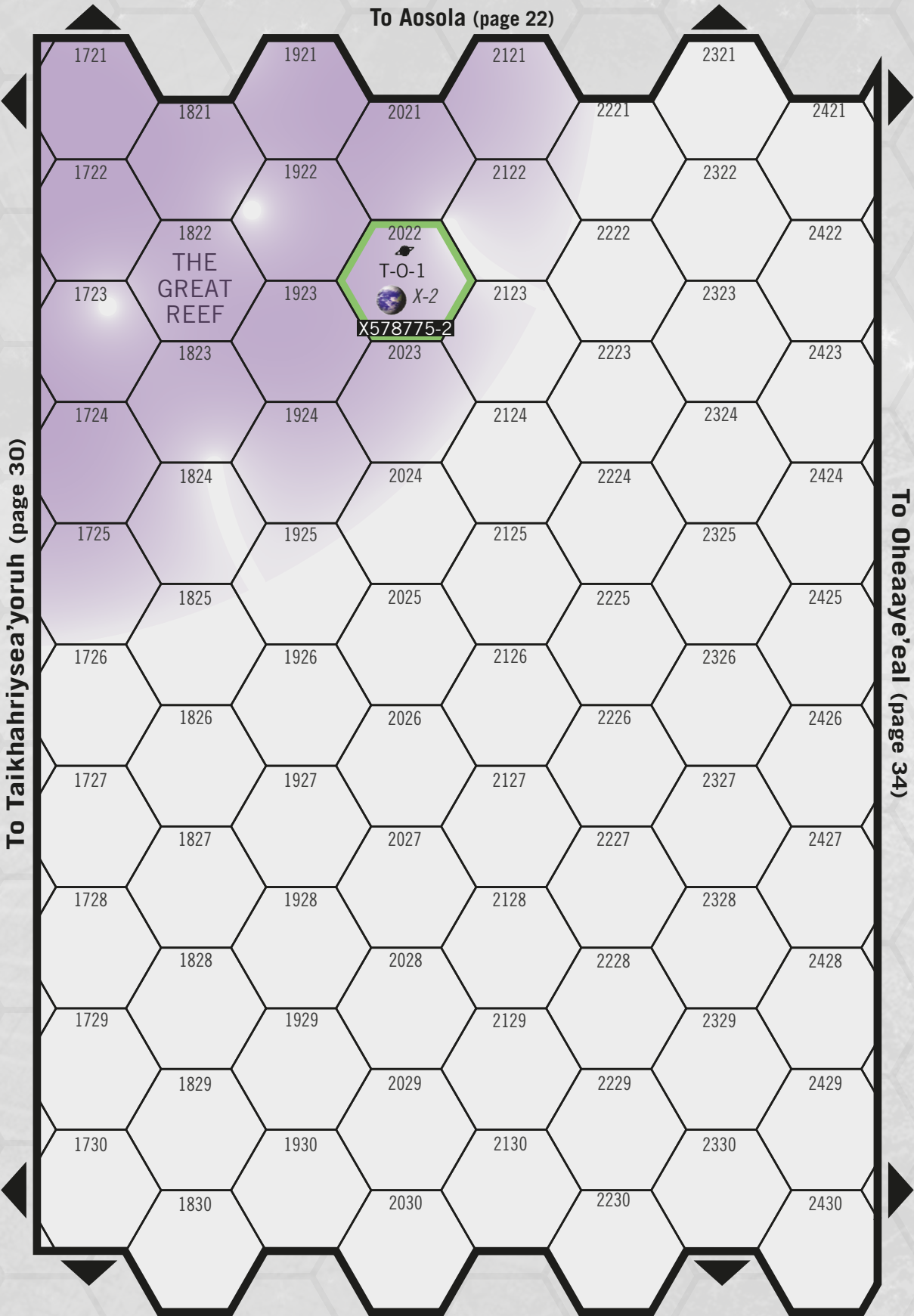
The nations of T-O-1 are competitive even, when not in conflict with one another, and launch attacks on one another's shipping whenever the opportunity arises. Most major conflicts are fought at sea or on distant islands; an invasion of a rival's homeland is beyond the capabilities of any nation although alliances have attempted it.

The arrival of starfarers might cause severe disruption in the power balance of T-O-1. Indeed, even the knowledge that they are not alone in the universe could result in unexpected changes in a society that has been isolated for so long.

		K	

Touchstone

TARLAIHNR SUBSECTOR



Gas Giant



Starport Class & Tech Level



Secure System



Planet (water present)

NX-34



(OHEAAYE'EAL)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Greatlake	2529		X78A000-0	Ba Wa			G

NX-34 has no widely recognised name other than its starchart designation and even that comes from an obscure Terran numbering system which fell into disuse before the fall of the Rule of Man. NX-34's single star system is one of the most remote and difficult to reach in this part of the Great Rift.

GREATLAKE

Greatlake, presumably named because it is a water world, is the mainworld of the system but uninhabited; the system's small population dwells on a station orbiting the innermost gas giant. This station is very old and was built by an unknown species who left behind automated systems that still – mostly – work. Although the station is in decay, it could still support a population in the tens of thousands. In its heyday, it was a major city in space.

Inscriptions and controls are in no known language, although the inhabitants have managed to figure out what some do by trial and error. Docking is automated, however any service robots that might have existed are long gone. Likewise, parts of the station are unsafe; indeed, some are entirely unexplored. Parties of scavengers sometimes enter these areas, either from an inhabited section or directly from the outside of the station. Not all come back.

The current population numbers a few hundred, most of whom live in intact sections near the docks. Scavenging parties sometimes fight among themselves or with other groups and most casualties are attributable to hostile action. However, some simply go missing or come back with tales of how they lost members to some inexplicable danger.

The station has a few working small craft, which the inhabitants can operate well enough. Most of these are used to skim fuel and chemicals from the gas giant's atmosphere but some cross to Greatlake itself and land in its oceans. Oxygen, water and foodstuffs are obtained from Greatlake and transferred back to the station to prop up the failing life support and hydroponic systems.

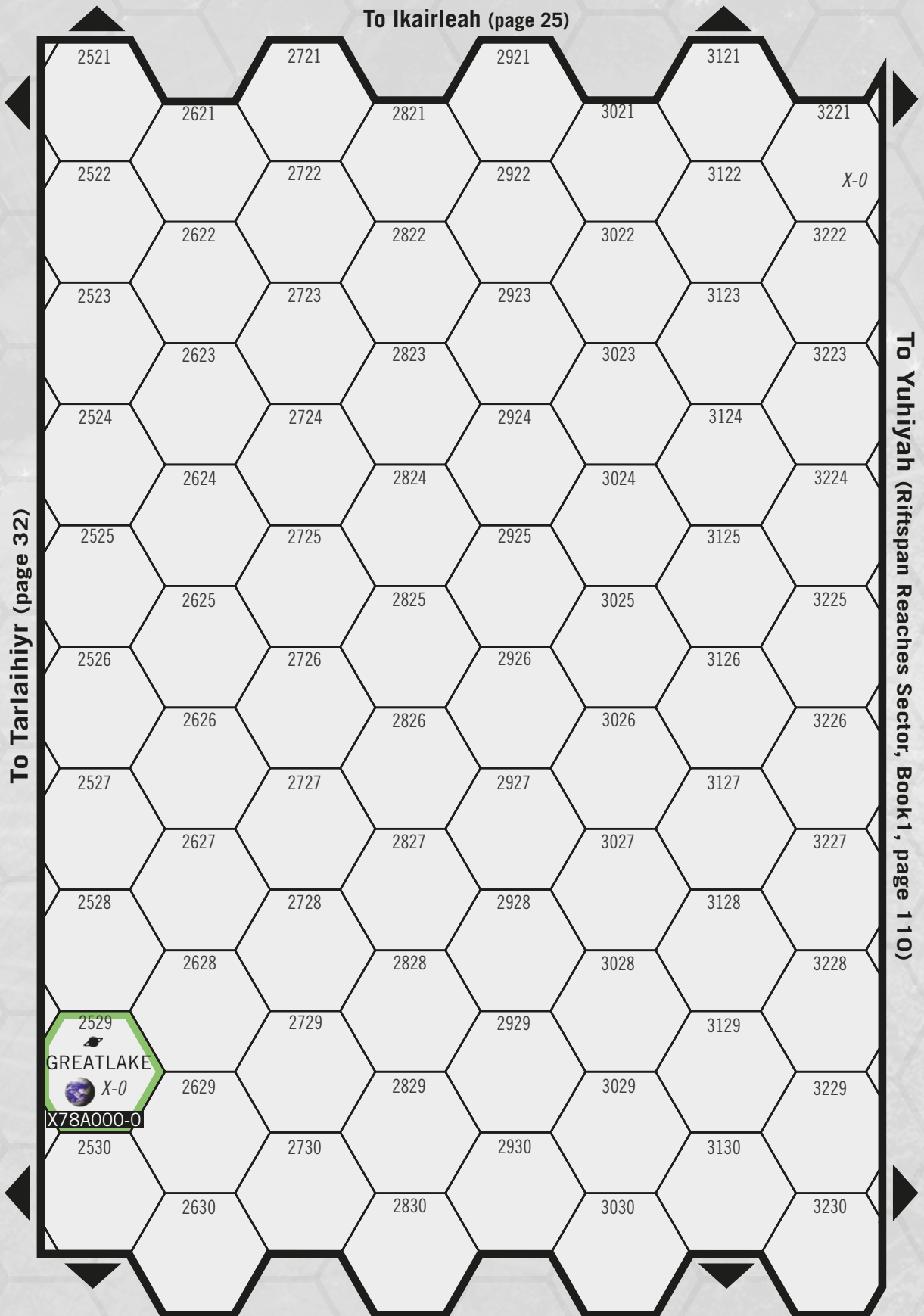
All the population were born on the station, although no-one knows how many generations have lived there or how they arrived. Society is fatalistic, as might be expected in a failing space station many parsecs from any inhabited world. There is no formal government, just a hierarchy of leaders who possess the few weapons available and use these to control critical functions of the station. Each has a band of followers who are reasonably loyal and a larger controlled population who generally do as they are told.



It is not clear how much longer the station can survive. Its station-keeping engines operate intermittently under automated control but are no longer able to maintain a stable orbit. The station is slowly spiralling out of orbit and will eventually set off across the Great Rift on a voyage lasting millennia. The population will survive for a time but, without the resources of Greatlake and the gas giant, the station is no longer self-sufficient; the population's fatalistic outlook seems to be appropriate.





Touchstone

OHEAAYE'EAL SUBSECTOR



 Gas Giant
 Starport Class & Tech Level

To Ala'ourl (page 40)
 Secure System

 Planet (water present)



VICTEIN'S HAND

(IYWE'UAR)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
[UNNAMED]	0134		X231000-0	Ba Po			G
[UNNAMED]	0235		X100000-0	Ba Va			
[UNNAMED]	0540		X303000-0	Ba Ic Va			G
Kamlenkammmiii	0836		X494XXX-X				G
Silenne	0139		X649872-1	Ri			

Victein's Hand is named for the scattering of star systems in this subsector and just beyond, which forms an extension of the loose stellar grouping known as Victein's Arm. The Arm extends spinward into Iphigenaia sector but is too dispersed to allow easy travel across the rift.

Victein is a deity in the mythology of several species found in the Iphigenaia and Theron sectors. Known by various other names, Victein is identified as a tragic god who reached out to grab the stars and was driven mad by their glory. It has been suggested that this is a metaphor for some lost race who expanded too fast and too far, or perhaps the Ancients, but no definitive work on the subject has been published.

KAMLENKAMMMIII

Kamlenkammmiii has a Vilani name in the starcharts but there are no records of it being visited by them. It is a dry world with a dense atmosphere tainted by emissions from the planet's many volcanoes. Whilst hardly a paradise, Kamlenkammmiii is habitable enough and several enclaves of humans and other species dwell there. The star charts list no permanent population or government because this data is unavailable. The only available estimates suggest there are several small communities with a starfaring level of technology – including one group essentially living out of their starship and a much larger primitive population.

The offworlder enclaves are mostly small groups with whatever technology they brought with them and will eventually fail if spares and replacements are not available. One solution to this is to raid other enclaves, which has resulted in a low-key range war in the outback.

The largest offworld group arrived aboard a colony ship that crash-landed near one of the world's small seas. Not all the colonists survived but the remainder are

trying to build a sustainable community before the power from their ship's reactor runs out. Whilst the wreck still functions, more or less, they have access to power, light and limited manufacturing facilities but sometime in the next few years they will be thrown back upon whatever resources they can muster. These colonists are well aware that what they achieve during this time will set the tone of their existence thereafter. They might manage to create a modest technological civilisation or could find themselves having to learn to use stone tools.

The primitive population are immune to the world's atmospheric taint, which is mild enough that it causes only a slight allergic reaction in most but can kill those who are particularly susceptible. The primitive tribes are not hostile to the newcomers but resent encroachment on their territory and have no interest in being educated or 'enlightened' to join a higher-technology society.

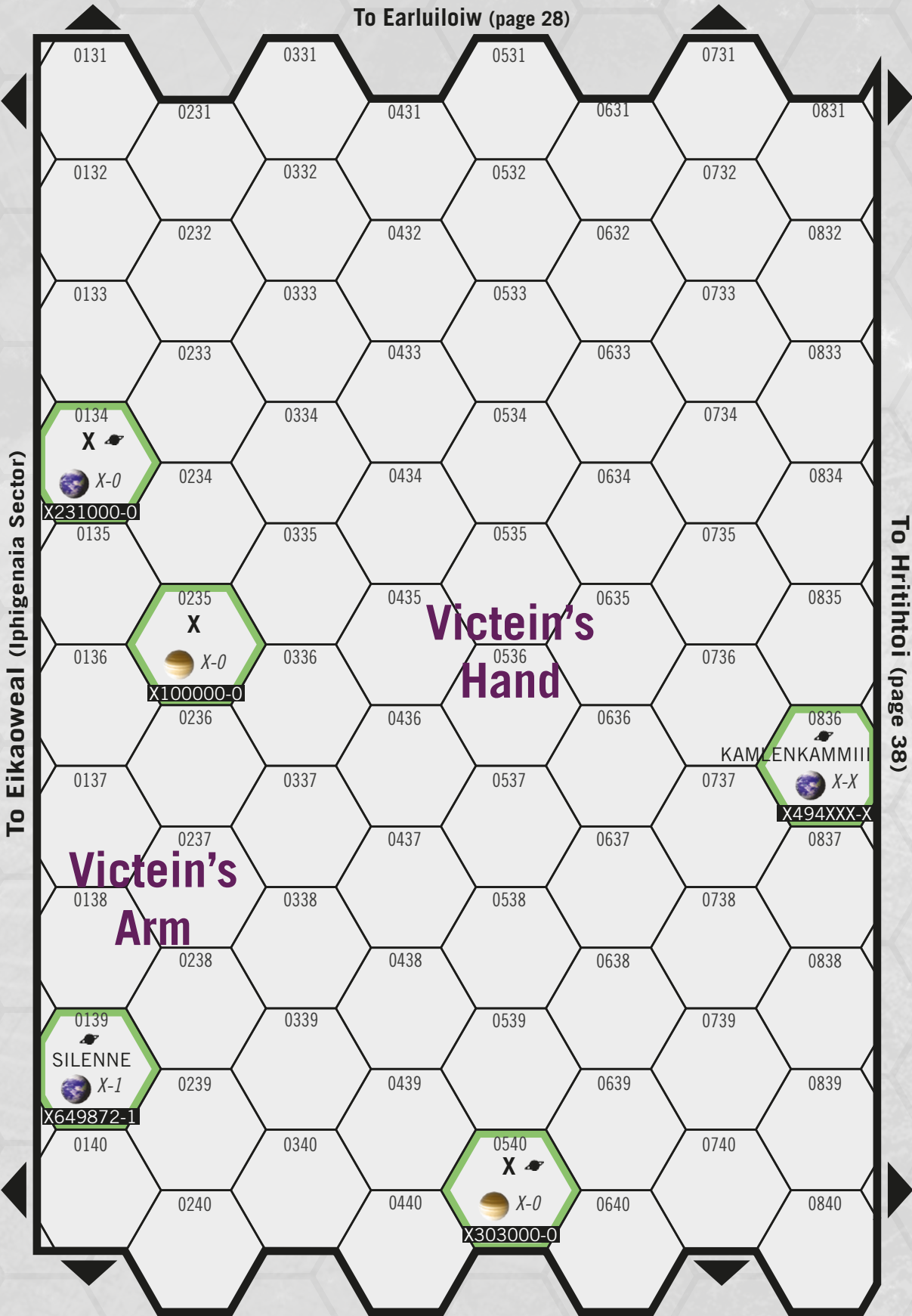
SILENNE


Silenne is home to a large population of indigenous humans who have been isolated for most of their history. The local ecosystem produces several compounds that are mildly toxic to offworlders but harmless to the locals. Adaptation has taken place over millennia, resulting in slight changes to some organs, which could possibly qualify the local population as a minor human race. There is some evidence that a mid-tech society has arisen on Silenne in the distant past but eventually collapsed back to barbarism at least once; most of the world's inhabitants are part of various TL1 states, with a significant minority maintaining a primitive existence in less hospitable areas. Unlike low-tech societies who have frequent offworld contact, the people of Silenne would have no idea what an electronic device was or did and would react unpredictably if they encountered starfarers with what might seem like magical powers.


M			



Touchstone

YWVE"UAR SUBSECTOR



 Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

 Secure System

 Planet (dry)
 Planet (water present)

NX-38



(*HRITIHTOI*)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Nahartu	1039		X510000-0	Ba			G
NX-38-S1	0933		X431000-0	Ba			G

NX-38 has no human name and has never needed one. Its two star systems are sometimes fancifully referred to as Vichtein's Fingertips and some charts list the subsector as 'Tips' rather than by its archaic numeric designation.

NAHARTU

The Nahartu system has no habitable worlds and has only been cursorily charted. The mainworld has barely a trace atmosphere and is scarcely more welcoming than any of the system's rockballs. It has never been settled but there are rumours that the innermost planet, unofficially dubbed Kelnichh, may support life. Kelnichh orbits too close to the system's primary for liquid water but is home to an extraordinarily hardy species of what has been described as 'armoured vacuum-proof arachnoids'. It is also claimed that the ruins can be found on Kelnichh, perhaps an Ancients site created to study the inhabitants of Kelnichh whose ability to survive their unbelievably harsh environment baffled even the Ancients.

NX-38-S1

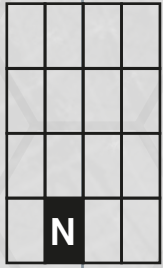
NX-38-S1 is one of the most subtly hostile worlds in Charted Space. It possesses riotous vegetation, with vast forests covering most of the land masses other than the polar regions. Mountains poke through the canopy, with high ground offering the illusion of a safe landing site. In fact, these highlands are just as dangerous as any other part of the planet.

The animal life of NX-38-S1 is extremely tough, territorial and aggressive, and engaged in a constant battle with predatory plants as well as other animals. The plants are winning in the lowlands, forcing the more successful animal species to retreat to higher ground. These regions are cut off from one another by an impenetrable sea of vegetation concealing many dangers, with the result that animals of the same species confined to different mountain ranges are beginning to diverge from one another.

Some of the world's predatory plant species have a straightforward method of attack. Spores are common, germinating on mucous surfaces such as lungs and eyes and literally eating the host as they grow. Once death occurs, the spores use the carcass to grow rapidly into a new plant, which can be ready to produce spores of its own in a matter of days or, in the case of at least one species, hours.

Ruins have been sighted in the lowlands or mapped by radar from orbit. There are also starship wrecks on the surface, not all modern or recent. The older hulks might be a treasure trove of archaeological artefacts if it were only possible to reach them.

To Taikhahriysea'yoruh (page 30)




Touchstone


HRITIHTOI SUBSECTOR



To Iywe'uar (page 36)



To Steakheya (Afawashisa Sector, Book 3, page 70)

 Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

 Secure System

 Planet (dry)
 Planet (water present)

MOUNTAIN POUNCER

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Mountain Pouncer	12	12 m
SKILLS	Athletics (dex) 3, Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1	
ATTACKS	Claws (2D)	
TRAITS	Armour (+4), Fast Metabolism (+3), Small (-1),	
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore, Pouncer	

The mountain pouncer is a very nasty six-limbed predator, capable of using any or all of its limbs to grab, swing or run. It can move quickly through trees or along an exposed rock face, a talent it uses to get above and behind prey. The mountain pouncer is aggressive and territorial but fortunately solitary unless a female with young is encountered. Its heavily muscled body and



thick fur give it natural protection whilst its usual mode of attack is to land on the victim, ideally knocking it down, and begin tearing with some clawed limbs whilst clinging on with others.

VENOMVINES

Venomvines push the boundaries between plant and animal life. They resemble long creepers that grow up another plant, artificial structure or rock face, and are anchored into the ground from which they draw water and some sustenance. However, the newer and less woody part of the vine is capable of creeping slowly (about a metre every 2-3 minutes) towards an infrared source, such as body heat, and can detach from its supporting tree or rock face to facilitate greater reach.

A venomvine is coated in tiny hairs, which inject toxins into the victim's bloodstream. The initial toxin has a soporific effect on humans and can cause disorientation or sleep. Once the victim is immobilised, the vine begins to inject other chemicals, which rapidly cause cellular breakdown. The vine then extracts nutrients from the dying victim, which often attracts other vines.

A Traveller who encounters a vine may be affected through normal clothing or bare skin, but good boots and gloves, or tough outdoor clothes, will prevent injection of the toxins. The initial injection requires an Easy (4+) END check to resist. Those who fail collapse unconscious in seconds; those that pass with an Effect of less than 6 become dizzy and suffer DM-2 to all tasks for the next 2D minutes, including attempts to resist further intoxication.



Once unconscious, a Traveller may make a Difficult (10+) END check every 3D minutes to wake up. If he succeeds, he is dizzy and confused as above (the DM -2 does not apply to the check to wake up). Each time the check is failed, the Traveller suffers 1D damage that ignores any armour.

Vines can be hacked through by any bladed implement doing 6+ damage in a single blow or by determined sawing with anything sharp – although the latter exposes anyone without hand protection to intoxication. Destroying a vine requires completely burning it and digging up the root cluster. Any material left will eventually grow into another vine.

ETERNAL DARK



(AYAAU'KHTE)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Phobetor	2333		B766873-9	Ga Ri			G

Eternal Dark subsector contains just one star system, although many star charts omit it and claim the subsector is completely barren. The Phobetor system has been visited numerous times by many different races, some of which have created colonies on its worlds. Only the Aslan seem to have no interest in going to Phobetor; they will not even acknowledge its existence and it is missing from their star charts. It

is rumoured that the Aslan naval bases at Aletoli and Teirikh in the Riftspan Reaches are maintained purely to guard against some threat expected to come from Phobetor. The Aslan, of course, do not comment on this matter.

See page 42 for more information on the Phobetor Alpha and Beta systems.

EMPTY FOUR



(ALA'OURL)

SUBSECTOR

Empty Four was named because it was one of four contiguous subsectors once thought to contain no star systems. In fact, this is not correct; the neighbouring Eternal Dark subsector contains a single system.

However, the originators of the Empty Four designation seem to have overlooked its existence as well as that of Yalroeroh in the Voidmarch (Aoaakhaowea) subsector.

SUBSECTOR: NO INTERSTELLAR OBJECTS

PHOBETOR

The Phobetor system contains two stars, each with a planetary system. There are three habitable worlds (Terra Nova, Hades and Ultima Thule), along with several other inhabited bodies. An entire star system is a big place and there is much that is not known (or not common knowledge) about many areas in the Phobetor system. Population density is also not high – even with a population in the hundreds of millions, there are significant wilderness areas on Terra Nova and Ultima Thule. Industrial and scientific bases are also very limited, meaning most activities are undertaken on a small scale. The nations of Terra Nova, for example, can produce industrial goods for their own use and some trade but they simply do not have the resources to build a spacefaring fleet of any size.

Phobetor is very remote. To get there, it is necessary to transit deep into the Great Rift and even finding a suitable jumping-off point for an expedition is a difficult undertaking.

AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY

The worlds and societies of the Phobetor system have been given a Tech Level rating. However, this is anything but the whole story. Most major states within the Phobetor system have TL7-8, with some at TL9. This does not so much reflect knowledge available as the ability to put it to use. Databases of advanced theoretical science exist but the capability to create TL10+ equipment, other than on a prototype basis, simply does not exist.

Most people of the Phobetor system know about advanced equipment and could use it if available. Travellers might be offered ridiculous amounts of money (or simply be robbed) for high-tech items in their possession or may be asked for an astronomical amount of money when they try to replace something commonplace on the frontiers of the Trojan Reach.

Currency

Since the arrival of the Imperial contingent, the Imperial Credit has become the standard against which other

currencies are rated, since Credits buy the highest-technology goods available in the star system. Credit coins and plaques are also hard to counterfeit at local Tech Levels, creating a stable medium for transactions and hold their value well even in remote parts of the star system.

Many local transactions use dollars, a traditional name for money ever since the *Shackleton* mission arrived. Strangers can get into trouble trying to convert their Credits to 'hicksars' – the name is a derogatory term for local currency, which is more properly termed dollars, kalshers, erros or keb. Whilst locally useful, these currencies lose their value rapidly over distance and kalshers issued by one state on Terra Nova may not have the same value as those produced by another. Credits are a much more reliable medium.

INTERPLANETARY AND INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL

Phobetor is many parsecs from the nearest star system and very few ships come through the system. Most are exploratory vessels but powers with ambitions in the system sometimes accept the enormous cost of running a high-jump freighter to the world. This is an incredibly inefficient way of transporting goods as it also requires tankers and deeps-space refuelling, and occasionally a freighter simply goes missing. However, it is the only way to get significant quantities of equipment and personnel to the system. The only power to ever put more than two or three missions of this sort into Phobetor is the Imperium and even it only averages one freighter every four to six years. The amount of hold space available aboard such a ship is very limited, so the size of an enclave that can be created is also limited and even the mighty Third Imperium has nothing more than a tenuous foothold in the system.

With no star systems within reach, there is little incentive to build jump-capable vessels or bring them to Phobetor, other than to permit rapid movement throughout the system. There are a few such vessels, mostly Imperial in origin, which gives their operators

strategic advantages. However, the trade-off is efficiency. A sublight ship can carry far more cargo than one that gives up a large percentage of its hull space to jump fuel. Thus, virtually all craft in the system have no jump drives.

A 2G-capable sublight craft can make the transit from Terra Nova to Ultima Thule in 70 days or so; a jump-1 ship can do it in about a tenth of that time. This capability is useful, not least when rescuing distressed vessels, but unless the need for a rapid transit is considerable, it is too expensive to build and operate a jump-capable vessel when a sublight one of the same size can make the same run cheaper while carrying more cargo. Most non-Imperial 'jump ships' are operated by private owners who charge a high price for their services.

