GURPS *Traveller*
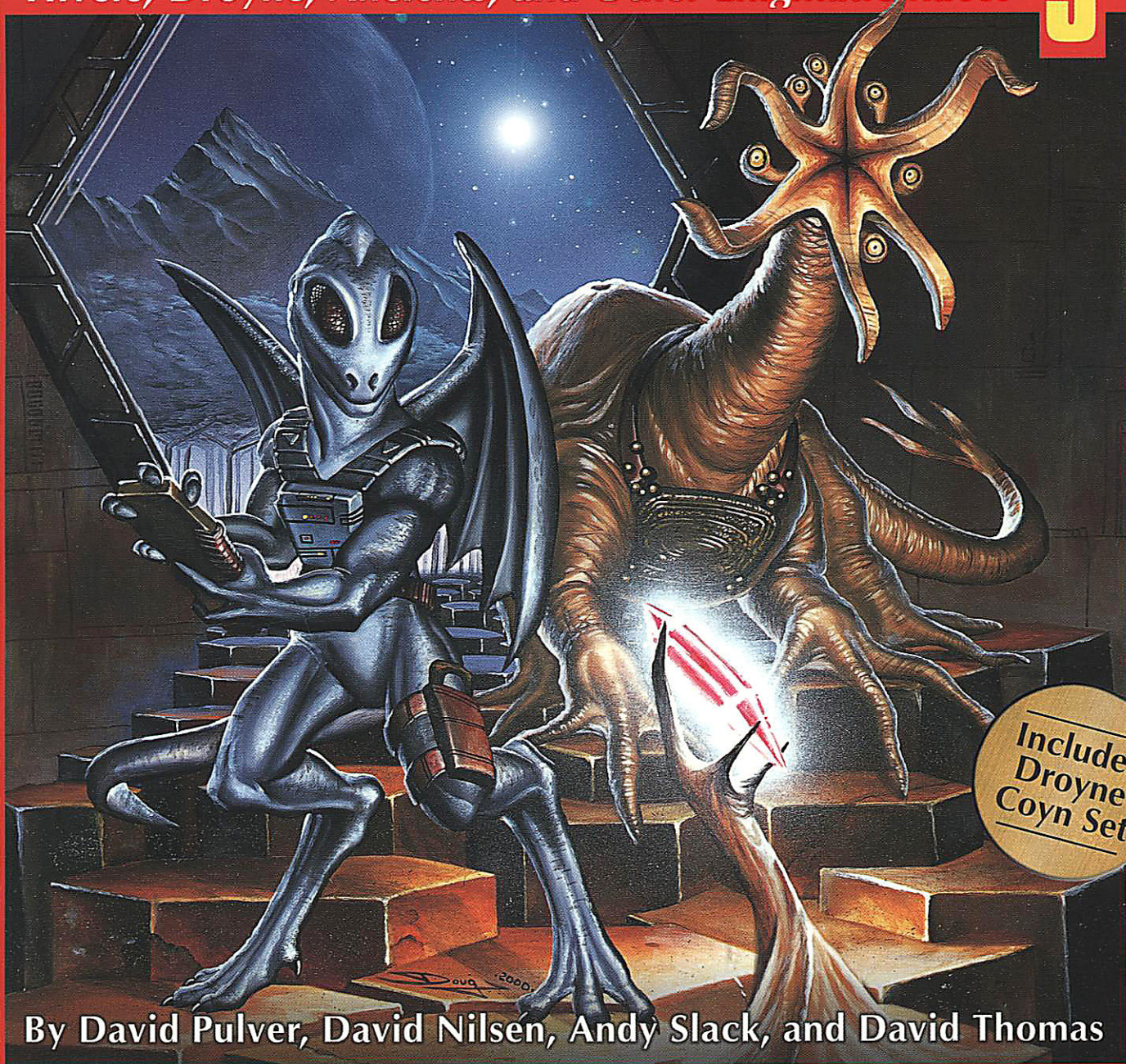
ALIEN RACES 3

Hivers, Droyne, Ancients, and Other Enigmatic Races
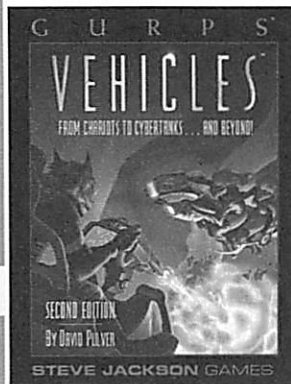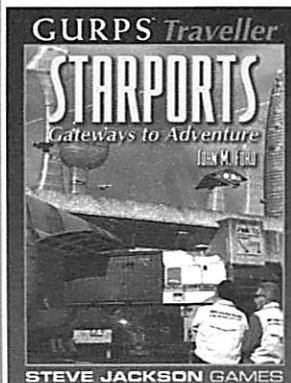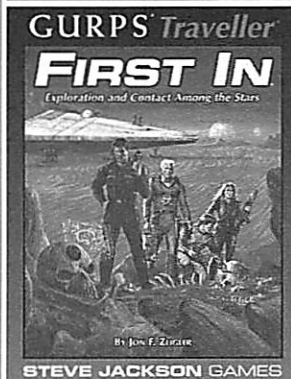
3
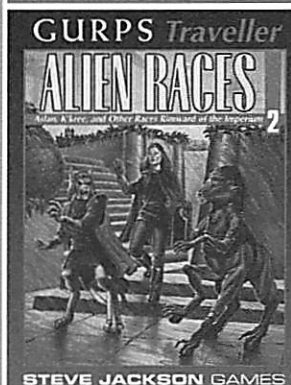
Includes Droyne Coyn Set

By David Pulver, David Nilsen, Andy Slack, and David Thomas

STEVE JACKSON GAMES
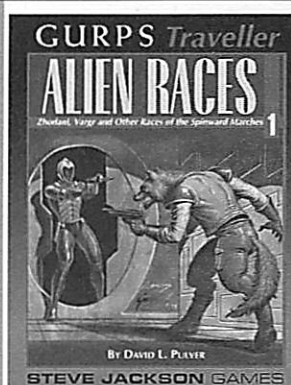
GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1

The human-descended Zhodani have long embraced psi powers, in contrast to the persecution that psis suffer within the Imperium. The Vargr are a race of aliens descended from transplanted Terran canines. Both are formidable rivals to Imperial power in the Spinward Marches sector.

Alien Races 1 has everything you need to set a campaign in the Zhodani Consulate or Vargr Extents.

GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 2

The second book in the *GURPS Traveller* Alien Races series, *Alien Races 2* addresses the biology, home worlds, culture, and society of the fierce Aslan, the centaurian K'kree, and two minor species. It details their historical involvement with the Imperium, from first contact to present, and presents racial templates, rules for playing alien characters, and examples of unique technologies and ship designs.

GURPS Traveller: First In

Beyond the borders of the Third Imperium, the Interstellar Scout Service seeks out strange new worlds! A Scout has to be ready for anything . . . or die. This book describes the Scouts' organization, equipment, starships and typical missions. To make running a Scouts campaign easy, it also details the whole process of exploration, from the initial sighting of a new star system to the integration of a world into the Imperium.
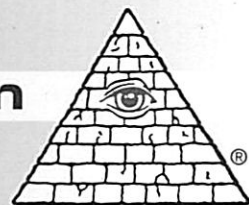
GURPS Traveller: Starports

Patrol, trade and Xboat routes are the lifelines of the Imperium, and starports are the anchors to which they are tethered. Serving as trade centers, customs offices and outposts of civilization in far-flung systems, they play a central role in the lives of starfarers, and are a crucial source of goods, wealth and information for even the most planetbound of souls. At the same time, they are havens for smugglers, fugitives and black marketeers.

GURPS Vehicles

GURPS Vehicles is your guide to any type of transportation you can imagine. From rowboats to racing cars, balloons to battlesuits. Greek galleys to GEVs – if you can dream it, you can design it.

The second edition streamlines the design process, using the design order found in *GURPS Robots*, also by David Pulver.

GURPS® Traveller® ALIEN RACES 3

Hivers, Droyne, Ancients, and Other Enigmatic Races

3

By DAVID NILSEN, DAVID PULVER,
ANDY SLACK, AND DAVID THOMAS

*Based on the award-winning Traveller
science fiction universe by* MARC MILLER

Edited by
GENE SEABOLT AND LOREN WISEMAN

Additional material by
CARLOS ALOS-FERRAR AND
DAVID P. SUMMERS

Continuity checking by STEVE JACKSON

Illustrated by
JESSE DEGRAFF, GLENN GRANT,
ED NORTHCOTT, AND SEAN MURRAY

Maps and deck plans by
ANDREW AKINS, ALEX FERNANDEZ,
AND MARK COOK

Additional illustrations by
RICK ACHBERGER AND ALEX FERNANDEZ

Cover by DOUG SHULER

Coyns by ALEX FERNANDEZ

*Playtesters: John Buston, Nelson Cunningham,
Anthony Jackson, Thom Jones-Low, K. David Ladage,
Phil Masters, Tony Moore, Hans Rancke-Madsen,
C.J. Owen, Robert Prior, Tony Prior, Anna Slack,
Giulia Slack, and Christopher Thrash.*

GMG '00

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Contents

CONTENTS

Introduction

This book contains detailed descriptions of four important alien races for the *GURPS Traveller* milieu.

The Hivers are the most alien of the major races, from the Human standpoint. They are mute, six-limbed, and possess an amazing biology, but their most exotic features are psychological. They lack emotion, fear violent confrontations, and still are capable of manipulating entire races to serve their purposes.

The Droyne are a winged race existing on dozens of scattered worlds. They seem content to live placid, pastoral existences. Thus, researchers were shocked to discover that the Droyne were a major race, having had jump drives longer than any other race. Not only that, but they are currently believed to be the descendants of the all-powerful Ancients, who once reshaped the galaxy.

The two new "minor races" described in these pages, the Lithkind and the Inheritors, provide a pair of alien cultures strikingly different from Humans.

All these races are intended to serve both as NPCs and PCs. Previous books in this series portrayed the Aslan, K'kree, Vargr, and Zhodani. The fourth book will illustrate several minor races of note.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Andy Slack has been playing and writing about *Traveller* since 1977, and playing *GURPS* since its beginnings. He is a project manager in the software industry living in Hampshire, U.K. with his wife, Constanza, son, Nicolas, and daughters, Anna and Giulia. He is a member of BITS (British Isles *Traveller* Support – **www.bits.org.uk**), and a technophile who wrote his share of this book on a palmtop computer while traveling between offices.

David Thomas lives and works in London. He has been playing *Traveller* and *GURPS* longer than he can remember. Like Andy, he is a member of BITS. Unlike Andy, he has the requisite two cats.

David Pulver is a game designer and author based in Kingston, Ontario. David's published work includes more than two dozen RPG sourcebooks, including *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races I* and *GURPS Vehicles*.

David Nilsen is a former employee of GDW, where he was the *Traveller* line manager for several years. He currently lives in Kentucky, and is a civilian consultant for the U.S. Army. Dave has written many products for *Traveller: The New Era*, including *Aliens of the Rim: Hiver and Ithklur*.

ABOUT THE LINE EDITOR

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publishers of *Traveller,* and spent more than 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced for a time, and then came to SJ Games, where he is *Traveller* line editor and expert-in-residence.

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

The long-running *Traveller* magazine is now online at **www.sjgames.com/jtas/**, edited by Loren Wiseman. It supports all versions of *Traveller* with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are $15/year for 52 weekly updates and full access to archives.

The *Traveller News Service* is updated weekly, chronicling the life and times of the Imperium, and is viewable *free* at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/ news.html**. The SJ Games *Traveller* page (**www.sjgames.com/traveller/**) links to the *Traveller* Web Ring, which includes most of the major *Traveller*-oriented websites. For information on subscribing to the *Traveller* mailing list, contact traveller-owner@mpgn.com.

The Hivers

The Hivers are the most atypical of the major races. While all the other major races are vocal, bipedal, and bilaterally symmetrical, the Hivers are mute, squat, and hexapodal.

The radical difference in appearance between the five erect races and the ground-hugging Hivers is the least of the shocks to non-Hivers. To races used to communicating via sound, the silence that characterizes Hiver interaction is unnerving. For non-Hivers, it is easy to populate those silences with imagined conspiracies and sinister forces – but then it can be said that the Hivers themselves tend to imagine the same forces at work!

The Hivers dominate 10 sectors to the rimward/trailing of the Imperium. They share a border with the Solomani Confederation and maintain a narrow demilitarized zone between themselves and the Two Thousand Worlds of the K'kree. Their trailing frontier apparently holds little interest for them; they are more intrigued by exploring the potential of the races they have already met.

The Hivers seem unlikely rulers. Openly cooperative, apparently pacifistic, reportedly cowardly, they are even less likely expansionists. Although they have the complete support of 170 allied races, including minor Human races and the Ithklur (reputedly the toughest troops in charted space), they have fought only one major war, which they won after losing all the battles. Inscrutable, patient, and subtle, they puzzle their neighbors more than they worry them.

It should be the other way around.
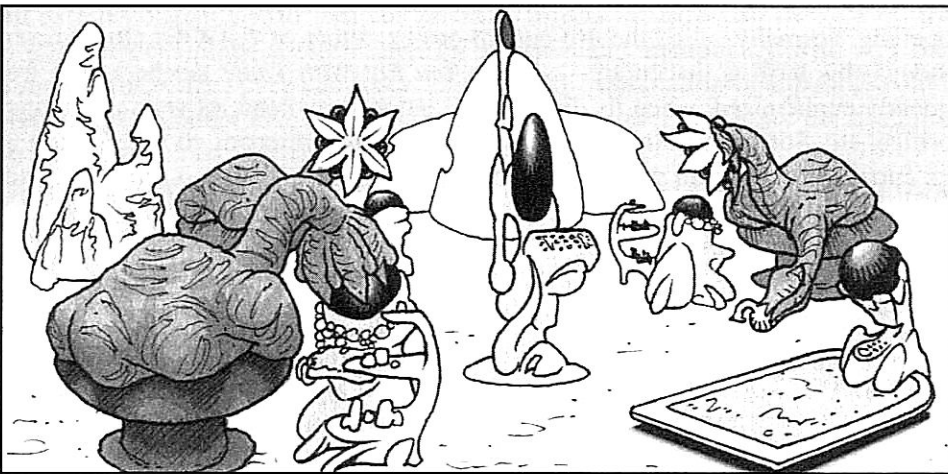
PHYSIOLOGY

To Solomani observers, Hivers at rest look a bit like starfish: pinkish brown, pebbly-skinned creatures with six flexible arms radiating from a large dome-shaped central body. However, an active Hiver does not give this same impression. Although their gross morphology is a sixfold radial symmetry, the six limbs have evolved specialized uses so that the Hivers exhibit a bilaterally symmetrical functionality.

Hiver Names

Each Hiver has several names, one used only in its nest, and one or more for use with other races. A yearling is assigned a nest name when it is adopted by a nest, and keeps that name for the remainder of its life, even when it goes to another nest. These names are never revealed to non-Hivers, and are seldom revealed to non-nest members.

Each Hiver chooses several names for dealings outside the nest, one in Gurvin for use with non-nest-member Hivers, and one for each race the Hiver has dealings with (normally a single word, sometimes two, rarely three or more). Hivers often devote great care to the selection of their names, and most try to choose one that has relevance to their occupation; others simply choose a name at random. A merchant dealing with Solomani might choose to be called Marco Polo or Fugger. A Hiver traveling in the Imperium to study Human history might choose Herodotus or Toynbee; a botanist might choose Linnaeus or Rosebud. It is common for a Hiver to use several names for dealing with different races or linguistic groups. A Hiver known as Kigiisii to Vilani might choose to be called Sherman to Galanglic speakers and Helmut to Swordic speakers.

Characters from Hiver history will be assigned names where necessary. Sometimes these names will be relevant, sometimes not (M. Primus and M. Eneri are two examples of the latter). This is done by whatever nest translates a document first.

Interesting Smell You Have

Only half the Hivers have a sense of smell. The ancestral species had the sense, but the Hivers themselves lost the ability at some point. A working nose re-emerged following the ice age, but has yet to propagate throughout the gene pool. Until it does, those who possess it go to remarkable lengths to take advantage of their ability, collecting, recording, reproducing, and synthesizing interesting aromas. Hivers being Hivers, they waste no time telling their anosmic colleagues what they are missing, especially with regard to food.

While each of the six limbs terminates in a six-fingered hand, one of the limbs additionally carries the Hiver's sensory organs. The most noticeable of these are the six eyes, each on its own stalk between a pair of splayed fingers. The limb directly opposite the sensory limb has a specialized reproductive function.

With the sensory limb held upright, swiveling around to observe its environment, and the reproductive limb folded beneath the central body, an active Hiver more resembles a broad, squat quadruped than a sprawling starfish.

Resting on the ground, Hivers measure about 3′ to the domed top of their central body, and 10′ from outstretched arm-tip to arm-tip. In their usual stance, sensory limb raised, they are about 5′ tall at their highest point. On average, they weigh 330 lbs.

EXTERNAL ANATOMY

Hivers are laid out simply, with a central body containing the vital organs, and six evenly spaced limbs extending out from it.

Their outer covering of skin is tough and leathery, with a rough, pebbly texture over the dorsal surfaces, and a smoother texture over the ventral surfaces and on the inside surfaces of the fingers where the hide is thinner and more sensitive. A very fine, invisible layer of down grows from the dorsal surfaces. This down is sensitive to the movement of air currents, in much the same way as a cat's whiskers. Hiver skin color runs from pink to tan in adults, with random blotches of brown in older individuals.

Central Body

The central body, or torso, is about 3′ across, and just under 3′ tall. It has two central openings, one at the dorsal apex of the dome, and one in the center of the ventral surface. The dorsal opening is the Hiver's respiratory stoma, often called the nostril or "blow hole." This leads down into the six lungs in the upper half of the torso, and has a sphincter to close it off.

The ventral opening is a feature unique among the major races, an opening that combines the function of mouth, reproductive canal, and urinary-excretory opening. Formally called the uro-genital-oro-excretory or "UGOE" cloaca (even though this term is inaccurate – see the *You Eat With That?* sidebar), it is frequently euphemized, when its discussion cannot be avoided, as ventral opening, orifice, etc. Some avoid the distasteful dissonance by referring to it according to its current use – mouth when the Hiver is eating, anus when it is excreting, etc. Humorist Anton Wilson Peale III, in his famous routine about the ugly habits of other races, has immortalized it as "the potty mouth."

The UGOE cloaca is not actually the anus, nor the mouth, nor the birth canal, but rather a common anteroom that serves them all. In the interior walls of the cloaca are the anal, urinary, genital, and oral openings, all leading to their respective organ systems. Placed centrally in the cloaca is a flexible muscle analogous to a tongue, which moves the cloaca's various traffic into, past, and out of the proper openings. The cloaca is served by numerous ducts, which regularly wash it out with powerful sanitizing enzymes. Hivers often use this "saliva" for disinfectant purposes. Non-Hivers are not often pleased to witness this process.

Limbs

Each of the six limbs is a thick cable of flexible, muscular calcareous tissue about a yard long, terminating in a six-fingered hand. Built like tentacles, the fingers contain no bony structure, but are composed of muscle and ligaments. They are extremely flexible, sensitive, and capable of finely controlled movements. The skin on the inner surface of the fingers is smooth and highly sensitive, and

covered with small muscular suction cups running about halfway to the finger-tips, for traction on slick surfaces and gripping objects. The tip of each finger has a small horny projection, analogous to the Human fingernail, and used for similar purposes. The outer finger surfaces are the same thickened, leathery skin as on the Hiver's dorsal surface.

Since all of the limbs are used interchangeably as feet or hands, Hivers walk with their fingers balled up on all but the smoothest surfaces. This puts the thicker outer skin in contact with the ground and protects the sensitive, highly vascularized inner surfaces.

The specialized sensory limb which defines the "front" of the Hiver is known as the prime or primary limb. This limb has all of the characteristics of the other limbs, but is modified to include the Hiver's visual and aural organs.

Each of the Hiver's six eyes is mounted on its own slender stalk, one in each inter-finger gap. The stalks are flexible and independently moveable, allowing the Hiver to look in six directions at once. However, to allow binocular vision and depth perception, Hivers generally use the eyes in three pairs. The eyes can be retracted into the fleshy lids at the end of the stalks for protection and routine cleaning, which the Hiver does automatically every few seconds. When extended, the eyes are about two-thirds exposed, giving a somewhat "bug-eyed" appearance.

The combination of mobile eyes and manipulative digits on this limb make it an extraordinarily useful tool for Hivers. Objects or tools can be held by the prime limb, examined at close range by the eyes, and manipulated with very fine control. Since the Hiver can insert this unified examination-manipulation limb into places it cannot take its bulky body, this provides a capability not available to Humans with their separate heads and hands.

Six further sensory organs are mounted on the prime limb, in a ring around the "neck" or "wrist" of the limb behind the base of the fingers. These are externally indistinguishable from each other, but three of them are ears and the other three are infrared sensors, placed alternatively. These organs are sited to the rear of and between the eyestalk bases – i.e., behind the backs of the fingers. This leads Hivers to close their prime limb fingers to unblock these organs when they attempt to listen to something or see something in the dark.

While it is natural for Humans to think of the prime limb as the Hiver's "head," as it is the sensory platform, this anthropocentric misconception belies the greatest terror of any Hiver. A Hiver's brain is located not in this primary limb, but protected deep in its torso, virtually impervious to damage. This means that a Hiver can lose any or all of its limbs and still remain alive and conscious (provided it does not bleed to death from the wound). For a Hiver to thus lose its sensory limb but be left blind, deaf, and effectively dumb (see the *Amputation and Regrowth* sidebar), is the worst fate imaginable, far worse than even death. The term "head" is properly reserved for a body part that contains both a creature's brain and the bulk of its sensory apparatus.

The Wilderness Year

"How much, if anything, does the average Hiver remember of its year as a larva? Hivers refuse to answer the question, explaining that they are not intelligent during that time and have no rational memory of events. This fails to convince many sophontologists, who feel that such a traumatic experience must leave memories, even if only in the unconscious mind. The whole point of the exposure of larvae to the wilderness is to select for those with intelligence enough to elude predators and survive, and it strains credulity that this intelligence is not accompanied by memories.

"Do Hivers suffer nightmares based on this experience? Flashbacks? Does part of their (to Humans) irrational behavior have its roots in their year of travail? Regrettably, no non-Hiver knows the answers to these questions."
– Jakob Kuvisham,
Professor of Sophontology,
University of Terra at Dingir

Amputation and Regrowth

Hivers have the Regrowth (see p. CI64) advantage, which gives them the ability to regenerate limbs or other body parts that have suffered severe damage.

Advanced medical technologies can accelerate their natural abilities. In the days before these techniques expedited recovery, amputation of the sensory limb was a traumatic event for Hivers. Unless the wound was severe enough to cause death by exsanguination or shock, the Hiver would survive with mental faculties intact, but be unable to hear, see, or properly communicate. Hivers can use their other limbs to "speak," but since the Hiver sign language requires their eyestalks for the formation of many words, the vocabulary is severely restricted. Since they cannot see, physical contact is required for them to receive information, and communication is very slow. A "decapitated" Hiver was (in those times) almost completely cut off from the world, and those who survived long enough for the sensory limb to regenerate often suffered irreparable mental damage.

Drugs, therapy, and rehabilitation are now available for any Hiver who suffers a prime limb decapitation. Regrowth is accelerated by drugs, and artificial sensors can temporarily replace the missing eyes and ears as they regenerate. Despite this, prime limb amputation still makes Hivers nervous, especially when they are in areas where proper medical care may not be readily available.

Timekeeping

The standard Federation year is said to be that of Glea, the capital system, which at 358 "standard" (24-hour) days, is slightly shorter than the Imperial year. Glea spins on its axis once every 22 hours (so the Glean year is 390 local rotational periods).

This is strangely irrelevant, as the Hiver "day" (translated as cycle) is based on the day of Guaran, the Hiver homeworld. Hivers divide the cycle into six equal portions or *boh'ohciy*, of about five hours each.

The Hiver calendar is said to have begun when the Federation capital was moved from Guaran to Glea, in either 410 or 490 Imperial (reports differ). In general, Hivers divide downward by six for progressively smaller intervals:

Name	Translation	Duration
Faroq	Year	0.98 Imperial years
Roqoc	Cycle	30 hours
Boh'ohciy	Interval	5 hours
Boh'ohchiy	Span	50 minutes
Chiybohd	Segment	8.3 minutes
Dhiybohch	Minute	1.4 minutes
Fiybohd	Breath	14 seconds
Giybohf	Blink	2.3 seconds
Kiybohg	Pulse	0.39 seconds

In practice, however, the Hivers do not use their own time-measurement system, but instead use the terms of other races they are working with. Hivers do not normally carry timekeeping devices, nor display them in their common areas, unless they are there to display time according to another race's system. Some sophontologists feel this ambivalence developed because the Hivers were subsurface dwellers during their early development, and diurnal cycles were not relevant to them.

Furthermore, some Hiver sources show dating equivalences based on not a 358-day year, but a 179-day year. When dealing with Humans, Hivers simply report all dates and times in Imperial terms.

It is widely thought (by those who bother to notice the inconsistency at all) that the discrepancy is due to some ongoing manipulation, or some old manipulation that someone forgot to turn off. Since the shorter year is exactly one-half of the actual Glean year, it is easy to see that it is actually a half-year, presumably measured from solstice to solstice or equinox to equinox. However, the actual origin of this is lost in the murk of time and contradictory historical documents.

Truly audacious scholars speculate that the discrepancy is due to the fact that, somewhere along the line, some Hiver forgot what the correct answer was, published an incorrect assertion, and Hiver pride has been unwilling to acknowledge the error ever since (see *Avoidance*, p. 12).

The limb opposite the primary limb is known as the "tail," and is also modified in form and function, although less so than the prime limb. The tail is the Hivers' external reproductive organ, used to transfer genetic material between Hivers.

The fingers on the tail have been modified to remove reproductive cells from the Hiver's internal reproductive sac via the UGOE cloaca, keep these cells alive while they are outside the body, and to exchange these cells with the reproductive cells held in the tail of another Hiver. Basically, a Hiver's own reproductive cells are held in a trough where they are protected from drying out and cooling off. Two Hivers briefly clasp each other's tails in an act termed by Humans "shaking hands," and a modified removal finger in each hand scoops the other Hiver's reproductive cells from the protective trough. These swapped cells are then returned to the Hiver's internal reproductive pouch through the UGOE cloaca.

Despite its specialization, the tail limb can be used for walking, standing, or manipulation just like any other limb.
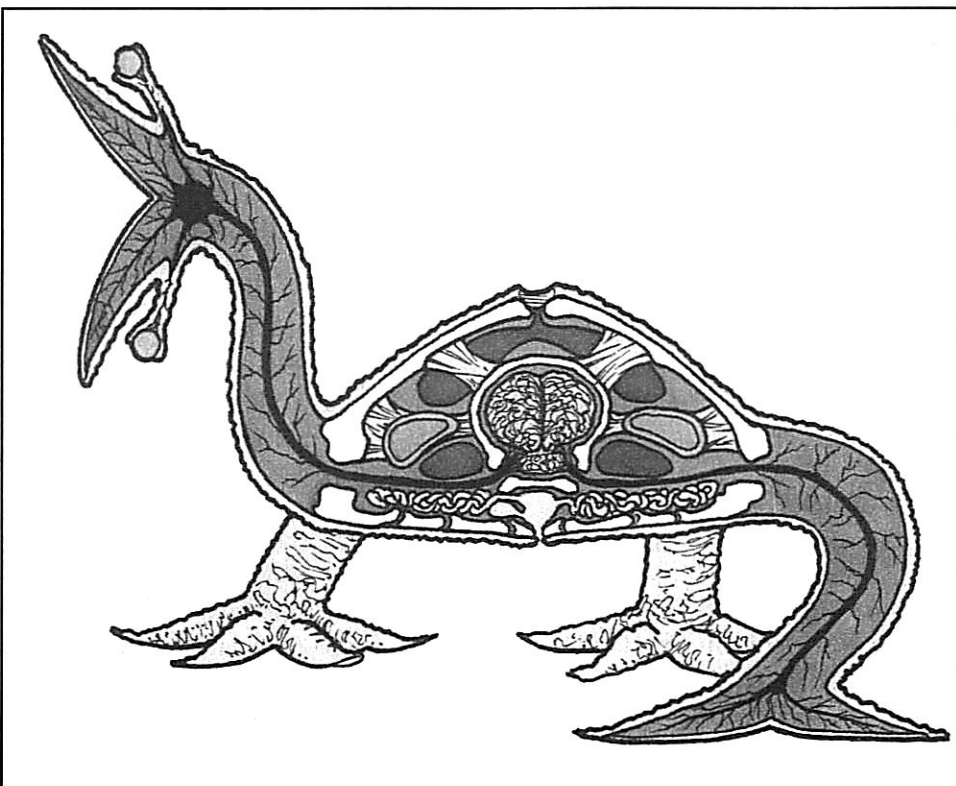
INTERNAL ANATOMY

Underlying all of the other biological systems is the Hiver skeletal structure. This structure contains two basic systems: the heavy casing internal to the torso, and the light, flexible structure supporting the six limbs. Although both skeletal systems derive from the same calcified cartilaginous tissue, that of the central body is more calcified, and therefore stiffer, heavier, and "bonier."

The torso's skeleton is composed of a number of subsidiary bones, but with one exception these are all fused into one large protective shell by the time the Hiver is an adult. This structure is like the shell of a tortoise, with a domed carapace above connected to a flat plastron below. The carapace portion has a hole at its peak for the respiratory stoma, and the plastron has a similar opening at its center for the UGOE cloaca. Around the perimeter of these bones, where the bones have sutured together, are a variety of openings that allow blood vessels and nerve bundles to pass out of the torso's interior to the body's outer extremities. Six of these openings, one for each limb, are very much larger to accommodate large

nerve trunks and capacious arteries and veins. Large crests around these six openings provide attachments for the muscles that operate the limbs.

The final skeletal element in the torso is the "skull" or brain case, a second layer of protective bone contained within the carapace. This structure is roughly spherical, with a bell-shaped opening at the bottom for nerve bundles and blood vessels. Already cushioned by the internal organs within the carapace, the brain case is "bungee mounted" from 12 shock-absorbing ligaments – six suspending it from the carapace, and six holding it tightly to the plastron beneath. The Hiver brain is thus virtually impervious to damage, either by intrusion or shock. This evolutionary investment in protecting this organ may be unique, in contrast with the majority of sentients, whose brain is stuck out in an extremity.

The limbs are supported by a series of bony rings, strung together with muscle and ligaments in a tube running the length of the limb, similar in appearance to electrical conduit, or a vacuum-cleaner hose.

Limb movement is achieved by contracting the connecting muscles along one side of the tube, causing it to bend toward the contraction. At the same time, thick-walled blood vessels along the extended side of the tube engorge with blood, further supporting the position.

This so-called "erectile calcareous tissue" is a remarkable combination of strength and flexibility. For example, unlike the Human arm or leg, the Hiver limb can bend at any point along its length, in any direction, in a combination of directions, and to almost any radius of curvature. What it gives away is the absolute strength provided by the load-bearing strut of bone. This means that Hiver strength and endurance are lower than those of creatures of similar weight with skeletal limbs. While a Human can stand erect with hardly any muscle activity, a Hiver is constantly holding its limbs in their current position, with no bony framework to rest on.

HIVER VALUES AND MOTIVATIONS

Hiver culture is for all intents and purposes homogeneous, which is remarkable for a starfaring race. For the Hivers to maintain such a remarkable consistency over time and the vast distances of interstellar empire implies a clear focus on their values. Hivers are perfectly content to talk about these values at length. They are: personal survival, racial survival, reproduction, parenting, curiosity, individuality, cooperation, and Hiver superiority.

PERSONAL SURVIVAL

Although this is less a value than an instinctive drive, Hivers feel compelled to explain their legendary cowardice. It is the expression of the value they place on personal survival that leads them to avoid violence rather than become good at it.

They profess to extend this courtesy to other races as well, believing that war is a tragic waste of irreplaceable intelligent life, and regretting it wherever it occurs. However, in practice they seem content to simply place Ithklur marines into the dangerous places where they themselves would rather not go. Hivers prefer their violence to be as remote and impersonal as possible. This does not prohibit them from carrying (and using) personal weapons – as a last resort, of course.

RACIAL SURVIVAL

The Hivers seem to place a rather higher value on this than do other races, if only because they think about it and talk about it so often. There is a strange dark side to this in that one generally only thinks about survival when it is called into question. A better term might perhaps be "the good of the race," but the Hivers persist in translating it this way. This is related to reproduction, as well.

The K'kree Border

The border between the Federation and the Two Thousand Worlds is policed in depth by both sides. The frontiers are only close in two regions, and there is a large pocket of unclaimed space between them. This volume is patrolled in force by the K'kree and covertly by the Hivers. Many pirate bands that seem to favor action against the Federation operate from here.

While it is certainly true that raiding the Two Thousand Worlds would be folly – visiting that Empire legitimately is dangerous enough – this offers no reason why the Federation should be considered a soft touch in comparison.

The answer to why the Hivers allow such conditions to persist is threefold. First, it gives the Federation Navy valuable practice in anti-pirate work.

Second, it enables the K'kree to vent some of their feelings toward the Federation, if only by proxy, so that they do not quite become so annoyed that they feel the need to invade. The Hivers do not fear the Two Thousand Worlds; they just find them a nuisance. They wouldn't learn anything from beating them, and it would be expensive and time-consuming, so if they can keep that border quiet, they will.

Third, and most important, it gives the FDA the opportunity to sneak equipment into their opponent's markets and, hopefully, into their technology. Goods stolen by pirates end up all around the trailing quadrants from Spica all the way to Star's End and Gh!ken to Nuughe. Millennia of experience have taught the manipulators that their opponents believe more fully in what they steal rather than in what they buy, and no one in their right mind buys dangerous, logic-bomb-saturated, back-door-ridden, poorly designed, or irrelevant technology.

So, when technicians attempt to reverse-engineer from a legitimate purchase, they might look for defects. If they find unexpected "features" in something they risked a diplomatic incident for though, they assume they're an exciting improvement which should go into all new systems. Often these characteristics are individually innocuous, even helpful, but turn into a lethal drawback when combined – declining to acquire Federation Navy ships as targets for instance, or turning off life support in a space station when the state that owns it declares war on the Hivers.

Another use for such equipment is to provide red herrings to the opposition – persuading them to expend time and resources studying the function of an object which actually does nothing, but in a complicated way.

REPRODUCTION

Since Hivers have no emotional drive to reproduce, nor any concern for their newborns, this refers to the deliberate efforts to reproduce in a fashion that is of the most overall benefit to the race.

For example, the Hiver habit of "shaking hands" at every opportunity is a deliberate policy promulgated over 5,000 years ago, intended to keep the Hiver gene pool well-mixed and prevent the negative effects of genetic drift. Hivers have a profound dislike for variations from the genetic norm, most easily exhibited by the preferred pinkish-tan Hiver skin color. Variations from this (too much pink, or white or blue highlights) are undesirable.

Likewise, the careful maintenance of wilderness areas around all Hiver habitations is to provide an adequate environment for the year-long trial of Hiver larvae. While this is not kind to the larvae as individuals, it works for the best interest of the race by ensuring that less viable genotypes are weeded from the gene pool.

PARENTING

Also related to reproduction, parenting has to do with the moral commitment to the good of immature Hivers. The instinct does not seem to apply to young Hivers until they survive their first year; see p. 13.

All Hiver young are effectively orphans, but all Hiver communities are effectively orphanages, and all Hivers function as foster parents. The commitment on the part of each adult Hiver to the instruction and proper raising of young Hivers is powerful and real, and is generally seen in the practice of "storytelling" in which an adult Hiver tells stories to groups of young to share personal experiences and life-knowledge. Storytelling is the Hiver equivalent of school, and is no less serious for its more informal nature. Though it's unstructured and voluntary, all of the young attend to this learning all day, every day.

The Hiver parenting drive is so strong that it spills over into a drive to educate and improve other adult Hivers and other races as well.

The means by which this is accomplished is the Hiver art called "manipulation," in which a Hiver secretly and subtly influences the acts of its fellows to guide them into a better way of living. Manipulation is a sophisticated practice, with many time-honored rules; see pp. 16-17. At this point it is sufficient to note that a Hiver manipulator is setting itself up as putative "parent" to all of those that it seeks to manipulate. In fact, the Hiver terms for alien races reflect this: *Fiiuh* or "adult alien," and *Fiyuh,* "yearling alien." *Fiiuh* include the starfaring races, and *Fiyuh* covers basically every other race the Hivers come in contact with. The Hivers have never met a young race that could not use some improving. Note that the term "adult alien" does not mean that Hivers do not seek to manipulate these mature races. Hivers are perfectly willing to manipulate their fellow adult Hivers, and extend this courtesy to other races as well.

CURIOSITY

Hivers wax rhapsodic about the joys of curiosity and the drive to understand how things work, as if no other intelligent race had ever heard of the concept. They explain how the Hiver expansion into space was spurred by simple curiosity, the desire to know what was out there. They note that all Hivers are members of at least one topical club devoted to a topic of interest to the Hiver. They speak of curiosity as if it were a hidden mystery and they its only prophets.

On the face of it, it is ridiculous to claim curiosity as a trait unique to a single starfaring race. Curiosity is the hallmark of any technological race, for without it science and research are impossible. Nonetheless, Hivers are adamant about assigning this trait to themselves in some unique fashion.

INDIVIDUALITY

Hivers make a great deal of their individuality. Many other races do, too; however, this trait is probably truer of Hivers than it is of any other major race. Alone among the starfaring races, Hivers experience absolutely *no* bonding with their fellows as infants. Their first year is spent in the wilderness in solitude, concerned only with avoiding predators and finding food and shelter. The absolute lack of deep, lifelong ties to family and community in comparison to other races cannot be overstated, or completely understood.

This does not mean that Hivers crave or prefer to be alone. On the contrary, their year alone (or what they remember of it, anyway; see *The Wilderness Year*, p. 7) appears to make them appreciate being part of a community. They derive comfort and a sense of security from living with others of their own kind, and value the opportunity to do so.

This individuality can be seen in competitiveness between Hivers in discovering new things and manipulating each other, and in the importance they place upon personal status.

COOPERATION

Hivers miss no opportunity to point out how perfectly cooperative and peaceful they are – in contrast to their paeans to individuality. They go to great lengths to point out that all Hiver acts are done for the greater good and that they have always found it easy to work in common cause. Competition for power over others is also foreign to them, they reiterate.

As with their comments about curiosity, these remarks come off as racist slurs, seeming to paint other races as benighted savages, red in tooth and claw. The reality behind this is that Hivers do not have the same quantity of formalized government apparatus that other races do. In some fashion they *do* find it easier to get along without the dedicated bureaucratic overhead that other societies use to grease the social wheels.

However, in light of the Hiver institution of manipulation, protestations of cooperation and the lack of the "will to power" ring a little hollow. Cooperation can be thought of as an expression of the Hiver desire for comfort and security in the company of other Hivers.

SUPERIORITY

Every Hiver knows that it is superior to every other sentient creature. The species is profoundly racist, with an unshakable superiority complex and a large, compliant multi-ethnic empire to prove its case. They are not xenocidal bigots like the K'kree; they export their sense of parental responsibility to their neighbors. To the Hivers, all other sentients are like larvae trying to survive. If and when they reach a level of civilization that their self-appointed parents find acceptable, they are inducted into the Federation. The K'kree, Aslan, and Vargr have not yet reached this stage and probably never will. Humans and hundreds of minor races are suitable for incorporation, so they are taken gently and reformed to embrace the Federation ideal. Droyne, with their psionics, pose a special problem . . .

There is, obviously a lot left to do, but it is important to note that the Hivers act out of parental duty to wayward children.

HIVER SOCIETY

The Hivers have, to outsiders, a paradoxical way of life. They let their children die, cooperate freely and naturally with each other, then lie, manipulate, and cheat, and admire each other's brilliance and success at doing so.

Mathematics

The Hivers, and therefore the Federation, use a base-6 system with place order value notation and a zero. They represent numbers either as hexagons subdivided into six segments or as between one and six lines radiating from a central point. One filled-in segment or line drawn denotes zero; six of them indicate the number five. Formally, the zero (one line or hexagon segment) that begins the next order or magnitude along should be drawn, but is usually omitted. This demonstrates that the Hivers have the conceptual quirk of implying that there is always something "beyond" . . . the next order of magnitude is always implicit, as the Hivers start counting not at one, but at zero. This has its origins in the need to mime out a blank space before speaking in Hiver sign language.

Although context is an important consideration, "Oh" usually indicates that there are numbers involved. "Oh" itself means "zero," a coincidence which sent the Solomani into paroxysms of speculation about the Ancients. Values above zero within an order of magnitude are denoted by ~b, ~c, ~d, ~g, and ~k (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) respectively. Successively larger orders of magnitude get an initial consonant, from "B" upward. Orders below zero have the augment "o."

Numbers

Gurvin	Anglic
Oh	0
Ohb	1
Ohc	2
Ohd	3
Ohg	4
Ohk	5
Bo'oh	6
Bo'ohb	7
Bo'ohc	8
Bo'ohd	9
Bo'ohg	10
Bo'ohk	11
Boboh	12
Co'oh	36
Do'oh	216
And so on.	

INTERACTION

As the race is so powerfully oriented toward working together while simultaneously prepared to be tricked into doing another's will, certain formulaic techniques are common. These are *confrontation, consensus* and *avoidance*. The nests teach their yearlings to respond positively to the first two techniques and always to consider the third.

Confrontation

The communal imperative is so strong among the Hivers that they will respond positively to this tactic. An aggressive, cogently reasoned proposal will often simply overwhelm other Hivers who are not prepared to respond in kind. This may be an echo of the Hiver aversion to violence, in that the path of least resistance is to avoid the conflict, or it may be an unwillingness to risk disgrace in defending an unprepared position. Either way, it is most effective if only used sparingly.

Consensus

This is the most common and time-honored of the Hiver social models. Hivers place great stock in tradition and precedent, but not in a slavish, superficial application. Tradition and precedent must be considered against the specific details of the matter at hand, and perhaps revised and modified to fit the new conditions.

This kind of deliberate, rational approach is that of consensus.

Every Hiver involved in the decision-making process fully expects its views to be considered by its peers. Thus, most Hiver enterprises enjoy a lengthy discussion of any new plan, ending in a mutually acceptable compromise solution.

Avoidance

This pattern is truly baffling to non-Hiver observers. If confrontation fails, or the group does not reach consensus, then the Hiver choice is to pretend that the problem has either gone away or was not there in the first place. There are quite a lot of things that Hivers simply won't discuss.

This can also be seen as an extension of the flight response to violence. Or it can be seen as eminently pragmatic: "If you have a problem, let it go. If it comes back to you, deal with it then. If it doesn't come back, it was never really your problem at all."

TRADITION AND INFORMALITY

Hiver society is decentralized, and almost anarchic. Nonetheless, it has a uniform nature across the 200-some subsectors of the Hive Federation.

One of the givens of this society is a high regard for tradition and custom, which the Hivers use as the baseline for their minimalist legal system. If something has been done a certain way for a long time, it is a good bet that it will continue to be done that way, and if a conflict arises, the side with the best claim to tradition will have the upper hand.

Are the Hivers just inherently conservative? Perhaps, but the real reason is the Hiver preference for consensus decisions. Tradition is the encapsulation of generations of consensus going back millennia, and to turn one's prime limb from this is unthinkable.

Visitors who look for organization or structure in Hiver society might be confused, or even frightened. Surely the expected complex structure must be hidden somewhere, as part of some kind of manipulation, some sinister hidden hand?

Not necessarily. Certainly there is manipulation going on; the Hivers are the first to admit that. Simply put, however, the Hivers aren't heavy users of organization. Their heritage of individualism makes that foreign to them. Hivers are

doers, not beings who like to stand around and tell people what to do. (If they really want someone to do something, they'll manipulate them into thinking that they wanted to do it all along.) Hivers as individuals and groups go about their business, and if conflict arises, there are persons who can handle it as it comes. Until it comes to that, however, the Hivers have no interest in setting up a pre-emptive bureaucracy to worry about it.

ROLES IN SOCIETY

There are three roles that every Hiver goes through in the course of its life, based on its age.

Larva

First is the larva. This is more of a non-role, as larvae are not regarded as Hivers, but as minor pests. Adults take no action to defend or preserve them, and take steps which, while they are in accord with the Hiver values of racial survival and parenting, can hardly be said to be in the interest of the individual larva.

Every Hiver habitation must have an adequate wilderness contiguous with it, well stocked with predators. No larva can be allowed to find its way to a place where there is no nest to welcome it if it survives to be a yearling. Hiver starships are routinely fumigated to kill all larvae aboard so they don't wind up on nest-less worlds.

Yearling

When they reach a year of age, yearlings somehow find their way out of the wilderness and into a nest. Yearlings are distinguished from larvae because their limb-tips have developed fingers that can grasp and manipulate objects. Yearlings are fully accepted as Hivers, and are nourished, protected, and most importantly, educated. Yearlings remain in the nest, growing and learning, until they reach 14 standard years, when they become sexually mature.

Adult

Any Hiver over 14 years of age is an adult, and is physically and mentally ready for full participation in Hiver society. An adult may leave its current nest to join another, based on its goals.

Senior

This fourth category is one that not all Hivers achieve. Senior status is granted by general consensus of fellow Hivers following long years of worthwhile service, for example as a nest leader or a judge. Generally, all manipulators (see p. 16) are treated as seniors. Senior status can be a local phenomenon; a Hiver who is recognized as a senior in its nest may not be so regarded at other nests.

NESTS

The building block of Hiver society is the *nest*. Nests are simply groups of Hivers united by a common goal, who live and work together in pursuit of that goal. Every nest has a stated goal, and Hivers join that nest because they wish to pursue that goal. So a nest is a physical place as well as a vocation.

Put another way, all Hiver organizations are nests. A factory is a nest, a farm is a nest, a starship crew is a nest, and a university is a nest.

Adventure Seed: The K'kree Perfume Incident

The PCs are involved in a characteristically nefarious plot. They have to go to a free port in the Crucis Margin and interfere with a transaction between some Imperial Humans and a K'kree herd. The Humans are trading three meson screens and communicator suites for a huge vat of perfume. The party's job is to interfere with the sale as, if it succeeds, many other deals will follow. The best possible outcome would be for the Humans to leave with a shipload of sewage and the K'kree to take delivery of some slaughterhouse robots.

Adventure Seed: Frontier Affairs

There are specific, limited occasions when a Hiver world is closer to a foreign supplier of some necessities than it is to a Federation source. When this occurs, the Hivers trade with the outsiders for mere commodities. Apart from the foreigners, who find themselves getting a good deal, no one is delighted when this happens so, like any other imperialists, the Hivers take steps to internalize the problem. Most interstellar empires either invade or stage a coup to put a sympathetic leader in charge. The Federation does it differently. They invoke comparative advantage (see p. T:FT10). For Hivers, manufacture of any item within the limits of a nest's capabilities is cheaper than it is for any other society. One of the major problems is transport of goods to their market, so it makes sense for the external trading partners to allow the Federation to build a trading enclave, thus getting the goods involved at a lower cost.

Once the colony nests have arrived, it emerges that they can provide all kinds of things cheaper than their hosts, who should, according to orthodox economics, concentrate on producing what the Hivers want, so that all can gain.

They don't realize their blunder until it emerges that their guests have overall control of their economy, and can turn off their generators and communications at any time. Should they decide to make a stand, the Hivers bring out some Ithklur.

Nest membership is voluntary, and a Hiver may change membership from one nest to another as its ambitions dictate. Most Hivers change nests several times over a lifetime.

The nest is, in some ways, like a Human family. While members, Hivers display complete loyalty to the Nest and its goals. This is partly self interest – the nest's success is the Hiver's success – but it is also because the individual recognizes the comfort, stimulation, and security offered by the group and responds with efforts on the group's behalf.

There is something of the kibbutz about the Nest, combined with the corporation and, crucially, the orphanage. A nest will take in any wandering yearling lucky enough to reach it. The adopted infant receives schooling, housing, and food until it reaches sexual maturity and adulthood. At this point it is allowed either to remain in the nest and further its aims, or to leave and seek its fortune elsewhere.

Nests are all business concerns at some level. This does not mean that all are primarily mercantile in nature, but that all nests must be self-supporting and have a means to provide for their members. For example, a nest could have as its goal pure research of some kind. Although it could not "sell" this research in a retail fashion, it could be tied to an industrial nest, which provides food and other upkeep to the research nest in exchange for access to the research results.

Most nests provide at least some of their own basic needs. Some are completely self-sufficient. Only the most specialized are completely dependent on other nests for basic services. These services include leadership, health care, technical support, power, and nourishment.

All nests have a leader; most have a medical specialist/coroner (a full-fledged physician/surgeon plus a small staff in large nests, a part-time medic in small nests), a computer/data specialist, and a power plant.

It is the rare nest that does not grow some of its own food, specifically cultures of fungus in the tunnels beneath the premises. This takes some of the pressure off of turning a profit, but the Hivers also enjoy spending time underground with the nest's *snohl* (see p. 32), trying their hand at the race's ancient art.

Each nest operates within a discrete sphere, interacting with other local nests to provide a comprehensive selection of goods and services to each nest and to the community at large.

Depending on location, resources, and interests, a nest can have anything from five to 500 individual members; 100 is most common. All nests have at least one leader. The leader's status depends ultimately on the continued approval of the nest members. The older individuals who are in charge are regarded as senior within the nest, not necessarily so outside it. Some seniors are sufficiently respected to act as a town council or higher deliberative body.

Inevitably, nests interact. Most nests, since they are focused on a specific goal, are not autonomous. They must both specialize and cooperate to provide each other with the network of services that their technological society requires. A collection of nests forms a community. Several communities of nests can form a city-state; several city-states can come together to form a nation-state.

A selection of interlocking interests – a dockside, a factory, a warehouse, a hotel, and a communications center – would form a small trading enclave. The Hivers have a knack for right-sizing – there are seldom any shortages, surpluses, or redundancy. More cosmopolitan communities maintain infrastructure suitable for other Federation races, often for more exotic aliens, too.

Nest buildings are designed according to their function, but most Hiver buildings follow the ancestral Hiver pattern: ovoid, "hive-shaped" buildings above ground sitting atop an underground network of tunnels.

TOPICAL CLUBS

The Hivers share interests outside their nests and pursue these through special interest associations, called *Cahjeng Iluteach Ahvochy* (literally, "self-learning conclave"), usually translated "topical clubs." In addition to promoting research and discussion, these serve as training providers. A club's size is limited by ease of communication between its members, so each star system has its own selection.

Topical clubs are long-standing institutions with "club houses," extensive lists of publications, and usually good reputations throughout the Federation. Physical facilities always include high-capacity, fast connections with the planetary datanet, auditoriums, and meeting rooms. Depending on need, the club might also have laboratory facilities and workshops. The club's own computer connects with the net, but security protocols prevent non-members from accessing some of its files.

Topical clubs are "pseudo-nests." Club members do not live in the club house, nor is the topical club their full-time activity. Some topical clubs aspire to become nests, to advance their organization to the point where it can be a full-time, self-supporting nest. Topical clubs are funded by a variety of means, usually membership fees, sales of items of interest, or grants from wealthy nests that either utilize the club's services or support the club as a constructive outlet for its members.

Clubs are self-governing and set their own policies about membership policies and interaction with other nests. Some clubs are Hiver only; some are open to all Federation races. Most topical clubs do not allow non-Federation citizens to be members. Both the Legal Club of Glea and the Manipulations Club of Guaran are open to all Federation races.

In principle, a topical club could exist to cover any area of interest, and those present on every world study physical sciences, history, engineering and applied sciences, and the more political subjects such as law or manipulation. As the clubs are of interest to outsiders and manipulators, many Hivers spend a lot of time attempting to hack into their secure systems.

Hivers can have affiliations and accreditation with topical clubs in other systems, but as a practical matter topical clubs must allow for real-time interaction, so a star-spanning topical club must have local branches. There are sometimes parallel topical clubs in the same system. For example, the Manipulations Club of Tryylin is accredited to the Manipulations Club of Guaran, while the First Manipulations Club of Tryylin is an independent entity. There is another star-spanning manipulations topical club open only to Hiver membership, the Manipulations Club of Centrax.

Membership accreditation with topical clubs is recorded on ID chip-cards carried by the member. The older, well-established clubs often maintain hostels for members traveling through their systems, available at a nominal fee.

Many topical clubs perform a *de facto* governmental role. For example, the Legal Club of Glea performs the coordinating and accrediting role for the Federation's legal system, and the Naval Procurement and Fleet Tactics topical clubs perform important roles within the Federation Navy.

Weights and Measures

The Hivers base their system of weights on themselves. An individual masses about 330 lbs., and they multiply upward or divide downward by six to get other values.

Linear and volumetric standards derive from the gazufo, or "arm's measure," which happily is almost exactly 3′ long. Again, the Hivers apply six to this length for their other measures.

Name	Translation	Measure
Gazufo	Arm's measure	3′
Gaizofo	Limb-cage measure	cubic yard
Snohiyfo	Snohl-weight, ton	1,980 lbs.
Zahysfo	Body weight	330 lbs.

NORTHCOTT 2000
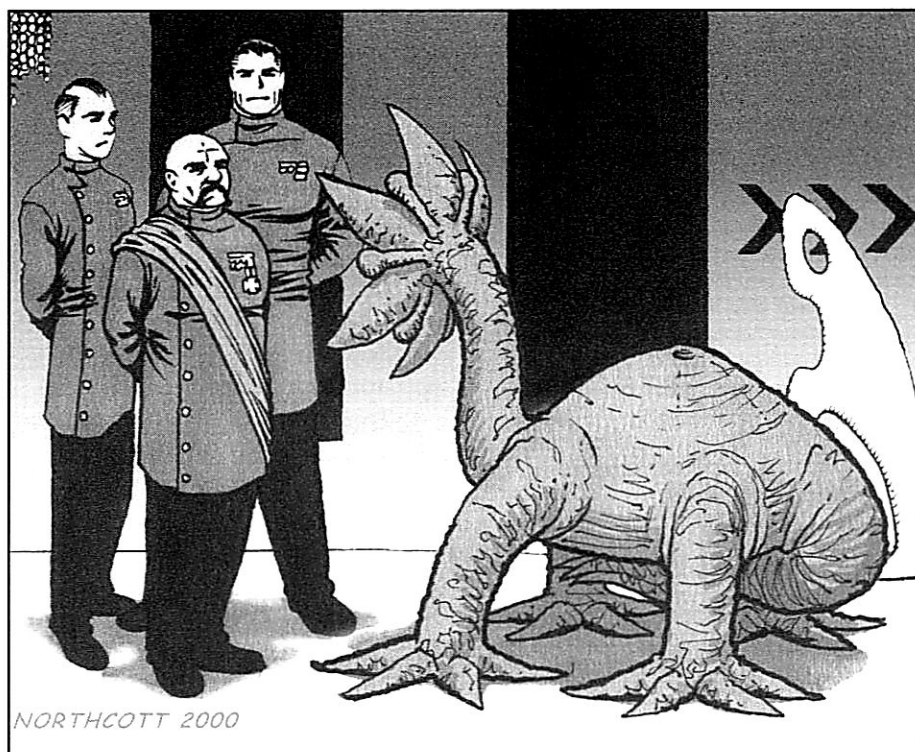
Defense of the Realm

"Balthazar? Yeah, I was there. Field med-tech, Bravo Company, 5th Battalion. It was brutal, man. At the briefing they told us it was an 'exemplary action.' The starfish had been brainwashing people up and down the frontier. The weak-willed were going over to the Federation. We were to show them no one messes with the true Humans.

"They weren't home when we jumped in, but their local forces put up a hell of a fight. They're Humans too, of course. It's in the blood.

"Covert-Ops knocked out their meson battery, local partisans took out the Quislings, and we inserted in the Clarke belt. I went down with the second wave. We were dropping on Balai, with orders to reinforce the Pioneers and pacify the town. Seven of the transports didn't make it. There weren't many of us on the ground. I set up a triage center in the old town hall. Laid out the casualties on the committee-room tables. No walking wounded, just guys blown apart or pulped and messed up.

"I was inside when they counter-attacked. Sonic booms knocked out our proximity-fused mines and there were these laser strikes. You see a glowing line, hear a crack, and there's a molten AFV. They remote-fired our command charges. The sappers were still laying them.

"I didn't expect the wall to vaporize. A neat hole, a yard across, with this long thing, like a big beaver with too many legs struggling through it. It must have missed me, so I straddled it and twisted its head round. Died easy enough. It had this little tube hanging off its webbing. I know a LAAW when I see one, so I grabbed it and snapped it open. The grip was wrong. A big dino in battledress punches out the masonry, so I give it the rocket, point blank. Showed that lizzie. All that was left was the feet and the tail, still in its armor, stuck in the ground like a dart.

"There was this burnt-meat smell. I'd forgotten about backwash and cooked the entire field station. I lost it. They started firing on my position and I ran. I saw a shuttle somewhere and just went flat out, so did a lot of guys. The lizzies caught us in the open. Only me and Peachy made it. Peachy doesn't talk any more. Just makes this moaning sound and ducks for cover whenever anything with scales shows up around here."

*– from **They Serve with Pride**,*
Solomani News Service

EMBASSIES

Embassies are the most visible form of the Hiver "government." An embassy is a nest of individuals, mostly Hivers, but including other races, who travel from world to world. These nests' goal is to maintain the consistent Hiver genotype and consistent Hiver culture.

The former they do by shaking hands with everyone they can find, preferably every Hiver on the world, if possible. The latter they do by sharing news and information, conducting seminars and story-telling sessions, and observing local variations from the norm.

Embassies also perform a legal/judicial function. When an issue cannot be resolved by the leaders/seniors of a world, the embassy hears the case and issues its judgment. All embassies include qualified judges as members.

The Embassy Directorate supports and coordinates all embassies (see p. 19).

COMPETITION AND MANIPULATION

Manipulation is the distinctive peculiarity that captures all that is odd about the Hivers. It is the lightning rod for all of the fears and misgivings that non-Hivers have about the Hivers. But no one even knows if it's true.

Hivers view the ability to arrange things so that others do a manipulator's bidding as laudable. Major turning points in their history are chalked up to important manipulations, and the manipulators are folk heroes. They even have a special social rank for acclaimed manipulators. Consequently they are predisposed to being manipulated by other Hivers or thinking that they have been when they haven't. Hivers keep careful records of their scheming and, in the event of a success, parade their original plans and claim to have brought the outcome about through sheer brain power. Naturally, they are much less willing to publish *unsuccessful* plots.

According to commentators, there is an element of self-delusion in manipulation. There are good, formal reasons why the process which the Hivers describe to the outside cannot work the way they say it does. The phenomena under discussion are variously chaotic or complex and that, to many commentators, is that. Logically, wouldn't such a system eventually break down to a sort of social Brownian motion, with each citizen constantly moving in an essentially random fashion without actually getting anywhere?

At the very least, the notion of manipulation seems to function as a public scapegoat to rationalize various events or inconveniences. This alone is a useful effect, and many believe it to be the only reality behind the idea. Nevertheless, the Hivers have achieved remarkable successes in their manipulations. Witness their well-publicized triumph in the K'kree war, or their taming of the Ithklur.

RULES OF MANIPULATION

There are formal, age-old rules for the performance of manipulation, all of which must be met for a manipulation to be considered genuine and for the perpetrator to be awarded the coveted "M." (for Manipulator) in front of its name.

There are four elements of any true manipulation: the *deed*, the *manipulator*, the *consequences*, and the *claim of credit*.

The *deed* is the stimulus that sets the manipulation in motion. The deed must be premeditated, and must be the minimum necessary to attain the objective. It must be documented beforehand, and the documentation must be rigorous enough to support the *claim of credit*.

The *manipulator* is the individual who conceived, planned, and set into motion the manipulation. The manipulator need not physically set the deed in motion; it may work through others. But it must be the sole responsible party, the one person who understands how it all fits together. A manipulation conducted by

more than one manipulator working together is not considered a true manipulation. The government-run manipulations of *fiyuh* races (see p. 21) are not considered actual manipulations, but follow the same process.

The *consequences* are the predicted result of the manipulative deed. Like the *deed,* the consequences must be adequately documented. The consequences cannot be the obvious first-order effects, but must be the very subtle *n*th-order effects that prove the shrewd, predictive genius of the manipulator.

The *claim for credit* is the final step. The manipulator reveals the manipulation and presents the evidence showing the deed and proving that the consequences predicted were in fact those that resulted. In practice, only fully successful manipulations have credit claims made.

The Manipulations Club of Guaran is the official ruling body for deliberations regarding manipulation credit. Other worlds have manipulations clubs, but these cannot award the coveted "M." and therefore function as the minor leagues for aspiring manipulators.

When the manipulation is judged, it is also evaluated for its artistry. The greatest manipulations are the most efficient, those which get the most dramatic results out of the slightest deed applied at precisely the right point at the right time.

A manipulation is much like a scientific experiment, where the scientist sets up a testable hypothesis, controls conditions, and pre-establishes what constitutes proof and disproof of the hypothesis. Indeed, many Hivers claim that is the only real reason behind manipulation. It is not a sneaky control trip, or an underhanded political tool, but pure science, the study of why things happen.

In practical terms, just what passes for manipulation and, indeed, why many everyday acts manage to become regarded as manipulative, is a mystery to all but the Hivers themselves (and perhaps even to them). Many commentators, including other Federation members, are baffled by the Hivers' belief in the institution. The celebrated First Manipulation (pp. 32-33) is instructive. The historical circumstances described are patently absurd and the resolution quite implausible, yet the Hivers insist that this is the signal event of their early history.

One suggestion is that every Hiver is so narcissistic that it can't bear the idea of having lost at anything. To get around this, the species perpetuates the fiction of manipulation. While losing is not as good as winning, being able to applaud the special qualities of the victor, especially the sneaky and underhanded virtues, takes some of the sting out of defeat.

THE HIVE FEDERATION

The Hive Federation, located to rimward-trailing of the Imperium, covers about 10 sectors and includes 170 member races, of which the Hivers are first among "equals." The Federation government extends the Hiver nest system to provide a bare minimum of star-spanning infrastructure.

The Hivers have a *laissez-faire* approach to government, but are vigorous about enforcing genetic and cultural homogeneity – so the Federation is a libertarian regime that's totalitarian about remaining libertarian. The Hivers leave a great deal of leeway for self-government by other member races – but the amount of leeway that the member races can exercise is firmly constrained in advance.

GOVERNMENT

Hiver government can be summarized as, "Only do the stuff that absolutely won't get done otherwise." Four functions fall into this category: settlement of disputes, maintenance of homogeneous genotype and culture, defense, and development of new worlds. Three government arms handle these – the Embassy Directorate, The Federation Development Agency, and the Federation Navy.

Adventure Seed: Chopper's Tasks

Chopper, a warship captain, has a strange idea of challenging drills. During the PCs' time on the Hiver's ship, whether they're Federation personnel, passengers, or prisoners, they suffer extreme indignities as Chopper encourages versatility and lateral thinking.

The life support on alternate decks fails. The gravity changes without warning. The bridge and engineering pretend to have been blown up, so the crew must improvise.

When the crew have become so blasé about their captain's surprises that they think it's crying wolf, something *truly* nasty happens . . .

Adventure Seed: Solomani Raid

The Federation can't be everywhere, and the Solomani frontier is long and thick with vulnerable planets. The PCs are members of a patrol ship's crew, enjoying shore leave on a frontier settlement.

The Solomani knock out the world's communications satellites, knock out the patrol ship, and land. The ship's crew has to fight back with whatever comes to hand.

Delphi Rift

Glimmerdrift Reaches

Crucis Margin

K'aa G!'kul

Gzurr!k'l

K'trekreer

Nuughe

Third Imperium

The Lithkind

The Inheritor Sphere

• Tryylin

Hinterworlds

Leonidae

Extolian

Ricenden

Blaskon

Nooq

Iydoch Tryyliniy
(Independent Ithklur Client State)

• Guaran

• Ofilaq

Spica

Phlask

Centrax

Wrenton

Folgore

Avereguar

• Glea

Solomani Confederation

Loza'tch

The Hive Federation

Langere

Drakken

Lorspane

Porlock

Kidunal

Treece

Storr

Mikhail

Darret

Ataurre

Katoonah

Uytal

All three agencies are set up like huge, Federation-spanning nests (see pp. 13-14). Any Hiver may join a federal agency just as if joining a private nest; that is, the cultural loyalty required in private life is sufficiently rigorous to qualify for government employ, too. Many Hivers who enter Federal service never leave it, but just as many return to a private nest after a short tenure.

Each agency has powers of taxation, which the Hivers view as little different than an industrial nest trading account credit for information from a research nest. The only difference is that the agencies are perceived to provide services to all private nests in the Federation, something no private nest could claim. Some private nests pay in services rather than account credit; for instance, shipyard nests usually provide ships and maintenance to the Federation Navy rather than credit.

The Embassy Directorate

Humans find it ludicrous that, out of all of the issues in the universe that the Hivers could choose for their three indispensable roles of government, one of them would be to support traveling cocktail parties. Of all the fishy Hiver behaviors, this is certainly among the fishiest.

To the Federation at large, "embassy" has a special meaning. It denotes the continuing audit of the Federation's worlds to assure that they are all developing within parameters. To the Hivers, the embassies exist to preserve the generalized Hiver genotype. The Embassies Directorate alone, of the three government arms, is the result of a Hiver manipulation.

During the early Hiver starfaring period, M. Fioran forcefully demonstrated that too much genetic isolation of Hiver populations was bad for the race. The Embassies Directorate was set up to achieve the goal of a single generalized genotype for the entire Hiver race.

The Embassy Directorate is headquartered on Glea. It schedules and routes embassies to visit all of the worlds of the Federation. Each embassy stays on a world for a local year. When it leaves, a new embassy arrives to take over.