Most shipping is of a sublight nature, with vessels transiting between the inhabited worlds of the Alpha system. There is much less interplanetary traffic in the Beta system and even less between the two. It is thus necessary to wait for a ship travelling between Alpha and Beta and to be at the right spaceport at the right time. The result is that the affairs of the two system halves are somewhat disconnected from one another at a day-to-day level but larger events will affect everyone sooner or later.

THE SHACKLETON MISSION

In the mid-21st Century, humans from Terra began launching missions beyond their solar system using slower-than-light vessels. Some ships were overtaken by the first jump-capable starships, although these used rather ramshackle prototypes that were rarely reliable. Jump-capable vessels became available from 2089 onwards, although this did not bring about an immediate end to the short era of sublight expansion.

The *Shackleton* was a hollowed-out asteroid vessel, similar in many ways to the three ESA vessels launched in 2050. Work on *Shackleton* began in 2072AD but it was not until 2094 that the project was completed. By then, the unreliable first-generation jump drive had been supplanted by improved versions, making interstellar travel far safer and predictable.

Shackleton began her early acceleration but the project was then declared unviable. The mission was shut down, leaving *Shackleton* as a hulk heading into deep space. However, six years after her drives were first activated, *Shackleton* was bought at a very low price by the private Anglo-American 2100 Project, which sought to launch a deep-space mission of its own.

Jump-capable ships matched their course to the empty asteroid and crews from the 2100 Project boarded her. They reactivated her systems, began acceleration again and undertook one of humanity's most ambitious projects; taking advantage of the availability of vast quantities of first-generation jump drive components, *Shackleton* was converted into a hybrid high sublight/jump-1 vessel. The unreliability of her drive was not considered a major issue since she was designed to survive a voyage of hundreds of years.

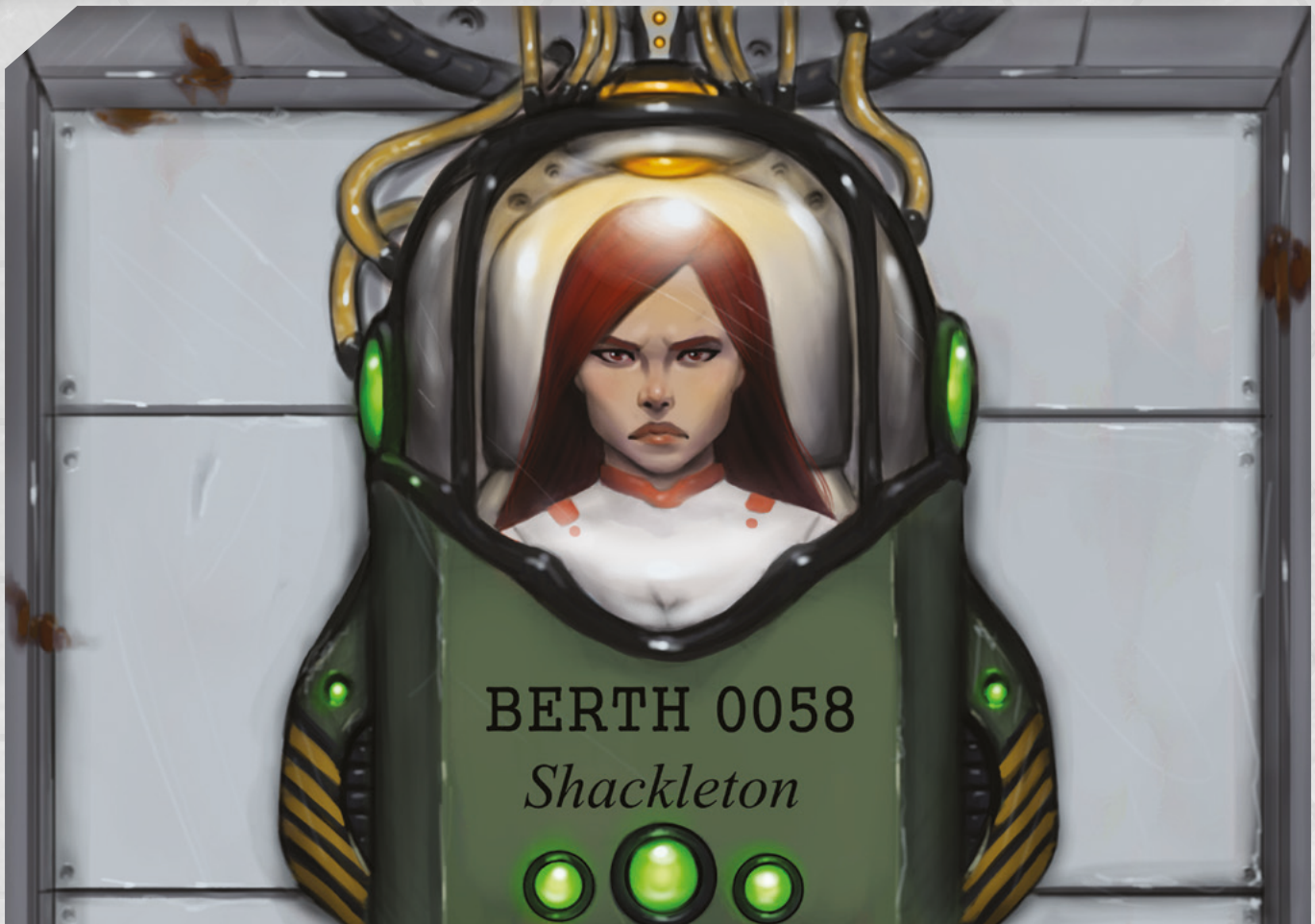
Shackleton finally left the Sol system in 2111, two years before the outbreak of the Interstellar Wars. She followed a roughly similar course to the three ESA ships launched in 2050, heading to spinward of coreward. Her flight was undertaken at high sublight speeds, with fuel reserves permitting four jumps along the way. Modest though this capability was, it would shave years off the overall mission time. Colonists from the 2100 Project were brought aboard during the early acceleration phase, entering cryogenic suspension in batches.

Shackleton's first jump, made in 2117, demonstrated that her drive was even more unreliable than other first-generation systems, probably as a result of being cobbled together from used components. *Shackleton* made a wild misjump that caused her crew to take the drive offline and vow never to use it again. To the few who witnessed her entry into jumpspace, it appeared that *Shackleton* had been destroyed. A scattering of debris was left behind and, along with unusual readings from monitoring instruments, this was taken as evidence of a catastrophic misjump event.

At this time, the Terrans were engaged in a series of wars with the Vilani Imperium, so *Shackleton* was written off and forgotten about. However, she had survived entry to jumpspace, albeit suffering significant internal damage, and her drive system was crippled. *Shackleton's* first translation from jumpspace was as traumatic to the ship as its entry.

Emerging dozens of light-years from her intended destination, *Shackleton* continued her mission as a sublight ship. During this time, the crew rotated through the cryogenic units, leaving just a handful of crew awake at any time. They would have to deal with any crisis that presented itself and in 4473AD, they had to make a desperate decision.

Shackleton came under attack from unknown warships and with no means of defence she would surely have been destroyed had her acting captain not made an emergency jump. The broken, ancient drive performed better this time, although it still resulted in a misjump. This brought *Shackleton* out in a star system that seemed at first to be a suitable prospect



for colonisation. However, her sublight velocity was far too high and her vector would take her into the system's primary before she could slow down. The only option was to make what is recorded as the Final Jump and, on Christmas Day 4473AD, *Shackleton* entered jumpspace for the last time.

The transit was rough and damaging but in due course the vessel emerged from her latest misjump. To the horror of her crew she was in deep space, with no star system for many parsecs in any direction. The ship's systems had begun to fail and, scanning for somewhere – anywhere – to land, the crew gambled everything on the most promising system in range. After initiating a deceleration programme, they entered their low berths for a few decades.

When they awoke they found they had struck gold – a binary system with three worlds that were at least borderline habitable. The crew initially named their destination Motherlode, for its two golden stars and bounty of habitable worlds, but later chose the more sinister name Phobetor by which the system is now known. The year was 4520AD.

ARRIVAL IN THE PHOBETOR SYSTEM

Shackleton used her sublight craft to ferry colonists to the most habitable world, named Terra Nova, and sent missions to the second, borderline-habitable, planet in the Phobetor Alpha system. This proved to have a harsh environment and was dubbed Hades but some of *Shackleton*'s people settled there.

Shackleton retained enough velocity to make a crossing to the Beta half of the Phobetor system and there found a world that was habitable with effort. Naming it Ultima Thule, more colonists settled on this world. Most, however, wanted to return to the more habitable Terra Nova.

During a solar orbital manoeuvre (a gravity-assisted slingshot turn intended to send *Shackleton* back to Terra Nova) the last of the venerable ship's systems failed. It became apparent that she was not going to be able to reach Terra Nova but was now committed to a trajectory that would take her into deep space after passing distantly through the Alpha system. What followed is

today known as the Abandonment. Some colonists went to Ultima Thule and made the best of it, while others were ferried to Terra Nova aboard *Shackleton's* collection of sublight vessels.

A segment of the colonists and many of the crew were reluctant to abandon *Shackleton*. Known as 'shippies', these diehards worked for nearly three years to repair their vessel before finally admitting the task was beyond them. By this time, the shippies were used to living in a controlled shipboard environment; many were less than keen to land on a wild and untamed planet but *Shackleton* was on a one-way trip out of the Phobetor system and nothing could prevent that.

Some shippies settled on a compromise, creating a colony in the Alpha system asteroid belt using equipment scavenged from *Shackleton* and others elected to remain aboard and continue their voyage into the unknown. These shippies remained in contact with their kinfolk in the Phobetor system for some years, exchanging greetings and offering technical advice over an increasingly long delay. Contact was finally lost with *Shackleton* in 4596AD as she drifted out of the system; her fate is unknown.

The last group of ships left *Shackleton* in 4544AD, 18 years after the first settlers landed on Terra Nova. A disaster en route caused several transports to be lost and others crash-landed on Hades. This deprived the colonists of in-system mobility and forced new colonies to develop largely independently of one another. The few remaining ships wore out and were retired before the colonists developed a technological base to build more. In the meantime, there were other problems to contend with, for the colonists were not alone.

Soon after landing on Terra Nova, the colonists discovered other humans were already there. These people lived at a low technological level, dwelling in small towns and relying on water and wind power. They did not even have gunpowder but their numbers were greater and conflict with the colonists resulted in the destruction of some settlements.

There were also non-humans present, mainly on Ultima Thule, and they proved friendlier than the indigenous human population. Indeed, the survival of the Ultima Thule colonies was largely due to the assistance of the Ascondi, as the aliens called themselves.

Within a few decades, the 'survival years' or 'colonial era' was over and the colonists had established themselves. In some cases, they came to dominate the local population, in others they lived alongside or simply ignored one another. A scattering of mid-tech cities began to develop and in time these grew into proto-nations.

OUTSIDE CONTACT

The location of the Phobetor system, deep in the Great Rift, makes outside contact difficult at best. Yet ships came nonetheless; Darrian and Zhodani vessels, then Vargr. However, the Aslan have never travelled there, despite it being the nearest great power to Phobetor.

Contact with the Third Imperium came in 5577AD, when a long-range exploration mission landed on Terra Nova. At that time *Shackleton* had been presumed lost for nearly 3500 years and was almost entirely forgotten. The first meeting between Phobetor humans and Imperials started out in confusion – and new mysteries emerged once both groups had told their story.

A small fleet of freighters arrived in 5599 (Imperial Year 1081) and built a spaceport on land leased from one of the main nations of Terra Nova. A small Imperial presence has been maintained ever since; freighters continued to arrive with additional personnel and equipment for almost two decades but never more than a couple of ships per year and sometimes nothing for several years at a time. In 5613AD, several shiploads of Vargr reached Phobetor but did not settle on any of the habitable planets. Instead, they claimed Terra Nova's largest moon and built a small city there.

Phobetor has now been inhabited by humans from Terra for eleven centuries, yet relatively little is known about this remote yet valuable star system. The Ascondi claim Ultima Thule is their homeworld, yet it is obviously not. Groups from many powers, human and otherwise, have visited the system. Even the K'Kree are known to have landed on Terra Nova.

But not the Aslan. If asked why, they ignore the question or become angered. Many human observers wonder if the Aslan are afraid of something in the Phobetor system. If so, what is it? What compels all other species to come to Phobetor but keeps the greatest warriors of Charted Space away?

THE PHOBETOR SYSTEM

The Phobetor system has several names associated with it and may also be the star system mentioned in various legends from across Charted Space. Conventional wisdom holds that the system was named Phobetor by the crew of *Shackleton* before they landed on Terra Nova, because of a sense of unease some of the crew had about their destination.

Phobetor is a god of nightmares, who dwelled in a land of dreams within the underworld. Most people in

TIMELINE OF THE PHOBETOR SYSTEM

Imperial	Terran	Event
c-315,000	c-315,000	Ancients seed humans and other species on worlds across Charted Space
(Unknown)	(Unknown)	Earliest evidence of Ascondi habitation on Ultima Thule
c-24500 to -27500	c-29-32,000BC	Earliest evidence of human habitation on Terra Nova
-2407	2111	Shackleton leaves Sol system
-2401	2117	Shackleton makes first jump
-45	4473	Shackleton makes second and final jumps
2	4520	Shackleton enters Phobetor system
8	4526	Shackleton lands settlers on Terra Nova
26	4544	Final abandonment of Shackleton
78	4596	Contact lost with Shackleton
1059	5577	Imperial explorers enter Phobetor system
1081	5599	Imperial settlers arrive on Terra Nova
1095	5613	Vargr settlers colonise Alcois
1105	5623	Current Date

the Phobetor system now refer to it as such but there are other names in common use, equally dark and foreboding; associated with dreams, nightmares or ill fortune and connected with a malevolent or uncaring god.

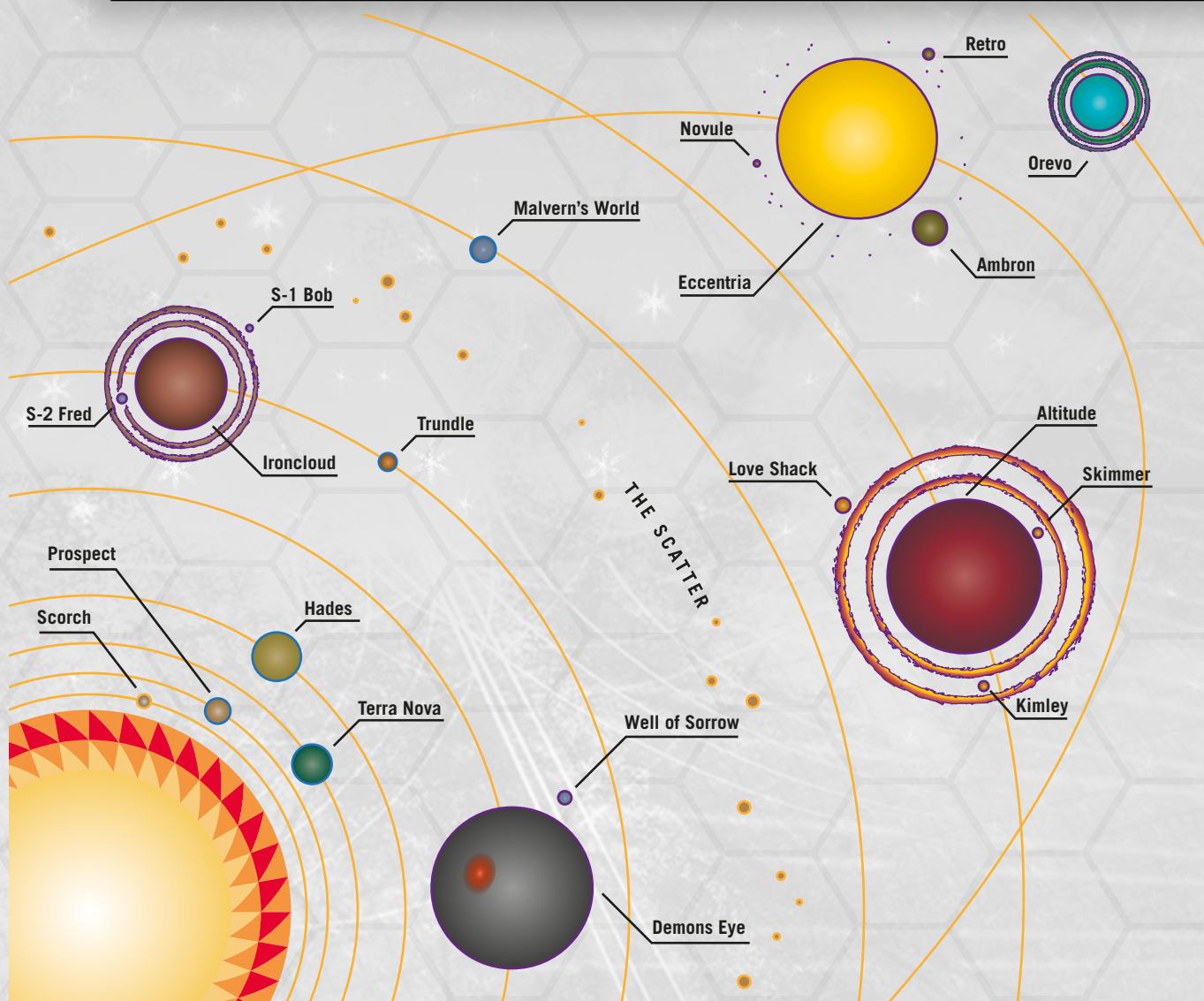
Many different cultures are represented on Phobetor's worlds and alien artefacts have been discovered, clearly from other species. It has been theorised that at some point Phobetor was significant to an alien empire and possibly a succession of them. This may be due to its location in the Great Rift or something else entirely.

Today, Phobetor is home to numerous small human and alien states, with enclaves set up by the more distant powers. It is sufficiently remote that only the occasional long-range ship comes through its port but has a fair amount of in-system traffic. There are many groups inhabiting the Phobetor system, all with their own reasons for being there. Major conflict is uncommon but total peace does not seem possible. There is always something going on in the Phobetor system; a territorial dispute, a clash of interests over resources or the rumoured site of alien artefacts. Alliances form and dissolve, with no one group dominating the politics of the system.

The system is a binary, containing two habitable worlds in the Alpha system and one in Beta, plus several other inhabited bodies. Phobetor Beta is a distant companion star, orbiting sufficiently far from the system's primary (Phobetor Alpha) that the two are considered separate star systems in many ways. However, it is possible to travel from one to the other without using a jump drive and vessels regularly do. There are also two brown dwarf sub-stellar objects associated with the system, orbiting very distantly from the binary.

ALPHA SYSTEM

Phobetor Alpha is a G5V (yellow main sequence or yellow dwarf) star not enormously different from Earth's sun. It is orbited by eleven major bodies – counting the system's planetoid belt as a single body – plus the usual collection of comets and clumps of planetoids. The Alpha system is more heavily settled than the Beta system and sees far more internal sublight traffic. In addition, virtually all interstellar traffic emerges from jump close to Terra Nova in the Alpha system, making this the hub of Phobetor's limited interstellar trade and conflict.



PHOBETOR ALPHA (G5V)

- 1 **Scorch** (X200000-0) Ba Va
- 2 **Prospect** (X6A0000-0) Ba
- 3 **Terra Nova** (B766873-9) Ga Ri
- 4 **Hades** (B985776-7) Ri
- 5 **Demon's Eye** (Large Gas Giant)
Well Of Sorrow (D1AA4F9-7) Ni Wa
- 6 **Ironcloud** (Small Gas Giant)
Ironcloud S-1 (X000000-0) Ba Va
Ironcloud S-2 (C310416-A) Ni
- 7 **The Scatter** (Planetoid Belt) As
- 8 **Malvern's World** (D531533-7) Ni
- 9 **Altitude** (Large Gas Giant)
Skimmer (X000000-0) Ba Va
Love Shack (D3A1413-8) Fl Ic Ni
Kimley (X310000-0) Ba De
- 10 **Eccentrica** (Large Gas Giant)
Novule (X11000-0) Ba
Retro (X201000-0) Ba Va
Ambron (XA21000-0) Ba
- 11 **Orevo** (Very Small Gas Giant)

Scorch

As its name suggests, Scorch orbits close to its primary and receives a great deal of stellar energy. It is tidally locked, with one side constantly blasted by its sun and the other exposed to space. An industrial installation was created some years ago, within a crater in the twilight zone between the hot and cold sides but the venture was a failure and eventually abandoned. Rumours circulate about the empty shell of this installation and who might dwell there now but the world is probably uninhabited.

Prospect

Prospect was named because it was a possible site for a colony. It is officially uninhabited and listed as such in databases but at any given time there will be numerous small mineral extraction operations and scientific expeditions on its surface. Prospect, despite its promising name, is lacking in metals and not suitable for large-scale exploitation. Small operations can turn a profit however, providing the site is carefully selected.

Terra Nova

Terra Nova has various other names, most of which are some variation on 'the world' or 'home'. The new name was adopted widely once a spacefaring society was established, although some groups still call their homeworld by other titles.

Regardless, Terra Nova is the prize of the Phobetor system. Designated a garden world, it lives up to this promise; its ecosystem is a mix of indigenous and Terran species, and climatic conditions roughly parallel those of Earth. There is slightly less surface water and, since neither of Terra Nova's two moons is as large as Luna, tides are much smaller. There is plenty of land, most of it habitable and this has allowed the population to spread out considerably.

Terra Nova is primarily inhabited by humans, the majority of whom are considered indigenous. These people were present on Terra Nova when the *Shackleton* arrived and had built their own societies to an equivalent of TL2-3. Some of the indigenous people knew they had come to Terra Nova from elsewhere in the distant past, although there is no record of how and when they arrived. Research has been patchy but it seems likely that the indigenous humans arrived 32-35,000 years ago.

This timing is intriguing, since it is known that the Ancients – who transplanted humans to many worlds – had been extinct for over 200,000 years and Earth was suffering the height of glaciation. The date is long past the theorised Droyne Renaissance and well before the Zhodani or Vilani reached the stars. It is possible that the humans of Terra Nova came from a colony created by the Ancients, which became capable of starflight. In turn, this implies that there may be other advanced humans beyond known boundaries of exploration.

Be that as it may, the indigenous population greatly outnumbered the new arrivals and there was conflict. Outcomes varied; sometimes the newcomers were overrun and the survivors absorbed, in other areas they took control of the region. Some new arrivals settled away from the indigenous people whilst others formed effective partnerships with them. The result was a patchwork of emergent nations whose technological and social progress advanced at different rates. Into this mix came much-later arrivals from the Imperium and other starfaring powers who set up their own enclaves.

As a result, today's Terra Nova is heavily balkanised, with most states reaching TL7-9. Backwater areas are less developed and there are significant regions that never progressed beyond muscle-and-wind technology. Most nations operate at least one spaceport and there are several orbital facilities too. There is no formally designated world starport for Terra Nova; ships go to the ports of whichever nation they are most closely affiliated with. However, several factions claim that their port is the main one.

The most obvious candidate for a world starport is Newport, established soon after the arrival of the first ships from the Imperium. Newport is the best facility and one of the largest but off-limits to vessels that have no clearance. This is not often granted, since it is a perk of alignment with the Imperium. Those who prefer to remain independent or whose allegiances lie elsewhere must make do with lesser ports.

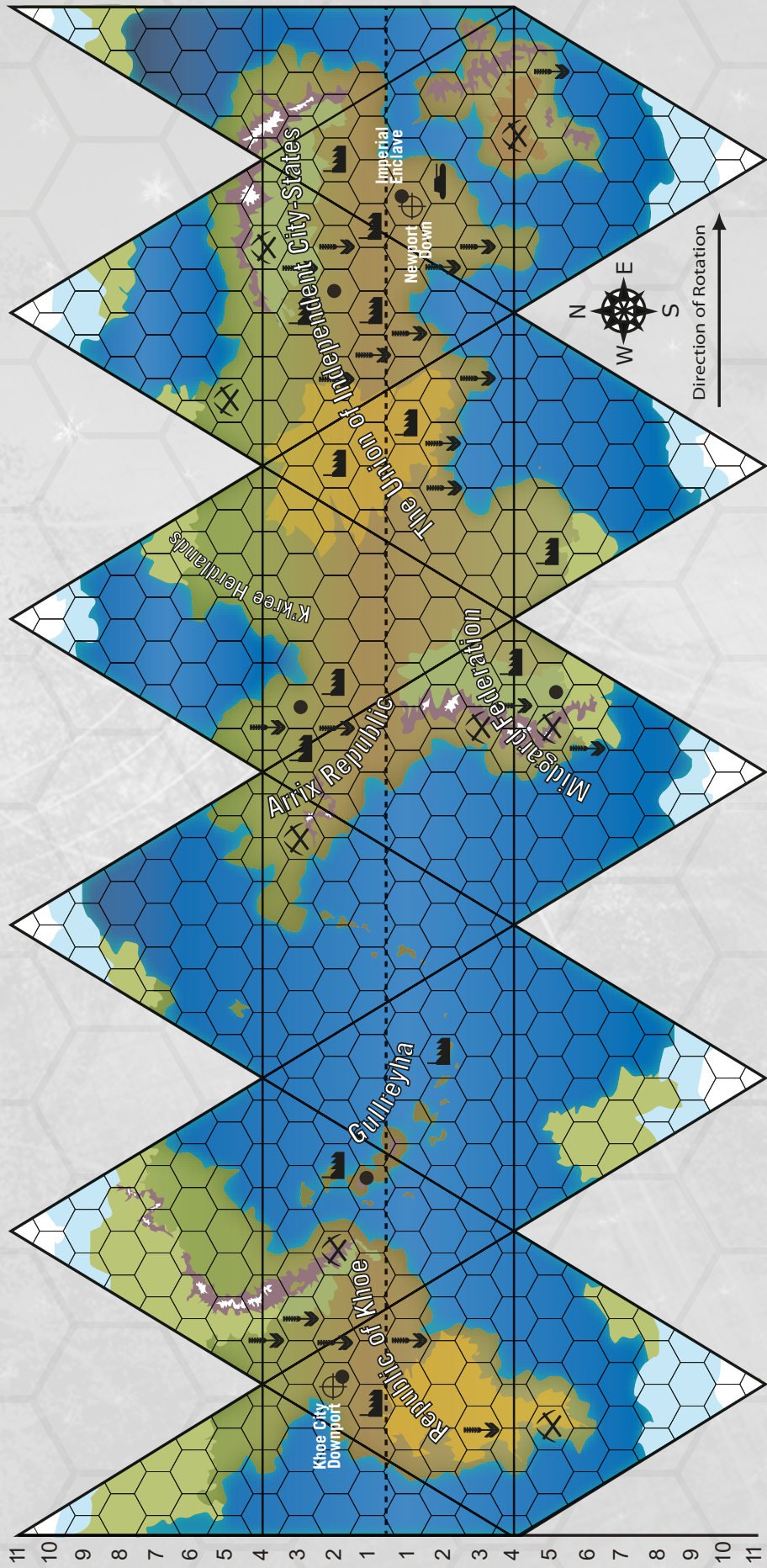
Alliance Highport is by far the largest of three orbital facilities that handle ships unable to land on the surface. Jointly run by a consortium of businesses, it is theoretically neutral but, in practice, Alliance Highport is neck-deep in politics. Alliance Highport has no groundside component but operates regular shuttle services to the spaceports of the planetside powers. Most traffic bound for other worlds stages from Alliance Highport or the much smaller Bronstein Commercial

Major Ports of Terra Nova

Name	Type	Notes
Alliance Highport	Orbital	No associated downport; heavily politicised freeport
Newport Orbital	Orbital	Off-limits except to Imperial and allied vessels
Newport Down	Downport	Off-limits except to Imperial and allied vessels
Bronstein Commercial Station	Orbital	No associated downport. Independent installation geared to bulk freighters and commercial shipping
Alcois Downport	Downport	Located on Terra Nova's Moon
Khoe City Downport	Downport	Co-Located with capital of Republic of Khoe

NAME: Terra Nova

UWP: B766873-9



- | | | | | | |
|------|----------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| City | Starport | Mining | Farming | Industry | Military |
| | | | | | |

Hex Scale	World Gravity	Mean Equatorial Temp
1005Km	0.9G	

Station. The third installation is the small orbital component of Newport and is off-limits to most non-Imperial traffic.

Terra Nova has two moons, neither of them large. Porix is uninhabited other than a mostly-robotic mining installation and steel mill run by the Imperium. Alcois is larger and often known as the 'dog moon', due to its Vargr inhabitants and has a small city around the downport operating numerous trading vessels throughout the system.

The Imperial Enclave:

The Imperial enclave at Newport might be considered the world's dominant power by some, since it can produce TL12 goods and military equipment. However, its population is only around 150,000 Imperial citizens and about three times that number of locals. This is not a large enough industrial base to take control of the world, let alone the star system but does make the Imperial enclave very influential since most other powers have only TL8-9 available.

Some of the Imperial personnel at Newport are assigned rather than resident, serving extremely long tours of duty (12-24 years on average) before returning home in low berths aboard a long-range supply ship. Most, however, settle on Terra Nova at the end of their tour. A large proportion of the 'Imperial' population at Newport were born there and will never visit the Imperium itself. Cultural drift is occurring, although the arrival of new personnel and cultural items from the Imperial heartlands slows this down.

The locals who have joined the Imperial faction are virtually indistinguishable from those born offworld in terms of mannerisms, speech patterns and mindset. There are some genetic differences that can be established by testing but it is hard to tell a Newporter whose ancestors have been on Terra Nova for thousands of years from one who arrived a few months ago. Society is well-integrated and orderly, with few serious internal divisions.

In addition to possessing the most advanced weaponry in the system, the Imperial enclave has the best electronics and robotics, and remains ahead of its competitors by making use of these advantages. However, much effort goes into maintaining its technological base in the long term; a crisis that damaged a lot of equipment or required resources to be expended in a profligate manner could begin a downward spiral that would be hard to stop.

Numerous spacefaring vessels and a few jump-capable ships operate out of Newport and tiny versions of the

Imperial services are maintained. Thus, there are scouts, marines and navy personnel based out of the orbital port whilst the Imperial Army protects the groundside component. Although small, these forces are very well equipped by local standards.

The Republic of Khoe:

The strongest of the local powers on Terra Nova is the Republic of Khoe, usually referred to simply as the Republic. The Republic of Khoe has a large expanse of territory – many say it claims far more than it needs for its population of around 200,000,000 – and some offworld holdings. It enjoys cordial relations with the 'other republic' of Arrix, whose spacecraft call at Khoe City Downport on a regular basis.

Khoe is technologically backward compared to the other major nations of Terra Nova, at TL7 in its capital but TL6 being far more common in outlying areas. Most 'Khoe-style' solutions to problems are labour-intensive and inefficient compared to the application of technology favoured elsewhere. However, Khoe is well organised in terms of work gangs, military patrols and project teams, and can perform difficult tasks quickly with nothing more than strong backs and a good plan.

Khoe is not democratic as republics go, with most policies determined by elected representatives without public vote. Eligibility for election as a representative is also restricted, although the process is transparent and anyone who meets the criteria will be considered.

The Midgard Federation:

Slightly less powerful – and much smaller in terms of territory – than the Republic of Khoe is the Midgard Federation. Notable for its fanciful city and region names, the Federation has a population of about 100,000,000. It is more strongly unified than its title suggests and owns the largest space fleet in the Phobebtor system. Midgard is the only state (other than the Imperial enclave) with a large TL9 industrial base and could in theory construct jump-1 capable vessels but Midgard's modest shipping construction takes the form of in-system craft.

Midgard is highly decentralised, at times resembling a confederation of city-states more than a formally organised nation. Its people do have a national identity however and share a common belief in the federation's destiny. The borders of the federation creep steadily outward, not always peaceably as it expands into 'unclaimed' territory and annexes small settlements by economic pressure; the Midgard definition of unclaimed is flexible. 'Defenceless' might be a better word, as sparsely populated areas are often simply declared a

protectorate and annexed. At present, there is still a great deal of unclaimed territory around the federation's borders but the day will come when its territory meets that of another organised state.

The Arrix Republic:

The Arrix Republic is smaller and much more democratic than the Republic of Khoe, although it is usually referred to as 'Arrix' whilst Khoe is 'the Republic' in common parlance. Arrix has its heartland on Terra Nova, with a large central city surrounded by a web of smaller communities at TL8. Arrix is a major exporter of manufactured goods and has several settlements throughout the Phobos Alpha system.

Representation to the Senate of Arrix is decided by a complex weighting of population and economic significance, which can change as demand for goods or resources varies. A sudden need for bulk heavy-industry resources such as iron and nickel will make an outsystem mining settlement more influential for a few years, after which its significance fades away.

Arrix protects its far-flung settlements with merchant-carrier vessels, lightly armed central hulls to which cargo or mission pods can be attached. Usually a carrier flies with at least one fighter-launch pod attached but Arrix does not publicise which ships are armed and which are engaged on commercial flights.

Gullreyha:

Although Terra Nova has less surface water than Earth, maritime transport is important as a cheap way of moving goods around. The world's greatest maritime power is Gullreyha, named after the Gullreyhan Archipelago, which forms part of its territory. Gullreyhan territory is largely made up of islands, although some of these are very large. It also controls the Bronstein Commercial Station, one of Terra Nova's orbital installations. Total population is about 150,000,000 people, although they are dispersed between small cities so manufacturing and economic capacity is significantly less than that of the Midgard Federation

The Union:

The Union (more correctly the Union of Independent City-States) is not a nation as such but it acts like one when circumstances dictate. Most of the time, the Union is engaged in internal squabbles between members but when threatened they put aside their differences long enough to deal with the problem. Most cities of the Union produce TL7 goods, with a few centres of more advanced manufacturing.

The Union leases a large tract of land to the Imperial enclave, essentially playing host to its city-state of Newport. This allows the Union access to Newport's spaceport and high-tech goods, and results in the rather spurious claim that the Imperial enclave is a part of the Union. The Union claims a population of around 50 million but the outbackers who dwell in the lands between the cities would increase this.

Alcois:

The larger moon of Terra Nova, Alcois is home to around 500,000 Vargr and a few humans, who have a stable spacefaring culture capable of producing TL8 goods. The people of Alcois do not have a formal name for their nation, although the phrase 'ueksghunghueurskna orkfukhsksaeaegzthong ueolrradhkhosoerrghu' is often used. This translates from Gvegh, a Vargr language, as something along the lines of 'heroic explorers in the footsteps of earlier heroes', which is almost as much of a mouthful and no more informative than the original Gvegh.

The governmental system of Alcois is typically Vargr, with numerous factions concentrated on a few powerful and charismatic individuals. Those who control the port and the shipyards are the most influential but nothing can be done on Alcois without a round or two of bargaining, bullying and promises of future patronage.

Alcois manufactures and exports TL8 goods and a few spacecraft. It operates mainly sublight trade ships but has a potent set of defences including missile systems, along with both fighters and larger gunboats. While not an aggressive state, Alcois does not tolerate threats to its holdings and can become trigger-happy if a string of recent incidents has made its personnel jumpy.

Other Cultures:

Elsewhere on Terra Nova, there are smaller states and many undeveloped areas. None are completely free of influence; it is entirely possible to visit an outback townlet where machinery is steam-powered but the richer citizens have access to advanced communications and entertainment equipment or where industrial robots are in use repairing a railway line. Technology is more uniform in the major states, with capabilities becoming distinctly patchy elsewhere. Thus, TL9 is a rather general classification; it indicates the best technology found in most areas rather than a uniform level.

Most of the outback population are humans but there is a large area under the control of K'Kree. It is not known when the first K'Kree landed on Terra Nova but the indigenous humans have legends of their arrival and the terrible war that took place soon afterward. The result

States of Terra Nova

Name	TL	Government	Characteristics
Imperial Enclave	12	Imperial-Style nobility and bureaucracy	Good starport, stand-offish to those not proven to be allies, perceived as arrogant by many
Republic of Khoe	6-7	Restricted Republic	Dispersed over large territory, inefficient
Midgard Federation	9	Cooperative Confederation of self-governing city-states (civil service bureaucracy)	Expansionistic
Arrix Republic	8	Complex Representative Democracy	Large spacefaring fleet
Gullreyha	7-8	Dispersed Representative Democracy	Maritime fleet; controls Bronstein Commercial Station
The Union	7	Balkanised City-States, various local governments	Loosely cooperative, generally friendly to the Imperial enclave
Alcois	8	Vargr-Style Charismatic Oligarchy	Vargr state located on the moon Alcois, Spacefaring power
K'Kree Herds	1-3	K'Kree-style militant oligarchy	Hostile towards all meat-eaters
Outback	Varies	Varies	Mostly human, gathered in small states typically of TL4-6 with stone-age 'neo-bushmen' in some places

of this conflict was that the technological advantages of the starfaring K'Kree were ground down by the numbers and desperation of the human population and the K'Kree failed to conquer the world. They were forced to retreat to marginal lands and abandon equipment, triggering a rapid slide into barbarism.

Today, the K'Kree of Terra Nova are a semi-nomadic people at an estimated TL3. Some settlements may have higher technology available and the K'Kree will trade or fight for it if they can. However, many nomadic groups have no manufacturing capabilities at all and rely on settlements for tools and weapons.

Conflict between humans and K'Kree tailed off once the K'Kree realised they could not win and faced extermination if they kept attacking the more numerous humans. Many observers are convinced that the K'Kree have not abandoned their ancestral mission of exterminating all G'naak (meat-eaters) from the universe and will overwhelm Terra Nova once their numbers have grown enough. However, given the technological differential, the K'Kree would have to obtain a decisive advantage before making the attempt. For the present, an uneasy truce exists where human and K'Kree lands are adjacent and skirmishing is not uncommon.

Hades

Hades is a 'habitable' world with a breathable dense atmosphere and sufficient water to support riotous plant life. The term 'habitable' is usually in quotes

because, however promising the world's datacode might be in navigational databases, it is a difficult place in which to live.

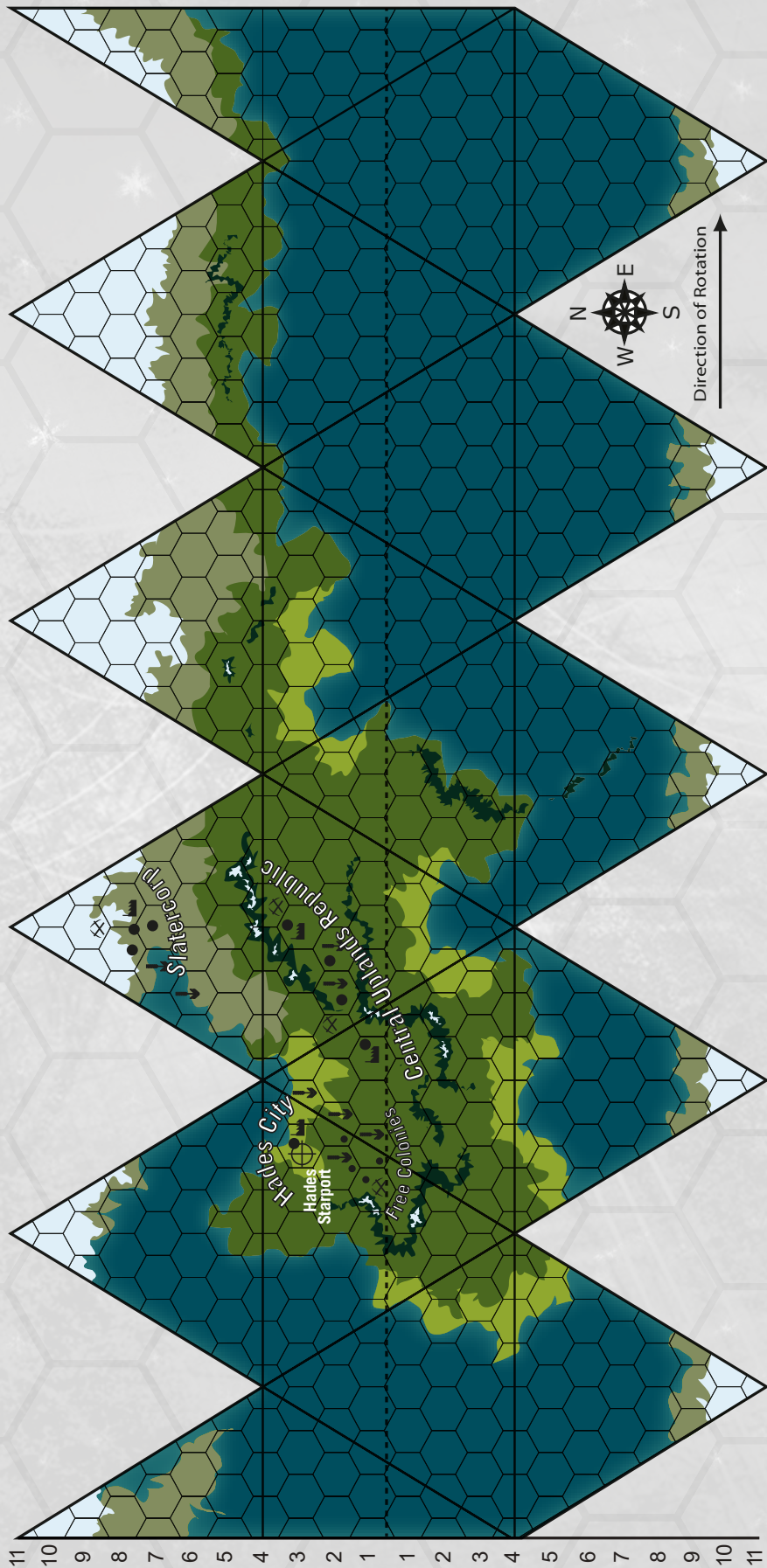
Hades is a large, dense world with a high surface gravity (1.3G) that can be uncomfortable for offworlders but tolerable in the long term. It has one huge moon (predictably named Tartarus) and a smaller (but still large) moon named Sheol. Tartarus causes large tidal variations that, when Tartarus and Sheol are aligned correctly, become enormous and very destructive. For this reason, settlements that survive on Hades tend to be those located far from large bodies of water.

Hades has a vigorous ecosystem, which stubbornly refuses to be tamed and welcomes humans as an additional source of food. Keeping herds and flocks of Terran origin from being devoured is a full-time occupation and even the vegetation is highly intrusive. The forests of Hades force damaging roots into almost any structure's foundations and the only solution is to burn back the encroaching vegetation on a frequent basis.

Added to this is a rather turbulent weather system and a considerable amount of tectonic and volcanic activity. Some areas of Hades are so prone to earthquakes that they cannot be settled and others are threatened by chains of volcanoes or ash clouds. This had the effect of channelling the human settlement of the planet into distinct zones, which today have become nations or cultural regions.

NAME: Hades

UWP: B985776-7



- | | | | | | |
|------|----------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| City | Starport | Mining | Farming | Industry | Military |
| | | | | | |

Hex Scale	World Gravity	Mean Equatorial Temp
1292Km	1.3G	

Central Uplands Republic:

The Central Uplands Republic is located in the centre of Hades' main continent, with outlying territories on high ground across the rest of the land mass. The CUR does not claim the continent as sovereign territory but has traditionally discouraged settlement by other groups. Those who claimed territory were usually ignored until their colony failed, at which point the CUR annexed the surviving population and equipment under the guise of rescue.

With a population of around 30 million located in several large cities, CUR is the largest of Hades' nations and the most stable. It claims Sheol as an offworld possession and has a modest sized spaceport there with an associated city. From Sheol Spaceport, the republic's fleet of sublight freighters plies the in-system trade lanes; its vessels can be encountered in most ports.

CUR has a stable and mature TL7 industrial base, with the capability to make small amounts of higher-tech equipment. This is used mostly for weaponry and survival gear, and to maintain the network of high-speed trains that run between cities. Keeping the lines open is a full-time task for a large workforce. If so much had not already been invested in the rail network and were it not entirely vital to the existence of the republic as a political entity, CUR might have already abandoned it as unworkable.

The Free Colonies:

The Free Colonies is not a nation but more a cultural region, a patchwork of small cities and large towns linked by a ramshackle mid-tech version of the CUR's rail network. With a sustainable TL5-7, most higher-tech items are imported. With few technological aids and a scattered population, subsistence is a constant struggle and life is hard. However, the people of the Free Colonies are independent and proud of their lifestyle; most would not trade their life for an easier one.

The Free Colonies makes extensive use of armoured trains or 'flame trains', which patrol the rail links and burn away encroaching vegetation with flamethrowers. No two trains are the same and their armament includes machineguns, mortars and even light artillery weapons. However, these weapons are not ideally suited to dealing with predators and fast-growing vegetation and there may be a war going on in the forests of Hades.

Hades City:

Located on the coastal plains of the main continent, the original settlement on Hades suffered badly from flooding during the first supertides it encountered but managed to survive and prosper. Today, it has grown into

Hades City, which claims to be the capital of the planet and routinely demands obedience from other states. This demand is politely ignored most of the time, with the occasional armed clash between Hades City and the CUR changing the situation very little.

Hades City has a population of nearly 20 million living within the enormous city itself or behind its flood barriers. It occupies only a small corner of the continent but has holdings elsewhere, many descended from the fleet of transports forced to crash land on Hades whilst ferrying personnel off the ailing Shackleton. Links are maintained using a handful of grav vehicles for high-speed, low-volume traffic, and a fleet of advanced airships for heavy lifting. Hades City also operates maritime vessels, mainly submersible freighters, from its coastal dock. The seas of Hades, like the rest of the planet, can be hazardous; vessels are sometimes lost for reasons that Hades City seems disinclined to explain.

Hades City has been a dictatorship for many decades. The elite claim to be able to trace their origins back to the officers of the original settlement but this is dubious. Be that as it may, the dictator and her supporters have created an orderly society, which has prospered despite the best efforts of Hades to destroy it. With TL8-9, Hades City can produce grav vehicles and other high-tech items, probably due to imports of equipment and machinery.

Hades City has a spaceport and tries to present itself as the main port on planet. This is not unreasonable; its port is of good quality and serves what is by far the largest city on Hades. Even without deception, Hades City receives a considerable offworld trade and has merchant factors stationed in many of the system's ports.

Slater Corporation:

The fourth major power on Hades is the Slater Corporation (Slatercorp), which has three large cities in the northern sub-arctic zone and another on Tartarus. Slatercorp started out as a business group but has grown into a corporate state run by a board of directors. It is not a democratic state but avenues for personal advancement and influence of management decisions are well publicised.

Slatercorp has a solid TL8 manufacturing base and a population of about 10 million in its cities and surrounding territories. Mostly located in colder regions, they face different challenges than other states; food production is more of a problem whilst being eaten by local predators is less of an issue. Slatercorp solves most food production problems by aquaculture and seabed farming in the shallow northern seas. The result is a perfectly adequate diet but one that produces a cultural

ARMOUR

FRONT 30

REAR 30

SIDES 30



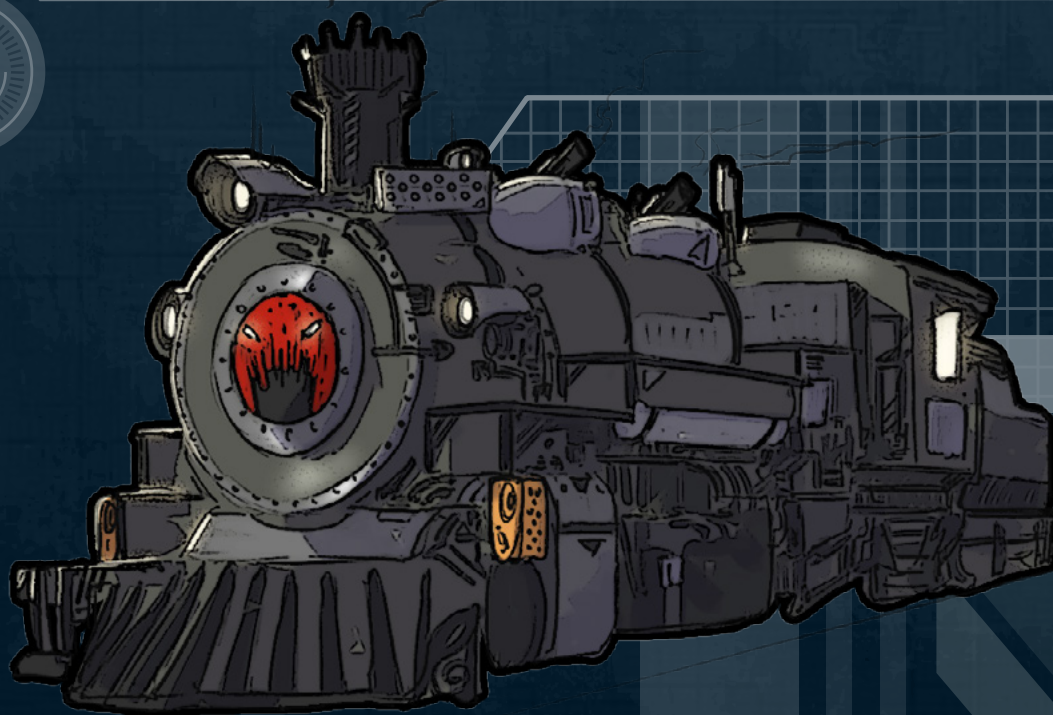
FLAME TRAIN

TL	7
SKILL	DRIVE (RAIL RIDER)
AGILITY	-4
SPEED (CRUISE)	MEDIUM (SLOW)
RANGE (CRUISE)	400 (600)
CREW	56
PASSENGERS	0
CARGO	120 TONS
HULL	3000
SHIPPING	500 TONS
COST	MCR48.6

TRAITS

AFV, Rail Rider

- Autopilot (skill level)
- Communications (range)
- Navigation (Navigation DM)
- Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)
- Camouflage (Recon DM)
- Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)



WEAPONS

Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Demolition Gun	0.1	1DD	1	Cr500	AP 10, Artillery, Blast 10	+1
Twin Light Autocannon	1	6D+6	1000	Cr1000	Auto 3	+1
Support Mortar	3	9D	1	Cr100	Artillery, Blast 3	+1
Flamethrower	-	4D	120	Cr240	Blast 5, Fire	+1
Field Gun	1	8D	1	Cr75	-	+1
Grenade Launcher	0.1	5D	6	Cr180	Blast 9	-
Bombardment Rocket Pack	8	5D	12	Cr8000	Auto 3, Blast 15	+1

Large Turret (demolition gun, basic fire control)
 Large Turret (twin light autocannon, basic fire control) x 4
 Fixed Mount (support mortar, front, basic fire control)
 Fixed Mount (support mortar, rear, basic fire control)
 Fixed Mount (support mortar, left, basic fire control)
 Fixed Mount (support mortar, right, basic fire control)
 Small Turret (flamethrower, basic fire control) x 10
 Small Turret (field gun, basic fire control)
 Pintle Mount (grenade launcher, left) x 2
 Pintle Mount (grenade launcher, right) x 2
 Fixed Mount (bombardment rocket pack, front, basic fire control)

EQUIPMENT

Bunks x 50, Fire Extinguishers, Fresher x 2, Galley (60 personnel)

DESCRIPTION

Ragin' Sally is, like most of her peers, a one-off design. In theory, additional cars could be added but in practice she was built as a single unit and – according to her operators – would not take kindly to having her parts swapped around.

Ragin' Sally weighs in at around 2,500 tons; relatively light for a goods train and most of her capacity given over to specialist weapons-carrying cars. Motive power is provided by two locomotives: *Ragin' Sally One* is larger and located close to the front of the train, whilst *Ragin' Sally Two* is situated a little to rear of the centre point. All cars, and both locomotives, have positions for personnel to fire their personal weapons from and racks of tools for clearing obstructions. Both locomotives use

a Stirling engine, a sealed steam-driven unit that can use any fuel capable of producing heat. Fuel cells are used aboard *Ragin' Sally* but could be substituted for a firebox and pile of cordwood if necessary.

Thick clusters of vegetation or other hazards can be thinned out from a distance using mortars and bombardment rockets, and particularly thick vegetation can be given the 'full Sally workover'; a preparatory bombardment with mortars and rockets, followed by the demolition gun. After this, the train drives slowly through the target zone playing flame cannon over everything that remains intact.

States of Hades

Name	TL	Government	Characteristics
Central Uplands Republic	7	Representative Democracy	Territorial, several large cities, claims Sheol as sovereign territory
Free Colonies	5-7	Varies	Scattered and disorganised
Hades City	8-9	Dictatorship	Large city-state
SlaterCorp	8	Corporate	Cities on Hades and Tartarus
Independents	3-5	Varies, usually frontier society	Little contact with outsiders or one another

craving for meat and cereals. A corned beef sandwich is nothing special but in the cities of Slatercorp it might become the object of an impromptu auction.

Independent Settlements:

Like Terra Nova, Hades has many independent settlements, mostly inhabited by humans. Towns are located in upland areas or on islands where the population has a reasonable chance of keeping the ever-intrusive vegetation at bay. Most are completely independent and have contact only with near neighbours, although a few alliances and proto-states exist. Life is hard for the independents of Hades and it is not easy to maintain any sort of technological society without outside help. Most settlements are at TL3-5 and steadily falling.

From time-to-time, a town will disappear under the vegetation canopy and never be found again. This is sometimes due to being overrun by local predators, able to enter the settlement once its defences are breached by the local vegetation, or simple carelessness. More commonly, a settlement is simply ground down until it is no longer viable and must be abandoned, the inhabitants facing a perilous trek across a hostile world in the hope of finding another town that can take them in.