What it accomplishes by doing such a simple thing is far-reaching. It is, effectively, the Ministry of the Interior, identifying cultural targets for the Federation and sending out directives to local ("subsector" in Imperial terms) embassy offices. These inform and assist their worlds accordingly. The flow of information is two-way – the embassies report back to their regional controllers so, ultimately, to the Directorate. There, Directorate officials ensure that follow-on embassies are organized and equipped to address local conditions. For example, they would bring information and experts to aid locals in bringing their institutions in line with Hiver standards, they would be staffed with judges qualified to deal in detail with local conditions and issues, and so on.

Embassies are carried by embassy ships, which tour a pre-scheduled route of member systems. The Directorate uses standard 1,200-ton vessels (see p. 61) which carry a full team of diplomats, social scientists, researchers, teachers, judges, and bureaucrats. The embassy visits every settlement on the world. Ideally, they greet every Hiver inhabitant of the world, to exchange genetic material, engage in cultural events, share news and information, and advise the locals on the latest developments elsewhere in the Federation. Where necessary, an Embassy will also act as a superior court or provide fair arbitration for local disputes.

Embassies also serve to identify talent. Suitable local citizens are free to join the ship, even if only to hop off at the next port of call. Officially, unsuitable individuals never feel the need to migrate.

All Federation citizens are encouraged to participate in the program and many have traveled on such a ship. All of them look back on the experience fondly. The non-Hiver elements of the Embassy participate in the cultural and information exchanges, but their impact on genetic-material exchanges is incidental at best.

Money

The Hiver economy has been described as an "economist's nightmare" or "capitalistic communism" by Human writers. It is very difficult for non-Federation members to understand, though it seems to work admirably for them. Basically, Hivers have a strong desire for material comforts and, hence, the wealth that makes these things possible. But they rely on a system of credit in which an individual has a positive or negative credit balance with a particular nest. When an individual changes nests, the new nest acquires the individual's credit balance, either paying to or being paid by the previous nest. In the interim, individuals can draw on the nest's accounts for virtually any amount, whether for simple necessities such as food or shelter, or for large material items.

Just how this system is regulated is a matter of some uncertainty to Humans; it seems to be largely a combination of honor and ambition on the part of the Hiver nest-member which limits unrestrained tapping of resources. Because the Hiver knows it will be moving into another nest, and it also wants to enjoy a certain degree of stability and comfort, Hivers seem to regulate their own desire to tap a nest's resources so as to end their service with a particular nest with a positive balance; they can earn credit according to the quality and quantity of work performed, just as Humans earn money. Thus, a Hiver may receive large amounts of expensive equipment for a particular project, which the nest provides; at the end of the project, the Hiver returns the equipment, and the value of the returned items (less a "depreciation allowance" if applicable) is used to offset the amount originally charged with the Hiver's account with the nest. The balance is made up out of the value of the individual's labor. This system is vastly oversimplified in this description, but in essence conforms to these lines.

The rest of the Federation use the same monetary units as the Hiver (biyzihn, literally "hourly exchange-value notation," worth about Cr15), but the Gurvin insist on a system closer to Imperial norms than that of the Hivers.

Foreign Policy

The Hivers have a well developed, if unusual, parental urge. They are unconcerned about newly deposited larvae, but work for the well-being and happiness of yearlings and take more constructive notice of their older children, actively manipulating their development, molding them into useful future citizens. The Hivers view their alien neighbors as children at various stages of development and with differing potential for growth.

The K'kree

The Federation and the Two Thousand Worlds are not friends and have little formal, face-to-face contact (usually beyond spitting range and on Capital). Despite their localized successes in the war, the Hivers regard the K'kree as probably too intrinsically barbarous to civilize. The Federation considers genocide repugnant, so the FDA limit themselves to maintaining the status quo along their common border, performing deep-cover manipulation to keep the K'kree too scared to attack, and containing K'kree-sponsored pirate raids into the Federation.

The K'kree are not hard to beat in space – their ships are unusually prone to explosive decompression and they are incapable of operating small craft. On the ground, it's a different matter. The K'kree are firm believers in tailored plagues dropped from orbit, saturation nuclear bombing, and huge artillery barrages. They have a totally cavalier attitude to the environment. They don't care if they can't live there, provided no one else can, either. Although pound-for-pound the Ithklur are better soldiers than K'kree, each K'kree masses 1,000 pounds to the Ithklur average of 400, and since they move in large groups, K'kree attacks have a mass and shock effect that can be difficult to blunt. Ithklur tactics concentrate on breaking up K'kree units and cutting individuals out of the herd, where they panic and become pathetically easy prey. Also (they joke), K'kree taste good.

The Imperium

The Hivers find the Third Imperium to be the least backward and contemptible of their neighbors. It is despicably autocratic, its nobles serve no useful purpose, and none of its rulers seem interested in their society's progress, only in their own comfort. The Imperium also has an alarmingly wide range of ethnic, racial, or cultural identities, practices, and appearances.

The Federation Development Agency

The Federation Development Agency (FDA), like the Embassy Directorate, dates from the early days of Hiver starflight some 5,000 years ago. The simple division of labor is that the Embassy Directorate is inward-looking, maintaining conditions on member worlds, while the Development Agency is outward-looking.

The FDA has authority for exploration, first contact with newly discovered cultures, survey of newly incorporated worlds, and diplomatic contacts with polities outside of the Federation. Thus, Hiver ambassadors to the Imperium fall under the FDA's purview.

The Federation provides programs of technical assistance and "self-improvement" to newly contacted races, and the administration of these projects is also an FDA responsibility.

The FDA and the Embassy Directorate share their intelligence – the ED will eventually inherit the Agency's work, so the distinction between the two is less clear-cut than it might seem. This is further confused by the exchange of personnel between them and the occasional borrowing by the FDA of embassy ships.

The hand-off from FDA responsibility (frontier worlds) to ED responsibility (Federation worlds) is often stickier than it ought to be. This is thought to be because there is unfinished covert work (read: manipulation) being done by FDA personnel who want time to complete it before the embassies take over.

In addition to its overt work in contact and exploration, the FDA also maintains covert listening posts both along and across the borders, often in conjunction with the navy. These stations are usually Hiver-staffed – they are doing interesting work, after all – but can call on local security forces if needed. Forward outposts have a team of Ithklur Marines.

The Federation Navy

All Federation armed forces are part of their navy; there is no separate ground force. Given the Hiver attitude to violence ("farther away is better"), the Federation regards military activity as space-centered, with all other forms being

subsidiary extensions of that.
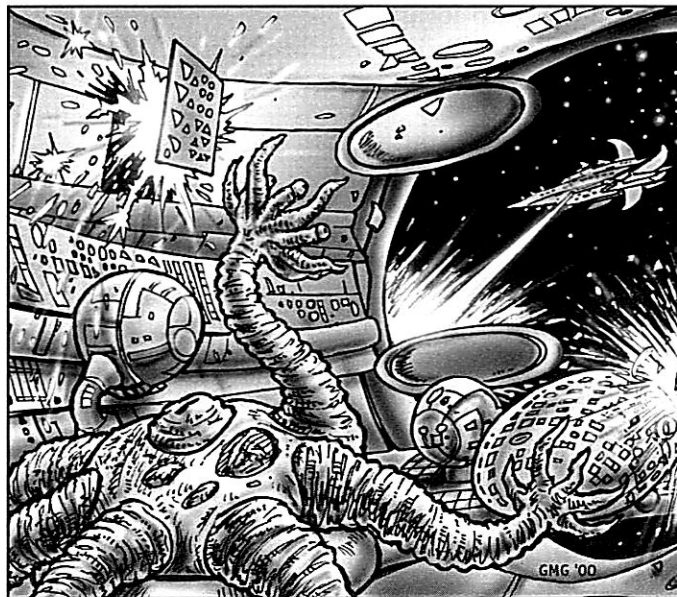
The Federation Navy is the descendant of the Hiver Navy, and was born of necessity alongside the Federation with the onset of the Hiver-K'kree war 3,100 years ago. The Hiver Navy of the time was an exploration and patrol service, and was not capable of waging true interstellar war. The Federation Navy therefore was raised to address that shortcoming, but has not fought another interstellar war since.

The Federation Navy has two missions. The first is to defend the Federation from aggression and to fight its wars, in all environments. In peacetime, which has been its prevailing environment, the navy's main battle force is maintained at reduced readiness levels, and patrol forces form the bulk of the active force.

With these, the navy patrols the Federation's borders to deter aggression and counter infiltration. It patrols and monitors the Federation interior to maintain order, and respond to internal violence. It also maintains aids to navigation, conducts emergency search and rescue, and other civil functions.

The Navy maintains the only standing ground-combat organization in the Federation, the Ithklur Marines. The marines are used for boarding parties, police actions, and all planetary surface operations. The Ithklur Marines are commanded by Hiver naval officers at high levels, but are predominantly non-Hiver. The close-combat troops are entirely Ithklur.

If large-scale combat is required, the battle and other reserve squadrons would be fully mobilized. For ground combat on the same scale, the navy would raise local units from nearby worlds that maintain such things, and hire mercenaries.

The navy's second mission is in support of the Hiver's parental instinct, and was in fact the primary mission of the old Hiver Navy. The navy is responsible for the quarantine of dangerous *Fiyuh* (yearling alien) races while they are suitably modified to be accepted into Federation society. Overall responsibility for this modification also falls to the navy, which maintains numerous covert operations and observation/listening posts for this purpose.

Thus, the navy functions as the Federation's *de facto* training academy for manipulation. The navy's manipulations are conducted by a staff of Hivers, effectively manipulator "apprentices" to one or more manipulation project managers. Since true manipulations, recognized by the rules of the Manipulations Club of Guaran, must be conducted by just one manipulator, not a team, naval manipulations are not true manipulations. Nonetheless, the basics and principles of manipulation can be learned here by the ambitious young Hiver.

It is ironic that the first such *Fiyuh* race to be so quarantined by the Hiver Navy, the Ithklur, has become the indispensable tip of the navy's spear.

The Topical Clubs

Although not formal government bodies, topical clubs perform many functions that are considered government roles by other races. Because Hiver society emphasizes custom setting the norms for behavior where other societies place governmental regulation, Hiver non-governmental bodies carry the load of maintaining and communicating these values where required. The crucial example of this is the Hiver legal system.

LAW, CRIME, AND PUNISHMENT

The Federation has a large body of common law and precedent, maintained by the Legal Club of Glea, but no explicit legislation in the Human understanding, because there is no Hiver bureaucracy to oversee such things.

Indeed, Human terminology obscures these issues. The use of terms such as "legislate," "law," "trial," "lawyer," and the distinctions between criminal and civil law presumes institutions that are not present in the Hiver model.

Hiver Law

As previously seen, disagreements or conflict in Hiver society are dealt with by confrontation, consensus, or avoidance. These frequently succeed in solving any difference in opinion or approach.

When they don't, the Hivers must appeal to a higher authority. In the nest, this would be the nest leader, or another senior in the nest. When this does not solve the problem, or two nests have a dispute, it must be taken to a mutually higher authority. Where nests have formed a community, community seniors or leaders will adjudicate internest disputes as needed. Communities banded into city-states and city-states banded into nation-states possess ever higher levels of authority to petition.

The Vargr

The Federation likes the way this race keeps the K'kree and Imperium busy without being stimulating enough to promote any new developments in military technology. The Vargr are also rather easy to model psychohistorically. Create a power vacuum and they will infest it.

This predictable, non-life-enhancing bias also shows the Hivers that the Vargr are very childish, among the least likely candidates for Federation citizenship.

The Droyne

Hivers are intrigued by what turns Chirpers into Droyne. They are also interested in the Droyne history as a starfaring race, which is at odds with their current status. Droyne psionics terrify the Hivers, however! Many topical clubs study the Droyne, but cautiously and at a distance. The Ithklur have come up with answers for such stealthy troops – *lots* of recon by fire.

Hiver Judgments

Hiver legal judgments focus on a return to business as usual, as rapidly as possible, rather than interrupting the normal flow of life while the legal system grinds along. Wherever possible, they decree repayments or payment of damages to redress any inequities that occurred.

Compared to Human justice, Hiver justice is less concerned with apportioning blame than about finding a way to clean up the mess and get everyone back to work. This sometimes results in what Humans would call a "rush to judgment."

For example: Sabotage in a manufacturing nest has caused valuable production to cease. Hivers from another (affluent) nest are accused. In the course of the judgment, it becomes clear that the accused are not to blame, but that there is no way to find out who is responsible. The judge rules that getting the manufacturing nest back in operation is of the most value to the community, and orders the accused, although innocent, to split the cost of the repairs with the manufacturing nest in the interest of getting things back to normal.

Thus, judgment against a Hiver does not carry the same onus as in Human society, so long as restitution is made. A Hiver who does not make restitution is considered criminally selfish. This system also promotes "out-of-court settlements," particularly where a dispute might be calling unwanted attention to an in-progress manipulation.

Cases of serious offense, unrepentance, or repeated malfeasance require sterner measures to ensure that rehabilitation occurs. See *Mental Illness*, p. 23.

Where such authority does not exist, or has not reached a ruling that is acceptable to the parties, the local embassy fills the gap. Embassy judges, carried explicitly for this purpose, are brought up to date on the details of the dispute by the lower judges who have already sat on the case, or by an appointed *recorder*.

If an embassy is not present, the dispute is postponed until one arrives.

Higher Appeals

The Hiver fondness for consensus allows parties unhappy with a judgment to take it to a higher level. This requires the permission of the judge who rendered the disputed judgment. Normally, the appeal is granted for two reasons: 1) if both parties to the dispute express dissatisfaction with the judgment, or 2) if the judge can be persuaded that the case involves expert subject-matter precedents with which the judge does not have sufficient familiarity.

The judge's approval is required, because the higher judge will demand a briefing from the lower judge on the precedents and details to date. The lower judge may appoint a *recorder* to deliver this information. *Recorders* are accredited by the Legal Club of Glea, and are basically judges in training who record dispute proceedings for archiving by the Legal Club.

On the other hand, a party in a dispute can simply walk away. This is the most common form of "appeal" at the nest level; the dissatisfied party simply changes membership to a new nest where it feels it will be judged fairly in the future.

Hiver Jurisprudence

The body of Hiver law generated over millennia and maintained by the Legal Club of Glea is vast, complex, and subtle in its interaction. No judge can possibly know all of it, and in specialized disputes where specific, technical precedents should apply, there is not always time or ability to send to Glea for the required interpretation. Judges will often have to make decisions based on the portions of the law they are familiar with, applying them to local conditions.

The following principles are strongly supported throughout the body of Hiver common law.

"Individuals have the right to life."

"Races and communities have the right to prosper."

"Individuals have a limited right to property, which is superseded by the nest's right to property, and above that, the race's right to have property used for its betterment."

"Individuals have a right to be judged by their own race, if possible."

"Hivers have the right to be judged only by Hivers."

"Local conditions and traditional understandings of processes take priority over 'absolute' conditions and understandings."

"Successful manipulations are for the good of society."

"In all disputes, the Legal Club of Glea sets the standard for precedents and is the final authority."

The Legal Club of Glea publishes the Federation's court reports, collates and rationalizes findings, then distributes a digest of this information to all member worlds, through the Embassy system as well as its local affiliated branches. This club has effectively become the Federation's judiciary – all leaders and judges must work with and abide by its precedents. In a characteristically Hiver way, the Legal Club ranks precedent in terms of cleverness, subtlety, and usefulness rather than hierarchically (the norm in Human societies). Given a choice, judges will favor decisions and rulings which serve to strengthen the Federation's goals rather than those necessarily most to the point in the dispute under consideration. Judgments which can be seen to benefit a large number over a few are also favored. This is the case even if the few are in what Imperial Humans would regard to be the right.

Equal Justice

The discussion above is of Hiver legal principles, which are naturally also the official legal principles of the Federation. However, the Federation grants significant leeway in the local affairs of non-Hiver races, and this includes legal principles.

Whenever possible, disputes involving non-Hiver races are resolved by that race's local law, including penalties and punishment. (If asked, Hivers do not approve of capital punishment. However, in practice, neither are they interested in getting too involved in the details of local administration.)

If multiple races are involved in a dispute, Hiver judges handle the dispute, and the parties are generally sentenced according to Hiver law, to ensure fairness to both races. Whenever a Hiver is involved, the dispute is resolved via Hiver law by a Hiver judge. The Hiver's sentence is applied according to Hiver principles, and the non-Hiver(s) are generally handed over to their own people for sentencing. In a case that is important to the Hivers, they will observe the non-Hiver's local sentencing to confirm that they are satisfied with it.

Hiver judges are empowered to hand disputes over to "expert judgment" in cases where the subject is sufficiently specialized. Observers note with no surprise that cases remanded to the Manipulations Club of Guaran generally disappear without a bubble. What is less appreciated is that there are Hivers who fight very hard to prevent a dispute from going to the Manipulations Club, which has the right to revoke Manipulator status as part of its judgments.

Mental Illness

The Federation assumes that it is sane and healthy for its citizens to want it to prosper. Thus, those who do not must be ill. This applies to individuals who are found guilty of serious or repeated offenses, or even those who press frivolous disputes; presenting disharmony for public display is clearly against the public interest.

Of course, many disputes simply require rationalization into the scheme of things but, when the litigants fail to grasp that the public good would be best served by their walking away, then both parties will be tested for sanity.

The test for sanity has two halves. First, the litigants must show that they understand that their actions are damaging the body politic. If they cannot grasp this, they are mad. If they do acknowledge this, then they will also be found mad if they cannot show that society stands to benefit from the case being heard.

Special nests exist for the treatment of mental illness, where the patients remain until they are cured.

POLICING

The Federation recognizes the need for public safety officers, who are regarded more as social workers than state-paid muscle. Maintaining public order is hardly a chore, so the force also puts out fires and provides paramedics and ambulances. In wartime or civil emergency, the police take charge of food and energy rationing and coordinate search and rescue efforts.

Most communities have a nest specializing in providing this service, while small settlements may have to get by with a part-time public-safety topical club. In regions with mixed populations, many of the officers are non-Hiver and the buildings are adapted to accommodate them.

Powers and Resources

Federation public safety officers have the rights to stop and search, and enter premises which they have reasonable grounds to suspect are associated with crime, and the powers of arrest and detention. In disasters, medical emergencies, or risks to public safety, they can go anywhere and commandeer any items or property they feel will help, as all such items are ultimately the property of the community.

The Rights of the Citizen

Federation citizens and bona-fide visitors (paying tourists, merchants, well-behaved mercenaries) may reasonably expect that the state will leave them alone. They are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their own lives, to benefit from the successful work of the members of the Manipulations Club of Guaran on their behalf, and to receive the assistance of the state in redressing any wrongs against them.

They may own any items which do not endanger their fellows, and which do not offer an inherent threat to the local biosphere, the citizenry, or property. Since all Hiver worlds contain extensive wildernesses deliberately stocked with dangerous predators, this really means that small arms are acceptable, but main battle items and biological or chemical agents are not.

The Hiver Language

Other races developed more sophisticated verbal communications to supplant body language and facial expressions, but the Hivers did not have this verbal route to follow. Thus, their current language still includes many of the same elements – body language and touch – that were used in the dim proto-hiver tunnels tens of thousands of years ago.

Hiver Sign Language

The Hivers communicate by making complicated gestures with their prime limb. Every conceivable combination of finger and eyestalk position in three dimensions has a meaning. In such an exchange, parallax can lead to difficulties, so there is a recognized imaginary plane, which the speaker defines by twitching its prime limb out and splaying its fingers as wide as they will go. Only hand signals following this gesture and taking place within the boundaries set by it are words.

Limbs other than the prime limb can be used for communication, but the gestures requiring eyestalks cannot be used, and the vocabulary is limited. Non-prime limb communication is primarily used only when the prime limb is being used for other purposes. Rarely, it may be a severely injured Hiver's only means of communication (see sidebar, p. 7).

The language's grammar has a strong mathematical basis, and is ideally suited to expressing logical and technical concepts.

23

Officers are entitled to use non-lethal force and may request naval or local militia assistance. Lethal force is serious business, and is only rarely required. Officers are equipped with tangler grenades (p. S79) or tranquilizer rounds (p. GT111) only if trouble is expected.

The Hiver Language

[Continued]

Hiver Script

The Hivers use an ideographic script derived from their hand signals. Each character stands for a discrete, individual concept and, except for "beginning" and "emptiness," there are no synonyms. The majority of the ideograms are hexagonal, the vertices representing the fingertips of a fully splayed Hiver hand. Inside this field, shapes and areas of shading indicate the positioning of the digits and eyestalks and the precise orientation of the hand itself. The three dimensions of the original are traditionally represented by larger or smaller areas of decoration within the field. Modern holographic inks and 3D displays get around this problem completely.

There are, of course, many thousands of ideograms to remember. This was not a huge problem for the Hivers, to whom it was native, or for the computer-using societies they met, but it slows the acceptance of the Federation by new neighbors and puts up barriers to communication.

The Hivers write their language in lines of hexagonal glyphs intended to be read in sequence. The most common arrangement is to have the vertices pointing up and down and read horizontally. Very careful arrangement of the characters allows them to be read diagonally instead (which sequence is intended is immediately apparent to the Hivers). More sophisticated draftsmen can also hide messages in lines of hexagons with touching corners.

The Hivers would very much like the elegance, power, and inherent subtlety of their written grammar to make it into Gurvin (see the sidebars beginning on p. 29), but it isn't catching on. Half of the Gurvin race cannot follow the concept at all, and the Ithklur have chosen to lampoon it by designing a spiral form, which reads out from the center of a cluster of glyphs, reminiscent of a mandala. They also use the varying shading density of the characters to produce pointillist artwork.

CITIZENS OF THE FEDERATION

The Hivers proudly call attention to their multiracial Federation at any opportunity. While anything that the Hivers repeat too frequently ends up attracting skeptical attention, the integration of 170 different races into Federation society is impressive by any standard.

Where Humans have to invent phony distinctions between Solomani and Vilani and Zhodani and other forms of Humaniti to make themselves look more inclusive, the Hivers really do have a truly integrated interstellar civilization, with member races occupying prominent positions in such crucial roles as government, interstellar trade, and the military.

The non-Hiver races are happy, productive, and have full access to the benefits of the Federation's success . . . so it is strange to hear the Hivers speak so openly of the high-handed way that they deal with their co-equal partners. They think and speak of these races as children, on which they exercise their parental instinct, shaping them and manipulating them as mommy knows best.

The Federation's real owners and controllers are actually not all that good at ruling. They are just too individualistic and curious to entertain the idea of performing the same repetitive tasks for their entire working lives. Where the Hivers excel is at innovation, research, discovery, and long-range planning. But they are not stimulated by routine middle-management or routine commerce, and are stimulated in all the wrong ways by actually having to fight to defend the clever empire they have built for themselves.

For these reasons, they choose to delegate many of these actual responsibilities to assistants who are happy to help out, especially if they were modified in advance to be specialized for those roles. There will also be Hivers on the staff, in senior managerial or policy roles, not because they are some kind of master race but because policy is more interesting than administration.

Of course, the Hivers manipulate their fellow members to bring out desirable qualities and to suppress inconvenient features. The most objectionable of these is violence. Although they spent 1,000 years making the fearsome Ithklur acceptable, Hivers maintain that some races are irredeemable, that they can never be remade into civilized races. Usually though, the undesirable qualities are things like a lack of discipline or focus – rough edges that can be manipulated away.

They do this through patient, long-term work rather than through explicit selective breeding or gene-modification. The end result is the same: co-operative, notably specialized species who fill niches in Federation society rather well. The Hivers point out unashamedly that it is desirable to assure that the people of the Federation can fully participate in its stable development.

THE ITHKLUR

Despite the more generally useful qualities of the other main races of the Federation, the Ithklur rank conspicuously higher in the Hivers' esteem. As noted, they represent the most impressive vindication of manipulation, both as a technique and as a social policy. They also perhaps remind the Hivers that it is a good idea to keep some violent friends around for a rainy day.

The Ithklur are the Federation's shock troops and its predominant source of soldiers. They are big, muscular, reptilian, tailed bipeds, evolved from

carnivore/pouncers. They are the only species the Hivers know of where violent behavior and intelligence are strongly linked. Humans regard it as intelligent to behave violently only after deliberation. Ithklur feel that an instant, violent action *is intelligence at work,* as well as being fun, spiritually fulfilling, and life-enhancing. Hivers find that it is handy to keep such enthusiastic killers at hand, provided that there is something for them to do. They claim to have given the Ithklur at least some restraint and sense of responsibility. The Federation's Ithklur kill when it is tactically desirable, not (as did their ancestors) seemingly at random.

NORTHCOTT 2000

In and near the Federation, Ithklur is a synonym for "shock trooper." Despite being exuberantly violent, the race is likeable – its members display a guileless honesty, which charms rather than nauseates. They are straightforward, but are given to philosophical contemplation. They have a childlike fascination with trinkets and novelties. They read books. They love plants and keep pets. Their typically ebullient greeting – a body check – is somewhat brutal but there is no malice in it.

A chief feature of the Ithklur's manipulation into a responsible species is their substitution of sport for combat as recreation. Playing competitive physical games is almost as good for the reflexes and keeping fit as killing people, and the team elements also appeal to the Ithklur pack instinct.

The Federal Agenda

The Hivers' criteria for stability and development of member races are rather well-defined. The Hivers do not like or much approve of diversity, and manipulate the Federation's citizens toward a narrow range of preferred attitudes and behaviors.

The Hivers do not understand frivolity, fun, or recreation for their own sake (though they might engage in such activities during research into other races' psychology). Consequently, none of the pleasures of the Federation are empty. They serve to instruct or investigate. They all have a point. The Hivers feel that the others would benefit from the same kind of focus in their own lives. In short, the 170 citizen races are being manipulated into as close to the Hiver mindset as is possible for aliens.

The Hivers are as interested in bringing about a convergence in other races' physical appearance as they are in doing this to themselves. They have noted with irritation the wide spread in physiognomy, especially among the Humans and Gurvin. As this variation is, in the Hiver view, at best pointless and at worst a cause of unnecessary trouble, it is steadily being muted. Eventually, each race will have a single genotype, the same aesthetically pleasing (if monotonous) look, smell, and sound.

The greatest latitude the Hivers allow the other members is in self-government. The Hivers rule themselves through a mixture of consensus, subtle manipulation, and a sort of enlightened anarchy. This works for them in part because they don't come to blows over anything and admire their peers for outsmarting them, but is inappropriate for most other peoples. Where different races share the same planet, the tendency is to balkanize the local governments and regulate planetary matters through a governing council. Hence, the Hivers leave other races to govern themselves and pull the strings at the federal level.

The Hivers do not rule by oppressing their fellow citizens, but with their carefully crafted, pre-programmed consent. The citizens are happy partners, because they have been designed to be.

Of the Federation population, Hivers do not form a majority but are the largest single group (45%). The others in order of size are Gurvin (15%), Za'tachk (13%), Humans (8%), Ithklur (7%, not counting the independent client state), and others including the Young Worlds (12%).

Ithklur Psychology

The Ithklur are the "poster race" for Hiver manipulation, but exhibit very few Hiver-approved traits. They behave rashly. They like jokes and games. They claim that the Hivers did not change them, but merely got tired of trying. There is evidence that supports the Ithklur position.

The Ithklur, although genuinely willing to fight and die for the Hivers' Federation and readily accepting their subordinate role in governmental and military structures, are nonetheless actively insubordinate to their masters. They retain their own language, which they stubbornly use instead of Gurvin, forcing Hiver naval officers to learn Ithklur. They keep dangerous pets (which they call *ssaktk'lak*, "ornamental carnivores") that terrify the Hivers. They profess to believe that Hivers have gender, treating them as male or female (apparently at random). Enlisted Ithklur deliberately bait and annoy Hiver associates, and compete with each other to be the most irritating.

Among themselves, however, Ithklur are cheerful, straightforward, and notably cooperative. Revisionists cite this as evidence that the Hiver manipulation was not the one-sided victory they proclaim. The Hivers, not surprisingly, cite these behaviors as proof of basic "Ithklur hardheadedness" and their decline in intelligence with the removal of their more violent behaviors.

For all their combat effectiveness, Ithklur are not cruel nor mean-spirited. They take pleasure in simple activities: handcrafts, collecting interesting objects, gardening, and keeping pets. Ithklur like to laugh, which ranges from a soft hissing sound to a rumbling glottal "purring," all the way to snorts, bellows, and full-bodied paroxysms.

On the negative side, the Ithklur approach to injury is callous, if straightforward. If the patient is in pain and a ready cure unavailable, the doctor kills him.

The Ithklur have a reputation (which they spread themselves) for eating sentients. There is no documented evidence that they do so, despite hearty jokes about things "tasting like Hiver."

Physiology

The Ithklur are big, carnivorous beings. They are superficially lizardlike, warm-blooded, and mass about 400 pounds. They reproduce sexually and come in two genders, but apart from their primary sexual characteristics, there is no significant difference between male and female.

The Ithklur have two hearts (one arterial, one pulmonary), a short digestive tract, and a highly efficient urinary system.

They have a good sense of smell with a useful directional component, and an infrared sense organ. Centered in the face beneath the eyes (where the nose is in Humans), it relays its information to the visual cortex where it is integrated with the visual spectrum data. Otherwise, Ithklur senses are comparable to a Human's.

Their skeletons, joint articulation, and limb proportions are very different from a Human's. Ithklur cross sloping or rough terrain in a semi-crouch, using their arms as much as their legs. They have sharp, needle-like teeth and functional claws on both hands and feet.

Their skin is lightly scaled, blue, green, or an intermediate blend/combination pattern. Skin color holds no social significance for them, although they do appreciate its lovely aesthetics. Of course, the Hivers keep trying to encourage the eradication of one hue or the other, but without success.

A female Ithklur gives birth after 17 months' gestation to a well-developed infant able to walk and eat solid food. The child does not exit through the pelvic girdle, but through an anterior opening in the abdomen.

Social Values

At the same time, the Ithklur retain a serious and robust set of core values, encapsulated by their concept of *integrity*. Simply put, an object or being divided against itself cannot stand. Just as objects that defy the laws of physics cannot exist in a world governed by those laws, beings that do not abide by social laws cannot expect to partake of the benefits of such a society. In short, "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature." Thus, the concept of laws binding on others requires law-abiding behavior from oneself. The concept of useful communication requires a commitment to truthfulness. One does not expect others to behave by standards that do not apply to oneself. These values teach that a being's *true self* (in Ithklur, *chalor*) is fully integrated, and therefore honorable and trustworthy. Ithklur, therefore, believe in honesty, duty, responsibility, commitment, and faithfulness, and do not approve of Ithklur who do not.

Ithklur believe that the true self is not expressed without effort, but is discovered through a lifetime of self-improvement. This involves some introspection, reflection, and meditation in the Human style. It also requires a great deal of peculiarly Ithklur spirituality – a vigorous, committed, physical acting out of various principles being examined, followed by an honest examination of the outcomes, both anticipated and unanticipated.

As a race, the Ithklur believe violence to be a powerful learning tool, and the orderly transmission of information can easily be taken for a series of brawls by outsiders. This is especially true in schools, where simple discussion of the nature of existence and the importance of vividly existing in each moment are driven home and comparatively analyzed with cuffing, shoving, chasing and tackling, emphatic tail slapping, and nipping.

While errors in such acting out of ethical discovery can be quite vivid, true crime among the Ithklur is remarkably rare. Although it is not unknown, and given the sheer power and exuberance of an Ithklur, would be impossible to conceal, Ithklur crime rates are well beneath the statistical levels of other races. The Hivers typically take credit for this state.

Given the Ithklur concepts of the self, and of the virtuous nature of the true self, the highest Ithklur value is that of *freedom*. This should not be understood as license to do as one pleases, or freedom from any constraint, but the freedom to live in accord with the positive structure of one's true self, and to become and achieve all that one was born capable of. Another useful translation of Ithklur *freedom* is *authenticity*. Lives and acts and moments should grow organically from the truth in individuals, their relationships with each other, and the context of those relationships. They oppose artificial or arbitrary constraints, which they act out by their disapproval of caging wild animals, and their opposition to selective breeding programs, including the creation of artificial strains of plants and flowers.

Living in free, authentic, consonance with one's *chalor* yields joy, which is the goal of all Ithklur.

Ithklur virtue also shows in their once-and-for-life marriages, their loyalty to each other, their trustworthiness, and their tendency not to lie out of malice. A fibbing Ithklur is a joking Ithklur.

Society

The Ithklur govern themselves on many well-run, productive worlds. Their preferred organization might be called an informal theocracy; the more enlightened take charge and the less so learn from them. Thus, the Ithklur rule themselves through community councils of warriors and elders. Their soldier's mentality conditions them to accept hierarchical structures, and their view that war is spirituality gives their rulers priestlike *kudos*. Sometimes, ingrained respect for one's officers is not enough, so the authorities retain the services of very cheerful Ithklur policemen.

Ithklur are naturally respectful of anyone with superior understanding; thus they do not distinguish between rank in different organizations, although they do recognize that the context of the wise one is derived from his vocation. An Ithklur recognizes the greater achievement of a seventh-grade bureaucrat over a fifth-grade tactical commander, for example, but would not follow the administrator's orders over a tactician's on the battlefield.

The job-based distinction is more true for the "fascist" path (see sidebar) rather than for the "phalangists," who always study more than one occupation.

Technology

The Ithklur enjoy the same level and scope of technology as the other Federation races. They do have a few cultural preferences, mainly concerning weapons; see pp. 51-52.

Ornamentation

The Ithklur draw plain, robust uniforms, weapons, and armor from the stores, then use their considerable artistic talents to customize them. The uniforms get embroidery, accents, frogging, and badges according to the owner's taste. Anything solid (weapons, armor, AFVs) gets intricate carving, tassels, bells, enameling, and inlays. The final result is baroque and astoundingly gaudy, with the marginal benefit of no longer presenting a crisp profile. It doesn't quite glow in the dark, but its camouflage value is nil, so the Ithklur have a *darkening* ritual, where they apply a camouflage pattern over their equipment and themselves before going into battle. They don't wash it off until they've won.

Ithklur Philosophy and Theology

The Ithklur believe that there is a divine concept, *the ultimate concern*, which is not open to direct appeal and which does not promise any kind of afterlife, but which can nevertheless be emulated. Through that emulation, it gives meaning and beauty to life. The Ithklur intend their actions to be living rituals, assisting them in better knowing and appreciating their place in the cosmos. Although the terms confuse rather than they help, the ultimate concern has Taoist, existential, and Nietzschean overtones.

Assisted by a mentor, seekers of enlightenment climb the eight steps of the Four-Fold Way, a regimen of spiritual and physical exercises which is (roughly) the racial religion. They choose between one of two paths. The "holist," "coherent," or "parallel" is one; the "radial" or "hand" is the other. Finding the Solomani tendency to render ideas in dead languages (to enhance gravitas over comprehensibility) amusing, the Ithklur translated the regimen and its two paths as "Tetramorous," "Fascist," and "Phalangist" respectively. That they knew the last two words were saturated with historical connotations for the Solomani is beyond dispute.

Followers of the holist path stick to one occupation and purpose for life. Radialists try different things, looking for understanding in various experiences. These attitudes to enlightenment are mutually exclusive, and both sects acknowledge that the radialists are closer to the original doctrine, but this disagreement has never turned into true ideological conflict.

On a mundane level, and one which is as true to their path as picking fights, Ithklur are fond of nature, natural ecosystems, and unfettered evolutionary pressures. They raise companion animals and plant gardens. These are as close to nature as can be managed; an Ithklur would prefer a mongrel to a pedigree dog and a weed to an expertly bred rose. They also take delight in breeding away from refinement and back to the ancestral stock.

A Gurvin Glossary

Aog: Beginning, Void.

Boh'ohciy: The Hiver "hour."

Biyzihn: "Hourly Exchange – Value Notation (realized)." The basic unit of currency, worth about Cr15.

Cihn: "Exchange-value notation," money in general.

Eacoh: Genetics.

Fiiuh: "Adult alien" – the Hivers do not make the major/minor race distinction.

Fiyuh: "Yearling alien."

Flagicih: Starship.

Gazu: Arm.

Gicih: Ship.

Gizihn: "Planned Exchange – Value Notation." Both an estimation of future growth of the money supply and a summary of likely productive capacity.

Gu: Soil.

Gua: "Earth" in the mystical "this land is ours" sense.

Gualeh: Farming.

Guu: Regolith, leeched out dust.

Giir: "Performers of the action" – work detail or team.

Gle: Growth.

Glee: Decay.

Gleh: Life.

Glea: Purposeful Development (rising above nature).

Icih: Trade.

Iigoh: Manipulation.

Iygiykuy: War.

Iyro: Gambling.

Noq: Circle.

Nohq: Ellipse.

Nooq: Sphere.

Oc: indicates that the word is a comparative adjective.

Og: indicates that the word is a simple adjective.

Oz: indicates that the word is a superlative adjective.

Phla: Star.

Ubu: General (as opposed to specific).

Yuryiyo: Research.

Zahy: Body.

Zizihn: "Realized Exchange – Value Notation." Very vaguely, current money supply.

THE GURVIN

This race of strikingly attractive tailed, hexapodal, sexually dimorphic, omnivore/hunters is peaceful, sociable, highly individualistic, and proverbially materialistic. They represent the Federation's mercantile shock troops, not taking no for an answer nor accepting a credit less all along the Solomani and Imperial borders.

Their sturdy, compact bodies and covering of short, glossy hair gives the Gurvin a look something like Terran otters or mink, especially with their mobile, triangular heads set with their bright eyes, which seem to miss no detail. Their pelts range in color from blond through caramel to cinnamon, chocolate and auburn to gray. However, they are not aquatic, and their six long, almost spindly limbs break the mustelid resemblance. They walk either bipedally or quadrupedally as circumstances dictate, and the middle pair of limbs is used as an extra set of arms when not being used as legs. When stationary, they squat on their haunches and use all four hands for manipulation.

They have two sexes, the females gestating for 11 months and giving birth to live young, in multiple births of two to four. Males are smaller and slenderer than the females, coming up to about their shoulders, and possess bony processes on both sets of arms, natural weapons which seasonally grow and shed wicked blades, in the style of antlers. However, Hiver squeamishness about violence and the means for conducting it often requires that males in mixed society keep their antler arm-blades trimmed to the nub. This is generally not much of an issue, as the males are rarely seen away from the surface of the Gurvin worlds, and even then don't stray far from the family ships.

Psychology

Gurvin society is dominated by their females, who exhibit a remarkable love of money and the things it buys. Their easy-to-learn language is the *lingua franca* of the Federation's races, although some compare it more to a pidgin. Their female merchants work in all of the Federation's mercantile concerns, and often serve under Hiver officers on Federation vessels as brokers, pursers, and quartermasters, or operate their own family-staffed free traders. They do most of the routine buying and selling in the Federation, and almost all of the foreign trade. If supply needs matching to demand, there's a Gurvin who'll arrange it, but she'll demand money for doing so, and lots of it.

Gurvin traders are said to have an uncanny ability to show up at a market, whether a trading post on a Federation world, or a starport on the Imperial trailing frontier, with just the right cargo that is in current short supply and high demand, and extract every advantage from it. Gurvin negotiation is referred to as "Ninja math," because there are always invisible factors sneaking around in the calculations that don't leap out until it's too late to back out of the deal. The Ninja numbers always favor the Gurvin, of course.

Society

Gurvin worlds are ruled by matriarchal collectives. The women compete to accrue wealth for the family and, by extension, for the world. This assures that the basic commerce of the Federation is cut to the bone, and that all possible avenues for greater cost efficiency are exploited to the fullest. Strangely, Gurvin males are much less intelligent than the females, who run everything and have an adventurous streak that their males lack. Males work as devoted servants in the "hunter" (industrial or agricultural worker) and "entertainer" (dancer/acrobat) fields, and have little part in the affairs of state, except appearing as "geisha boy" consorts at the side of the female leaders.

THE ZA'TACHK

These trisexual, quadrupedal omnivore/gatherers developed in the transition zone between the forests and steppes of their homeworld, Loza'tch. They are the Federation's premier administrators. Mentally, they are far more similar to the Hivers than any of the other member races. Whether this is because they were an early contact, thus being available for manipulation for a longer period, or just an accident, is unknown. Outside analysts lean toward the former interpretation.

The Za'tachk have less pronounced forms of several Hiver traits – they are non-aggressive, pacifistic, and highly cooperative, but lack individual initiative and curiosity.

Biology

The Za'tachk have a short spine, connecting to huge bony structures, which combine some features of both the shoulders and the pelvis. The head is at one end, on an extension of the backbone that resembles a stubby tail as much as it does a neck. Za'tachk can use any of their limbs for walking or grasping. The Za'tachk have deep auburn fur which shades to black at the limbs and to golden brown over the face. In winter, each Za'tachk molts and grows a thick white coat.

The Za'tachk are trisexual, with a complicated and flexible reproductive pattern. There are two subsidiary sexes, the *oygui* "scouts" and *oyzgui* "homesteaders," and a master sex, the *ohyugua* "matriarchs." To understand the roles of the three sexes, it is more helpful to think of social insects rather than male vs. female. The *oygui* "scouts" can be compared to soldier ants, the *oyzgui* "homesteaders" to worker ants, and the *ohyugua* "matriarchs" to queens. Unlike social insects, the soldiers are "male" in nature because they cannot gestate young, while the workers and queens are female.

All three sexes produce gametes, and the gametes can produce viable offspring either in the diploid (two gametes conjoining) or triploid (three gametes) configuration; however, diploid offspring are sterile "mules." Thus a scout and a homesteader could mate to create a sterile version of either sex.

Matriarchs, scouts, and homesteaders all carry triploid genes, and are the result of tri-fold mating, with one of each sex participating. Impregnated homesteaders and matriarchs give birth to live young, young homesteaders and scouts after six months' gestation, and young matriarchs after 12. All three sexes are capable of feeding the young from pseudo-mammaries, glands that secrete a nourishing semi-liquid into their belly fur.

Society

Like the Hivers they resemble in many ways, the Za'tachk are quite alien from the Human perspective. Although individual Za'tachk are sentient individuals, their psychology and social behavior is highly structured and stylized, making them often appear to Humans as programmed automatons rather than as independent individual intelligences.

The matriarchs are the center of society and its leaders. A Za'tachk community generally has a "court" of fertile matriarchs and a group of "courtiers" – scouts and homesteaders who are the favored mating partners of the fertile matriarchs. Older matriarchs past their days of fertility also participate in community leadership.

Scouts and homesteaders specialize in the daily support of the community – scouts in exploration, hunting, warfare, policing, and heavy labor; and homesteaders in administration, education, child-rearing, crafts, management, and distribution of basic goods and services.

The Gurvin Language

When the Hivers encountered the Gurvin, they were taken by the coincidence that both species used an ideographic script. The grammar of each was regular and possessed a similar range of concepts. Translation between them was quite easy. Conveniently, Gurvin script also had a syllabary, so it became possible for the first time to make Hiver pronounceable. The Hivers set about adapting the new Federation members' tongue for their state's benefit.

Gurvin became the Federation language for several reasons. First, it filled the need for a readily exportable tongue which could be tied to Hiver. Second, as it arose among well-traveled merchants, who needed to be able to talk to strangers, it is readily comprehensible. It has a regular, inflected grammar. Each word is short with a single, unique, unambiguous meaning. There are no synonyms and a quantitative measure, the degree of similarity, replaces the concept of metaphor.

Gurvin's small vocabulary is not entirely comprehensive – some words have no Gurvin translation and a lot of awkward concepts are unavailable to a speaker. Also, the tongue is wholly unsuited for creative expression, so there is no poetry, no whimsy, and no humor.

By removing redundant and inconvenient concepts, and by replacing shades of meaning with quantities, the Hivers made the tongue ideally suited for statistical manipulation and modeling. Gurvin cannot express the sentiment "less is more," for example, and would be seeking the counting method behind "no greater love than this."

It is worth noting here that the Ithklur defiantly cling to their own tongue, and profess to not understand Gurvin. The Ithklur tongue allows its speakers to deal with abstract and philosophical concepts and especially to use metaphors. Because of this, Ithklur pidgin is widely used as an auxiliary to Federation Gurvin among races that need the additional breadth of expression.

As no record of primeval Gurvin exists, there is a scholarly, sometimes heated debate as to how much the Hivers changed the tongue to their own ends. The Federation regularizes the language. Embassies circulate a style guide to discourage local divergence. Linguistics clubs review any spontaneously arising usage and consider its utility to the language as a whole. If a club finds a change to be good, it lobbies for its introduction. The Embassies Directorate is, for example, promoting the use of the consonant "z," as most of the Federation's races find the sound easy to pronounce.

This is the main difficulty with Gurvin – the language is not alive. There are no changes to it except by committee, so it lacks many concepts important to other species and common among the major races.

Initial Consonants	Letter Frequency (100)	Sound
B, P	8.3	Either *b*ath or *p*ain.
C,S	8.3	*C*entury.
D	6.48	*D*olphin.
F, Ph	7.4	*Ph*ysics.
G	13.8	*G*oal.
J	2.8	*J*ump.
K, CK	4.16	*Cl*ock.
KK	4.16	"*K*"stuttered to produce a double sound.
L	4.16	*L*ook.
N	3.7	*N*ote.
P	1.38	*P*ain.
Q, KW	2.8	*Q*ueen.
R	5.6	*R*ope.
SN	1.39	*Sn*ow.
T	5.6	*T*ime.
V	5.6	*V*ote.
W	5.6	*W*ombat.
X	2.8	E*x*it.
Z	2.8	*Z*oo.

Continued on next page . . .

This biological-social structure makes the Za'tachk predisposed to firm structure and rules, even of a very detailed nature. It is the homesteaders and matriarchs that are the most creative in this respect, and actually form the bulk of the Federation's famed Za'tachk bureaucrats. As the Hivers feel that this is a really useful trait in a subordinate, the Federation publicly admires it in the Za'tachk.

Their worlds tend to bureaucratic governments with voluminous, yet consistent, helpful, and thorough sets of regulations for people to follow. The Za'tachk seldom intentionally break the rules, but visitors sometimes do, so the authorities retain small police forces, composed of scouts on predominantly Za'tachk worlds, but often employing other Federation races on more cosmopolitan worlds.

FEDERATION HUMANS

The Hivers are strangely reticent to discuss the Human members of the Federation. They do not attempt to conceal the fact that it includes a handful of minor Human races from Ancient-planted stock along their spinward frontier. But they don't call attention to them either, preferring to talk all about the wonderful Gurvin traders with their useful language, the challenging Ithklur manipulation, and the lovely Za'tachk bureaucrats.

The Hivers were able to handle Humaniti well. The species is violent but not irredeemably so, inquisitive, adaptable but in no way equal to other Federation species in any one specialization. Humans are handy for the initial stages of any enterprise. Their flexibility and initiative mean that they can be deployed as different needs show themselves. When the likely structure becomes evident, the Hivers bring in optimized workers and deploy their primates elsewhere.

The presence of two nearby Human-dominated superpowers, and knowledge of a farther one, makes the Federation Humans especially interesting to the Hivers. Human citizens are occasionally trained as spies and deposited in deep cover.

The Hivers do not like the Human tendency toward autocratic rule, so encourage democratic institutions for local self-government. They have also noted that Human atavism flows more from their literature and entertainment than from their historical experiences or religions. Federation Humans tend not to take part in competitive games. Neither do they encounter the heroic ideal very often. They often find themselves working collectively against an impersonal force, repairing a generator failure on an iceball, for instance, or building flood barriers in the middle of a storm. Those Humans who join the navy are thoroughly persuaded that it is a dirty but necessary job, rather than a big adventure.

THE YOUNG WORLDS

A statistically improbable number of worlds clustered in the Centrax, Lorspane, and Drakken sectors are home to promising primitive races. These

youngsters are just crying out for the kind of parental guidance that only the Hivers can give. Since 410 (Imperial), the region has been the beneficiary of a massive manipulative effort. The Federation capital was even moved from Guaran to Glea to facilitate this.

The Young Worlds initiative is very important to the Federation. Historical accidents meant that a lot of the other members' basic traits had been developed before contact, thus thorough manipulation proved difficult, sometimes even impossible. In a sense, that work represents a preliminary sketch, and the eventual form of the Young Worlds' peoples will be the Hivers' masterpiece.

Six Arms, Long Reach

The Hivers' activities extend far beyond their formal boundaries, and indeed considerably farther than what other states consider to be the Federation's sphere. Diplomatically, it is reasonable for a power to involve itself with the affairs of its immediate smaller neighbors, even to make clients of them. It is also unremarkable that the Federation might want to initiate long-term, deep-cover work inside powers with a proven record of hostility. All states do this.

What would not be acceptable, indeed what is not even appreciated, is that the Hivers have sleepers, stooges, and discreet helpers all the way across charted space. These people implement instructions from determined manipulators, who then wait years to see if any ripples reach them. The Federation can also activate them when something new and interesting comes to light. The high level of traffic to and from the Federation disguises movement of operatives, intelligence, and orders. It would be possible for security agencies to infer the existence of this network but for two things: its huge size and the belief that all of charted space is too big a canvas to work with.

Public Relations

On first sight, it is bizarre that a race as publicly devious as the Hivers has anyone left to manipulate. There are several reasons why neighbors deal with the Federation at all.

First, there is the unavoidable fact that there's money in it. The Hivers produce very high quality goods, and trade is about individual gain, not the good of the larger society. There's no reason not to buy Hiver products, and their quality provides a strong incentive to do so.

Second, discussion of conspiracy theories inevitably falls prey to positive feedback – as soon as it starts, the conversation spirals so far out of control that participants are left feeling that the universe is out to get them, everything is a spiteful lie, and they have no free will at all. There might well be conspiracies and plots – indeed there are many – but sane people recoil from the idea (for instance) that the Hivers began their alleged plot to murder Dulinor 1,200 years ago.

Third the Hivers are *cute*. They're like big starfish. They're amusing and cryptic and are always engaged in silly experiments. Whenever one does anything, it looks like a selection of well-coordinated finger puppets. They are famously non-aggressive. It is difficult for Imperial Humans to look at them and not go "aww . . . " let alone think that they want to conquer the universe. Even the Ithklur guards with the diplomatic missions seem playful and exuberant rather than overtly dangerous.

The Federation uses these observations as the basis for its charm offensive into the Imperium. Hiver products prove to have unexpected benefits – a traffic-control system might prove to be optimized to deliver rescue services to accidents, for instance. Whenever there are public discussions into manipulation and conspiracy, they soon become so obviously paranoid that no one sane would agree with them.

Vowels	Letter Frequency (100)	Sound
A	8.3	M*a*th, a short "a."
AA	11.6	F*a*rce, a long "a."
AH	5.1	*Ach* so (Hollywood German).
E	8.3	P*e*t, a short "e."
EA	5.6	Fr*eja*, a Norse goddess.
EE	5.6	Fr*ee*ze, a long "e."
EH	5.6	*Air.*
I	5.6	B*i*t.
IH	2.8	*Ich* (Hollywood German).
IY	2.8	*Eye.*
II	2.8	*I*ci, a truncated long "e."
O	2.8	H*o*rrid, a short "o."
OCH	1.85	L*och* (Hollywood Scots).
OH	1.85	*Eau* (French), a long "o."
OI	1.39	H*oy.*
OO	1.39	D*oo*m.
OU	1.39	*Ou*verte (French – like oo, but shorter).
U	1.39	J*u*mp, a short "u."
UA	1.39	*Wa*ssail.
UH	1.85	R*uff.*
UU	0.93	J*u*ne, a long "u."
UY	1.85	Hollywood Yiddish, defies phonetic transcription.
YA	2.8	Ken*ya.*
YAH	2.8	A noise stagecoach drivers make in Westerns.
YE	2.8	*Ye*s.
YEE	1.4	"Hear *ye*, hear ye."
YO	1.4	*Yo*yo.
YI	1.4	"Hear *ye*," but shorter.
YU	1.4	See *yu* Jimmy (comedy Glaswegian)
YY	1.4	Hollywood Yiddish, defies phonetic transcription.
'	1.4	A glottal stop.

Final Consonants	Letter Frequency (100)	Sound
B, P	2.8	Either *b*ath or *p*ain.
C	2.8	*C*entury.
Ch	2.8	Chur*ch*.
D	2.8	*D*olphin.
F, Ph	2.8	*Ph*ysics.
G	8.3	*G*oal.
J	8.3	*J*ump.
K, CK	8.3	*C*lock.
L	8.3	*L*ook.
N	5.6	*N*ote.
NG	5.6	Goi*ng*.
P	5.6	*P*ain.
Q, KW	2.8	*Qu*een.
R	2.8	*R*ope.
SN	1.4	*Sn*ow.
T	1.4	*T*ime.
TR	1.4	Cen*tr*al.
V	2.8	*V*ote.
W	1.4	*W*ombat.
X	2.8	E*x*it.
Z	16.6	*Z*oo.

Each vowel has a short, long, and aspirate value. The short value indicates the base concept, the long (ideally) its exact opposite, but usually its negation, and the aspirate some kind of synthesis between the previous two, or failing that, action toward a resolution.

Diphthongs provide the language with some badly needed euphony, standing for ordinary vowels, but occasionally have significance of their own, generally casting the word in a specially important form. "Gua" means "Earth," with overtones of Solomani-style sentimentality, while "gu" means "earth" as in "soil."

Presence of the y~ diphthongs will show that the word refers to a hybrid of one of the base concepts. Presence of the ~y diphthongs will indicate that the concept is outmoded. In Gurvin costume dramas, all the first vowels are of the ~y form, the Federation equivalent of "thou shalt," "forsooth," and so on.

Where possible, the initial consonant, if any, indicates the purpose of the concept: "g" denotes a word concerned with action, "p" indicates contemplation, and "z" closure. "B" and "p," although distinct for most Humans, are indistinguishable for Za'tachk, thus can be read for each other when transliterating Gurvin into Anglic. The Hivers sometimes render identical-sounding consonants differently as well, like "f" and "ph." They claim the distinction to be important for their own symbolic logic, but that statement is probably untrue and intended to mislead.

Federation diplomats are always available to talk to public forums; schools can usually arrange tours of Hiver ships or consulates for their children. In short, the Federation doesn't discuss peoples' fears at all, it just shows itself to be too nice for such suspicions to have any credibility.

HISTORY OF THE HIVERS AND THEIR FEDERATION

The Hiver approach to history seems unusual to a Human observer. Hivers are not concerned with names, dates, generals, and great deeds by great leaders. Hiver history concentrates on the recording and discussion of manipulations great and small, with a few other topics seemingly selected at random. They keep records, of course, but analyzing them for patterns and lessons is not commonplace. Much of the material below has been assembled by non-Hivers.

PREHISTORY AND EVOLUTION

Hivers traditionally claim that they are unique among sentient races in that they had a culture and language before they developed intelligence. As bizarre as the claim is, it is a constant refrain in the Hiver self-image, and is no more bizarre than many of the other claims they make about themselves.

The proto-Hivers were opportunistic scavengers who developed a symbiosis with the snohl, a species of massive tunneling worms. The Hivers followed the snohl into their burrows, dragging carrion and decaying plants into them. The organic matter served as food or as fertilizer for underground gardens of fungus. The snohl and Hivers shared the fungus harvest, and both species thrived.

The proto-Hivers successfully co-existed with their snohl partners before the development of intelligence, which took place during a recent climactic change – the Guaran ice age. The key survival mechanism for the species had been its prolific nature. Hivers produced, and still produce, huge numbers of offspring for their size and intelligence, averaging nine offspring per adult per standard year. In the wildernesses in which they spend their first year, most Hiver larvae died, but a substantial minority escaped the attention of predators because of the wide variety of other food sources. The ice age changed all this.

Intelligence arose as a beneficial trait as the climate worsened. The smarter Hivers adapted better to their new circumstances and passed this advantage to their children. The huge die-off of the less bright contracted the gene pool so that intelligence was common to all survivors.

FEDERAL HISTORY

The history of the Hivers and of their Federation is, for them, a gratifying series of great manipulative achievements punctuated with minor crises. The response to these obstacles is always innovative, practical, and beneficial to the swelling Hiver confidence that there is no development that they can't manage into submission.

The First Manipulation

The most significant event in Hiver history is confusing to outside observers. The story is hard to square with economics or the Hivers' probable engineering or logistical capabilities at the time, yet the Federation's historians insist that the details are correct and that the events really did take place as described.

Some 10,000 years ago, Guaran's most recent ice age was ending. The Hivers were settled in mountainous, coastal areas around the planet's equator. Most of their trade was by sea. Their typical social organization was independent city-states. A Hiver, remembered by posterity as M. Primus, was a resident in

one of 10 states at the conjunction of several river valleys around a rocky peninsula. It observed that the sea routes were inconveniently long and suggested that it would be useful to develop the interior valleys. Primus persuaded the states to undertake a program of tunnel building to replace the sea trade and to open up the peninsular interior. In the short time of 15 years, the cities were connected by roads winding and tunneling through the mountains, and settlements served by them grew up in the interior. After 30 years, the region had changed from a selection of isolated communities to a single nation-state. When this happened, Primus claimed that it had intended this outcome all along.

Here accounts differ. Primus was either appointed ruler of the new polity or driven out as a threat to the community. In either case, the state grew as outsiders observed its success and applied for membership, and Primus' account of its act was lauded as the first great Hiver manipulation.

Expansion and Manipulation

As the climate improved, the Hivers spread along the coasts toward the poles, principally from Primus' state. The salutary benefits of unity, the Hivers' dislike of violence, and the scope to satisfy their curiosity and make a profit made this a good, prosperous time for them.

It also hastened the acceptance of manipulation as a social force. This practice became an institution. Following M. Primus' example, the more ambitious Hivers took to performing manipulations of their own, always making sure that they got credit for work done well. Although Hivers detest being upstaged by one another, there was sufficient glory to be gained from being associated with a distinguished manipulator (even if as a dupe) that the race took to enjoying seeing the masters at work.

Industrialization and the Guaran Breeding Crisis

Hiver technology advanced smoothly toward its industrial revolution. Native curiosity more than compensated for any supposed loss to inventiveness through lacking war as a stimulus. The Hivers came early to the concepts of zero and place order notation, so were able to measure and study processes precisely, and express their results in rational terms.

The nest system was admirably suited to the first stage of industrialization, job specialization, which led to greater efficiency; the Hivers' individualism and joy at being tricked cleverly mitigated against any development of a class-war mentality.

Their manual dexterity enabled them to work metal to very fine tolerances. This, coupled with the formalism of a sign-based language, enabled them to devise mechanical computers; they could produce intricate yet long-wearing moving parts to manufacture reliable machines. Their early development of telegraph and facsimile transmission enabled coordination of effort over the entire planet.

The Hiver industrial revolution was remarkably thorough and consistent, but it was not without problems. The spread of factories and unrestricted building was turning the wild lands, essential for the first year of larval life, into deserts. There was a real danger of either being overrun with larvae who would not leave the nests, or of losing all of the larvae to poisoning in pools of toxic industrial waste and mine tailings. Local communities responded with local initiatives, fencing off proving grounds for their own offspring and dumping pollutants elsewhere, but the inevitable far-sighted manipulator (known to the Imperium as M. Eneri) saved the day.

M. Eneri's intricate plans preserved areas of Guaran for larval development and introduced stringent pollution controls. M. Eneri's template for planetary management is now standard throughout the Federation. In Hiver eyes it certainly deserves its "M."

Spaceflight

The Hivers laud their manipulators, but seldom bother students with the names of *inventors*. In -4698 (Imperial), a ship from Guaran made a jump to another star system using a jump drive invented by . . . some Hiver. The Hivers were delighted. They took readily to space flight and set out to explore and colonize the nearby systems. Their first efforts were hampered by a poor jump drive design – the devices would melt after 10 uses at most, and were limited to jump 1.

In -4212 they developed more efficient designs, equivalent to modern jump-1 drives, and the rate of their expansion accelerated. They made new contacts, meeting the Za'tachk in -4100 and the Gurvin in -4050. Both races were technologically primitive, pre-industrial, and grateful for the Hivers' development aid. From these contacts, the Hivers formed the opinion that all species were basically cooperative.

The Ithklur

The Hivers' rosy view of space exploration changed when, in -3986 (Imperial), they met the Ithklur above their home planet of Tryylin. This species had space travel, but no jump drives. They were also extremely hostile, reacting violently to the explorers. The Hivers quarantined their system until they could decide what to do with them.

Manipulation won out. Nearby nests set to work and over the next 1,000 years, the Hivers molded the Ithklur into the cheerful maniacs they are today. This large-scale manipulation became the model for the work that the Hivers have performed – and still do – on their fellow Federation members.

The first big decision the Ithklur had to make was not whether or not to ally with the Hivers, but what to do with the dissenters. Killing them all was morally repugnant, and considered only so that it could be rejected formally. Instead, the Hivers suggested that those Ithklur resistant to manipulation be given a territory of their own to develop and a promise of non-interference from the Federation. Recognizing that malcontents would arise spontaneously in each polity, the parties agreed to free migration of dissidents in each direction. Even today, some Ithklur make the trip to or from their feral state.

True to form, the Hivers tricked the feral Ithklur. They lent them their older, more primitive jump technology and gifted them a large cluster surrounded by a two-parsec demilitarized zone. The independent Ithklur cannot go anywhere in significant numbers without Federation help. The Hivers do honor the word of their treaty, whatever their breach of faith with its spirit.

The Great Civilizing Mission

Since the K'kree war (see sidebar) ended in -2013 Imperial, the Hivers have been busy with their Federation. They have decided that their civilization's promise of peaceful co-existence across charted space is too good to be refused. They know that good work can't be rushed, and are prepared to take the long view.

The war, the only one they've fought, reinforced their commitment to diplomacy, and especially to manipulation, so they expand deliberately now, satisfying their curiosity by studying what they have, rather than going on to new possessions. This caution, and the paucity of reports reaching their neighbors from the Federation's outward frontiers, tends to lead to the Hivers being underestimated. That's the way they like it.

They have since met all the governments of charted space, and have established reasonable relations with most of them. Officially, the Solomani Confederation is a good neighbor and valued trading partner, whatever the true picture on the frontier. The Hivers have plans for all their neighbors, but these will wait until the Young Worlds program comes to fruition.

Composition of the Federation

The Hive Federation has existed for just over 3,000 years. In that time it has spread from the homeworld to a few systems in four adjoining subsectors of Ricenden, then on to its present boundaries (see map on p. 18). Its expansion has slowed so that the increasing number of new worlds can be absorbed, but the Federation is still growing.

Astrography

The Hive Federation dominates a rectangle six sectors from spinward to trailing and four from coreward to rimward. Its aggregate area is about 10 sectors. On its spinward and coreward flanks, it abuts the Solomani Confederation and the Two Thousand Worlds.

Between these theaters, the frontier bends back to avoid the broad sweep of independent or client states that stretches all the way from the Lesser Rift to Spica sector. Overt expansion in that direction would alarm neighbors prematurely, so the Hivers have contented themselves with leaving the independent Ithklur state as a stalwart redoubt in this area, sufficient to at least slow down any hostile incursions. The Federation is far more active with the wholesale development and assimilation of the cultures lying to trailing and rimward.

Worlds

The Federation has the usual assortment of planet types. Most have a federal presence, sometimes Hiver, more often another species. Since not all worlds are ideal for settlement, the Hivers, as is the tradition for a dominant species in a cosmopolitan society, reserve the choicest real estate for themselves. Less choosy races inhabit the majority of worlds, with their less-than-ideal conditions.

Preferred Climate

Hivers like their worlds moist, with moderately dense atmospheres. They need a sizeable piece of rough terrain where larvae can wander and expect to survive the climate if not predators, so seldom choose hostile worlds for their own colonies. A robust fauna is preferred. If there are insufficient predators to make a real impact on larval numbers, then suitable species are imported.

Settlement Patterns

Hivers live in collections of interconnected buildings, with residential, business, and environmental functions. The need to provide accessible wild land for larval development means that Hiver settlements are dispersed. Historically, this meant ribbon development along arterial roads or railways, the added danger from traffic contributing to a challenging environment for the larvae. Currently, with the widespread availability of grav transport and telecommunications, nests are scattered across a planetary surface, their numbers varying according to land quality and available resources.

Other Federation races settle according to their preference, which is usually for more concentrated developments separated by countryside. The appeal of dense settlement is particularly strong for Federation Humans, who find themselves colonizing more than their fair share of hostile environments. The Gurvin are less keen on physical hardship, preferring arcologies and park land. Za'tachk are commonly found on new, underpopulated worlds with thinner atmospheres, which their caste-based society can rapidly and effectively colonize.

Fortunately again for the Hivers, the invading K'kree stopped once more to absorb their new possessions, which slowed their attack between -2018 and -2013. The K'kree were apparently puzzled by the Hivers, who were not themselves carnivorous, but aided and abetted subject races who were. Adding to this, the Hivers' almost ludicrous nonviolence made the K'kree very suspicious, indeed. What sort of game were they playing at, and how best to beat it? Pondering this took time, and taking this time was a K'kree mistake. The Federation used it to build a technologically impressive navy, and to train and equip imposing ground forces, recruited from their new allies. These they deployed to the front lines, with orders to hold where necessary, and attack if possible. This cautious response puzzled many of the allied contingents, but the Hivers had a different game in mind than a military counter-offensive.

During this holding action, the Hivers slipped teams onto four carefully selected K'kree worlds in Kilong sector, deep within enemy space. These agents set about manipulating the K'kree and keeping detailed records. The K'kree go mad if separated from each other and are militant vegetarians. When the Hivers finished with their work, there were planets full of K'kree who enjoyed meat sauces and spent time alone.

When their work was done, the Federation lured their enemies into negotiation with an offer of surrender. When the K'kree arrived, the Hivers presented the results of their work. The K'kree were appalled and terrified, came to immediate terms, and sterilized the worlds concerned (they are still embargoed). The frontier is closed in each direction, with a demilitarized zone of backward systems between the two powers. Piracy, effectively war by proxy between the two sides, remains in the area, but no K'kree invasion has occurred since.