Demon's Eye

Named for the baleful red storm that rages near its equator (not unlike Jupiter's Red Spot in the Sol system), Demon's Eye is a turbulent gas giant whose conditions make fuel skimming unusually hazardous. As a result, there have been few survey missions to Demon's Eye and even basic data such as the number of its moons is scarce. Some entries list several moons, others mention only one. Well of Sorrow is one moon that definitely exists and is home to around 20,000 people.

Well of Sorrow is an independent settlement created as a commercial installation by a long-defunct company from Terra Nova. Independence was not so much achieved as simply happened and the transition from supported commercial installation to independent

colony was not a smooth one. The result was an oppressive and insular society that worked its members hard for little reward (perhaps the origin of the world's name) but kept them fed and clothed. The moon exports minerals and chemicals obtained from the ice that coats much of its surface. The depth of the ice layer is not known and seems to vary from just a few metres around the rocky 'islands' of the surface, to several kilometres. There has been little exploration since the original settlement; beyond the immediate vicinity of the colony, most of the moon is unknown territory.

Ironcloud

Ironcloud is a small gas giant named for its reddish-grey atmosphere. It has an extensive ring system made up of tiny rock and ice particles, with very few larger bodies and only two moons, both large planetoids of no great significance. They are listed in official databases as Ironcloud S-1 and Ironcloud S-2 but known locally as Bob and Fred.

Bob is uninhabited, although transient mining camps spring up from time-to-time when a useful deposit is found. Fred, being slightly larger, has a permanent population of about 7,000 people, all of whom dwell in a settlement named Ironcloud Exploitation and Extraction Support Base. This is usually abbreviated to ICE-B by officials and called Fredport by everyone else.

ICE-B is not an independent settlement but owned and operated by the Slatercorp. Slatercorp operates several petrochemical skimming rigs in the atmosphere of Ironcloud, concentrating the chemicals at ICE-B for purification and processing before they are shipped to market on the main worlds of the system. About half the rigs' produce goes to Hades, with the rest sold on Terra Nova and smaller amounts going to other markets.

In addition to being home to back-up and maintenance crews, chemical engineers and shuttle pilots, Fredport is a recreation facility. Working the petro-skimming rigs is a hazardous and tiring job; most personnel work ten days on, five days off with transit to and from the rig eating into the worker's time off. The result is a distinct split

between ICE-B and Fredport – they are the same place but seen from very different perspectives. On the one hand, ICE-B is a professionally run corporate installation with facilities for both work and recreation, and on the other Fredport is a somewhat rough place where workers can blow off some steam before going back to the grind. How someone refers to ICE-B/Fredport is usually an indicator of how they are likely to behave there.

Ironcloud has only two moons but also a significant collection of planetoids at its leading Trojan point, 60 degrees ahead of it on the same orbital path. Slatercorp has a small mining base in this asteroid group, as do other mining concerns, but there is no permanent population there.

Ironcloud's trailing Trojan point (60 degrees behind) has no planetoids but is occupied by a small rockball planet named Trundle. Trundle is probably a captured body or moon that Ironcloud did not entirely lose. It has a handful of small satellites of its own but they are very small and of no real significance.

Trundle's orbital path is stable but wayward. It wanders in the trailing Trojan zone, suggesting its orbit is still settling. With a diameter of just over 3,000km, Trundle is large enough to retain an atmosphere of sorts and may even have water. It has never been properly surveyed, however – there are no survey results in public databases.

The Scatter

The Scatter is the Phobetor system's planetoid belt, marking the boundary between inner system and outer, and is not considered to lie in either. The Scatter is a broad region containing unevenly distributed clumps of planetoids. Some areas of the belt are so sparse that they would be considered open space were they not surrounded by denser regions.

Other areas are relatively dense, with numerous families of asteroids clumped together. Where several families are close to one another (relatively speaking), the grouping is termed a cluster. Many locals use the terms clan or tribe to describe asteroid families and since these dense regions are often heavily populated, the people who live there are usually known by the tribal or clan name. The idea of tribes of spacefaring asteroid dwellers can confuse newcomers to Phobetor but it is widely accepted by those who have been in the system for some time.

Within the belt are numerous inhabited planetoids and several (probably dozens; possibly over a hundred) planetoids large enough to be considered dwarf planets. The total population of the Scatter is not known but is probably around 10-20 million, spread out over

thousands of inhabited planetoids and dwarf planets in a ring around Phobetor Alpha that is about 1.5 AU wide. This gives the Scatter an extremely low average population density. Most dwell in small cities (rarely more than 10,000 people) on the dwarf planets or in a cluster of small settlements within a family of asteroids.

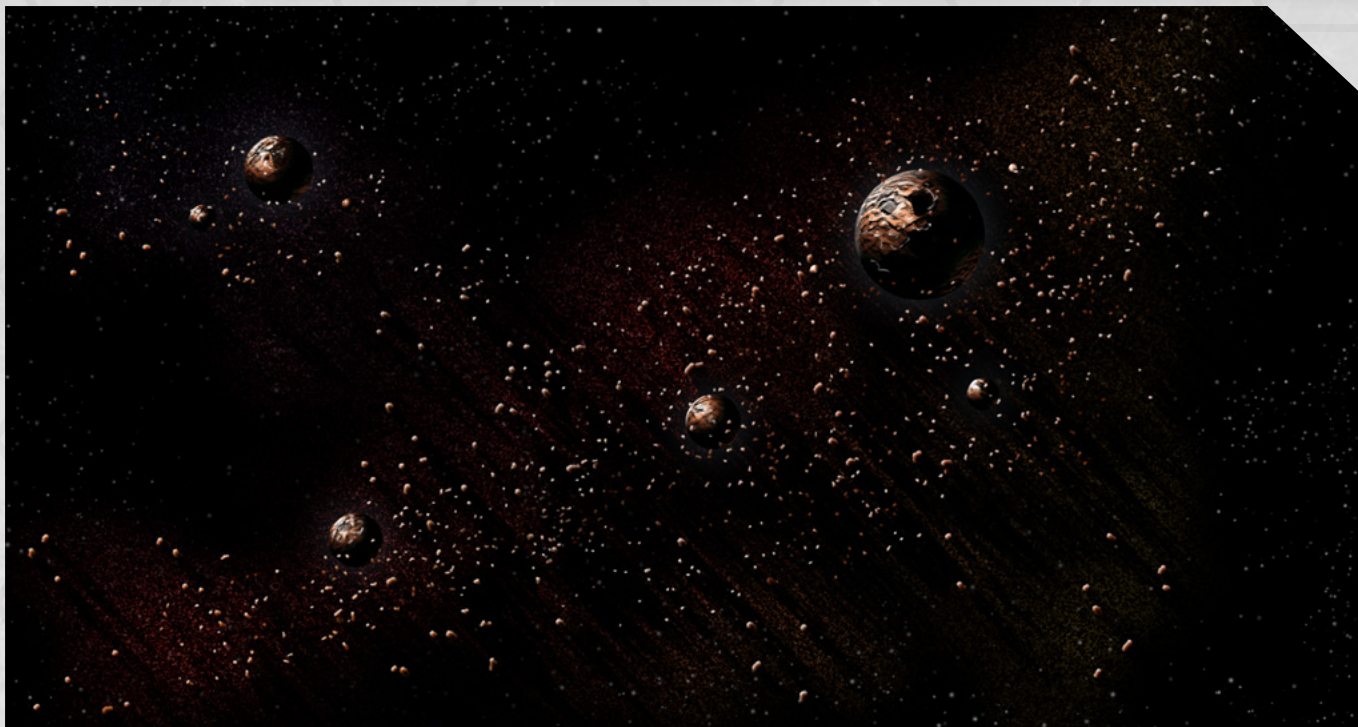
The Scatter was originally settled by Shippies from *Shackleton*, using well-practiced techniques of hollowing out asteroids to create living spaces. Some settlements are located on the surface, notably those on dwarf planets, but most are underground. This gives protection against radiation and micrometeorites and, not coincidentally, makes asteroid habitats easy to secure against attack.

These populations have much in common due to shared ancestry and similar living conditions but there are also considerable differences. The original Shippies were technologically adept and resourceful people who wasted little and learned to keep machinery running long after it should have been scrapped by clever workarounds and an attitude that 'there has to be a way because if not everybody dies'.

This tough outlook has not been lost by the people of the Scatter, many of whom still call themselves Shippies. Most outsiders use the term 'belter' for anyone who lives in the Scatter and this is widely used by the population as well but with different connotations – a belter is anyone who lives and works in the Scatter; a Shippie is someone who has proven their resourcefulness and tenacity.

After starting with a hierarchy built around officers and leaders of the Shippie community aboard *Shackleton*, most groups in the Scatter evolved a pseudo-tribal system of government, which continues to this day. Governance of this sort is typically informal, with leaders emerging by common assent rather than any standard path to prominence. Essentially, a Shippie who demonstrates the ability to lead and solve problems will attract a following and become a power in local politics. Because most settlements are quite small, this setup is entirely workable, although it is rarely found in larger cities.

Most of the Scatter's larger communities went one of two ways during their development and growth. Many evolved a democracy, which became institutionalised over time. In some cases, this was a participating democracy with everyone gaining a vote on all matters but most developed into republics with elected representatives. The other route was the creation of a feudal technocracy, with power resting in the hands of those who controlled vital technical functions such as ship repairs, power and food production.



Most Scatter communities have an informal system of government, with social mobility available to those with talent or wealth. Most have a basic set of laws and much larger body of accepted behaviour. Wasting food is a crime in some Scatter communities and likely to cause annoyance and outrage. Even where there is no formal penalty for breaking a custom, Shippies will often refuse to deal with someone who does not at least try to fit in with their culture. In some cases, this lack of cooperation can be harsh, to the point of ignoring distress signals. More commonly, it takes the form of ostracism and rudeness intended to let the transgressor know they have made themselves unwelcome.

The Scatter is TL8-9, although industry is on a very small scale and can usually do little more than meet local needs. The Scatter's main exports are minerals and metals mined from asteroids, with a few specialist electronic systems sold on the markets of Terra Nova and Ultima Thule. Trade among Scatter communities is commonplace, typically using small craft. Larger communities serve as trade hubs, with ships out of Terra Nova visiting one hub then returning home.

Malvern's World

Malvern's World lies beyond the Scatter, in the outsystem, and receives little traffic, due to its society more than location – under other circumstances, the world might be a trade hub for the planetoid settlements of the Scatter. The 60,000 or so inhabitants dwell in a chain of small cities around the equator, forming the Democratic Principality of Malvern.

In practice, the DPM is not democratic at all, although lip service is paid to the concept. Actual power rests in the hands of a ruling class who receive 'advisory input' in the form of votes cast by the populace. Enough of this input is heeded that the illusion of democracy is maintained but the population are kept distracted by votes on all manner of trivial issues – including many that are more about entertainment than governance – and big issues are played down. This has reached the point where several times as many people voted on whether a popular entertainment channel should show animated movies or not than a major change to healthcare regulations.

Although forbidding when seen from space, Malvern's World has an atmosphere and even water, mostly underground ice. It is not possible to survive outside without a suit but useful gases can be extracted from the atmosphere and available water reduces many life support problems. This has permitted Malvern's World to become quite insular and unwelcoming to offworlders. It receives some trade ships but these tend to be vessels with a long association with the world. Few traders are willing to make the long trip out to Malvern's World with a speculative cargo.

Altitude

Altitude is a large gas giant with an impressive ring system. It has only three significant moons, plus a much larger number of large ring components, typically ranging in size between small asteroids to rocks the

size of a basketball. Of the three moons, Skimmer is by far the smallest, orbiting well inside the inner edge of Altitude's ring system and encountering a slight but significant drag from Altitude's upper atmosphere. In time – tens of thousands of years – Skimmer may begin to spiral inward as velocity is lost, falling into Altitude.

The outermost moon, Kimley, is the largest. It is a rockball with only a trace of atmospheric gas but known to have deposits of common minerals such as iron and copper. There are no permanent mining operations due to its remote location but mining expeditions will spend a year or so on the surface before leaving.

The third significant moon of Altitude orbits at the outer edge of the ring system and is named Love Shack. This may have been whimsy or could be an oblique reference to the Shackleton mission that brought its first colonists. Love Shack was initially settled by a group of Shippies from Shackleton, for reasons now lost to history. The colony survived but never really prospered; it reached its current population of just under 4,000 centuries ago and has remained stable ever since. Love Shack receives few visitors but does see trade ships on occasion. In the meantime, its people are more or less self-sufficient in their subterranean town and are, for the most part, content with their way of life.

Eccentrica

Eccentrica is a large gas giant with at least 42 objects large enough to be called a moon (rather than rock or ice fragments). Eleven are large enough to land upon and two others have very eccentric orbits. Novule's orbit is sharply inclined compared to the orbital plane of the main system and extremely elliptical, whilst Retro gets its name from its inclined retrograde orbit – i.e. Retro orbits in the opposite direction to the rest of Eccentrica's moons. It is likely a captured body, perhaps a former moon of some other world in the system.

As if that were not enough, one of Eccentrica's moons has satellites of its own. Ambron is large enough to be a large planet (Size code A) and has several small moons. How stable their orbits are is a matter for conjecture; they have not been surveyed in any detail but cursory data suggests the whole moon system may be in a state of flux. It is not known if Ambron is permanently inhabited; although visited by prospectors and explorers, data on conditions there remains patchy.

Eccentrica itself has a highly elliptical orbit inclined to the plane of the system and may be a captured body itself – if so then it may have stolen a moon from one of the other bodies in the system when it arrived.

Orevo

Orevo lies at the outer edge of the Alpha system and is extremely small for a gas giant. It has an impressive ring system of dust and ice but nothing that could be termed a moon. There are a few rocks orbiting in Orevo's ring system, some large enough to land a ship on. However, they are not known to have any useful mineral deposits. Orevo is thus rarely visited and remains little more than a distant speck on the outskirts of the system.

BETA SYSTEM

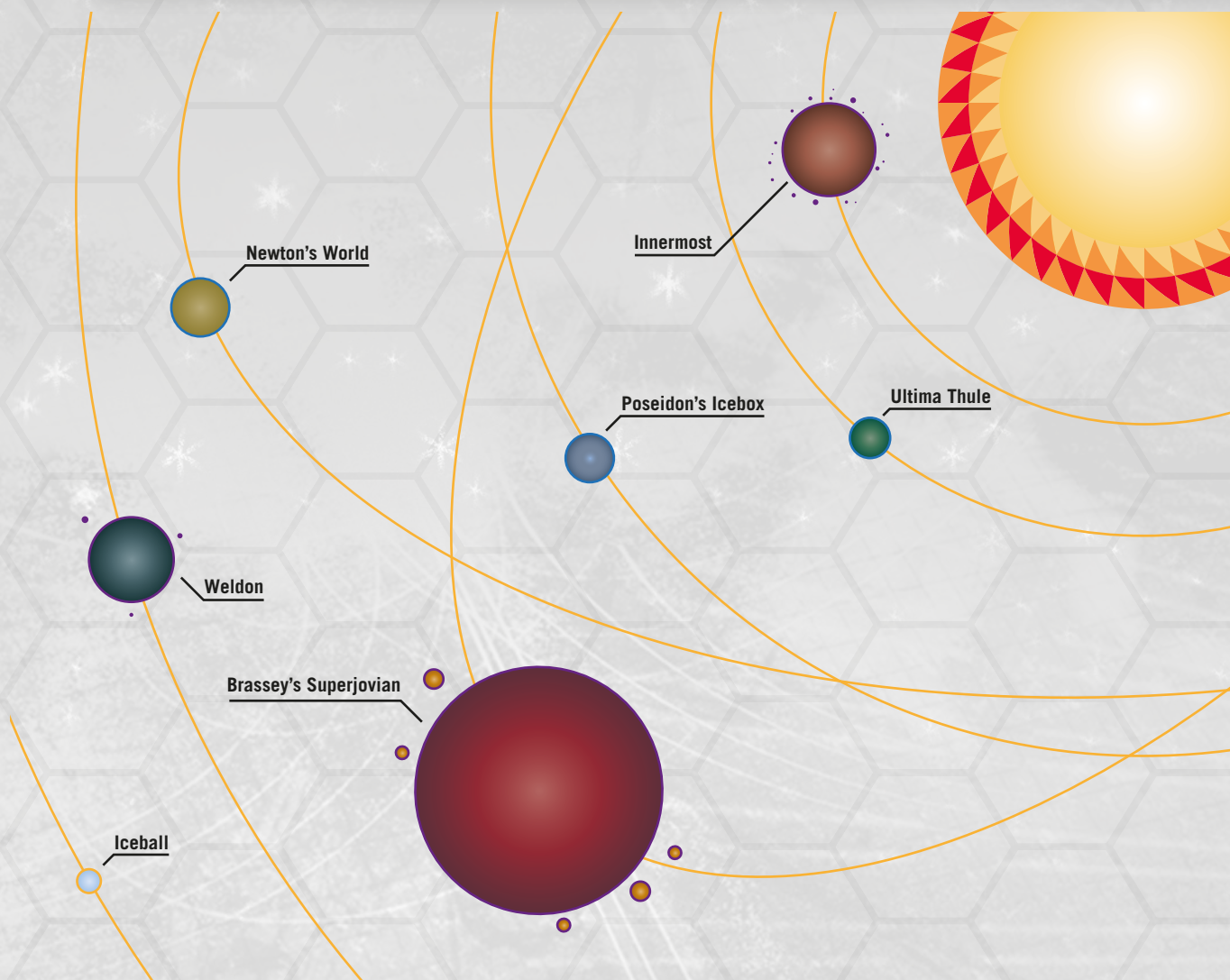
Phobetor Beta is almost identical to Alpha, being a type G5V yellow dwarf star. It is listed as being a far companion star in navigational databases but this is misleading. Since both stars have close to the same mass, what actually happens is that the two stars orbit one another about a common point. They are far enough apart that bodies orbiting the stars are not greatly perturbed but orbital mechanics in the system are complex and there are several bodies with unusual orbits, suggesting upset in the past.

Phobetor Beta is considered a separate solar system to Alpha for most purposes, except that it can be reached by long transit through normal space. Although slower than a jump drive, this allows contact and trade using cheaper vessels, which do not give up space to jump fuel. Phobetor Beta's position relative to Alpha varies over time but the average distance between them is around 500 Astronomical units (AU) or 75 billion kilometres. Radio signals take almost three days to cross this distance, rendering real-time conversation impossible but regular contact by data burst is an acceptable mode of communication.

A 1G capable vessel can cross between Phobetor Alpha and Beta in approximately 100 days; a 2G ship can do it in 70 days and a 3G ship in 57; a long time relative to one week in jump but 2-4 months in space is tolerable on a regular basis. Trade between the halves of the system is limited but there are a few regular freighters and other intermittent traffic.

PHOBETOR BETA (G5V Star)

- 1 **Innermost** (Small Gas Giant)
- 2 **Ultima Thule** (C764877-5) Ag Ga Ri
- 3 **Poseidon's Icebox** (E88A589-6) Ni Wa
- 4 **Brassey's Superjovian** (Huge Gas Giant)
- 5 **Newton's World** (Super-Earth)
- 6 **Weldon** (Small Gas Giant)
- 7 **Iceball** (X52A000-0) Ba Ic



Innermost

Innermost is a small, hot, turbulent gas giant surrounded by many moons whose orbits are chaotic. None of these bodies is known to be inhabited and there has never been a detailed study of the moons' orbital dynamics. The system seems stable enough – in the short term at least – and it is not flinging off debris on a constant basis but it is not clear whether the situation is stable but highly complex, or unstable enough to pose a hazard to nearby inhabited bodies.

Ultima Thule

Ultima Thule is the second body from Phobetor Beta. Since Phobetor Alpha is the system's primary and Beta is by convention usually described as being 'out' from it, Ultima Thule is considered the habitable planet furthest into the Great Rift and thus is an 'island at the end of the world'; hence its name. For the crew of Shackleton, who named the world, it seemed that beyond there was only the great emptiness of the rift.

Ultima Thule is officially designated as a garden world and a rich one, which is a reasonable description but not the whole story. Ultima Thule is a little dry, meaning those areas without water are a lot less rich or garden-like than others. The planetary surface is characterised by multiple modestly-sized seas, some connected by navigable channels with large 'inland' areas between them. Some seas are very deep but most are less than 1,000 metres at their deepest point. There is a great deal of surface water but it is concentrated, creating well-watered areas in some regions and large rocky deserts elsewhere. Ultima Thule has two small moons, neither of which has enough mass to produce significant tides.

Habitation by humans and others is concentrated in the most well-watered lands, typically around the shores of major seas or between them. The usual estimate of population size is a few hundred million but there has never been a detailed census or survey. Most of the population are humans of one sort or another, with a few alien races here and there.

Most societies are a sustainable TL5 (early to mid-20th century, with internal combustion engines and some basic flight) but this varies considerably. There are several low-tech societies on the fringe of the habitable lands and a few enclaves of much higher technology.

Ultima Thule is heavily balkanised, with several major states and enclaves of offworld powers. The latter tend to have small populations – just a few thousand for the most part – but possess a higher Tech Level than most local groups. There is no central starport; most major groups have a spaceport of some sort and ships land all over the planet. However, relatively few ships come to Ultima Thule and they tend to arrive at the offworld enclaves that provide a proper spaceport service.

New Albion:

The best spaceport on Ultima Thule is New Troyes, capital of New Albion. New Albion is the major human power on Ultima Thule, although it is of lesser magnitude than the major states of Terra Nova. New Troyes was built on the ruins of a much older and larger city, reusing materials from the previous site. Like most enclaves in the Phobetor system, New Troyes is small, with a population of about 20,000, plus several times that number of locals. Mostly at TL7, New Troyes can produce very limited amounts of TL10-11 goods, including space vessels and possesses a couple of small jump-capable ships available for special missions.

New Albion has a semi-feudal society that may be based upon a combination of European traditions from Old Terra, combined with a badly misunderstood version of Imperial nobility. The ruler is a hereditary Grand Duke, supported by nobility formed from those who control assets such as starships, the military or manufacturing.

New Albion is territorial but not expansionistic. It guards its interests and holdings jealously, and has vigorous internal politics that occasionally result in outsiders being attacked to further some internal goal. For the most part, however, New Albion seems content to very gradually spread its influence over Ultima Thule.

The Ascondi Homeland:

Visitors not friendly with New Albion are forced to use the world's lesser spaceports. Most traffic goes via Stethslaa spaceport, which is colloquially called the Slar. The Slar is located close to the capital of the largest state on Ultima Thule, the Ascondi homeland. The Ascondi are non-humans and many of their words (including the correct name for their homeland) are described by Travellers as 'face-bustingly unpronounceable'.

The Ascondi have a large territory on New Albion, mostly contiguous but they possess small settlements in remote areas and modest lands within the territory of other groups. In some cases, it is apparent what the Ascondi want these areas for but in others they cling to worthless scraps of desert or mountains without rhyme or reason.

The Ascondi refer to their holdings on Ultima Thule as their homeland and insist it is their original world of origin. They offer no proof and ignore anything to the contrary if presented. There is no fossil evidence to indicate the Ascondi evolved on Ultima Thule, nor are they closely related to any of its creatures. It is not clear whether they believe this but they say it all the same.

The Ascondi homeland has a population of several hundred million, of whom most enjoy TL6. There are some anomalies in the local Ascondi technology, however, leading experts to believe they have access to small amounts of much more advanced equipment. Some Ascondi-controlled areas exhibit a much lower level of technology – typically TL3-4 – and may not be part of the same Ascondi state that controls the Slar.

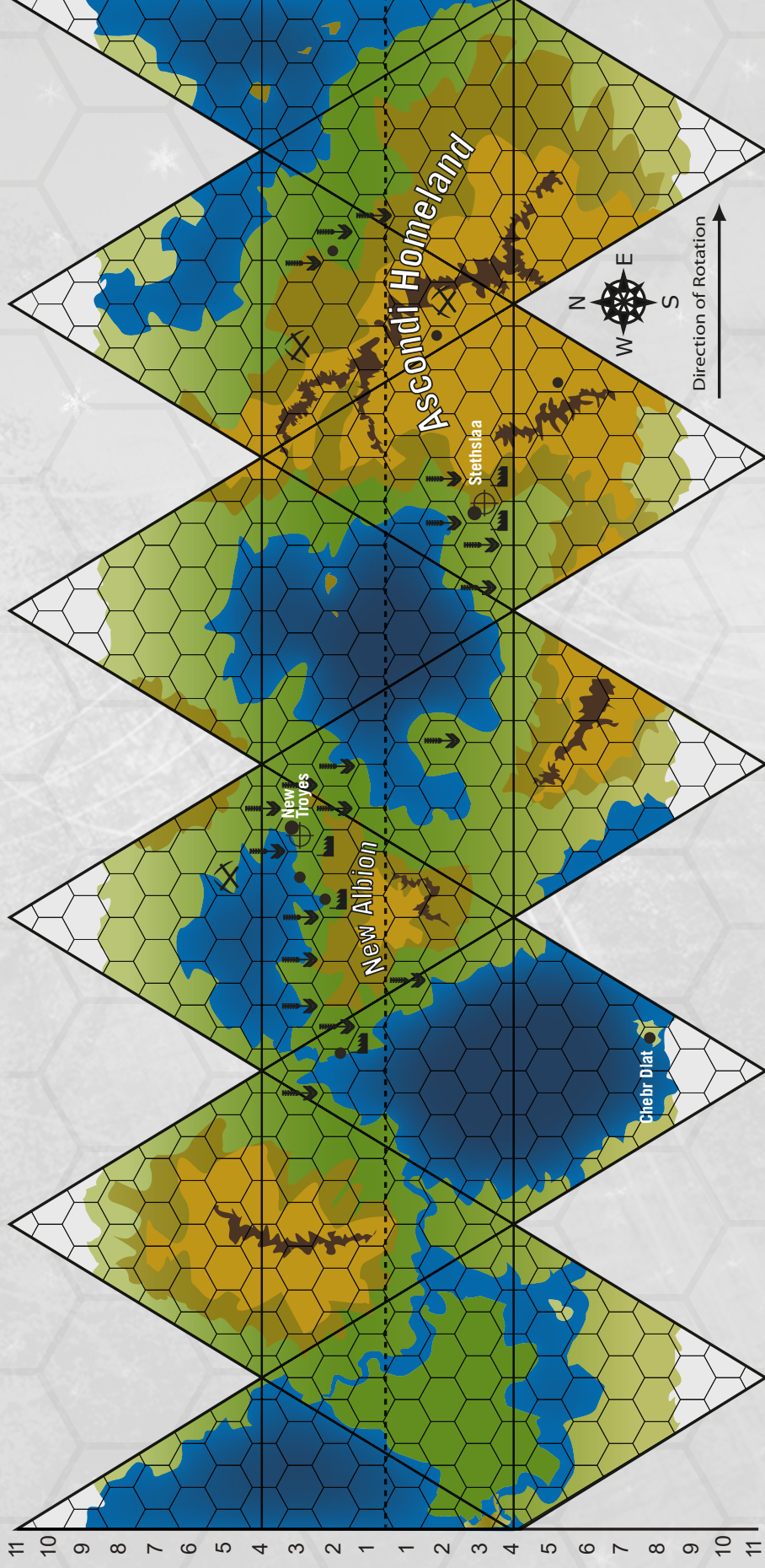
The workings of the Ascondi government defy human explanation. It is not even possible to determine if the Ascondi of Ultima Thule acknowledge the concept of the nation state. At times, they seem to be a unified and organised state with clear leadership and national goals; at others, they appear to be a vast collection of people going about their own business without organisation beyond interpersonal courtesy. The same applies to outlying regions – upon occasion, these seem to be part of a great plan and aware of their role but most of the time, they are simply a community of Ascondi oblivious to the affairs of nations.