WORLD GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

Except in the case of Gurvin planets, which are Gurvin representative democracies with a female-only franchise, and with the reservation that meaningful categorization of Ithklur power structure is futile, Federation world governments are consensual, whether an anarchy, a committee, or a participatory democracy. In all of these systems, nests cooperate if they feel that is good for them, but can be manipulated into acting against their own interests for the common good. Governments can switch between these forms according to the inclination of the nests or the masterful work of a manipulator.

Anarchic systems are extremely laconic – if any problems arise an informal, short-term committee arises spontaneously to sort it out, provided, of course, that the committee members believe that they can provide the solution without danger to themselves. Some of these anarchies are supervised – Federation observers will intervene if things get out of hand. Others are not. Although these systems are unlikely to sink into violence, if the system breaks down then so do food and power supplies, so failure is a real danger.

There are some authoritarian regimes, ranging from company boards or colonial administrations to the *Sept*, a uniquely Hiver form of administration akin to a seven-member supreme court, but these are exceptions rather than rules.

Control Levels

Federation planets are remarkably free places with low control levels, usually ranging from 0 to 2. Occasionally, the weapon control can be higher, but only in matters of genuine public safety (armor-piercing rounds in a pressurized dome, for example). These higher values are only acceptable to the citizens if they obviously work to the public good. The locals accept that the authorities have the technological capability to keep them under continuous surveillance and intercept their communications, but also accept that this power will not be abused beyond the Federation acceptance of manipulation as a normal means of governance. Federation citizens trust and approve of their governments, if only because they have been manipulated into doing so.

Starports

Although the Federation likes to think that its ports are of class III or above, there are many worlds with more primitive facilities. The Federation prefers activity to be orbital, so the downports are usually concerned with servicing passenger and cargo shuttles. There invariably is a small, unobtrusive security force, drawn from the most suitable (which means easy-going and self-confident) members of the local militia and stiffened with navy regulars.

Starports are prime sites for criminal activity and inter-species contact. The density of ancillary buildings means that they aren't good places to build nests, so settlement near a port favors a world's non-Hivers. These communities are difficult to build into predictable social models – their personnel change, numbers fluctuate, and they have more opportunities for unsavory behavior. Consequently, the Hivers plan *around* them, working with sealed bulk transport and direct nest-to-nest communication, so that the main thrust of Federation traffic passes them by entirely. The remaining

GLEA

Ice Cap · Mountain · Water · Forest · Desert · Savanna · Volcano
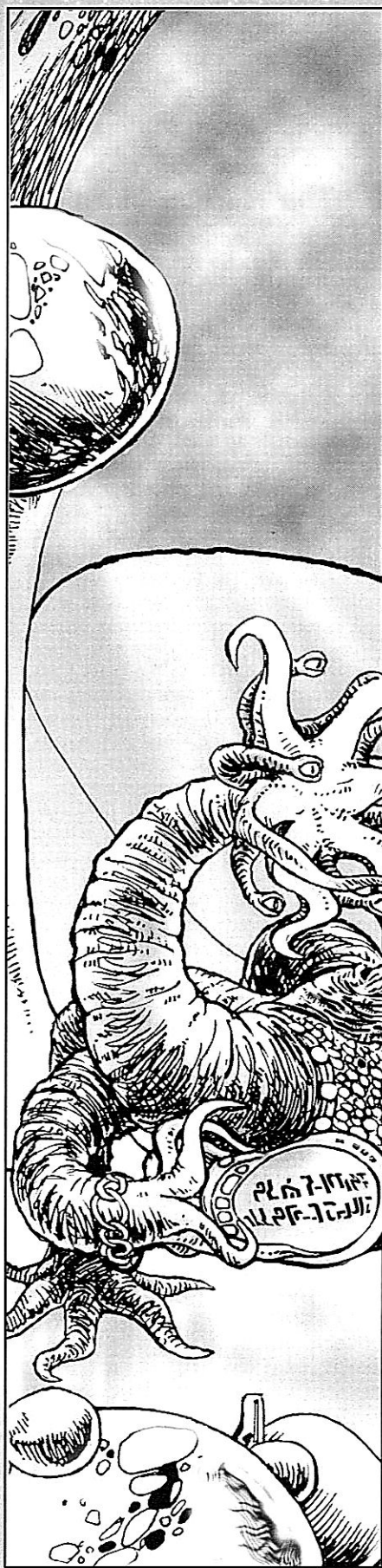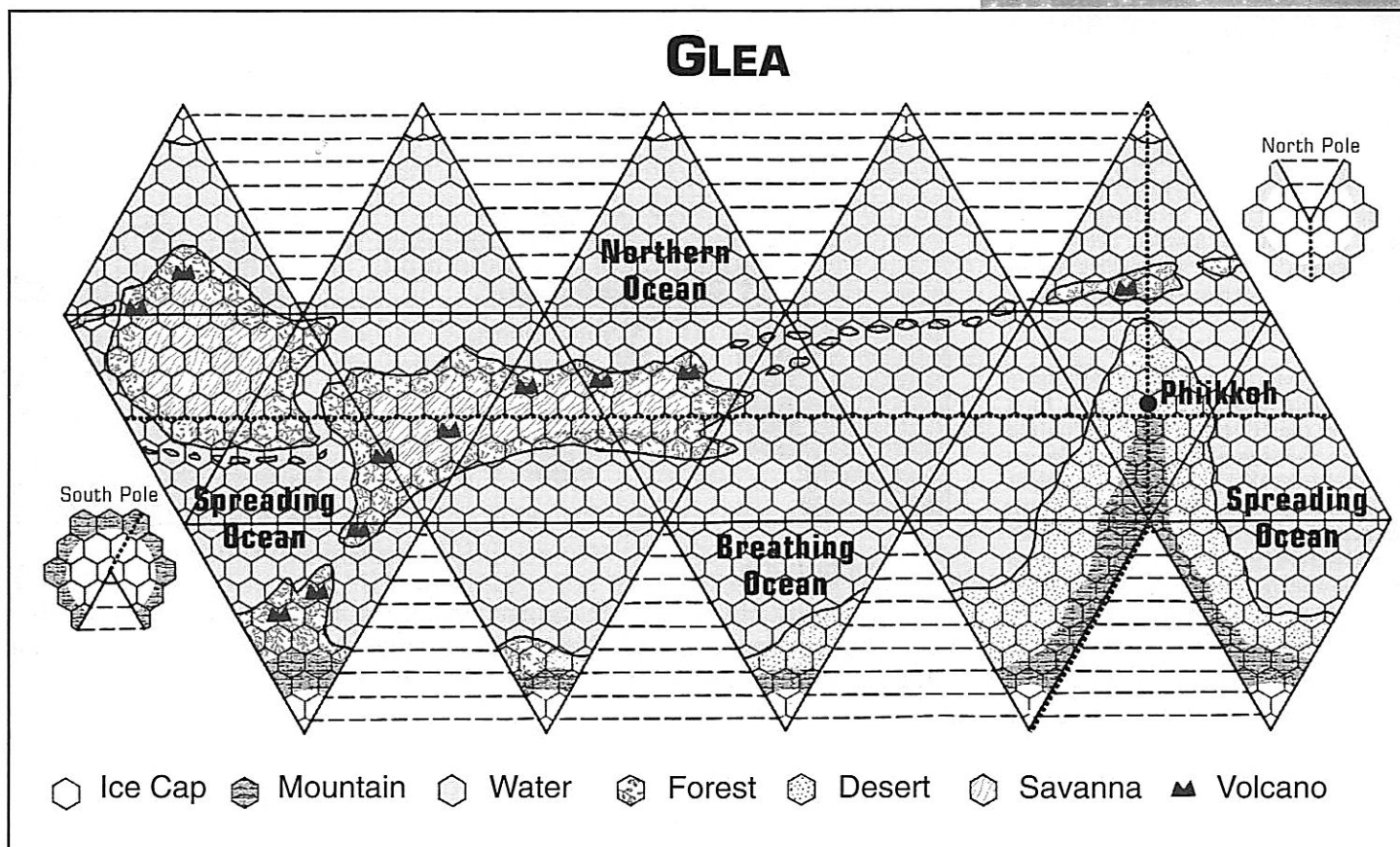
facilities run on incidental trade, opportunity buying and selling, and intangibles such as leisure.

Imperial visitors find the absence of bureaucrats puzzling, and are seldom sure where the port boundary is. There are no rigid immigration or customs controls, no tariffs or duties, and no obvious searches. Of course, the Hivers aren't stupid. Prior intelligence work, such as cross-referencing ships' manifests with security databases, gives a good idea of who and what is going where. Hiver robots, festooned with cameras, densitometers, and sensors (including X-rays), are almost ubiquitous around starports, and are leavened with warbots around Federation naval bases.

Of course, no ship that has been in contact with Hivers is ever allowed to depart a world without mandatory anti-larval fumigation.

Bases

All worlds have a militia, tasked with its defense. The Federation aspires to equip them all at TL12, but for the moment, these troops have the best equipment that can be supported by local industry, so are usually at least TL8-9. The navy disapproves of this slackness; TL10 is their minimum approved standard.

The main purpose of the militia is to provide personnel to work the local deep meson guns and associated sensors, but they also keep bases with missile batteries and atmospheric fighter craft.

Important worlds have a base associated with their support squadron and system defense boats, and an orbital platform for the fighter squadrons.

The most significant world in a subsector has a large base for the patrol squadron, which includes barracks, arms stores, and mothballed transports in case the navy needs to mobilize ground troops.

A battle fleet's home base is in the most suitable system, considering logistical support, the distance from most likely threats, the suitability of the locale for crew rest and recreation, and the presence of a main trade route.

Glea

The Federation capital orbits a hot, yellow star at 1 AU. There are two hot rock balls at 0.2 and 0.46 AU, then a desert world at 2.04, three gas giants at 3.08, 5.16, and 8.32 AU, then three ice balls at 14.64, 27.28, and 52.56 AU. Glea has no moon.

Stellar Data

Type: G0V. *Luminosity:* 1.21. *Radius:* 1.03. *Mass:* 1.04.

World Data

Starport: Class V. *Diameter:* 5987.5 miles. *Density:* 5.52. *Gravity:* 0.75. *Atmosphere:* Standard, oxygen nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 70%. *Climate:* Warm and moist. *Population:* 650 million. *Government:* Supervised anarchy. *Control Rating:* 0. *TL:* 12.

Atmosphere and Hydrosphere

The planet is slightly younger and more geologically active than Earth, and somewhat smaller. The atmosphere is a standard oxygen/nitrogen mix, with no pollutants or irritants. It has three oceans and three major land masses. Two of its continents straddle the equator; the other reaches up from the South Pole. Poor water circulation in the two southern oceans means that the southern latitudes are warm except for very close to the polar cap.

Two of the oceans, the Northern and the Spreading, are very deep. Two continental plates grow from a ridge under the Spreading Ocean. The Breathing Ocean is much more shallow, nowhere deeper than 100 fathoms, although it is sinking almost as fast as its source rivers deposit their silt.

Geography

The equatorial continents both have considerable ranges of mountains. First Reserve, the Hiver-settled land on the equator, also has a high central plateau and a substantial high-latitude snowfield.

The southern continent, part of which actually reaches into the northern hemisphere, rises in a dome over the south pole. The hump is due to an active magmatic province and (in all probability) an emergent plume of epic proportions. Some geologists postulate an imminent extinction episode in 1,000 years or so, with an alarming margin of error.

Flora and Fauna

Glea lacks woody plants and grasses, but has abundant fern, cycad, moss, and lichen analogs. Where there is abundant moisture, the plants grow into thick forests with floors of decaying vegetation. Growth is more sparse in colder or drier climates.

The fauna resembles that of the late Devonian period on Terra – cephalopods and giant insects. The chief predator of larvae is the wind wasp, a flying predator. It resembles a hawk-sized wasp, but with small crablike pincers.

Federation Settlement

Glea is a pleasant planet with a relatively low population and a statutorily protected ecosystem. Its inhabitants are half Hiver; the other races are present in proportion to their share of the Federation population. Most of the nests are on First Reserve, where they climb the plateau sides, allowing larval access to the high plains. Other nests dot the world's surface, but the only significant city is Phiikkoh, with a population of 25 million. None of the other communities have more than 100,000 residents.

The world and Federation capital, Phiikkoh, is immense and very cosmopolitan. Members of all the Federation's species live close together. The starport is here, as are the main Federation government buildings and most prestigious topical clubs. There are facilities for visitors from across charted space, and the superpowers' "high commissions" (the Hivers reserve the term "embassy" for their own interior ministry). Inevitably, the size and vitality of the metropolis supports a criminal class among the non-Hivers.

Architecture

Physically, Hiver nests are conglomerations of hive-shaped buildings, usually taller than they are wide. The operators sometimes paint their property with large logos or distinctive livery, but just as often leave them unadorned.

The members' quarters have windows looking out over the settlement and doors opening onto a central chamber about 50′ across. A spiral walkway winds round the inside wall, stopping in a wide promenade where the walls begin to bend in again. This level usually has windows or even balconies.

Each building has a house computer, usually linked to a planetwide data net, with a terminal in each room.

Under the floor is a warren of tunnels, which often runs beneath the entire settlement. Hivers use this space to grow fungus, to access other buildings, and as a home for the nest's pet snohl. These creatures are no longer required to excavate the Hivers' homes, but the Hivers like having them around.

GM's SECTION

This section is intended for the use of GMs running campaigns featuring the Hive Federation. Some of this information will of necessity be used by those taking on Hiver PCs, but otherwise it should not be made generally available.

As should be clear, there are a great many fishy things going on in the Hive Federation. This section sheds light on some of these.

OVERVIEW

The material presented in the open section of this book is not entirely true. Some of it is true, such as the physical and biological details of the Hivers. Some of it is incomplete, such as the discussion of their behavior, society, and government. Some of it is simply wrong, particularly in portions of their history and description of the Federation's non-Hiver races.

The material *is* valid because it is the story that the Hivers present as the truth about themselves and their Federation. The previous material is what a well-informed Imperial citizen would know about the Hivers, and would be accepted as the broad truth by most any individual in the *Traveller* universe. As the text itself points out, there are many points that seem odd, which might be doubted by the thoughtful observer, but there is no one outside the Federation – indeed, few within it – who know the answers that clear up the ambiguities.

Most outsiders accept this Hiver propaganda at face value, if only because there is no alternative. In fact, much of what is "known" about the Hivers is derived from Hiver material planted in Human media sources in the period circa -1750 Imperial, within a century of their first contact with Humans. This material, when found in its original form, is remarkable for its style – rambling, repetitive, self-contradictory, and tautological. The overall effect on the reader is to paint a picture so opaque and confusing that disbelief is almost too much effort. Whether this is a deliberate, masterful psychological *coup* on the part of the crafty Hiver authors or an accident of woefully poor understanding of Human psychology and language cannot be determined almost 3,000 years later.

GOVERNMENT OF THE HIVE FEDERATION

As has been discussed, government in the Hive Federation is minimal. The only true governmental bodies are the Federation Development Agency, Embassies Directorate, and Federation Navy. But these bodies merely execute policies whose necessity must have been determined by a pre-existing deliberative body or bodies. There is not a policy-making or executive branch among them. There is no Federation head of state or head of government. It is true that the Hivers are not much interested in government, and yet there are certain functions that must take place for an interstellar polity to exist and prosper, as has the Hive Federation in the past three millennia.

The true Hiver government is the topical clubs. These do not exercise governmental authority in a formalized way, but rather as a form of "shadow" government in which the important policy issues are derived, discussed, and acted on by the topical clubs within whose areas of concern they fall. The Hivers do not think of the topical clubs as their government, because to them, they are not. Topical clubs act in the arenas they are interested in, that is all. Members of topical clubs make decisions and carry out actions or manipulations according to their interests, and these decisions and actions become Federation policy based on their success over time. These are not governmental actions, but merely the aggregate effects of Hivers acting in areas of their own interest. Government is the *effect*, not the cause.

Just as the Manipulations Club of Guaran is recognized as the governing body for manipulations and the Legal Club of Glea is the repository for Hiver jurisprudence, fields such as diplomacy, naval appropriations, and domestic policy are handled in part by the *Fiiuh* Guidance, Naval Procurement, and *Fiyuh* Management topical clubs, respectively.

Some Human concepts of government, such as ministries of housing or environmental protection, are unheard of in Hiver culture. There is simply no need to centrally manage something that is so effectively handled at the local level. And environmental protection was handled once and for all by M. Eneri's manipulation following the Guaran breeding crisis, and does not need to be learned again. Should conflicts or differences in interpretation arise, they are handled by Hiver judges on a case-by-case basis, and that is the end of it.

SECRETS OF HIVER PSYCHOLOGY

As with any race, the forms of Hiver society and government are derived directly from their psychology, which in turn derives directly from their biology.

As with many Hiver "secrets," this one is hidden in plain sight, and it is not even clear that the Hivers attempt to deliberately conceal it. As has been observed, Hiver physiology is "primitive" when compared to that of other intelligent races.

Guaran (Hiver Homeworld)

Guaran orbits a close binary pair of a white dwarf (Phlaguu) and an orange main sequence star (Phlahsniy) at a mean 0.682 AU. Only Guaran and the gas giant Ohsnay ("fuel stop") survived Phlaguu's gravity.

Stellar Data
Type: K1V. Luminosity: 0.35. Radius: 0.834. Mass: 0.77.

World Data
Starport: Class V. Diameter: 4,940 miles. Density: 6.2. Gravity: 0.7Gs. Atmosphere: Standard, oxygen nitrogen. Surface Water: 70%. Climate: Warm and moist. Population: 870 million. Government: Sept (see p. 36). Control Rating: 0. TL: 12.

Atmosphere and Hydrosphere
At 0.8 standard atmospheres, Guaran's air has an oxygen/nitrogen composition with traces of carbon dioxide and a strong representation of noble gasses, especially neon and argon. Combined with a strong magnetosphere, these provide spectacular polar aurorae and thunderstorms. Guaran has six seas and two small icecaps.

Flora and Fauna
Unusually for a rich, civilized world and as a direct result of the Hiver breeding crisis, Guaran retains its entire ancestral ecosystem, largely intact. Mobile life forms usually follow the Hiver model – many-limbed invertebrates. Plants are usually woody or grassy, but what would be called fungi on Terra is very well represented.

The Tourist Trade
Guaran has no special administrative significance any more, but is still the homeworld. It attracts millions of Hivers, curious about their origins. It is also ideal for long-term conference or diplomatic work; Guaran has gravitas but no political clout.

The planet has a decaying, old world charm. The old capital buildings are still there, some parts lavish and well maintained, others in picturesque ruin. Bits of the world are like a theme park. The tourist board presents re-enactments of important events. Historically significant pre-fusion industries survive as living museums, and adventurous visitors can try their hand at sailing replica barques around Sunset Cape.

Beyond the famed Manipulations Club, Guaran hosts the biggest, if not most important, topical club: the Mushroom Society. Often trivialized by outsiders, this organization keeps genetic records of Federation fungi and lichens, and documents hybridization and breeding efforts from all over charted space. It also breeds snohl.

Topical Club Shell Game

An Imperial official wishing to meet with the "Hiver secretary of state" would be sorely disappointed. While the Imperial official might eventually work out that he would need to deal with the *Fiiuh Guidance* topical club, there is no president or leader of the club. Fortunately, the Hivers have come to recognize the Human need for formal channels of communication, and maintain staffs of officials to deal with Imperial and Solomani statesmen, particularly on Glea, where the main Human embassies are maintained. These staffs are Hiver seniors drawn from a variety of organizations: Hiver embassies, the Development Agency and Embassies Directorate, various topical clubs, or important local nests. But they are not drawn by any formalized system; they are there because they wish to be there. Their interests and goals cause them to deal with Humans.

Strangely, one of the main roles of Human diplomats on Glea is to accredit Hiver officials who will travel on "official government" business into the Human domains. Since Hiver trade/diplomatic delegations do not have the sort of internal credentials Human governments are used to, their legitimacy is derived differently. They introduce themselves to Human ambassadors on Glea, who provide for them the proper secure credentials for them to present when they arrive at Human capitals. By thus empowering Hiver envoys to deal with their own societies, Human ambassadors to the Hivers work rather more for the Hivers than they do for their own governments.

The other trick for discerning Hiver government is to know which topical club is actually in charge of a given area. There are a variety of duplicate topical clubs covering a topic, and clubs whose areas of interest overlap. Based on the current success of its manipulations, a given club's policies may be ascendant, but this can change over time without warning. Humans who become aware of this may assume that this is cunning Hiver duplicity, but this is not necessarily the case. Hivers themselves have no way of knowing which club is doing better than another without analyzing the issue, usually by another manipulation, which itself affects the balance of power. This assumes, of course, that a Hiver cares to know who is "in charge." Most Hivers simply pursue their own manipulations and don't concern themselves with keeping any kind of aggregate club scorecard. And Hivers can join new clubs whose assets or capabilities assist them in their current goals.
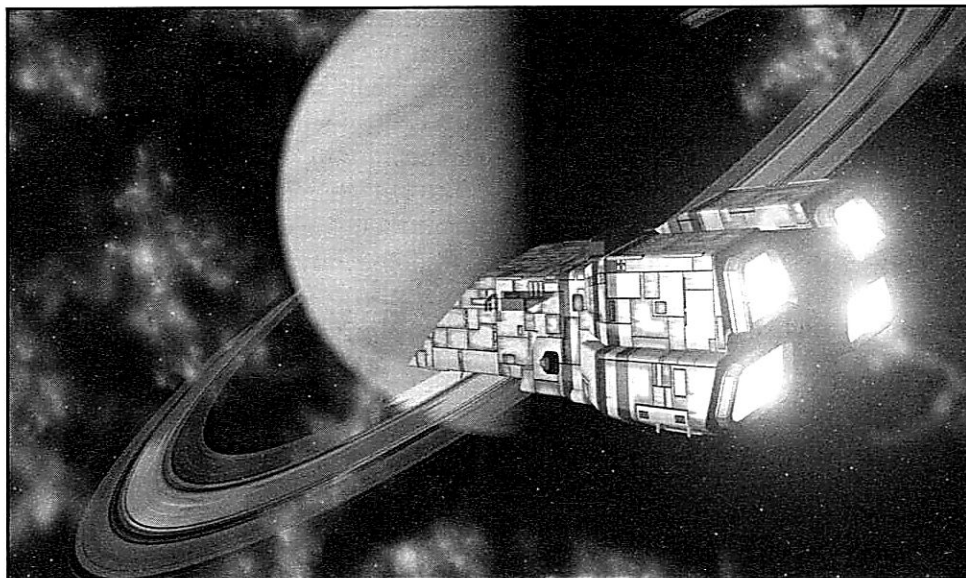
Rather than achieving intelligence after developing efficient, healthy biological systems, Hiver intelligence is overlaid on somewhat defective biological structures, suffering from unreliable sensory capabilities and deficiency diseases caused by the failure of internal organs to function properly. This is because Hiver selective pressure functions on a completely different mechanism from that of the other major races.

All of the major races besides the Hivers are social creatures that care for their young. Selective pressures thus function on the population as a whole, rather than on individuals.

Hivers, on the other hand, only become social creatures after spending their crucial first year alone in the wilderness. Selective pressures therefore operate most dramatically on the individual, when it is the most vulnerable in its first year. Given the high Hiver birth rate, any mechanism that increased the percent of larvae that survived their first year would have a greater population impact than one that extended the life of adults without changing the larval survival rate.

Such a mechanism was the rise of intelligence. Intelligence did not get fixed in the Hiver genotype because it was advantageous to adult social Hivers. It became fixed because it allowed larvae to survive their critical first year in the Guaran ice age. Orange proto-Hiver larvae, flopping around in the cold, white snow, almost denuded of plant cover, suffered terribly from exposure, starvation, and predation. Only intelligence saved them, rapid opportunistic intelligence geared to allowing the individual larvae to spot food and shelter, and to see a threat and evade it. The ice age's impact on the proto-Hivers' reproductive behavior would likely have resulted in the species' extinction otherwise.

The Hiver race survived because the larvae became quick-witted enough to live for a year and make it back into the protection of the nests. But this intelligence was not geared to routine, steady, daily adult social interaction, nor for farming, nor organizing and planning other collective tasks. In short, this intelligence did not help the adult Hivers. It had at best a vestigial role for adults, but at least it was not detrimental to their survival, so was retained. The only pressure to concentrate the genes for intelligence into the proto-Hiver population was the fact that only larva with the genes for intelligence made it through a year in the icy wastes and back into the nests. Over generations, higher levels of intelligence developed and became concentrated in the nests populated by surviving, bright yearlings.

The result is the central trait of Hiver psychology: *volatile intelligence* – intelligence that ebbs and flows with environmental stimulation.

After the development of larval proto-Hiver intelligence, the next most important event in Hiver evolution was the ability of adult Hivers to take advantage of the intelligence that had seen them through their first year. Adult proto-Hivers, when under survival-level, "flight"-quality stress, found their larval intelligence re-awakened, and were able to perform acts that benefited their nests. These flashes of intelligence were short and sporadic, but over time, proto-Hivers learned to reliably trigger this response in themselves. The next step was to invoke it in, and teach it to, others. It is likely that this early teaching involved such elementary techniques as scaring each other by poking their fellows with sticks or chucking rocks at them. Proto-Hivers may have taken turns at being intelligent, and then, when group cooperation was required, activated each other by suitably shocking behavior.

This capability probably took longer to develop than the raw material of intelligence itself, as its mechanism was less sure. The use of sporadic flashes of intelligence to make a difference in fungus farming or tunneling had fewer immediate uses than it did when dodging a raptor or finding a warm place to spend the night.

The next crucial development was to stretch the duration of intelligence over time. The trick was to "fan the flames" of this intelligence by continuing to stimulate the mental process, and the eventual successful means to do this was to keep the intelligence focused on a problem, to *remain interested*. Proto-Hivers that were able to do this were the first true Hivers, and this is the source of the proverbial Hiver curiosity. Curiosity is the means by which Hivers daily maintain themselves as an intelligent race. It is this insight that makes sense of the otherwise dubious Hiver refrain of how curious they are, and also shows the irony that a fundamental Hiver "secret" is hidden in plain sight.

CURIOSITY AND VOLATILE INTELLIGENCE

The modern Hiver does not recede to animal intelligence when its mind is not aroused. The passing generations of evolution have developed a higher level of volatile intelligence in the species.

But a Hiver is functioning at well below its true capabilities without intellectual stimulus, specifically upon first waking up. In order to function at the intellectual level that allowed them to achieve technological civilization and starflight, Hivers must flog their brains continuously to keep them "revving at the required rpms."

Topical Club Shell Game
[Continued]

Some cases are deliberately tricky, however. For example, the Manipulations Club of Tryylin is an affiliate of the Manipulations Club of Guaran, which is open to all Federation races. The First Manipulations Club of Tryylin, however, is a Hivers-only club.

When the Manipulations Club of Tryylin was first opened to non-Hivers, Ithklur flocked to join, eager to learn the truth of what had been done to them. They were disappointed by their inability to learn any unambiguous information. When it was discovered that there was a parallel *First* Manipulations Club of Tryylin, it was clear that the Manipulations Club was a stalking horse intended to confuse non-Hivers while the Hivers-only First Manipulations Club did the real work.

In reality, the First Manipulations Club was the stalking horse, diverting attention from the Manipulations Club of Tryylin, which oversees the actual continuing work of the Ithklur manipulation in plain sight. The First Manipulations Club primarily produces disinformation intended to confuse those who oppose the Ithklur manipulation. However, over time individuals will learn to disregard information from the First Manipulations Club, allowing it to become fertile ground for real manipulations, and the balance of power of successful manipulation will shift over to it, away from the currently "true" manipulations club.
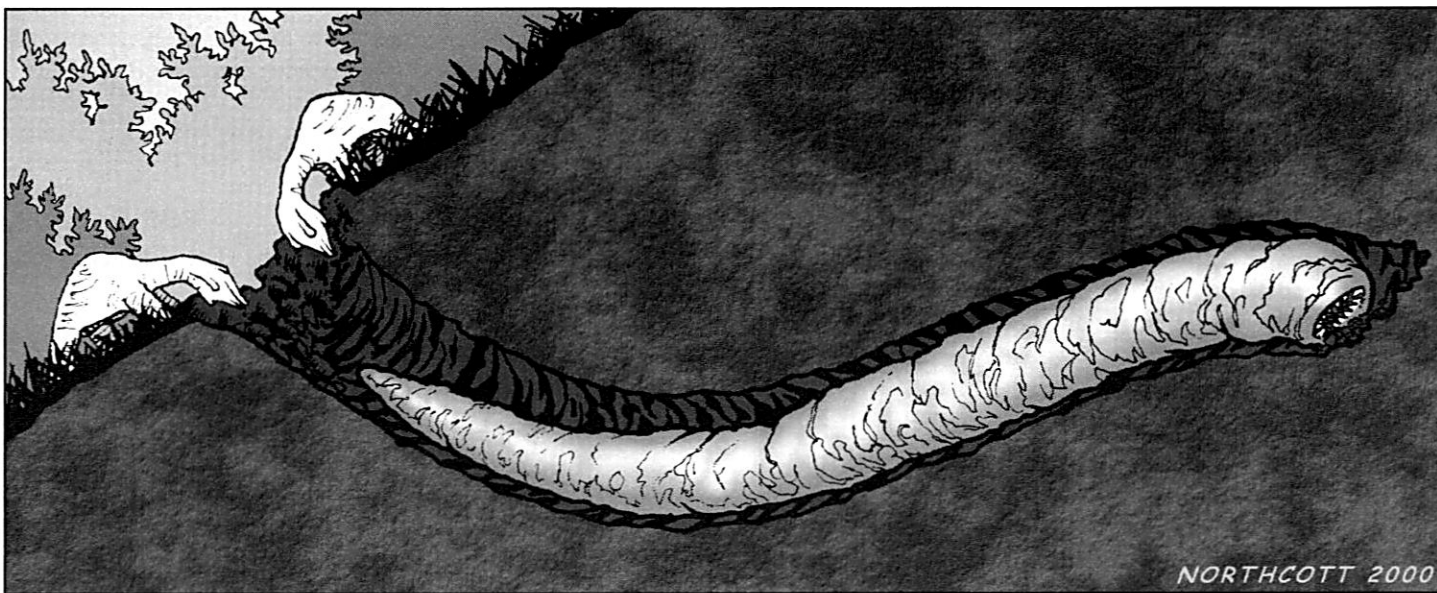
NORTHCOTT 2000

FEDERATION CHARACTERS

HIVER RACIAL TEMPLATE
35 POINTS

The average Hiver is 3' thick, 10' across when outstretched, 5' high in its normal stance on four limbs with prime limb raised, and weighs 330 lbs. Add or subtract 20 lbs. and 2" for every point of ST above or below 10.

Attributes

The average Hiver has ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 10 [0], and HT 10 [0]. While comparable to Human abilities, their ST and HT, particularly their ability to endure damage, are poor when compared to their massive size. Furthermore, Hivers are rather slow-moving; see *Reduced Speed* under *Disadvantages*.

ADVANTAGES

As befitting the most alien of the major races, Hivers possess several advantages rarely seen in other sentients.

Damage Resistance

Their thick, rubbery hides give Hivers DR 1, a 3-point advantage.

Extra Arms

Hivers have four extra arms of ordinary length, costing 40 points.

Extra Flexibility

This 10-point advantage reflects the Hiver arms' tentaclelike nature.

Faz Sense

Though the hivers don't use this name for it, they do possess the ability to sense vibrations in the dark, worth 10 points.

High Technology

Most Hivers enjoy a TL12 background, effectively requiring that the entire race take two levels of the High Technology advantage for 50 points. Individuals with unusual, perhaps frontier, upbringings may reduce this investment to one level (TL11 for 20 points) or none (TL10, the *GURPS Traveller* default) with GM permission.

Infravision

Hivers have heat-sensitive sense organs, giving them this 15-point advantage. These organs are distinct from their eyes; theoretically, a Hiver could be visually "blinded" but still see heat emissions or vice versa. This is a 0-point racial trait.

Injury Tolerance (No brain)

Though Hivers have a brain, it is centrally located and can hardly be damaged without killing the Hiver before reaching it. Therefore, the race enjoys this 5-point advantage in practice if not in theory.

Manual Dexterity

An added benefit of their flexible limbs and eyes set next to their finger equivalents, Hivers have a +2 bonus to fine-detail work, for a 6-point advantage.

Panimmunity

Given the deficiencies of their primitive physiology, Hiver medicine excels at improving their resistance to various infections and internal disfunctions. Most Hivers enjoy two levels of this advantage, worth 5 points, but its benefits are halved (to +4) because of their Weak Immune System disadvantage, described under *Disadvantages*. Rare Hivers from lower-TL backgrounds might not enjoy this benefit.

Psionic Resistance

Psionics believe it impossible (though in reality it's merely extremely difficult) to mentally influence Hivers. The race possesses no special defenses vs. physical psionic manipulation, however. This is nine levels of Psionic Resistance with the -50% limitation "Vs. Psionic Vampirism and Telepathy only," for a net cost of 9 points.

Regrowth

The race can regrow most any lost extremity, a 40-point advantage. See p. 7 for more information on the trauma associated with losing a prime limb.

360-Degree Vision

This 25-point advantage reflects the race's six radially set eyes. Furthermore, a Hiver eye can be squeezed into or around barriers in ways that no other race can emulate.

DISADVANTAGES

Most of these reflect the essential two drawbacks to the Hiver race: They are unsurpassed cowards and suffer from a surprisingly primitive physiology.

Callous

Their treatment of their newborns alone qualifies the Hivers for this -6-point disadvantage. Those unfamiliar with the race may react in shock when exposed to their early parenting.

Chauvinistic

This -1-point disadvantage reflects the Hivers' belief in their own racial superiority.

Combat Paralysis

Even if a Hiver felt compelled to fight, it might find itself rooted in place, a -15-point disadvantage.

Cowardice

A fundamental of Hiver psychology is their desire to save their own hides. This -10-point disadvantage will inflict various reaction penalties when dealing with other races,

depending on their familiarity with the Hivers and own perspective on martial valor.

Curious

Hivers need to stimulate their brains more than other races; very few individuals will lack this -10-point disadvantage.

Invertebrate

While Hivers have bonelike structures, these don't extend to their limbs. Thus, they suffer this -20-point limitation on their ability to move heavy objects.

Low Pain Threshold

This -10-point disadvantage is a side-effect of the racial aversion to risk.

Mute

Hivers can't speak (though they *can* hear), but at TL8+ the race's chest computers (see pp. 49-50) give this the -75% limitation "Commonly circumvented with technology" for a net -6-point disadvantage.

No Sense of Humor

Hivers may have their own bizarre sense of humor, but they regard the variety enjoyed by Humans, Vargr, and Ithklur as a nuisance at best, for a -10-point disadvantage.

No Sense of Smell/Taste

Half of all Hivers do enjoy a sense of smell (see *Interesting Smell You Have*, p. 5), so any individual should be allowed to buy off the No Sense of Taste/Smell disadvantage at character creation for a cost of 5 points.

Post-Combat Shakes

This -5-point disadvantage is yet another reflection of the race's intense self-preservation instinct.

Reduced Speed

Further making their lives miserable in fight-or-flight circumstances, Hivers do not move quickly. They subtract 2 from their Basic Speed (and subsequently Dodge). This is worth -50 points (and is technically a reduced attribute rather than a disadvantage, but is listed here for convenience).

Selfish

Hivers as a race are selfish, though less so as individuals. This racial trait is a -5-point disadvantage.

Weak Immune System

While the Hiver's relatively crude physiology confers many benefits (primary among them their Regrowth advantage), it also creates problems. Foremost among these are frequent breakdowns in their endocrine system, represented by a racial Weak Immune System worth -30 points. They should suffer the disadvantage's normal chances of infection as a result of this flaw.

ITHKLUR RACIAL TEMPLATE
75 POINTS

The average Ithklur is 7' tall and weighs 400 lbs. Add or subtract 25 lbs. and 2" for every point of ST above or below 13.

Attributes
ST 13 [30], DX 11 [10], IQ 10 [0], HT 11 [10].

Advantages
Acute Taste and Smell +3 [6]; Claws [15]; Extra Hit Points +1 [5]; Infravision [15]; Sanctity [5]; Scales [3]; Striker (1-hex tail) [10].

Disadvantages
Bloodlust [-10]; Code of Honor (Ithklur; see pp. 26-27) [-10]; Obsession (Enlightenment) [-5]; Odious Racial Habit (Exuberant prankster) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10].

Racial Skill Bonuses
Animal Handling +1 [1]; Appreciate Beauty +1 [4]; Gardening +2 [1].

FERAL ITHKLUR
45 POINTS

Substitute Glory Hound [-15] for Overconfidence and add Primitive -3 [-15] and Short Attention Span [-10].

Ithklur Status
The Ithklur revere progress along their spiritual path, which is graded. This grading in the degrees of enlightenment works as Status, Military Rank, Administrative Rank, Clerical Rank, etc., depending on the Ithklur's position in society. An Ithklur must have at least 1/2 point invested in Theology (specializing in Tetramorous Way; see sidebar, p. 27) for every 5 points invested in Status and the various Ranks. (I.e., an Ithklur with Status 2 and Administrative Rank 3 would need 2¹/₂ points invested in Theology, which rounds up to 4 points for Theology at IQ level.) It is not necessary to buy Status or Rank to study Theology.

GURVIN (FEMALE) RACIAL TEMPLATE

30 POINTS

The average Gurvin is 5'2" tall (8' from tip of nose to tip of tail) and weighs 175 lbs. Add or subtract 10 lbs. and 1" for every point of ST above or below 10. Males tend to be 4" inches shorter and correspondingly lighter than females of equivalent ST.

Attributes

ST 10 [0], DX 11 [10], IQ 11 [10], HT 10 [0].

Advantages

Extra arms (Two, normal) [20]; Fur [4].

Disadvantages

Greedy [-10]; Reduced Hit Points -1 [-5].

Racial Skill Bonuses

Merchant +1 [1].

MALE GURVIN

0 POINTS

ST drops to 9 [-10]; IQ drops to 8 [-25]; add Claws [15], Hidebound [-5], and Incurious [-5]. Males who mingle outside Gurvin society routinely trim their arm-antlers; they have no Claws advantage for a racial cost of -15 points.

Notes

Gurvin tails are useless as manipulators or weapons.

Most Gurvin women learn and practice Economics, Merchant, Politics, and Xenology. By and large, they disapprove of fighting; female soldiers will be rare.

Males may have been early hunters, but Hiver influence has blunted their instincts. Some do serve in uniform, but are more likely to be found in planetary militias than the Federation Navy.

FEDERATION HUMAN RACIAL TEMPLATE

-15 POINTS

Whether the result of Hiver manipulations, or simply the fallout of Federation culture, those Humans in Federation space tend to share certain characteristics. These are not universal, however.

Advantages

Versatile [5].

Disadvantages

Chummy [-5]; Curious [-5]; No Sense of Humor [-10].
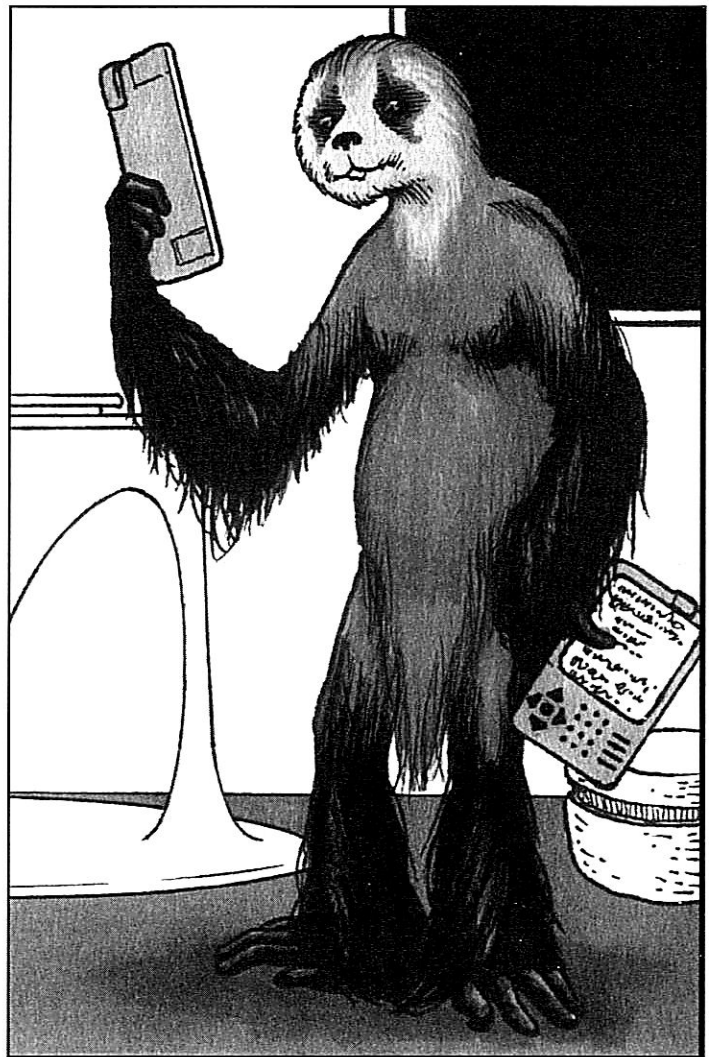
ZA'TACHK RACIAL TEMPLATE

5 POINTS

The average Za'tachk is 5'6" tall and weighs 165 lbs. Add or subtract 10 lbs. and 1" for every point of ST above or below 12.

Attributes

ST 12 [20], DX 10 [0], IQ 10 [0], HT 10 [0].

Advantages

Brachiator [5]; Extra Arms (Two, normal) [20]; Fur [4].

Disadvantages

Cautious [-1]; Pacifism (Complete) [-30]; Gregarious [-10]; Obsession (Order) [-5].

Racial Skill Bonuses

Administration +2 [2].

Notes

Since they can manipulate items as nimbly with their "legs" as with their "arms," Za'tachk must purchase their legs as Extra Limbs. Their aversion to violence is not as all-consuming as the Hiver example, and it may be that certain rare Za'tachk individuals are capable of physical aggression.

OTHER ADVANTAGES

The following advantages are treated slightly differently in the Federation.

Cyberwear   see pp. UT104-110

Bionics do not create a social stigma in the Federation as they do in the Imperium, but bionics are rarely manufactured to *enhance* performance. Most models merely replace a missing limb or organ. PCs may not purchase devices concealing weapons or giving superior strength or reflexes.

Artificial eyes affording ultraviolet or infrared vision are permissible, at the usual cost. Hivers would need *six* for full benefit.

Voice   see p. B23

In the Hiver language, this refers to particularly graceful finger movements, and has all the same advantages as described for the vocal version. Hivers may also buy a similar upgrade in one or two levels for their translation devices. The first is identical to the Voice advantage; the second adds Silver Tongue (p. UT69).

OTHER DISADVANTAGES

These disadvantages create special circumstances or are worthy of note in the Federation.

Horizontal   p. CI102

None of the Federation races described *must* use *every* limb for full-speed movement, so none qualifies for this disadvantage.

Social Stigma (Visible Cyberwear)   p. B27

This is only available in campaigns where a Federation citizen will be active in Solomani or Imperial space.
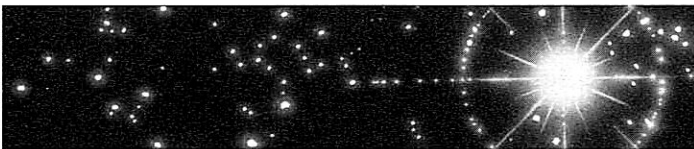
SKILLS

Certain unique conditions apply to various skills in Federation-based campaigns.

Hiver Combat Skill Limitations

Hivers much prefer to do their fighting through subordinates and from at least the next star system over. They do recognize that sometimes there might be some unpleasantness, so some naval personnel train with guns and knives. As 300 yards is a much safer range than a tentacle's length, they emphasize firearms. A Hiver would need an Unusual Background to have more than 2 points devoted to combat/weapon skills. Unarmed combat skills are simply forbidden, as even training in them is more violence than a Hiver can stand.

Appreciate Beauty (Smells)   p. CI129

Hivers who can smell tend to go overboard, so this specialization covers the ability to appreciate scent compositions.

Artist (Scent)   p. B47

This covers the composition of scent works, or artistic arrangements of odors. Artist and Artist (Scent) are separate skills with no default to one another.

Bard   p. B47

Hiver players need to specify whether their PCs possess this skill for their own sign language, or for spoken language. In the latter case, the Hiver's skill cannot exceed its Computer Operation skill.

Bardic Lore   p. CI146

This skill covers knowledge of Hiver cultural and historical traditions, and is usually presented as a litany of successful manipulations. It is *not* History (Hiver) or even a serious academic discipline; rather it is an overview of their culture and traditions, illustrated with instructive tales of cunning and subtlety.

Climbing   p. B57

Hivers do not like to climb, but can when they must. Climbing skill will be rare, but is not forbidden.

Computer Operation   p. B58

Almost all Hivers will have this skill, both because they rely on their chest computers (pp. 49-50) for talking with non-Hivers and because the technology generally fascinates the race.

Karate   p. B51

For the Ithklur, this skill includes the offensive use of the tail, generally combined with a sharp twist of the body.

Languages   pp. B54-55

All Hivers should know their own sign language. This is M/A for Hivers; other races can read Hiver script as a M/A skill, but adding "verbal" communication changes this to a M/VH skill, usually requiring TL8+ computers and the proper software to communicate.

All Federation citizens should speak Gurvin, a M/E skill, but many Ithklur refuse to do so. (Whether or not any individual Ithklur actually comprehends the tongue is another question.)

The Ithklur and most practically minded Federation Navy officers speak Ithklur, a M/A skill.

Physician   p. B56

This needs to be specialized by race. The Hiver version deals almost exclusively with the malfunctioning of their endocrine system, since their natural Regrowth ability makes it less essential to treat injuries, beyond the initial first aid required to stop the bleeding and control shock.

Seamanship/TL4- (Hiver)   p. B57

The Hivers' traditional sailing ships did not use the tall masts and rigging familiar to Humans. As the Hivers prefer not to climb, the sails were worked from winch stations on deck. This skill is required for their use. Human and Hiver Seamanship default at -3 to one another.

WEALTH, STATUS, AND JOBS

The Federation's strange economics and the Hiver governmental philosophy create a very fluid background in which to measure an individual's fiscal or social worth.

Wealth

Hivers don't use true currency, per se; see the *Money* sidebar on p. 19. Instead, they have an account at their current nest which they debit; indeed, they can incur a debt on it should they choose. (Cultural values and central oversight keep them from abusing this system.) At the same time, being limited to electronic, centralized transactions limits a Hiver's purchases to goods and services that would meet community approval.

In game terms, the benefits of being able to draw a deficit cancel out against the drawback of having every purchase monitored. Hivers, therefore, purchase Wealth normally.

Varying wealth really reflects various nests' relative affluence rather than the individual Hivers' net worth – usually, a struggling Hiver belongs to a down-on-its-luck nest and a comfortable Hiver belongs to an affluent nest. Also, Hivers rarely amass great wealth; a nest profiting this much won't redistribute obscene sums to its members, but invest them elsewhere.

Other Federation races may belong to a community set up as a "nest," and use the Hiver currency system above. Local governments do have the right to use true currency, and many do, most notably all those led by the Gurvin. In these, cash is distributed normally – whether in something identical to Imperial credits, Hiver *biyzihn*, or a unique currency – and individuals are free to make their fortunes as they see fit. As natural merchants, the Gurvin thrive in these circumstances, and are loath to work under the Hiver nest system.

Status

Social prominence is even more fluid than money in the Hiver culture. Hivers have never had a class system, so Human-style Status isn't really relevant. Reputation is more so; for instance, a well-regarded manipulator may enjoy a +1 to +4 Reputation, perhaps extending across the Federation. This would serve as the equivalent of Status 1 to Status 4 in Imperial society.

For prominent Hivers, use the table to determine equivalent Imperial Status, then spend a similar number of points on Reputation. This isn't hard and fast; a Hiver negotiating a vital point with the Imperium might have but a local +1 reputation, while his attache enjoys a +3 across the Federation!

The Ithklur system makes even less sense to Imperial observers. "Holist" Ithklur (see sidebar, p. 27) tend to have *either* Status *or* a single sort of Rank. "Hand" Ithklur tend to have a few points in Status and several Ranks – but the Ithklur add all these modifiers up in figuring a "hand" follower's prominence! Thus, a "holist" with Status 5 and a "hander" with Status 1, Military Rank 2, Administrative Rank 1, and Clerical Rank 1 are social peers, as much as these things can be gauged among the Ithklur. See p. 43 for more information.

HIVER STATUS EQUIVALENTS

Status	Description
5+	Planetary leader, legendary manipulator
4	City-state leader, embassy judge
3	Community leader, great manipulator
2	Nest leader, experienced manipulator
1	Nest senior, new manipulator, storyteller
0	Good citizen
-1	All non-Hivers in good standing
-4	Criminal, larvae

Jobs

Once again, the Hivers aren't prone to dwell on pay stubs. In Hiver nests, or the equivalents for other Federation races, "pay" is deposited in an individual's account varying with need, performance, and other qualifiers. One week's deposit might be ten times – or one-tenth – the previous week's, depending on how skillfully the account-holder has displayed his needs.

On Gurvin worlds and many other local jurisdictions, jobs are handled normally, at pay rates comparable to those found on p. GT106 (divided by 15 if distributed in *biyzihn*, of course).

FEDERATION CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Most of the standard *GURPS Traveller* templates work well for Federation citizens.

Players should bear in mind that the Hivers detest fighting, so should direct any or all points spent on combat/weapon skills in a standard template elsewhere.

The rogue template is only really useable at the interface between Federation and outside society, on the frontier and especially in the criminal subculture associated with starports. In the Federation interior, such behavior does not last long.

The following are not appropriate for any Federation species: corsair (except for feral Ithklur), hunter, marine (soldier or officer), rich traveler, and special forces (soldier or officer).

The Ithklur Marines have their own template (p. 48). While players may take the soldier or aviation templates to represent full-time professionals in a planetary army, the Federation militia template (p. 48) more accurately reflects the training of many Federation ground forces.

HIVER LEADER   35 POINTS

Some Hivers take personal charge of society and force their way into the forefront of public life. This template is an add-on; Hiver leaders always did something else first.

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 10 [0], HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Reputation +2 [10] and 20 points spent among Allies [varies]; Ally Group [varies]; additional Reputation [varies]; Luck [15]; Voice [10]; and additional IQ [varies].

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points from Charitable [-15]; Enemies [varies]; Delusions [-1 to -15]; Extravagance [-10]; Intolerance [-5 or -10]; Paranoia [-10]; and Secret Enemy [varies].

Primary Skills: Administration (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; and Leadership (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12.

Secondary Skills: Spend 4 points among Intelligence Analysis/TL (M/H) and Merchant, Politics, Streetwise, and Research (all M/A).

Background Skills: Spend 3 points on skills from the Leader's previous career.

Customization Notes

The leader had another job previously, which should provide useful skills and possibly a selection of Contacts. Leaders stay in power through their usefulness to their friends, so they will be helped immensely by additional Allies, Duties, and Dependents of the sort that are still useful despite their low point totals making them technically a disadvantage.

Depending on the nest's circumstances, levels in Status or Administrative Rank might be required for its leader.

HIVER MANIPULATOR   80 POINTS

Manipulating for a living is the zenith of a Hiver's career. The best are celebrities and the focus of great interest, even occasionally of personality cults.

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 13 [30] HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 30 points spent among Charisma [5/level]; Reputation [varies]; Intuition [15]; Luck [15 or 30]; Mathematical Ability [10]; and Voice [10]

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points from Enemies (Other manipulators, foreign governments, etc.) [varies]; Intolerance [-5 or -10]; Obsession [-5 to -15]; and Overconfident [-10].

Primary Skills: Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-16; Politics (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-16; and Psychology (M/H) IQ+3 [10]-16.

Secondary Skills: A total of 11 points spent on: almost any scientific skill (varies, usually M/H); Area Knowledge (any), (M/E); Intelligence Analysis/TL (M/H); and Research and Writing (both M/A).

Background Skills: A total of 3 points in Scrounging (M/E); Administration and Streetwise (both M/A); and Strategy and Tactics (both M/H).

Customization Notes

Players should buy other skills that support how the manipulator obtains its data and inserts it into the proper venue; for instance, Electronics Operation (Security) could come in particularly handy.

A manipulator possessing high honors also should have a convincing history, detailing the efforts that have earned its distinctions to date.

HIVER STORYTELLER   50 POINTS

The storyteller is the Hivers' combined teacher and entertainer. As the job offers the opportunity to corrupt young minds long before others get the chance, it is highly sought after.

Even more so than other Hivers, storytellers have been around – many travel the Federation telling their tales.

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 12 [20], HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 20 points in Charisma [5/level]; Claim to Hospitality [1-10]; Reputation [varies]; and Voice [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points from Chummy [-5] or Gregarious [-10]; Intolerance [-5 or -10]; Jealousy [-10]; Obsessions [-5 to -15]; and Xenophilia [-5 or -15].

Primary Skills: Bard (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Bardic Lore (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14; and Teaching (M/A) IQ+ 2 [6]-14.

Secondary Skills: A total of 7 points spent among Fast-Talk, Performance, Research, and Writing (all M/A), plus one or two skills representing areas of specialization (varies).

Background Skills: A total of 3 points spent among Area Knowledge, Savoir-Faire, and Scrounging (all M/E); and Streetwise (M/A).

Customization Notes

A storyteller could have a lot of Contacts, Enemies, and Allies, as well as Claims to Hospitality and an interesting back story. The best ones should know a wide variety of skills and a well-travelled individual should have appropriate Area Knowledge.

The storyteller can be added to any other template, to illustrate the master sharing its experience, strength, and hope with youngsters after a life in the field.

ITHKLUR MARINE 75 POINTS

The fearsome Ithklur Marines are regarded by many, both inside and outside the Federation, as the finest soldiers in charted space. They fill the role of shock troops and special forces. Although all are battledress-capable, they often perform covert missions, so learn conventional and unarmed techniques. Many are trained in resisting interrogation.

The Ithklur culture leaves some question as to the extent of their devotion to the Federation per se, but none doubt their Fanaticism on the battlefield. Whether it reflects devotion to the Federation or just the corps, the results are the same.

Attributes: ST 13 [0], DX 12 [10], IQ 12 [20], HT 12 [10].

Advantages: Fit [5] and a total of 25 points spent among Combat Reflexes [15]; Fearlessness [2/level]; Extra Fatigue [3/level]; Extra Hit Points [5/level]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Military Rank [5/level]; Rapid Healing [5]; Reputation (Medals) [varies]; Strong Will [4/level]; and increased attributes [10 or 15/level].

Disadvantages: Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20]; Fanaticism [-15]; and Sense of Duty (Unit) [-5].

Primary Skills: Battlesuit/TL (P/A) DX [2]-12; Climbing (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11; First Aid/TL (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-11; Free Fall/TL (P/A) DX [2]-12; Gunner/TL (Missile Launcher) (P/A) DX+2 [2]-15* and Gunner/TL (Laser or plasma cannon) (P/A) DX+1 [1]-14*; Guns/TL (Light auto) (P/E) DX+3 [2]-15*; Interrogation (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Karate (P/H) DX [4]-12; NBC Warfare/TL (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Piloting (Contragravity) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11; Running (P/H – HT) HT-3 [1/2]-9; Spear (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12; Swimming (P/E) DX [1]-12; Tactics (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10; and one of the following MOS options:

Chaplain: Teaching (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13 and Theology (M/H) IQ+ 1 [6]-13.

Communications: Electronics Operation/TL (Communications) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13 and SIGINT Collection/Jamming/TL (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-13.

Engineer: Engineer/TL (Combat) (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-13 and Demolition/TL (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13.

Forward Observer: Electronics Operation/TL (Sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-12 and Forward Observer/TL (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-15.

Intelligence: Intelligence Analysis/TL (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-13 and Intimidation (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13.

Medical: Diagnosis/TL (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Electronics Operation/TL (Medical) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Physician/TL (Ithklur) (M/H) IQ [4, but frees up 1/2 point by replacing First-Aid/TL from primary-skills list]-12; and Surgery (M/VH) IQ-4 [1/2]-8.

* Includes +2 from IQ.

Secondary Skills: Armoury (Battledress)(M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Armoury (Gauss weapons) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; and Survival (any) IQ [2]-12.

Background Skills: A total of 6 points in Area Knowledge and Scrounging (both M/E); one Hobby skill (varies, but purchased at half cost); Breath Control and Meditation (both M/VH); other Survival specializations (M/A); and skills from another MOS (varies).

Customization Notes

This package reflects time-consuming training, so a wide range of unrelated skills or outside interests is unlikely. (In game terms, the 75-point Ithklur racial package and 75-point marine template perfectly consume the standard 150 starting points for a *GURPS Traveller* campaign, with a few more points made possible by adding quirks.) One hobby and some detailed knowledge of a trivial subject would be appropriate.

FEDERATION MILITIA 10 POINTS

Most of the Federation's armed forces are part-timers, serving in the local militia.

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 10 [0], HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Extra Fatigue +1 [3] and 5 points in one of Absolute Direction, Absolute Timing, Collected, Composed, Fit, or Military Rank 1.

Disadvantages: Duty [-5].

Primary Skills: First-Aid/TL (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-9; Beam Weapon/TL (Lasers) or Guns/TL (Light auto) (P/E) DX+1 [1]-11*; Gunner/TL (Grenade or missile launcher) (P/A) DX [1]-10*; NBC Warfare/TL (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Stealth (P/A) DX-2 [1/2]-8; and one of the following MOS options:

Combat: Beam Weapons or Guns increased to (P/E) DX+2 [2]-12* and Gunner increased to (P/A) DX+1 [2]-11*.

Communications: Electronics Operation/TL (Communications) (M/A) IQ [2]-10.

Forward Observer: Forward Observer/TL (M/A) IQ [2]-10.

Heavy Weapons: Gunner (Any other than one previously chosen) (P/A) DX+1 [2]-11*.

Transport: Piloting (Contragravity) (P/A) DX [2]-10.

* Includes +1 from IQ.

Secondary Skills: None.

Background Skills: None.

Customization Notes

This is a weekend warrior, a template designed to be superimposed upon a civilian profession. Most planetary militias in the Federation will have a small cadre of full-time professionals; these will use the appropriate military templates from *GURPS Traveller*.

TECHNOLOGY

Hiver technology is generally TL12, with some planets languishing as low as TL8. The Federation has two strategic advantages over the Imperium – better information technology and central government involvement in local development.

Hiver infotech is TL12, except that their computers have twice the storage capacity and cost half as much as their Imperial equivalents. Their robots have much the same capabilities as Imperial versions (barring the improvements ingrained in their computer "brains"), but cost only 2/3 as much as an Imperial counterpart and are much more common.

The GM may want to rule that these cost breaks result from ultraefficient mass production, and that non-standard Hiver computers and robots cost as much as Imperial versions.

Using Hiver Technology

Most Federation machines have completely reconfigurable controls, and respond to verbal or visual inputs as well as more primitive devices like keyboards and switches. In principle, they are useable by all Federation citizens. External purchasers need to become familiar with them (per p. B43). Items designed primarily for Hiver use impose a -6 penalty for other races, and vice versa. Humans, Gurvin, Za'tachk, and Ithklur are at -4 to use one another's species-specific equipment.

ROBOTS

Robots are a mainstay of Federation society. They are the usual form of non-skilled labor and the most common construction workers. The navy uses robots both as economical flying weapon platforms and as sensor drones and decoys.

Civilian units are freely available. While private trade in military models is not illegal in the Federation, the purchasers are objects of intelligence-community curiosity. Note, however, that it violates Imperial high justice to import Hiver warbots.

All exported robots have anti-tamper security which melts their processors should the "No User-Serviceable Parts Inside" plate be removed.

CONSUMER GOODS

Each item in this section has two prices. One, in *biyzihn* (see the *Money* sidebar on p. 19), is how much it costs a Hiver to acquire the item through legitimate channels, strictly speaking

to buy it for the nest, then lease it for private use. A Hiver may, if it wishes, purchase on "credit," effectively indenturing itself for a while to enjoy the item now rather than later.

A second price, in Imperial credits, indicates how much hard currency a buyer needs to own the item outright. This should not be taken as indicating a standard exchange rate; there is none, and prices are set to assist exports by the sectors where Hiver manufacturing tends toward chronic oversupply. A Hiver purchasing anything for hard currency, while not illegal, is interesting. Other Federation worlds, particularly Gurvin worlds, will deal strictly in a currency system akin to Imperial credits.

NORTHCOTT 2000
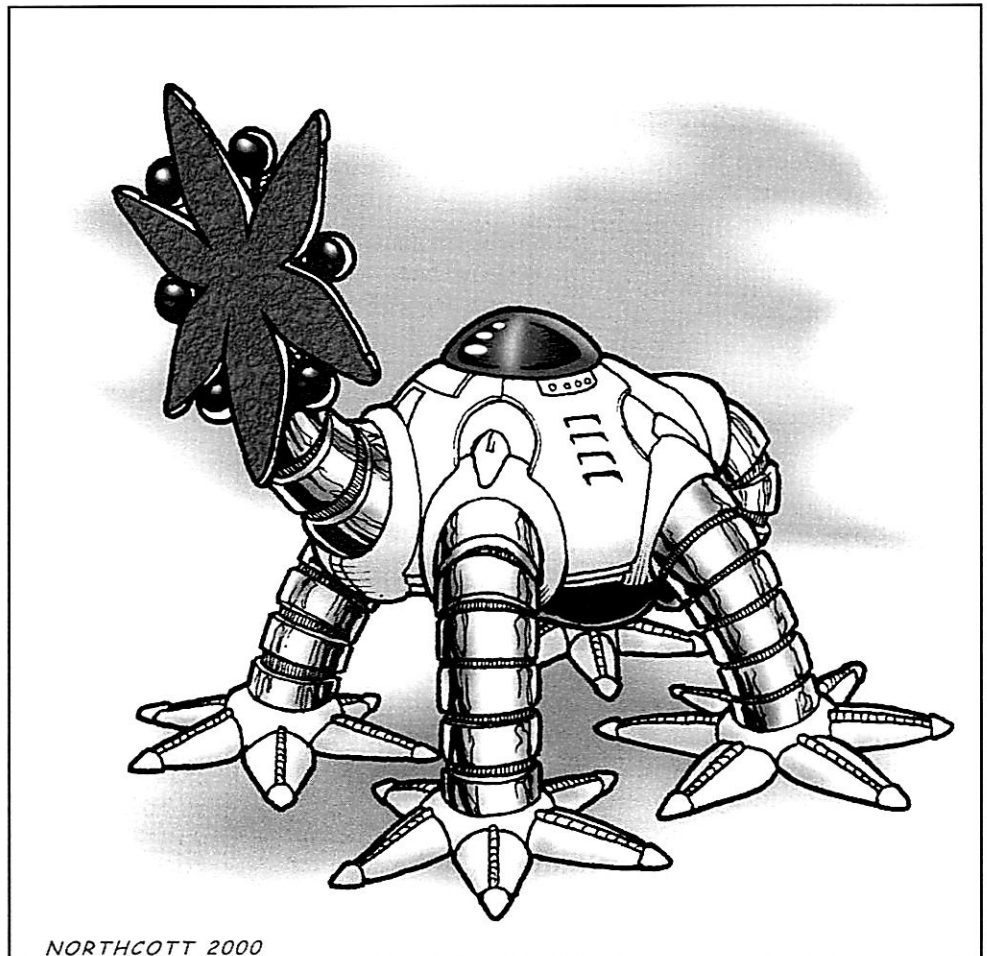
Chest Computers

Every Hiver usually wears a portable computer, fully integrated into the local communications network. This is worn on a harness fastened at the base of its prime limb, on what Humans think of as its chest (hence the name).

The Hiver would feel lost without it. Hivers use these indispensable machines to keep notes on projects, manipulation results, reminders, calibration data for curiosity routines, and as a translator for speaking with the majority of non-Hivers, who can't interpret the Hiver sign language.

These are small computers and a terminal. They weigh 12 lbs. (with the terminal's functionality limited like that of a laptop computer until TL10+). Standard models have Complexity TL-6 (Complexity 6 for the standard TL12 model), plus the usual Hiver double storage capacity.

Should a Hiver need such a device (at character creation or to replace a damaged unit), its nest simply debits its account by 17 *biyzihn*. They are available for sale at Cr250+ at TL10+.

Translation Software

Hivers use their chest computers as translation devices when speaking to other races. The software is installed in the "chest computer" above. The Hiver types its message into the computer keyboard, and the translation program outputs it as the language previously selected by the Hiver through the computer's speakers.

This system is far from perfect – rate of communication is mediocre, and accuracy can break down given the very alien nature of the original language. Neither the Hiver language nor Gurvin have the conceptual range necessary to precisely translate most of the alien tongues, though they tend to translate to one another fairly smoothly. Ithklur often creates problems. The Hivers suspect that the Ithklur retain their own language – and provide their masters with a slanted version – out of either inscrutability or spite.

Many Hivers prefer to program or modify their translator software personally, to better support the nuances in communications needed for expert manipulations. The result depends on the owner's linguistic flair and technical competence.

Translator software for one language incurs a debit of 167 *biyzihn*. Alternatively, the Complexity 4 software sells for Cr2,500. Most Hivers possess software for several tongues.

Scent Organs

The Hivers who have a sense of smell like to celebrate it, so have developed machines which can record and synthesize different scents. The same technology enables the Ithklur to smell things through their battledress.

A scent organ weighs 10 pounds at TL8 with a volume of 0.4 cf (most of this is the chemical supplies used to recreate smells). It will run on building power or for 12 hours on a rechargeable A-cell.

It will incur a debit of 100 *biyzihn*. Chemical refills are 2 *biyzihn*. These prices in no way reflect the manufacturing costs of the item. It is deliberately marked up so that the non-

smelling Hivers can describe their scent-loving counterparts as dupes. Should anyone wish to buy one outside Hiver markets, it would cost Cr500 and Cr20 for refills.