Ascondi can be encountered almost anywhere on Ultima Thule. Their business can be simple to discern, as with trading expeditions or work parties, but some groups wander aimlessly or march across a desert to reach some point indistinguishable from any other scrap of wilderness. There, the party might stay for a few days or could change direction and begin another march immediately. Some settle down for extended periods, or even permanently, joining or creating a community that may grow after the original pilgrims have left. If asked about these strange activities, the Ascondi answer in obscure proverbs and quotations from ancient writings, always in their own language. Their answers are thus completely incomprehensible to humans.

The Ascondi defend themselves if threatened but are rarely hostile towards outsiders unless provoked. However, they have no concept of territory other than

NAME: Ultima Thule

UWP: C764877-5



City



Starport



Mining



Farming



Industry



Military



Hex Scale

1005Km

World Gravity

0.9G

Mean Equatorial Temp

their own and will wander without concern into areas they have been warned are off-limits. They rarely do any harm and New Albion has learned to tolerate incursions wherever possible. For their part, the Ascondi do not challenge the right of New Albion or any other enclave to exist on Ultima Thule, even though they claim ownership of the entire planet.

Chebr Dlat:

Chebr Dlat is a city-state located on a large island in one of Ultima Thule's shallow seas. It is in the far southern hemisphere and subject to very low temperatures all year around. Chebr Dlat has a population of around 30,000 humans, culturally Zhodani, and a small number of other species. Perhaps twice this number dwell on the island in small communities. Conditions are very tough, with food production taking place in semi-underground greenhouses and the people of the city do not venture far beyond their island. Some are genetically Zhodani, others local humans who joined the community over the centuries and interbred.

Chebr Dlat has a typically Zhodani government, with psionic nobles leading a largely non-psionic society. It is not clear what proportion of the population are psionic, nor what effect interbreeding has had upon psionic potential. Chebr Dlat is remote and insular, and its people do not seem interested in outside contact. Occasionally, they conduct trade missions or diplomatic visits to Ascondi communities and humans dressed in a manner similar to the people of Chebr Dlat have been seen accompanying parties of Ascondi 'pilgrims'. The technology of Chebr Dlat is estimated at a mature TL9, although this is based upon limited observation.

Other Inhabitants:

Much of the rest of Ultima Thule is wilderness populated by 'outbackers', with some primitive (TL1-2) tribal groups in the most remote parts of the world.

There are also numerous city-states that grew from colonies created by the Shackleton mission. These are typically around TL5, with a few exceptions.

Poseidon's Icebox

Next out from Ultima Thule is Poseidon's Icebox, a water world with a dense but unbreathable atmosphere. It has almost no land above water level but extensive shallows inhabited by seabed communities linked by trade rafts. These are not true ships, formed from buoyant seaweed bound together to create floating platforms capable of carrying cargo. Poseidon's Icebox receives few visitors and there is little information about its culture or society in the databases.

Poseidon's Icebox has a thick atmosphere that allows it to trap just enough stellar heat to keep its oceans liquid. Icebergs are common at the equator and towards the poles the seas turn to a semi-frozen slurry before giving way to pack ice. It is this feature that gives the world its name.

Brassey's Superjovian

Brassey's Superjovian is an unusually large gas giant, earning it the title 'superjovian'. Its orbit is highly elliptical, inclined sharply to the plane of the Beta system and retrograde, making it unlikely that it originated in the Phobetor Beta system. Although eccentric, its orbit is stable; Brassey's Superjovian is certainly part of the system now.

The superjovian has several moons, some with orbits as unusual as its own but there are no signs of habitation. There are wild rumours of strange ruins and alien wonders to be found on its moons but this is true of almost every outsystem planet in human space. Whether anything is present remains to be seen; Brassey's Superjovian has not been visited since research vessel *Damaur* out of the Imperial enclave at Terra Nova in 1089. This mission ended in a catastrophe which resulted in the loss of a rescue vessel as well as *Damaur*.

Powers of Ultima Thule

Name	TL	Government	Characteristics
New Albion	8, some 10-11	Feudal Oligarchy	Internally subdivided and prone to political infighting
Ascondi Homeland	6	Ascondi	Friendly but confusing and inconsistent
Chebr Dlat	9	Zhodani, Psionic Nobility	Remote, aloof and mysterious
Outbackers	1-5	None	Scattered and varied, sometimes with different races in the same settlement

Newton's World

Newton's World appears to be another captured body. Its orbit is far less extreme than that of Brassey's Superjovian but it is still greatly eccentric. It is not clear if Newton's World was once associated with the superjovian, perhaps as one of its moons. Alternatively, it might have been part of the Phobetor system and displaced from its position by the arrival of its huge neighbour.

Newton's World is large for a terrestrial (rocky) planet, with a surface gravity of a little over 2.3G. This is survivable for humans but very uncomfortable and makes landing a dangerous business. The surface is shrouded in dense methane fog and is thought to have oceans of toxic chemicals. There is no hard data, however; indeed, there are no records of any expeditions to this remote and hostile world.

Weldon

Weldon is a small gas giant planet lying almost at the edge of the Beta system. It is thought to have several moons but there are no records of any detailed survey.

Iceball

Iceball is, essentially, a ball of ice orbiting at the very fringe of the system. It has been poetically described as 'scraping the void', a reference to the fact that it is even farther out into the Great Rift than Ultima Thule during part of its orbit. Little is known about Iceball for certain but astronomers predict quantities of frozen gases – which may contain water – on the surface, surrounded by a thin atmospheric envelope.

Brown Dwarf Sub-Stellar Objects

A brown dwarf is essentially a failed star, an object larger than a gas giant but without enough mass to begin stellar fusion. There are two such objects associated with the Phobetor system, both in very distant orbits.

Fineline: Fineline is named because there is a fine line between a brown dwarf (which can be considered a sub-stellar object) and a very large gas giant (essentially a hugely overgrown planet). In fact, Fineline is well on the stellar side of this line but it is small for a brown dwarf. Nevertheless, it produces enough heating to – in theory – prevent its moons from being icy wastelands. Fineline is known to have moons but nothing more is recorded about them and it is open to debate whether Fineline's moons could be useful colony sites. They will certainly have no breathable air or liquid water but any environment less harsh than a rockball is a reasonable prospect for those with the technology to live there.

Distant Speck: Although farther out than Fineline, more is known about Distant Speck than its fellow brown dwarf, as *Shackleton* passed close to Distant Speck on her final voyage out of the Phobetor system. It is possible that the remaining crew used Speck's gravity to assist with a course change.

Distant Speck has a handful of moons of varying sizes, three of which are equivalent to small planets. *Shackleton* sent back images of the moons and one in particular has become an iconic poster for the walls of spaceflight fans throughout the Phobetor system; it shows *Shackleton* from a remote viewpoint, framed against the disc of Distant Speck, with one of the moons also visible. This moon has been unofficially named Waypost and is considered the last 'world' visited by Shackleton before she was lost in deep space.

PEOPLE OF PHOBETOR

The sentient races that inhabit the worlds of Phobetor include humans, Vargr, K'Kree and Ascondi. The latter have only one major enclave each, although small groups exist elsewhere in the system. Humans, on the other hand, are widespread and have created a range of cultures within the system. There are no reports of Aslan living on any world of Phobetor, although Aslan artefacts have been uncovered in archaeological excavations.

The humans of Phobetor fall into three groups:

- **Indigenous Humans** apparently arrived about 32-35,000 years ago and settled. It is not known where they came from or how they reached Phobetor.
- *Shackleton Humans* arrived a few hundred years ago, bringing with them the technology and social values of Terra in the early 22nd Century. They spread out and mingled with the indigenous population, creating composite states.
- *Newcomers* arrived after the Shackleton, notably within the past century. They come from well-established but far-off cultures and brought with them their own values and technology. The newcomers tend to remain concentrated, creating enclaves of their own or greatly influencing local society to create a fusion of both indigenous and newcomer cultures. Most newcomers came from the Imperium but a community of Zhodani is present and some Darrians are scattered among other human groups.

ADVENTURES IN PHOBETOR

The Phobetor system has room for all manner of adventures. The cities of Terra Nova and its orbital starport are ideal for intrigue and political machinations, whilst those preferring to travel can explore the deserts of Ultima Thule or wilderness of Terra Nova. Plunging through the hostile jungles of Hades aboard an armoured train or exploring the far reaches of the system in search of alien artefacts might appeal to others.

In short, there is enough variety in this system to enable years of adventuring. There are big mysteries to investigate – why do so many races and cultures come to Phobetor? What finally happened to *Shackleton* and what legacy did the colony ship leave behind?

The *Shackleton* Legacy

There are many who wonder what became of the Shippies who drifted out of the system aboard *Shackleton*. The ship must still be out there somewhere; a tomb now but still holding secrets. There are also rumours of a cache left behind by Shackleton, something hidden for reasons that may never be known. Treasure seekers claim wealth or knowledge awaits whoever unlocks the final legacy of the *Shackleton*.

A clue to this hangs on many walls – the popular poster of *Shackleton* framed against the brown dwarf Distant Speck. A moon is visible in the picture; the last body in the system visited before Shackleton departed into deep space. Of course, a moon is a big place but perhaps clues are there.

And what became of the *Shackleton* herself after she left the system a thousand years ago? Records of her velocity and heading are available for those with the patience to search for them. Estimating a current location is no simple matter; *Shackleton* was affected by gravity wells – however slightly – during her long flight. The *Shackleton* is in fact approaching the Kifnell system in Captain Aesvall (Hkao) subsector, within Afawahisa. She is moving too fast to be captured but will still be close enough to visit and perhaps salvage for some years. She might even be re-crewed for a continued voyage deeper into the Great Rift.

The Conquest of Terra Nova

Terra Nova is heavily balkanised and some of its powers have been at odds for many years. Some seek to take control of the whole world and perhaps the rest of the

system but this has seemed impossible. However, the balance of power is shifting and various proxy wars seem to be escalating towards a major clash. The victor will be the dominant power in the Phobetor system; something that has never happened before. Some believe this would be a good thing, while others are fiercely opposed to it and willing to do whatever it takes to prevent a single power arising.

Island on the Edge of Night

Ultima Thule is one of the most distant habitable worlds from the Imperial heartland, the sort of place Travellers end up when they drift outward and cannot go any further, but there are those who come to Ultima Thule for other reasons. Some give plausible explanations for being there but may not be telling the truth. Others will not say why they came to this remote place. Many seem to be searching for something.

Ultima Thule is home to a phenomenon that can unlock psionic potential even in species that have little. The effect is due to a combination of chemicals in the rocks – and therefore in the water and any food grown there – and a natural psionic resonance. Exactly why this happens is unknown but psionically sensitive species sometimes talk of ‘dreaming places’ where they receive visions of telepathic origin. These are usually dark and threatening, and thought to bear warnings, although individuals are prone to finding meaning that might be nothing but coincidence.

Prolonged exposure can alter some creatures, making them permanently psionic, although there are other effects as well. The Aslan colony on Ultima Thule was hastily withdrawn when its members ‘lost their self’ and became a community of vegetarian pacifists. This event was so shocking that the colonists were relocated to a remote star system and all Aslan were forbidden from visiting Phobetor. Today, the very mention of the place is taboo and no Aslan will speak of it. Whether this loss-of-self is somehow transmissible is unclear but the thought of no longer being proud predators frightens the Aslan deeply.

How the Ascondi, Zhodani and other races on Ultima Thule are affected is unknown but it seems that some Ascondi are adept at finding the dreaming places, which shift or cease to function from time-to-time. The Ascondi ‘pilgrims’ seem to follow some sort of sign – perhaps telepathic – in their search for a dreaming place, although how often they find one and what happens next is not known outside Ascondi society.

AFAWAHISA

Afawahisa contains four subsectors of high stellar density, lying wholly within Hierate space. Five other subsectors contain a narrow strip of Aslan worlds along the trailing and rimward edges of the sector, with the remaining seven subsectors lying wholly within the Great Rift. These have an extremely low density of stars and other interstellar objects.

Aslan explorers pushed into the Great Rift in search of a way across and once they found a suitable route, interest waned rapidly. Expeditions into Afawahisa from the Hierate are thus rare, although the few conducted are carried out with great determination.

As with Touchstone, human names are assigned to many subsectors and in common use outside the Hierate. Aslan-dominated areas are normally known by their Aslan names.



CAPTAIN AESVALL



(HKA0)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Kifnell	0103		C653875-7	Po			

The Captain Aesvall subsector is named for an early-Imperium explorer who supposedly charted much of the Great Rift. Aesvall's starmaps have since become a byword for fraud and invention however; much of the data turned out to be little more than rumours picked up in distant starport bars and the rest pure invention. The charts occasionally match reality, probably by pure chance. This subsector is one such occasion; its lone star system is on the Aesvall chart, which is sometimes used as evidence that perhaps Captain Aesvall really did explore at least part of the rift. Some take this a stage further and suggest there are hidden meanings concealed within the charts and that perhaps Aesvall was trying to conceal important information in plain sight.

KIFNELL

Kifnell is a habitable world located in a system with more than adequate resources. Its human population were transplanted there, presumably by the Ancients, without much in the way of tools or equipment, and have developed in almost-total isolation ever since. The discovery that there was other sentient life in the universe came as no surprise; folk tales about colonisation tied in with a fossil record that contained no trace of human life. The first visits by starships caused nervousness but no great shock.

Kifnell is balkanised into several large nations and many smaller ones, a situation complicated by numerous colonies throughout the system, some of which are independent and essentially nations in their own right. Conflict has been common throughout the history of human habitation on Kifnell, sometimes spurring on the development of new technologies and upon occasion causing severe setbacks.

Most of Kifnell's larger nations, and alliances of smaller ones, have some form of primitive but abundant spacefaring capability. Orbital space is busy with spacecraft and small installations, with vessels making the sublight haul out to other planets in the system. There is a mature offworld mineral-extraction industry, whose output is increasingly taken up by manufacturing facilities located off Kifnell itself. This is a cause for concern for the nations of the mainworld, whose industrial output depends on ore ships from the outsystem.

An attempt might be made to seize control of the outsystem mining and resource extraction operations, which would result in conflict both on-planet and in space. Whilst the fledgeling nations of the outsystem cannot resist a concerted effort by Kifnell's larger powers, no consensus is likely over ownership of seized assets or their produce. The larger nations of Kifnell could take what they need but none are confident they can keep it.

Visitors to the Kifnell system are rare. Those who do arrive are bombarded with requests for information on the outside universe and offers to buy parts of their vessel. Few exploration missions are so over-equipped they can afford to part with critical components and schematics alone are of little use to the people of Kifnell without the accompanying advances in technology and construction capability. Thus, ambitions to expand beyond the system remain frustrated. It is not inconceivable that someday the people of Kifnell might try to take the technology they want by force.

To Iywe'uar (Touchstone Sector, Book 3, page 34)

A			

Afawahisa

HIKAO SUBSECTOR

To Steakheya (page 70)

To Hkyewaol (page 74)



Gas Giant

B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

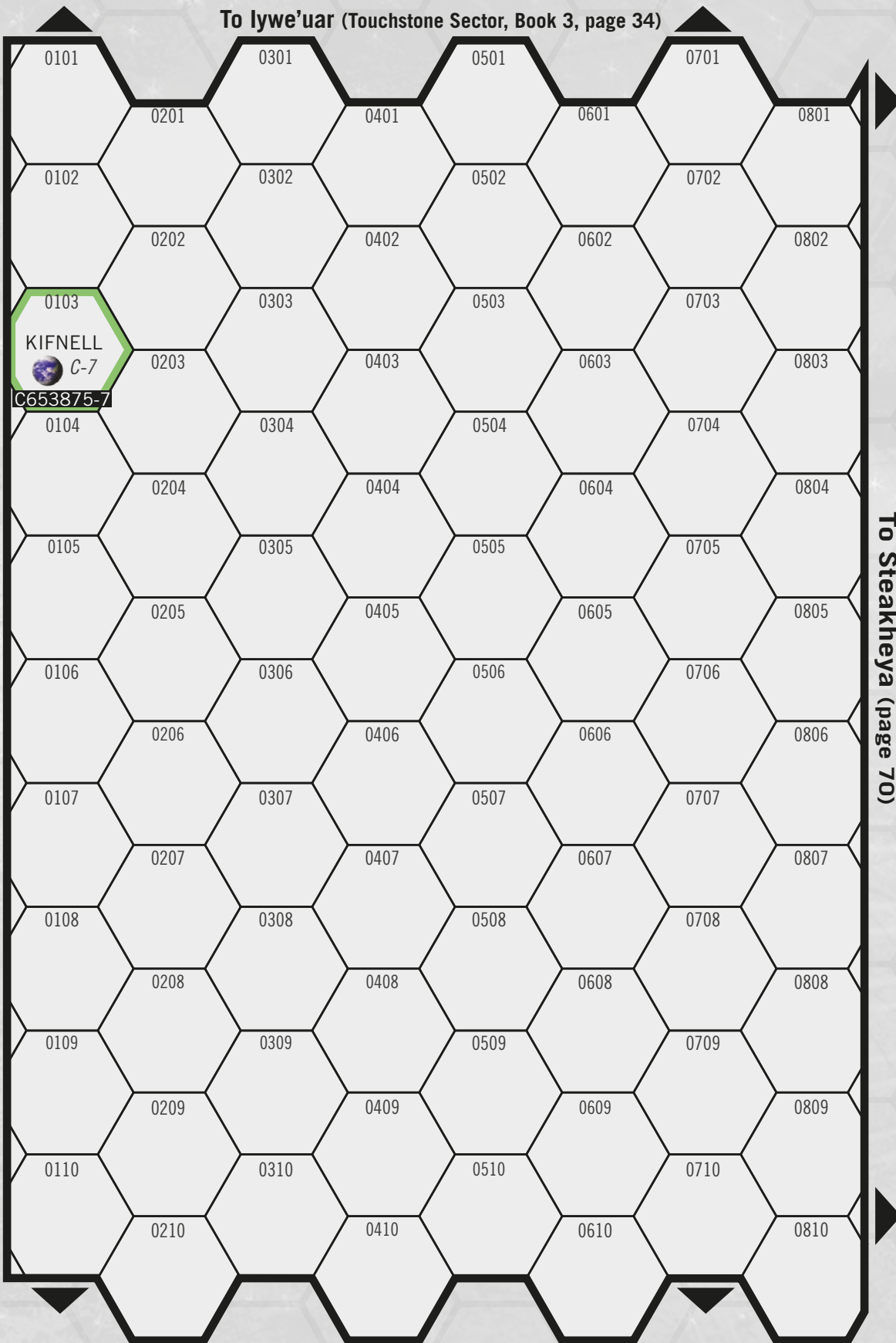


Secure System



Planet (water present)

To Kouyelaos (Ftaoiyekyu Sector)



MIDRIFT



(STEAKHEYA)

SUBSECTOR

Midrift subsector has no star systems but is not considered to be one of the 'empty four'. Oddly, Eternal Dark subsector (which actually does have a star system) is included in that grouping. Midrift derives its name from its position, although several other subsectors also qualify for the designation.

SUBSECTOR: NO INTERSTELLAR OBJECTS

ETAA



SUBSECTOR

Ettaa is one of the 'empty four' subsectors located in the middle of the Great Rift. Some charts show two or more systems but more reliable data has since been obtained indicating that there is little else in the subsector other than the occasional deep-space comet.

SUBSECTOR: NO INTERSTELLAR OBJECTS

VOIDMARCH



(AOAAKHAOWEA)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Yalroeroh	3201		X160000-0	Ba De			G

The dramatically named Voidmarch is almost devoid of star systems, forming one of the 'empty four' subsectors that block Aslan expansion in that direction. It is, unsurprisingly, of little interest to the Hierate.

YALROEROH

Yalroeroh is a small world with a standard atmosphere lying four parsecs from the nearest Aslan-aligned system. It is officially unclaimed and unpopulated but patrols from the naval base at Aletoli have reported encounters with starships – Aslan and otherwise – and small groups have landed on the surface. With three gas giants and eleven terrestrial planets, the Yalroeroh system could be worth investment, especially since the mainworld has a breathable atmosphere. This is something of an oddity and is almost certainly the result of terraforming in the distant past.

The terraforming hypothesis is supported by the existence of the Yalroeroh Spires, tall pillars of rock, which could not have formed by any known natural process. They resonate to some frequencies of energy, although the resonance point constantly shifts and requires a complex 'chase' through the wavelengths to maintain it. No pattern has been predicted beyond a few seconds, so it has not been possible to find out what happens when the pillars resonate for any length of time.

Ice comets have been tracked in the far outsystem, on paths that will take them close to the mainworld in a few hundreds of years' time. This is not that unusual but these paths are too complex to be natural and all converge at a point in space close to the mainworld. The chances of this happening by coincidence are infinitesimally small. There are craters on the surface where meteorites or comets have struck before, suggesting an early bombardment – perhaps with water-bearing comets – might have occurred. The current working hypothesis is that the terraformers of Yalroeroh intended to bring many comets within reach, then redirect them to the mainworld on a century-long schedule, perhaps completing the terraforming process.

If Yalroeroh was terraformed, then it follows that someone lived there or intended to colonise the world. This has attracted scientists and treasure-hunters from all over Charted Space, hoping to stumble upon ancient terraforming equipment or a city buried in the sands. The Aslan Hierate does not officially discourage exploration but has proven highly unwilling to assist any expedition that gets into trouble. The mysterious ships in the outsystem may relate to exploration of the mainworld but their location suggests some other purpose. It is possible that some vessels are searching for how the inward-bound comets were redirected.

NX-45



(HKYEWAOL)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Herebedragons	0613		X2000000-0	Ba Va			

NX-45 has never been assigned a human name outside of the Aesvall charts, where it is rather embarrassingly named Herebedragons. Most Travellers ignore this, not least as a show of contempt for Captain Aesvall's largely imaginary star charts. Oddly enough, Aesvall's chart is correct on the location of the subsector's only star system, although his additional text describes a completely different world not present in this system.

HEREBEDRAGONS

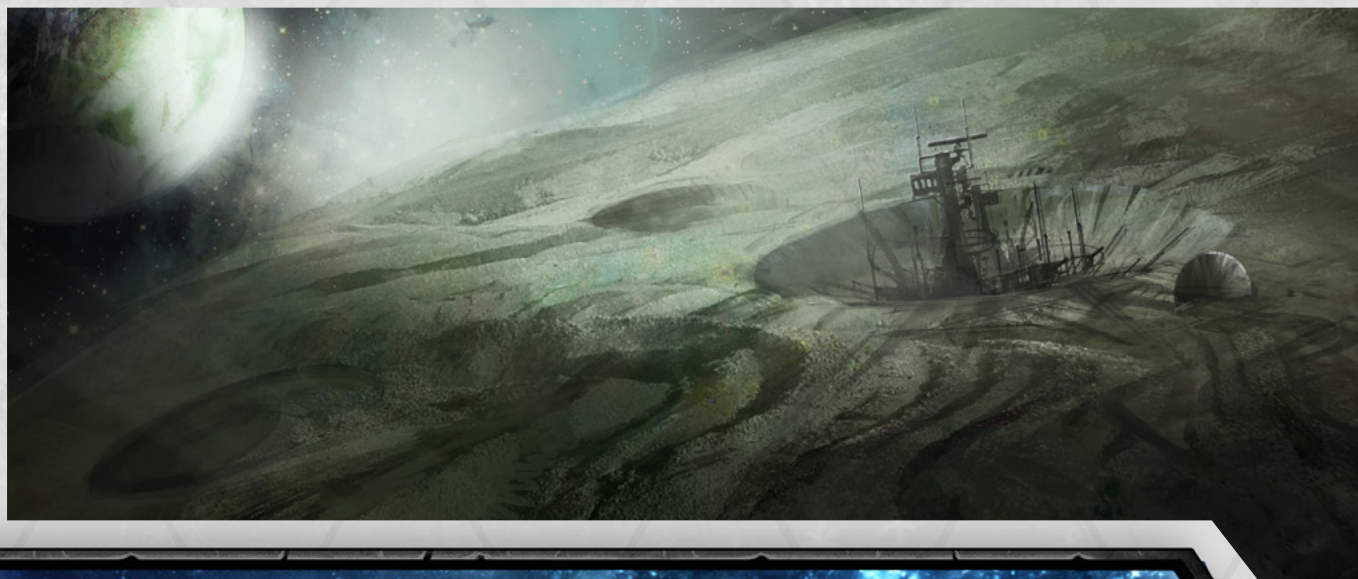
Despite being listed as a habitable world with a shirtsleeve environment in Captain Aesvall's charts, Herebedragons is a desolate rockball interesting mainly for ruins that date back a hundred thousand years or more. The ruins are not extensive and in a deep crater close to the world's north pole, so easy to miss. The vacuum environment has preserved the remains well but millennia of micrometeorite strikes have taken their toll.

The ruins appear to have been created by a species roughly about the size of a human or Aslan, using materials consistent with a TL12-14 civilisation. Very

little is left in terms of power systems, controls and the like; the ruins appear to have been abandoned after being stripped for useful items and clearly scavenged for anything left in the long years since.

Curiously, Aesvall's charts make no mention of these ruins, nor do they refer at all to this world, although the bodies of the rest of the system are accurately plotted and match the descriptions given. The world in Captain Aesvall's charts does not precisely match any system in the common databases. There are numerous candidates in terms of general size, atmosphere and hydrographics but details such as orbital inclination, rotation speed and the like are all wrong.