NORTHCOTT 2000
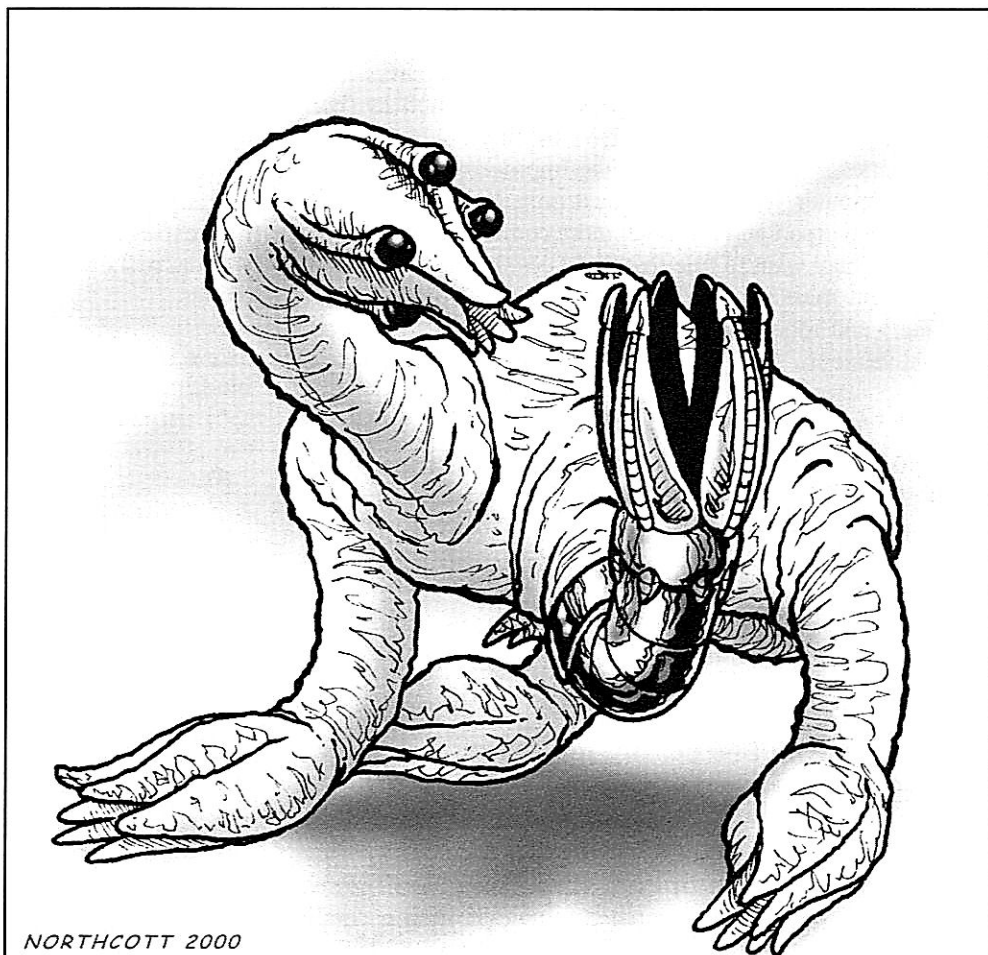
Cybernetics

The Federation employs many cybernetic prostheses as needed; see p. 45 for limitations to those available. Some cultures prefer body parts harvested from a brain-dead clone, and some nests provide this service, but by and large the Hivers and their allies use mechanical replacements.

Prices are per **GURPS Ultra-Tech**, divided by 15 for Hiver "purchases" in *biyzihn*. A nest member need not pay this upfront – the hospital can place its account in arrears for the cost of surgery and the hardware.

The Federation takes no position on elective, non-essential surgery, so anyone odd enough to desire it can have cyberwear fitted. Hiver bionics rarely are exported, so the price in credits might be at a premium in the Imperium due to rarity.

Clothes

The Hivers do not wear clothes, but the other Federation species do. Prices are entirely subject to the vagaries of fashion, rather than any other factor. The Hivers are completely bemused by the range available and its turnover. Any citizen may draw appropriate basic garments (polymerized beige paper

shoes and a coverall with napped liner) from the nearest social welfare nest; few take advantage of these goods. Anything more showy must be purchased at prices comparable to Imperial costs.

Furniture

Humans, Ithklur, and Za'tachk use ordinary chairs, with a perforated back to allow for the Ithklur tail. Gurvin lounge face down on couches.

Hivers don't actually need furniture, but find some items useful. A common item is the work stool, a shallow cone, resting at an angle. This seat has a breathing hole, and is quite strongly made. It is not comfortable for anyone else. Its main function is to enable the sitter to bring all its limbs into play when performing intricate work.

Another Hiver item, used at banquets, is a dining stool, which resembles an "o" on legs. The Hiver rests on the ring and raises all its limbs. This piece is not much seen outside the Federation. Food is served via a sluice from a central reservoir, and the sight of the Hivers sucking it up is too much for most alien sensibilities.

As all pieces are practical, hard-wearing, and designed without flair, Federation furniture is not in heavy demand elsewhere. It therefore makes an ideal lemon cargo for trade-oriented games. Purchase price is around 5 *biyzihn* (Cr75) per item.

Armor and Protective Gear

The Federation issues its troops with atmosphere-sealed cloth armor and solid helmets (equivalent to the combat environment suit, p. GT118). Certain units have better protection and a few wear battledress, but the Hivers have noted that very little personal armor stands up even to light weapons, so prefer to equip their soldiers to survive NBC warfare and teach them the value of cover.

The Ithklur wear open-face, plate armor by preference, but are sensible enough to know that they need proper equipment to survive on the battlefield. Unlike their Federation allies, they pick the heaviest gear they can manage comfortably, which is usually some form of combat armor. Some of them wear heavy duty battledress similar to the Marine commando model (see p. T:SM61).

The Federation does not use reflective armor, which gives its wearer a huge radar signature.

The different Federation species require different sizes of armor, as shown by the following table. The price adjustments reflect the difficulty in tailoring to some body shapes as well as the cost of materials.

WEAPONS

Although the Ithklur show a racial preference for Gauss guns, the Federation issues compact, high-powered, relatively short-ranged X-ray lasers to everyone else. These weapons are expensive, but the savings in logistics support and the ability to burn through an APC at 500 yards are well worth the extra cost. Unlike the Imperium, the Hivers prefer lasers to fusion guns (in *surface* combat), since lasers are longer ranged, slightly more accurate, and a lot less indiscriminate.

While the Federation is a richer society than any of its neighbors, and does not balk at the cost of good material, the selection which follows is usually in the hands of marines or regular navy soldiers. Local militias often have more primitive equipment. In fact, nothing listed in **GURPS Traveller** or any of the chemically propelled weapons from **Space** or **Ultra-Tech 2** would be out of place in the Federation.

Weapon and armor prices are quoted in Imperial credits, only for the purpose of comparison. Transactions would normally take place in Hiver *biyzihn* (see the *Money* sidebar, p. 19).

Insight's Barb

Although the Ithklur use swords, machetes, and similar fare as tools – and occasionally meditate on their utility in combat – the traditional melee weapon, much-used in spiritual self-discovery, is Insight's Barb. This slightly impractical device, a 6' pole with 18" scythe blades on each end protruding in opposite directions, has an elongated "Z" profile.

Insight's Barb is only available as a very fine quality weapon, but is seldom on sale. True devotees make their own. The popular Imperial vid-show heroine *Lizzie Tucutte* has a collapsible model, but this triumph of imagination defies material science.

Treat the weapon as a two-headed, very fine scythe (see p. B206), weighing 7 lbs. but otherwise identical to the listed implement. They fetch at least Cr600 when found for sale.

Gauss Weapons

The Ithklur strongly favor electromagnetic guns. They use two calibers, 5.5mm and 10mm.

Gauss Pistol. An Ithklur is naked without his pistol. These come in both the 5.5mm "Little Iron" and 10mm "Big Iron" varieties. The smaller weapon is for nuisance targets and suppressive fire, while the Big Iron is renowned for its stopping power, and is the weapon of decision and honor when facing down a respected opponent.

ARMOR MODIFIERS

Race	Weight	Cost
Gurvin	×2	×2.5
Hiver	×3	×3.5
Human	×1	×1
Ithklur	×1.5	×2
Za'tachk	×1	×1
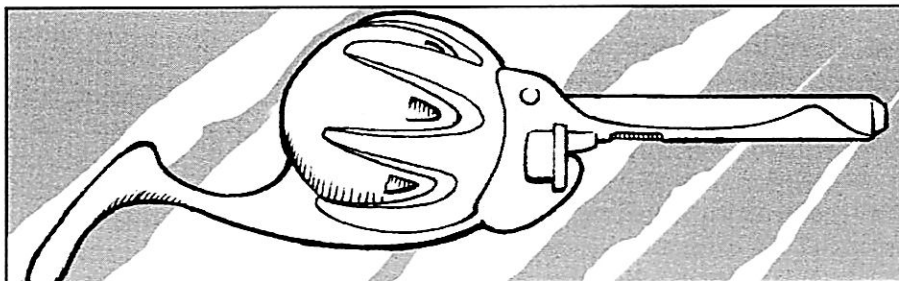
FEDERATION WEAPON TABLES

GAUSS WEAPONS

Weapon	Malf	Type	Dam	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	AWt	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Costs	LC	Hld	TL
5.5mm G. Pistol	Ver.	Cr.	6d+2 (2)	9	5	390	2,700	2	0.12	3~	20/rA	8	-1	1,350/12	2	-1	12
10mm G. Pistol	Ver.	Cr.	9 (2)	10	6	640	3,700	3	0.3	3~	8/rA	9	-1	1,500/15	2	-2	12
5.5mm G. Rifle	Ver.	Cr.	10d (2)	12	10	900	4,400	6	0.6	16*	100/rB	9	-1	2,100/40	0	-4	12
5.5mm G. SAW	Ver.	Cr.	16d+2 (2)	20	12	1,200	5,300	30	3	20*	200/rC	11	-1	8,200/140	0	No	12
10mm Heavy G.	Ver.	Cr.	6d×5 (2)	20	13	2,400	8,200	48	3	1	35/rC	13	-1	13,500/140	0	No	12

LASERS

Weapon	Malf	Type	Dam	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	AWt	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Costs	LC	Hld	TL
Laser Rifle	Ver. (Crit.)	Imp.	9d (2)	12	15	1,700	3,500	6.25	5	8*	54/rD	8	0	1500/500	0	-4**	12
Support Laser	Ver. (Crit.)	Imp.	6d×5 (2)	17	15	3,400	10,200	24	24	8*	140/rE	10	0	4,800/2,000	0	No	12
Heavy Laser	Ver. (Crit.)	Imp.	6d×9 (2)	20	15	1,500	4,600	33	24	4*	43/rE	10	0	6,500/2,000	0	No	12
Akkagi	Ver. (Crit.)	Imp.	6d×100 (2)	30	27	39 mi.	117 mi.	16,200	60	8*	1/3rE	–	–	MCr1.1/0.006	0	No	12

* Can be fired at either RoF 3~ (semi-auto with three rolls to hit) or RoF 4 or 8 (full-auto using laser-autofire rules).

** Holdout figure is for laser weapon only. Power packs are separate items at -2 to Holdout.

RAM GRENADES

Weapon	Malf	Type	Dam	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Cost	LC	Hld	TL
5cm RAM-8 HEAT	Crit.	Exp.	6d×10 (10)	20	11	290	460	1.5	1/6	1	–	0	35	0	-3	8
5cm RAM-8 HE	Crit.	Exp.	6d×4 [4d]	20	11	290	460	1.5	1/6	1	–	0	30	0	-3	8
5cm RAM-9 HEAT	Crit.	Exp.	6d×15 (10)	20	11	370	720	1.5	1/6	1	–	0	25	0	-3	9
5cm RAM-9 HE	Crit.	Exp.	6d×6 [4d]	20	11	370	720	1.5	1/6	1	–	0	20	0	-3	9

* Holdout figure is for the grenade alone. Attaching the grenade to a weapon lowers the weapon's Holdout by -2.

TAC MISSILES

Weapon	Guidance	Malf	Type	Dam	SS	Skill	1/2D	Max	Wt	RoF	Shots	Cost	LC	Hld	TL
6cm kinetic *aloo*	OH	Crit.	Cr.	6d×50	–	17	–	2,000	13	–	–	625	0	No	10
6cm HEAT *loflar*	NH	Crit.	Exp.	6d×30 (10)	–	16	–	2,000	13	–	–	1,200	0	No	10
Disposable tube launcher	–	–	–	–	12	–	–	–	7.8	1	1	650	0	No	10
Breech-loaded launcher	–	–	–	–	20	–	–	–	43	4:2	4	3,250	0	No	10

Gauss Rifle. This is the Ithklur soldier's preferred longarm. When asked for reasons, soldiers say they find its kick reassuring. Kinetic energy is just so much more trustworthy. Also, it is easier to move around stealthily without a backpack power supply. Ithklur rifles universally feature a RAM grenade launcher incorporated in the muzzle brake. The price does not include laser sights or gyrostabilization, but these and other options are commonly fitted.

Gauss Squad Support Weapon. This is a more robust 5.5mm rifle, normally fired from a bipod. As with the rifle, laser sights and other accessories often are fitted to it.

Heavy Gauss Gun. This weapon is intended for use with battledress, although a strong Ithklur can handle it without. It is attractive as an anti-material or sniper rifle. It incorporates a bipod; a 45-lb. tripod also is issued in certain circumstances.

Lasers

The standard longarm is a TL12 X-ray laser rifle.

The support laser provides squad- or platoon-level support fire, and is normally fired from its integral bipod. Battledress troops often use it as their standard longarm.

The heavy laser is intended as a medium-range, high-impact squad-support weapon for battledress troops, fired from its integral bipod. Non-powered troops often use it as company support, fired from a 33-lb. tripod (Acc. remains 15). It also commonly serves as a light vehicular defensive weapon.

The *akkagi* is a 583-megajoule vehicle-mounted main weapon commonly used by Federation AFVs.

RAM Grenades and Rockets

The Federation uses 50mm RAM grenades, fired from hardpoints on their Gauss rifle muzzles or from dedicated automatic units. The ammunition is heavy and bulky, so soldiers often carry small quantities, if any. Conversely, the rounds are far more robust than their 40mm Imperial counterparts.

For heavy targets, the Hivers issue two 60mm supersonic missiles, the cheap but effective kinetic-kill *aloo* with optical homing, and the more expensive, neutrino-homing shaped-charge *loflar*. These come with a breech-loading four-tube launcher or as one-shot disposables (add missile and launcher weights and costs together for disposables). Federation troops tend to favor these over RAM grenades, as their guidance systems mean the user spends less time aiming under fire.

Federation troops can also be found using other support weapons commonly seen in the Imperium.
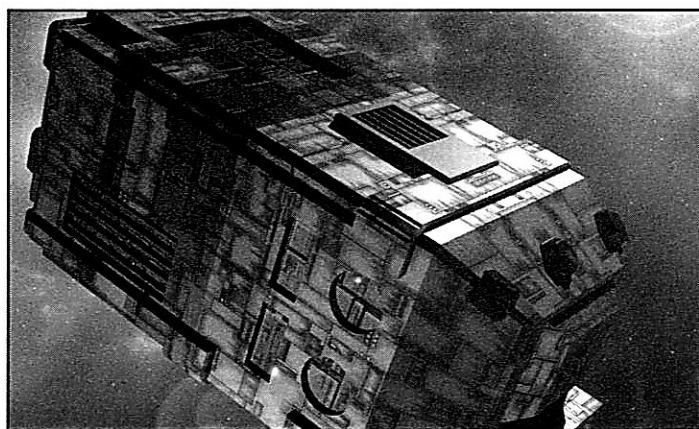
FEDERATION VEHICLES

The Federation's civilian vehicles are similar in performance to the higher end of the Imperial range, although different military doctrines result in some variation in fighting machines.

The following selection presents vehicles commonly found around the Federation. Where water performance is given, it is for situations in which the contra-gravity has failed or is not used, while the thrusters still work.

Ciycuu "Floater"

The Hivers prefer to employ a small, simple TL12 floating platform where Imperial citizens would use an air/raft. It cannot be pressurized; pilot and passengers must wear protective gear if venturing into the upper atmosphere or orbit. This would be a *long* trip, so the floater rarely is used for such operations.

- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** Top surface has a control column and 25 sf top deck.
- **Propulsion:** Vectored TL12 thrusters for 6 lbs. thrust (0.45 lbs., 0.009 cf, 3 kW).
- **Aerostatic Lift**: 2,000 lb. TL13 contragrav generator (11 lbs., 0.22 cf, 2 kW).
- **Instruments and Electronics**: Short range radio (500 miles, 0.07 lbs., 0.001 kW). Global positioning system (0.25 lbs., 0.025 cf.). Terrain-following radar (1.25 lbs., 0.0005 cf, 0.25 kW). Hiver small computer with compact and dumb options (1 lb., 0.02 cf) and one terminal (10 lbs., 0.02 cf).
- **Software:** Regional charts, Datalink, Computer Navigation, and Routine Vehicle Operation (Piloting)-12.
- **Controls:** Computerized.
- **Crew Stations:** "Cycle seat" crew station for pilot (5 lbs.). The top surface has foot straps and D-rings for passengers to employ cargo space.
- **Power Systems:** Rechargeable energy cell provides 6 kW for 24 hours (0.005 lbs.).
- **Access, Cargo, and Empty space:** 7.975 cf.
- **Surface Area:** 76.
- **Structure:** Very cheap, medium (152 lbs.).
- **Hit Points:** 114.
- **Armor:** Cheap metal, PD 3, DR 5 (27.36 lbs.).
- **Other surface features:** Waterproof ($156).
- **Statistics:** Weight 208.38 lbs. External payload 1794.62 lbs. (crew, 400 lbs., cargo, 1,391.62 lbs.). Loaded weight 2,000 lbs. (1 ton). Volume 8.75 cf. Size modifier +0. Price Cr6,819. Structural HT 12.
- **Water Performance:** Top speed 2 mph, wAccel 0.06 mph/s, wMR 1, wSR 5, wDecel 10/s. Draft 0.
- **Air Performance:** Top speed 25 mph, aAccel 0.06 mph/s, aMR 6, aSR 4, aDecel 24 mph/s.
- **Space Performance:** 0.02 Gs.

Ziysnu (G-Carrier)

This is the Federation's standard TL12 goods-mover. Many ships carry one as a planet-side utility vehicle. Often, the cargo bay is fitted out with passenger seats.

- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** None
- **Propulsion:** Vectored TL11 standard thrusters for 2,000 lbs. thrust (150 lbs., 3 cf, 100 kW).
- **Aerostatic Lift:** 11,000 lb. lift TL13 contragrav generator (5.5 lbs., 0.11 cf, 11 kW).
- **Instruments and Electronics:** Medium range radio (5,000 miles, 0.25 lbs., 0.005 cf, 0.01 kW). Radar (200 mile range, no targeting, 0.5 lbs., 0.005 cf, 50 kW). Global positioning system (0.25 lbs., 0.025 cf). Terrain-following radar (1.25 lbs., 0.0005 cf, 0.25 kW). Small computer with dumb option (3 lbs., 0.01 cf) and two terminals (20 lbs., 1 cf).
- **Software:** Regional charts, Datalink, Computer Navigation, and Routine Vehicle Operation (Piloting)-12.
- **Controls:** Computerized.
- **Accommodations:** Two roomy crew stations (80 lbs., 80 cf). Complete life support for two (40 lbs., 2 cf, 0.2 kW).
- **Power Systems:** Rechargeable energy cell provides 162.5 kW for 40 hours (0.24 lbs., 0.005 cf).
- **Access, Cargo, and Empty space:** 313 cf.
- **Surface Area:** 400.
- **Structure:** Very cheap, medium (400 lbs.).
- **Hit Points:** 600.
- **Armor:** Cheap metal, PD 3, DR 10 (400 lbs.).
- **Other surface features:** Sealed.
- **Statistics:** Empty weight 1,122.75 lbs. Usual payload 9,877.25 lbs. (crew 400-1,000 lbs. depending on species, cargo 8,877.25-9477.25 lbs.). Loaded weight 11,000 lbs. (5.5 tons). Volume 476 cf. Size modifier +4. Price Cr25,979. Structural HT 12.
- **Water Performance:** Top speed 24 mph, wAccel 8 mph/s, wMR 1, wSR 5, wDecel 10 mph/s. Draft 1.2'.
- **Air Performance:** Top speed 195 mph, aAccel 8 mph/s, aMR 3.5, aSR 4, aDecel 14 mph/s.
- **Space Performance:** 0.4 Gs.
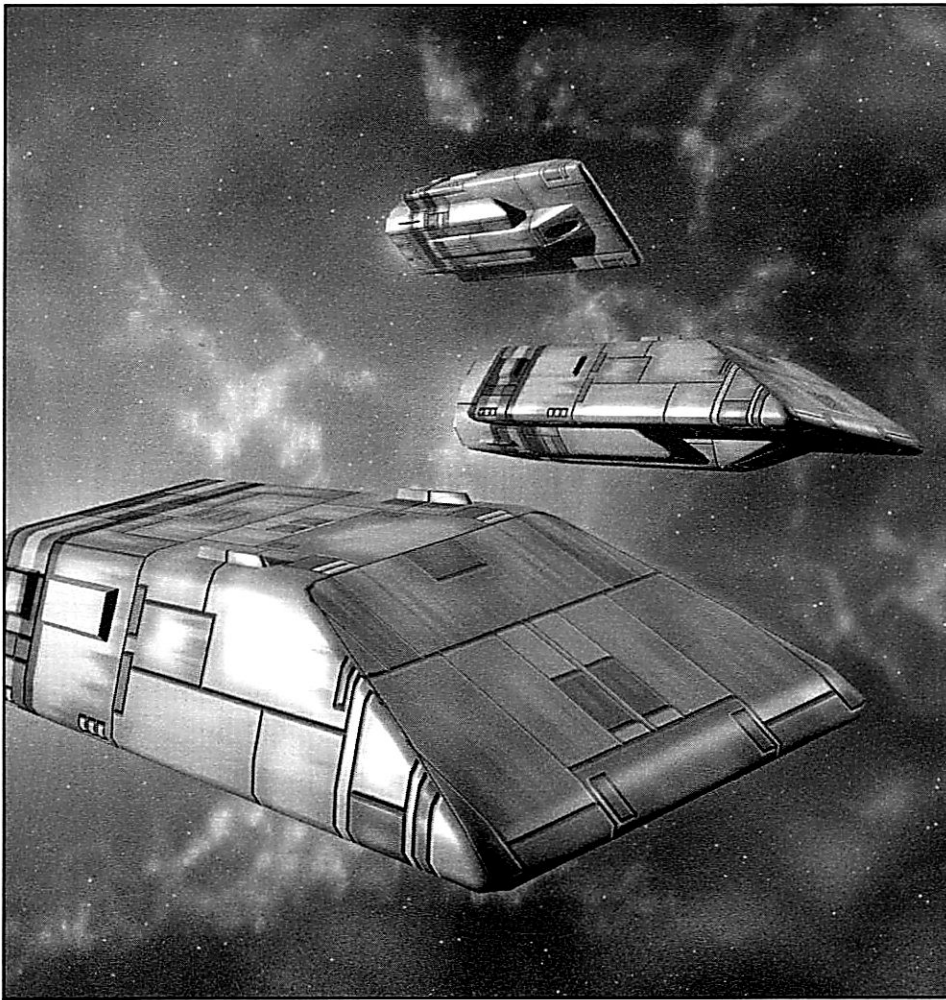
Gui'chka (Attack Craft)

This is a TL12 flying gun. Its inertial damping and vectored thrusters enable it to spin around its axes to shoot and move in different directions.

For weaker targets, the pilot, who flies the craft from a prone position, lying along the main gun's barrel, has a pair of heavy lasers. Their beams intersect at half-damage range. Pilots like the *Gui'chka* for its speed and relatively comfortable cockpit, although the Ithklur complain of tail cramps.
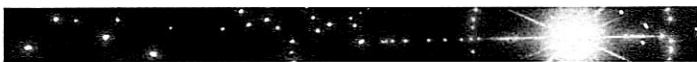
- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** Radical streamlining.
- **Propulsion:** Vectored TL13 megathrusters for 18,000 lbs. thrust (27 lbs., 0.54 cf, 900 kW).
- **Aerostatic Lift:** 66,000 lb. lift TL13 contragrav generator (43 lbs., 1 cf, 66 kW).
- **Weaponry:** *Akkagi* laser cannon and two heavy lasers (fixed forward mounts, 22,906 lbs., 391.72 cf), includes 312 rechargeable E cells for *akkagi* (104 shots or 13 tank-melting eight-shot bursts) and 20 rechargeable E cells for the heavy lasers (860 total shots). Full stabilization for all weapons (1626.6 lbs., 33.53 cf), linkage for the support lasers.

- **Instruments and Electronics:** Radio with scrambler (5 million mile range, 250 lbs., 5 cf, 0.4 kW) Tight beam radio with scrambler (5 million mile range, 125 lbs., 2.5 cf, 0.1 kW). Laser communicator (200,000 mile range, 250 lbs., 5 cf, 1 kW). AESA (1,000 mile range, 375 lbs., 7.5 cf, 250 kW). PESA (3,000 mile range, 1,500 lbs., 30 cf). Global positioning system (0.25 lbs., 0.025 cf). Terrain-following radar (1.25 lbs., 0.0005 cf, 0.25 kW). HUDWAC. Advanced radar/laser detector (1.5 lbs., 0.3 cf). Deceptive jammer (Rating 16, 1,000 lbs., 20 cf, 50 kW). Blip enhancer (50 lbs., 1 cf, 2.5 kW). Six decoy dischargers (120 lbs., 6 cf). Hardened, compact, genius microframe (75 lbs., 1.5 cf, 0.1 kW) with one terminal (10 lbs., 0.5 cf).
- **Software:** Planetary charts, Datalink, Computer Navigation, Vehicle Recognition database, Gunner-18, and Routine Vehicle Operation (Piloting)-14.
- **Miscellaneous:** Ejector seat (100 lbs., 5 cf).
- **Controls:** Computerized.
- **Accommodations:** Roomy crew station (40 lbs., 40 cf) for pilot. Full life support for one (20 lbs., 1 cf, 0.1 kW).
- **Power Systems:** NPU (1,500 kW with 230.9 kW excess, 309 lbs., 3.09 cf), with 10-year internal fuel supply.
- **Access, Cargo, and Empty space:** 47.29 cf access space.
- **Surface Area:** 500.
- **Structure:** Very cheap, extra heavy (2,000 lbs.).
- **Hit Points:** 3,000.
- **Armor:** Advanced laminate PD 4, DR 4,000 (30,000 lbs.).
- **Other surface features:** Sealed, radical emission cloaking (2,000 lbs.), radical sound baffling (2,000 lbs.), radical stealth (2,000 lbs.), and instant chameleon surface (250 lbs.).
- **Statistics:** Weight 65,204.6 lbs. Usual payload 150-500 lbs. (pilot only, depending on species). Loaded weight circa 65,500 lbs., although the vehicle is rated for 66,000 lbs. (33 tons). Volume 600 cf. Size modifier +4. Price MCr15.92. Structural HT: 12.
- **Water Performance:** Cannot float, crush depth 7,050, submerged speed 13 mph (using contragravity to provide neutral buoyancy), uAccel 5 mph/s, uMR 1, uSR 6, uDecel 10 mph/s. Draft 13′.
- **Air Performance:** Stall speed 0, top speed 3,286 mph, aAccel 6 mph/s, aMR 5, aSR 5, aDecel 20 mph/s.
- **Space Performance:** 0.27 Gs.

FEDERATION STARSHIPS AND SMALL CRAFT

The Federation's starships are built at TL12, although some member worlds' locally produced vessels are more primitive. Where possible, the hulls are boxes with a sloped front. (Most Hiver grav vessels share this design philosophy.) The Hivers do not share the Human fondness for exposing the bridge, preferring to locate it in the protected center, precisely analogous to the placement of the brains in the respective races.

The guns are fired from the bridge – sitting in a turret, inviting counter-fire, is not the Federation way.

Apart from the benefits of a generally higher TL, the main differences from Imperial vessels are the absence of anti-theft measures and the adaptable controls – all Federation vessels must, in principle, be operable by all member races. This means non-Federation Humans should be able to operate Federation ships without retrofitting their own controls.

The following selection portrays the smaller, more common, and more interesting craft found in the Federation, the kind of ships that adventuring parties are most likely to encounter.

TL12 *GIICUYCHE*-CLASS 10-TON FIGHTER

Although untried against the Imperium's comparable *Rampart* class (p. GT138), this fighter scares the Solomani. It has heavier armor than the *Rampart*, and this front-line model mounts a single fusion gun, although much cheaper craft mounts two lasers.

The fighter is unstreamlined, apparently serving to discourage its pilots from surrendering the high-guard position. Published manuals insist that, in Federation doctrine, the proper place to fight for a planet is from orbit, a stance belied by the streamlining of SDBs and heavy fighters. The overwhelming likelihood is that streamlining would have reduced space for engines, forcing a sacrifice of either armor or acceleration.

- **Crew:** Pilot.
- **Design:** 10-ton USL Hull, DR 1,680, Radical Stealth, Radical Emissions Cloaking, 1 hull-mounted Fusion Gun (see p. T:SM67 or use laser option below). *Modules:* 1 Cockpit Bridge, 7 Maneuver, 0.5 Cargo (usually empty).
- **Statistics:** EMass 116.4, LMass 116.4, Cost: MCr29.9, HP: 3,000. Size modifier: +6.
- **Performance:** Accel 6.01 Gs.

The laser-mounting version substitutes two Lasers for the Fusion Gun and Cargo space. Mass rises to 118.5 tons, Cost falls to MCr9.7, and Accel drops to 5.91 Gs.

TL12 *ZOFAGIC*-CLASS UTILITY VESSEL

This little ship is the Hiver equivalent of the *Suleiman*-class scout (p. GT130) and can be seen throughout Hiver space. In the configuration below, it serves as a jump-capable ancillary craft in the development zones. The ship's crew are highly trained and multi-skilled, except for the gunners, who aren't always carried. In this case, the guns can be slaved to the pilot's controls. In the interior, the utility vessel is stripped of turrets, weapons, and probes, and referred to as an *Explorer,* presumably to confound foreign intelligence. The ship can carry up to five passengers (seven if no gunners are aboard) in double occupancy.

Typical missions are courier work, passenger transport, re-supply, survey and exploration, and posing as an innocent trader from foreign parts.

- **Crew:** Pilot/astrogator, engineer, steward/medic, and two gunners.
- **Design:** 200-ton SL Hull, DR 300, 2 Turrets, one with 3 Lasers, one with 3 Missile Racks. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 8 Jump, 60 Fuel, 1 Fuel Processor, 25 Maneuver, 5 Staterooms, 1 Utility, 1 Sickbay, 38.5 Hold.
- **Statistics:** EMass 414.8, LMass 607.3, Cost MCr51.4, HP: 22,500. Size modifier: +8.
- **Performance:** Accel 4.12 Gs (6 Gs with no cargo), Jump 3, Air Speed 3,361 mph.
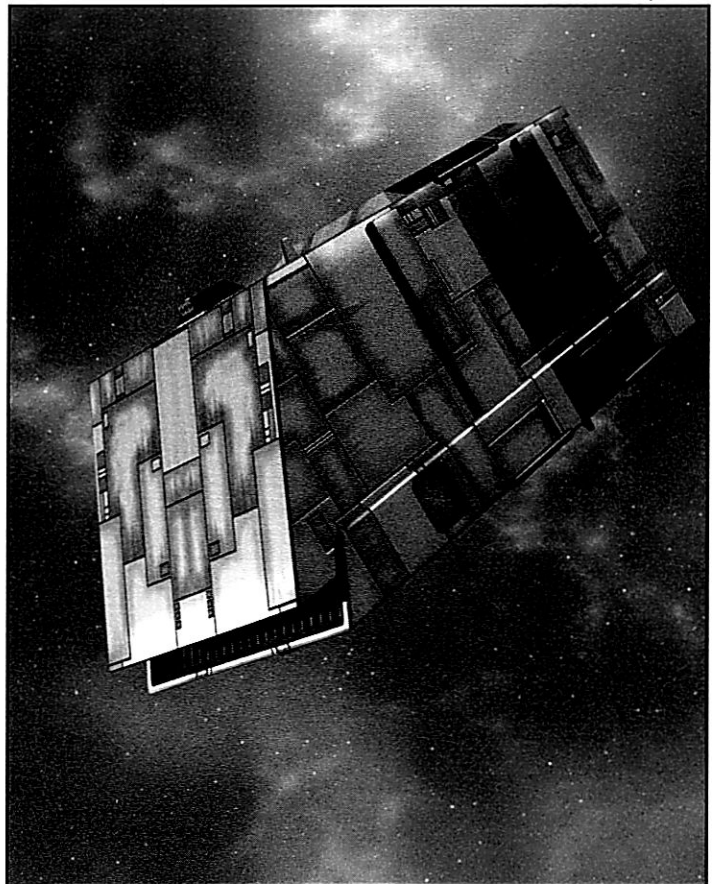
ZOFAGIC-CLASS UTILITY VESSEL

LOWER DECK
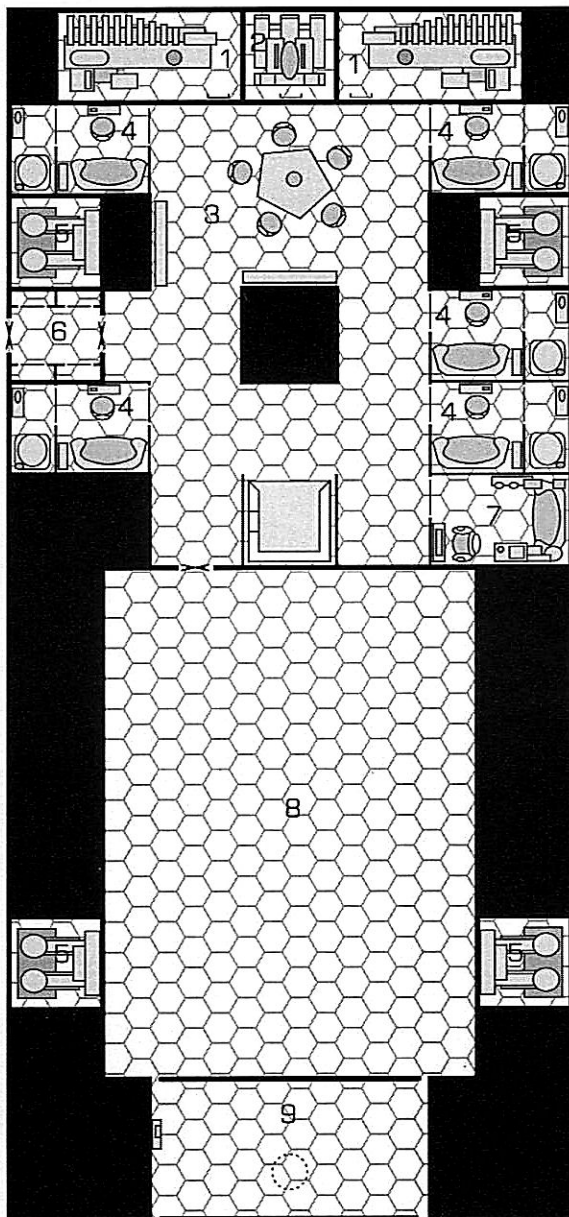
ONE HEX
EQUALS 1 YARD

SCALE IN YARDS
3   6   9
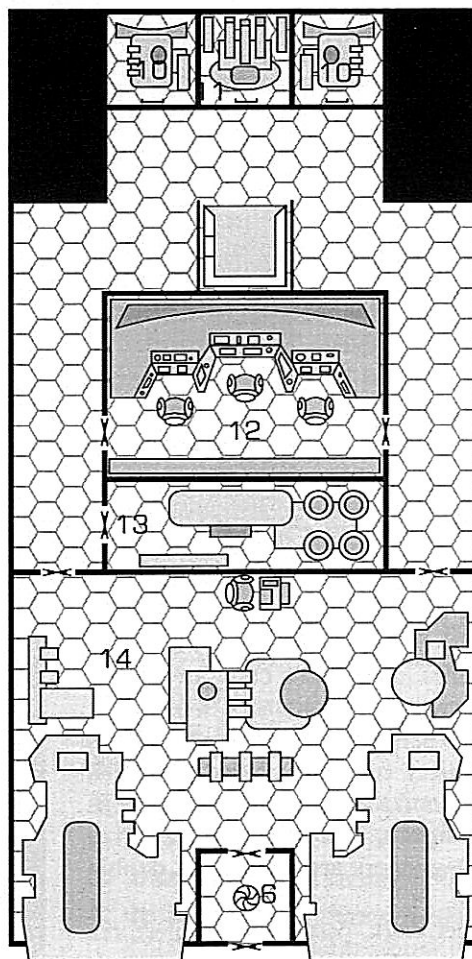
**UPPER
DECK**

DECK PLAN SYMBOLS

Iris Valve	Iris Valve, Overhead	Iris Valve, Floor
Large Hatch	Sliding Door	Maintenance Hatch
Bed	Personnel Lift	Acceleration Couch
Chair	Fresher	
Interior Partition	Bulkhead	

THE HIVERS

TL12 *CIGIYSNA*-CLASS 30-TON SHIP'S BOAT

This is a common surface-to-orbit or in-system vessel, often carried by the 400-ton general trader (p. 61). Transfer traffic between Federation highports and planetary surfaces will often be carried in this vessel. Common variants sacrifice cargo space for more passenger couches, or vice versa.

■ **Crew:** Pilot and navigator.

■ **Design:** 30-ton SL Hull, DR 100. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 1 Utility, 2 Maneuver, 1 Passenger Couch (12 seats), 16.5 Cargo.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 41.04, LMass 123.54, Cost: MCr4.8, HP: 6,000. Size modifier: +7.

■ **Performance:** Accel 1.62 Gs. Air Speed 1,937.

TL12 *GAHCUYCHE*-CLASS 30-TON HEAVY FIGHTER

Resembling the 30-ton boat, this craft is fielded in a variety of configurations. The example illustrated is an expensive, flexible-response, long-duration model. The fusion gun and missile launcher allow a variety of tactics, including the ability to attack over-the-horizon targets. This model is used extensively against the Solomani.

Cheaper and more common models substitute lasers and/or deadfall bomb bays for the fusion gun, or lose the life support to produce a short-duration fighter with either two fusion guns or three lighter weapons – usually a mixture of lasers and missile racks. The front-line commanders usually ask for fusion guns, but the cost and Hiver preference for long-range weapons mean that the Federation Navy does not always oblige.

■ **Crew:** Pilot and navigator.

■ **Design:** 30-ton SL Hull, DR 2,050, Radical Stealth, Radical Emissions Cloaking, 1 hull-mounted Fusion Gun (see p. T:SM67 or use laser option below), 1 hull-mounted Missile Launcher. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 14 Maneuver, 1 Stateroom.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 265.5, LMass 265.5, Cost: MCr37.5, HP: 6,000. Size modifier +7.

■ **Performance:** Accel 5.27 Gs, Air Speed 5,123.

The laser version substitutes 1 Laser and 0.5 Cargo spaces for the Fusion Gun (Mass 259.8, MCr16.6, Accel 5.39 Gs).

TL12 *CIIGUSNA*-CLASS 100-TON SHUTTLE

This boat is a common passenger and cargo mover – most large ships carry at least one, and they are a common sight at downports.

The Federation military often converts these to their own purposes – although unlike purpose-designed lookalikes, the converted shuttles rarely feature stealth or emission-cloaking. Retrofitting these features to the hulls is expensive.

■ **Crew:** Pilot and navigator, plus any additional per military customization.

■ **Design:** 100-ton SL Hull, DR 100. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 16 Maneuver, 3 Passenger Couches (36 seats), 57.5 Cargo.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 101.62, LMass 389.12, Cost: MCr9.7, HP: 15,000. Size modifier + 8.

■ **Performance:** Accel 4.11 Gs (15.74 Gs empty), Air Speed 3,464.
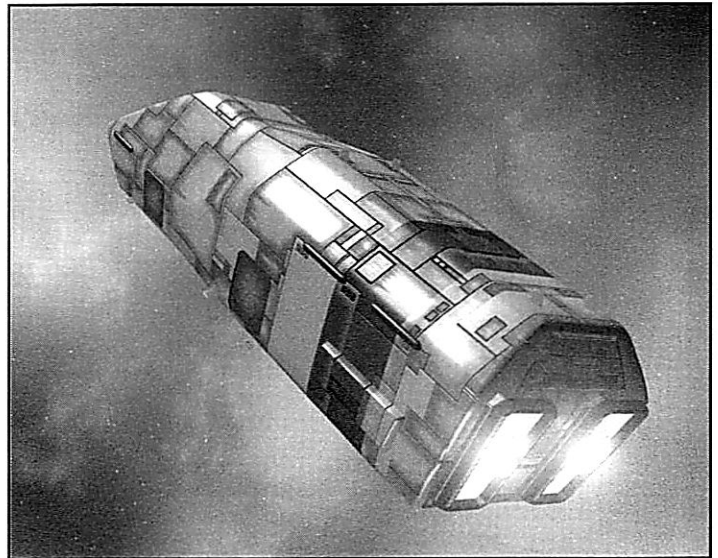
TL12 *CIHZICIH*-CLASS TRANSPORT

This vessel works in the Federation's development areas on the trailing and rimward borders. The ship carries personnel and materials to forward zones. It is moderately well-armed – sufficient to drive off the typical raiding ship, but inadequate for independent operation.

■ **Crew:** Commander, pilot, astrogator, four gunners, defensive systems operator, three engineers, and medic. Suitably trained crew members or passengers operate the shuttle, depending on mission profile.

■ **Design:** 800-ton USL Hull, DR 300, Basic Stealth, Basic Emissions Cloaking, 5 Turrets, four with triple Lasers and one with triple Sandcasters. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 24 Jump, 160 Fuel, 1 Fuel Processor, 50 Maneuver, 25 Staterooms, 2 Utility, 1 Sick Bay, 1 Vehicle Bay (100-ton shuttle), 1 Nuclear Damper, 347.5 Hold.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 1,017.2, LMass 2,856.3, Cost: MCr140.8 (plus shuttle), HP: 60,000. Size modifier: +10.

■ **Performance:** Accel 1.75 Gs (4.92 Gs without cargo or shuttle), Jump 2.

CIHZICIH-CLASS TRANSPORT

GUN DECK

ONE HEX EQUALS 1 YARD

SCALE IN YARDS
3   6   9
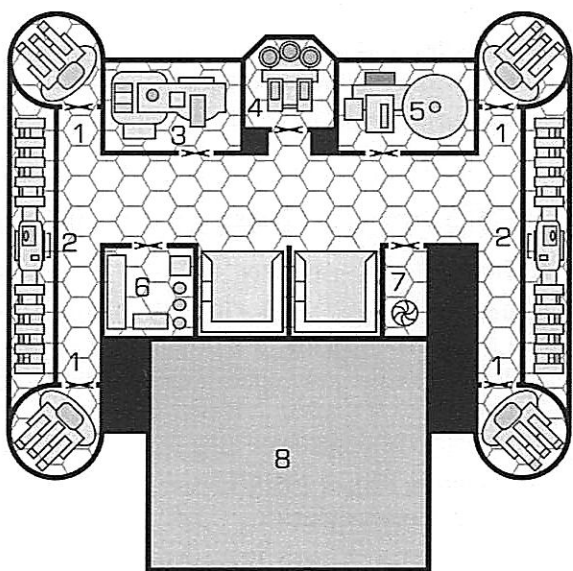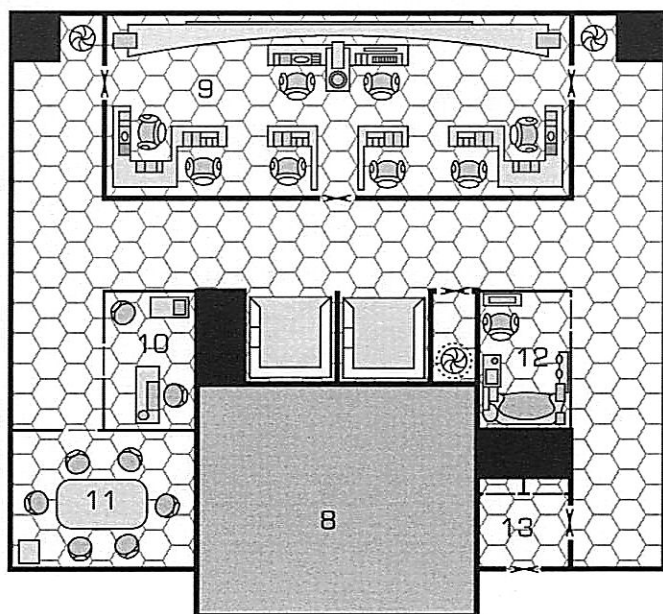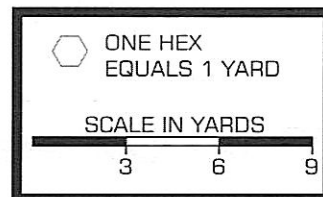
SIDE CUTAWAY

SHUTTLE BAY (RUNS THROUGH SHIP)

| GUN DECK |
| OPS |
| QUARTERS |
| QUARTERS |
| FUEL (PLANS NOT SHOWN) |
| CARGO (40' HIGH) |
| DRIVES |

OPS DECK

DECK PLAN SYMBOLS
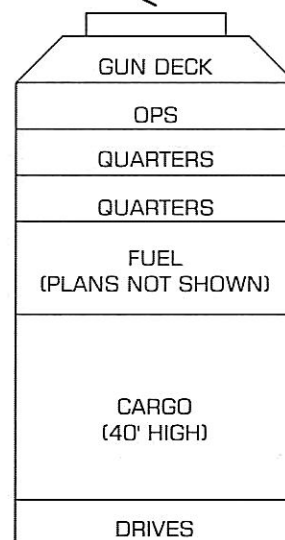
Symbol	Name	Symbol	Name	Symbol	Name
⋈	Iris Valve	⊙	Iris Valve, Overhead	⊘	Iris Valve, Floor
⊚	Iris Valve, Both	-·--	Sliding Door	[	Maintenance Hatch
▪--▪	Large Hatch	▢	Personnel Lift	⊚	Acceleration Couch
⬭	Bed	○	Chair	▢	Fresher
───	Interior Partition	▬▬	Bulkhead		
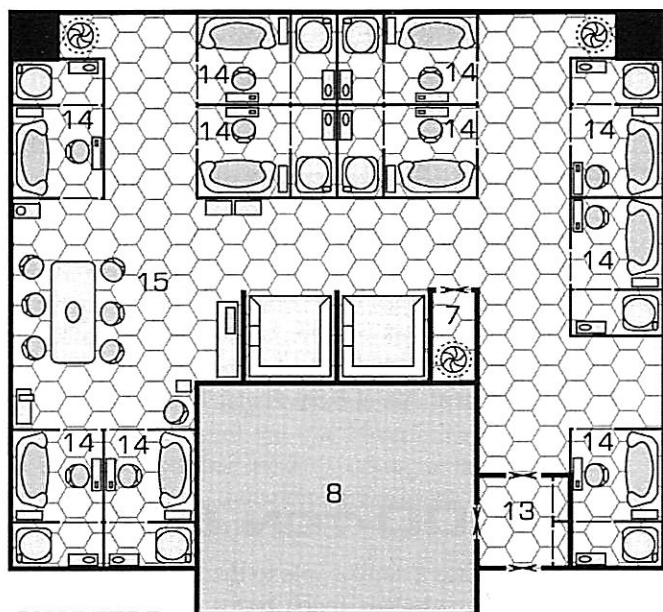
QUARTERS
DECK
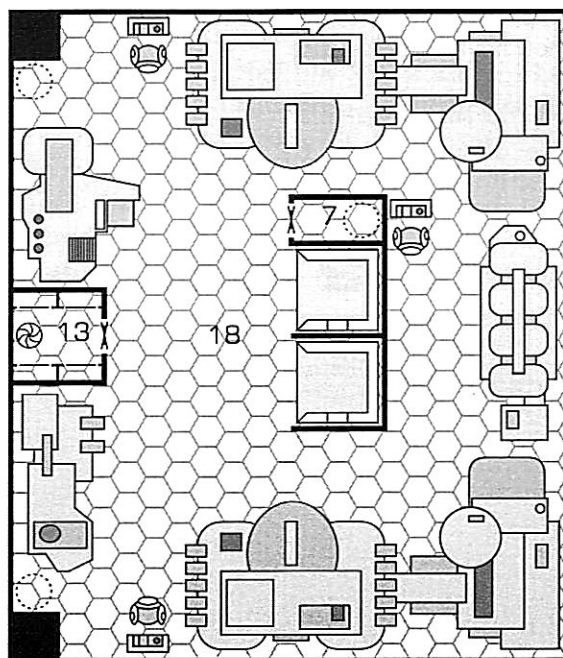
DRIVES
DECK
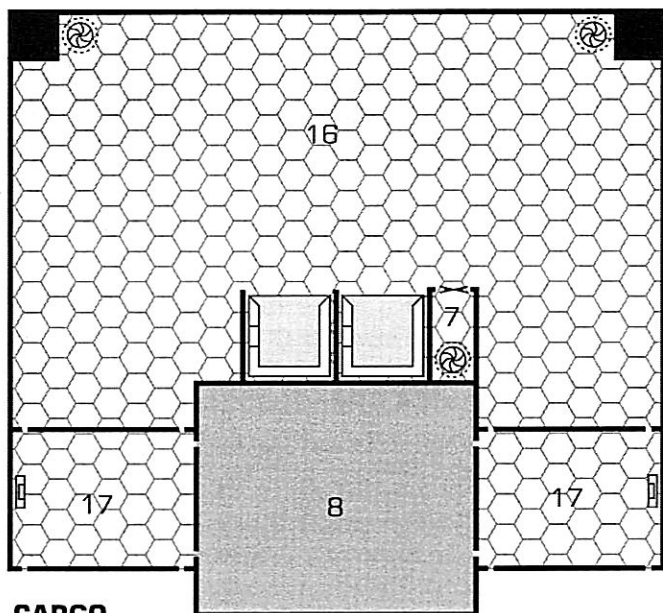
CARGO
DECK

KEY

1. Laser Turret
2. Fuel Scoops
3. Nuclear Damper
4. Sandcaster Turret
5. Avionics
6. Maintenance Stores and
   Sand Magazine
7. Central Access Conduit
8. Shuttle Bay
9. Bridge
10. Captain's Office
11. Conference Room
12. Sickbay
13. Airlock
14. Stateroom
15. Common Area
16. Cargo Hold
17. Cargo Lock
18. Engineering

TL12 *CⅡGUSNA*-CLASS 40-TON PINNACE

This is a standard Federation ship's boat, carried by civilian vessels and warships alike. It's a particularly comfortable small craft, given that artificial gravity is installed, which is why it's often reserved for high passengers in civilian use and line officers in military applications.

■ **Crew:** Pilot and navigator.

■ **Design:** 40-ton SL Hull, DR 100. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 6 Maneuver, 1 Utility, 2 Passenger Couches (24 seats), 19.5 Cargo.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 60.08, LMass 157.58, Cost: MCr6.2, HP: 7,500. Size modifier +7.

■ **Performance:** Accel 3.81 Gs (9.99 Gs empty), Air Speed 3,000.

TL12 *ZⅡGUYSNA*-CLASS 40-TON MILITARY PINNACE

Superficially identical to the civilian version, this boat handles troop deployment, covert insertions, and recoveries no matter how hot the landing zone.

■ **Crew:** Pilot and navigator.

■ **Design:** 40-ton SL hull, DR 2,000, Radical Stealth and Radical Emissions Cloaking. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 20 Maneuver, 1 Nuclear Damper, 1 Meson Screen (DR 4,160), 3 hull-mounted TL12 Lasers, 2 Passenger Couches (24 seats), 1.5 Cargo.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 337.98, LMass 345.48, Cost: MCr23.7, HP: 7,500. Size modifier +7.

■ **Performance:** Accel 5.79 Gs (5.92 Gs empty), Air Speed 5,477.

TL12 *FAZACHU*-CLASS 400-TON SDB

This craft has a similar role to the Imperial *Dragon* class (p. GT144). It is, however, much better armed, faster, more comfortable, and far better armored. T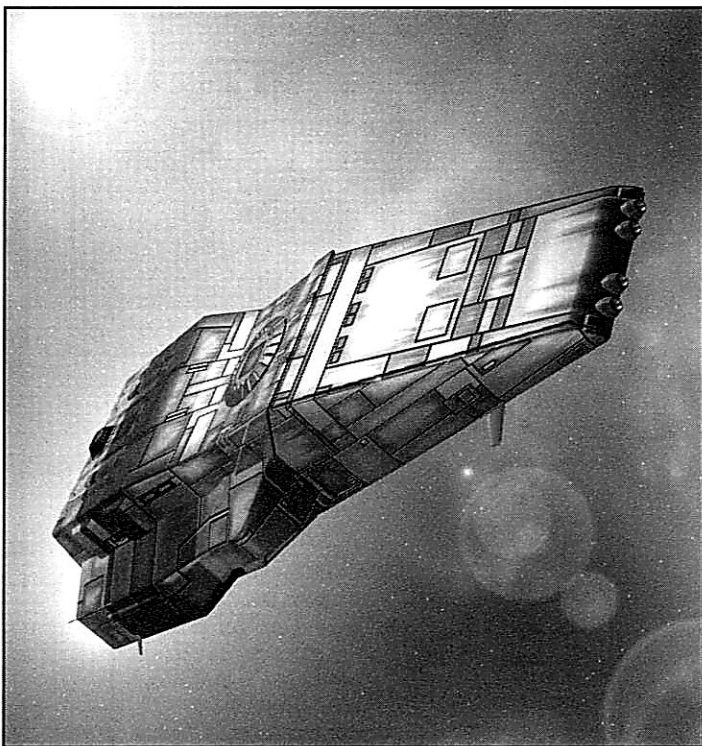o encourage its crew to attack enthusiastically, the main weapons – four fusion guns – fire forward. The lasers are for minor threats and point defense. Unlike the 10-ton fighter, which acts from an orbital platform or a spaceship, the SDB is streamlined, to enable it to be based on less developed worlds or even hide in oceans.

The cargo space is provided just in case a crew on customs duty feels like confiscating something. Less expensive versions mount lasers and missile launchers instead of the fusion guns.

■ **Crew:** Pilot, navigator, two engineers, two gunners, and medic.

■ **Design:** 400-ton SL Hull, DR 6,300, 2 Turrets (3 Lasers each), 4 hull-mounted Fusion Guns, Radical Stealth, Radical Emissions Cloaking. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 276 Maneuver, 1 Utility, 7 Staterooms, 3.5 Cargo.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 4,632.85, LMass 4,650.35, Cost: MCr257.6, HP: 37,500. Size modifier +9.

■ **Performance:** Accel 5.96 Gs (5.94 Gs if cargo carried), Air Speed 8,822.

TL12 *GICⅡFICHU*-CLASS 100-TON DISPATCHER

The Federation does not possess an Xboat network (pp. GT8, 31). Embassy ships take care of general communications, so this vessel primarily serves the government and other special-interest groups. Most are required to carry ordinary mail as well.

These ships can carry a complement of four, but they are cramped. Given so little living space and the inadequate medical facilities, passengers are only carried in extreme circumstances. The dispatcher seldom has a Hiver in its crew, unless one happens to make a hobby of epidemiology and requests the posting.

■ **Crew:** Pilot/navigator and engineer.

■ **Design:** 100-ton USL Hull, DR 300. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 1 Utility, 6 Jump, 50 Fuel, 1 Fuel Processor, 12 Maneuver, 2 Staterooms, 1 Communications Module (see p. T:FI35), 6.5 Cargo.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 367.7 LMass 400.2, Cost: MCr39.4, HP: 15,000. Size modifier + 8

■ **Performance:** Accel 3 Gs (3.26 Gs empty), Jump 5.

TL12 *IIGICIH/GIIPHICIH*-CLASS 1,200-TON EMBASSY SHIP/LINER

The ubiquitous embassy ship is the keystone of Federation homogeneity. The government is emphatic that an embassy ship stops at every settlement at least once a year. Many places have weekly visits. The embassies carried by these vessels travel around the worlds, calling in, exchanging data, checking cultural drift, taking discreet remedial action, shaking hands with local Hivers, setting down and taking up passengers. The embassy carries *very* complete surveillance and modeling equipment to assist its monitoring and adjusting roles.

The vessel is extremely comfortable, with lavish entertainment and conference facilities. It is unstreamlined and is *never* armed. A substantial escorting force – perhaps a small destroyer group – accompanies an embassy to the frontier.

Although all Federation citizens can, in theory, join an embassy, only Hivers routinely do so. Identical ships, designated *liners* (further evidence of the true Hiver/other citizen relationship) carry other member species working in this field.

Commercial passenger transports are similar, but mount a Basic Bridge and gain 2.5 Hold spaces.

This ship is designed using only modules from *GURPS Traveller*. Some embassy ships – particularly those that frequent troublesome worlds – may substitute Staterooms and/or Holds for communications and survey gear as described in *First In* or *Starports*. Others may fit luxury passenger features as described in *Far Trader* or *Starports*.

- **Crew:** Captain, pilot, navigator, two sensors operators, two communications officers, computer officer, engineer, three medics, and one to seven stewards. Any mission specialists are housed within passenger staterooms.
- **Design:** 1,200-ton USL Hull, DR 300. *Modules:* 1 hardened Command Bridge, 1 Engineering, 36 Jump, 240 Fuel, 30 Maneuver, 2 Fuel Processors, 150 Staterooms, 3 Utility, 2 Sick Bays, 1 Vehicle Bay (100-ton shuttle), 176 Hold.
- **Statistics:** EMass 1,266.2, LMass 2,247.9, Cost: MCr182.9 (plus shuttle), HP: 75,000. Size modifier: +10.
- **Performance:** Accel 1.33 Gs (2.37 Gs without shuttle or cargo), Jump 2.

TL12 *GIZICIH*-CLASS 400-TON GENERAL TRADER

This ship fills the roles of the free, far, and subsidized traders of the Imperium (pp. GT132-135, 146). It is an unremarkable vessel and tempting for pirates, hence the Q-ship version. The navigator usually flies the ship's boat.

- **Crew:** Pilot, navigator, two engineers, medic, and steward.
- **Design:** 400-ton SL Hull, DR 100. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 1 Utility, 12 Jump, 80 Fuel, 11 Maneuver, 1 Fuel Processor, 15 Staterooms, 1 Sickbay, Vehicle Bay (30-ton Boat), 119 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 313.45, LMass 949.49, Cost: MCr61.2 (plus ship's boat), HP: 37,500. Size modifier +9.
- **Performance:** Accel 1.16 Gs (3.51 Gs with no cargo or boat), Jump 2, Air Speed 1,817.
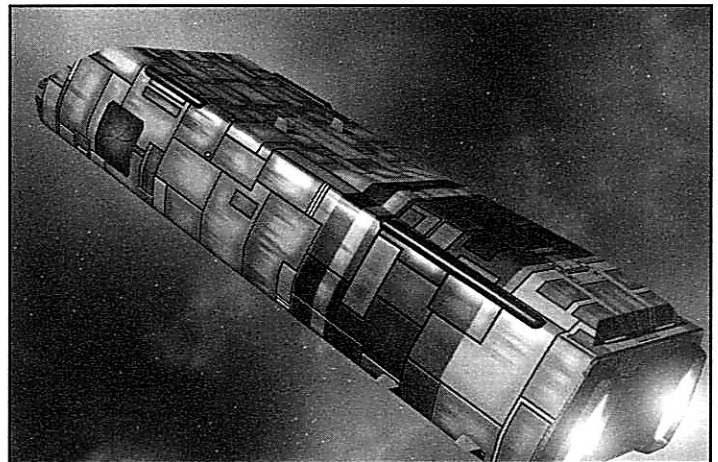
TL12 *ZAHZICIH*-CLASS 400-TON Q-SHIP

This vessel is superficially identical to a general trader, right down to lacking EM masking, stealth, or turrets. Reports from the Federation suggest that the Q-ship will act like any other member of a convoy unless attacked, then it will launch its fighters to englobe the threat, then intercept the enemy head-on. At the captain's whim, the opposition may be invited to surrender.

Q-ships both accompany convoys and work proactively, visiting dangerous areas to entice combat. There is provision to take some prisoners and to transport valuable items, but the ship cannot recover much contraband – the crew must hide large recovered cargos and direct other vessels to retrieve them.

Many corsairs don't believe that these ships exist. Since none of their own ever return from an engagement with the *Zahzicih* class, and those who know of its existence don't advertise it, the outlaws remain in ignorance . . .

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, gunner, three engineers, two medics, two stewards, and four fighter pilots.

Design: 400-ton SL Hull, DR 4,000, 12 hull-mounted (all pointing forward) Lasers. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 12 Jump, 80 Fuel, 118 Maneuver, 1 Fuel Processor, 15 Staterooms, 1 Sickbay, 1 Utility, Vehicle Bay (four 10-ton fighters), 1.5 Cargo.

Statistics: EMass 2691.45, LMass 2698.95, Cost: MCr115.7 (plus fighters), HP: 37,500. Size modifier +9.

Performance: Accel 3.73 Gs (with four fusion-armed *Giicuyche*-class fighters aboard, 4.38 Gs with no fighters or cargo), Jump 2, Air Speed 5,950.

GIZICIH-CLASS GENERAL TRADER

LOWER DECK

CARGO DECK

UPPER DECK
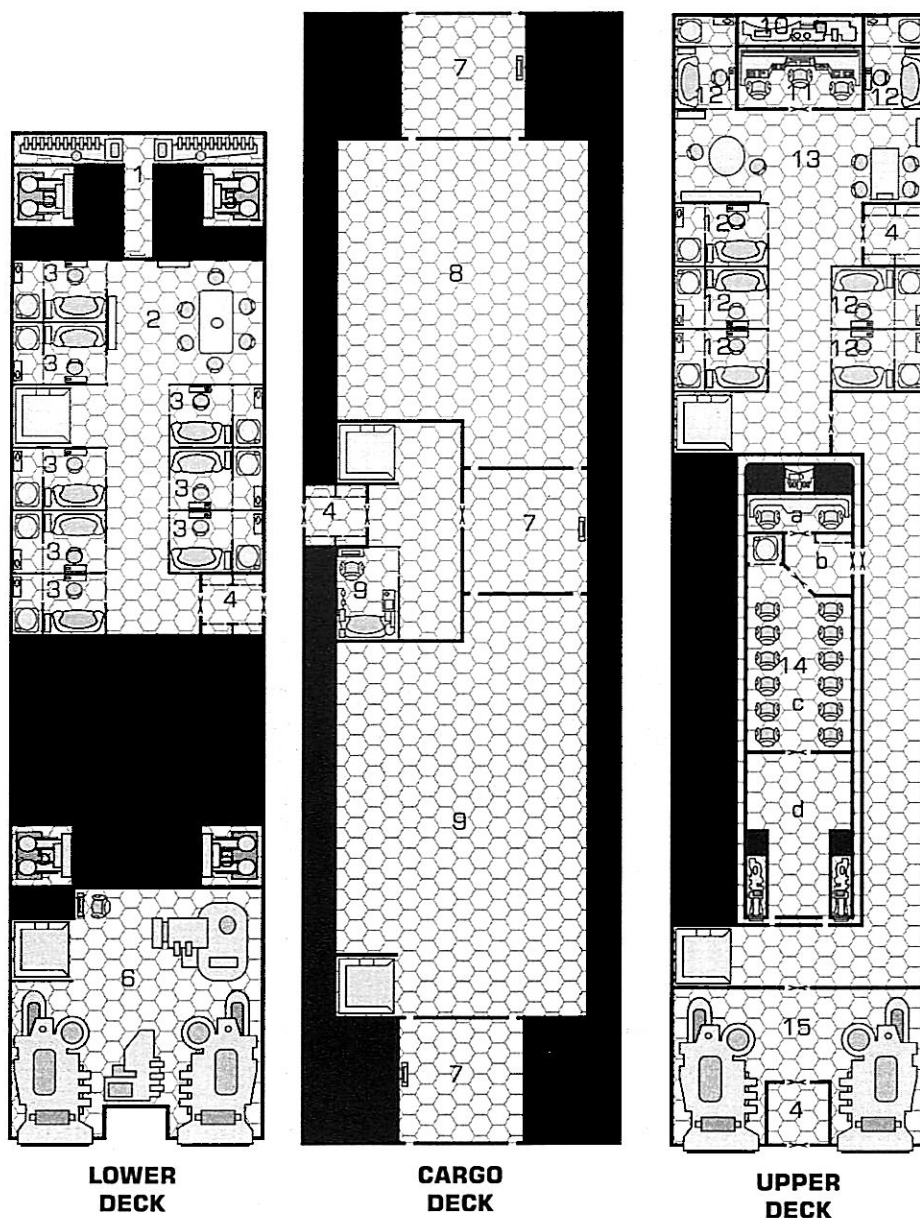
KEY

1. Fuel Scoops
2. Passenger Common Area
3. Passenger Stateroom
4. Airlock
5. Landing Gear
6. Lower Engineering
7. Cargo Lock
8. Forward Hold
9. Sickbay
10. Avionics
11. Bridge
12. Crew Stateroom
13. Crew Common Area
14. Ship's Boat
    a. Bridge
    b. Airlock
    c. Passenger Area
    d. Hold
15. Upper Engineering

DECK PLAN SYMBOLS

✂	Iris Valve	-·-·	Sliding Door	[	Maintenance Hatch
■-■-■	Large Hatch	▣	Personnel Lift	◈	Acceleration Couch
⬭	Bed	⊙	Chair	◌	Fresher
—	Interior Partition	▬	Bulkhead		

ONE HEX EQUALS 1 YARD

SCALE IN YARDS
3   6   9

The Droyne

Rules are made to be broken.

Academics introduced the term "major race" to describe those species of sophonts that had independently discovered jump drive. Politicians (especially those who were members of major races themselves) spread the term, and used it to "prove" that major races were superior to minor ones. Since jump-drive technology gave its users an obvious and powerful advantage, the minor races found this classification hard to dispute.

So it came as a shock when researchers proved that the Droyne were a major race. By the standards of most species, the Droyne have no ambition; they are content to lead placid lives on bucolic planets. At first, people thought of the Droyne as many separate minor races. Once it became clear that the various Droyne communities were the colonies of a single race, they were still considered a minor one, perhaps spread by the Ancients like Humaniti.

It was most inconvenient to learn that the Droyne have jump drive, that they have had it for longer than any other major race, and they just don't bother to use it much. The underpinning for a basic scientific and political definition was shattered, although the definition and the habits it engendered are still very much alive.

PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Droyne and Chirpers (see sidebar) seem to mutate readily, so their communities scattered across charted space show great external variation. Skin colors range from the usual grays to purples and greens; wing size varies; average height and weight differ from world to world; the ratio of trunk to leg to arm length shifts. Underneath the external differences, however, all Droyne share many traits.

Droyne and Chirpers have extensive psionic talents. Fortunately, the average Imperial citizen is not aware of this.

EVOLUTION

The Droyne evolved from hexapedal omnivores – probably gatherers – on the lost world called Eskayloyt, a small planet with a dense atmosphere permitting the evolution of large flying creatures. Physiological and genetic evidence points to the proto-Droyne having been amphibious creatures, which moved to the forest floor and thence to the treetops. Some have speculated that the world had a high level of background radiation, causing a correspondingly high rate of mutation that became a racial trait. Other observers point out that existing Droyne communities also tend to reside on worlds with high background radiation, so the mutation is less a racial trait than a byproduct of the racial preference in habitat.

Mutation is the leading theory as to why the Droyne became a race that forms castes, because DNA analysis (and the Chirper nature) suggest the trait isn't inherent. The Droyne subject their children (heretofore identical to Chirper youths) to a casting ceremony when they are 12 years old.

Chirpers: The Dying Races – Should We Help?

Chirpers, a semi-intelligent minor race native to many worlds, are in fact populations of Droyne who have for some reason lost the ability to caste. They therefore engage in two-sex reproduction, though often not at population-maintaining rates.

A typical Chirper weighs about 55 lbs. and has opposable thumbs and vestigial wings. Some populations retain the ability to fly, though rarely for long distances.

Most Chirper worlds have very low tech levels and primitive societies, though the occasional Chirper planet, like prehistoric Zhdant (see *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1*) exhibits relatively large and complex social organizations.

Adult Chirpers are as smart as Droyne workers – but the Droyne treat them as lesser sentients. Chirpers do seem to have a much harder time maintaining a high-TL society, for reasons not entirely understood. Chirpers can learn Human speech, often developing an impressive vocabulary, although their conversation always retains the sharp, chirping tones for which they are named.

The Imperium recognizes Chirpers as intelligent, and accords them the normal protections of sophonts. Within the Imperium, Chirpers mostly live on reservations, and have little contact with Humans.

Most Chirper worlds seem to show a slow but steady decline in numbers. Imperial authorities are currently debating whether or not the Droyne should be invited to teach their less fortunate cousins how to caste.

Adventure Seed: Teach a Chirper to Caste . . .

Authorities on a world with a small Chirper population have resolved to bring in Droyne to share the secret of casting. The PCs may be sent to find teachers and bring them back, or hired by powerful interests (perhaps a megacorp that covets the Chirper land) to prevent it. Several NPCs should present different, but convincing, views of which course is morally correct.

But I'm Too Young to Die!

Krinaytsyu (voluntary death – see p. 70) is expected of all Droyne in the appropriate circumstances, but there are always a few who resist the urge to self-destruction even after the community withdraws its support. Some find another goal supplanting the basic need to serve their *oytrip*, and this becomes the new driving force in their lives. (In game terms, an Obsession or a Higher Purpose would fit the bill.) They postpone or ignore the call to *krinaytsyu,* perhaps for years, in pursuit of their new goal.

Such Droyne are known as the *krinaytsoyni* (the Deathless), a term of scorn among normal Droyne. They live outside society, without the support of family or community, and are characteristically melancholy, lonely wanderers, obsessive and prone to kill themselves (or at least threaten to do so) in the face of failure or disappointment.

Leaders, Sports, and Drones are most often able to make this transition; the lower castes have too strong a need for leadership and company to survive without their family's support.

Read Larry Niven's *Protector* for one possible insight into the mind of a Deathless One.

Adventure Seed: Waiter, There Are No Flies in My Soup!

In the 800s a Droyne Sport named Osseskil, visiting Earth on a diplomatic mission, discovered black beetles. Delighted at their crunchiness and flavor (especially when roasted), he arranged to import some to Droyne communities in the Spinward Marches, where they turned out to be very popular. His *oytrip,* Kroputhyath, has been importing them ever since (though imports are sometimes sporadic and always in small numbers given the distances involved), and they are a popular delicacy among the Droyne.

Another *oytrip,* Esiskpilk, has been trying to raise them on Andor, but has not met with any success. However, the word is that they intend to try again and are importing a Solomani biologist to help them. There are rumors that Kroputhyath *oytrip* feels threatened by this project and is trying to stop it.

The PCs are employed by Esiskpilk *oytrip,* or by the biologist, to guard her during her travels to Andor and her work while there.

The Droyne possess six castes. Some castes do not directly take part in reproduction, but they do make communities of creatures more successful, and therefore more likely to survive and reproduce.

Though the period in which they began casting is unclear, most current theories suggest the Droyne evolved through several primitive castes. The earliest are alleged to have been the Hunter, the Nest-builder, and the Mother. Computer modeling suggests that the next caste to appear was the Leader, perhaps as some Hunters took on a guiding role in their communities by virtue of their heightened initiative. Evolving later from the Hunter caste came present-day Sports and Warriors. The original Hunter caste was no longer necessary, and so died out.

The Nest-builder caste gave rise first to the Worker, and later to the Technician, then died out itself some time thereafter, and is no longer seen. The fact that Droyne *have* a Technician caste is itself evidence that they have had intelligence, and possibly a technical civilization, for hundreds of thousands of years.

The theory further posits that the Mother caste slowly transformed into the modern Drone, responsible for procreation and managing the family unit.

GMG '00
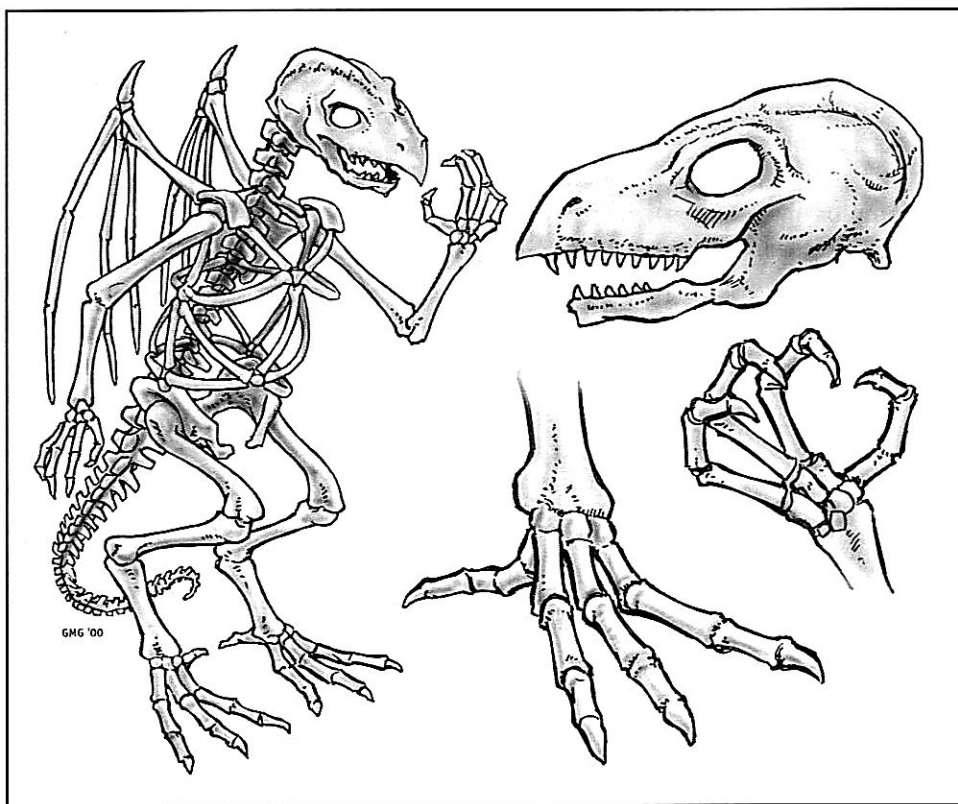
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

All Droyne have six limbs, arranged in three pairs. The lowest pair are legs, ending in sharp, strong claws; the middle pair have developed into extensive wings, with a wingspan of roughly 3 yards; the upper pair are arms, equipped with four-fingered hands. Size varies with caste and homeworld; adult Droyne range from 3′ to 6′ 6″ tall, and from 55 to 130 lbs. Their weight is low for their height, primarily because their bones are hollow and brittle like those of Terran birds.

The two most noticeable features of the skeleton are the wings, and the unusual geodesic arrangement of the ribs. On closer inspection, one notes that the limbs have different numbers of joints. The skin is tough, usually marked with black patterns according to caste, and scaled. The wings are batlike and usually black. The four digits on hands and feet are long and flexible, each being

fully opposable to the other three. (Only three of the toes are fully developed. On most worlds, the fourth has degenerated into a bony spur used only in combat.) The rear limbs are digitigrade – Droyne walk on their toes, like Aslan or Vargr.

Droyne have two large, wide-set, compound eyes, set atop a beaklike arrangement of nose and mouth. The eyes' facets are too small to see easily, and so the eyes appear smoothly blank.

DIET

Droyne are omnivores. In prehistoric times, the Droyne ate local fruit and nut analogs, and used their wings to catch small animals. Droyne dietary preferences remain similar today. They show a general taste for crunchy foods; particular favorites are sweet fruits, nuts, and insects. Their omnivore nature makes it easy for them to adapt to foreign cuisine. They do well with Human dishes, liking some more than others. For example, many have developed a real fondness for Solomani garlic bread, and often make their own version (with nuts). Conversely, they don't have any great desire for spaghetti (too squishy), though some feel that covering it with roasted beetles makes it bearable.

They are known, almost to an individual, to detest Vilani dishes. Aslan and Vargr food has too much emphasis on meat, but Droyne can put up with it.

THE CASTES

Droyne are unique among the major races in being "casted." Adult Droyne belong to one of the six *Esorde* (castes) which – unlike the castes of Human or K'kree societies – affects their physical and intellectual development as well as their social standing. There is far more difference between Droyne castes than between Human sexes, for example.

Each caste in turn is divided into many subcastes, specializing in various functions. For game purposes, the fine distinctions between these are abstracted into three main divisions in each caste. While a Droyne may not change caste once he has undertaken the *iskay* ceremony, it is possible for an individual to change subcaste (after an appropriate coyn-casting ceremony; see p. 73).

Caste is the single most important factor influencing Droyne personality; it determines the types of skills and careers available to the individual, as well as almost every other feature of his mental and physical make-up.

Which caste a Droyne belongs to seems to be triggered by environment and diet, the effects of which are awakened in an individual by the ceremony called the *Iskyar*. At the *Iskyar*, Droyne youths are assigned a caste, and aspects of the ceremony initiate and reinforce existing genetic "programs" latent in the sophont. The ceremony is little understood outside Droyne society, and is shrouded in mystery, but what does seem clear is that any youthful Droyne has the potential to become a member of any caste. Some researchers speculate that the ceremony depends on the use of psionics, but this is neither proven nor widely accepted.

The Uncasted

Those Droyne who don't undergo casting are Chirpers (see sidebar, p. 63). Chirpers tend to remain small and perhaps a bit less intelligent than the casted Droyne. They eventually develop male or female sexual characteristics. Usually Chirpers live on a planet with no population of casted Droyne, or in an isolated pocket on an otherwise Droyne world. In some cases, Droyne and Chirper populations co-exist, with the Droyne apparently feeling no urge to share their ability with their brethren. Some Droyne communities even exploit Chirper neighbors.

The Droyne castes are:

Aydin: Worker

Workers specialize in manual labor and other mundane activities. They are the least intelligent, most placid, and most contented of all Droyne. Size varies from 3′ to 6′ 6″ depending on their function. There are three main subcastes:

Farming Workers specialize in agricultural tasks – raising crops, herding, gathering wild food, and so forth.

Laboring Workers carry out the heavy, unskilled labor their community needs: digging, hauling, mining, loading, etc. They also serve as clerks and receptionists, if their community requires these functions.

Building Workers build, and assist the Technician caste. These are the construction workers and craftsmen of Droyne society.

Aydih: Warrior

Trained for combat and possessing well-developed muscles and reflexes (at least by Droyne standards), the Warrior is Droyne society's enforcer and protector. He is more involved with tactics than strategy, and better at accomplishing a mission than defining what it should be. Warriors are the largest and strongest caste, sometimes reaching 6′ 6″ tall and 130 lbs. The Warrior subcastes are:

Battling Warriors are combat troops, used for surface battles, as well as bodyguard duties.

Guard Warriors are primarily used as hunters or sentries, but their brief is to guard the community in the broadest sense of the term, so they are also found as firemen, paramedics, and police. Unlike Sports with similar roles, guard Warriors are deployed in groups.

Voyaging Warriors take on military or paramilitary roles that call for travel, such as ship's crew functions.

Aydirsoth: Drone

The major role for drones is that of reproduction and rearing the young, including playing a central part in the casting ceremony. This gives them great influence in Droyne society, and a detailed understanding of the goals and needs of the other castes. As a result, they form a sort of middle-management caste which handles the routine functions of business, trade, and administration, grasping and conveying the internal consensus of the *oytrip* to its Leaders much as Sports mediate between *oytripin.* Drones can handle day-to-day work effectively alone, and make good managers so long as there is a Leader to whom they can refer problems requiring long-range, strategic planning. The subcastes are:

Family Drones make up a large proportion of all Drones in a small family unit or community, less so as community size increases. They are responsible for bearing, raising, and educating the young.

Priestly Drones are essential; each *dreskay* (see pp. 76-77) needs one or more of these, as they play a key part in the casting ceremony and other uses of the coyns (see pp. 70-71), such as predictions.

Social Drones provide Droyne society with its administrators and middle managers.

Aykrusk: Leader

Leaders manage and direct Droyne society. They are the most intelligent and intuitive Droyne, and the caste most capable of initiative. They are about the same size as a Drone or Technician, and outwardly similar except for a larger braincase.
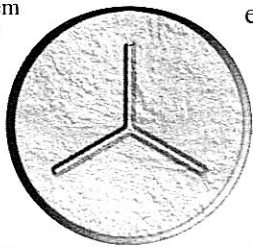
Leaders are driven to lead, and take jobs which allow them to do so. Sometimes they are forced into roles as advisors to other Leaders, but they always struggle to make decisions personally and gain more responsibility. They normally accept the authority of their superiors, but constantly strive to increase their own power within the system.

Leaders are the exception to the rule that Droyne are not possessive; they are extremely possessive, both for their communal organization and for themselves. Caste bonds ensure that Leaders within a community work together for the common good, but such co-operation rarely extends from one *oytrip* (see p. 77) to the next, because the Leaders are typically unable to grasp the concept of answering to another community for their actions. The needs of a Leader's own *oytrip* come first, and if something essential is in short supply, he does whatever is necessary to ensure that his *oytrip* gets as much as it needs. This originally led to a number of unnecessary wars, until the advent of the Sport caste provided a channel for negotiation and compromise (and better yet into barter, and thence to trade).

Leaders typically act as patriarchs, corporate or military officers, or ship captains (however, unlike the Human or Aslan norm, Leaders are more likely to be astrogators than pilots). The Leader subcastes are as follows:

Military Leaders are responsible for organized groups of Droyne, such as military or paramilitary units, starships, and fire or police departments.

Priestly Leaders lead small family groups, such as *dreskayin* or *oytripin,* and also work as merchant or company officers.

The *Leader of Leaders* is the Droyne who gives orders to other Leaders. A large group may have a number of these, with rank determined by experience; this is usually equivalent to age, as a Droyne serves his *oytrip* from casting until death, but since it is possible for them to change subcaste, there is some scope for contention as to who has the most *relevant* experience.

Ayssath: Technician

Technicians form the scientific section of Droyne society, and are concerned with both research and its practical implications. They are small, but nimble and intelligent. They are decisive and display initiative, but only within their own narrow areas of expertise. They are hi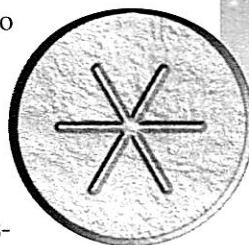ghly competent at assembling or repairing mechanisms; invention requires direction from a member of the Leader caste. Technicians also have three subcastes:

Fixing Technicians repair and maintain devices. When the task is complicated (such as repairing a battle-damaged jump drive), they are frequently directed by an artificer Technician.

Artificer Technicians build machinery and technology of all types, and provide the Droyne with their engineers, computer programmers, chemists, physicists, architects, and so on.

Dreaming Technicians focus on pure research, and are generally only found in the larger communities that can afford such luxuries. These are the theoretical scientists of Droyne culture.

Praytsirv: Sport

The Sport is the deliberate exception to the rigid Droyne caste system, a special individual who can function alone for long periods without a Leader's guidance. The closest parallel in another major race would be a Vargr emissary (see p. T:AI92). In the Imperium they are most often compared to IISS scouts.
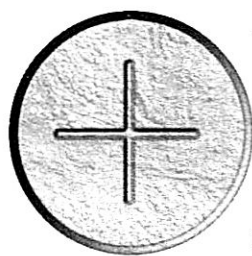
Droyne Art

Droyne art tends to be utilitarian, providing lessons, reminders, education, or instruction. The creation of art is the responsibility of the Drone caste. A Leader is usually consulted as to what he needs the group to know or think about, and what fits best with the directions the group will be taking. Drones also try and stay sensitive to the artistic needs of the other castes. Most of the actual creation of art and entertainment is done by Drones, but some tasks may be delegated to other castes if necessary – a Technician may need to write a technical section, a Sport may need to address a philosophical problem that a Drone would never run into, etc.

Art intended just for Leaders tends to address broad issues of policy and the morality and responsibility of groups.

Entertainment follows similar lines, except that for the Workers, who are often physically tired by their tasks and need to pass time as they rest. They are the only group that can be said to get pure entertainment, which is directed at the lowest common denominator. The themes are simple ones that a Worker can understand: overcoming adversity to meet a production quota, building the bridge in time for the group, working efficiently together, and so on. Solomani anthropologists have been reminded of Soviet industrial art of the 1930s on Terra, but unlike that art, Droyne entertainment is not aimed at making the viewer think along those lines; rather, it is intended to reassure someone who already thinks that way that all is well and he is truly valuable to the community. By Human standards it is appallingly trite, but there is no doubting its sincerity.

Entertainment for Sports is designed to expose them to new situations they may one day encounter and sometimes has a superficial resemblance to Human entertainment. ("The Sport battling through a storm to bring vital supplies back home.") The other castes generally go for technical programming on their areas of interest: jump-drive repair, diagnosing wing fever in young Droyne, and so on. Simplified treatments of these subjects are also sometimes watched by Sports, who may find the need for almost any skill while far from the family which would normally provide support.

Droyne Architecture

Droyne buildings tend to have cleaner designs than Human ones. Art is present, but abstract ornamentation is much simpler. Like many other races, the Droyne have "clean nest" instincts, which in modern times manifest themselves as an appreciation of clean lines and finished detail in architecture.

Overall architectural direction and ornamentation is the responsibility of the Drone caste in consultation with a Leader. Basic architectural design is usually done by a member of the Technician caste under the supervision of a Drone who adds ornamentation.

The Droyne Alternative to Prisons

The Droyne neither have prisons nor need them. The typical Droyne miscreant breaks with tradition because he does not understand the implications, or because he truly believes it is in the best interests of his family. Either of these is addressed by re-education (if necessary, telepathic Mindwipe). Particularly flagrant crimes (such as challenging a Leader's wisdom without due cause) lead to invitations to *krinaytsyu,* which are usually accepted.

Recidivists and the unrepentant, who will not live according to the ways of the *oytrip,* are cast out of the community. Lacking both support and a reason to live, such unfortunates usually die swiftly.

The Sport caste is thought to have emerged as a subrace of professional diplomats. When war threatened, Sports were dispatched to represent the needs of their community to their opposite numbers, who then used the normal processes of appeal and suggestion to convey those needs to their own Leaders.

Sports are about 5' high and roughly as intelligent as Drones. Sports are used as messengers, representatives, pilots, drivers, and explorers. There are (as ever) three principal subcastes:

Finding Sports locate required resources, such as raw materials, lodes of ore, and so on. They are prospectors, brokers, surveyors, representatives to other communities, and so on.

Speaker Sports carry messages between Droyne families and communities of all sizes and locations, even between worlds. These are the Droyne emissaries and diplomats.

Seeking Sports wander far from their community in search of knowledge; they are explorers, spies, and scouts.

REPRODUCTION

Droyne have three genders, designated male, enabler, and female. Gender normally develops only after casting. Drones are female; Leaders, Sports, and Warriors are males; Workers and Technicians are enablers. When new *tyafelmin* are formed, enablers tend to join ones containing male or female relatives; it is thought that this serves to ensure that they are supporting children as closely related to them as possible, rather than rival genes. The "outsider enabler" occupies the same place in Droyne folklore as the "wicked stepmother" in Human tales.

Early Solomani researchers, not realizing that the Droyne have three genders, assumed that the only difference between males and enablers was social position (as is commonly found on Earth) and dubbed them "alpha male" and "beta male." These terms are still frequently found in textbooks, even though they aren't strictly accurate.

Mating and Gestation

Reproduction is complex; females can only ovulate and be fertilized by males if pheromones from enablers are present in sufficient quantities. In effect, a *tyafelm* (see p. 76) must have at least one member of each gender, or it is infertile.

The Drones lay clutches of six fertilized eggs and nurture them when they hatch, after roughly 60 days of incubation. The hatchlings are then fed predigested food reduced to a manageable consistency in the Drone's mouth pouch; they are "weaned" from this at about 1 standard year of age.

Droyne have a long childhood for a species with their lifespan. They have an elementary vocabulary by 2 years old, and commence education at 4 years old.

Education

Droyne education occupies their young between the ages of 4 and 12. This is not formal classroom schooling, but a program individualized for each Droyne. New learning builds on success; additional training addresses problem areas. This education includes psionic training, varying with individual potential.

Socialization

To the Droyne, socialization is just as important as education. During their formative years, young Droyne are constantly exposed to social situations, so that they learn what is expected of each caste in any given circumstance, and what is allowed to members of that caste. The primary focus, though, is to ensure that each understands his responsibility to the whole.

Adolescence

At age 10, the young Droyne begins a two-year period of preparation for the casting ceremony and the transition to adulthood. The Drones, acting as "priests" for the ceremony, examine and evaluate their charges both formally and informally. Deficiencies are identified and remedied; the Drones form an opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of each adolescent Droyne in their charge.

Part of this process is normally for the youngsters to make short expeditions out of the community in small groups, so that they gain practical experience in working together without adult supervision. Expeditions are usually organized with some specific goal in mind – a hunt, exploration of a specific place, or perhaps a visit to an archaeological site. Reports and debriefings after the trip provide additional information to the Drones about their students.
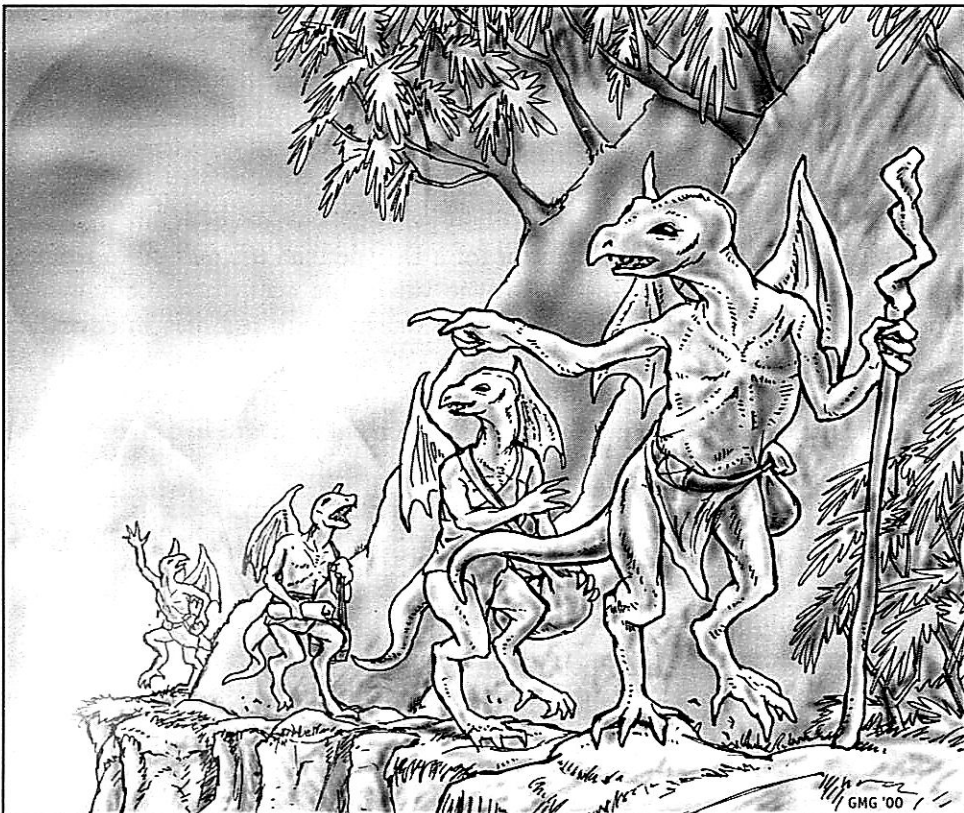
Casting

By the age of 12, an uncasted Droyne has developed as far as it can, physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Casting is necessary for further growth.

At some point during the Droyne's 12th year, the Drones of the community arrange a casting ceremony for the eligible youth. This rite of passage is controlled by the coyns (see *Mysticism*, pp. 70-76). The young Droyne draws coyns from a bag or other container, surrounded by a circle of Drones who officiate at the ceremony and record the outcome. Beyond the Drones, the whole community is watching with interest. Theoretically, the coyns are drawn at random, and fate decides the outcome; for an alternative approach, see *What Do You Mean, the Dreskay Needs Workers?* on p. 66.

However the result is arrived at, the whole community witnesses the ceremony, and their reactions to the outcome reinforce its effects on the newly casted individual immediately, and continuously thereafter. The present members of the caste welcome their new comrade; members of other castes change their perceptions of, and reactions to, the new adult.

An oytrip that has an excess of one caste and a deficit of another may occasionally trade members with another *oytrip*. These trades are usually, but not always, temporary to meet short-term needs and a Leader will consider both the needs of the individual and the *oytrip* before making such a trade. Once the circumstances are arranged, the Leader informs the Droyne in question that henceforth they are to obey the new *oytrip* and sends them over. In a few rare instances, there may be a breakdown in communications between the Leaders involved, and a Droyne is sent to an *oytrip* that is not ready to receive him. While this is usually straightened out by the Leaders, it occasionally results in a Droyne getting cut off. If the other Leader doesn't accept him, the original Leader cannot recall him since he has been told to obey the new Leader, and will do so, accepted or not.

The Forgotten Ones

The PCs are part of an *oytrip*, or are off-worlders studying one or trading with it, and notice a small group of alien Droyne skulking around the edges of town. They may be taken for spies or Deathless, but in fact they are Droyne traded to the *oytrip* and not accepted because of a communication breakdown between the Leaders involved. They are simply hanging around, waiting for their new Leader to give them orders, and helping their new family as best they can while laboring under the limitation that as aliens, they face a hostile reception.

As the days pass, the Workers, Technicians, and Warriors in the group will find themselves unable to cope. Believing that neither *oytrip* has a use for them, they commit *krinaytsyu* one by one; the PCs may find their bodies, or see them being removed by local workers to be buried or burned.

The Drones and Sports are made of sterner stuff, and seek to keep themselves alive in case the new *oytrip* needs them after all, and will do what they can to aid it. (Finding lost things and returning them, rescuing lost children from avalanches – that sort of thing.)

The adventurers must figure out what is happening, and intervene. The sooner they do this, the more Droyne lives they will save. It is even possible that they can persuade the outcasts to become their followers, loyal unto death (if a bit on the dim side).

Droyne History

While history on most Droyne planets is remarkable for its dullness, archaeologists and historians find a common pattern of four phases.

Decline

From a (presumed) starfaring civilization around -300,000, the typical Droyne world fades toward extinction over the next quarter of a million years. Since the Droyne are found on many worlds, and their original culture is roughly contemporary with that of the Ancients, some hold that they were transplanted from their home planet, Eskayloyt, by that race, much as Humans were relocated from Earth. The low point for most Droyne worlds comes at around -75,000, by which time most had lost even the ability to caste, and were prime examples of a dying race.

Recovery

Around -75,000, on about 20 worlds, the Droyne almost simultaneously underwent a renaissance. The key to this was the revival of the ability to caste, based on the introduction of small gold disks called coyns (see *Mysticism* in the main text). These became the basis for many aspects of Droyne culture. Since most people balk at the idea of coyns simultaneously appearing on a score of widely separated planets, the accepted wisdom is that one of the Droyne cultures discovered jump drive and spread the coyns to the others. It is this theory which led to their classification as a major race.

Stagnation

The recovery of casting halted and reversed the decline in population (for reproduction is strongly linked to casting), and led to a revival of culture and advances in technology.

Strangely, the recovery did not trigger a resurgence of interstellar travel. Except for the sudden appearance of the coyns, there is no evidence that indicates a jump in either the sophistication or the spread of Droyne technology; in fact, no archaeological evidence exists for more than early TL5. Space travel should not have been possible for them. However, as Droyne culture from this point evolved along closely parallel lines, there must have been some ongoing contact.

Contact

Over the lifetime of the Ziru Sirka, Vilani explorers repeatedly contacted Droyne worlds. For various reasons, the Vilani never grasped that the Droyne were a single race, nor did their successors under the Rule of Man.
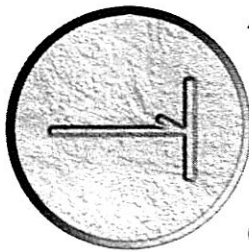
Aging and Voluntary Death

It is a central tenet of Droyne society and behavior that the individual exists for the good of the community, rather than the reverse, which is the customary view among Imperial Humans. For this reason, a Droyne who is no longer valuable to the *oytrip* usually undergoes *krinaytsyu* (voluntary death), unless he can be "traded" to another *oytrip* who need members of his caste, which benefits everyone and is the preferred option.

Otherwise, he spends several hours in meditation, making use of his powers of psionic self-awareness to deactivate his body and mind. He dies painlessly, and entirely by the force of his own will.

This is the fate customarily chosen by those whose usefulness to the community has been undermined by age, infirmity, or an ill-omened reading of the coyns (see *Mysticism*, below). It is also traditional for one who challenges a Leader's judgment and is proven to be drastically wrong to commit *krinaytsyu*. Leaders themselves may choose voluntary death after a disastrous decision, clearing the way for new Leaders to resolve the issues. Finally, a Droyne who is permanently cut off from his *oytrip* or *dreskay* (see pp. 76-77), beyond hope of rejoining it, is bereft of purpose and usually wills his own death in this way.

This sort of death holds less terror for a Droyne than it would for a Human; this is partly because the average Droyne values the needs of the community above his own, and partly because the custom of using psionics in education means that significant portions of a Droyne's experience and personality live on in the next generation – the living Droyne has fragmentary memories of earlier lives, and the dying one knows that some of his memories will live on in the next generation.

A Droyne wishing to perform *krinaytsyu* must maintain the Concentrate maneuver for at least 30 minutes × HT. The process may be halted at any time if he finds a new reason to live.

MYSTICISM

Droyne culture has a strong mystical slant, emphasizing ceremonial rituals that regulate and reaffirm the whole direction of a community. Many scoff at Droyne mysticism, but since their psionic powers became known to a few researchers, the possibility that the ceremonies act as a focus for psi talents, and actually *work*, has been discussed although not accepted as proven.

Castes are assigned by one ritual, individuals join or leave a *dreskay* (see pp. 76-77) by another, and a third is used to predict the success or failure of any endeavor.

Leaders and Drones officiate in community ceremonies; each *oytrip* (see p. 77) has a number of members whose only function is to regulate ceremonial life. Also of crucial importance are the coyns (Oynprith: *koynisin*, singular *koynis*). Sets range from 6 to 38 individual coyns, each a gold disk engraved with a particular symbol; the most common number of coyns in a set is 36.

COYNS

Droyne tradition holds that the coyns were introduced by a godlike figure known as Yaskoydray, which literally means "grandfather." Yaskoydray appears in the Droyne myths of many worlds as a savior, bringing the coyns to his people and teaching them the key elements of their culture. Most scholars see this as a religious interpretation of visits by the vanished Droyne spacefaring culture, although

the legends insist that Yaskoydray came to his people many times, refining their culture and correcting misunderstandings. These are generally held to be mythological exaggerations, as there is no other evidence of Droyne starfaring over a prolonged period.

The coyns are an enigma in many ways. For one, there are recorded instances of what seem like uncanny predictive powers. For another, six of the coyns contain pictorial representations of the major races: Humaniti, Droyne, Vargr, Aslan, K'kree, and Hivers. While the Ancients could have left traditions of three of these, the others did not exist as civilized sophonts at the time of the Ancients, and there was nothing to mark them as unusual species at the time the coyns were introduced. No reasonable explanation of this has ever been produced.
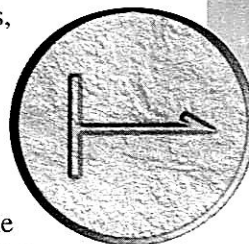
When Coyns Are Cast

Coyns are cast before each important event in Droyne society to help divine the correct course of action. Specifically, coyns are cast when a Droyne reaches maturity, to determine its caste and subcaste; every four standard years thereafter, to determine its fitness to continue in service to the community; prior to any journey of more than a day's duration; before any import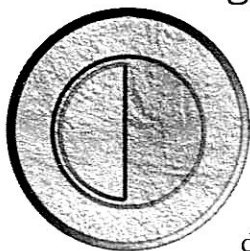ant project or endeavor; before a battle or other contest; before taking a new member into the *oytrip* or *kroyloss* (see pp. 77-78); and finally, on a personal basis, whenever the individual feels it necessary.

The casting ceremony is by tradition a very formal affair, but sometimes circumstances demand a fast and informal draw. This, too, is permitted.

Coyn Drawing

For the most verisimilitude, the replica coyns at the back of this book can be removed, then drawn from a cup or bag. Alternately, the following table can be used. It requires two dice of different colors (for example, one red, one white). Roll both dice, and the coyn at the intersection of the appropriate row and column is the one drawn. Reroll duplicate results; since actual coyns are drawn from a container and not replaced, duplicates are not possible.

Example: A PC Droyne draws a coyn, rolling 3 on the red die and 5 on the white die. The coyn drawn is **Heat**, a positive one.

Coyns marked in **bold** are positive; those in *italics* are negative; those in plain text are neutral – this will be explained below.

COYN TABLE

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
2	*Void*	Soil	Air	Gas	Water	**Fire**
3	*Darkness*	*Cold*	*Noise*	Signal	**Heat**	**Light**
4	Humaniti	Vargr	Aslan	**Droyne**	Hivers	K'kree
5	Genesis	**Aspiration**	*Sacrifice*	*Defeat*	*Death*	**Achievement**
6	*Beast*	Mercenary	Voyages	**Justice**	Chance	**Phoenix**

Certain coyns have special significance if drawn. *Achievement* has double the normal positive value, and *Phoenix* has triple. *Death* has twice the usual negative value, and *Defeat* three times.

Eskayloyt: The Lost Droyne Homeworld

The location of the Droyne homeworld is not known. Scholars have established a few facts, and parlayed those into a variety of wide-ranging and conflicting theories.

When Droyne and Chirper worlds are plotted on a map of charted space, they appear to grow less dense as one moves from a notional region in the Spinward Marches. The obvious conclusion is that the missing Droyne homeworld is somewhere in that volume. The Deneb Sector or the Trojan Reach have been proposed as alternatives, due to the frequency with which the race is found in them.

Casual observers call the lost planet Droynia; serious students refer to it as Eskayloyt, meaning "Lost Home," a name which occurs independently in the myths and legends of Andor, Auitawry, and Zeen, and which is generally accepted by scientists who study the Droyne.

The characteristics of Eskayloyt are difficult to determine with certainty, but the following notes are accepted as valid by most academics. Assuming the available data has been correctly interpreted, Droynia is (or was) a pleasant, Earthlike planet, slightly warmer than Terra.

Stellar Data

Analysis of Droyne vision and the lifeforms commonly found with them suggests that Eskayloyt orbited a main-sequence star somewhere in the F2 to F7 range.

World Data

Based on studies of the Droyne and the planets on which they have settled, Eskayloyt is thought to be a small world, probably 3,000 to 6,000 miles in diameter, with a standard or (more probably) dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, and at least 30% surface water. Such a world would match the weak gravity and high atmospheric pressure most conducive to Droyne flight.

Where is Eskayloyt?

No known world provides fossil evidence that it was Eskayloyt. Several theories propose to explain this.

Destruction. This theory states that Eskayloyt was destroyed in the Ancients' war 300,000 years ago, in which case it is probably an asteroid belt today. However, this could be expected to leave some fossil evidence, and to date none has been found.

Distance. It is possible that the Droyne evolved on a world thousands of parsecs away and then traveled to charted space. In this case, finding Eskayloyt is most likely impossible, although there are those who believe that the Zhodani Core Expeditions (p. T:AI22) have a lead on where it is . . .

DROYNE COYN CHART

SIGNAL NOISE HEAT COLD LIGHT

DARK WORKER WARRIOR DRONE

TECHNICIAN SPORT LEADER VOID SOIL

AIR GAS WATER FIRE

ASPIRATION ACHIEVEMENT JUSTICE PHOENIX BEAST

SACRIFICE DEFEAT GENESIS DEATH

MERCENARY VOYAGES CHANCE HUMANITI ASLAN

VARGR HIVERS DROYNE K'KREE
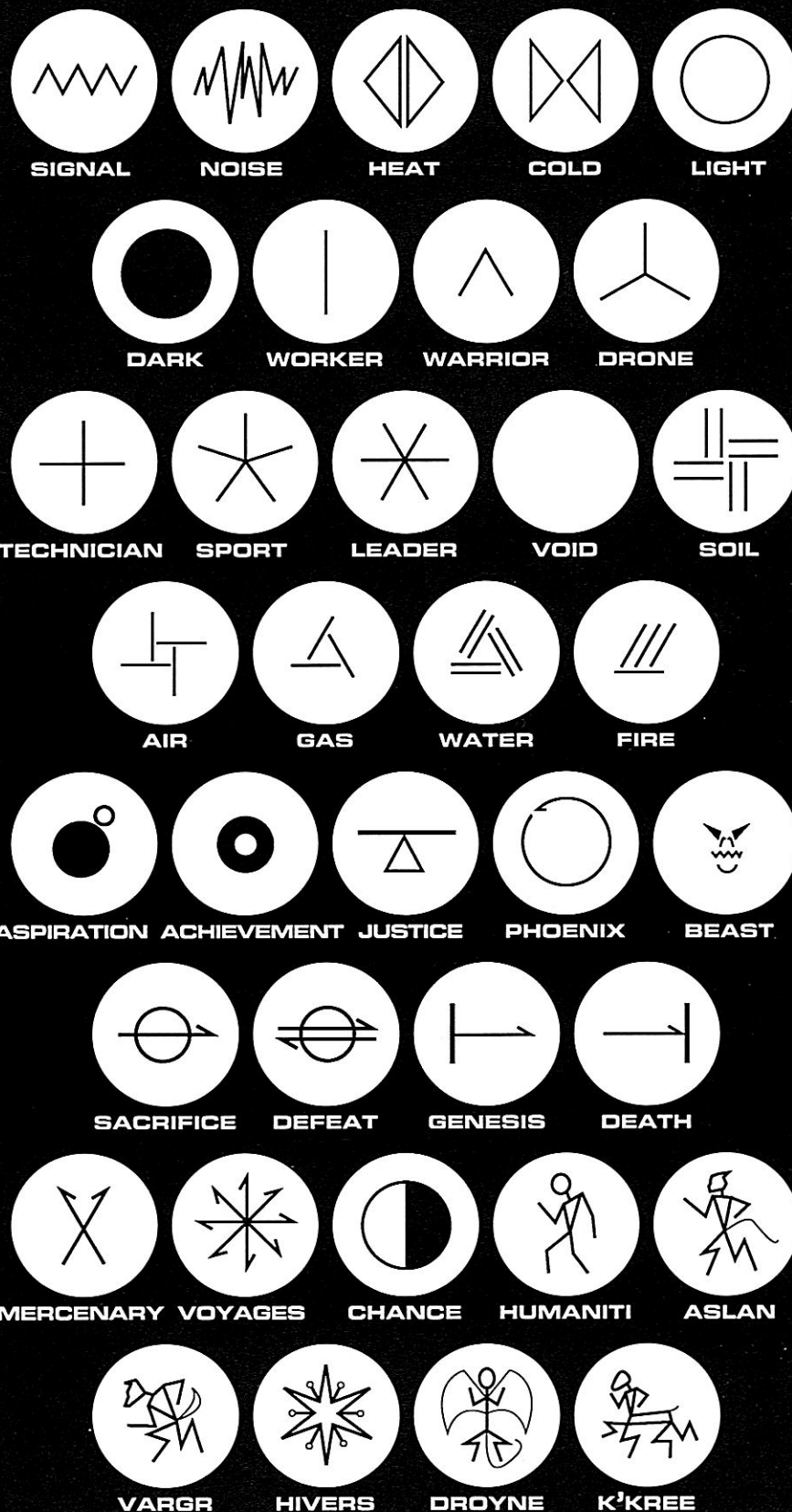
Determining Caste and Subcaste

Researchers were long baffled by the apparently random drawing of coyns, under the direction of a Leader and several Drones, which ends in the choice of caste for an adolescent. Within the last century, research has suggested that the coyns drawn are used as foci for concentration; the Leader and Drones use psionics to open the young Droyne's mind and awaken the appropriate genetic program latent within it. Some even theorize that the draw is influenced by one or more of the overseers, who select the coyns by clairvoyance or telekinesis.

Whatever the truth is, the rare outsider privileged to observe a casting ceremony sees coyns drawn at random from a container. As each coyn is drawn, the symbol on it is announced; the process continues until a coyn bearing a depiction of one of the Droyne castes is drawn, whereupon the juvenile is permanently assigned to that caste. The sooner the caste disk appears, the more prominent the individual will be in that caste. Coyns drawn prior to the caste disk modify its final meaning, and hence help determine the subcaste.

For example, a casting ceremony might result in the sequence *Heat, Light, Death, Voyages, Leader*. The Droyne is destined to be a Leader; the Drones may predict that his future will involve positive energies (*Heat, Light*), violence (*Death*), and transportation (*Voyages*). This might lead to a career as a warship's chief engineer, the manager of a dangerous power plant in a distant valley, or the driver of a crematory hearse.

Continuing in Service

After casting, the coyns are consulted periodically (every four standard years or so) in another ritual which determines whether or not an individual may continue to serve the community. This ceremony is believed to reveal the future – of an individual, a task, a battle, a voyage, and so on – and although frequently dismissed as random fortune-telling, can be disturbingly accurate. This has been explained as luck, coincidence, precognition, and several other things, but the truth remains unknown, even to the Droyne themselves.

As a game mechanic to simulate this for players, draw a coyn again using the above methods; a positive coyn changes the Droyne's subcaste but keeps him in service, a neutral one keeps him in service in the same caste, and a negative one forces the Droyne out of his *oytrip*, having been declared unnecessary or unfit to serve. (In the third case, *krinaytsyu* is the expected outcome, although Droyne who refuse this course may become Deathless and simply leave the *oytrip*.) While the Droyne themselves use this method, it is notable that young, fit Droyne rarely draw a negative coyn, while the aged and infirm often do so; some outsiders believe that this proves the mystical nature of the coyns, others that it is the result of a psionic election (by the community's Drones) or suicidal impulse by the drawer. The GM may choose to alter the normal drawing procedure to reflect these non-random factors.

If a change in subcaste is directed, draw a further coyn and consult the table below, cross-referencing the Droyne's caste with the value of the coyn (positive, negative, or neutral). Draw again if the old subcaste is indicated.

COYN SUBCASTE TABLE

Coyn	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
Positive	Building	Voyaging	Social	Dreaming	Finding	Leader (of)
Neutral	Laboring	Guard	Priestly	Artificer	Speaker	Priestly
Negative	Farming	Battling	Family	Fixing	Seeking	Military
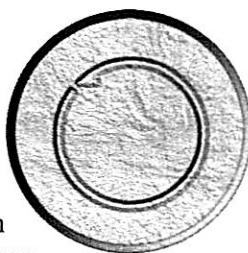
The Droyne at War

"When the war came, I had been living and working with the Droyne as part of an IISS contact team for nearly a year, and I'd developed – well, a certain view of them: slow, weak, stupid. I just couldn't see them as a threat. That was before Zhodani infiltrators persuaded the *oytrip* that its best interests lay with the Consulate.

"Then I found out I was wrong. Fighting the Droyne up close and personal is a nightmare.

"You only notice them when they want you to. That means that any Droyne you do see is a decoy. Fortunately, the average Droyne is not smart enough to run double or triple bluffs.

"Still, you only find out they're there when your buddy's head explodes from a laser hit. You can see from the ionization trail where that shot came from, but by then the Warrior that fired it is long gone – they know all about shoot and scoot, believe me.

"They didn't seem to have the same problem. In fact, they always seemed to know precisely where we were.

"After the team leader was killed, I ordered the team to pull out; we piled into a *Suleiman* that had come to deliver supplies and ran for it. Smartest move I ever made."

– Hershellar Meldol,
*The Quick and the Dead:
A Scout at War*

"There was a mission where we had to transmit an attack plan in clear, because one team's communicator was busted and lost its encryption. We knew the Sword Worlders would be listening.

"Luckily, we had an Oynprith speaker in that team, and another at base camp. So we transmitted in the clear, in *Oynprith*.

"It worked like a dream. They had both learned Oynprith from IISS self-study tapes while they were on Xboat duty, so *they* understood each other perfectly.

"Mind you, they were talking absolute garbage. Those tapes are useless; the pronunciation's all shot away, the mutations are wrong, and one of the genders is missing. No *real* Droyne would have understood a word."

– Hershellar Meldol,
*The Quick and the Dead:
A Scout at War*

Ark
Ayn
Ayptaykutwekmiar
Aysoprayssu
Ayssdinohuipdarv
Driumiyu
Dyasstos
Dyuho
Ebo
Erdiusstsalmkaste
Esssux
Etwusesfith
Hoypustyu
Ie
Itresbrolmlob
Matyarm
Moyasmevsan
Murfultfetrutha
Nayundadkrayste
Nuemisre
Pepirs
Puburtheptyassya
Pudusyodoyfoyu
Ssudyu
Twoersratsbastlifpo
U
Ultrobtilmferknertses
Usped
Uv
Viktwurdtroypat
Vilkressutur
Yaltixlusayt
Yopsieskbyuldoyist
Yudilsbrorv

Prediction and Hiring-On

Almost nothing in Droyne culture is done without consulting the coyns to foretell the outcome. In game terms, Droyne receive real benefits or penalties because of these predictions; the GM may rule that these are simply the expectations set in the Droyne mind by the prediction, or that the Droyne really can foretell the future.

No Droyne leader or expedition head would set out without consulting the coyns. If a non-Droyne hires Droyne NPCs for a voyage or endeavor, and fails to cast the coyns, he must take an immediate reaction roll with a -5 penalty. (Droyne PCs may of course select their reactions, but should be reminded that this is not the right way to do things *at all*.)

There are two ways in which predictions can be handled. To illustrate these, we'll assume that a Droyne *kroyloss* (see pp. 77-78) is about to set out on a trading expedition to a Human outpost in a nearby star system – the same approach is used for any individual Droyne or group of Droyne. The GM rules that coyns must be drawn until the Humaniti coyn appears. In a solemn (and hopefully role-played!) ceremony, the *kroyloss* Drones select coyns.

The GM simply adds up all the coyns, counting each positive coyn as +1 (except *Achievement*, which counts as +2, or *Phoenix*, at +3), each negative coyn as -1 (except *Death*, -2, and *Defeat*, -3), and each neutral coyn as 0.

> *Example: The sequence which emerges is **Noise** (-1), **K'kree** (0), **Worker** (0), **Technician** (0), **Vargr** (0), **Justice** (+1), **Voyages** (0), **Light** (+1), and **Humaniti** (0). The **kroyloss** has a +1 modifier.*

The modifiers provide the casters with a "one-shot" version of the Luck advantage (allocated by the players) or the Jinxed disadvantage (allocated by the GM), which may be used during a single game session while playing out the event for which the prediction was made. If the prediction is for an individual Droyne, the Luck or Jinx applies to him; if the fortune of a group is foretold, it applies to one member of the group – not necessarily the same one in each session of play.

A modifier of +2, +3, etc. may be taken as any combination of additional "shots," or as higher levels of luck – Extraordinary Luck counts as +2, Ridiculous Luck as +3. In the above example, the *kroyloss* may claim that one of its members has the Luck advantage for one gaming session only. The players may select which Droyne has the advantage, and in which gaming session, but must specify this at the start of play; they may not decide arbitrarily when one of them needs to make a crucial success roll. If the *kroyloss* had achieved a +3 modifier, they could give one of the Droyne Luck in each of three sessions; one Droyne Ridiculous Luck for one session; one Droyne Extraordinary Luck in one session, and another Luck in a later one; and so on.

Conversely, should the overall modifier be negative, the GM secretly nominates a Droyne to be Jinxed. An overall -1 result means one Droyne has one level of Jinxed for one session of play; a -3 may mean one level of Jinxed for three evenings, or one scene in an adventure where a hapless PC has three levels of Jinxed.

True Fortune-Telling

Alternatively, the GM may rule that Droyne truly have second sight, and focus this via the casting. In this case, events and encounters along the way should be set up to mimic the sequence of coyns drawn. In the example above, the GM might take each coyn as a scene in the adventure, in effect using them to script it; the coyns may be combined for dramatic effect. For instance, the first part of the adventure might involve the noise of a K'kree attack on the *kroyloss'* current location; the Droyne must escape it or be slain as recidivist meat-eaters. During their

flight, a lowly worker (probably an NPC) is killed, but the group's Technician rescues a Vargr prisoner from the invaders, giving him justice. The Vargr is a friend of the Human factor the Droyne plan to trade with, and so accompanies them on their voyage, incidentally fixing a broken internal light (set up by the referee as a minor problem early in the adventure) which none of the Droyne have been able to repair. Finally, they arrive at the outpost and make their deals.

This adventure seed from the coyns took little more time to invent than drawing the coyns did. Fleshed out with a couple of NPCs and maps, it would take the players through one or two evenings of gaming.

Appeals

Appeals are the mechanism by which non-Leaders, or subordinate Leaders, may exercise initiative, bringing new facts or suggestions to a superior's notice when he may have overlooked them in reaching a decision. It thus allows a Leader to change his mind without losing face. It is most commonly used between Leaders and Leaders of Leaders, as these are the Droyne most accustomed to making decisions, but is also available to other castes; Sports and Drones make notably more use of it than other non-Leaders.

Note that it is not usually an attempt to usurp the Leader's power, as it might be in Human or Vargr cultures, although this sometimes happens between Leaders; petitioners remain loyal to the *oytrip*, and act in what they consider to be its best interests.

In game terms, a Droyne may consult the coyns to appeal against a superior's decision, or to suggest a course of action to him. A suitable "target coyn" is chosen, and coyns are drawn until it appears. Their values are summed to obtain a reaction modifier, which is applied to a reaction roll made by the Leader. A reaction of Good or better indicates that the Leader changes his mind; lower results mean he does not, and on a critical failure the insubordinate petitioner is expected to undergo *krinaytsyu* at once for questioning his Leader's wisdom.

Oynprith Glossary

Common Oynprith terms the players may encounter are listed below, with their idiomatic translations. Literal translations are also provided where these give an insight into Droyne thought.

Aydih: A Warrior Droyne.

Aydin: A Droyne Worker.

Aydirsoth: A member of the Drone caste.

Aykrusk: Droyne Leader.

Dreskay: An extended family of three to 18 *tyafelmin.*

Droynia: A casual term for the lost Droyne homeworld.

Esivoy: Literally, "schism" – the process by which a *dreskay* divides into two or more daughter *dreskayin.*

Eskayloyt: The original Droyne homeworld, no longer known to science. Literally, "Lost Home."

Esorde: Generic term for a Droyne caste.

Fikrudrarm: ("Black knowledge.") A collective term for Thief/Spy skills, which are rarely necessary for Droyne.

Iskyar: Droyne ceremony which assigns caste to adolescents – a rite of passage into adulthood.

Iyuksim: Literally, "tendril." An exploratory party.

Koynis: A medallion used in the *iskyar* casting ceremony and in other Droyne rituals. Commonly known in the Imperium as a "coyn," since it resembles the gold pieces sometimes used as currency by low-tech societies.

Krinaytsyu: Voluntary death. A Droyne which feels it has become a burden to its *oytrip* kills itself by this process.

Kroyloss: Fraternity – a voluntary prefamily or semifamily.

-in: Suffix used to denote a plural. For example, one *kroyloss,* many *kroylossin.*

Oynprith: The principal Droyne language, used in mystic rituals, and also for trade, as every *oytrip* has someone who speaks it.

Oytrip: A community of *dreskayin,* all found in the same profession or geographic region.

Praytsirv: a Droyne Sport.

Sssaldrarm: ("Space skills.") A collective term for skills such as Vacc Suit, Piloting, and so on which are associated with space travel. These skills are rarely used by the Droyne.

Tyafelm: Family of six Droyne, one from each caste.

Yaskoydray: Literally, "Grandfather." A godlike figure common in the myths of many Droyne worlds, comparable to Prometheus in Human legends.
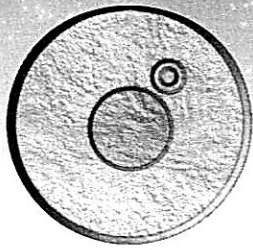
Droyne Merchant Companies

Since the Droyne have no established empire, they have no far-reaching megacorporations. Droyne trading organizations are small – free traders, fledgling merchant lines limited to a subsector (or even a few worlds within a subsector), and small "interface" lines trading across the boundaries between Droyne states (usually individual worlds) and the empires of other races. For example:

Dhoylezhokka is the most wide-ranging of Droyne merchant companies, based on Mulyosh (1923 Ilelish). The company flourished during the last two millennia of the First Imperium, and although it ceased spaceborne operations during the Long Night, it remained in existence as a planet-bound merchant house until 320, when it again expanded into interstellar trade.

The company provides transport between Droyne worlds throughout the Imperium, and undertakes incidental, speculative trade on these runs, specializing in goods of particular interest to Droyne such as nuts and insects.

Thyo Supud is a Droyne *kroyloss* from Andor (Spinward Marches 0236), which operates a single *Beowulf*-class free trader (also called the *Thyo Supud*) along the Spinward Main. For tax reasons, it operates under a flag of convenience and is registered out of Binges (Spinward Marches 1635).

Piloting Prerequisites and the Droyne

The low DX and IQ of the average Droyne make starship piloting skills very expensive for them, since *GURPS* recommends that in most campaigns Free Fall and Vacc Suit should be prerequisites for a Piloting skill specializing in spacecraft.

The GM may therefore wish to relax this ruling, allowing Piloting to be bought without knowing Vacc Suit-12 or Free Fall-12. This is in keeping with classic *Traveller*, where the three skills were separate and unconnected.

The GM may limit this to Droyne only, or may make it a general ruling for all *GURPS Traveller* pilots.

If the Leader in question is a PC, he may select his reaction; when dealing with NPC Leaders, any other normal reaction modifiers also apply.

Morale

Prior to an expected battle, coyns are drawn to predict the outcome. If the Droyne know there's a fight in the offing, and their Leaders don't undergo this ritual, their morale suffers – in a potential combat situation or morale check (p. B204) this inflicts an additional -5 modifier. Note that no such penalty accrues in the case of ambushes or meeting engagements, where the Droyne have no advance warning of combat.

If there is time for the coyns to be drawn, they are, until either Warrior or Mercenary appears. All coyns drawn up to that point are combined to give a single morale modifier, which applies to any morale reaction rolls taken during the fight.

In longer conflicts, a new ceremony must be performed roughly every 90 minutes, provided that tactical circumstances permit this. (Only in a silly campaign will the Droyne cease fighting to conduct this ritual, and even then the GM should apply some equally silly reason why their opponents cannot press the advantage – a Mercenaries Guild work rule, perhaps.)

DROYNE AND OTHERS' PHILOSOPHIES

The Droyne approach to other philosophies is "live and let live." They do not normally adopt the ways of others, nor do they have any missionary bent. Droyne ways are for Droyne; other species have their own ways, and are welcome to follow them, so long as the Droyne community is not harmed.
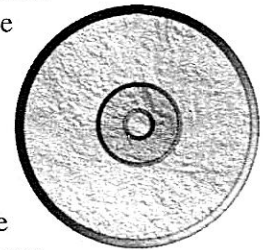
SOCIETY

The nature of Droyne society stems from the caste system, which dictates much of the interaction between groups, and also influences government, warfare, and a variety of other matters.

SOCIAL GROUPS

As with most races which have families, the family structure determines many details of character and background. Among the Droyne, there are two basic types of families: the *tyafelm* and the *dreskay*. Families then group together to form an *oytrip*, or community.

Tyafelm: The Nuclear Family

The basic Droyne family is the *tyafelm*, a group of at least six Droyne, with at least one from each caste. This unit is essential to reproduction, as the presence of the various caste members (and their combined pheromones) permits the Drones to lay fertile eggs. A *tyafelm* may be balanced, with equal numbers of each caste included, or specialized, with a predominance of one specific caste – for example, a military *tyafelm* might have more Warriors than members of any other caste.

Each *tyafelm* chooses as its emblem one of the 36 standard coyn symbols, which is used by other neighboring families to refer to it.

Dreskay: The Extended Family

The extended family is a group of 3-18 *tyafelmin*. The association of many nuclear families provides a larger gene pool, thus reducing the chance of genetic damage through inbreeding, and allows the offspring from component families

to form new *tyafelmin*. The *dreskay* is mostly a family, but it is also partly a school and partly a group of friends; it is probably the closest of current Droyne organizations to their precivilized social units.

Occasionally, a *dreskay* will split into two or more smaller *dreskayin*, a process known to the Droyne as *esivoy* (literally, "schism"). This occurs when local economic pressure, famine, drought, or the excessive size of the original *dreskay* dictate. The daughter *dreskayin* divide the acquired assets between them, and go their separate ways; they may or may not stay in touch.

As families grow in size, they may also send out *iyuksimin* (literally, "tendrils") to explore, to trade, or simply to travel. These small groups normally include one member of each caste, and are used to give the young experience of fending for themselves, to provide revenue for the parent *dreskay*, or simply to relieve the family of the need to care for surplus members.

Oytrip: The Community

The *oytrip* is a collection of *dreskayin*, usually focused on a specific geographical region. It is a commune, where all share their resources for the common good, with each caste contributing its abilities to the community's needs. In some ways, the Droyne *oytrip* can be thought of as a single organism; although individual Droyne are not possessive or aggressive, the *oytrip* as a whole is both.

Most *oytripin* are simple rural communities, devoted to agriculture, hunting and gathering, or similar lifestyles. On more sophisticated Droyne worlds, or where their race is integrated with Humans or others, an *oytrip* may specialize in manufacturing, trade, or a military role.

Within the *oytrip*, social relations are smooth and well-regulated. Natural Leaders emerge to cope with problems as they arise, and enjoy the unquestioning support of other castes; they are no more capable of misusing this power than they are of destroying their followers. The community is governed by a Leader of Leaders, and all its *dreskayin* answer to him. The group's Drones form an advisory council, and are also responsible for casting adolescent Droyne.

Kroyloss: The Fraternity

The *kroyloss*, or fraternity, fills the need for the young to make their own way in the world without losing the companionship of other Droyne. The primary difference between a family and a fraternity is that families are committed to reproduction, and fraternities are not.

When a young Droyne reaches maturity, it leaves its *tyafelm* to join or form another, usually within the same *dreskay*, and almost always within the same *oytrip*. Finding another suitable family can be difficult; many youths are placed via existing agreements between families, but others are driven by conflicting motives. They are curious, inquisitive, and anxious to explore and learn about the universe; at the same time, they feel incomplete when separated from other Droyne. The answer to this dilemma is the *kroyloss*, a voluntary association of Droyne which provides mutual support and companionship without requiring the same level of commitment that a proper family does.

After a period of wandering or mutual endeavor, a fraternity may break up, with its members leaving to join families; more often, it may itself become a family as its members mature. It is thus a sort of proto-family.

As they have few of the responsibilities of families, *kroylossin* are much more capable of wandering in search of adventure, building a business, or forming a mercenary band. Although one caste may dominate a fraternity, there is always at least one member of each caste present when possible.
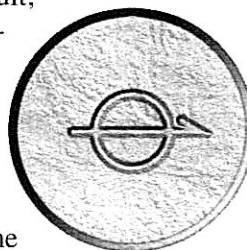
Utopia

Sometimes a few Humans, or members of other species, become enamored of the Droyne social system and seek to emulate it; this most commonly happens with members of a Psionic Institute, and may possibly have been one of the factors leading to the Psionic Suppressions.

A few such groups have attempted to replicate the Droyne system over the years. They produce some method of assigning members to castes, where their responsibilities are carefully laid out. Children are either assigned, or allowed to choose, a caste when they come of age. Some attempts have been made to duplicate the Droyne casting ritual, but this generally results in random woes.

One problem is the gender distribution; all females among the Droyne are Drones, but only 17% of Droyne are female, whereas the ratios of sexes in other races are quite different, and unsuitable.

These attempts usually founder on the fact that those involved are unable to completely eliminate Human traits such as personal initiative, individuality, greed, jealousy, and so on. Those communities which do work usually disintegrate within a generation – most offspring leave the community for a society that fits with Human nature better. The sole exception is the "New Humaniti" project in the Trojan Reaches, which currently has 200 members and is in its third generation. By casting children at 5 years old, they have been able to apply programs of psychological conditioning (critics might say brainwashing) to get the children to accept the caste they will assume at age 12.

The Droyne themselves have never shown interest in the success or failure of these attempts, beyond the mildest of curiosities, even if the group is placed near to a Droyne community. The Zhodani, however, are reputed to have found such experiments *very* interesting indeed . . .

The smallest proper *kroyloss* is six Droyne, one from each caste; the largest is several dozen, although a fraternity with more than 20 members is rare.

A Droyne who participates in forming a *kroyloss* is expected to do so within one year of being casted. It is acceptable to remain with the association for one's entire life, although for most, the fraternity is a passing phase, which leads naturally into family responsibilities.

A wandering *kroyloss* is a natural party of PCs and NPCs in an all-Droyne campaign. The Droyne are young, unhampered by the need to look after children, and relatively unbound by the standards of their society.

Yatroy: The Mandate

This is a group of Droyne, primarily social Drones and speaker Sports, charged with the coordination of cooperative efforts between different *oytripin*. Originally *yatroyin* arose as groups of negotiators from different *oytripin* that were formed when these needed to cooperate on projects too large for individual *oytripin*, such as large hunts or joint fights against a third party. They achieved much greater prominence in periods of industrialization, when projects such as railroads became too large and complex for an individual *oytrip* to manage successfully. In low-tech cultures, *yatroyin* are temporary institutions set up to meet problems as they arise and disbanded once the goal is achieved. More advanced Droyne societies have *yatroyin* dating back hundreds (or even thousands) of years, maintaining the delicate balance between specialized *oytripin* and their highly territorial leaders.

If a *yatroy* simply co-ordinates, it is made up mostly of speaker Sports. If it has administrative functions, its staff is expanded with social Drones from the member *oytripin* If it needs to take a leadership position, the members co-ordinate with the various *oytripin* involved to select a Leader of Leaders to fill that role.

The first recorded permanent *yatroy* was the Canal Authority on Andor. It was formed around -44,000 to dig a canal connecting the cities on the Twoysk Plain with the cities of the Aylkoy River System. When the canal was finished, it was decided to expand the system, so the *yatroy* kept on functioning. At the same time, it began to mediate in disputes about the use of the canal in cases where individual *oytripin* demanded priority, and to coordinate the maintenance of the canal. Other permanent *yatroyin* include Space Control, which runs the ships that trade with Candory; the Mining Initiative, which mines metals from a barren island in the North Polar Ocean; and the Aylkoy Energy Distribution, which administers a dam built on the Upper Aylkoy. Similar arrangements have arisen on other Droyne worlds over the years.

CUSTOMS

Most of the customs common to Droyne everywhere are tightly bound to their rituals (see *Mysticism*, pp. 70-76). There are a few others worthy of note.
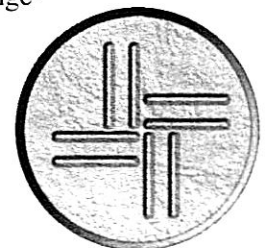
Craftsmanship

While many Droyne communities have the technology for mass production, and Leaders intelligent enough to appreciate its benefits, most continue to build even complex items by hand, because the cost/benefit equations are different for Droyne.

One factor is that full employment is a crucial need for Droyne society. While a Droyne worker is second to none in his ability to operate a boring production line efficiently, one who becomes unemployed, or unemployable, quickly feels he has no value to his *oytrip* and wills himself to die. This is unacceptable to his

Leader for two reasons; first, the Leader's purpose is to ensure the continued survival and prosperity of all his followers, however humble; and second, a *tyafelm* needs all three sexes before reproduction can occur, so the *oytrip* is wise to preserve members of all castes in suitable proportions – none are easily expendable.