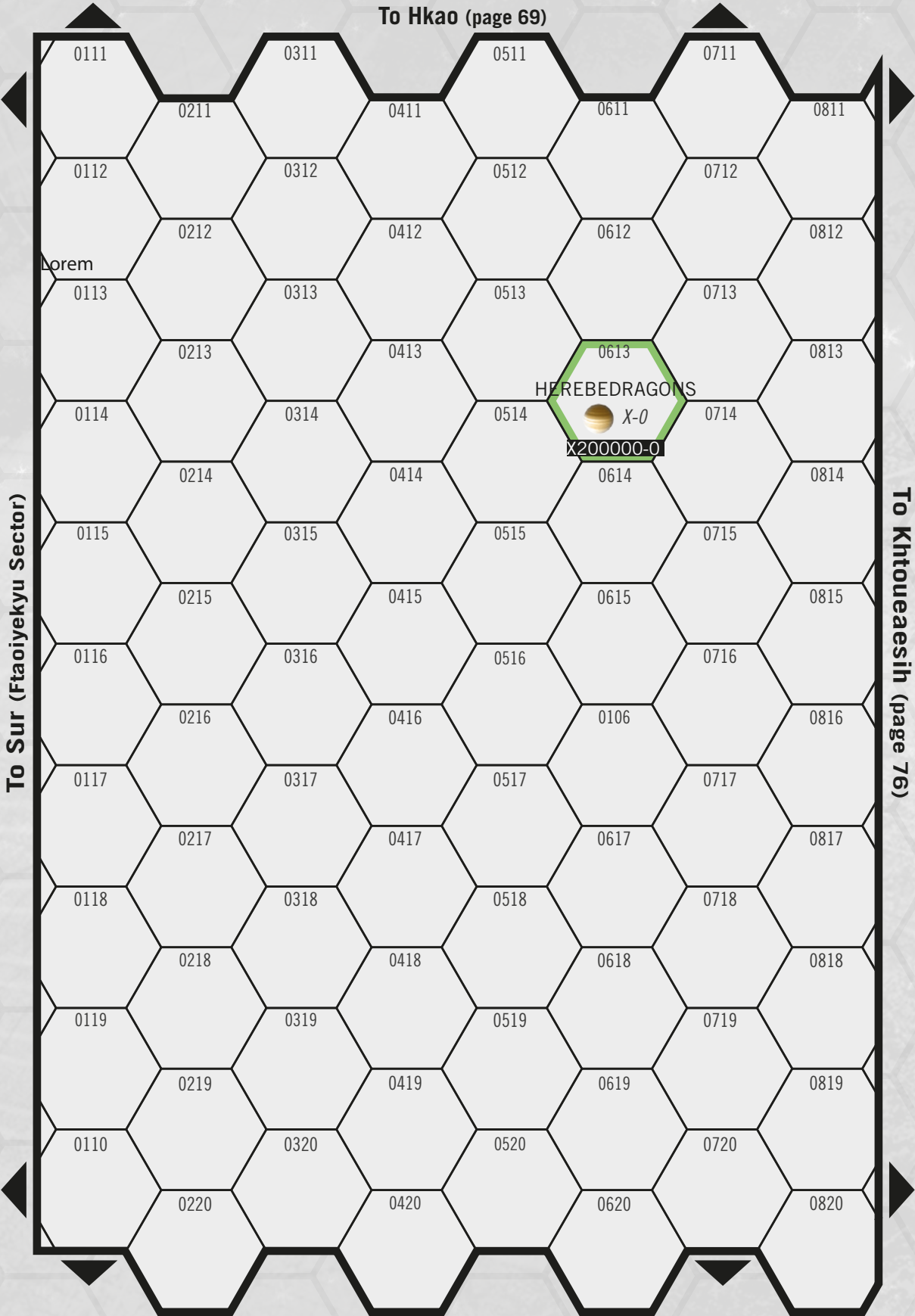
The data *does* match a world not in commonly-available charts: Ultima Thule, in the Phobetor system, the second habitable world orbiting Phobetor's companion star. Exactly why Aesvall chose to place its data here is a mystery but it is possible that he intended anyone exploring this far out to be directed to Ultima Thule. He may have left other clues but they are either lost or overlooked.





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Afawahisa

HIKYEWAOL SUBSECTOR



 Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

 Secure System

 Planet (dry)



ONE LIGHT

(KHTOUEAESIH)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Yustetya	1120		D240000-0	Ba De Po			G

One Light subsector is named for the fact that it contains just a single star system. Lying eight parsecs from the nearest Aslan world, this system was an early goal for Aslan explorers but was found to be a dead end and essentially forgotten.

YUSTETYA

Yustetya is listed as barren and uninhabited in the star charts but this is far from correct. It is a harsh world with a thin, tainted atmosphere and very little water but habitable with some effort. It is home to around a million people who are physically Aslan but behave in a manner not seen elsewhere.

The people of Yustetya live in large villages located wherever there is water. These settlements are concentrated in a region of the southern hemisphere, leaving the rest of the world empty. Life is very simple for the Yustetyans. They have a mature TL1 society in terms of technology and work their barren land in apparent contentment. Conflict is virtually unknown and these Aslan-like people have no apparent desire to hunt or outdo one another in deeds of valour and recklessness.

The people of Yustetya are, without exception, vegetarian. Meat is replaced in their diet by a variety of fungi and high-protein pulses, which they seem content with. Animals are available but kept only for milk and, apparently, companionship. A Yustetyan would be terribly upset to see someone eating meat or wearing the hide of an animal; leather and similar materials are replaced in their culture by plant fibres treated to create a material used in everything from clothing to construction and tool-making.

The people of Yustetya are happy. They sing and laugh, they are gentle and kind, harming others only at great need and with regret. Their behaviour is so unlike other Aslan that they might appear to be some related species but they are not. A clue to their nature comes from the Trokh phrase 'hriytuarl teahrekikhtahah yustetya wyeuaaeirl kheafo'iy'a', which translates roughly to 'the abomination that comes from the loss of self'.

The Yusteyans are telepathic. This is extremely unusual in Aslan and the nature of Yustetyan telepathy is different to that of other species. They are almost a hive-mind, although capable of operating independently, and have none of the aggressive ego or reckless pride that drives normal Aslan. They are, in the eyes of normal Aslan, an abomination to be feared not so much for what they might do – they would never harm anyone by choice – but because if normal Aslan could become Yusteyans, then it could happen to others.

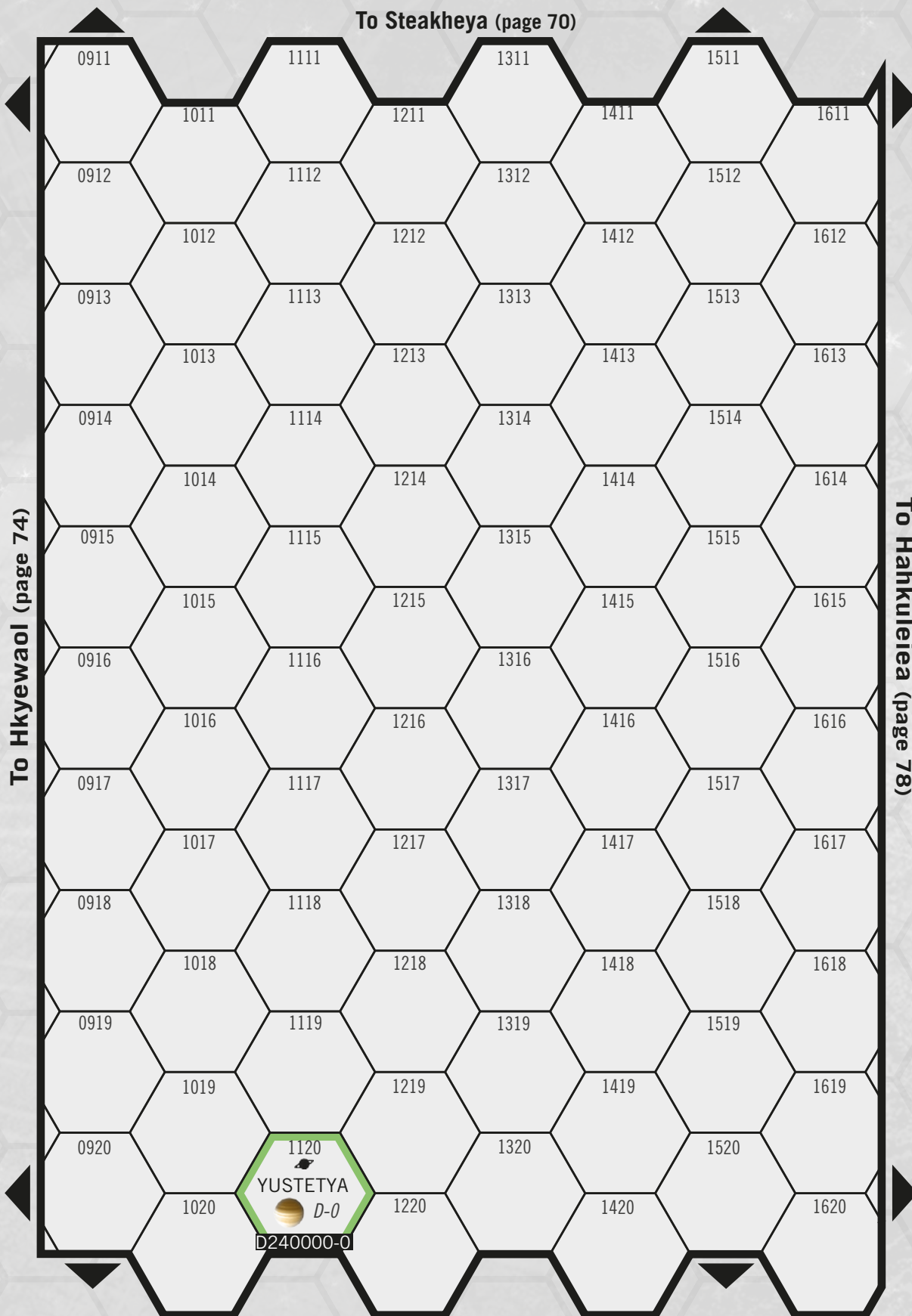
If asked how and why they changed so profoundly, Yustetyans only say they 'lost their self', which could mean their quintessential Aslan-ness or the self-centred ego-driven aggression that normally defines it. They do not consider this good or bad. The Yustetyans are simply what they are: a culture of peaceful, vegetarian Aslan telepaths whose very existence terrifies other Aslan.



No Aslan from the Hierate will assist a ship going to Yustetya and occasionally a warship makes the long trip to scan the world, then hurriedly departs towards the saner universe of inter-clan feuding, assassins and endless small wars. If they notice, the Yustetyans do not seem to care.


	F		


Afawahisa

KHTOUAEESIH SUBSECTOR



 Gas Giant
 Starport Class & Tech Level

 Secure System

 Planet (dry)

TAMBOLDON



(HAHKULEIEA)

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Tekheal	2119		X663000-0	Ba			G

Tamboldon subsector contains only a single star system, reached by jump-4 vessels with tanker support. There are records of early experiments in trans-rift operations conducted by the Aslan Hierate, many of which fell afoul of the inherent dangers. Claims that the subsector is a treasure-trove of lost and drifting Aslan ships are enormously overstated but certainly many vessels were lost before the techniques of trans-rift jumping were fully understood. Few of these wrecks have ever been located.

TEKHEAL

Officially designated as an empty world, Tekheal has a standard atmosphere and enough water to support a varied ecosystem, which has been modified over many years to include several varieties of the most dangerous predators known to the Aslan. It is maintained as a hunting preserve for those with the wealth to afford a visit and studied by the occasional expedition interested in how highly territorial and aggressive species interact.

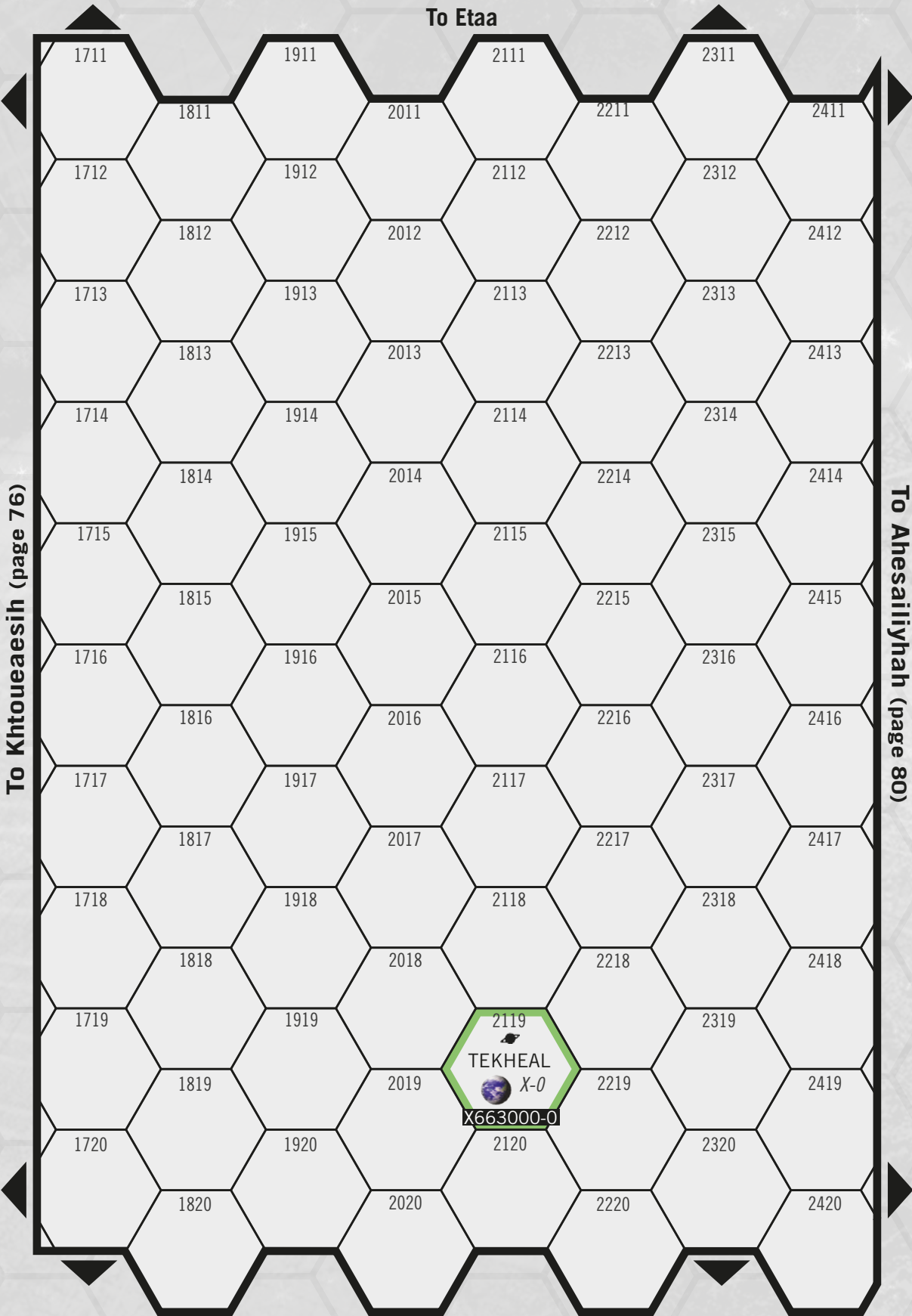
The world has claimed the lives of several unwary Travellers, who were simply unprepared for the savagery they encountered there. A few permanent structures exist, although these are hard to spot as they blend into the landscape. Most settlements are small, being little more than a hunting lodge with accommodation for support staff, and empty when the owner is not in residence. It is thus possible to stumble upon a dwelling but detecting one from orbit would be unlikely; to all intents and purposes Tekheal is an empty garden world awaiting exploration.

There are rumours that some of the predators roaming Tekheal are humans or other sentient species, possibly even Aslan, who have been placed on the world as prey. It is possible that these people are feral or have been altered in some way to reduce them to an animal level of intelligence, although hunting parties have been fired upon. Whether this was a dispute between hunting parties, armed feral humans or a shipwrecked and scared exploration party remains unclear.

		G	

Afawahisa

HAHIKULEIEA SUBSECTOR





AHESAILIYHAH

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Aoasa	3219	N	B575654-A	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Eiahiyhawer	3218		C78868A-3	Ag Ni Ri		Hierate	G
Hei'	3216		C00059B-8	As Ni Va		Hierate	G
Hlaliualeaaw	3119	N	B330100-E	De Lo Po		Hierate	G
Khtekhheaw	3018		X8C7000-0	Ba Fl			G
Ktihtyeoh	3217		C0008CE-9	As Na Va		Hierate	G
Uehkaroi	3120		C400468-7	Ni Va		Hierate	G

Ahesailiyhah subsector contains seven systems, all lying in a small clump in the trailing-rimward corner and connected to words deeper in the Aslan Hierate by easy jump-1 and jump-2 transits. Curiously, Khtekhheaw lies outside Hierate territory even though reaching it poses no great difficulty. The rest of the subsector is empty space, with virtually nothing to spinward-coreward for over a hundred light-years.

KHTEKHEAW

Khtekhheaw is not claimed by any clan despite lying very close to Hierate space. It is not a particularly inviting world, with an insidious atmosphere capable of penetrating most survival equipment but this sort of difficulty can be overcome with technology that is widely available. Normally, such a world would be claimed just in case it became valuable or to stop

another clan from doing so. In the case of Khtekhheaw, this has not happened.

The reason for this seems to be a quiet injunction from the *Tlaukhu*, which has made it known (without saying so openly) that its member clans would look disfavoured upon any other that claimed this world. No reason has been given for this attitude but it is thought to relate to wreckage found in a shallow sea on Khtekhheaw.

Accounts vary, although most agree this wreckage is the remains of a large starship that may be of non-Aslan origin and is certainly very old. Too large to raise out of the sea, the wreck is the subject of ongoing research as Tlaukhu-backed engineering teams attempt to seal off parts of the hull and pump water out. Scientists will then study the wreckage to determine its origin and value.

Afawahisa









AHESAILMYAH SUBSECTOR

To Aoaakhaowea (page 72)

To Hahkuleiea (page 78)

To Faeifahof (Hlakhoi Sector)

To Ryuwahah (page 89)

-  Gas Giant
  Secure System
  Planet (dry)
- B-6* Starport Class & Tech Level
  Trade Route
  Planet (water present)
-  Other Naval/Tlauku Base
  Hirate Border
  Asteroids

YUYAHTAO



SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Aihu	0828		E67999B-6	Hi In		Hierate	G
Awiyi	0629		E536887-4			Hierate	G
Ealraowaw	0530		E510448-8	Ni		Hierate	G
Eayakheahyei	0729		C466410-5	Ni		Hierate	G
Hiyalrou	0230		C458889-7			Hierate	G
Khuseatasyeh	0821		E8946XX-5	Ag Lt Ni			G
Urlich's Find	0228		X557701-1	Ag Lt			G
Yaferoakh	0728		E889765-6	Ri		Hierate	G

Lying on the rimward shore of the Great Rift, Yuyahtao subsector contains a handful of Aslan-controlled worlds that are part of the Hierate and two rift-systems. None of the Aslan worlds are heavily developed and Yuyahtao is a frontier region of no great strategic importance.

KHUISEATASYEH

Khuseatasyeh is normally referred to by its Aslan name, as few non-Ascondi can come close to repeating the sounds the local population make when referring to their home. A reasonably habitable world, Khuseatasyeh has a well-developed ecosystem in the process of being exterminated by an extreme ice age. A broad band around the equator is reasonably ice-free but the rest of the world is buried under ice sheets that are still advancing.

Khuseatasyeh is home to a few hundred thousand Ascondi who, until a century or two ago, were scattered across the globe in small city-states. The onset of the ice age came quickly, although average temperatures had been falling for many years and the population did not react quickly enough. Several city-states were overwhelmed before much could be salvaged from them, forcing a population relocation towards the equator. The

need to support this newly concentrated population, along with preventing an economic and technological collapse, made desperate measures necessary. All manner of schemes were attempted in an effort to hold back the advancing ice. At first it seemed that some cities might be saved and again the decision to abandon them was made too late.

Today, the surviving population are fighting a rearguard action to save their civilisation. Their small starport is within an endangered city, with ice sheets advancing towards it. The few Travellers who have passed through the port describe its inhabitants as 'inventive, dignified and doomed'. With no alternative, the Ascondi of Khuseatasyeh continue to retreat into the remaining warm lands, relocating their remaining manufacturing centres and harvest enough agriculture to support the survivors.

No reliable figures are available on population, government or available technology. The Ascondi of Khuseatasyeh had a TL6 society before the ice age began and some of their industrial-technological base remains, however, they are losing ground rapidly and may not be able to support their technological society

for much longer. It may be that – if they survive at all – the Ascondi of Khuisseatasyeh will emerge from the ice age as barbarians, perhaps finding the ruins of their old cities and wondering who built them.

URLICH'S FIND

Ulrich's Find is the human name for this system; it is likely that the Aslan have a name for the world, since it is only two parsecs from their border, but the databases make no mention of it. Nor is it all that clear who Ulrich was, other than an explorer of some kind. Ulrich's Find is a habitable world, home to a humanoid species capable of producing good quality stone tools. Their population is unknown although they are spread across the whole globe so probably number in the tens of millions at least. The local population are known to the Aslan by an archaic word that – curiously – means 'little cousins', and they are afforded respect. Certainly, Aslan parties visiting Ulrich's Find are careful not to cause offence and treated to a hunting party and feast by their little cousins. Relations are amicable, although the Aslan have no interest in colonising Ulrich's Find and the locals do not want to progress beyond the stone age.

YAFEROAKH

In many ways, Yaferoakh is a typical Aslan frontier world, of the subtype sometimes referred to as an 'over-reach' colony. Yaferoakh has a sizable population but, other than among the ruling elite, available technology is very limited. Most of the population dwell in modestly sized towns supported by agriculture, with large ranges of wilderness around them. This is not deliberate; Yaferoakh was intended to be developed into a major world that would increase the owning clan's power and prestige but, as is often the case, ambition outstripped available finances and settlers had to build up from their bootstraps rather than receive regular shipments of machinery and tools. The result is not displeasing to the inhabitants, who have plenty of land and a traditional way of life. Indeed, this is something of a problem since there is a movement within the Hierate towards this sort of existence. Many Aslan feel there is something lacking from life in high-tech cities or aboard orbital stations – fresh air and the ability to wander or hunt at will. There are those who wonder if a return to a simpler lifestyle might be more attractive than pursuing destiny as an interstellar power, to the point where the Hierate loses its drive to expand and conquer.



IUATYELEAHOI



SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Ahyulafa	1128		E997653-5	Ag Ni		Hierate	
Aihyeel	1528		D200353-6	Lo Va		Hierate	G
Eieihkeiekh	1029		D000734-5	As Na Va		Hierate	G
Hreeuua	1529		X40088A-2	Na Va		Hierate	
Yoaheis	1030		E753540-5	Ni Po		Hierate	G

Iuatyeleahoi subsector is located on the fringe of the Aslan Hierate, containing only a handful of undeveloped worlds. Regions of this sort are places of opportunity for ihatei, with conflicts over land and resources common until one clan or another achieves sufficient dominance to resist further incursions. As a result, Iuatyeleahoi can be turbulent and the motives of anyone venturing there considered suspect by those seeking to gain control of the area. Travellers run the risk of being coerced into helping one clan or another or attacked as enemies (or just potential enemies) even if they have no political agenda.

AHYULAFa

Ahyulafa is in many ways typical of the belt of undeveloped worlds lying on the rimward shore of the Great Rift. This is one, often overlooked, effect the Great Rift has had on the development of local civilisations. Worlds not on the way to developed worlds cannot benefit from passing trade and lack opportunities for development that others might enjoy. Ahyulafa is one such world, annexed and colonised, then largely left to its own devices. The million or so inhabitants have a stable TL5 civilisation but little prospect of improving their industrial or technological base without investment that is very unlikely to be made.

Ahyulafa is of interest primarily for archaeological reasons. Ruins have been unearthed that date back perhaps 200,000 years, belonging to what was clearly a technological society and arranged in a manner that suggests colonisation rather than growth. Along with the fact that no earlier lower-tech ruins have been found, this suggests that a large colony mission was sent to Ahyulafa and was, at least for a time, successful.

However, otherwise very suitable colonisation sites have depressions in the ground that bear the hallmarks of nuclear detonations, although radiation has long ago

fallen to background levels. Analysis, carried out only in a very patchy manner, suggests the cities of Ahyulafa were bombarded from space. Some were obliterated by bracket patterns, others sustained only partial damage, but all appear to have been abandoned soon after.

It is claimed that a derelict colony ship, formed from a hollowed-out asteroid, was found drifting in the outsystem and removed for study. This ship has been described in a manner similar to Terran sublight vessels that colonised the Islands subsectors in Reft but it was far too old. Lacking jump drives, this vessel must have been moved to the Ahyulafa system but has not been located since. It may be concealed among the moons of one of the gas giants; just another unremarkable rockball moonlet. If the wreck is still being studied, ships transiting to and from it are careful to conceal their movements.

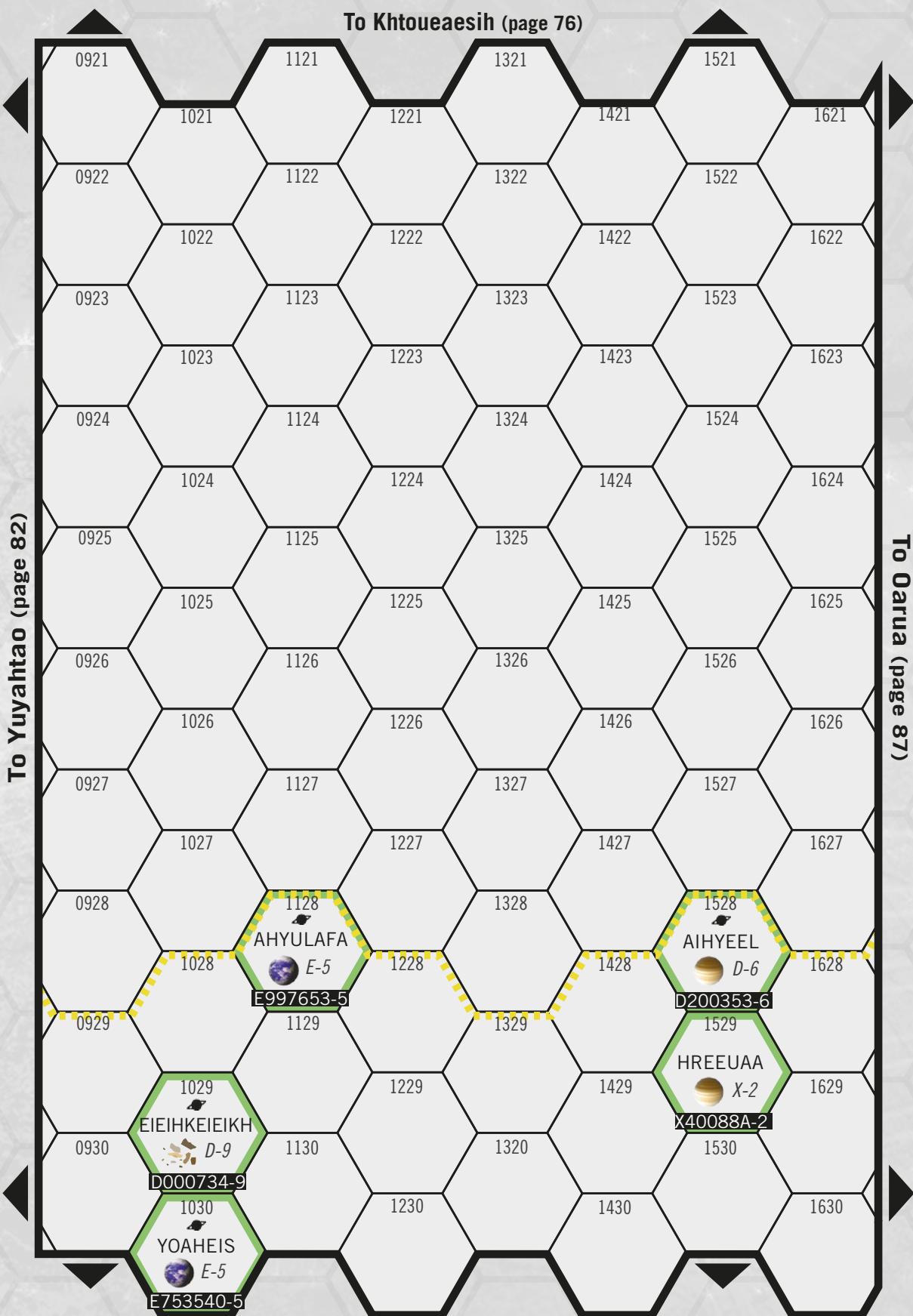
HREEUAA








Hreeuua was never a great prospect for colonisation but, like many other worlds, it represented territory and therefore status. A chain of cities was established, at great expense, atop one of the world's few mineral-rich areas and colonists moved in. Long before the investment began to pay for itself, inter-clan conflict came to Hreeuua in a big way. The cities became war zones with urban guerrilla fighting and the small starport was destroyed when a transport crashed directly into it. By the time the situation was under control, Hreeuua's population was reduced to eking out an existence in whatever parts of the cities remained habitable. No significant attempt has yet been made to rebuild or even bring relief to the populace, who continue to kill one another in sporadic flare-ups. The world's technological base has been destroyed, with remaining technology irreparable by local means. If the population could be pacified, rebuilding might be possible.

Afawahisa

IUATYELEAHOI SUBSECTOR

	J		



-  Gas Giant
-  Planet (dry)
-  Planet (water present)
-  Asteroids
-  Secure System
-  Hirate Border
-  B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

OARUA



SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Ahyaleyekh	2428		X223430-1	Ni Po		Hierate	G
Aoarlealoilr	1828		X10087A-0	Na Va		Hierate	G
Auheliylaol	1827		X578766-0	Ag		Hierate	G
Eikoiwakh	2430	ACS	D677563-7	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Hlauyase'u	2327		B6A2120-7	Fl Lo		Hierate	G
Ieilil	2328		B7839AB-A	Hi		Hierate	G
Khoi	1730		X6A0987-3	Hi In		Hierate	G
Laherikh	2329		X252762-3	Po		Hierate	G
Lakheisewer	1728	ACS	D8B7247-8	Fl Lo		Hierate	
Tlaiahi	1930	ACS	DAC3134-6	Fl Lo		Hierate	G
Wieelr	2425		B837344-8	Lo		Hierate	G
Yutaohre	2326	N	B624452-C	Ni		Hierate	G

Oarua subsector contains four developed worlds in a chain around Ieilil, with jump-2 links to systems deeper in the Hierate. The rest of the subsector is underdeveloped and in some cases still undergoing the landgrab-counter-landgrab phase that most Aslan worlds must endure. Naval and exploration bases are maintained in the subsector but it is not clear whether any trans-rift operations are undertaken from them. More than likely, expeditions focus on surveys of prospective colony sites and resources rather than deep-space exploration.

AUHELILYLAOL

Although initially appearing to be a habitable world, Auheliylaol is a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The world changed hands several times during the settlement phase, with several clans establishing large landgrab colonies. These included far more swords than ploughshares and, although cities and infrastructure were built, the urban areas soon became another battleground. This situation persisted for years, with one clan after another dropping out of the meatgrinder attritional campaign. Others funnelled in personnel, hoping to outlast the other contenders.

The war for Auheliylaol was the breaking of several clans' power, with some staying in the fight for pride long after it was apparent they could not win. The world took on a significance far beyond its worth – some thought victory

was necessary to make the sacrifices mean something, others wanted to win the titanic struggle for glory.

It is not clear who first used orbital bombardment, or tactical nuclear missiles, but once the first shots were fired there was a general free-for-all. Doomed clan contingents made sure they took an enemy with them and when it was over there was no victor. It would be incorrect to say 'when the dust settled' in the case of this war, because the dust has still not settled. Most of the dust and debris blasted up into the atmosphere was the result of orbital weapons that produced little or no radioactive fallout but enough were used that some areas of the world are very unhealthy to visit.

Auheliylaol is in the grip of a nuclear winter, albeit a mild one, with most cities and urban areas shattered or turned into craters. The survivors are at TLO, since they cannot support the technological weapons and items they retained, but some relic technology survives, jealously hoarded and used to support the powerbase of emerging composite clans. Several factions and former allies have put aside their differences and are building a post-apocalypse society of sorts, fighting to cement control over their world. In the longer term, their survival is in doubt without external assistance, and this seems unlikely to present itself. No clan wants to stick a paw into the hornet's nest that Auheliylaol has become, just in case any hornets are still alive.

To Hahkuleiea (page 78)



Afawahisa

OPARUA SUBSECTOR

To Iuatyeleahoi (page 85)

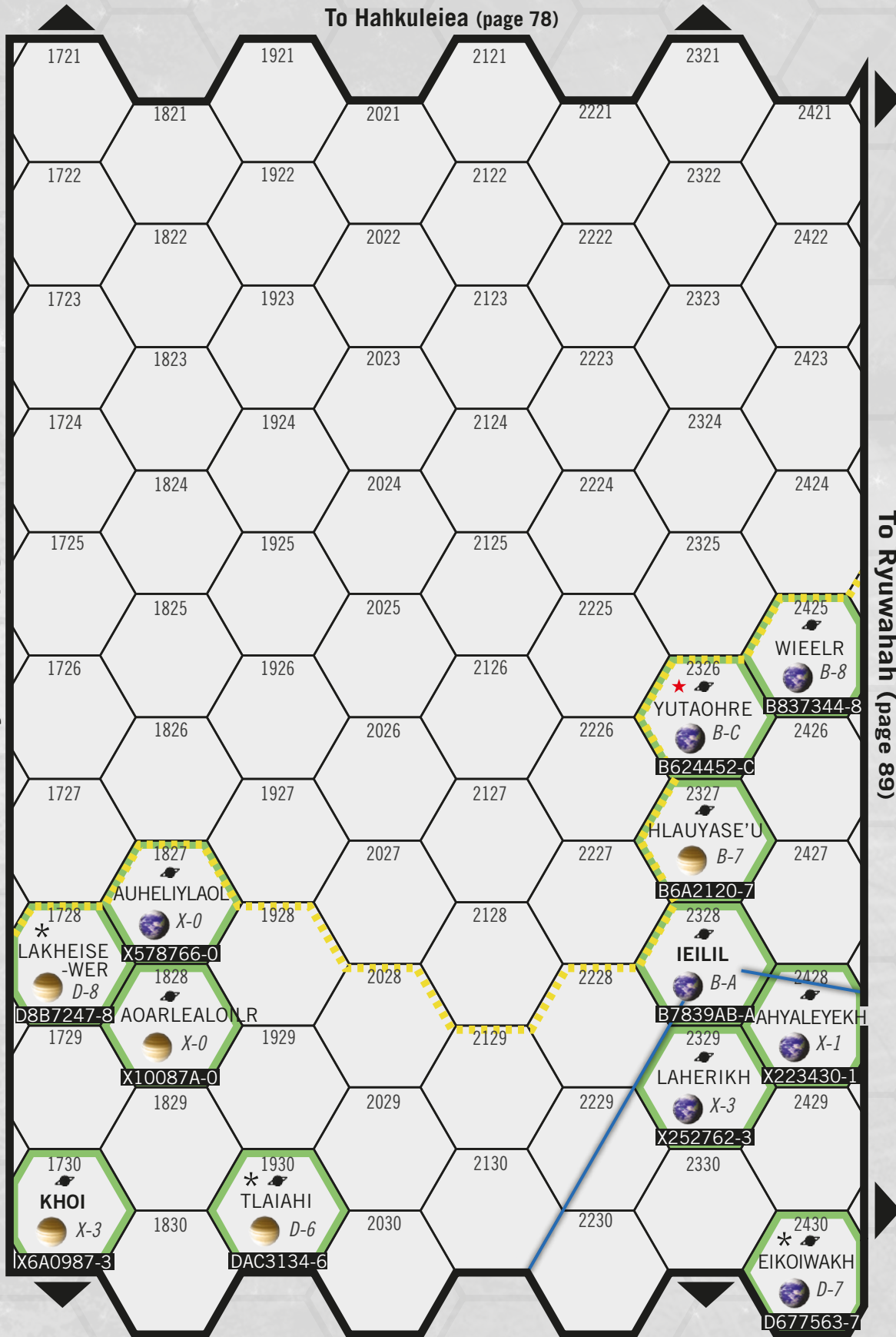
To Ryuwahah (page 89)

To Hkiyiyfteah (page 100)

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- * Clan Base

- Secure System
- Hierate Border
- Trade Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Other Naval/Tlauku Base

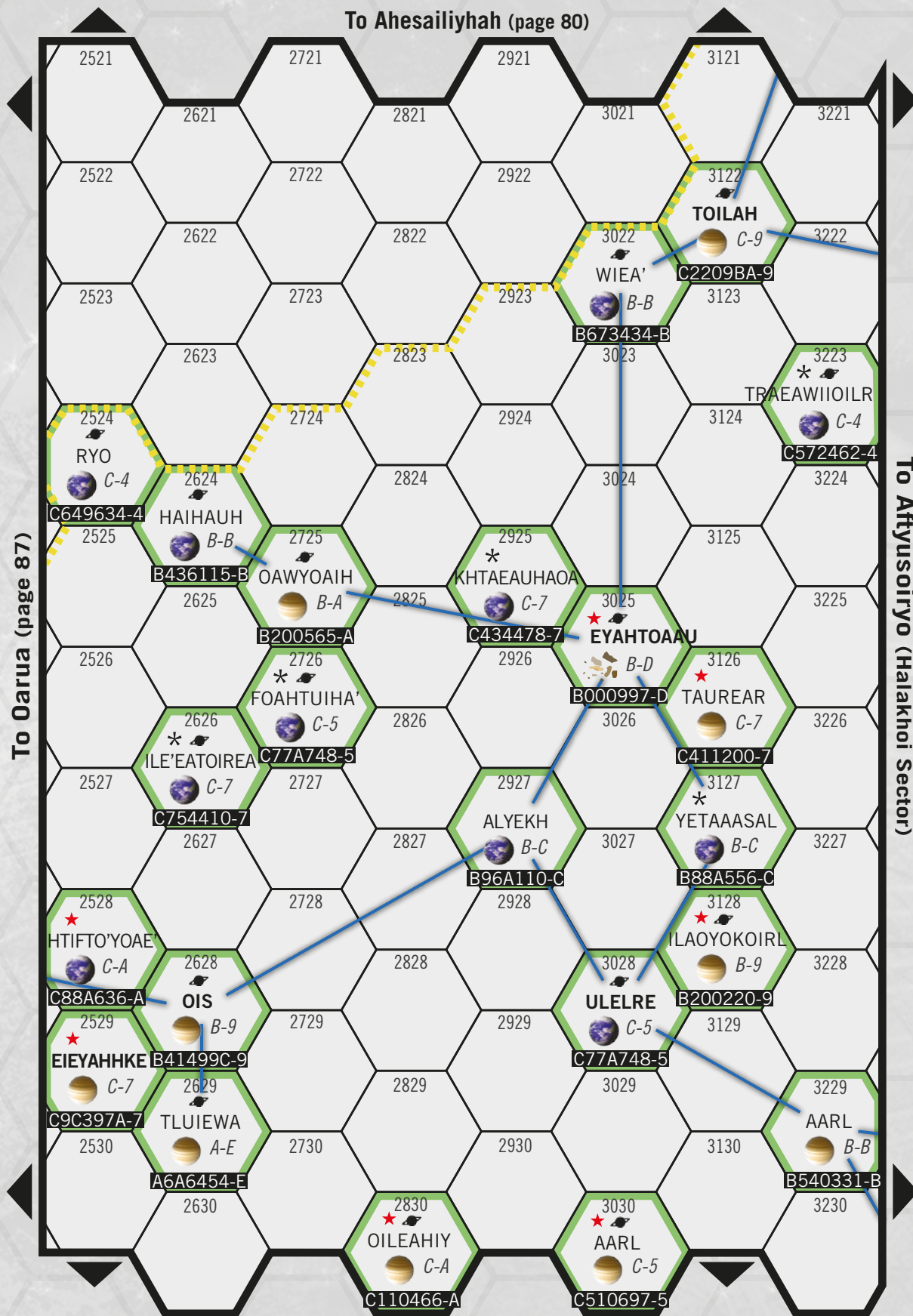


RYUWAHAH



SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Aarl	3030		C510697-5	Na Ni		Hierate	G
Alyekh	2927		B96A110-C	Lo Wa		Hierate	G
Eieyahke	2529	N	C9C397A-7	Fl Hi In		Hierate	
Eyahtoau	3025	N	B000997-D	As Hi In Na Va		Hierate	G
Foahtuiha'	2726	ACS	C77A748-5	Wa		Hierate	G
Haihauh	2624		B436115-B	Lo		Hierate	G
Htifo'yoae'	2528	N	C88A636-A	Ni Ri Wa		Hierate	
Hwe	3229		B540331-B	De Lo Po		Hierate	
Ilaoyokoiri	3128	N	B200220-9	Lo Va		Hierate	G
Ile'eatoirea	2626	ACS	C754410-7	Ni		Hierate	G
Khtaeauhaoa	2925	ACS	C434478-7	Ni		Hierate	
Oawyoaih	2725		B200565-A	Ni Va		Hierate	G
Oileahiy	2830	N	C110466-A	Ni		Hierate	G
Ois	2628		B41499C-9	Hi Ic In		Hierate	G
Ryo	2524		C649634-4	Ni		Hierate	G
Taurear	3126	N	C411200-7	Ic Lo		Hierate	
Tluiewa	2629		A6A6454-E	Fl Ni		Hierate	G
Toilah	3122		C2209BA-9	De Hi In Na Po		Hierate	G
Traewiioilr	3223	ACS	C572462-4	Ni		Hierate	G
Ulelre	3026		BA98999-8	Hi In		Hierate	G
Wiea'	3022		B673434-B	Ni		Hierate	G
Yetaaasal	3127	ACS	B88A556-C	Ni Wa		Hierate	



Afawahisa

RYUWAHAH SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- * Clan Base

- Secure System
- Hierate Border
- Trade Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Other Naval/Tlauku Base

The Ryuwaha subsector is prime real estate for an expanding interstellar power, and its worlds are more developed than those to spinward. The presence of jump-1 mains and clusters facilitated early exploration and expansion all the way to the rift's edge. The Aslan clans of this region do not seem interested in exploring the rift itself, concentrating instead on spreading along its fringes.

RYO

Ryo is a good example of an underfunded colony. Although sub-prime real estate with too much water and too little air, the world was attractive enough to be settled by several clans in competition. Wide separation with oceans in between ensured there was little conflict but – perhaps because the world was relatively forgiving – too little effort was made to ensure growth and stability of early colonies. The result was an inability to sustain equipment imported to start the colony and a gradual slide towards a more basic existence once the initial support missions ended.

Today, Ryo is subdivided into the territory of various clans, each controlling a small land mass or island chain. An advanced steam-powered civilisation has emerged,

implementing concepts remembered from the starfaring era by means of complex mechanical systems. The steamships of Ryo are the lifeblood of its economy, plying the deep oceans between scattered enclaves. Ships are occasionally lost to hostile action when some inter-clan dispute arises but a far greater threat comes from weather and the large creatures dwelling in the oceans.

Some seas are reasonably safe but crossing deep water is always a risk. Reports on what lurks in the depths are patchy but there are tales of vessels capsized or simply dragged under the water by some huge creature. Impacts on the hull are sometimes also heard and vessels are routinely checked for damage when they make port. To counter this threat, most ships are armed with a mix of guns, torpedoes and depth-charges, all of which can be turned upon rival vessels when needed.

Some offworld Aslan come to Ryo to hunt these great underwater beasts. The locals are not so keen to find them and would prefer to drive off the threat or exclude it from waterways with armed patrols or minefields and those hunting monsters for sport are looked upon as frivolous and perhaps dangerous for everyone else. Thus far, attacks have been sporadic and random but if the sea-monsters' breeding or feeding grounds are threatened they could turn hostile.

OKHOIKOIL

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Okhoikoil	280	10 m
SKILLS	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1, Survival 1	
ATTACKS	Bite or Head Bash (1DD)	
TRAITS	Armour (+18), Large (+10)	
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore, Killer	

The Okhoikoil is a huge oceanic predator resembling a three-headed plesiosaur. Only one of the 'heads' is actually that; the other two are massively elongated flippers used to grab prey – or components of a ship. Okhoikoil are quite capable of pulling a boat or small ship directly underwater.

The creature's body is streamlined and possesses powerful flippers that drive it at surprising speed, and it can dive to depths in excess of 800 metres for over an hour. There is some evidence that Okhoikoil have a natural enemy in the depths; corpses have been washed up on the shore with injuries inconsistent with any known Aslan weapon.

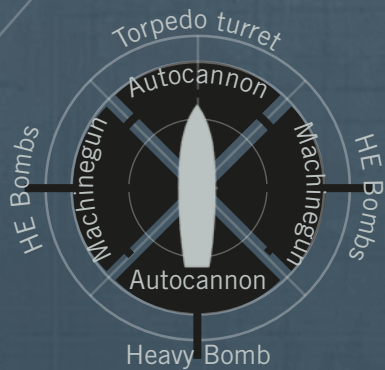
Okhoikoil are normally solitary but occasionally come together in groups of a dozen or more, presumably to breed. They lay claim to some islands and the shallow water around them, and even lurching up on to a beach from time-to-time. Although ungainly, they can move around on land almost as fast as a terrified human can run away from them. However, Okhoikoil are sea-dwellers and, for the most part stay out of sight of land. They have been known to attack ships on the open sea, usually by plucking crewmembers off the deck but occasionally by tipping up a smaller vessel and capsizing it.

ARMOUR

FRONT 6

REAR 6

SIDES 6



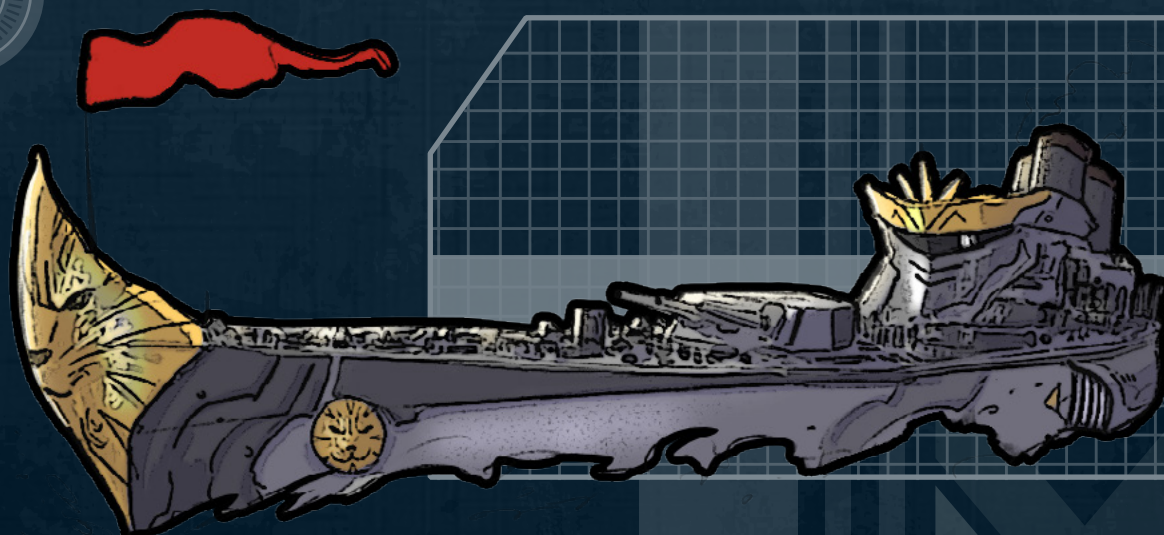
RYO STEAMSHIP

TL	4
SKILL	SEAFARER (SHIP)
AGILITY	-6
SPEED (CRUISE)	SLOW (IDLE)
RANGE (CRUISE)	3000 (4500)
CREW	26
PASSENGERS	UP TO 12
CARGO	1170 TONS
HULL	8000
SHIPPING	1000 TONS
COST	MCR30.3

TRAITS

None

- Autopilot (skill level)
- Communications (range)
- Navigation (Navigation DM)
- Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)
- Camouflage (Recon DM)
- Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)



WEAPONS

Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Heavy Bomb	-	3DD	4	Cr32000	AP 30, Blast 30, One Use	-
High-explosive Bomb	-	1DD	12	Cr18000	AP 20, Blast 20, One Use	-
Early Machinegun	400 m	3D	30	Cr100	Auto 3	-
Twin Light Autocannon	1	6D+6	500	Cr1000	Auto 3	-
Torpedo	1	1DD	6	Cr18000	AP 10, One Use, Smart	-

Hardpoint (heavy bomb, rear)
 Hardpoint (high-explosive bomb, left side) x 1
 Hardpoint (high-explosive bomb, right side) x 1
 Pintle Mounts (early machinegun, left side) x 4
 Pintle Mounts (early machinegun, right side) x 4
 Pintle Mount (twin light autocannon, front)
 Pintle Mount (twin light autocannon, rear)
 Turret (torpedo, front, left and right sides)

EQUIPMENT

Bunks x 40, Crane (medium) x 3,
 Freshers x 4, Galley (full, 30 people),

Internal Bay (25 tons), Internal Bay (15 tons), Internal Bay (5 tons) x 2, Mini-Galley, Staterooms x 12

DESCRIPTION

There are few standard ship designs on Ryo but the size of available slipways dictates the general tonnage of most craft. This example was built for a wealthy operator, who could afford to upgrade both the operating range and economical speed of his vessel. It is suitable for cargo runs or 'miscellaneous' operations, a euphemism on Ryo for attacks on other vessels. The shipping tonnage is about five times that of a typical Free Trader, equating to around 5,000 tons water displacement. The vessel has bays for four smaller craft, normally used to carry lifeboats and utility craft.

There are twelve staterooms, used by officers and guests, and bunks for up to 40 crew or low-paying passengers. Three large cranes allow quick cargo transfer even where there is no proper port available. Primary armament consists of four quick-firing 40mm

guns, equivalent to a light autocannon (although vastly more expensive at this Tech Level), trading volume of fire for greater explosive power. For anti-personnel work, there are eight machineguns mounted on the superstructure and along the rail.

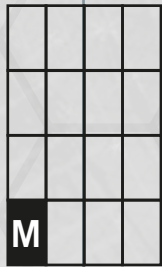
A bank of six rather basic unguided torpedoes is mounted on a pivoting turret at the bow, whilst aft are two rails each with twelve depth charges, equivalent to standard bombs. For extremely dangerous underwater targets, the vessel carries four heavy depth bombs, equivalent to heavy bombs, on hardpoints that allow them to be swung out over the side and dropped – ideally whilst the ship is speeding away!

HTAOEASEE



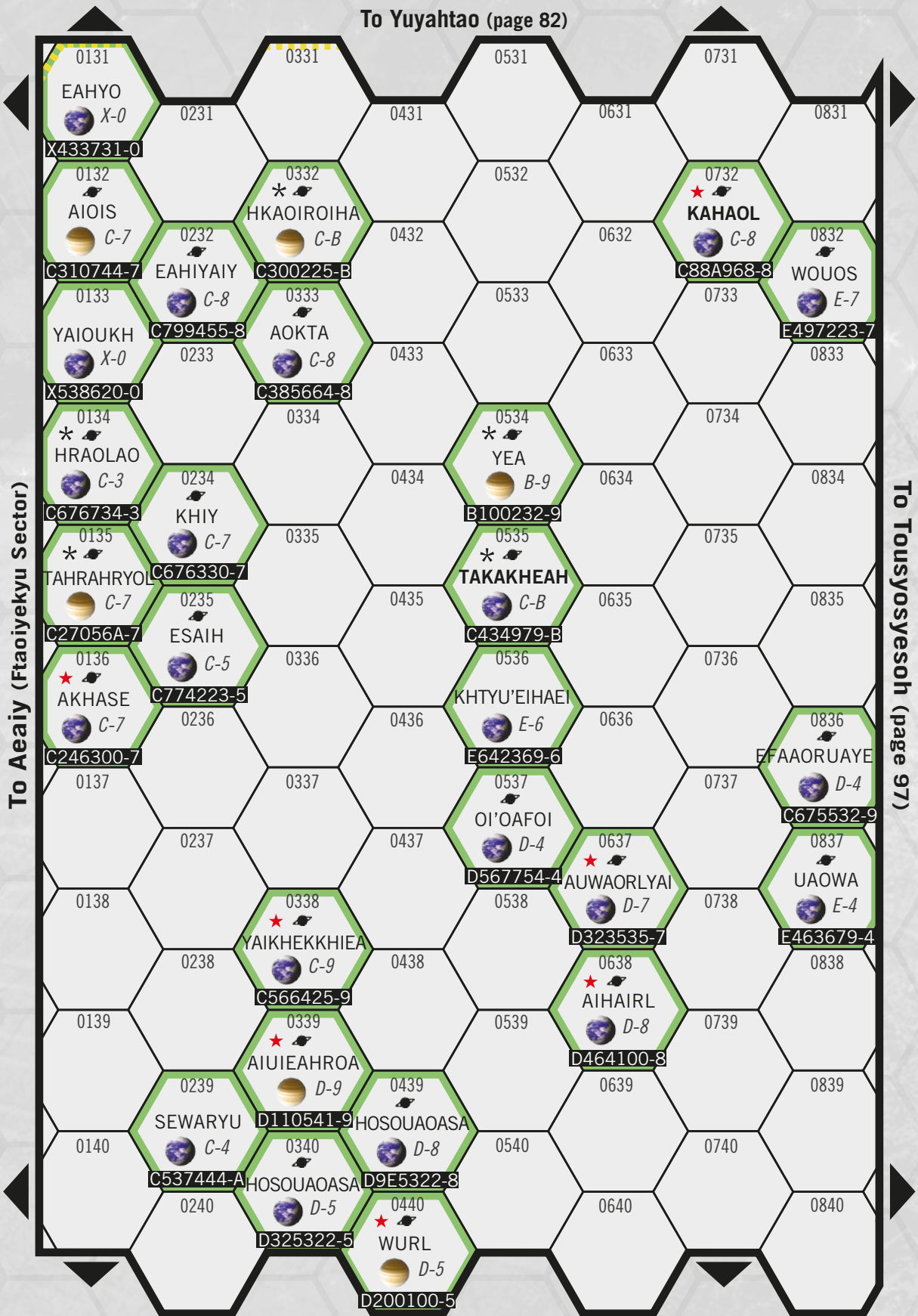
SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Aihairl	0638	N	D464100-8	Lo		Hierate	G
Aiois	0132		C310744-7	Na		Hierate	G
Aiuieahroa	0339	N	D110541-9	Ni		Hierate	G
Akhase	0136	N	C246300-7	Lo		Hierate	G
Aokta	0333		C385664-8	Ag Ni Ri		Hierate	G
Aouiyeieih	0340		D325322-5	Lo		Hierate	G
Auwaorlyai	0637	N	D323535-7	Ni Po		Hierate	G
Eahiyaiy	0232		C799455-8	Ni		Hierate	G
Eahyo	0131		X433731-0	Na Po		Hierate	
Efaaoruaye	0836	ACS	C675532-9	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Esaih	0235		C774223-5	Lo		Hierate	G
Hkaioiroiha	0332	ACS	C300225-B	Lo Va		Hierate	G
Hosouaoasa	0439		D9E5322-8	Lo		Hierate	G
Hraolao	0134	ACS	C676734-3	Ag		Hierate	G
Kahaol	0732	N	C88A968-8	Hi Wa		Hierate	G
Khiy	0234		C676330-7	Lo		Hierate	G
Khtyu'eihaei	0536		E642369-6	Lo Po		Hierate	
Oi'oafoi	0537		D567754-4	Ag Ri		Hierate	G
Sewaryu	0239		C537444-A	Ni		Hierate	
Tahrahryol	0135	ACS	C27056A-7	De Ni		Hierate	G
Takakheah	0535	ACS	C434979-B	Hi		Hierate	G
Uaowa	0837		E463679-4	Ni Ri		Hierate	G
Wouos	0832		E497223-7	Lo		Hierate	G
Wurl	0440	N	D200100-5	Lo Va		Hierate	G
Yaikhekhiea	0338	N	C566425-9	Ni		Hierate	G
Yaioukh	0133		X538620-0	Ni		Hierate	
Yea	0534	ACS	B100232-9	Lo Va		Hierate	G



Afawahisa

HTAOEASEE SUBSECTOR



Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Clan Base

Secure System
Hierate Border

Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Other Naval/Tlauku Base

Htaoeasee lies entirely within the Aslan Hierate, with a large stellar cluster extending to spinward-coreward into the Aeaiy sector. This cluster has not yet been fully absorbed into the Hierate, with the result that there is steady movement of *ihatei* bands in this direction. Several naval and exploration bases exist on the worlds of the subsector, partly to facilitate *ihatei* activity and partly to inhibit it when the *ihatei* go in an undesirable direction.