Another factor is that the Droyne are willing to work for their Leaders at any task, however humble. Wage costs are irrelevant, as are other expenses a Human employer would incur. The Droyne (especially those of the lowest castes) seek only sustenance, and the knowledge that what they do will benefit the *oytrip*. This makes it easier for a Droyne Leader to marshal resources than for most species; a K'kree steppelord has similar control over his followers, but has to work harder to keep them in line.

The upshot is that Droyne build things in the way that suits them best, not necessarily the way which would be fastest or generate the most profit. If only one air/raft is needed, the Leader of the *dreskay* may well ask his Technicians to build one by hand. If 1,000 are needed quickly, perhaps as trade goods, the Technicians will build an air/raft factory, instead.

Ritual Warfare

Wars are still sometimes fought between *oytripin*. Warfare is the province of the Warrior caste, although the entire *oytrip* contributes to success in war as it does in other spheres. In Droyne warfare, Warriors do the actual fighting; they are not clerks or medics (Drones do those jobs); they are not sappers or trench-diggers (Workers fill those slots); they are not expected to build, repair, or maintain heavy equipment (Technicians do that). Sports act as spies, scouts, and couriers. Leaders make the strategic plans and decisions. As in all other aspects of life, the *oytrip* at war is a well-oiled machine, running smoothly because each individual has a role, and no one crosses over into that of his comrade.

Ritual war always has specific goals – the capture of necessary materials (perhaps food or weapons), or control of strategically important territory or transportation routes. A Warrior killed in a ritual war is just as dead as one slain by other means, so the Leader must constantly balance the benefit the *oytrip* will gain by achieving his goal against the damage it suffers by losing a cadre of Warriors.

Big Wings, Little Wings

Various incarnations of *Traveller* have depicted the Droyne as having wingspans ranging from very small to over 10'. This work assumes a wingspan of roughly 150% of the Droyne's own height – i.e., between 4'10" and 10'.

In fact, some populations of Droyne have smaller or larger wings, (see p. 63). Some have even lost the power of flight (usually populations long isolated on high-gravity worlds), though they retain vestigial wings. Most, however, retain a limited ability to fly (see sidebar, p. 90) and the racial template (see p. 93) reflects this.

Common Tech Levels

The stereotypical Droyne of Imperial holovision has an extreme TL: they are either a primitive society with TL5 or less, living on an IISS reservation, or a mysterious and isolated TL13 culture. In practice, the majority of all-Droyne worlds are at TL8-10, similar to Imperial worlds.

They may well *appear* more primitive, as the simple, rural lifestyle of the Droyne requires less technology, and they are content to live without it in everyday life. This does not necessarily mean that the Leader (and his advisors and guards) don't have access to higher-tech items, or that they fail to understand them.

Real Warfare

The difference between ritual war and real war for the Droyne is that in ritual warfare, only the Warrior caste are legitimate targets. Real warfare is total war, and considerations such as crippling the enemy by destroying all his Technicians enter into the Leader's plans. Real war is not often seen between *oytripin*, but is the default for conflicts where Droyne face other species.

GOVERNMENT

Droyne government is always determined by caste and external influences.

The Droyne themselves have their own hierarchy: the Leader of Leaders, the Leaders, and the other Droyne. Depending on the size of the community, there may be several levels of Leaders. Like Vargr states, the larger Droyne communities tend to fragment, as Leaders of individual *oytripin* strive to increase their own power, although this is normally for the benefit of their subordinates rather than for personal reasons.

If a Droyne world has a planetary government, this is simply a larger hierarchy, with a more powerful Leader of Leaders at the top level. If there are multiple societies, each is a Droyne hierarchy, albeit smaller.

Often, the Droyne share their world with other species; they retain their hierarchies, although the planetary government may be another government type to which the Droyne hierarchy is subordinate.

Where the Droyne control a world but other races also live on it, the Droyne treat them as if they, too, had a hierarchy of Leaders. They have trouble understanding that Leaders of other races cannot command the same unflinching obedience that Droyne rulers enjoy; a Vargr enclave's apparent Leader is held responsible for the actions of its most impulsive member, because the Droyne assume that member is acting on orders from his Leader.

DOMESTIC POLICY: A PLACE FOR EVERYONE, AND EVERYONE IN HIS PLACE

The Droyne caste system ensures that everyone has a place, not least because the casting ceremony (see p. 73) may be receiving major input on which caste the juvenile would best serve, and which castes the *oytrip* needs that year. This guaranteed "place" may mean death, though! If one year the crops are bad, the old must commit *krinaytsyu* (see p. 70) to make way for the new.

The need for each Droyne to have a role in his *dreskay*, and to be clear on both what that role is and how it benefits his fellows, is a critical factor in how the *dreskay* is ruled.

FOREIGN POLICY: LIVE AND LET LIVE

The Droyne are relaxed about sharing their space with other races – they care little for territory beyond ensuring that the needs of their *tyafelm* and *oytrip* are met. So long as they and their fellows are left in peace, all is well. If another *oytrip* or race encroaches on land or resources they need, a *praytsirv* or two will be sent to negotiate; if that fails, war results. The same occurs if the *oytrip* needs more land, more ore, or whatever – if they can acquire it by peaceful means, they will do so, but they *will* acquire it. Fortunately, the more common approach is to live within their means, using casting rituals and *krinaytsyu* to regulate their numbers.

Droyne societies integrate well into the legal and societal structures of other races. The key to success is flexibility in what constitutes an individual. Ideally, an *oytrip* as a whole gains the status of "individual" in the local social/legal system, much as corporations are treated as an individual for legal purposes in many Human societies. This is only a problem when it is used as an excuse to allow, for example, 1 million Humans to dictate the policy of a planet with 6 million Droyne by giving each *oytrip* just one vote.

Planets that insist that rights be held by individual members are usually not a problem, either. An *oytrip* can simply have each individual exercise their rights on the *oytrip's* behalf. A Worker given a vote will simply vote as directed by his Leader. This works well because, unlike with Humaniti, the obedience of the members to the group can be depended on, and each individual can depend on the Leader working in his best interests (which is to say, the best interests of the *oytrip*). It can be a bit inefficient, because the Leader has to communicate effectively to each member what they are to do, but the only real problem is societies where governments insist on making an individual exercise his rights based on the government's standards of what is in the individual's best interests. This only occurs on worlds where the local government is paternalistic and has a strong ideology about what is right for an individual.
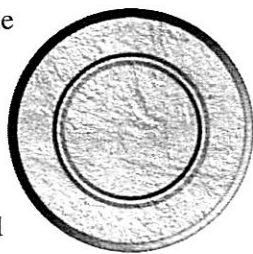
LAWS, CRIME, AND PUNISHMENT

Crime is almost unknown among the Droyne; laws and law enforcement are equally marginalized. Members of an *oytrip* are assumed to be acting in its best interests, whatever they may be doing; and this assumption is almost always valid.

Outsiders are suspect, however, for they do not have the *oytrip's* interests at heart. If Droyne from other *oytripin*, they will naturally be seeking advantage for their own community, which is likely to lead to actions unfavorable to this one; non-Droyne are assumed to have similar motives.

Why Don't the Droyne Make Progress?

Although the Droyne as a race are not motivated to advance technologically, there is another factor at work. They are psionically talented, and use their powers to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next. Every community has one or more Droyne who act as storehouses for the accumulated knowledge of the race. This is a heavy burden, and while these individuals are undoubtedly wise, they are also sometimes mentally unstable.

This persistence of knowledge through generations has led to such extreme cultural stability as to have almost eliminated change. Exposure to new races and their ideas leads some Droyne to break with tradition and look to the future, but this is resisted by most of the race.

Ship Crews

Small scout ships can be operated by one Droyne, almost always a Sport; other ships are crewed by a minimum of six Droyne, usually a single *tyalfelm* or *kroyloss*. The formation of new trading families and fraternities is often influenced by whether or not potential members can handle the necessary crew positions.

The ship's captain is usually a Leader, as is the navigator; on smaller ships the two roles are combined, with a Sport pilot as first mate. Mates, pilots, and assistant navigators may be Leaders or Sports, while deckhands and freight handlers are Workers, although the cargomaster (if the ship has one) may well be a Drone.

Engineering duties are carried out by Technicians with Worker drivehands.

The chief purser, if present, is most likely a Drone, with assistant pursers and stewards being Drones or Workers.

The ship's doctor, if it has one, is normally a Drone. If assistant medics are needed, these may be Drones, Sports, or Warriors – however, Warrior medics tend to know only enough emergency trauma aid to stabilize the patient until a Drone physician can be reached.

Gunners, security personnel, and ship's troops are Warriors.

T he tables use two ordinary dice to generate Droyne words or names. It is suggested that the dice be red and white, but any other colors will do. GMs may prefer to program a computer to generate a large number of Oynprith words quickly, and allocate meanings as they are taken from the list; those in a hurry for names can pick one from the sidebar on p. 74.

Words are generated in three steps: determine length, determine syllable types, and determine syllable components.

Word Length: Words may be almost any length, although more than six syllables is rare. Roll one die for the number of syllables; to speed generation, the GM may opt to treat any roll of 3 or more as denoting a three-syllable word. Or, the GM or player may simply specify word length.

Syllable Type: For each syllable in a word, generate the type of syllable. The *Basic* table is used for initial syllables, and those occurring after a type CV or V syllable; the *Alternate* table is used for syllables which occur after a type VC or CVC syllable.

Syllable Components: The component consonants (C) and vowels (V) for each syllable are now determined from the appropriate tables. Inspect the syllable type to determine the correct column (initial consonant, vowel, or final consonant). Roll one die to determine which table in the column is used, then two dice to determine the specific vowel or consonant used.

Word Generation Example: The GM needs to name a Droyne that the PCs have met. Rolling one die for the number of syllables, he finds the name has two syllables. He rolls 6 and 4 on the Basic table, so the first syllable type is CVC. This dictates the Alternate table for the second syllable, and rolling 3 and 4 yields a VC for the second syllable type.

The GM determines each component for the first syllable (CVC). Rolling a die for the initial syllable table (4) and two dice for the specific initial consonant (1, 5) gives p. Rolling a 2, followed by a 6 and a 3, selects e from vowel table 2. Rolling a 3, followed by a 2 and a 5, selects p from final consonant table 3. The first syllable is thus pep.

Following the same process for the second syllable (VC), the GM rolls a 3, then a 6 and a 5, yielding I from the third vowel table. Then a 4, followed by 3 and 1, produces rs from the fourth final consonant table.

The new name is thus Pepirs.

So long as an outsider is doing nothing which might disadvantage the *oytrip*, he is left alone, although he will be under constant surveillance by local members of the Warrior caste. At the slightest hint of hostile intent, the Warriors will act to ensure the safety of their *oytrip;* this can mean anything from gentle urging to move along to a preemptive strike with a Droyne-portable fusion gun, depending on circumstances.

THE DROYNE IN CHARTED SPACE

After the Vilani first achieved starflight in -9325 Imperial, they gradually established an interstellar empire over much of the area now occupied by the Third Imperium. They encountered many alien races, including the Droyne, but crucially they never entered the Spinward Marches, and so never found groups of Droyne worlds close to each other. With so many new races to study and the differing physical appearances (and mental levels) of Droyne and Chirper populations, the Vilani failed to realize that the various Droyne were a single race, rather than unique races. Even if they had made the connection, they were already trying (and failing) to explain why they had met 40 or more independent Human races.

Thus, the Droyne remained isolated and obscure. When Terra conquered the Vilani and established the Rule of Man, the Solomani had enough problems trying to govern their new empire, without worrying about individual minor races.

The Rule of Man collapsed in -1776 Imperial, and the Long Night did not end until the rise of the Sylean Federation, later the Third Imperium. This new state entered the Spinward Marches in 300 Imperial, and by the mid-700s controlled much of the sector. At this point, the brace of Droyne worlds in the Five Sisters subsector, and the populations of Chirpers nearby, made it impossible to continue believing that the instances of Droyne recorded so far were separate races.

Worse was to come: Some of these Droyne had jump drive, and had had it for centuries. As cross-checking against other worlds progressed, the date for their acquisition of this technology was pushed further back, until it became clear that they could not have obtained it by theft from, or trade with, any of the current major races. The fact that the Aslan, the Vargr, and the Zhodani also had Droyne worlds, some of whom also possessed jump drives, pushed the date back still further.

ASTROGRAPHY

Droyne worlds are scattered throughout charted space. This makes co-operation between them difficult, and tends to place the Droyne at the mercy of the nearest interstellar power (but see *Why Haven't the Droyne Been Wiped Out?* on p. 79.)

Some scientists theorize that given the current number of known Droyne or Chirper worlds, and the rate at which they seem to have died out (or been killed off) over the last few tens of millennia, there may at one time have been hundreds, possibly thousands, of Droyne worlds, throughout and beyond the current range of the starfaring races.

OTHER RACES, OTHER PLACES

The history of interaction between Droyne and others is not always a happy one. On many worlds, including Zhdant and Esperanza in the New Islands subsector, Humans or others wiped out the local Droyne; this was sometimes a deliberate policy, sometimes a regrettable accident, and sometimes due to indifference.

Relationships with Other Races

Aslan dealings with Droyne are driven by the interests of the clans concerned, and (as with everything in the Hierate) vary widely. Droyne worlds with high TLs, especially TL12-13, are an important resource and jealously guarded; they are usually under the protection of a powerful clan, trading land and technology for protection. Some chose this course willingly, and some had it thrust upon them at dewclaw-point. Those less advanced are either ignored, or kept isolated from Aslan society; it is rare indeed for a Droyne community to cleave to *Fteir*, the Aslan code of honor, and so gain total acceptance in the clan.

K'kree space has no Droyne worlds, which is perhaps fortunate as advanced societies of meat-eating Droyne would be a serious threat to K'kree superiority and culture. No, there are no Droyne worlds in the Two Thousand Worlds. *Not any more . . .*

The various Solomani and Vilani Imperia have historically treated the Droyne unevenly, perhaps because through most of Imperial history they were not recognized as a single race, but regarded as many different minor races. Some Droyne worlds in the Third Imperium are accepted as part of the interstellar community; others are interdicted by the Navy or the Scout Service for various reasons, and thus off-limits to trade and common travelers.

The Solomani Confederation is currently tolerant of low-tech Droyne populations, which are not perceived as a threat to its supremacy. High-tech Droyne worlds are isolated or interdicted in case they destabilize the current status quo – their supposed technological capabilities together with the difficulty of inserting agents into Droyne society makes SolSec suspicious. The fact that the Droyne appear not to mind being interdicted merely fuels Solomani paranoia.

Vargr relations with Droyne are even more variable than Aslan ones. Some Vargr groups ally with the Droyne; some raid them; some persecute them. Even more confusingly, their approach changes according to which leader has the most charisma at the moment.

The Zhodani have a close relationship with the Droyne, regarding them as a valuable resource for their psionic talents, and using them as instructors. Early Zhodani contacts with the Droyne on Zhdant and its moon (p. T:AI15) resulted in the accidental release of a plague which killed two-thirds of the Humans on the planet, and *all* of the Chirpers and Droyne. The Zhodani have a lingering racial guilt for this, and were overjoyed to find Droyne elsewhere – a chance to make up for earlier mistakes and failures. Droyne worlds in the Consulate are isolated, but well-treated.

Humans (and Others) on Droyne Worlds

So long as they do not threaten the *oytrip*, members of other species are tolerated on most Droyne worlds. It is rare for non-Droyne to accept the rigors and limitations of the caste system, and even rarer for a Droyne *tyafelm* to incorporate them – they lack the pheromones necessary to partake in reproduction, and so are always additions whose "support costs" may outweigh their benefits. Furthermore, they are well known to be uppity types who do not take orders well, and have an unhealthy interest in progress.

It is, however, fairly common for enclaves of merchants or academics to live near the Droyne, studying or trading with them.

Oynprith Word Generation Tables

[Continued]

Basic

Red Die	White Die					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	V	V	V	V	V	V
2	V	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV
3	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV
4	VC	VC	VC	VC	VC	VC
5	VC	VC	VC	VC	VC	CVC
6	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC

For initial syllables, or after CV or V.

Alternate

Red Die	White Die					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	V	V	V	V	V	V
2	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV	CV
3	VC	VC	VC	VC	VC	VC
4	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC
5	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC
6	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC	CVC

For syllables after VC or CVC.
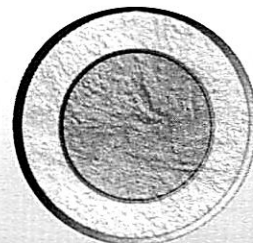
Initial Consonant 1

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	B	B	B	B	B	B
2	B	B	BR	BR	BR	BR
3	D	D	D	D	D	D
4	D	D	D	D	D	D
5	DR	DR	DR	DR	DR	F
6	F	F	F	F	F	F

Initial Consonant 2

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	F	F	F	F	F	F
2	H	H	H	H	H	H
3	H	H	H	H	H	H
4	H	K	K	K	K	K
5	K	K	K	K	K	K
6	K	K	KR	KR	KR	L

Initial Consonant 3

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	L	L	L	L	L	L
2	L	L	M	M	M	M
3	M	M	M	M	M	M
4	M	M	M	M	N	N
5	N	N	N	N	N	N
6	N	N	N	N	N	N

Initial Consonant 4

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	P	P	P	P	P	P
2	P	P	P	P	P	P
3	PR	PR	R	R	R	R
4	R	R	R	R	R	R
5	R	S	S	S	S	S
6	S	S	S	S	S	S

Initial Consonant 5

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	S	S	S	S	S	S
2	S	S	S	S	S	S
3	S	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS
4	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	ST
5	ST	ST	T	T	T	T
6	T	T	T	T	T	T

Initial Consonant 6

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	TH	TH	TH	TH	TH	TR
2	TR	TR	TR	TS	TS	TS
3	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS
4	TW	TW	TW	TW	TW	TW
5	TW	TW	TW	V	V	V
6	V	V	V	V	V	V

Droyne Beyond Their Worlds

Sports, or small bands of wandering Droyne, may be encountered anywhere except the Two Thousand Worlds. They are normally on some specific research or trading mission for their *oytrip*, although some communities may send juveniles on missions purely to gain experience in dealing with travel and aliens.

Player characters may also find one of the Deathless (see sidebar, p. 64), exiled by his fellows and seeking (or pursuing) a new purpose in life. These will normally be lone Sports or Leaders, and may bond with the group, taking them for a surrogate family; this is an easy way to introduce a Droyne PC to the campaign.

DROYNE WORLDS

Planets colonized by Droyne (or Chirpers) vary, but tend to have certain things in common. The GM may declare any world to have a Droyne population, but this is most likely if the world is about 4,000 miles in diameter, with a standard or dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, 30% to 70% surface water, and a population of 100,000 to 1 million. As any of those factors vary from the ideal, the likelihood of Droyne being present declines. Roughly 40% of Droyne worlds have retained their culture; on the other 60%, they have lost it, and degenerated into Chirpers (see sidebar, p. 63).

The GM may also rule that the Droyne or Chirpers represent anywhere from 10% to 90% of the population, with the remainder being the race of his choice, most commonly the dominant race of the nearest interstellar state (Humans in the Imperium, Aslan in the Hierate, and so on).

All worlds primarily inhabited by the Droyne will have a diameter of 6,000 miles or less, and a population of fewer than 1 billion.

STARPORTS

Droyne worlds have the normal frequency of starports for their TLs and populations, but their low average populations have the result that Droyne-dominated worlds rarely feature major ports.

Interdiction

Any world with Droyne on it may be interdicted by a nearby interstellar government. The reasons for interdiction vary, but the commonest are:

Protect the Droyne. A particularly small or interesting Droyne population may be interdicted to shield it from outside influence. This sort of protection is more common in the Third Imperium than in other states.

Protect the State. This is commonest for high-tech Droyne planets in the Solomani Confederation; the Droyne world is isolated so that its products do not destabilize trade or politics in surrounding space.

Monopolize Interaction. Perhaps the most likely fate of a system in the Aslan Hierate, the state isolates the Droyne so that it is the only one to enjoy whatever benefits might accrue from trade or other interaction with them.

CLIMATE

Droyne worlds are generally Earthlike, although typically warmer and drier. No major race has problems living on Droyne worlds, with the possible exception of needing to wear eye protection against the bright F-class suns that Droyne prefer.

POPULATION

As mentioned above, Droyne worlds are thinly populated by the standards of other races; a typical population would be 100,000 to 1 million, and the largest known Droyne world has a population in the hundreds of millions.

GOVERNMENT

Regardless of population or other factors, Droyne worlds always have one of three government types: subjugated (including colonies and military governments), multiple societies, or Droyne oligarchy. (GMs converting worlds from earlier *Traveller* materials should note that these correspond to government types 6, 7, and X, respectively.)

Droyne oligarchies are whole-world governments set up along classic Droyne lines, whereas multiple societies are competing Droyne oligarchies on a single world. See also *Domestic Policy*, p. 81.

CONTROL RATING

Control Ratings on Droyne worlds tend to be slightly higher than on comparable worlds possessed by major races. There are no laws nor police as such; the GM should treat the Control Rating on a Droyne world as indicating the frequency and level of harassment by local Warriors. Specifically, the CR is a negative modifier on the guard Warriors' reaction rolls.

TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL

On worlds where Droyne or Chirpers are only a fraction of the population, they operate at the TL of the world, whatever it might be. The TL of all-Droyne worlds may be as low as TL1 or as high as TL13, but is typically in the TL8-9 range.
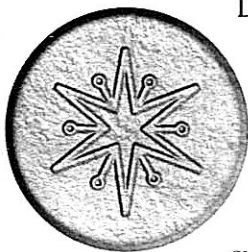
DROYNE CITIES

The layout of a Droyne city depends on the planetary atmosphere, gravity, and TL, and whether the local Droyne retain the ability to fly. Cities with atmospheres too thin to support Droyne flight are much like Human cities, except they tend to be communally structured. On worlds where the atmosphere supports flight with mechanical wing sets, cities are still like Human ones, but a wealthy *oytrip* or *dreskay* of flying Droyne installs entrances on the sides and tops of buildings as well as at ground level.

Where the atmosphere is thick enough and gravity light enough to support unaided flight, streets begin to become just avenues for deliveries of heavy items. If the TL is not high enough for contragravity vehicles, streets are just wide enough for cart or truck traffic, with street level entrances generally used only for deliveries. Market places are large open areas, but otherwise shops are on the tops of buildings, or the sides (poorer shops are farther down). Cities don't have large arterial roads.

At higher TLs, the communal nature of the Droyne and the fact that cities already are built with narrow streets mean that personal vehicles don't gain the same role that they do with Humans. *Dreskayin* and *oytripin* use trucks and buses, which can carry more members, and cities build mass-transit systems. Eventually, the availability of contragravity leads to the streets becoming little more than an afterthought, only sometimes paved. Separations are maintained between buildings only for sunlight and ventilation.

Oynprith Word Generation Tables
[Continued]

Vowel 1

Red Die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	A	A	A	A	A	A
2	A	A	A	A	A	A
3	A	A	A	A	A	A
4	A	A	A	A	A	A
5	AY	AY	AY	AY	AY	AY
6	AY	AY	AY	AY	AY	AY

Vowel 2

Red Die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	AY	AY	AY	AY	AY	AY
2	E	E	E	E	E	E
3	E	E	E	E	E	E
4	E	E	E	E	E	E
5	E	E	E	E	E	E
6	E	E	E	E	E	E

Vowel 3

Red Die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	E	E	E	E	E	E
2	E	E	E	E	E	E
3	I	I	I	I	I	I
4	I	I	I	I	I	I
5	I	I	I	I	I	I
6	I	I	I	I	I	I

Vowel 4

Red Die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	I	I	I	I	I	I
2	O	O	O	O	O	O
3	O	O	O	O	O	O
4	O	O	O	O	O	O
5	O	O	O	O	O	O
6	OY	OY	OY	OY	OY	OY

Vowel 5

Red Die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	OY	OY	OY	OY	OY	OY
2	U	U	U	U	U	U
3	U	U	U	U	U	U
4	U	U	U	U	U	U
5	U	U	U	U	U	U
6	U	U	U	U	U	U

Vowel 6

Red Die	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	U	U	U	U	U	U
2	U	U	U	YA	YA	YA
3	YA	YA	YA	YA	YA	YA
4	YO	YO	YO	YO	YO	YO
5	YO	YU	YU	YU	YU	YU
6	YU	YU	YU	YU	YU	YU

Final Consonant 1

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	B	B	B	B	B	B
2	D	D	D	D	D	D
3	D	D	D	D	D	F
4	F	F	F	F	H	H
5	H	H	H	H	K	K
6	K	K	K	K	K	K

Final Consonant 2

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	L	L	L	L	LB	LB
2	LD	LD	LD	LD	LD	LD
3	LD	LK	LK	LK	LK	LM
4	LM	LM	LN	LP	LS	LS
5	LT	LT	M	M	M	M
6	M	M	M	M	M	M

Final Consonant 3

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	M	N	N	N	N	N
2	N	N	P	P	P	P
3	P	P	P	P	P	P
4	P	P	R	R	R	R
5	R	R	R	R	R	RD
6	RD	RD	RF	RF	RK	RK

Final Consonant 4

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	RK	RK	RK	RM	RM	RM
2	RM	RN	RN	RN	RS	RS
3	RS	RS	RS	RT	RT	RT
4	RT	RT	RV	RV	S	S
5	S	S	S	S	S	S
6	S	S	S	S	S	S

Final Consonant 5

Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	S	S	S	S	S	S
2	S	S	S	SK	SK	SK
3	SK	SK	SK	SS	SS	SS
4	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	ST
5	ST	ST	ST	ST	T	T
6	T	T	T	T	T	T

Final Consonant 6

| Red Die	White Die 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	T	T	T	T	TH	TH
2	TH	TH	TH	TH	TS	TS
3	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS
4	TS	TS	V	V	V	V
5	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	X	X	X	X	X	X

All cities are constructed around the communal structure; buildings are built around the *dreskayin* and *oytripin*. All Droyne eat and sleep together regardless of caste, and the rooms (or, for larger groups, buildings) are centered around communal eating, sleeping, or recreational facilities. Surrounding rooms or buildings are devoted to, and used by, different castes for their purposes; studies for Leaders, workshops or laboratories for Technicians, nurseries for Drones, etc. Large *oytripin* have buildings or entire neighborhoods centered around them. They can either group their members in one exclusive area, or disperse them among others in a city, depending on need.

GROUND AND SPACE FORCES

Most Droyne-dominated worlds will have a small military presence. See *The Droyne Military*, pp. 90-91.

CANDORY (SPINWARD MARCHES 0336) – RED ZONE

Candory (see pp. T:BC52-3) is a relatively low-tech world in the Five Sisters subsector of the Spinward Marches.
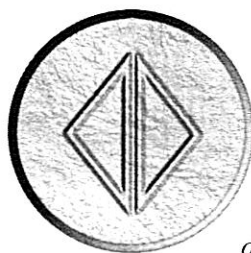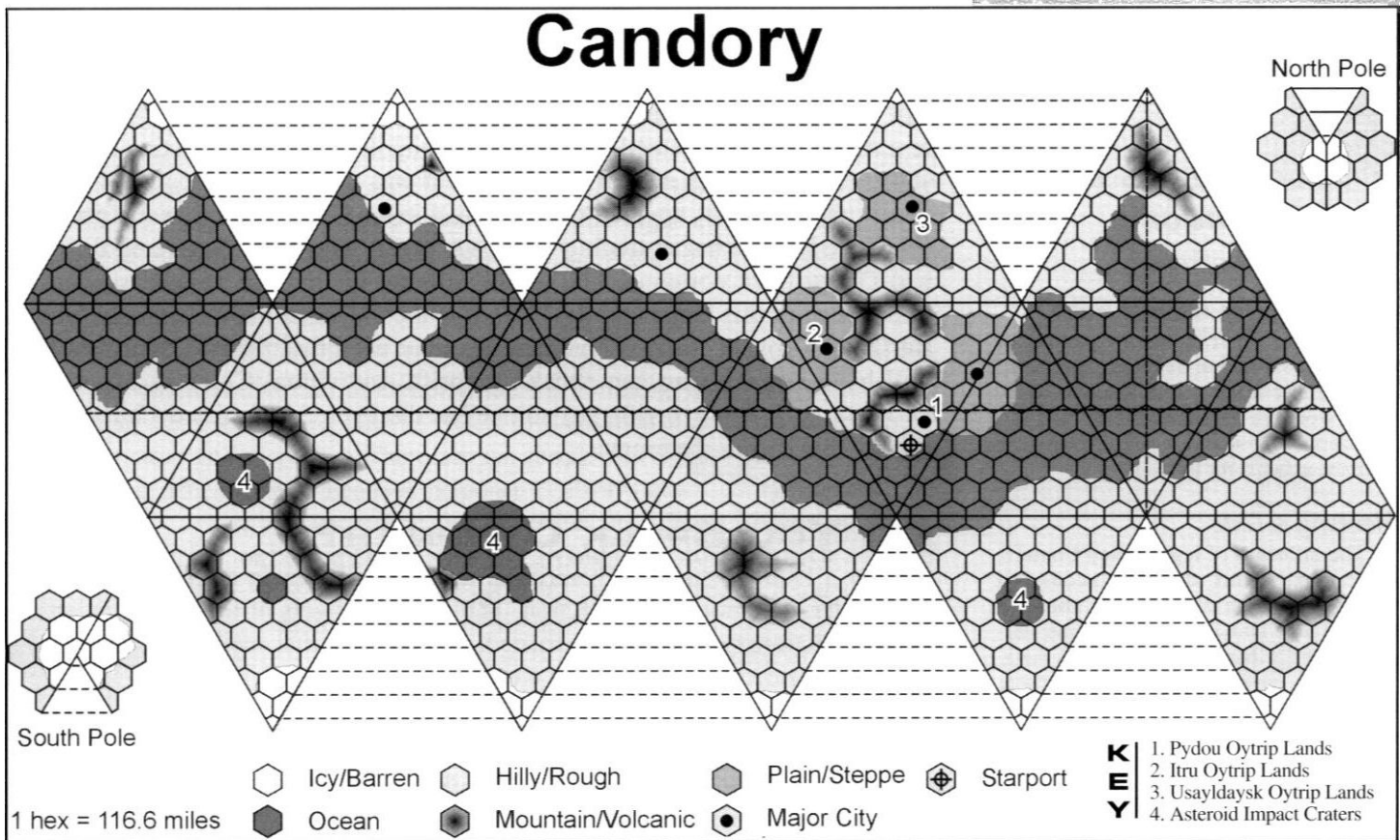
World Data

Starport: Class III.

Diameter: 5,248 miles. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen, with slightly high background radiation. *Surface Water:* 25%. *Climate:* Warm. *Population:* 9.3 million Droyne. *Government:* Oligarchy (the Leader caste in each *oytrip*). *Control Rating:* 2. *TL:* 8.

It has been suggested that Candory is the long-lost Droyne homeworld, as it has the right atmosphere, gravity, and stellar spectrum; however, nearby Andor, which is somewhat wetter and much more densely populated, is generally held to be a more likely candidate. Both worlds were discovered in 802 during the Psionic Suppressions, and at once interdicted by the IISS, officially "to protect the native population." The worlds are adjacent to each other, but at least 3 parsecs from any other system. Andor is no longer interdicted, although access is strictly controlled by the Imperial Navy and Scout Service. Candory remains a Red Zone, with an IISS squadron and a significant naval presence to enforce access controls. Non-Droyne are occasionally allowed to land at the port, but are never allowed beyond the perimeter.

Candory's entire population is found on the northern continent, clustered around the starport, and is divided into a number of *oytripin*. The three most commonly encountered by visitors are those closest to the starport extrality fence – the Pyodu, Itru, and Usayldaysk *oytripin*.

The Pyodu *oytrip* is expansionist and progressive, at least by Droyne standards, and trades freely with the few offworlders permitted to land. The starport is on lands leased from the *oytrip,* and it has a number of interpreters who speak Anglic and other offworld tongues.

The Itru *oytrip* is more neutral and conservative in its approach. It does not go out of its way to deal with aliens, although it has been known to do so with caution; it keeps to itself. Itru maintains lightly armed forces to defend its lands. Those who wish to deal with them must do so through an interpreter who speaks Oynprith – they are willing, if reluctant, to speak with aliens, but see no reason to learn another language to do so.
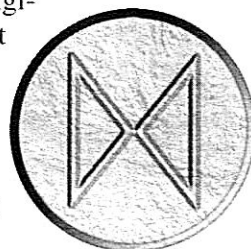
Candory

North Pole

South Pole

1 hex = 116.6 miles

	Icy/Barren		Hilly/Rough		Plain/Steppe	⊕	Starport
	Ocean		Mountain/Volcanic		Major City		

KEY
1. Pydou Oytrip Lands
2. Itru Oytrip Lands
3. Usayldaysk Oytrip Lands
4. Asteroid Impact Craters

The Usayldaysk *oytrip* is a reactionary community which holds that no good can come from dealings with non-Droyne, and is skeptical of the value of dealing with other *oytripin*, most of whom it sees as rivals wishing to steal its resources. It maintains a large cadre of Warriors to defend its current lands against potential incursions. Travelers forced down in Usayldaysk territory will be summarily ejected at best, and executed as spies and saboteurs at worst. Speaking Oynprith is no help; the Usayldaysk are just as suspicious of other Droyne as they are of aliens.

The southern continent is heavily cratered, and still radioactive in places. There would appear to have been several bombardments, using both fusion weapons and iceballs from the system's Oort cloud. It is theorized that the iceballs were used to thicken Candory's atmosphere and increase its surface water cover, by providing additional volatiles; this argues against it being the Droyne homeworld, which would presumably already have had the right air and water.

If this is not Eskayloyt (see p. 63), then perhaps the Droyne preference for high levels of background radiation was met by setting off high-yield thermonuclear groundbursts

Biologists investigating Candory's flora and fauna have tentatively marked some of the local bacteria as genetically engineered, possibly to adjust the atmospheric gas mix; as yet this remains unproven. The surface lifeforms are a mixture; some share genetic sequences with the Droyne, suggesting that they, too, came from Eskayloyt; some do not. The fossil record has not currently been studied sufficiently to determine which are the native lifeforms and which are the interlopers.

Adventures on Candory

The following scenarios based on Candory can provide hooks for more thoroughly exploring the Droyne:

Flight 101 Is Down

Staggering out of jumpspace days late, the PCs realize they have misjumped to the Candory system. Worse is to come; convenient system failures force them down in Usayldaysk lands. Grabbing what they can in the few minutes before angry Warriors arrive, they must evade pursuit and make their way to the starport, where they will need to convince the IISS that they are shipwrecked spacers, and not spies. Finally, their ship is now inoperable and scores of miles inside hostile territory . . .

The Psionic Master

Zhodani (openly) or a Psionics Institute (secretly) may be on Candory, seeking instruction from powerful psionic Droyne. (This goes well with the adventure seed *Trained by a Master*, p. 79, with the added complication of having to run the blockade.) The IISS may be studying the local psions; it is even possible that one of the Imperial secret services is illegally training operatives here.

Adventures on Candory

[Continued]

The Obligatory Ancient Base

The PCs are IISS survey personnel exploring the barren southern continent, and stumble upon a lost Ancient base. What wonders lie within? And will the PCs report them like good citizens, or keep the goodies for themselves?

Hitching a Ride

The influence of high-ranked Contacts or Patrons gains the PCs access to Candory. Just as their ship is about to leave, a lone Droyne sneaks into the starport and begs them to take him with them. Why is he on the run? Who is pursuing him? And what secrets does he know about the Imperial interdiction?

Dinosaur Killer

Aeons ago, somewhere in the outer system, a comet nucleus began a long, slow slide down the gravity well to Candory. The starport fails to detect it until it is just a few days away; the PCs have the only starship onplanet which can rendezvous with this dirty snowball in time, and attempt to divert it. Can they succeed, using only their wits and whatever they can extract from the starport personnel and local Droyne? Is this a cosmic fluke, or is something out there doing this on purpose – and if so, has it got any more comet nuclei to hand?

Southbound

As an IISS survey crew, shipwrecked spacers, or members of an authorized expedition, the PCs find themselves trekking across the great southern continent, and destined to find out just why the local Droyne have a taboo against visiting it. There may be Ancient warbots or bioweapons to be accidentally reactivated, fusion bombs picking this precise moment to raise the background count some more, lethal plant spores inducing psychotic episodes in the explorers, or innocent Chirpers minding their own business – the descendants of long-forgotten rival *oytripin*.

OYNPRITH: THE DROYNE LANGUAGE

For centuries, the vast distances separating Droyne worlds concealed the fact that they all had a common language. While Droyne communities did speak different languages, all shared one tongue – Oynprith, used in the casting ceremony and rituals. Outsiders missed this because it was rarely used in public, having a quasi-religious status much like that of Latin in the Catholic Church on Terra.

Once Droyne began trading with each other, they soon discovered that they had Oynprith in common, and as the volume of trade increased, so did the importance of this language. By 1120, it is the universal native language among starfaring Droyne; isolated communities may use other dialects, but even they will have Drones who can speak Oynprith. Individual Chirpers exposed to Droyne may learn Oynprith, but no one has discovered an isolated Chirper community that retains the tongue.

DO YOU SPEAK OYNPRITH?

For a Human student, Oynprith is daunting. The main causes of confusion are gender, mutation, and inflection. The primary effects of these are first, that a Droyne dictionary is not to be trusted, and second, that many different words, when translated into Anglic, have the same meaning.

Gender

Oynprith has seven genders: one for each caste, and a seventh for beings or objects which belong to no caste. The seventh gender is the commonest, used to refer to inanimate objects, members of other species, and even uncasted Droyne children. The other six also refer to the traditional possessions of the caste; for example, weapons are associated with the Warrior caste, and so take the Warrior "gender." Medical instruments are the province of the Drones, and so are considered to have their "gender."

Most Droyne affect not to distinguish between Human genders; like the Aslan, they assign gender based on the individual's perceived role in the community. Whoever appears to be in charge is addressed using the Leader "gender," medical personnel are spoken to as Drones, and so on.

Mutation

In this, Oynprith is like Terran Welsh, but more extreme; it changes the consonants within a noun (and any associated adjectives) depending on the gender and the way in which the noun is referred to in a statement. Mutation is most extreme in feminine nouns, more moderate in enabler nouns, and quite rare in masculine nouns. For example, *dralm* means "skill," but can only be applied to members of the Leader, Sport, or Warrior caste; if referring to a Worker or Technician, or an uncasted being such as a Human, one uses the word *dalm,* and when speaking to (or about) a Drone, one says *taln.* This is a simple example, as *dralm* is a common word with little variation between castes; others are much worse.

Since mutations are less pronounced in the plural form, novice Oynprith speakers tend to talk about themselves as members of a group rather than individuals. It's easier, and the Droyne find it perfectly natural, so rarely correct it.

Inflection

English and its descendant Anglic have relatively few inflections. One says *I see, he sees, I saw* and the word changes according to tense.

Oynprith has many more inflections, and uses them in situations where Anglic would not – for example, inflecting words based on gender. Also, not

only does the ending of the word change, as in Anglic, but other parts of it may also change. This is especially annoying in irregular verbs, and as in most languages, these are the ones a speaker needs most often in daily life.

For example, one might say *twa*, "I, who am a Leader, see." Or *pra*, "I, who am a Leader, saw." Other castes would use similar, but different, inflections. Searching a hypertext Oynprith dictionary for the translation of the Anglic expression "I see" would return a list of between eight and 20 possibilities, depending on which of the Anglic idiomatic meanings were included in the search parameters.

Figures of Speech

A few other peculiarities of Oynprith are worth noting; the GM is encouraged to use them when roleplaying Droyne NPCs, to stress their strange worldview.

Affirmative and Negative: There are no simple words for "yes" and "no" in Oynprith; an affirmative or negative response is always qualified by the speaker's caste and tense. For example, "Yes, as a Sport I have done that," or "No, a Drone such as I would never consider such a thing." The meaning will be clear, but expressed in a manner both verbose and quaint to other races.

Possession: This is a difficult concept to express in Oynprith. "I have an air/raft" would be literally translated into Oynprith as "I am a designated operator of one of my *oytrip*'s air/rafts." Note that things are possessed not by the individual, but by the *tyafelm*, *dreskay*, or *oytrip*, and their use is controlled by the group's Leader for the group's benefit. If the family has a fancy, expensive vehicle, it is because they need one, not because it is a status symbol for the Leader; and it will be wherever it benefits the family as a whole the most, which may well mean a Sport is using it on a mission.

Refusal: It goes against the grain for a Droyne to refuse an order, or contradict someone in authority, even when the instruction or decision is blatantly wrong. Most sophontologists ascribe this to the possible consequence if a Droyne denies his Leader's will – *krinaytsyu*. Instead, when given an impossible task (such as, "rebuild the jump drive by noon, using only these candy-bar wrappers") a Technician will enthusiastically agree, and start work. He will keep working until he has finished, or until you drop by to ask how things are going, when he will apologetically state that some unforeseen problems have prevented him completing the work on time, but that it will certainly be finished by tomorrow.

Of course, a Leader would understand the situation perfectly from nuances of the Technician's body language and verbal cues, and would ask if anything could be done to make the task easier; this gives the Technician a chance to point out how much better it would be to have tools and spare parts, whereupon the Leader can instruct him to find them before starting work, since this is clearly in the *oytrip*'s best interest. Offworld PCs with little or no Droyne experience are unlikely to realize they are supposed to do this.

Time Sense: The Droyne have what some academics describe as an "agricultural" time sense; they live more sedately than other species. The difference between arriving on time for an appointment at 0900 and getting there at 1930 as the sun goes down is just not important to the average Droyne. This habit is made worse because as a gregarious race, when they do agree to meet you, they bring the family, and you will probably find half a dozen other offworlders there, all for different meetings, all of which have been "scheduled" for the same time – namely, sometime that day.

Initial Consonants (216)

Sound	Freq.	Pronunciation
B	8	*b*at
BR	4	*br*ing
D	12	*d*og
DR	5	*dr*ain
F	13	*f*in
H	13	*h*ole
K	13	*k*ing
KR	3	*cr*own
L	9	*l*ake
M	14	*m*ake
N	14	*n*ame
P	12	*p*ine
PR	2	*pr*int
R	11	*r*ing
S	24	*s*ing
SS	10	his*s*ing
ST	3	*st*one
T	10	*t*ool
TH	5	*th*is
TR	4	*tr*ap
TS	9	*ts*ar
TW	4	*tw*in
V	9	*v*ine

Vowels (216)

Sound	Freq.	Pronunciation
A	7	l*o*ck
AY	8	l*a*ke
E	5	g*e*t
I	4	k*i*t
O	4	g*o*
OY	2	ah*oy*
U	1	r*u*n
YA	9	*ya*rd
YO	7	*yo*-yo
YU	11	f*eu*d

Final Consonants (216)

| Sound	Freq.	Pronunciation
B	6	cra*b*
D	11	ba*d*
F	5	cha*ff*
H	6	ho*w*
K	8	bac*k*
L	4	cal*l*
LB	2	ca*ll b*ack
LD	7	he*ld*
LK	4	mi*lk*
LM	3	he*lm*et
LN	1	ca*ll n*ow
LP	1	he*lp*
LS	2	ca*lls*
LT	2	hi*lt*
M	11	hi*m*
N	7	ca*n*
P	12	ca*p*
R	9	ca*r*
RD	3	ca*rd*
RF	2	wha*rf*
RK	5	wo*rk*
RM	4	wo*rm*
RN	3	wo*rn*
RP	1	wa*rp*
RS	4	wa*rs*
RT	5	wa*rt*
RV	2	Ha*rv*ard
S	23	i*s*
SK	6	di*sk*
SS	8	hi*ss*
ST	5	li*st*
T	12	hi*t*
TH	6	wi*th*
TS	10	wi*ts*
V	4	hi*v*e
X	12	a*x*

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Oynprith is a Mental/Hard language for non-Droyne. Other Droyne languages tend to be simpler, but most traders opt to learn Oynprith because they are certain to find a Drone who speaks it in any *oytrip*. Droyne may learn the languages of other races, but treat them as one degree harder – Anglic, for instance, is Mental/Average for Humaniti, but Mental/Hard for Droyne.

BUSINESS, TRADE, AND COMMERCE

Within the *tyafelm*, *dreskay*, or *kroyloss*, Droyne rarely engage in trade – each contributes what he can, and takes what he needs. *Dreskayin* within an *oytrip* may or may not trade with each other, depending on the agreements the Leaders have made with each other.

Oytripin trade between themselves, although they do so largely by barter. Unless interdicted, the vast majority of Droyne communities trade with other species, either on their planet or across space.

It is only when dealing with other races that Droyne employ currency, and even then barter is preferable.
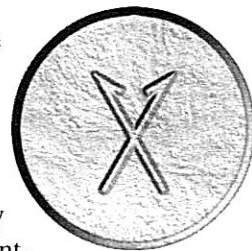
THE DROYNE MILITARY

The Droyne seem to lack the temperament to enjoy combat. They can fight when necessary, fiercely and efficiently, but what truly distinguishes their attitude to warfare is that they fight only to secure the needs of their *oytrip*. Droyne do not go to war over abstract matters – points of honor or religious dogma – or out of greed or envy. They fight when the *oytrip* needs something concrete; they fight until they have obtained it, then they stop.

This means that ideas such as preemptive strikes are alien to the Droyne. Some communities now make use of them, but almost invariably they have learned the technique by having it used against them.

GROUND FORCES

In theory, Warriors make up 15-20% of a Droyne population. In practice, 5% or less (the battling Warriors) of a Droyne population is combat-suitable. Given their smaller populations, Droyne worlds field very small armies, and are unlikely to be a threat to their neighbors for this reason alone. This weak strategic position is made worse by the distance between Droyne worlds, the resulting logistical problems if they try to act in concert, and the low probability that they will work together in the first place.

Droyne forces frequently are lightly equipped in addition to being small, though lightly armed TL13 Droyne Warriors may be more than a match for heavy TL10 infantry . . .

Organization

Military organization is based on groups of six. A squad-equivalent has six Warriors; a Droyne platoon has 36 Warriors, and a number of support staff – a Leader to issue directions, Drones to act as medical orderlies and read the coyns, Technicians to

THE DROYNE

repair and maintain equipment, and perhaps a Sport to act as a scout or runner. A typical *dreskay* is unlikely to have the Warriors for more than one platoon, with a typical *oytrip* perhaps placing a few companies or battalions in the field. The Aslan table on p. T:AII24 may be used as a rough guide to numbers of troops, or the GM may assign troop strengths by any other means to meet the needs of his campaign.

On mixed-race worlds, if Droyne are represented in the planetary armed forces, they are normally segregated into all-Droyne units because of their need for different armor and weapons. The Droyne population may also retain its own military units, distinct from the planetary forces. These will usually be assigned paramilitary roles, such as dangerous law-enforcement work.

Tactics

Droyne tactics are simple, as they must be given their low average IQ. Like the Zhodani, Droyne have the advantage of psionics among their troops. Their tactics rely heavily on their ability to cloud their opponents' minds, remaining unnoticed before an attack starts.

Droyne troops have poor standards of marksmanship, and compensate by placing an increased reliance on aimed fire. The Droyne shun slugthrowers because of the Recoil penalties (p. B121), particularly in automatic fire. The usual tactic is to expose a decoy Droyne to draw enemy fire and force the opponent to reveal his position; Droyne Warriors then engage that position with autofire lasers. If particularly talented psions are available, they locate the enemy with clairvoyance and telepathically advise the Warriors where to fire.

Droyne forces are well-suited to infiltration, ambush, and guerrilla tactics; consequently, these are their favored approaches. They try to avoid a prolonged fight in which their psionic talents become discounted.

SPACE FORCES

Like their ground forces, Droyne space navies are small; indeed, they are often non-existent. Fewer than half of Droyne worlds have naval forces at all; those that do have small navies, largely focused on system defense. The largest Droyne navy may boast one or two cruisers. More often, the navy is the *oytrip's* merchant shipping retrofitted with laser turrets and packed with Warriors. Most *oytripin* rely on the protection of other states, such as the Zhodani Consulate.

Ship Types

While some Droyne are able to build their own warships, the majority of them prefer to convert vessels from other races. Droyne can therefore be found operating almost any type of ship common in their area; specialist warships over 1,000 displacement tons are rare.

Organization

Again, organization is based on groups of six. There are six ships in a squadron, and six squadrons in a fleet, when possible. Fleets raised by a single world are very unusual, and are more often only found when several wealthy worlds join forces for some reason. In this case, each world probably supplies one of the squadrons, although individual *oytripin* may field individual ships.

Racial Invisibility?

Some of the facts about Human-Droyne relations – facts that are part of Imperial history and society – simply don't make sense.

How could the Vilani have overlooked that the Droyne on dozens of worlds belonged to a single race? All the discussions of "cultural blind spots" and "Vilani unsophistication in the biological sciences" don't hold water. The Ziru Sirka was meticulously organized, and whole departments had no greater goal than to catalog everything owned by Vland.

And today, how can the whole Imperium feel so complacent about the Droyne? How can the phrase "dumb as a Droyne" be used about the race that builds the best jump drives known? How can the clear psionic abilities of the race be ignored by a culture that hates and fears psions?

And it's not just the Imperium; the Vargr and Aslan are equally patronizing, the Solomani merely interdict worlds they could sterilize, and even the Zhodani treat the Droyne as slightly backward clients.

Why is everyone so *calm* about the Droyne?

Good question.

One *possible* hint might lie in the Droyne's "invisibility" ability (see p. 94). On an individual level, this lets a Droyne hide in plain sight; others see him, but just don't consider him worth noticing.

What if some version of that same ability were operating on a racial, interstellar level, convincing the other sophonts (with the possible exception of the Hivers) that there is really nothing interesting about this widely-spread, highly psionic, jump-drive-using, future-sensing major race . . .

Of course, there might be some other explanation – a perfectly logical, boring, non-threatening one. That would make much more sense. After all, the Droyne really *aren't* that interesting, are they?

Just forget you read this.
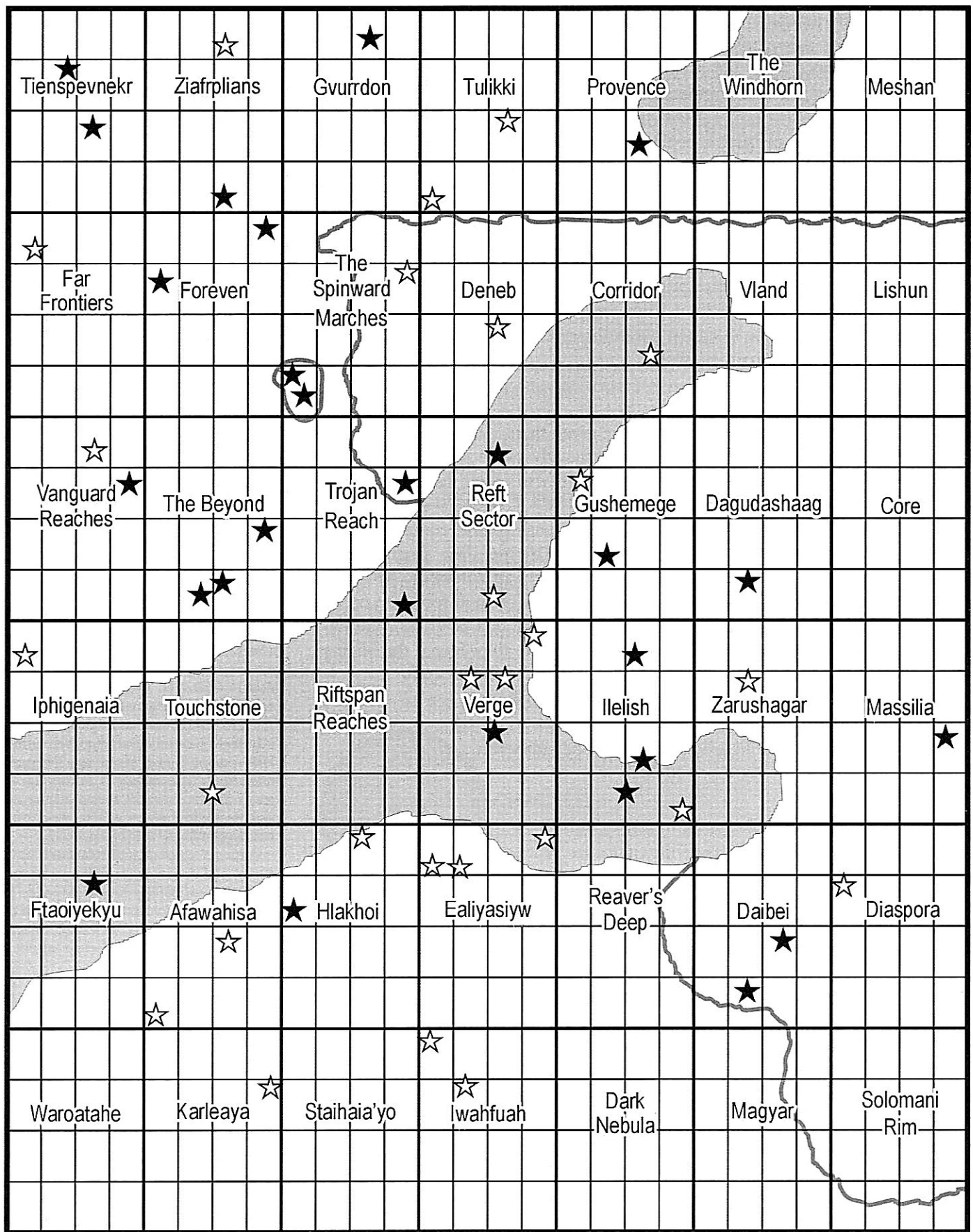
Droyne Worlds in the Spinward Marches Region

Droyne worlds denoted with ★; Chirper worlds are shown with ☆ (all locations are approximate.) Imperial official sector names are shown in large type.

CREATING DROYNE CHARACTERS

All Droyne and Chirpers are represented by one racial template, then each of the six castes and the uncasted Chirpers are represented by their own character template. Droyne may not use the standard *Traveller* character career templates.

Starting Wealth and TL

Droyne PCs purchase starting Wealth normally, but should not exceed "Wealthy." This usually represents equipment and discretionary funds provided by their community, not earnings.

Droyne are found at all TLs, even TL13 should the GM allow the 100-point investment in High Technology.

Castes

While casting is random in play, most campaigns will be better served if a player picks his Droyne's caste. Unless the party has enough Droyne to form a *tyafelm* or *kroyloss* (see pp. 76-78), the PC is almost certain to be a Sport on some long-term mission, one of the Deathless (see p. 64), or a Leader. Leaders usually possess an Ally Group, composed of members of other castes. A Drone might be assigned a short mission by her Leader – and an Ally Group of Workers, Warriors, and Technicians to help her – but this can be hard to justify as part of an ongoing non-Droyne campaign.

Since Droyne can change subcastes, a Droyne may take more than one of the secondary skills packages for his caste.

Height and Weight

These vary widely between worlds, and considerably within each caste. As a rule of thumb, a "standard" ST 7 Droyne will stand 3'6" and weigh 65 lbs. Add 6" and 10 lbs. for every additional point of ST, or subtract half as much for every point by which ST is less than 7.

Other Notes

Like the K'kree, Droyne do not retire from their profession to go adventuring. A Droyne serves in his career till death. Any adventuring should make sense within that context.

Droyne players in a standard Imperial campaign should feel free to buy up their poor attributes. (In particular, the less-expensive ST purchases on p. CI8 should be available to Workers and Warriors at the least). These Droyne represent the rare, exceptional individuals sent to deal with the other races.

DROYNE RACIAL TEMPLATE

This package reflects some simple caste variations, therefore cost varies. The value is 20 points for Technicians, Warriors, and Workers; 25 points for Drones; 30 points for Leaders; and 40 points for Chirpers or Sports. The species' great variety (see p. 63) means any individual Droyne may heavily alter this template.

Attributes

All Droyne and Chirpers begin with -3 ST, -1 DX, and -2 IQ, worth a total of -45 points. HT starts at 10 as for Humans, but note the Reduced Hit Points disadvantage, p. 94.

RACIAL ADVANTAGES

The majority of Droyne and Chirpers usually possess the following advantages.

Claim to Hospitality

Within the bounds of racial culture, any other community member may be asked for assistance. This is worth 5 points.

Claws

Droyne and Chirper feet – though not hands – have 15-point Claws, doing +2 damage with kicks.

Decreased Life Support

Small size means that most Droyne and Chirpers (generally, those under 100 lbs.) require about half the food, air, and water needed by most races. This 10-point advantage allows twice as many Droyne to live in a starship stateroom as is normal.

Flight

Special restrictions impose an overall -40% limitation; see sidebar, p. 90. This reduces the cost to 24 points.

As described in the sidebar on p. 80, whole populations of Droyne and Chirpers have lost this ability. These generally spend some of the saved points on buying higher ST (though rarely to a local average higher than ST 9), since they've lost the environmental pressure toward light builds.

Night Vision

The race has partial Night Vision, but they still suffer half of any darkness penalty. This -50% limitation reduces cost to 5 points.

Peripheral Vision

The race's wide-set eyes give it a 270-degree field of vision. This is a 15-point advantage.

Striker

The species has a semi-prehensile tail, which cannot manipulate or be used for walking, but which is controllable enough to strike an aimed blow, rolling against DX. This is treated as a 5-point generic Striker. Droyne Warriors often fit macelike weapons to their tails for use in close combat.

Telepathy Power

Most Droyne and Chirpers are telepaths of immense, if poorly exploited, potential. They start out with Telepathy Power 18 with the limitation "Usable only for racial skills." Since the racial package is fairly limited in its utility, this is worth a -30% discount. A standard Droyne or Chirper pays 63 points for his psionic talent. Many individual Droyne do not possess this limitation, and receive additional psionic training. PCs buying off the limitation would need to pay another 27 points. Chirpers may not buy off any racial limitations on their psionics.

RACIAL DISADVANTAGES

The following are nearly universal within the Droyne race.

Addiction (Purpose in Life)   see p. B30

Droyne (but not Chirpers) *need* to serve their community – a legal, non-incapacitating Addiction. Sports and Leaders can make basic Will rolls to "recover" (and become a *Krinaytsoyni*) for a 0-point racial trait, Drones at -5 for a -5-point disadvantage, other castes at -10 for -10 points.

Duty   see p. B39

Droyne usually serve the above Addiction with a Duty to the community, non-hazardous but effective on a roll of 15 or less. This is a -10-point disadvantage.

Fragile   see p. CI102

Light, hollow bones evolved for flight cause the race to take double damage from crushing attacks, a -20-point disadvantage.

Gregarious   see p. CI90

All Droyne and Chirpers except Sports – who often must work alone – have this -10-point disadvantage.

Hidebound   see p. CI91

The racial culture is extremely stable, and does not encourage originality, a -5-point disadvantage.

Primitive   see p. B26

This will vary widely, but the "default" Droyne or Chirper has Primitive -2, for an effective TL8 and -10-point disadvantage.

Reduced Hit Points   see p. CI83

A Droyne or Chirper has three fewer hit points than its HT would normally indicate; this is a -15-point disadvantage.

Secret   see p. B238

In Imperial space, almost every member of the race keeps his psionic powers secret, a -10-point disadvantage.

Selfless   see p. CI94

Placing the *oytrip's* needs before one's own is a -10-point disadvantage. Chirpers and *krinaytsoyni* often buy this off.

Short Lifespan   see p. CI104

The race matures at age 12, begins aging rolls at 20, and accelerates them at 36 and 52. These rolls are made at the standard 1-year, 6-month, and 3-month intervals. This is Short Lifespan 1 with the +50% enhancement "Only affects maturity and age thresholds, not frequency of rolls" for a net -5 points.

RACIAL PSIONIC SKILLS

Droyne and Chirpers start with the following rudimentary psionic skills. Most cannot purchase other psi skills, or alter the limitations on these, but *can* improve their racial skills with experience. The above restrictions do not apply to individuals who have bought off the racial limitation to their Telepathy.

Homing (Telescan)   see p. P26

The race can tell in which direction and roughly how far away their *oytrip* lies, or they can single out a member of their *oytrip*, within the distance shown on p. B167's table. This IQ+2 racial Telescan costs 7 points with the enhancement "Can detect largest grouping of *oytrip* members instead of single individual" (+10%) and the limitation "Only usable on members of *oytrip*" (-30%). It costs 7 points at IQ+2. The *oytrip*-locating Telescan does not convey the normal bonuses for subsequent psionic-skill usage.

Link (Telereceive)   see pp. B168-169

Most Droyne have a very limited Telereceive skill. They can only use it to receive limited information from fellow *oytrip* members for a limited time, or to pave the way for their Invisibility skill, below. (The latter process enters the mind without actually obtaining any information.) This IQ+4 racial Telereceive costs 9 points with the limitations "Only receives thought from fellow *oytrip* members" (-35%), "Maximum duration of thought reception 15 seconds" (-10%), and "Effective amount by which skill roll is made can't exceed 3" (-5%). It has the enhancement "Can be used against groups only to open minds to Invisibility" (+25%). Droyne who buy off their racial Telepathy limitation often simply buy off the limitations to this skill, rather than purchasing a new, more useful version.

Invisibility (Suggest)   see p. P21

Droyne invisibility isn't, though the few Human "experts" on Droyne psionics think it is. The race actually employs Suggest skill to make the target uninterested in the fact that a Droyne is lurking in the corner. (Technically, the Droyne sends the feeling "indifference" with the object "me.") The subtlety of this technique explains why it's so long been attributed to ordinary stealth. The Droyne doesn't disappear; he slides beneath notice.

This IQ+5 racial skill is Suggest with the enhancement "Can be used against groups" (+50%), and limitations "Only for suggesting 'indifference to me'" (-50%) and "No range" (-20%). It costs 12 points. The average Droyne can attempt the Suggest against everyone within 200 yards of himself whom he's successfully Telereceived. The unusual application changes the normal modifiers: The Droyne is at a -5 in the Quick Contest of Wills to make Suggest with its object modifier ("me") work, with +3 if the subject does not know him well and +2 if the subject does not already know he's present.

On a success, if the Droyne attempts no hostile action, the victim won't even remember he was there. A victim may just stand by but remember the Droyne later if he does something mildly hostile (such as steal *someone else's* valuables). Attacking a Suggest victim will break the effect *after* the first shot . . .

For multiple targets (over 12 or so), simply make one Suggest roll for the Droyne and notice the margin of success. Subtract that from the group's average Will (usually 10). Look up the result on p. B45's table. The corresponding number is what percent of the group should resist. For instance, a Droyne who makes his roll by 3 against an average Will 10 group of 72 would make all but 16.2% (rounded to 12 people) ignore him.

This racial skill waives Suggest's prerequisite of Telesend 12+. A Droyne wishing to buy off racial limitations to this skill should be required to purchase Telesend normally first.

NEW RACIAL TRAIT

Krinaytsu is the Droyne ability to will their own death (see p. 70). Given the length of time that this takes, *krinaytsu* is a racial "special effect" which costs no points, though it is of some small, one-shot utility . . .

OTHER ADVANTAGES

Though not on the racial template, these advantages deserve special mention.

Legal Enforcement Powers   see p. B21

These are only available to members of the Warrior, Leader, and Sport castes.

Luck   see p. B 21

Rather than take Luck and related advantages, it would better reflect the Droyne culture to have any good or ill fortunes derive from the effects of coyn casting, as described on p. 74.

Military Rank

Formally, Droyne have no military grades. Instead, those serving in the military are referred to by their caste, subcaste, and time in service. For game purposes, the respect Droyne have for these is abstracted to a Military Rank, although an officer would be something like "Military Leader of 10 Years' Service" rather than "Major." Most commissioned-officer equivalents are Leaders, and usually members of the military subcaste. Droyne navies also invest Sports, which provide most of their pilots, with the equivalent of commissioned rank.

Only Leaders or Sports may buy Military Rank 4+ – military Leaders *must* buy at least Military Rank 3. Military Rank up to level 3 (warrant officer equivalent) is available to any Droyne, as the military forces include members of all castes.

OTHER DISADVANTAGES

Though not so common as to be on the racial template, these disadvantages also deserve special mention.

Age   see p. B27

To Droyne, Age is worth -3 points per year over 20. Since they usually commit voluntary suicide once they become a "burden" to their community, ripe old age is a luxury available primarily to Sports and Leaders, and even for them it is infrequent.

Disowned   see p. CI77

Krinaytsoyni (Droyne who refuse to die) usually are publicly denounced by their clan leader, leading to a -3 reaction from any Droyne who hear about it. A true *Krinaytsoyni* must work off the racial Addiction (it is *not* enough simply to refuse to commit *krinaytsu*, since the Addiction can be just as deadly if slower). Adding this disadvantage more than offsets Addiction's cost.

Obdurate   see p. CI92

This disadvantage is common among Droyne, who dislike novelty, but not so common as to be a racial trait.

Sterile   see p. CI84

Any casted Droyne except a family Drone may take this disadvantage, indicating that they are unable to take part in their *oytrip*'s production of children. It is not mandatory.

DROYNE STATUS TABLE

The castes in descending order of status are: Leader, Sport, Technician, Drone, Warrior, and Worker.

All Droyne outside a Droyne's own community are treated as Status 0 strangers, no matter what their appearance or caste. They will usually be treated with cautious reserve.

Chirpers rank considerably lower, and are looked on by Droyne in much the same way that Humans regard chimpanzees – at best as a "presentient" near-relative (never mind that many Droyne aren't any smarter than Chirpers), at worst as a resource to be exploited.

These rankings represent Droyne status within their own society. Within Imperial society (and within a standard Imperial campaign) Droyne tend to have one less level of Status. Thus, most Sport PCs will have Status 0 in campaigns set within the Imperium, or Status 1 in all-Droyne campaigns.