YAIIOUKH

Yaioukh recently changed hands after a clan dispute and colonists eagerly moved in despite the world's very thin atmosphere. They soon discovered their new homeworld was no prize and several of the initial landings were hurriedly withdrawn after being overrun by the local wildlife. Yaioukh is home to a variety of hostile creatures, many of which resemble heavily protected crustaceans requiring significant firepower to repel. Being Aslan, the colonists were anything but defenceless and their willingness to fight for new homes led to heavy casualties that could have been avoided by a more expeditious retreat.

The second round of landings were conducted with military organisation, setting up walled compounds from which the colonists began aggressively taming the local environment. Armed parties conducted sweeps of the area whilst technical squads set up inventive traps and lures. Whilst others might consider the colonisation of Yaioukh to be a horribly dangerous and frightening business, the Aslan seem to be enjoying the challenge.



The population and Tech Level figures for the world are misleading if taken at face value – the population refers to landholders assigned territories to pacify and the Tech Level reflects the fact that everything the colonists need must be shipped in from elsewhere. There is no industry on Yaioukh and precious little agriculture. Once enough territory has been pacified, these activities will begin in earnest but for now the world is more a war zone than colony.

Matters are not helped by rivalry among landowners trying to outdo one another for how much territory they can get under control by the next meeting. The clanlord's share of imported supplies goes to whoever has increased their territory the most since the last gathering, a measure intended to encourage competition but has resulted in forces being spread very thin and pointless risks being taken daily.

The war against Yaioukh's native life has produced several near-legendary figures including several inventive female trappers alongside male warriors. Some of the latter have taken to outdoing one another in their risk-taking, hunting giant armoured crustaceans armed only with a pistol or bow. Life expectancies are short for such daredevils but many consider earning fame is more important than a long life.

UAOWA

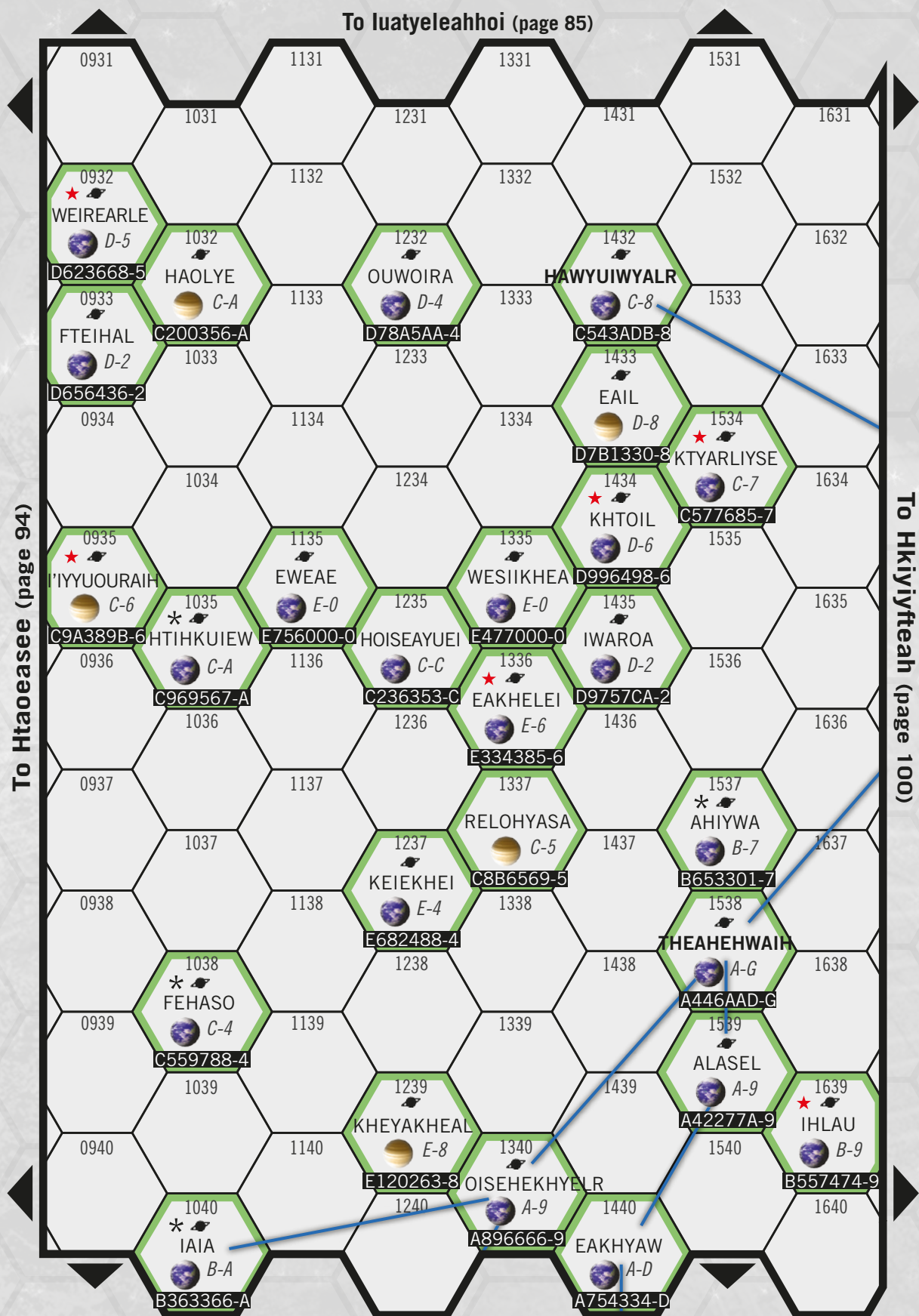
Uaowa is a reserve world jointly owned by several powerful clans, each maintaining its own enclaves and settlements, which are off-limits to outsiders. Beyond these enclaves is a population of around one million Aslan with little connection to the wider universe. Uaowa is a popular venue for inter-clan conferences, with carefully maintained outdoor ranges for recreation and hunting located conveniently close to luxurious villas. Some smaller resorts are used to reward successful clan members or grant an honourable retirement to those whose prowess is beginning to fade. This does not necessarily mean elders; some granted an estate on Uaowa are quite young and may have had a lot of promise but have been shunted aside. It might be possible to find a well-connected, resentful incompetent on Uaowa and make use of his misplaced ambitions for some political scheme.



TOUSYOSYESOH

SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Ahiywa	1537	ACS	B653301-7	Lo Po		Hierate	G
Alasel	1539		A42277A-9	Na Po		Hierate	G
Eail	1434	N	D7B1330-8	FI Lo		Hierate	G
Eakhelei	1336		E334385-6	Lo		Hierate	G
Eakhyaw	1440		A754334-D	Lo		Hierate	
Eweae	1135		E756000-0	Ba Ga		Hierate	G
Fehaso	1038	ACS	C559788-4			Hierate	G
Fteihal	0933		D656436-2	Ni Ga		Hierate	G
Haolye	1032		C200356-A	Lo Va		Hierate	G
Hawyuiwyalr	1432		C543ADB-8	Hi In Po		Hierate	G
Hoiseayuei	1235		C236353-C	Lo		Hierate	G
Htihkuiew	1035	ACS	C969567-A	Ni		Hierate	G
I'yyuouraih	0935	N	C9A389B-6	FI		Hierate	G
Iaia	1040	ACS	B363366-A	Lo		Hierate	G
Ihlau	1639	N	B557474-9	Ni		Hierate	G
Keiekhei	1237		E682488-4	Ni		Hierate	G
Kheyakheal	1239		E120263-8	De Lo Po		Hierate	G
Khtoil	1435		D996498-6	Ni		Hierate	G
Ktyarliyse	1534	N	C577685-7	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Oisehekyhelr	1340	ACS	A896666-9	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Ouwaira	1232		D78A5AA-4	Ni Wa		Hierate	G
Relohyasa	1337		C8B6569-5	FI Ni		Hierate	
Teahehwaih	1538		A446AAD-G	Hi In		Hierate	G
Weirearle	0932	N	D623668-5	Na Ni Po		Hierate	G
Wesiikhea	1335		E477000-0	Ba		Hierate	G



Afawahisa

TOUSYOSYESOH SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Other Naval/Tlauku Base
- Secure System
- Hirate Border
- Trade Route
- Clan Base

The Tousyosyesoh subsector contains a handful of well-developed worlds with good starports, plus a much greater number of new or disputed colonies. Naval and exploration-support installations are common, although these vary from well-established and smoothly run facilities to ramshackle temporary bases cobbled together from bits of damaged starships, shipping containers and whatever else happened to be available. Open conflict had been going on in the subsector for some years, beginning as territorial disputes but in some cases growing into multi-sided feuds based on a desire for revenge or attempts to regain lost status. The entire subsector should be considered highly dangerous – even by the normal standards of the Hierate – by outsiders for the foreseeable future.

TEAHEHWAIH

Teahehwaih is potentially one of the most important worlds in the Aslan Hierate, for with its combination of extremely advanced technology and enormous population, Teahehwaih could be an industrial powerhouse driving the expansion of the entire Hierate. However, there are significant difficulties as Teahehwaih suffers from what might be termed an excessive drag on its capabilities, a problem not likely to be overcome soon.

The huge population, numbering over ninety billion, requires enormous support, even on a habitable world like Teahehwaih, and much of the output from the industrial zones is expended on maintaining the

cities. This could be offset (if not eliminated) by good management, perhaps selling TL15 products from Teahehwaih to buy far greater amounts of lower-tech (but still very advanced) goods, tools and materials from other worlds.

The fragmented nature of the Hierate throws obstacles in the way of such an endeavour on a regular basis. One problem is rivalry – Teahehwaih cannot be permitted to achieve its full potential if rivals are to avoid eclipse, so rather than integrate the world into the interstellar trade network to mutual benefit, other rulers impede its progress. A significant segment of the world's advanced industrial output is also expended – wasted might be a better word – on gifts and what amount to bribes to political rivals. As a result, little is left to invest in further progress.

Questions have been asked about how Teahehwaih achieved its incredible technical sophistication. The answer is surprisingly mundane – a combination of wise investment and well-directed exploration. Teahehwaih benefited from alien technology discovered on remote worlds but claims that its inhabitants are sitting on a treasure trove of Ancients artefacts are untrue. Most of breakthroughs came from taking an innovative approach to problems, often influenced by examining the mindset of other races. Teahehwaih's explorers did not find technology waiting for them on the worlds they explored; what they found were ideas and alternate viewpoints that enabled their scientists to tackle problems others had given up on.

TAS

TOUSYOSYESOH

A subsector wide
TRAVEL WARNING
is in effect.

Travellers are advised
EXTREME CAUTION

SHOW DETAILS

HKIYIYFTEAH



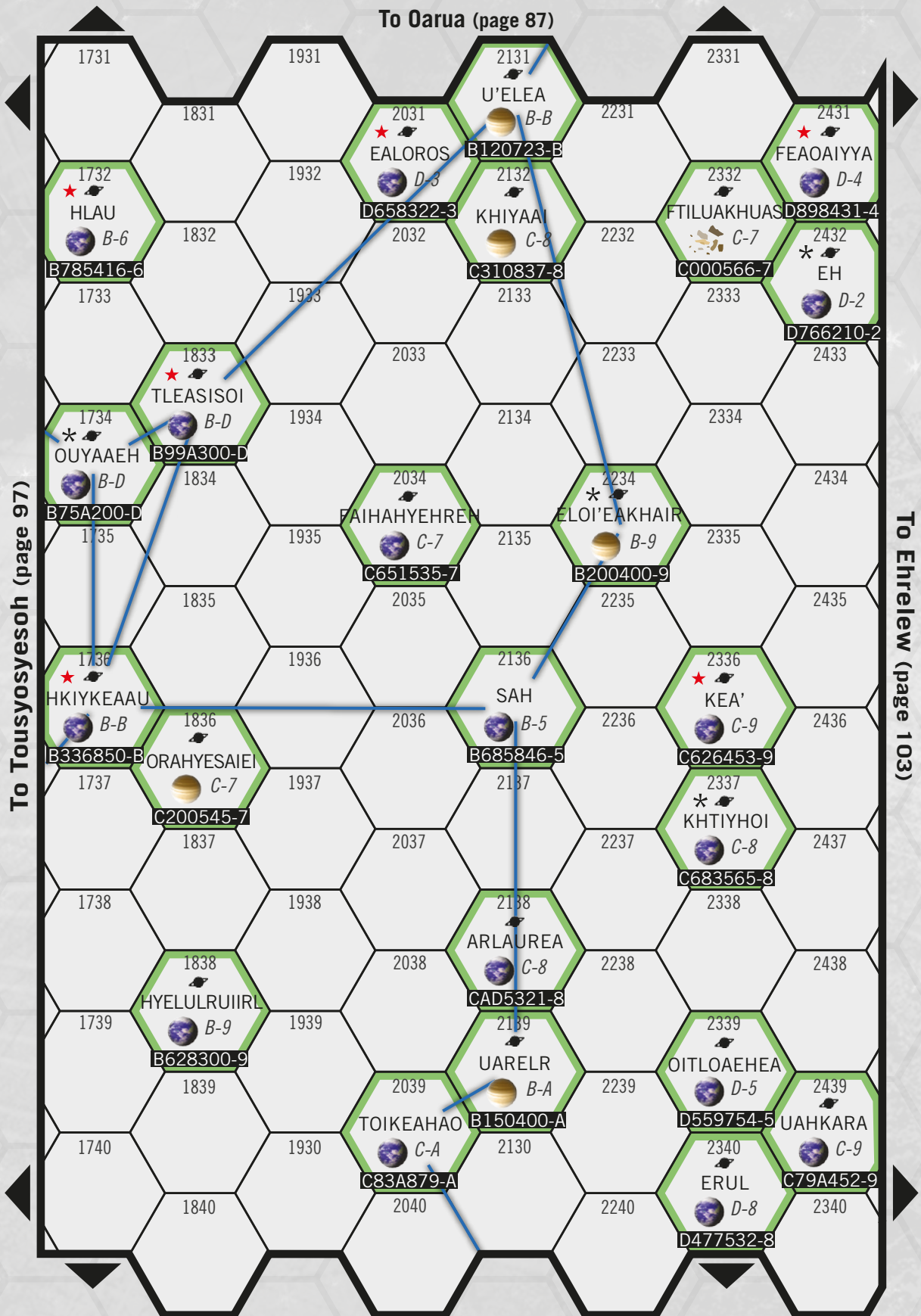
SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Arlaurea	2138		CAD5321-8	Lo		Hierate	G
Ealoros	2031	N	D658322-3	Lo		Hierate	G
Eh	2432	ACS	D766210-2	Lo Ga		Hierate	G
Eloi'eakhair	2234	ACS	B200400-9	Ni Va		Hierate	
Erul	2340		D477532-8	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Faihahyehreh	2034		C651535-7	Ni Po		Hierate	G
Feaoaiyya	2431	N	D898431-4	Ni		Hierate	G
Ftiluakhuas	2332		C000566-7	As Ni Va		Hierate	G
Hkiykeaau	1736	N	B336850-B			Hierate	G
Hlau	1732	N	B785416-6	Ni Ga		Hierate	G
Hyelulruiirl	1838		B628300-9	Lo		Hierate	G
Kea'	2336	N	C626453-9	Ni		Hierate	G
Khiyaai	2132		C310837-8	Na		Hierate	G
Khtiyhoi	2337	ACS	C683565-8	Ni		Hierate	G
Oitloaehea	2339		D559754-5			Hierate	G
Orahyesaiei	1836		C200545-7	Ni Va		Hierate	G
Ouyaaeh	1734	ACS	B75A200-D	Lo Wa		Hierate	G
Sah	2136		B685846-5	Ga Ri		Hierate	
Tleaisoi	1833	N	B99A300-D	Lo Wa		Hierate	G
Toikeahao	2039		C83A879-A	Wa		Hierate	
U'elea	2131		B120723-B	De Na Po		Hierate	G
Uahkara	2439		C79A452-9	Ni Wa		Hierate	G
Uarelr	2139		B150400-A	De Ni Po		Hierate	G



Afawahisa

HKMYFTEAH SUBSECTOR



- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- * Clan Base

- Secure System
- Hierate Border
- Trade Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroids
- Other Naval/Tlauku Base

Hkiyyfteah is a typical *ihatei* frontier region, with a few islands of well-developed stability amid a sea of disputed territories and contested star systems. This has hampered the economic development of the region, as trade routes are frequently disrupted by fighting and ports are suddenly closed to allies (or in some cases, everyone). Control of major ports will probably be the key to dominance in the subsector but that day is far away.

EALOROS

Ealoros is an undeveloped world with a small population, of little consequence in and of itself. The system is of strategic importance as the site of a *Tlaukhu* naval base, protecting important trade and communications routes through Ue'lea and patrolling the cluster of worlds to spinward-coreward along the fringe of the Great Rift.

Tlaukhu bases tend to be smaller and closer together than the naval installations of the Third Imperium, with forces more evenly distributed. Most vessels are small combatants suited to patrol and commerce protection, backed up by heavier units optimised for warfighting. The likely opponents of these vessels are internal to the Hierate, typically clan forces whose leaders have strayed too far from the dictates of the *Tlaukhu* and require correction. Such vessels tend to be smaller than warships of major powers, so can be outclassed by

relatively modest vessels such as the destroyers or light cruisers based at Ealoros.

The base also plays host to a small trans-rift force, which contains far more tankers and support vessels than warships. Capabilities of these ships are modest compared to a conventional naval asset of a similar tonnage but tend to be pressed into service as long-range or fast-response units rather than operating in the Great Rift or along its fringes.

The fleet at Ealoros is not unified in the same way that of a major power would be but is instead made up of assets contributed by the major clans of the *Tlaukhu*. These generally have a common interest and should, in theory, be able to operate smoothly together but even without clan disputes breaking up the command structure, personal differences between officers have been known to derail an operation.

At the present time, there are major rifts in the fleet, stemming from perceived insults and a tendency to favour officers from certain clans over those who have contributed greater forces. Great care must be taken over which ships serve together or encounter one another on patrol; although it is unlikely that vessels would fire upon one another, subtle attempts to get one over on a rival have been known to spiral into a major incident.



EHRELEW

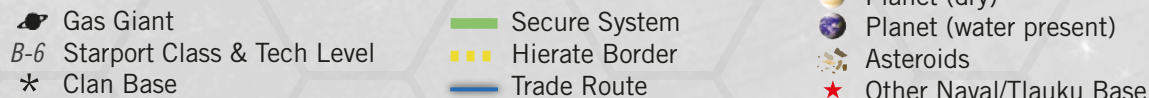


SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Code	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Ahiyeyoloi	3133		E454243-7	Lo		Hierate	G
Aihea	3132		C796983-7	Hi In		Hierate	G
Aihya'ekha	3033	ACS	C898865-8			Hierate	G
Aiyr	2732		C6B1430-9	FI Ni		Hierate	
Alikh	2933		C447988-B	Hi In		Hierate	G
Auoiwah	2832		E767300-5	Lo Ga		Hierate	G
Auwyu	3140		B373889-8			Hierate	G
Eaaoostiei	3234		E110565-9	Ni		Hierate	G
Ealeakeharer	2635		C332776-8	Na Po		Hierate	G
Eawa'iyakhye	2540		E100636-9	Na Ni Va		Hierate	G
Ehfau	2631		E233744-8	Na Po		Hierate	G
Elyahehe	2733		E580100-4	De Lo		Hierate	G
Hkyahkarleaw	2637		B8C1679-9	FI Ni		Hierate	G
Hoatyusariy	2836		B89A786-9	Wa		Hierate	G
Htiyuw	2831		E688520-7	Ag Ni		Hierate	G
Htyoheweya	2537		E130202-6	De Lo Po		Hierate	G
Iiheirilos	2633		C687224-7	Lo Ga		Hierate	
Iyarearli'	3035		C310420-7	Ni		Hierate	G
Iyeihte	2731		C7A4766-4	FI		Hierate	G
Iyrylehkekh	3232		E555120-4	Lo		Hierate	G
Kaeakhihta	3039	ACS	B232664-8	Na Ni Po		Hierate	G
Khouaai	2931	N	D659955-9	Hi		Hierate	G
Koas	3240		C6867A9-8	Ag Ga Ri		Hierate	G
Oiiyrerei	2639		D657100-3	Lo Ga		Hierate	G
Roayo	3136		E696345-5	Lo		Hierate	G
Seaihyuki	3138		B796122-9	Lo		Hierate	
Stouoihalra	2634		E8C4965-4	FI Hi In		Hierate	G
Tloilrea	2932		E89A468-6	Ni Wa		Hierate	
Toasoih	2734		E555401-8	Ni		Hierate	
Uasyulaor	3131		C000548-7	As Ni Va		Hierate	G
Yewooa	3032		E37157C-5	Ni		Hierate	G

			P

EHRELEW SUBSECTOR



The coreward end of the Ehrelew subsector is dominated by a large jump-1 star cluster, facilitating rapid economic growth. The region is more stable than some nearby subsectors and, as a result, has been a jumping-off point for expeditions elsewhere. This has been a drain on the subsector's resources, resulting in a long local recession that has only recently ended. If previous patterns are followed, Ehrelew will enjoy a new period of economic expansion that will then slow as a new torrent of ihatei begins to expand outwards again.

AIHEA

Aihea is, in many ways, a typical world of the Aslan Hierate and a billion or so inhabitants are divided among numerous clans, each with its own territory. One result of this fragmented social situation is that industrial and economic activity is inefficient compared to a society under a single world government. Indeed, one reason why many worlds in the Hierate do not enjoy a higher Tech Level is a lack of economies of scale. That is not to say the whole of Aihea is restricted to TL7; some clans have invested in high technology machinery and thus gained an economic advantage, stimulating progress among others and inducing clans to make investments they cannot afford to avoid being left behind.

EAAOOASTIEI

Eaaoostiei is the mainworld of an important star system but the world itself is of little consequence. Although well situated in the system's continuous habitable zone, Eaaoostiei has several peculiarities that make it unsuitable for large-scale habitation. The mainworld orbits head first; that is, its north pole is steeply inclined such that it points along the orbital path, creating significant seasonal variations and inhibiting the development of life even if Eaaoostiei had a thicker atmosphere.

Not surprisingly, the mainworld is sparsely inhabited and has little industry of its own. Few ships visit and the planet is largely forgotten about. However, the remainder of the system sees a great deal of activity, all of which uses the commercial highport orbiting

Eaaoostiei as a hub. The system's gas giant moons, rocky planets and planetoid belt are all extensively mined, with in-system ore freighters plying back and forth on a constant basis. Some clans have set up factories at the extraction sites or deployed large factory ships on a more temporary basis. Most prefer to haul raw ore to the highport where it is smelted in a large heavy-industry zone and shipped to nearby industrial worlds.

The mining flotillas and ore haulers have proven to be attractive targets during recent clan disputes, resulting in the deployment of a large force of escorts and other small warships. This deterred external raiding but proved a double-edged sword during a recent inter-clan dispute; the destruction of industrial assets was relatively minor but at the cost of a great many combat vessels expended in raids and interceptions. Most of the clans involved have begun crash programmes to rebuild their forces, with some seeking a decisive advantage by investing in expensive, high-quality vessels and others buying obsolescent craft from any seller in the hope of gaining a quick advantage. This behaviour suggests a resumption of hostilities is expected by at least some involved.

STOUOIHALRA

Stouoihalra is a hellworld with an insidious atmosphere. Like many such planets, it offered the chance to extract exotic compounds with relative ease and was colonised primarily for industrial purposes. However, expansion of the original settlements outpaced sustainability, resulting in the creation of barely habitable and overpopulated cities. The world has become a money pit for the clans who invested in it, with a billion or so inhabitants held hostage by an environment that will quickly kill them if support is withdrawn. The only upside is that Stouoihalra has become a recruiting ground for desperate young Aslan who will take any job to get out. Military units and work gangs are recruited wholesale on planet, then shipped off for training. Few who join such formations dream of returning, having made their fortune – for almost everyone on Stouoihalra, the goal is to get offworld and stay away.