DROYNE STATUS TABLE

Status	Description
5+	Planetary Leader of Leaders
4	Leader of large *oytrip*
3	Leader of *dreskay* or small *oytrip*
2	Leader of *kroyloss* or *tyafelm*
1	Sport, Technician
0	Drone, Warrior, Worker, "Other" Droyne
-2	Chirper
-3	*Krinaytsoyni*

Note that Sports have slightly higher Status than Technicians, and Drones slightly higher than Warriors who are slightly higher than Workers, although not enough to warrant an extra level of *GURPS* Status. Note also that Droyne have a relative social standing within their caste – see the Social Rank advantage, below.

NEW ADVANTAGE

This advantage, first seen in *GURPS Alien Races 2*, works for the Droyne much the same as it does for the K'kree.

Social Rank   1 point per level

This represents the fine grading of Droyne status within caste. Higher rank compels respect and obedience from lower, but only within Droyne of the same caste – higher caste individuals always take precedence over those of lower caste, regardless of rank. There is no upper limit to Social Rank.

Social Rank is actually defined during the casting ceremony, and depends on the number of coyns drawn before a caste is assigned; the earlier the caste coyn is revealed, the higher the Droyne's rank. For this reason, Social Rank may not be changed after initial character creation.

Assume a Social Rank of 12 minus the number of coyns drawn prior to the caste coyn, with a minimum of 0. Assuming the standard 36 coyns are used in the casting, this means that roughly 17% of Droyne should have Social Rank 12, 14% rank 11, 12% rank 10, 10% rank 9, 9% rank 8, 7% rank 7, 6% rank 6, 5% rank 5, 4% rank 4, 3% rank 3, 3% rank 2, 2% rank 1, and 8% rank 0. Psionic manipulation of the ceremonies could drastically alter these percentages, of course.

DESIRABLE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Ally Groups are appropriate for Leaders, and possibly Drones, but not for other castes. A Leader could plausibly have followers as Dependents.

Collected, Composed, and *Imperturbable* are all valid ways to reflect the stoicism of lower-caste Droyne.

Patrons are appropriate for any Droyne; these are higher-ranking Leaders.

Single-Minded is appropriate for lower-caste Droyne.

"TABOO" ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Allies do not really fit for members of this species; Leaders (and possibly Drones) might have an Ally Group.

Lecherousness is much less common among this species than Humans, primarily because sex is something they take less interest in overall.

Psionic Resistance (p. B22) should not be taken by a casted Droyne, since it would have rendered him unteachable. It could conceivably exist in a wild Chirper.

Versatile doesn't fit well with most castes, but is possible for Sports.

Workaholic is a credible disadvantage for any Droyne.

Many other serious disadvantages (such as Blind, Sadism, etc.) would make most Droyne will themselves to die so as to unburden their *oytrip*, so a Droyne taking them should also be Disowned or have a suitable bad Reputation (-3 reaction, -15 points) as a *Krinaytsoyni*. The GM will need to rule on whether a given disadvantage triggers this requirement, keeping in mind that context will vary greatly. For instance, a talented Technician might be able to serve his community perfectly well despite having Hemophilia. A Warrior, particularly in a low-tech community, would be hard-pressed to "justify" his continued existence with the same disadvantage.

SKILLS

Thief/Spy skills, and space-related skills such as Vacc Suit and Piloting, are rare among the Droyne, but not forbidden. Gambling skill is nearly unknown. See pp. 88-90 for more information on language skills.

The following skill is common among the Droyne:

Augury (Droyne) (M/H)   see p. CI137

This skill covers officiating at Droyne ceremonies, interpreting coyn castings, fortune-telling, and conducting Droyne rituals. It includes an extensive body of precedent for all manner of communal decisions.

Effects of Physique

Their fragile builds and hidebound ways restrict Droyne in their choice of Combat/Weapon skills. Knife, Shortsword, Broadsword, Two-Handed Sword, and Spear are widely known; skill in other hand weapons is rare. Where technology permits, Droyne favor lasers for their lack of recoil.

DROYNE MARTIAL ARTS

Droyne martial arts focus on avoiding blows and damaging an opponent without breaking one's own fragile bones. They emphasize wing-assisted jumping kicks which bring the claws on the attacker's feet to bear. Human observers of Droyne unarmed combat are often reminded of roosters fighting for dominance.

A Droyne martial art should give Droyne practitioners a +1 with any wing-assisted Jump Kick. Many incorporate Judo, favoring the Dodge-like qualities of its Parry. Some Droyne styles also incorporate psionic techniques, though only exceptional Droyne can learn the required psionic skills.

DROYNE PSIONICS

Droyne may learn any psionic power or skill from *GURPS Basic Set* or *Psionics* without taking an Unusual Background, with the following exceptions: They cannot learn any new Telepathy skills till their racial limitation is bought off; they can *never* learn Mindswitch and Mindsword. They cannot learn the Astral Projection power nor its skills. They must get GM approval and pay a 10-point Unusual Background (Special powers) to purchase Electrokinesis, or a 5-point Unusual Background (Special skills) to purchase Healing usable on others without taking damage to the healer.

The fact that many Droyne possess wide and rare psionic talents is not well known among other races, but psionics are a natural part of Droyne life. Talented youths receive psionic training during their elementary education. There are no Droyne psionic institutes – they are open about their talents, and train any members of the *oytrip* who have a reason to be trained. Droyne in Imperial space have found it expedient to conceal their powers from Humaniti, due to Imperial anti-psionic prejudices; their flagrant psionicism is a common cause of interdiction for Droyne worlds in the Imperium.

GURPS Basic Set provides enough information on psionics to model many abilities, but *GURPS Psionics* will be required to fully flesh out psionic potential. The limitations on pp. GT84-85 apply, with the following expansions originally presented in Chapter 6 of *GURPS Traveller Alien Races 1*:

Telepathy transcends linguistic and species barriers. Despite differences in brain structure, a Droyne can read a Human's mind, and vice versa. *Very* alien species may be harder to understand.

Clairvoyance and Clairaudience are much longer-ranged than in standard *GURPS*. Calculate ranges using the Telepathy table, not as (power squared) inches. The user sees (or hears) exactly what he would if his head were displaced to the specific point –

for instance, he sees as if his head occupied that point, and can rotate the viewpoint each turn as if he were turning his head.

Life Detection is mentioned in **GURPS Traveller** but not presented in **Basic Set** or **Psionics**. This is a Telepathy skill, allowing the user to "search" an area and hunt for living minds; this takes a turn of concentration and a Life Detection roll. On a successful roll, the user senses the presence of other minds, the number present, the general type (Human, animal, etc.), and their approximate location. The user can "tune out" insects, bacteria, or other "low-scale" life-forms if he so wishes. Range is based on the Telepathy table; within that range the area scanned is 1 yard, or 1% of the user's telepathy range, whichever is greater. Anyone with a functioning Mind Shield cannot be detected. The psi must roll every 10 seconds to maintain the scan.

The GM may rule that a non-Droyne telepath who lived and worked with the Droyne long enough might be able to learn their racial skills and any other skills known by exceptional Droyne within the community. The oytrip concerned would do much of this training by judicious use of Mindwipe, and may well want to implant a few suggestions or Droyne memories while they are about it . . .

GMs may substitute the Telepathy Power's Illusion skill (see p. P21) with the -50% limitation "Only for making self invisible" for the racial Suggest skill, if they do not care for this book's assertion that Imperial researchers have grossly misinterpreted how the Droyne's psionic stealthiness works.

TRAVELLER CONVERSIONS

For the most part Droyne can be converted in the same way as other **Traveller** characters, but they have a number of unique skills and abilities:

Homing, Link, and *Invisibility* are covered under *Racial Psionic Skills,* p. 94.

Appeal converts as Diplomacy skill. While Appeal originally had a more limited venue than Diplomacy, assume that any Droyne familiar with non-Droyne cultures can use the same techniques in those societies.

Boost allows Droyne to act as "amplifiers" for the psionic powers of their fellows. **GURPS Traveller** normally forbids psionic gestalts (see p. P37); assume this is an Unusual Background allowing the particular Droyne to coordinate one, worth 10 points.

Forgetfulness is the Telepathy power's Mindwipe skill.

Inward Eye is the Healing power's Healing skill with the "self-only" limitation. At high skill levels it may also be translated as knowledge of the Metabolism Control skill; this would usually be in addition to Healing skill. As a racial special effect, any Droyne with the Immunity to Disease or Rapid Healing advantages is considered to have latent psionic Healing power!

Rejuvenation is the Healing power's Life Extension skill.

Train is advanced use of Mindwipe skill to educate Droyne young by installing or editing memories and compulsions.

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

CHIRPER   40 POINTS

This is a youngster, or a member of the species who, for some reason, could not undergo the casting ritual at the right time.

Attributes: ST 7 [0], DX 9 [0], IQ 8 [0], HT 10/7 [0].

Advantages: Chirper Racial Package [40] and 15 points chosen from Absolute Direction [5], Acute Hearing [2/level], Acute Taste & Smell [2/level], Alertness [5/level], Danger Sense [15], Pitiable [5], psionic powers [varies], and Rapid Healing [5].

Disadvantages: Status -2 [-10] and a total of -25 points from Absent-Mindedness [-15], Curious [-5 or -10], Gullibility [-10], Illiteracy [-10], Impulsiveness [-10], Kleptomania

[-15], Laziness [-10], Primitive [varies], Reputation [Lazy thieves, -10], Shyness [varies], Social Stigma [varies], and Subjugation [-20].

Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (any local) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-9, Scrounging (M/E) IQ [1]-8, Spear (P/A) DX [2]-9, and Survival (any) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-9.

Secondary Skills: Axe/Mace (P/A) DX [2]-9 and Spear Throwing (P/E) DX+2 [4]-11.

Background Skills: 5 points divided among any ancient/medieval weapons (varies), Fishing (M/E), Flight (P/A), and other specializations of Survival (M/A).

Customization Notes: It is possible to make a Chirper PC, but his potential will be considerably limited . . .

WORKER   75 POINTS

Workers undertake brute labor, and are therefore less common in settlements with higher TLs. They are strong, not too bright, and temperamentally suited to hard, repetitive work.

Attributes: ST 10 [30], DX 9 [0], IQ 8 [0], HT 11/8 [10].

Advantages: Worker Racial Package [20] and 15 points from Absolute Direction [5], Absolute Timing [5], Animal Empathy [5], Empathy [15], Fearlessness [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Immunity to Disease [10], psionic powers [varies], Rapid Healing [5], and Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: A total of -25 points in Color Blindness [-10], Gigantism [-10], Gullibility [-10], Honesty [-10], Incurious [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], Social Stigma (Valuable property) [-10], and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-9, Computer Operation/TL (M/E) IQ [2]-8, Electronics Operation/TL (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-8, Mechanic/TL (M/A) IQ [2]-8, and Scrounging (M/E) IQ [1]-8.

Secondary Skills: Choose one of the subcaste options below:

1. *Farming:* Agronomy/TL (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-9, Animal Handling (M/H) IQ [4]-8, and Veterinary/TL (M/H) IQ [4]-8.

2. *Laboring:* Freight Handling (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-11, and Gesture (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-10.

3. *Building:* Architecture/TL (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-9, Carpentry (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-10, and Demolition/TL (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-9.

Background Skills: 5 points divided among Flight (P/A), other specializations of Mechanic/TL (M/A) or Electronics Operation/TL (M/A), psionic skills (M/H), and any one primary or secondary skill of another caste. The GM might allow some combat-related skills to be purchased with these points if the Worker has served in a combat-support role in the Droyne military.

Customization Notes: Of all the castes, Workers are the least suitable as PCs; they are useful members of an Ally Group, however. Additional skills will vary widely by community.

WARRIOR   75 POINTS

The Warrior is the policeman, soldier, and security guard of the Droyne. They are common in dangerous or frontier regions, but rarely encountered in stable, civilized areas. While they have sufficient initiative to take tactical decisions alone, or in small groups, they require strategic direction from a member of the Leader caste; a Warrior garrison would defend their position if attacked, but would need specific orders from a Leader to mount an attack – although once the order to attack is given and the objectives defined for them, the Warriors can plan and execute the assault without further direction.

Attributes: ST 9 [20], DX 11 [20], IQ 8 [0], HT 11/8 [10].

Advantages: Warrior Racial Package [20] and 15 points selected from Alertness [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Legal Enforcement Powers [5, 10, or 15], up to three levels of Military Rank [5, 10, or 15 points], psionic powers [varies], Rapid Healing [5], and Toughness 1 [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points selected from Bad Temper [-10], Berserk [-15], Bloodlust [-10], Fanaticism [-15], Glory Hound [-15], On the Edge [-15], Paranoia [-10], Social Stigma (Valuable property) [-10], and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Beam Weapons/TL (any) (P/E) DX+2 [4]-13 *or* Guns/TL (any) (P/E) DX+2 [4]-13, Demolition/TL (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-7, Driving/TL (any) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10 *or* Piloting/TL (Contragrav) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10, Judo (P/H) DX [4]-11 *or* Karate (P/H) DX [4]-11, Survival (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-7, and Tactics (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-6.

Secondary Skills: Choose one of these subcaste options:

1. *Battling:* Battlesuit/TL (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-9, Forward Observer/TL (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-7, and Gunner/TL (any) DX-1 (P/A) [1]-10.

GMG '00
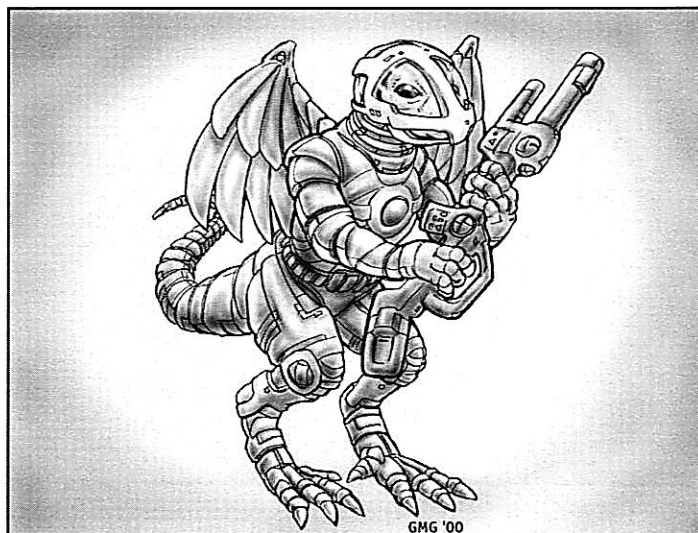
2. *Guard:* First Aid/TL (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-9, Intimidation (M/A) IQ [2]-8, and Tracking (M/A) IQ [2]-8.

3. *Voyaging:* Computer Operation/TL (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-9, Gunner/TL (any) (P/A) DX [2]-11, and Tactics (Space) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-7.

Background Skills: 2 points divided among Broadsword (P/A), Flight (P/A), Free Fall (P/A), Knife (P/E), Shortsword (P/A), Spear (P/A), Two-Handed Sword (P/A), Vacc Suit (M/A), additional specializations of Beam Weapons (any) (P/E), Gunner (any) (P/A), or Guns (any) (P/E), and any psionic skills (M/H).

Customization Notes: Warriors do not make good PCs, but can be found in many Ally Groups. Low-TL Warriors would ignore most of the high-tech skills, investing those points in Combat/Weapon skills such as found in the Background Skills list, instead.

DRONE   75 POINTS

Drones are a "caretaker" caste. This and their child-rearing duties mean their "daily grind" requires much more initiative and foresight than most Droyne need possess. They still lack the true will and strategic vision of Leaders.

Attributes: ST 7 [0], DX 9 [0], IQ 10 [20], HT 10/7 [0].

Advantages: Drone Racial Package [25] and 15 points in Ally Group [varies], Clerical Investment [5/level], Empathy [15], up to three levels of Military Rank [5, 10, or 15], Patron [varies], Pious [5], and psionic powers [varies].

Disadvantages: A total of -25 points in Compulsive Generosity [-5], Dependent (Children) [varies], Obsession (Complete tasks) [varies], Pacifism [-15], and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Administration (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11, Computer Operation/TL (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Cooking (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Diplomacy (M/H) IQ [4]-10, First Aid/TL (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, and Teaching (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11.

Secondary Skills: Choose one of these subcaste options:

1. *Family:* Area Knowledge (any local) (M/E) IQ [1]-10, Performance (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11, Professional Skill: Childcare (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11, Survival (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-10, and increase Teaching to (M/A) IQ+3 [4]-13.

2. *Priestly:* Augury (Droyne) (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-11, History (M/H) IQ [4]-10, Performance (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11, and Psychology (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-8.

3. *Social:* Diagnosis/TL (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-11, Electronics Operation/TL (Medical) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-9, Physician/TL (M/H) IQ+3 [10]-13. *Note:* Physician skill *replaces* First Aid skill in this option, and the saved points are reinvested in Physician.

Background Skills: 5 points invested in Social skills, Driving/TL (any), Flight, and Piloting/TL (all P/A); Surgery/TL (M/VH), Teaching (M/A), and psionic skills (M/H).

Customization Notes: A Drone is a credible if limited PC. Many have extensive middle-management skills, as well.

LEADER   90 POINTS

Leaders are the civic officials, military officers, and directors of Droyne society. They are ultimately responsible for everything that the Droyne do as a race.

Attributes: ST 7 [0], DX 9 [0], IQ 11 [30], HT 10/7 [0].

Advantages: Leader Racial Package [30], Status 2 [10], and 20 points from Ally Group [varies], Charisma [5/level], Clerical Investment [5/level], Legal Immunity [varies], Military Rank 3+ [15+5/level], Pious [5], psionic powers [varies], Ship Patron [varies], and more Status [5/level].

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points selected from Age [-3/year], Bad Temper [-10], Duty (To *dreskay* or *oytrip*) [varies], Fanaticism [-15], *increase* Chummy to Gregarious [a net -5], Honesty [-10], Intolerance (Of aliens or new things) [-10], Megalomania [-10], No Sense of Humor [-10], Obsession [-5 to -15], Overconfidence [-10], and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Administration (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Diplomacy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, and Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-11.

Secondary Skills: Choose one of these subcaste options:

1. *Military or Leader of Leaders:* Astrogation/TL (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-12, Engineer/TL (any) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, Piloting/TL (any) (P/A) DX [2]-9, Strategy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, and Tactics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10.

2. *Priestly:* Augury (Droyne) (M/H) IQ [4]-11, Performance (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Psychology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, and Teaching (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-12.

Background Skills: 2 points divided among Flight (P/A); Savoir-Faire (M/E); Interrogation or more Leadership (both M/A); more Diplomacy, and psionic skills (all M/H). A Leader who spent time in the military may spend these points on any Combat/Weapon skill; Engineer/TL (Combat), Strategy and Tactics (Land or Space), and Forgery/TL (all M/H); Astrogation/TL, Fast-Talk, Streetwise, Tracking, and Vacc Suit/TL (all M/A); and Free Fall/TL (P/A).

Customization Notes: Those Droyne Leaders that purchase Military Rank must spend at least 15 points on it, to represent a minimum of officer-equivalent seniority. Leaders make excellent PCs, and with their *oytrips* serving as Ship Patrons or Ally Groups, can even provide transportation and devoted ship's crews. If a ship acquired in this fashion features special Droyne jump drives or other non-standard gear, an extra 5+ points should be applied to the Ship Patron cost to reflect it.

TECHNICIAN   75 POINTS

This caste designs, develops, maintains, and repairs equipment of all types. In those rare cases where a Droyne community undertakes scientific research, this too falls to the Technicians.

Attributes: ST 7 [0], DX 9 [0], IQ 10 [20], HT 10/7 [0].

Advantages: Technician Racial Package [20], Status 1 [5], and 15 points chosen from Absolute Direction [5], Absolute Timing [5], Acute Vision [2/level], Lightning Calculator [5], Manual Dexterity [3/level], Mathematical Ability [10], and psionic powers [varies].

Disadvantages: A total of -15 points from Absent-Mindedness [-15], Curious [-5 to -15], Impulsiveness [-10], Obsession (Tinkering) [-5], Stubbornness [-5], and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Computer Operation/TL (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12, Electronics Operation/TL (any) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11, Mechanic/TL (any) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11.

Secondary Skills: Choose one of these subcaste options:

1. *Fixing:* 4 points in additional Electronics Operation/TL or Mechanic/TL specializations, typically two skills both (M/A) IQ [2]-10.

2. *Artificer:* Engineer/TL (any) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, and increase Mechanic/TL (any) to IQ+2 (M/A) [6]-12.

3. *Dreaming:* 4 points in one or more pure sciences (e.g., Physics/TL, Chemistry/TL, Genetics/TL), typically two skills, both (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9.

Background Skills: Technicians should spend 10 points to increase one primary or secondary skill, usually by +5. They then spend 4 points among Driving/TL (any), Flying, and Piloting/TL (any) (all P/A); Electronics Operation/TL (any), Mechanic/TL (any) (both M/A); Computer Programming/TL, Electronics/TL (any), Engineer/TL (any), and any psionic skills (all M/H). Technicians with a record of military service may invest a few points in Combat/Weapon skills and any Medical skills that rely extensively on equipment.

Customization Notes: Technicians are unlikely PCs, though their single-minded devotion to their technical skill or science isn't so far different from some Human-scientist stereotypes. Note that, despite their low IQ and initiative, Droyne Technicians will be highly skilled in at least one of their disciplines. Combining this with the High Technology advantage can create a devastatingly effective inventor or researcher, despite the mental limitations present.

SPORT   100 POINTS

Sports often undertake missions away from their community; in a sense they are the Droyne scout service. Sports have much greater initiative and independence than most Droyne.

Attributes: ST 7 [0], DX 10 [10], IQ 11 [30], HT 10/7 [0].

Advantages: Sport Racial Package [40], Status 1 [5], and 15 points chosen from 3-D Spatial Sense [10], Absolute Direction [5], Alertness [5/level], Danger Sense [15], Daredevil [15], Intuition [15], Military Rank [5/level], psionic powers [varies], and Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: -20 points chosen from Absent-Mindedness [-15], Confused [-10], Curious [-5 to -15], Impulsiveness [-10], Obsession [-5 to -15], On the Edge [-15], Overconfidence [-10], Short Attention Span [-10], and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Astrogation/TL (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, Beam Weapons/TL *or* Guns/TL (any) (P/E) DX+1 [1]-11*, Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-10, Diplomacy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, Driving/TL (any) *or* Piloting (Contragrav) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-9, Fast Talk (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, Mechanic/TL (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, and Streetwise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10.
* Includes +1 for IQ.

Secondary Skills: Choose one of these subcaste options:

1. *Seeking*: Interrogation (M/A) IQ [2]-11, and Survival (any) IQ (M/A) [2]-11.

2. *Speaker:* Interrogation (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, Leadership (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, and Teaching (M/A) IQ [2]-11.

3. *Finding:* Demolition/TL (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, First Aid/TL (M/E) IQ [1]-11, Prospecting/TL (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10, and Tracking (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10.

Background Skills: A total of 7 points distributed among these skills: Flight and Free Fall/TL (both P/A); Savior-Faire (M/E); Vacc Suit/TL (M/A) and Survival (both M/A); and any psi skills (M/H). Sports with army backgrounds may also buy Beam Weapons/TL (any), Knife, or Guns/TL (any) (all P/E); Battlesuit/TL, Broadsword, Gunner/TL (any), Shortsword, Spear, or Two-Handed Sword (all P/A); Carousing (P/A – HT); Forward Observer/TL (M/A); and Engineer/TL (Combat) and Tactics (both M/H). Sports with naval backgrounds may purchase Carousing (P/A – HT); Computer Operation/TL (M/E); Interrogation and Leadership (both M/A); and Strategy and Tactics (Space) (both M/H), or any one primary or secondary skill of another caste.

Customization Notes: Sports rarely have Ally Groups, since they usually undertake solo jobs. Many buy off the Hidebound disadvantage, though it isn't required.

EQUIPMENT

Most Droyne equipment is similar to Human models, and they often use imported items at no penalty. Tools and weapons made for Droyne are adapted for small, strangely fingered hands, and so are difficult for other races to use (-2 to effective skill).

Suits of Droyne armor are smaller than those for Humans, but do have to cater to wings and tails, so they are no lighter or less expensive. Since the Droyne are smaller and become encumbered more easily, they tend to wear less armor than larger races.

COYNS

A full set of 36 gold coyns in a nice container weighs 1 lb. and costs Cr15,000. A Droyne would need to be in dire straits before he would consider selling his coyns!

FLYING

Most Droyne are capable of unaided flight, under certain circumstances; see the sidebar on p. 90. More often, gravity and atmosphere make flight difficult. To overcome these limitations, aircraft, mechanical wings (see p. 102), and performance-enhancing drugs have been developed.

Flying Drug

This TL9 drug is essentially a Droyne-specific version of the Combat drug (p. GT109) that increases ST by 3 per dose. A dose of flying drug costs Cr75 as a pill, or Cr150 as an injection, and is hard to find outside Droyne communities.

WEAPONS

Weapons can present a considerable logistics problem to the Droyne. Since they don't often engage in war *or* mass production, few Droyne communities have sufficient incentive to create their own arms industry. Conversely, those weapons readily available for import often are ill-suited for Droyne usage.

Using Imperial Standard Weapons

Droyne will almost always fail to meet requirements for minimum ST and SS skill when using weapons designed for other races; this means that recoil penalties may be as much as quadruple the normal figures, and also risks breaking their fragile bones. For this reason, Droyne who have access to laser weapons prefer them. Normal *GURPS Traveller* lasers (see p. GT115) are fine for this, especially the laser pistols and laser carbines, although domestic versions will be built for Droyne hands; there are no changes to weight or other statistics.

Partly because of their tradition of hand-crafting items (see pp. 78-79), and partly to counteract their low racial DX, Droyne may use fine or very fine (Accurate) weapons. Fine weapons cost 5 times the normal price and give +1 Accuracy; very fine ones cost 30 times as much and give +2.

Weapons on fixed mounts such as vehicles are not subject to these constraints, and Droyne may use them normally.

Droyne-Specific Weapons

These are beam weapons, reflecting Droyne racial preferences, and are designed using the close range and compact size options to minimize weight (and thus required ST – since the average Droyne has ST 7).

All have HUD sights fitted (see p. GT112) to reduce the weapon Snap Shot numbers to something a Droyne might hope to achieve. Because of their handy size and autofire capabilities, they are sometimes acquired by criminals or adventurers, who modify the handgrips and controls for use by the appropriate species (takes a successful roll against an appropriate specialization of Armoury/TL, spare parts costing 10% of the weapon's price, and a couple of days' work).

Assault Laser-8: TL8 laser, 133 kJ output, with cyclic rate 12. Shoulder stock. Two rechargeable C cells in backpack.

Assault Laser-9: TL9 rainbow laser, 200 kJ output, with cyclic rate 12. Shoulder stock. One rechargeable C cell in backpack.

Assault Laser-13: TL13 rainbow laser, 179 kJ output, with cyclic rate 12. Shoulder stock. Two rechargeable C cells in backpack.

Support Laser-8: TL8 laser, 467 kJ output, with cyclic rate 12. Shoulder stock with bipod. Two rechargeable D cells in backpack.

Plasma Gun, Droyne-Portable-13: TL13 neutral particle beam plasma blaster, 1,133 kJ output, with cyclic rate 1. Shoulder stock with bipod. One rechargeable C cell in backpack.

DROYNE WEAPON TABLE

Weapon	Malf	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	AWt	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Costs	LC	Hld	TL
Assault Laser-8	Ver.	Imp.	2d	10	14	600	1,200	7.6	1	12*	27/2C	7	0	4,500/200	0	-4**	8
Assault Laser -9	Ver.	Imp.	3d	7	15	700	1,400	8	0.5	12*	12/C	7	0	6,250/100	0	-4**	9
Assault Laser-13	Ver.	Imp.	5d	7	15	900	1,800	7.7	1	12*	63/2C	7	0	1,500/200	0	-4**	13
Support Laser-8	Ver.	Imp.	7d	18	15	1,100	2,200	39.2	10	12*	77/2D	10	0	18,000/1,000	0	No	8
PGDP-13	Ver.	Exp.	5d×20†	12	15	1,300	3,900	20.5	0.5	1	6/C	10	-1	22,500/100	0	No	13

* Can be fired at either RoF 3~ (semi-auto with three rolls to hit) or RoF 4, 8, or 12 (full-auto using laser-autofire rules).

** Holdout figure is for laser weapon only. Power packs are separate items at -2 to Holdout.

† PGDP fires bolts of high-velocity star-hot plasma (treat as crushing; no damage multiplier). The splattering plasma also does 1/4 damage to everyone else within 2 yards of the target.

VEHICLES

TL8 Mechanical Wings

These are simple, light frames supporting fabric or plastic wings, increasing the Droyne's wingspan and lift – basically, a one-droyne ornithopter, operated using Flying skill.

A no-frills muscle engine much like a bicycle pedal is mounted in front of the wearer's chest, and used to store energy in a flywheel mounted between the wings at the rear; this powers roughly half an hour's flight. A clutch mechanism allows the user to disengage the flywheel to conserve power – with the clutch out, he still may glide from a higher altitude to a lower one, or use thermals to gain height like a glider, but he is unable to fly normally. In fact, since the motive thrust is so low, the only way to accelerate is to drop from a height or be towed like a Terran glider. To facilitate the latter option, the torso part of the harness has a clip – a motor, a vehicle or simply a heavy weight dropped off a cliff then launches the intrepid Droyne aviator.

Higher-tech versions may be fitted with reactionless thrusters and contragravity, but then the wings become superfluous.

- **Subassemblies:** Two standard wings.
- **Propulsion:** 1 kW ornithopter drivetrain with 2 lbs. thrust, 5 lbs. lift in each wing. (Wing, HP 1, 2 lbs., 0.04 cf, 1 kW).
- **Controls:** Primitive.
- **Accommodations:** Pilot (Flying skill) in harness station (Bo, HP 1, 2 lbs.).
- **Power:** 0.18 kW muscle engine, ST 9 (Bo, HP 1, 0.4 lbs., 0.02 cf). 2,000 kWs flywheel (Bo, HP 2, 10 lbs., 0.2 cf).
- **Space:** Empty space (5 cf per wing).
- **Surface Area:** Body 2.5. Each wing 18. Total 38.5.
- **Structure:** Super-light frame with standard materials.
- **Hit Points:** Body 1, each wing 3. Total 4.
- **Armor:** PD 2, DR 2 advanced ablative (2.3 lbs.).
- **Statistics:** Empty weight 34.1 lbs., payload 200 lbs., loaded weight 234.1 lbs., volume 10.3 cf. Size +1. Cr2,471. HT 6.
- **Performance:** Stall speed 10 mph. Aerial motive thrust 4 lbs. Aerodynamic drag 38.5. Top speed 30 mph. aAccel 0 mph/s. aMR 6. aSR 3. aDecel 24 mph/s.
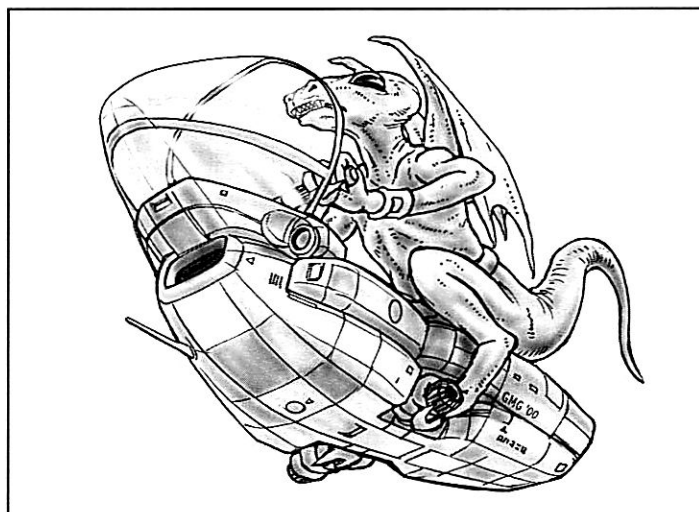
TL8 Gravcycle

Sports use this on urgent missions, perhaps carrying dispatches or desperately needed medical supplies.

- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** Two skids, retracting into body. Very good streamlining.
- **Propulsion:** 500 lb. thrust standard reactionless thruster (Bo, HP 30, 500 lbs., 10 cf, 250 kW).
- **Aerostatic Lift:** TL12 4,500 lb. lift contragrav generator (Bo, HP 4, 24.5 lbs., 0.49 cf, 4.5 kW).
- **Instruments and Electronics:** Radio communicator (Bo, HP 1, 1 lb., 0.02 cf, 0.01 kW, 100 mile range). Laser communicator (Bo, HP 2, 10 lbs., 0.2 cf, 0.1 kW, 200 mile range). Navigation radar, 10 mile range, no targeting option (BoF, HP 2, 10 lbs., 0.2 cf, 2.5 kW, Scan 17). Headlight, 1 mile range (BoF, HP 1, 0 lbs., 0.01 kW). Digital recon camera option (Bo, HP 4, 25 lbs., 0.5 cf, 0.01 kW). Navigation instruments (Bo, HP 4, 20 lbs., 0.4 cf, 0.01 kW). Inertial navigation system (Bo, HP 4, 20 lbs., 0.4 cf, 0.01 kW). Small computer, dedicated (Bo, HP 1, 1 lb., 0.02 cf, 0.01 kW, Complexity 2). Terminal (Bo, HP 10, 40 lbs., 2 cf, 0.01 kW).
- **Controls:** Computerized.
- **Accommodations:** Pilot (Piloting [Contragrav]) in cycle crew station (Bo, HP 1, 10 lbs.).
- **Power:** 260 kW radiothermal generator (Bo, HP 60, 2,800 lbs., 28 cf, lasts 14 years).
- **Space:** 2 cf cargo (Bo). Access space (Body 76.98 cf).
- **Surface Area:** Body 175. Skids 22. Total 197.
- **Structure:** Medium frame with standard materials.
- **Hit Points:** Body 262, skids 16.
- **Armor:** PD 2, DR 3 expensive metal (148 lbs.).
- **Surface Features:** Lifting Body.
- **Statistics:** Empty weight 4,396 lbs., payload 240 lbs., loaded weight 4,636 lbs., volume 143.23 cf. Size modifier 3. Cost Cr98,089. HT 12.
- **Air:** Stall Speed 0 mph; can hover, can fly. Aerial motive thrust 500 lbs. Aerodynamic drag 35. Top speed 325 mph. aAccel 2 mph/s. aMR 2.5. aSR 3. aDecel 10 mph/s.

DROYNE SCOUT

ONE HEX EQUALS 1 YARD

SCALE IN YARDS

3   6   9

DECK PLAN SYMBOLS

✕	Iris Valve
⊙	Iris Valve, Overhead
▬ ▬	Large Hatch
]	Maintenance Hatch
◉	Sleeping Creche
⑧	Acceleration Couch
◉	Hygiene Unit
	Air/raft
☒	Cargo Lift
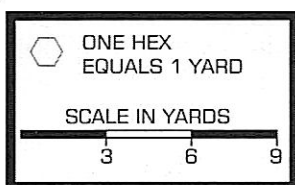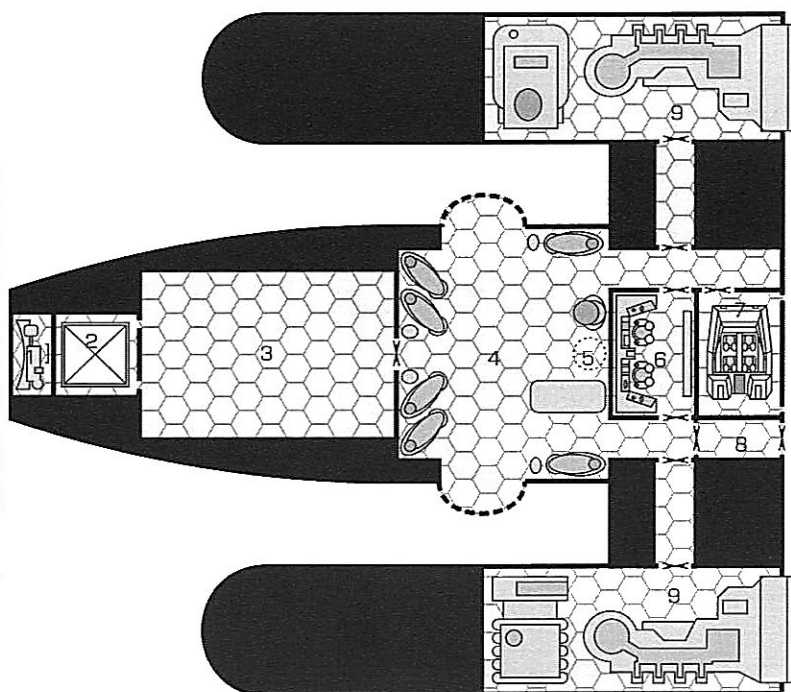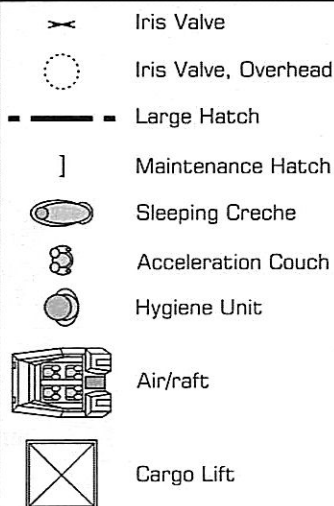
KEY

1. Avionics
2. Cargo Lock
3. Cargo Bay
4. Nest
5. Turret Access
6. Bridge
7. Air/raft Garage
8. Airlock
9. Drive Pods

DROYNE STARSHIPS

Droyne ship design follows the Human approach, although rarely do they build at higher than TL10.

The main difference is in life-support and companionship needs. Droyne usually build staterooms the size of three Human staterooms. (For consistency's sake, however, Droyne ships' Stateroom modules are listed in the "Imperial standard" sizes. Divide the listed number of Staterooms by 3 to get a rough idea of the actual number of physical staterooms aboard.) Each Droyne stateroom holds six to 12 Droyne or three to six Humans. Further, they have interconnecting doors enabling the whole crew (and passengers, if Droyne) to live in each others' pockets.

These Droyne living areas tend to feature an open plan, commonly referred to by spacers as "the nest." These arrangements can get on the nerves of Human passengers used to more privacy.

Droyne Jump Drives: The Best in Charted Space

Many spacers swear that the hand-built Droyne jump drives are the best anywhere. The GM who wishes to make this more than a rumor may specify that Droyne jump drives are finely or very finely made. Finely made drives cost four times the standard price, but require half as much maintenance, and therefore half as many engineers. Very finely made drives cost 20 times list price, but require effectively no maintenance for decades. An alternative is to give a bonus to repair rolls on Droyne jump drives.

Mixing Spacecraft

Although many Droyne worlds are capable of building starships, most *oytripin* are satisfied to buy new or used ships of standard designs from established shipyards in whatever part of space they call home. In the Imperium, the Zhodani Consulate, and the Solomani Sphere, Droyne fly Human ships; in Vargr or Aslan space, they fly locally built vessels, and so on.

The larger Droyne castes are Human-sized, so Droyne crew stations are large enough to squeeze in a Human. (In *GURPS Vehicles*, the Droyne use the "cramped" workstations listed, but these give most Droyne the equivalent of a roomy environment. The same principle applies in their starships.) Droyne ergonomics are all wrong for Humans or other major races, and vice versa, so the GM may feel free to impose skill penalties until the proper controls are fitted in a Human-built Droyne ship or Droyne-build Human ship.

Some Droyne ships might even incorporate psychotronic controls (see p. T:AI142), in which case non-psionic spacehands (such as most Imperial citizens) will be at a total loss to operate the vessel! The Droyne crew for these ships would have to exceed the normal racial psionic abilities (see pp. 93-94).

TL10 Droyne Scout

This ship occupies the same niche as the *Suleiman*-class scout/courier does in Imperial space (both in active and retired service). Usually it is temporarily assigned to a *kroyloss*. It has one large living space. The major issue for non-Droyne is the lack of privacy – the "nest" lacks even a screen around the fresher.
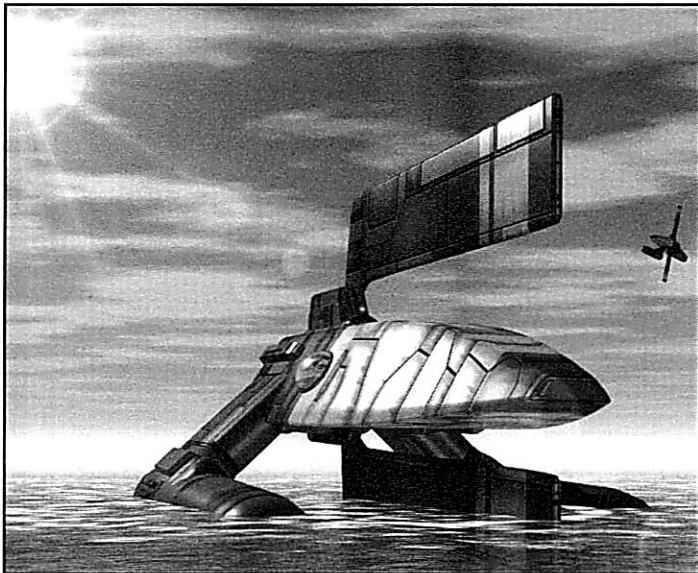
The small laser turret is fitted at the forward edge of the vertical stabilizer root, so fire to the rear or below is obscured by the fin or the hull. As the vessel has internal artificial gravity, ground fire is easily accomplished by rolling inverted, but the ship has a "deadly arc" to the rear where it cannot return fire, unlike its Imperial or Aslan equivalents.

The two drive pods are used as floats for water landings, or as landing feet when on the ground; in this case, the ship can be "flattened" by rotating the wings and the attached pods upward about the wing roots.

The rear cargo hatch is equipped with a winch on a boom, so that cargo can be hauled up when the pods are fully down; when they are rotated up, the rear cargo ramp is extended to ground level.

- **Crew:** One pilot/engineer.
- **Design:** 100-ton SL Hull, DR 200, 1 triple Turret sporting three Lasers. *Modules:* Basic Bridge, Engineering, 3 Jump Drive, 20 Fuel, 20 Maneuver, 1 Spacedock (for open-topped air/raft or similar), 3 Staterooms, 1 Utility, 1 Fuel Processor, 17.5 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 283.1, LMass 370.6, Cost MCr25.7, HP: 15,000. Size Modifier +8.
- **Performance:** Accel 2.16 Gs, Jump 2, Airspeed 2,357 mph.

TL10 Droyne Trader

The Droyne trader is commonly encountered as a merchant vessel, operating on an unscheduled basis between Droyne worlds. The crew is typically a *tyafelm* or *kroyloss*. The accommodations are set up for six Droyne in one large communal area, and eight standard Imperial staterooms. However, the internal walls and fittings are designed so that they can easily be rearranged to accommodate a dozen or so Droyne instead, with considerably less privacy.

As with small freighters produced by many other races, the vessel is a belly-landing design, designed to turn around as quickly as possible in port. This dictates a large "contact area" through which cargo, preferably in standard containers, can be off- and on-loaded swiftly.

- **Crew:** Navigator, pilot, engineer, steward, medic, and gunner. Note that this is a Droyne preferred arrangement of six crew members, and some shuffling of jobs could be done. The navigator, not the pilot, will usually be the Leader in charge.
- **Design:** 200-ton SL Hull, DR 100, 2 single Turrets each fitted with a single Missile Rack. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 4 Jump Drive, 20 Fuel, 16 Maneuver, 11 Staterooms, 1 Utility, 1 Fuel Processor, 67.5 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 274.7, LMass 612.2, Cost MCr25.9, HP: 22,500. Size Modifier +8.
- **Performance:** Accel 1.05 Gs, Jump 1, Airspeed 1,700 mph.

TL10 Droyne Cruiser

The Droyne cruiser is a military ship, usually found in the service of an *oytrip*. It usually carries a crew of 16. Unusually for a Droyne craft, the cruiser's complement has individual staterooms; treat these as one-half of a Stateroom module each, making very cramped quarters for Human-sized occupants. This provides more cover for the crew in boarding actions.

The ship also can carry up to 128 Droyne passengers, usually Warriors and their support personnel. Any passenger complement exceeding 112 requires the crew to double-bunk in their "half" staterooms, with senior passengers using the freed-up eight half-staterooms. The remaining passenger space – the equivalent of 28 Stateroom modules – is arranged in the traditional Droyne communal style.

- **Crew:** Navigator, pilot, five engineers, medic, and eight crew usually broken up as four stewards and four gunners.
- **Design:** 800-ton USL Hull, DR 200, 8 single Turrets each fitted with one Laser. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 32 Jump Drive, 240 Fuel, 240 Maneuver, 50 Vehicle Bay (for 50-ton small craft, most often a modular cutter with passenger module in Imperial space), 36 Staterooms, 2 Utility, 1 Fuel Processor, 77 Cargo.
- **Statistics:** EMass 1,956.6, LMass 2,341.6, Cost MCr197.2, HP: 60,000. Size Modifier +10.
- **Performance:** Accel 4.1 Gs, Jump 3, Airspeed 3,939 mph.

DROYNE TRADER

BRIDGE DECK
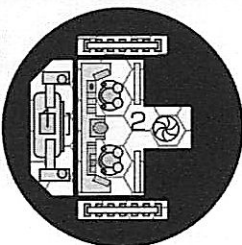
CREW DECK

PASSENGER DECK

SIDE CUTAWAY VIEW

Bridge

Crew

Passenger

Drives

Cargo (40' high)
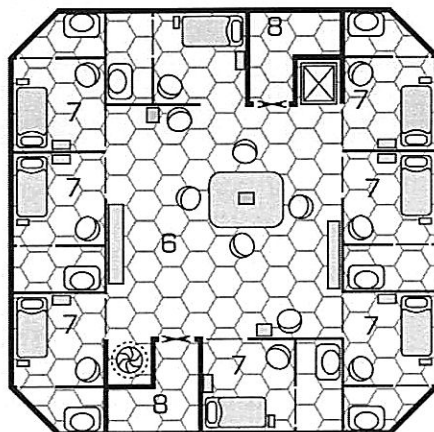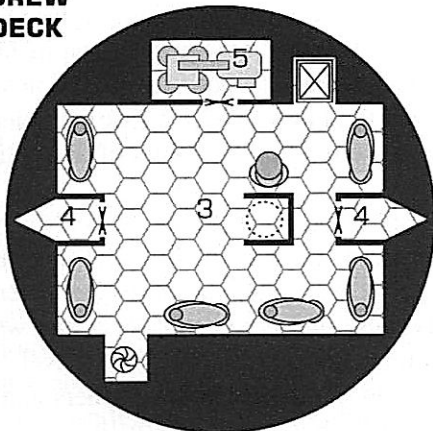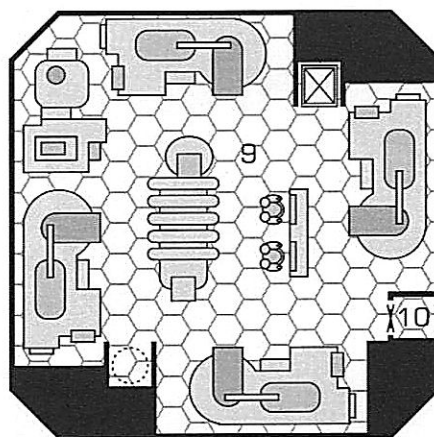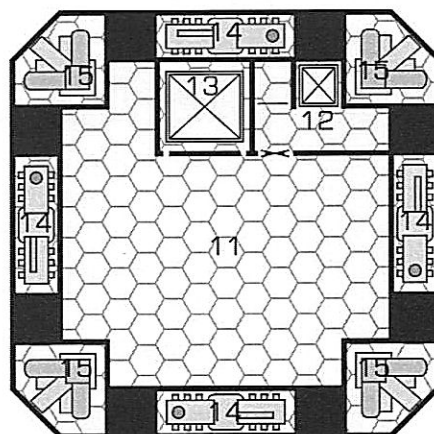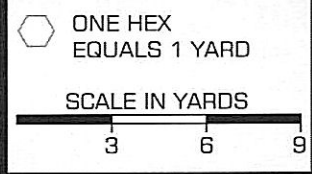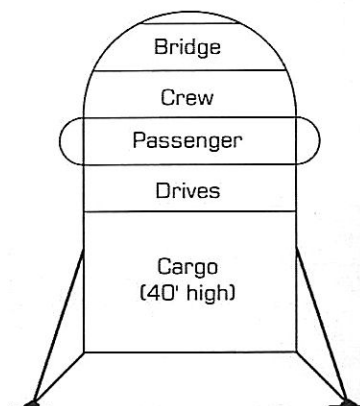
Landing gear folds upward against the hull when ship is in flight.

DECK PLAN SYMBOLS

Symbol	Description
✕	Iris Valve
◉	Iris Valve, Floor
◌	Iris Valve, Overhead
◉	Iris Valve, Both
— —	Sliding Door
▬ ▬	Large Hatch
]	Maintenance Hatch
⬭	Sleeping Creche
8	Acceleration Couch
◍	Hygiene Unit
▭	Bed
○	Chair
◖	Fresher
⊠	Personnel Lift
⊠	Cargo Lift
—	Interior Partition
▬	Bulkhead

DRIVE DECK

CARGO DECK

KEY

1. Avionics
2. Bridge
3. Nest
4. Turret Access Slides
5. Life Support
6. Common Area
7. Passenger Stateroom
8. Passenger Luggage Holds
9. Engineering
10. Airlock
11. Cargo Bay
12. Airlock & Ship's Locker
13. Cargo Lock
14. Maneuver Drives
15. Landing Gear Machinery

The Ancients

An Ancient Timeline

-3,000,000	First Droyne intelligence
-500,000	Droyne cities
-490,000	Droyne reach early TL6
-470,000	Ritual warfare adopted
-350,000	Grandfather born
-300,000	Ancients thrive
-300,000	Civil war destroys Ancients

This chapter is intended for GMs only. Players who read it may end up spoiling the fun in their campaign.

The Ancients had a vibrant, starfaring civilization more than a quarter of a million years before any of the present major races discovered jump drive. Their technology was centuries, perhaps millennia, ahead of anything known in 1120. Yet, they were wiped out in a war of unimaginable violence. The common view is that this was a civil war, mainly because the alternative – a race sufficiently advanced and warlike to destroy the Ancients utterly at the height of their power – is too awful to contemplate.

Much information about the Ancients is classified; wherever their sites are found in charted space, the local military takes a keen interest, mainly because of the potential for a find which will revolutionize warfare or space travel. The data that does reach civilian researchers and the general public has been carefully filtered to remove anything of military value.

In classic *Traveller* canon, the Droyne *are* the Ancients, and the Final War *was* a civil war. This was one of the Big Secrets of the original game, although it is now common knowledge, and explicitly stated many times in the *GURPS Traveller* line. Some GMs prefer to break this link, and have the Ancients be another race, perhaps many other races; some keep the link, but have players who are unaware of it. For this reason, the Ancients are presented as a separate race in a separate chapter; the individual GM (as always) decides how much is true for his campaign, and may present as much or as little of this to his players as he wishes.

This work is written from a *Traveller* canon viewpoint, but it is structured so that the GM can easily make the Droyne a transplanted client race of the Ancients, like Humans and Vargr. In this case, the GM must assign one or more races to the Ancients' role, and may wish to present the Droyne as a red herring – the race everyone *thinks* is the Ancients. If the GM chooses this approach, he must provide an explanation as to why many features of Ancient sites – doors, furniture, perches, balconies, and so on – seem perfectly adapted to Droyne use, or be prepared to modify this facet of *Traveller* canon.

ANCIENT CHARACTERS

The Ancients share many traits with their descendants, the Droyne, but do not embrace the mystical or ritual aspects of Droyne culture. It is assumed that Ancients will be NPCs in most campaigns.

It's also possible to set a campaign before the Final War, in which PCs take the part of Ancients, or members of Ancient client races; in this case the Ancients would have no High Technology advantage, but client races might well have the Primitive disadvantage – probably 6-8 levels of it. While this would be a fascinating campaign, much of the supporting material for *Traveller* would not apply to it.

BUILDING ANCIENTS

Ancients are built using the Droyne templates on pp. 93-94, 97-100, but all Ancients who somehow survive into the era of the Third Imperium have three levels of High Technology (see p. CI26) at a cost of 100 points.

HISTORY

Droyne and Ancient history can be divided into three eras: the prehistoric, ancient, and modern periods, each with a distinct character.

There are many mysteries about the Droyne, most of which Imperial research will never reveal. Specifically, the prehistoric and ancient periods are not known in 1120, even to the brightest and best of Imperial scientists, although a few crackpots have theories that come close to the truth. The academics closest to understanding these eras are the Zhodani researchers investigating the surviving Droyne materials on Viepchakl, the satellite of Zhdant.

THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

This spans between roughly 3 million years ago, when the Droyne first showed intelligence, and 350,000 years ago, when the Ancients arose.

The first evidence of sentience for the Droyne was their use of tools and decorative clothing. Later advances in this period included agriculture, the use of hunters as scouts and guards, division of labor, and expansion into fishing and seafaring – but *not* the casting that most Imperial researchers believe began here (see p. 64).

By about -500,000, the Droyne had established cities as trading centers along coasts and rivers. These were supported by large agricultural areas, often irrigated, and typically were the capitals of city-states, controlling up to 4,000 square miles, and with a population of up to 1 million. They were separated by large buffer regions of no-man's land.

Differences in the available resources inevitably led to conflict. Many of the technological advances of the next 10,000 years were driven by warfare, although Droyne technology evolved much more slowly than for other major races; after 10 millennia, they had only reached early TL6.

From -490,000 to about -350,000, Droyne society was frozen at this level. They built cities, communicated, had writing and machines – but they were satisfied with idyllic, pastoral lives, and had no upward drive. Without some sort of stimulus, this long plateau might have lasted forever.

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

The Ancients burst onto the scene suddenly, at a time when no other species in charted space had star travel. They expanded to hundreds of worlds. Then they destroyed themselves.

Any theory on the Ancients must address several important questions, namely: Where did they come from? Why is their technology so diverse? Who fought the Final War, why, and why was it so effective in destroying their civilization?

In 1120, Imperial scientists debate four main theories. None of them answers all the questions satisfactorily.

Conflict

This theory proposes that the Ancients were split into many different groups (tribes, nations, or similar), which competed fiercely. Eventually, this led to the Final War. Probably the most popular of current theories, this explains the variation in technology and the ferocity of the war.

Conquest

A relatively weak theory, this suggests that when the Ancients expanded out into the galaxy, they encountered an even more advanced culture, which saw them as a threat and crushed them. This explains the Final War, but not the technological variety of Ancient sites; further, its single biggest weakness is the lack of evidence for the supposed superior culture. It has some adherents in several minor races, each of whom claims that their species was *really* the Ancients, and that the Enemy genetically engineered their forebears to suppress their true talents.

Migration

For some reason or other, the Ancients decided to leave charted space and go elsewhere. This theory explains the Final War as a sort of tidying up before they left. Once popular, this hypothesis is now falling out of favor, partly because it fails to explain the wide differences in technology, and partly because it does not explain why the Ancients felt they needed to tidy up. Most importantly, there is no sign of whatever event or threat might have triggered the migration of an entire species. (For one possible threat, see Larry Niven's short story *At the Core*.)

Peaking Out

The Ancients' technology reached the ultimate limits, and this caused a racial depression which led to a species-wide suicide pact – the Final War. This theory fails to explain unfinished projects such as the Leenitakot ringworld, nor does it allow for the fact that the Ancients still had the prospect of becoming a Type III civilization open to them (see sidebar, p. 112), nor does it explain why they felt the need to tidy up behind them. (Vernor Vinge's *Marooned in Realtime* partly addresses "peaking out" as applied to Humaniti; Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* offers another view.)

I f you're a GM who wants to stay close to *Traveller* canon and still have some surprises about the Ancients for his players, then focus on this question: *Where did Yaskoydray come from?*

Canon assumes that Yaskoydray was a fluke of the cosmic dice – a supergenius born by accident. But there are other options, each of which can lead into a series of adventures as the PCs uncover the truth behind the canon.

The Artifact

Yaskoydray gained his unusual powers while exploring as an adolescent, after he found an artifact left over from an even earlier civilization – perhaps an advanced *Brain Seed* (p. UTT89). Read Vernor Vinge's *A Fire Upon the Deep* for some ideas on how this might affect its recipient. An obvious adventure along this line of thought is the hunt for (or accidental discovery of) another such device.

War in Heaven

Other, even more advanced races (perhaps Type II or Type III civilizations – see sidebar p. 112) are locked in a struggle for control of charted space. One side deliberately created the Ancients from the Droyne, much as the Droyne created the Vargr from Terran canines; the other side provoked the Final War to deny this resource to their enemy. *GURPS Lensman* addresses this sort of conflict. A campaign built on this premise would hinge on discovering what happened to the pre-Ancient races, and what their current schemes are, if any.

Paradoxical Timeline Nomads

At some point in the distant future, wars between advanced civilizations are conducted by altering the past to prevent the enemy culture ever appearing. This is much like the previous option except for different adversaries, and a campaign in this universe could well become a hybrid of *GURPS Traveller* and *GURPS Time Travel.*

Quantum Timeline Nomads

Yaskoydray was actually a Droyne scientist from a parallel universe, marooned in this one after a failed experiment. The Ancient civilization was created to enable him to return home; once he had this capability, he destroyed his creation to allow this universe to develop naturally. Unfortunately, he was not entirely successful. Has he discovered since that his clean-up was incomplete? Does he feel a need to wipe the galaxy clean of Ancient-descended civilizations (i.e., all the current major races)? That's for the GM to know, and the PCs to find out.

Early Vilani researchers who discovered the bases and colonies left behind thought each to be representative of a different race. It was some time before cross-referencing of common factors revealed that all were examples of the same civilization. Those investigating Ancient sites place their age at 300,000 years, plus or minus 10,000; the civilization as a whole appears to have lasted fewer than 50,000 years. The name "Ancients" was originally bestowed in honor of the sites' antiquity.

The Ancient culture was wide-ranging. Confirmed sites have been found in every sector of the Imperium, over 200 in all; they are also present throughout Vargr and Aslan territory. What little information leaks out of the Zhodani Consulate on this topic suggests a high frequency of Ancient bases. It is almost certain that the Ancients explored and settled worlds beyond charted space, and that evidence of their travels is to be found beyond the borders of current states.

The Ancients' population level is a matter of some debate. Some hold that the surprisingly frequent asteroid belts in charted space are the remains of high-population Ancient worlds, shattered in the Final War; in this case, the total Ancient population may have been in the trillions. These theorists hold that the known Ancient sites are outposts, not worth destroying in so spectacular a manner. Others point out that no evidence to support this theory has been found in any asteroid belt surveyed to date; they believe that no more than 1 million or so Ancients lived on any one world, and that for some reason the Ancients only settled in specific regions on each planet. This hypothesis would give a total population of no more than 1 billion.

Over a period of some 2,000 years, the Ancients destroyed each other in a war of such ferocity that only traces of their existence remain. As a result, archaeologists labor under immense handicaps in trying to piece together how the Ancients lived. This Final War was fought with weapons as advanced as TL15. The armaments used were capable of reducing entire planets to asteroid belts. Many planets still bear the scars of being bombarded by planetoids or even small moons. The Ancients' attacks seem to have been unstoppable, even with Ancient technology. Still, there are inconsistencies, not always explainable, suggesting a wide range of technologies, abilities, and tactics were used.

THE MODERN PERIOD

With the end of the Final War, the Ancients ceased to exist for all practical purposes. Few Droyne survived the war; those who did lost all their higher technology, and declined into barbarism. The majority even lost the ability to caste, and a large number of the surviving worlds faded into extinction.

TECHNOLOGY

The two most striking aspects of Ancient technology are its very high level and its diversity. Of the hundreds of Ancient sites excavated and analyzed, each seems to use a different approach to solving basic technical problems. This partly explains why the Vilani originally thought them to have been built by many races. One site depends on screws to fasten objects together; a second uses glue; a third, rivets; a fourth, interlocking ellipses; a fifth, simple plastic clasps. Where one ship's computer uses silicon chip circuits, others may perform the same functions using fiber optics, fluid dynamics, or channeled heat transfer.

WORLD-BENDING

In some cases, the Ancients moved entire worlds. These engineering projects were so vast that not even the Final War was able to erase them from the face of the galaxy. See Chapter 4, *The Inheritors*, for one example. Others include:

Leeitakot: This system, in the Hinterworlds Sector, is an unfinished ringworld, circling a dim M1V star at a distance of some 18.5 million miles. The ring is less than 62,000 miles wide, with an inner surface area equal to that of 25,000 Earths. Why the Ancients would have built a ringworld around such an unspectacular star is not known, although some have speculated that the star itself was somehow changed. It is also unclear why the ring was left with no soil or atmosphere.

Tireen: In the Vargr Extents, the Ancients created a rosette of five planets, equidistant from each other along the same orbit. Not content with this, they then (presumably) transformed the planets so that each is 4,000 miles in diameter, with a dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, 40% surface water, and a warm climate. While there is no way to know what the worlds were like previously, and so no way to gauge the effort involved, it must have been vast.

TRANSPLANTATION

Once the Solomani Hypothesis (that all Humaniti originated on Terra) was accepted, it was a simple matter to analyze the gene pools of Humaniti, and conclude that the Ancients visited Earth many times, taking groups of 1,000 to 10,000 primitive Humans to each of perhaps 100 worlds. Some of these groups were genetically engineered to suit their new homes, but the majority were not.

It is therefore a fairly common belief that any world which is home to a Human minor race must have an Ancient site on it somewhere – after all, the Ancients must have brought the Humans here originally. If one has not already been discovered, there are sure to be fortune-seekers and scientists looking for it.

Just why the Ancients were interested in Humaniti remains unknown. Assistants? Workers? Warriors? Pets? A food source? No one knows for sure.

GENETIC ENGINEERING

At about the same time that they were kidnapping Humans, the Ancients also sampled Terran canines. This dog stock was manipulated by genetic engineering to produce an upright stance, opposable thumbs, and intelligence, resulting in the Vargr (see *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1*).

Many other life-forms are thought to be the result of Ancient genetic tampering. The Ancients' motives for this remain unclear to Imperial scientists.

ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

The remaining debris from the Ancient civilization is scattered in ruined sites across parsecs of empty space. Individual pieces of this debris are commonly called artifacts; they come in all shapes and sizes, and three main types:

Garbage: The vast majority of Ancient artifacts are rubble with no apparent value except as curiosities. Examples might be shimmering pieces of broken brick, diamond-hard transparencies which have obviously been cast, and simple containers made of titanium or cobalt. A constant fear for any researcher working on an Ancient site is that he may mistake some crucially important device for garbage, simply because he cannot recognize its purpose. The Heechee "prayer fans" in Frederick Pohl's *Gateway* series are an example of the latter.

Broken but Recognizable: Perhaps one artifact in 1,000 falls into this category. It is no longer functional, but its purpose is apparent, perhaps a fastening device or chair. Again, the risk of mistaken categorization is great, but these devices are valuable for the insights they give into the technology used to create and operate them. They are of interest to scientists and whichever state they are found in; collectors and the public are not usually exposed to them.

Adventure Seed: Seven Days of the Ancients

Naturally, each interstellar intelligence agency maintains a small group of researchers who gather all the unclassified Ancient material released by their neighbors and try to reverse-engineer what was filtered out, so that they can find out what next door's military has on its wish list.

As their starship leaves one militaristic world, the PCs discover a stowaway, who claims he was a member of such a unit, that his office was destroyed in mysterious circumstances by other agents of his own government, and that he is pursued by nefarious forces who believe he knows too much.

Is this just another deranged addict who watches too many thrillers on holovision, or is he telling the truth? If the latter, what does he *really* know, what do the Bad Guys *think* he knows, and how far will they chase the ship to get it?

We Are the Ancients . . .

"*The truth which the Droyne-Vilani conspiracy has tried for centuries to suppress is this: **The Solomani were the Ancients**. Our legends of Mu and Atlantis dimly recall this Golden Age. We are much older than today's so-called archaeologists would have you believe; Solomani art, for example the classic **One Million Years B.C.**, celebrates Humaniti's struggle against the dinosaurs. It's a pity that the supporting scientific evidence was destroyed in the Long Night, probably by Vilani spies.*

"*Yes, we are the Ancients. And soon, we will take back what is rightfully ours: **rulership of charted space**.*"
 – *Jevgenijis Nirgudkar,*
 Solomani Movement

"*Words fail me. They really do; they fail me. I mean, if the Solomani were the Ancients, then surely the minor Human races are Solomani, too, so Nirgudkar's whole philosophy collapses around his ears.*

"*Find out what this guy is smoking and get me a kilo of it, will you?*"
 – *Dr. Krazemlea Askatrell,*
 Meade Institute

Research in Other States

Other planetary and starfaring polities are just as interested in Ancient sites and artifacts, and like the Imperium are mainly motivated by the desire for advanced technology, military or otherwise.

The Aslan Hierate is a chaotic mass of competing clans, most of whom attempt to keep any newly discovered Ancient site secret and exploit it for the clan's benefit. Many clans lack the resources to fully exploit a find, though, so may find themselves using it as bait to cement an alliance with another clan who can help research it.

The Hive Federation, so far as anyone can determine, has no Ancient sites, and therefore no formal policy for investigating them. Naturally, there are some topical clubs with a deep interest in the Ancients, and these are often found far from the Federation, puttering about any site the locals will give them access to, watched over by vigilant Ithklur guards.

The Solomani Confederation maintains a policy much like that of the Imperium, although they are less likely to let even rubble back into circulation, and are slightly less generous with their finder's fees (which average 80% of Imperial standard prices). The black market in Ancient devices is also under constant attack by SolSec. As a result, underworld prices for artifacts are high – five to 100 times the government fees.

The Two Thousand Worlds, like the Hive Federation, have no acknowledged Ancient sites. Unlike the Hivers, they appear to have little interest in solving the riddle of the Ancients. Should such a site be found, the Steppelord of the 2,000 Worlds would undoubtedly take personal control.

The Vargr Extents, like the Hierate, have no standard policy. Since owning an artifact is a powerful boost to a Vargr leader's charisma, Vargr sites are more likely to be indiscriminately looted, and the artifacts more likely to see actual use outside a research laboratory.

The Zhodani Consulate approach is not too different from that of the Imperium. There are no finder's fees, but there is recognition to be had by finding a site. (Financial rewards would seem to promote an adventurism that the Zhodani would rather suppress in their society.) Any good Zhodani finding Ancient bases or debris is expected to notify the authorities; failure to carry out this civic duty is difficult to conceal for long in a state run by a psionic oligarchy, and marks one as antisocial.

Since many Ancient artifacts are psionic in nature, the Zhodani have a huge advantage over the Imperials when it comes to studying and using them. The starmap artifact (see p. T:AI22) is the most dramatic example.

Working Devices: The find in a million is a working Ancient artifact; even once found, it can be the work of a lifetime to analyze its purpose and use. In fact, unlocking the device's secrets is often the more difficult puzzle.

The "mother lode" would be an untouched Ancient ship or city, which somehow survived the Final War. This would be a once-in-a-lifetime find, and a natural climax to a campaign centered around unveiling the Ancients' secrets.

ANCIENT SITES

It is the Final War which occupies the popular imagination, but the Ancients had other interests. Their settlements and bases were not designed as fortifications (at least, not the ones which survive); some of the complexes in cities excavated by their successors look like entertainment centers, concert halls, theaters, parks, schools. A common question among academics is: If the Ancients had such awesome weaponry, what must the peaceful applications of their technology have been like?

Traffic in Artifacts

Most interstellar states have an extreme interest in Ancient artifacts, due to the potential value of their secrets. Since the remains vary so much, the usual approach is to gather every available piece of the puzzle and search for common themes.

Imperial Research and Discovery Bonuses

The Imperium has strict laws controlling traffic in Ancient artifacts; they cannot be legally sold unless registered with the Imperium. The registration fees are incidental (usually Cr20); the true purpose is to allow the authorities to examine each item.

Garbage is registered and then returned to the owner; a compulsory purchase scheme – paying from Cr500 to Cr100,000, depending on the artifact – separates useful items from collectors, after which Imperial scientists analyze the devices. Unfortunately, this approach results in a black market in Ancient devices; anything more interesting than common rubble can be sold illicitly for more money than it would fetch under the Imperial purchase scheme. In the Imperium, black-market prices usually are two to 10 times higher than what the government would pay.

Ancient sites within the Imperium are normally the responsibility of the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. Scouts coordinate (and often conduct) the excavation and research of these sites under carefully controlled conditions. Major universities compete for the chance to assist, for most of what is known about the Ancients was learned by studying such sites. The exceedingly rare site which offers immediate military applications (for example, the site where a cache of black globes was discovered – see p. 113) is administered by the Imperial Navy, and placed under Marine guard. Such sites are very secret, very heavily guarded, and of great interest to megacorporations, organized crime, and foreign powers.

To encourage the casual traveler who might stumble on an Ancient site to report it to the proper authorities, the Imperium pays a flat Cr50,000 finder's fee to anyone who advises the IISS of a previously unknown Ancient site. After an in-depth analysis of the site, which could take years, a further payment of between Cr1,000 and MCr1 is made, depending on the perceived value of the site. This may not seem much, but the typical adventurer does not have access to the expensive equipment and highly trained help needed to analyze the site, which in 99.9% of cases will have nothing but interesting rubble to offer in any event.

THE SECRET OF THE ANCIENTS

The secret of the Ancients is not known in 1120, not even by the brightest and best Imperial academics. The Ancients themselves left no history behind, at least not in any form that Imperial science can recognize. The PCs may be lucky enough to find and revive a survivor from those times, and to hold on to him long enough to learn what he knows (fighting off hordes of criminals and intelligence agents all the while, of course), but this will give them only part of the story. Only should they miraculously encounter Yaskoydray himself might they learn the whole truth.

ORIGINS

The Droyne became the dominant species on their world nearly half a million years ago, and built themselves a gentle, simple civilization *without* a caste system. Dwelling contentedly in a society of cooperation and trust, the Droyne had little impetus to develop technology, so advanced very slowly.

Mutations were common on the Droyne homeworld, and one day a fantastically intelligent mutant Droyne was born. He also wielded unprecedented psionic potential. Growing bored with the bucolic TL6 Droyne life, he discovered that while no one occupation could keep his interest, he did like looking for answers. This realization sparked his career as the greatest scientist in the history of charted space.

He needed help with his experiments, and even more importantly a better technical base. Given his raw ability, he took over the Droyne homeworld. With his own innovations in psionically enhanced TL7 genetics, he recruited the whole population as assistants – introducing casting as a means to hone his race's limited potential. The resulting, more focused society sped up its technological progress. The race soon left its own world and began exploring the confines of its solar system.

Their supergenius leader needed a long life to follow his more extended experiments through to their conclusion, so he developed a means of immortality. Even this was insufficient to deal with the interstellar travel necessary for some experiments, so he invented the jump drive.

Even the casted Droyne remained depressingly devoid of intelligence and initiative, so the supergenius began a breeding program. He sired 20 children, each of whom had about 20 more, creating a cadre of several hundred highly intelligent, immortal beings. These met the immediate need, so the program was stopped. About this time, the original Ancient adopted the name Yaskoydray, literally *Grandfather.*

Yaskoydray worked on a wide variety of projects for some time, assigning tasks to his offspring. They scattered across the galaxy to do his bidding – exploring new worlds, kindling supernovas, genetically engineering various species, building magnificent places, and generally investigating the universe. Each descendant led a group of Droyne who carried out the actual work; projects were carried out at specific bases, which might then be abandoned, reused, or destroyed.

Ancient Artifacts

The Ancients are the ideal way for the GM to introduce exciting high-tech gimmicks into his campaign without unbalancing it. You want force swords? The PCs find a couple in an Ancient base – enough for them to play with, not enough for the GM to have to explain why the Imperial Marines don't use them. Of course, it goes without saying that the Ancient base blows up in a spectacular manner before the PCs can loot it completely or (even worse) move in.

You want a matter duplicator, but don't want to rewrite the entire campaign's economics? The PCs find one in a derelict Ancient starship, on an unchangeable collision course with the nearest star. They just need to get it out in time, and find the sixteenth of an ounce of Unobtainium that its power system runs on.

Naturally, as soon as they *use* this stuff, every petty warlord, religious nut, bounty hunter, and intelligence agent between here and Andromeda takes a sudden interest in them . . .

GMG '00

A Sufficiently Advanced Technology . . .

. . . is indistinguishable from magic, said Arthur C. Clarke.

Russian astronomer Nikolai Kardashev grouped advanced civilizations into three levels, based on energy usage.

Type I civilizations use just about all the energy their planet can safely produce, and have usually started to expand off-world. A planet with a population of several billion at TL10+ may qualify.

Type II civilizations use all the energy they can get from their star – about 10 billion times the amount used by Type I civilizations. To gather it, they may create a loose shell of solar collectors around their sun (a Dyson sphere). A Type II civilization would probably be TL13-14.

Type III civilizations are galactic in scope, using the energy of thousands or millions of stars. A Type III civilization might tap energy from pulsars, black holes, or the galactic core. A Type III civilization would be TL15-16.

Note that the Ancients as described in this book are easily capable of creating Type II societies. When picturing the largest Ancient sites, the GM should consider what they might have been doing which demanded the total energy output of an entire star. Unless your campaign involves shadowy non-canon Ancient races manipulating events from behind the scenes, perhaps with the long-term goal of the PCs uncovering their plots, Type III civilizations are not recommended – they are of necessity organized on a galactic scale, and their works would likely be visible from Charted Space.

Air on a G-Band

Ancient sites are usually invisible to sensors; whether this is due to deliberate concealment or the incidental properties of Ancient building materials is a topic of debate among scholars. PCs may eventually realize that some sites are responsible for delayed echoes in an obscure communications band called the G band, and may use this to confirm the presence or absence of such sites. Searching the G band can be done using any starship's communications suite, and requires a success roll against Electronics Operation (Sensors), conducted by the GM so that the player is uncertain whether or not the roll succeeded.

Yaskoydray was never entirely happy with Droyne assistants. They lacked drive. He tried Human laborers, but they were too independent. (They were useful for a time, and used in many projects before they were abandoned.) He next tried to genetically engineer a more compliant race from Terran canines; their retained pack mentality proved a problem. Finally, Yaskoydray resorted to robots; these were the most helpful and obedient, though not as intelligent as his children.

At length, Yaskoydray exhausted the possibilities of what is now charted space, and set out to explore further. He ordered his children and grandchildren to come and help, but they had started projects of their own and refused. At first, he ignored them and pressed on, but eventually their experiments began to interfere with his own. This was intolerable. He decided that having children had been a mistake.

Fortunately, it was one which could be rectified.

THE FINAL WAR

Initially, Yaskoydray's descendants did not realize that he was bent on their extermination. After the first few had been wiped out, the others knew that this would be a war of total victory or total elimination – a "final" conflict one way or another. The war grew complicated as the children and grandchildren split into factions. Some wanted to kill Yaskoydray; some wanted to flee and create their own civilization; some wanted to have their own children; others attempted to join him, offering to work on his new projects. Some Droyne did not ally with Yaskoydray or any of his offspring.

The war lasted 2,000 years, and by the end Yaskoydray was convinced that he had killed all his descendants. (The GM might rule otherwise, or that the war is still going on somewhere.) The galaxy was by now the worse for wear, with many new asteroid belts where habitable planets had once orbited.

Wearied by the long struggle, Yaskoydray used his advanced technologies to "pinch off" a pocket universe several parsecs across, and retired to pursue studies without risk of interruption from the universe he had left behind.

SURVIVORS

While Yaskoydray's careful count showed he had accounted for all his descendants, he did not succeed in the elimination of all their followers. Droyne, Humans, and Vargr were left alive on many worlds, blasted back into the Stone Age and unable to regain civilization or technology.

The surviving Droyne began a long period of decline – Grandfather's casting system depended on his guidance to function properly. Without his oversight, the artificial social mechanism began to break down, the Droyne began to lose hold of

GMG '00

their ability to caste and their technology level, and worst of all, the modified race no longer remained viable as a low-tech culture. His modifications fatally flawed their uncasted reproductive system.

Yaskoydray continued to visit the universe he had abandoned for another 250,000 years or so. At first, his goal was simply to eradicate any surviving bases, lest they be used against him. Later, for his own reasons, he intervened to help the Droyne survive. He designed and introduced the coyns, the rituals surrounding them, and Oynprith (see p. 88); these in tandem contain coded instructions to keep the Droyne casting and viable. He revised the system several times; one of these improvements added the coyns depicting the current major races.

At last, Yaskoydray decided that the few complexes and species left could not threaten him in the foreseeable future, and cut off all contact with our universe. He did not forget his allies: In his pocket universe, one world is set aside for descendants of his main supporters. Another (totally isolated) pocket universe was created for a faction he considered slightly untrustworthy.

ANCIENT SITES IN THE MARCHES

Unless otherwise noted, these sites are known to the general public, although access to most of them is limited to researchers licensed by the Imperium. (Those with information on the former site on Fulacin mentioned in *Twilight's Peak* will probably have destroyed it during that adventure, so it is not listed below.)

Beck's World (Spinward Marches 2204) has a collapsed warren of interlocking caverns, currently being excavated by the University of Regina.

Boughene (Spinward Marches 1904) has an Ancient village floating on contragrav units in the atmosphere of the local gas giant, Komesh. This is surrounded at a 120-mile radius by a series of navigation beacons, each about 100 yards across, which collect information on local weather and transmit irregular bursts of static to the village. Discovered in 1112, the site is now under IISS investigation.

Efate (Spinward Marches 1705) has a gridwork of thousands of walls spaced about 6' apart, punctuated by massive bulwarks at apparently random intervals. Discovered in 354 Imperial, it has long been stripped of anything useful, and is now operated as a historic monument.

Inthe (Spinward Marches 2410) has a large, water-filled volcanic crater thought to be the former location of an Ancient base. Nearby, large mounds of earth, miles long, are scattered over nearly 400 square miles. So far, analysis has failed to reveal their purpose. The area is secretly controlled by the IISS.

Knorbes (Spinward Marches 1807) has a major excavation project undertaken in secret by the Imperial Navy. Elaborate precautions conceal its existence; extensive security measures trap intruders. The Ancient base here is of special interest to the Navy, because it held a large cache of black-globe generators (see p. 117). It was destroyed in the Final War, when a massive attack cratered the area and toppled mountains into the craters.

Pixie (Spinward Marches 1903) has a secret Ancient site, protected by numerous Imperial security devices and under the aegis of the IISS. It is a flat, irregular area on the edge of a vacuum plain near a range of mountains. It is inlaid with a mosaic of multicolored anodized aluminum bars. As yet, its purpose is unknown.

Victoria (Spinward Marches 1817) has a site on its moon. Those who venture on Victoria's surface may also find a unique small site in the forest. It is a TL15 residence – a bewildering warren of rooms and closets with shimmering walls, doors of cloudy mist, floors of focused gravity, and partitions paper-thin but steel-strong. Victoria is interdicted by the IISS, ostensibly to protect the unusual local culture.

Yori (Spinward Marches 2110) has a small site found buried under drifting sands, in a vast desert surrounded by signs of destruction from the Final War. The site is characterized by iridescent white building blocks and deep rubble-filled wells. The University of Regina administers it.

Sources of Inspiration

L ong-vanished, high-technology precursor races are a staple of SF, which is fortunate . . . while the need to make every Ancient site unique allows each GM maximum range for his creativity, it also demands an injection of new ideas each time the PCs find one. Some good places to start:

Any of the books in Charles Sheffield's *Heritage Universe* series, Alan Dean Foster's *The Tar-Aiym Krang*, Larry Niven's *Ringworld* and its sequels, Iain M. Banks' *Culture* stories and his novel *Against a Dark Background*, Frederick Pohl's *Gateway* books, Philip Jose Farmer's *World of Tiers* novels, and Erich von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods* and its sequels.

The movies and TV shows of the *Babylon 5* and *Stargate* series regularly feature ancient artifacts.

GMs looking to use Ancient teleportation technology to pose puzzles for their players will find plenty of ideas in Larry Niven's collections *All The Myriad Ways* and *A Hole in Space*.

A silly campaign might also draw on Terry Pratchett's *Strata*.

Campaign Seed: Lost in the Aftermath

T he PCs are a group of Droyne stored in suspended animation – military reserves, refugees, researchers interrupted in the midst of Meddling With Things That Droyne Were Not Meant To Know . . . Whatever the reason, they missed all the excitement and have awoke after more than 250,000 years to find the universe much changed.

What is going on out there? Where did all these weird aliens come from? What happened to the rest of their race?

The PCs must answer these questions, and decide what to do about it. Will they give up in despair, try to find some way to travel back in time to their fate in the Final War, seek other survivors, or restore their culture to its rightful place as rulers of the galaxy?

Alternatively, such a group might be NPCs – a shadowy Patron the group knows only through dead-letter drops or encrypted transmissions, using the adventurers as their eyes and hands in this strange, new world.

Equipment

Excavating an Ancient site rarely produces anything of other than archaeological value. But every so often . . .

Robots and Androids

Yaskoydray created various robots to assist him once he lost faith in his children and other races. They vary enormously in form, according to their intended use. Some resemble Droyne; others do not. The GM is encouraged to develop (or reuse) designs from *GURPS Robots, Vehicles,* or other works to represent these robots. TL15 robots tend to be highly dexterous and *very* smart . . .

Grandfather also created biological constructs, which usually are similar in form to Droyne, but artificially created. In effect, they can be either biomechanical robots or bioengineered Droyne. For bioengineered servants, one might start by adding highly enhanced attributes, advantages, and skills to the existing Droyne templates. Many will have the Slave Mentality disadvantage. At this TL, partially "living" robots also can be created. See *GURPS Robots* for more information on both approaches.

Many of these tools have artificial intelligence, and almost all bioengineered servants will retain sentience.

Teleportation

The Ancients mastered teleportation, and were able to transmit objects or beings across vast distances using various machines. For simplicity, all such devices are referred to as *portals.* Portals are deployed in pairs or groups. Anything inserted into one portal disappears, to reappear in another.

Underlying Concepts

There are four basic approaches to teleportation in *Traveller;* psionic, energy, signal, and circumvention.

Psionic teleportation is covered on p. B175. No one in the *Traveller* universe is sure how or why it works.

Energy teleportation involves total conversion of matter into energy, the transmission of that energy to a receiver, and the reconversion of energy into matter. Given the huge amount of energy in even a small amount of totally converted matter, transmission presents problems that no known culture has solved.

Signal teleportation works by a destructive scan of the matter to be transmitted, resulting in a signal which is sent to a receiver where a duplicate of the object is created from stocks of matter on hand. The main problem with this, again unsolved by any known civilization, is that any signal degradation would result in partial or total failure to transmit. In game terms, it also has the problem that if the signal can be stored, the portal is also a matter duplicator and an infinitely flexible transmuter; this gives a campaign many of the same economic problems as those identified on p. GT14-15 for nanotechnology.

Circumvention is the approach used by the Ancients, and avoids the problems of the other two technological methods. It is based on pocket universes, which are independent of our universe but can be accessed via portals of stressed space. The object to be transmitted is placed into a portal, passes through a pocket universe, and emerges from another portal. No energy or signal passes between transmitter and receiver; there is no need for a supply of matter at the receiving end, and the trip is apparently instantaneous without exceeding the speed of light, as it only traverses a short distance. It is conceptually similar to traveling from the Atlantic to the Pacific via the Panama Canal rather than going all the way around South America.

Circumvention retains one irritating constraint – it cannot break the law of conservation of energy. Velocity is retained; an object teleported from Earth orbit to the surface still has its orbital velocity (c. 17,500 mph) on arrival, and in addition heats up markedly since it is moving down into a gravity well. Editing the transmission in signal or energy teleportation would address these issues, but circumvention relies on an energy sink – a large mass which can absorb excess energy, or supply energy to make up a deficit. A few hundred tons is enough, but the more, the better. For this reason, most pocket universes have a planet or star system inside them. Should a failing portal deposit the adventurers on its energy sink, anything might be found – any type of planet, with or without native life, possibly including the descendants of earlier travelers or factions from the Final War.

Portals and Portal Networks

Ancient portals are a long-range variant on the teleport booths described on p. UT117. Each doubling of cost, weight, volume, and power usage increases range by a factor of 10. No

matter how large, there is a maximum range for these units (see below).

Portals are circular, and come in various sizes. For a portal larger than the base model – which will teleport one Human or large Droyne at a time – multiply the cost, weight, size, and power usage calculated above by the portal's capacity in cubic yards divided by 2. To teleport spaceships, multiply by displacement tons of capacity × 250.

Once designed, the actual portal itself has only 5% of the calculated weight and volume. The remaining 95% of its equipment is located in the pocket universe that powers it (see below).

The most common are personnel portals 1 or 2 yards in diameter. There are also cargo portals (about 10 yards across with a maximum volume of 800 cf) and ship portals (about 200 yards wide with a maximum volume of 6,000 displacement tons). Most portals in a given network will be the same size. "Prime portals" (see below) are slightly larger, so that subordinate portals can be passed through them.

GMG '00
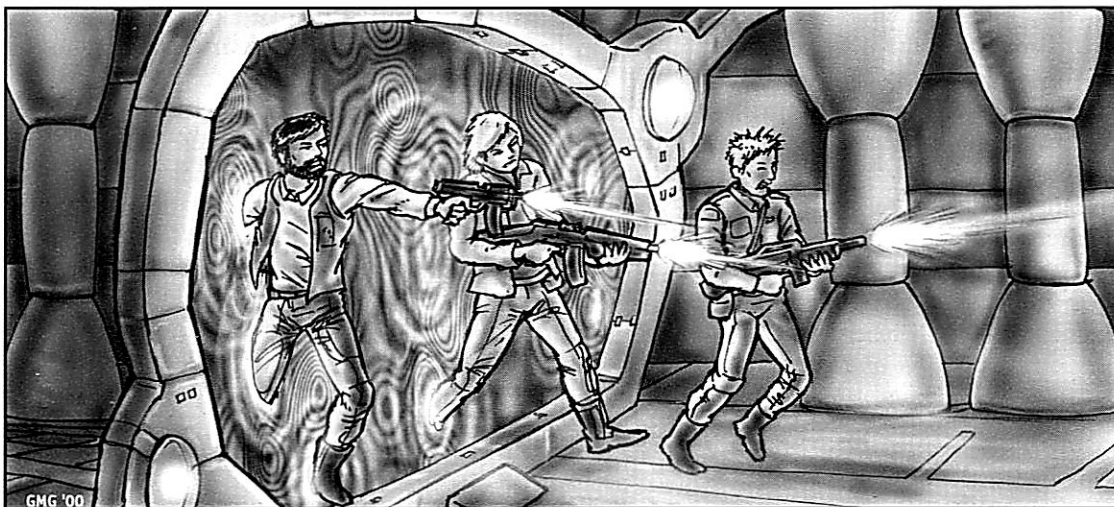
Portal networks are systems of at least two and up to 60 linked portals, each network attached to its own pocket universe. Normally, a star system is pinched off and a portal generator installed; one of the worlds serves as the energy sink, and the star or the core of another planet is tapped for the portals' power. The portal generator must be at the center of the pocket universe. (This amounts to 95% of the mass and volume of *each* portal in the network, as described above; usually this is represented as one large set of equipment, though.)

The integral computer switches links between portals, and can pair all of them simultaneously if necessary. The energy sink automatically determines kinetic and gravitational potential energy levels at each portal, and adjusts the energy of any teleported object. Objects will have their temperature corrected, and will arrive with a relative velocity of no more than 50 mph, usually much less.

Portals are rigid disks with titanium alloy frames. Their pocket-universe power sources make them portable and independent of local power needs. When inactive, they are steel gray. When operating, they are a shimmering white – light cannot pass through them. They are controlled by a small series of pressure-sensitive buttons along the rim of the device; a row of small buttons is used to enter a binary code corresponding to the destination portal, and a larger button at the end serves to activate the portal. If no destination has been set, one is randomly selected. The number of small buttons varies, from none (such a portal is always part of a matched pair, and can only transfer objects to its mate) to half a dozen. The portals can be activated in any position – upright, flat, upside down, etc.

Portals are durable, and easily withstand normal handling, but are vulnerable to extreme heat, acid, or physical damage.

The prime portal is the center of the network, and effectively "carries" the pocket universe around with it; other portals therefore reckon their range from it. The nature of the supporting pocket universe determines the maximum teleportation range between portals, based on factors such as the energy sink's size, energy transmission rates, and so forth. The theoretical maximum range is some 9 AU, but the practical limit is just over 4 AU; beyond this range, non-prime portals disconnect from the system and become inoperative. They can be reset by passing them through the prime portal, hence its larger size.

In a typical network, therefore, the maximum teleportation range is just under 9 AU, and to achieve this both portals must be at their maximum range from the prime portal in opposite directions.

Portal networks do have limitations; they cannot reach a ship in jump space; they cannot connect different pocket universes, although they can connect a pocket universe to ours; and they do not equalize atmosphere between the points of arrival and departure. A vacc suit would be a wise investment when exploring unknown portal systems.

Lasers and other beam weapons cannot penetrate a portal, since it blocks all electromagnetic energy. Bullets or other missiles lack punch on arrival, as their kinetic energy is vastly reduced. Attacks can't be aimed through them, anyway, so any such effort is targeted as if blind.

Other Applications of Portals

Storage: "Just how many people are *in* that scout ship, anyway?" The pocket universe is an ideal storage site, which is instantly accessible to any of its portals. A traveler fortunate enough to acquire a portal network (some of which would easily fit in an apartment or small starship) has access to an entire star system and all that it holds. Ancient starships built around portal networks – or more modern ones with a lucky find – can therefore carry cargo and firepower far beyond what is reasonable for their apparent size. By detaching a few portals, an Ancient ship could deploy a planet-buster (see below).

Planet-Busters: By disconnecting the energy sink in the pocket universe, a portal network becomes a potent weapon. There is no longer anything to regulate the speed of an object passing through the network. Two or more portals in a gravity field can be used as a giant particle accelerator; place a rock into one portal, let it drop toward another, which flips it back to the first. When it has reached near-light speed, flick it to a third portal on or near the target. The resulting impact is devastating, often enough to reduce the target planet to an asteroid belt. This is how many of charted space's current asteroid belts were produced, including Shionthy in the Spinward Marches.

Yaskoydray and his children were all smart enough to have worked this one out, and transport networks have extensive safeguards to prevent saboteurs subverting them to this purpose. A "weapons-grade" network would be an extremely destabilizing artifact to have in a campaign, and the GM is advised to think carefully before introducing one into the game.

Sanitation: By pulsing a horizontal portal on and off, it can be made to act as a waste disposal unit. Each pulse slices off the bottom few millimeters of the garbage, and teleports it to a suitable reclamation facility or dump; gravity then drops the remainder onto the portal surface, ready for the next pulse. These units are especially dangerous to PCs, as they can remove portions of protective clothing or even the user's body parts.

Distributed Housing: Different rooms in a base can be linked by portals rather than ordinary doors, allowing them to be physically separated. The adventurers may not realize that in stepping from the airlock to the reception area, for instance, they have actually been teleported several hundred yards underground, or that the wonderful view from that mysterious chamber is not a hologram of the next planet – the chamber is really *on* the next planet. Larry Niven's *A World Out of Time* and Philip Jose Farmer's *World of Tiers* novels both use teleporters in this way.

POCKET UNIVERSES

These are "pinched off" from the fabric of the universe at large, becoming isolated from it. Creating this sort of rip in space/time, and sealing it off, requires very high technology and enormous amounts of energy to manipulate gravity in the chosen volume of space. Pocket universes are closed, folding back onto themselves; it is impossible to leave one by an ordinary vehicle, as a course is bent back on itself. PCs somehow reaching a pocket universe will need portals to escape.

The techniques were initially developed by Yaskoydray to support his teleportation networks and starships. Creating a small pocket universe took Yaskoydray several years; his most ambitious project, the pocket universe to which he retreated after the Final War, took over a century to build, not including terraforming the worlds inside. It is 3 parsecs across.

Due to the extreme expense and difficulty of creating a pocket universe, no more than a couple of dozen were made, almost all of them to support portal networks; few have survived the intervening aeons intact.

Should the adventurers gain access to a pocket universe containing a star, as most do, they will find not black space, but a uniform star glow within, the result of 300,000 years of sunlight reflected from the edge of the pocket.

Yaskoydray's System: Yaskoydray's personal pocket universe consists of three star systems once located in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches. They formerly occupied the hexes between Wochiers and Enope (hexes 2107, 2206, and 2307).

Early in his life, Yaskoydray selected one of these systems as a base of operations, and this became the core of his pocket universe. It has several planets, one of which is (by now) nearly identical to the Droyne homeworld and has been seeded with animals and plants from that planet. The system has various industrial complexes, research laboratories, mines, storehouses, and so on. These are at TL16 – Yaskoydray has improved on the TL15 devices he used to fight the Final War.

Droyne System: One star system is set aside for those loyal Droyne who stood by Yaskoydray during the Final War. They are restricted to that system, and are forbidden jump drive. They have been left alone for some time, and have reverted to an easygoing TL4 life. Yaskoydray kept them as a hedge against future need; should he need Droyne as soldiers, experimental subjects, or whatever, he has a supply to hand. They are conditioned to obey him without question should he ever issue orders.

Vacant System: As a further hedge against future need, Yaskoydray has reserved a third star system. One never knows when one might need the odd gas giant or two.

Access to the pocket universe is (or at least was) via teleportals connecting it to our universe. All were in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches, for example in the Algine system. As Humans or others colonized these systems, Yaskoydray closed the relevant portals. By 1120, there are none left open as far as Yaskoydray knows; it is possible that one remains available, created by one of his robot servants and for some reason not yet destroyed – perhaps in deep space, in an otherwise empty hex on the star map.

Another pocket universe is described for the GM on pp. BTC124-125.

WEAPONS

A surviving Ancient or a ruined base might display any weapon up to TL15, *especially* those not normally found in *Traveller*. The Ancients are intended to have mysterious, irreplaceable, advanced technology.

Hand Disintegrators

These are equivalent to the disintegrator on p. UT61, with the exception that Ancient disintegrators do not produce heat or concussion damage in surrounding hexes; the target simply vanishes. Disintegrators are the commonest weapon used by Ancient warriors, should the party be fortunate enough to find any and unfortunate enough to annoy them.

The weapon is operated psionically; it has no physical controls or readouts. The user simply aims it at the target, and imagines it gone. (For game purposes, this is considered to be a psychotronic interface which can only be used by those with a skill level of Telesend-12 or more.)

Disintegrators function by suppressing the nuclear forces holding matter together; sealed armor and force screens protect at 1/100th of DR; unsealed armor offers no protection. All defenses are treated as having PD 0 against a disintegrator. They cannot penetrate nuclear dampers.

ANCIENT WEAPON TABLE

Weapon	Malf	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	AWt	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Costs	LC	Hld	TL
Disint. Pistol	Crit.	Spcl.	8d (100)	10	12	–	1,000	4	0.5	1	3/C*	–	0	6,000/100	0	-2	15
Disint. Rifle	Crit.	Spcl.	15d (100)	15	18	–	3,000	12	5	1	15/D*	–	0	20,000/500	0	No	15

* Assumes TL15 rechargeable power cell. Multiply shots by 2/3 for TL12 cells.

These devices use Beam Weapons/TL (Disintegrator) skill. There is no beam as such, just an effect produced at the target point, so if the built-in laser rangefinder is inoperative for some reason, make an IQ roll to guess the correct distance to the target, missing by 1 yard for each point by which the roll was failed.

ARMOR, PROTECTIVE, AND MISCELLANEOUS GEAR

Some of the previously encountered wonders of the Ancients are described below.

Black Globes

One Ancient site investigated by the Imperium revealed almost 2,000 working black-globe generators. Typifying the incomprehensible Ancient artifact, the black globe is a shiny metallic cube roughly 10′ on a side, with two minor discolorations which act as on and off switches.

When activated, the device projects a field which absorbs all forms of energy (including light, hence the characteristic black color for which the artifact is named) in a spherical volume around the unit. In the first experiment, the field formed at a distance of 3′ from the generator, bisecting a researcher. In the second, a rod was used to activate the item from a distance – but then it could not be switched off, as nothing could penetrate the field to reach the off switch. Eventually, scientists discovered how to adjust the field radius; holding down the "on" switch causes the field to alternately expand and contract until the switch is released. The generator actually absorbs and rechannels energy striking its field's surface or from power sources near the generator itself, expanding as more is fed into it. A ship's capacitors can be used to create the initial field at a suitable radius. Unfortunately, fields large enough to englobe a warship big enough to carry sufficiently large capacitors are inherently unstable, and will explode if overloaded. (GMs are referred to E.E. "Doc" Smith's *Lensman* books or Niven and Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye* for examples of this sort.)

Despite this disadvantage, the Imperial Navy has adopted black-globe generators as a defense for selected fighting ships. Navy researchers are rumored to have produced crude duplicates of the devices, but have no real understanding of how they work.

Black-globe generators can be represented by a modified form of the TL15 force screens on p. GV93 – they are not available at lower TLs. The main modification is that they have DR 10,000 regardless of the surface area protected; they continue to require 0.01 kW per square foot of surface area of the ship on which they are mounted.

Unlike standard *GURPS Vehicles* force screens, they hamper the user's weapons and sensors as much as the enemy's, they do not change color as they gain energy levels, and if overloaded they destroy the entire ship.

The standard black-globe generator weighs 20.5 tons and would cost MCr51 to build at TL15. It can protect a ship up to 8,200 sf in surface area. Some generators are much larger.

The Oynssork

This is a combination disintegrator and personal shield, used by Yaskoydray or a trusted lieutenant for personal defense; on at least one occasion, an *Oynssork* was left with a Droyne community, possibly as a souvenir for the then-current Leader of Leaders, possibly through a moment's forgetfulness.

Carried in the hand, it has a soft metal grip which conforms to the hand, then tightens to support the wrist. Like most Ancient artifacts, it is controlled psionically. The device is activated when a hand is inserted (it is, of course, designed for Droyne hands); it is fired at a target when the user focuses his mind upon it. Sensors in the device detect any object approaching at more than 6 mph and automatically activate the personal shield to stop it. The shield effect covers an arc (actually, a segment of a globular surface some 5 yards in radius) in the direction of the threat; it deactivates automatically when the threat is removed.

GMG '00
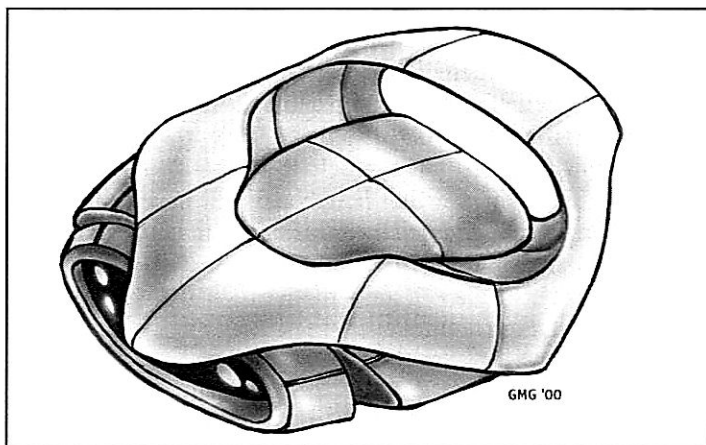
The *Oynssork* is a TL15 device combining the functions of a disintegrator pistol (see p. 116) and a PD 0, DR 400 personal force screen (p. UT78), using the *Combination Gadgets* rule from p. UTT12. It weighs 5.6 lbs., and would have cost some Cr10,000 to build, although in 1120 it is also priceless.

It operates for 7.5 minutes on a TL15 rechargeable C cell, minus 2.5 minutes for every disintegrator shot. Using a TL12 rechargeable cell reduces operating time to 5 minutes minus 2.5 minutes for every shot taken.

Shimmersuits

These are Ancient vacc suits with some defensive capabilities, and are occasionally found in the hands of collectors. The majority are fashioned for Droyne users, but some Human or Vargr suits may also exist.

Shimmersuits are so named because of the iridescent sheen they have. They are form-fitting suits, of an elastic material which can stretch to fit most members of a species. Suits intended for Droyne Warriors can be worn by Humaniti, and the hump between the shoulder blades (originally intended to accommodate folded wings) can be used to carry extra air tanks, a small backpack, or similar items. The main problem is that Humans have five hand digits, while Droyne have only four, so one finger must be folded back into the palm of the hand while wearing the suit – this is not only uncomfortable, but gives a -2 to effective skill on any related task.

Shimmersuits are treated as TL15 cybersuits (p. UT76). They have PD 5, DR 160 and weigh 35 lbs., although this is not counted against encumbrance because the in-built sensors and motors neutralize the apparent weight. They would have cost about Cr20,000 a suit to build, although they are now priceless.

Ancient Wristcomp

This is a standard TL15 personal computer, built using the rules on p. V61 as a small computer with the sentience option. It weighs half a pound, has a volume of 0.01 cubic feet, and would have cost the Ancients the equivalent of Cr500 to make. It is a sentient Complexity 9 device, able to learn IQ-based skills as if it had IQ 14 and Full Eidetic Memory. It may be encountered on its own, or as a dedicated processor fitted to a vehicle, a weapon, etc.

If discovered by the PCs, its first task will be learning to communicate, so that it can establish what has happened to its former masters. If there are Droyne in the group, it will try to make contact with them first, then Vargr, then Humans, then anything else. It will use its built-in audiovisual circuits to make interesting noises and displays so that it is kept nearby; by listening to and analyzing their speech, it will be able to communicate on a basic level within hours, and will have fully mastered the language used (skill level 14) in less than two weeks.

Once it can communicate, the wristcomp's actions will depend on its personality (if any), motives, standing orders, and any equipment it has control over . . .

VEHICLES

Ancient vehicles are constructed at TL15, using the rules in *GURPS Vehicles*. Like Droyne, Ancients average half the volume requirements of Humans; the easiest way to handle this is to design Ancient vehicles with cramped Human accommodations, which are roomy for most Ancients and Droyne.

TL15 Grav Board

This is a personal transport device for a single Ancient; it is a silvery disk capable of atmospheric flight, which the rider stands upon and steers by shifting his body weight, much like a surfboard. The grav board is roughly 1 yard across and 3″ thick. The rider normally wears armor as a protection against air resistance and windblown debris, and is strapped to the board by the feet like a snowboarder. The straps are usually intended for four-toed, chickenlike Droyne feet, but occasional grav boards might be found for Human or Vargr riders.

- **Subassemblies:** None.
- **Propulsion**: 10,000 lb. thrust mega reactionless thruster (Bo, HP 2, 10 lbs., 0.2 cf, 500 kW).
- **Aerostatic Lift:** 2,000 lb. lift contragrav generator (Bo, HP 2, 11 lbs., 0.22 cf, 2 kW).
- **Vehicle Controls:** Computerized.
- **Crew:** Pilot in harness station (Bo, HP 1, 2 lbs.).
- **Power Systems:** 502 kW antimatter reactor (Bo, HP 4, 25.1 lbs., 0.5 cf, lasts 30 years).
- **Space:** Access space (Body 1.84 cf).
- **Surface Area:** Body 12.
- **Structure:** Extra-light frame with standard materials.
- **Hit Points:** Body 4.
- **Statistics:** Empty weight 51.1 lbs., payload 200 lbs., loaded weight 251.1 lbs., Volume 2.76 cf. Size modifier -1. Cost Cr61,685. HT 8.
- **Performance:** Stall speed 0 mph, can hover, can fly. Aerial motive thrust 10,000 lbs. Aerodynamic drag 12. Top speed 600 mph. aAccel 796 mph/s. aMR 8. aSR 3. aDecel 32 mph/s.

ANCIENT STARSHIPS: LEAVE THE FUEL AT HOME

Ancient starships are hand-built, one-of-a-kind TL15 items, and so have been designed using the *GURPS Vehicles* sequences rather than the modular starship rules of *GURPS Traveller*. Any Ancient starship may be declared by the GM to be attached to a portal network. In this case, fuel and cargo capacities become effectively infinite, as portals are connected to a pocket universe containing an entire star system. Fuel processors (if necessary) are attached to portals in oceans or gas-giant atmospheres, and so are not necessary aboard ship.

The equivalents of Cargo, Fuel, and Fuel Processor modules are therefore not necessary; some circulation space is still needed to provide space for loading and unloading; 80 cubic feet of empty space for a personnel portal, and proportionally more for a cargo portal.

The cost of the ship may then be figured normally, if desired. The cost of the portal network's associated pocket universe is effectively infinite, as it represents years of work by thousands of laborers.

Ancient Hull

This lattice-work frame is the basis for an Ancient exploration ship of roughly 200 displacement tons. It carries 43 capsules (see below), of which one (the *prime capsule,* containing the prime portal for the portal network) is firmly fixed in place, and the others are detachable. The ship is unstreamlined, and relies on its capsules for access to world surfaces; typically a capsule is detached and lands, with personnel and cargo being transferred through the portal network.

Likewise, there are almost no internal passageways, as movement through the ship is via the portal network. Fuel is pumped from the pocket universe through a dedicated portal to the jump drive as needed, so there is no fuel tankage – it is this which allows the ship its effectively unlimited range. Also, while the antimatter reactors aboard the ship and its capsules are only good for 30 years, the sentient computer operating the ship is quite capable of ordering support units in the pocket universe to send more antimatter through from the factory there.

Finally, the ship appears unarmed, but this is deceptive; if expecting combat, standard practice would be to detach several capsules with the portal network energy sink disengaged and the capsule walls open. One or more pairs of capsules would be deployed to accelerate rocks using the planet-buster technique, and individual remote capsules ready to switch rocks through the network at targets.

Engagements between such craft would be contests of vehicle stealth, each trying to sneak one of its "turret" capsules close enough to the enemy to fling a nearly light speed rock at it. Secondary modes of attack if there is no time to prepare planet-busters – for instance, if the ship is newly arrived in-system – include using detached capsules to ram targets, or deliberately exploding a capsule's antimatter reactor (see p. GV186 for how to figure damage, or assume concussion damage of 6d × 7.5 billion × number of years of operating life remaining, plus more hard radiation than your PCs would want to think about).

Given the capabilities of this exploration ship, one may well shudder at the thought of what an Ancient *warship* could do . . .

- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** Living metal body (this represents the hull's ability to "melt" an entrance, then seal it closed again).

- **Propulsion:** 4.5 million lb. thrust mega reactionless thruster (Bo, HP 125, 4,500 lbs., 90 cf, 225,000 kW). Jump drive (Bo, HP 1,000, 84,000 lbs., 1,680 cf, 140,000 kW).

- **Instruments and Electronics:** Radio communicator (Bo, HP 18, 250 lbs., 5 cf, 0.4 kW, 5 million mile range). Laser communicator with extreme range (Bo, HP 100, 2,500 lbs., 50 cf, 4 kW, 10 million mile range). Navigation radar, 1 million mile range, no targeting (BoF, HP 1,200, 125,000 lbs., 2,500 cf, 250,000 kW, Scan 47). AESA, 1 million mile range (BoF, HP 2,500, 375,000 lbs., 7,500 cf, 250,000 kW, Scan 47). PESA, 50,000 mile range (BoF, HP 400, 25,000 lbs., 500 cf, 0.01 kW, Scan 39). Navigation instruments (Bo, HP 4, 20 lbs., 0.4 cf, 0.01 kW). Transponder (Bo, HP 1, 2.5 lbs., 0.01 kW). Three TL15 terminals (Bo, HP 4 each, total of 30 lbs., 1.5 cf, 0.03 kW). Three TL15 macroframes, sentient, robot brain (Bo, HP 50 each, total of 3,000 lbs., 60 cf, 30 kW, Complexity 13, effective IQ 18, effective DX 14).

- **Miscellaneous:** Full fire suppression system (Bo, HP 16, 200 lbs., 4 cf). 42 external cradles for Ancient capsules (Bo, HP 50 each, total of 42,420 lbs., 848.4 cf). Teleport projector, 2 cf capacity (Bo, HP 125, 4,000 lbs., 80 cf, 10,000 kW). *Note:* The teleport projector is not a normal portal – it is a dedicated fuel-transfer system allowing the craft to receive jump fuel as necessary from its pocket universe. The additional cost and weight represent fuel pumps and assorted failsafe systems.

- **Controls:** Computerized .

- **Accommodations:** Pilot in cramped crew station (Bo, HP 50, 20 lbs., 20 cf). Luxury suite, 6 Droyne occupancy (Bo, HP 1,500, 12,000 lbs., 3,000 cf). Full life system for four people (Bo, HP 16, 80 lbs., 4 cf, 0.4 kW). Artificial gravity unit (Bo, HP 60, 2,000 lbs., 27 cf, 1,000 kW).

- **Power Systems:** 750,000 kW antimatter reactor (Bo, HP 500, 37,500 lbs., 750 cf, lasts 30 years).

- **Space:** Access space (Body 5,040 cf). Empty space (Body 3,500 cf). *Note:* The empty space includes long-term access for the jump drive, and circulation space around the two passenger portals.

- **Surface Area:** 6,500.

- **Structure:** Medium frame with expensive materials. Total compartmentalization.

- **Hit Points:** 9,750.

- **Armor:** PD 4, DR 100 expensive metal (16,250 lbs.).

- **Statistics:** Empty weight 738,647.5 lbs., payload 200 lbs., loaded weight 738,847.5 lbs., volume 25,660.3 cf. Size modifier 7. Cost MCr239.2. HT 8.

- **Performance:** Jump-6, sAccel 6.09 G.

Ancient Capsule

The Ancient capsule is a multipurpose small craft of roughly 6 displacement tons. It comes in several varieties, serving as staterooms, cargo holds, maintenance areas, libraries, and so on; the example below is configured for use as living quarters. It may be found attached to an Ancient hull (see above for one possible example) or on its own at an Ancient site.

Capsules may be entered either by teleporting (each capsule has two portals) or through the hull; a control on the inside and outside walls causes the wall to melt temporarily, forming a large enough hole to step through. The melted wall reforms seamlessly after entry. The portals are controlled either from within the capsule, or from its mother ship (if any).
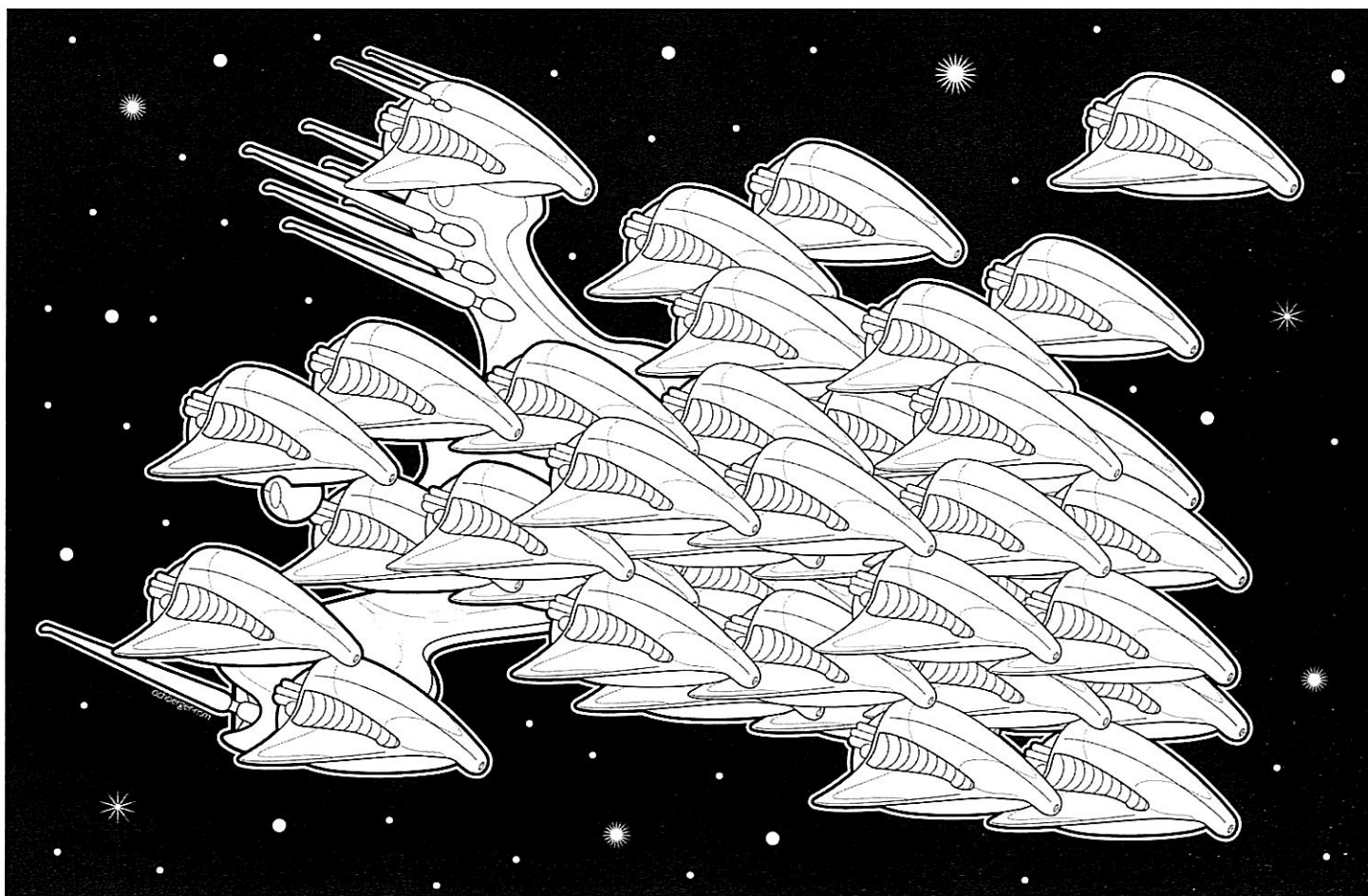
When attached to a mother ship or base, the capsule exchanges data electronically through cables; when detached, mechanical arms mounted near the portals can be swung through the portal to connect with others and so transmit information and orders. This is necessary because the portals are opaque to electromagnetic radiation (see description on pp. 114-116).

Capsules have simple controls, which may be easily understood by anyone with Piloting skill for a starship or spaceship; halve the normal unfamiliarity and TL penalties.

- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** Two skids (retract into body). Very good streamlining.
- **Propulsion:** 145,000 lb. thrust mega reactionless thruster (Bo, HP 13, 145 lbs., 2.9 cf, 7,250 kW).
- **Aerostatic Lift:** 24,000 lb. lift contragrav generator (Bo, HP 4, 22 lbs., 0.44 cf, 24 kW).
- **Instruments and Electronics:** Radio communicator (Bo, HP 1, 0.25 lbs., 0.01 kW, 5,000 mile range). Laser communicator (Bo, HP 1, 2.5 lbs., 0.05 cf, 0.1 kW, 10,000 mile range). Navigation radar, 10,000 mile range, no targeting (BoF, HP 60, 1,250 lbs., 25 cf, 2,500 kW, Scan 35). AESA, 2,000 mile range (BoF, HP 40, 750 lbs., 15 cf, 500 kW, Scan 31). PESA, 5,000 mile range (BoF, HP 100, 2,500 lbs., 50 cf, 0.01 kW, Scan 33). Navigation instruments (Bo, HP 4, 20 lbs., 0.4 cf, 0.01 kW). Transponder (Bo, HP 1, 2.5 lbs., 0.01 kW). TL15 mainframe (Bo, HP 11, 125 lbs., 2.5 cf, 1 kW, Complexity 12). Terminal (Bo, HP 4, 10 lbs., 0.5 cf, 0.01 kW).

- **Miscellaneous:** Full fire suppression system (Bo, HP 16, 200 lbs., 4 cf).
- **Controls:** Computerized.
- **Accommodations:** One pilot in cramped crew station (Bo, HP 50, 20 lbs., 20 cf). Luxury suite, 2 person occupancy (Bo, HP 1,000, 8,000 lbs., 2,000 cf). Full life system supports two people (Bo, HP 10, 40 lbs., 2 cf, 0.2 kW). Artificial gravity unit (Bo, HP 60, 2,000 lbs., 27 cf, 1,000 kW).
- **Power Systems:** 12,000 kW antimatter reactor (Bo, HP 40, 600 lbs., 12 cf, lasts 30 years).
- **Space:** Access space (Body 30.68 cf). Empty space (Body 160 cf). *Note:* The empty space provides room to maneuver into and out of the two portals carried, and to unship them if necessary.
- **Surface Area:** Body 1,500. Skids 175. Total 1,675.
- **Structure:** Medium frame with expensive materials.
- **Hit Points:** Body 2,250, skids 131.
- **Armor:** PD 4, DR 100 standard metal (6,700 lbs.).
- **Statistics:** Empty weight 23,643.5 lbs., internal payload 200 lbs., loaded weight 23,843.5 lbs., volume 3,308.12 cf. Size modifier +6. Cost MCr4.02. HT 15.
- **Air Performance:** Stall Speed 0 mph, can hover, can fly. Aerial motive thrust 145,000 lbs. Aerodynamic drag 300. Top speed 740 mph. aAccel 122 mph/s. aMR 4.5. aSR 5. aDecel 18 mph/s.
- **Space Performance:** Thrust 145,000 lbs. sAccel 6.08 g. sAccel 133.15 mph/s. sMR 6.08.

The Inheritors

The Inheritors resemble Chinese dragons, with too many limbs and heads like hammerhead sharks. Descended from ancient vermin, the self-styled Inheritors evolved in one region of a partially completed Dyson sphere, long after the original builders died out or vanished.

The ancestors of the Inheritors survived whatever disaster overcame the sphere's creators. With the enigmatic Builders gone, the Inheritors were on their own. Gradually, evolutionary pressure from surviving Builder pest-control robots, coupled with the opportunity to study and use the tools and artifacts left behind by their creators, resulted in their development of tool use and civilization.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

The Inheritors are oxopod vertebrates that breathe fluorine. An Inheritor's body is bilaterally symmetrical and serpentine, 1 to 3 yards long in an adult, ending in a further yard or two of tail. Its eight limbs perform double duty as both arms and legs – each has multiple joints, ending in eight long, dextrous fingers tipped with small suction cups, which enable the Inheritor to climb smooth walls or hang onto ceilings. They have a hammer-shaped head, with large eyes spaced on either side of the skull, which give superior peripheral vision but inferior depth perception.

The Inheritors are carbon-based, but their biochemistry is based on fluorocarbons rather than the carbon-oxygen-hydrogen chain molecules common to all terrestrial life, with liquid sulfur replacing water as the suspension medium.

An Inheritor's body is covered in light scales formed from a flexible layer of organic plastic. The color of the scales varies – see *Castes,* below. The primary sense for the Inheritors is vision, which is roughly comparable to a Human's. Secondary senses are also similar to those of Humaniti.

CASTES

Inheritors have three castes, each with a characteristic body-color.

Queens have violet bodies and are the largest and most intelligent of the castes, as well as the rarest. They can be recognized by an enlarged brain case that slopes backward from the head. A Queen is 2.5 yards long, with an additional 1.5 yards of tail. Queens are female and capable of reproduction, mating with the Drones to produce offspring. A Queen will mate about once every 400 days. Two hundred days later, she will lay a clutch of a dozen or so eggs. One egg in 20 will be a Drone; one egg in 200 will be a new Queen. After a Queen is born, however, there will usually be no more Queen eggs for some years.

Drones have lustrous blue bodies. Drones are males, and a lucky few will be allowed to mate with the Queens to produce offspring. Drones are the physically smallest Inheritor caste, having a 1.2-yard-long body plus a 0.8-yard tail. Drones are nearly as intelligent as Queens; their intellect is approximately equivalent to that of the average Human.

MURRAY

The Ancients and the Inheritors

Examination of Inheritor designs patterned off Builder technology indicates their "Builders" were almost certainly the Ancients. Given that hypothesis, the existence of the Dyson sphereworld in Nooq sector is not a great riddle. The Ancients left a number of other megastructures behind. While the sphereworld is the largest by some measurements, its unfinished construction makes it a less impressive feat than the ringworld in Hinterlands sector. Perhaps more puzzling is the sphereworld's fluorine environment, given that nearly all Ancients sites are have oxygen-nitrogen or no atmospheres.

The Inheritors claim to be the Builders' chosen people, created by them to inherit the sphereworld (and perhaps the galaxy). This is generally rejected by other races. Other theories have been proposed by Hiver, K'kree, and Lithkind academics. One theory is that the fluorine atmosphere was needed for certain industrial processes or experiments going on in the sphereworld, but if so, it is doubtful that the Inheritors could have evolved "naturally" from any normal Ancient specimens. It is possible, however, that their original form was a genetically engineered artificial organism, created as a servant race.

The Hive Federation's Ancients Study Club of Guaran recently proposed another theory: About 300,000 years ago, the Inheritors were a pre-sentient species. For as yet unknown reasons, probably having to do with characteristics of their star, a faction of Ancients chose to build a Dyson sphere there. During the planning or construction, Ancient engineers discovered a protosapient race on one of the worlds in the system. Rather than halt the process or exterminate them, the Ancients evacuated the race and some or all were later transported onto the sphereworld, where a life system was built for them. It is possible that additional experiments were performed on them, and that the Ancients may have intended them as a servant race.

The Final War then intervened. Most Ancients in Nooq sector apparently went off to fight or sought another place of refuge. The Inheritors were left to develop on their own. The sphereworld was maintained by robots (who may have constructed additional life zones for the Inheritors as their population expanded). Other Ancient robots apparently performed "pest control" and kept the Inheritors out of critical systems or restricted their population. Eventually, the Inheritors learned to defeat them; in the process, they gained in intelligence and developed civilization. The majority of these robots apparently were destroyed by the Inheritors (or ran out of energy, or malfunctioned) millennia ago. Inheritor legends indicate a few still exist in obscure parts of the sphereworld.

Workers are the commonest caste of Inheritors. They have pale pink or red bodies and are slightly larger than Drones, but smaller than the Queens. They grow and age more rapidly than Drones or Queens. Workers are neuter females, incapable of reproduction. In terms of brain capacity, they are almost as intelligent as a Human, but lacking in creative faculties and initiative. A worker is 2.1 yards long, with a 1.4-yard tail.

Soldiers are a warrior subcaste of Worker. They have golden-red bodies, and are more aggressive, faster, stronger, and braver than the average Worker.

Diet

The Inheritors are scavengers. They don't catch live food, but are able to eat almost anything organic that grows or dies in their own fluorine-based ecosystem, though naturally some things taste better than others. In most high-tech nests, the food vats brew tasteless nutrient soup for the lowly Worker and Soldier castes. Drones eat more flavorful processed food rich in necessary vitamins and minerals, while the Queen caste and their Drone consorts enjoy the luxury of natural organics.
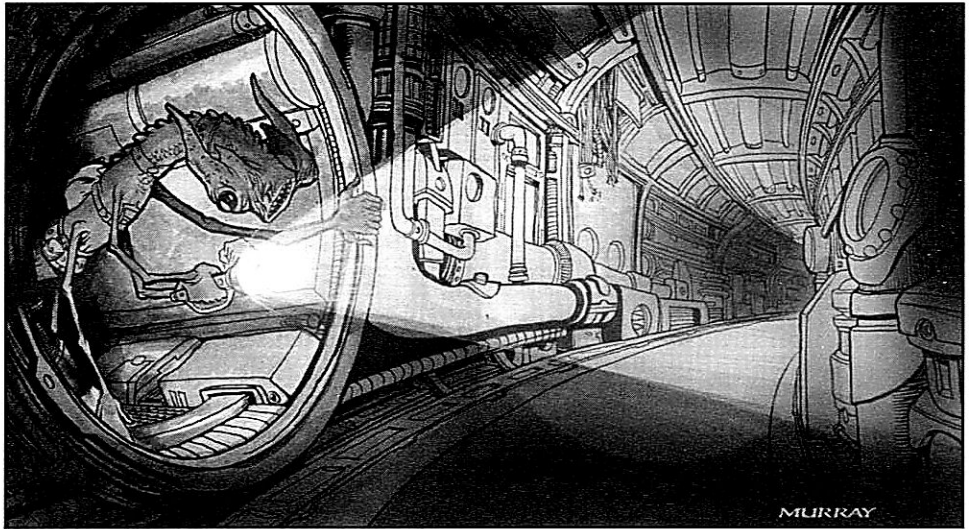
Favored Ecosystem

The Inheritors evolved inside the endless labyrinth of pressurized passages and structures that the Builders left behind on the sphereworld's inner surface. The inhabited portion of the Inheritor's sphereworld possesses almost no gravity and a hydrogen-fluorine-sulfur tetrachloride atmosphere maintained at 0.9 atmospheres pressure with a temperature of 300° Fahrenheit. Because they evolved without gravity, the Inheritors are most comfortable in weightless or near-weightless conditions. They cannot tolerate gravity above 0.2 Gs without special powered exoskeletons or artificial-gravity generators.

An Inheritor would quickly be poisoned by an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, while its sulfur-based circulatory fluid would solidify in any temperature that Humans could survive. Similarly, any Human without a vacc suit will die almost instantly if exposed to their environment. If the 300° temperature didn't boil his blood first, the corrosive and deadly poisonous fluorine-sulfur atmosphere would burn his lungs out and blind him in a matter of seconds.

Languages and Names

Inheritor vocal apparatus is very complex, and their hearing is very discriminating. Their languages sound, to Human ears, like instrumental music (sometimes

highly experimental music, but still music). Spacefaring Inheritors usually know the tongue of the Circle of the Sphere (p. 124). It is M/VH for Humans, or M/H for anyone with any musical skill at 12 or better. Still, Human vocal apparatus renders Inheritor very poorly, so translators are recommended!

An Inheritor name is a series of chords – the higher the rank, the longer and more complex the name. Humans usually give use-names to Inheritor acquaintances, based on what the real name sounds like – Flute, Doorbell, Dogfight . . .

PSYCHOLOGY

Workers, Drones, and Soldiers obey absolutely those of a higher caste, and expect instant obedience from their inferiors. No Worker would ever disobey a Drone, and no Worker or Drone would ever think of opposing a Queen, unless under direct orders from a more senior one. Even offering unasked advice is perilous. Except in dire emergencies, Workers show the utmost deference to Queens, performing elaborate dances of abasement before entering their presence. Drone protocol is similar, but a favored Drone who is a Queen's formal consort may omit much of it.

Workers are always subservient to superior castes, or to anyone (even Humans) who behaves as if they had high status. Although they can think for themselves, they are emotionally at sea without their superiors. A group of Workers will be confident, content, and motivated if led (or recently instructed) by a higher caste leader. A group lacking direct personal supervision, will be cowardly, depressed, and lacking in initiative.

Soldiers are unfriendly and close-mouthed to people they don't know, and aggressively hostile to enemies. If the person they are dealing with is on good terms with their superiors Soldiers seem to be polite, gung-ho, and cautious – much like Human military cadets.

Drones are somewhat cautious by Human standards, but this is balanced by an intense curiosity and strong social instinct. Drones are terrible gossips, but a Drone will try to determine the status of anyone he meets, and then will be overbearing, comradely, or subservient as he thinks appropriate.

Queens are arrogant and convinced of their own superiority. A Queen will be jittery without at least a dozen followers to order around. No Queen will ever meet outsiders, let alone travel, without a bodyguard of Soldiers!

Queens and drones alike tend to be technophiles and problem-solvers, little inclined to introspection. They believe that almost any problem can be solved with the proper application of know-how and common sense. They love gadgets. Inheritor ships, vehicles, and devices are usually in a state of functioning dismemberment, as their owners tinker with and fine-tune them.

SOCIETY

The basic Inheritor organization is the nest. A typical modern nest – approximately equivalent to a city-state – is ruled by about 500 Queens. Under them will be some 5,000 Drones, and about 100,000 Workers. Although different nests may be fiercely competitive, within the nest the concept of private property does not exist. Instead, a nest's Queens own all nest property in common, though in practice individual Queens may possess private stocks of material goods (never territory).
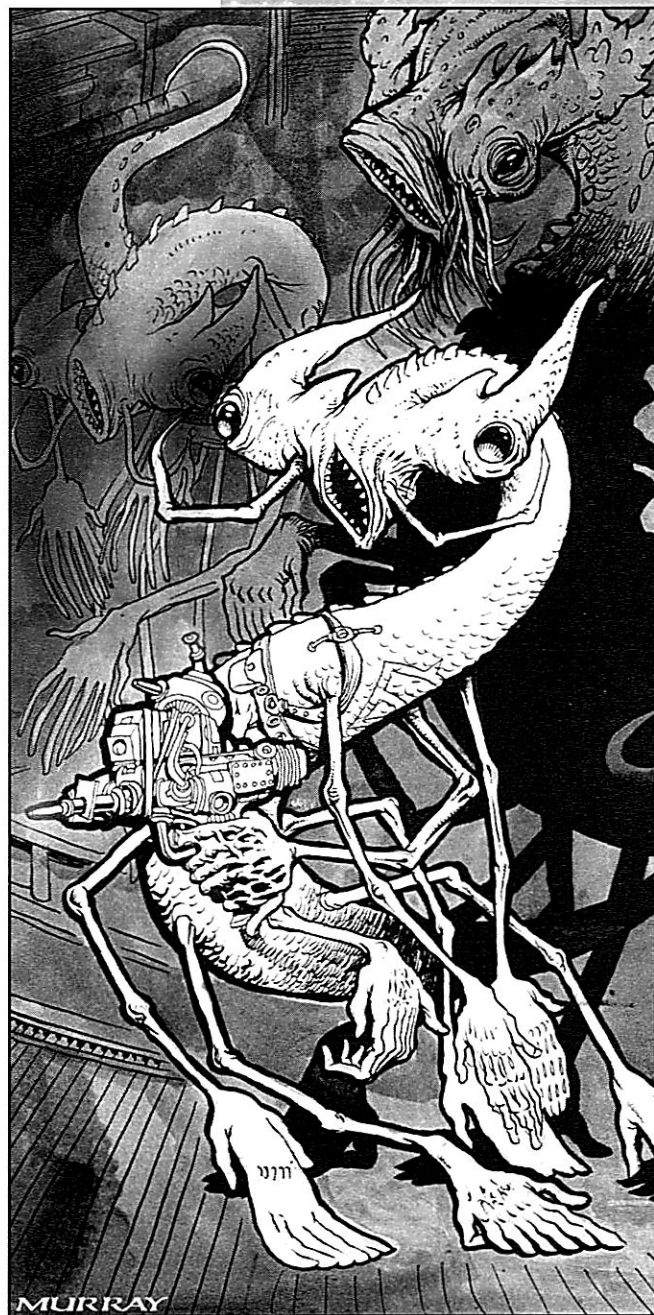
Inheritor Castes

Both the Inheritors and the Droyne have caste systems. As some researchers believe that the Droyne were the Ancients, this has led to a supposition that the Inheritor caste system was in fact derived from the Droyne (through imitation, or through deliberate biological and social engineering). Critics point out the many differences (including the lack of any coyn system). Supporters counter that the current Inheritor system was doubtless matched to existing Inheritor biology, and may in any event have evolved or degenerated since its design.

Interstellar Relations

T he Inheritor sphereworld is located in Nooq Sector (Nooq 3201), in a largely unexplored region on the trailing edge of Federation space. Since they developed space travel a few hundred years ago, the Inheritors have actively colonized 28 star systems in the vicinity of the Sphere, mostly establishing bases on small airless moons and in asteroid belts, where they mine for raw materials rare in their home system. The majority of interstellar bases have been established by the Circle of the Sphere (see main text), but other Inheritor factions and nests have established colonies, sometimes leading to rivalry and even armed skirmishes.

The initial contact between the Inheritors and the Federation occurred recently, when a Hiver research cruiser noticed the star Nooq 3201 had what appeared to be a strangely high amount of infrared radiation compared to other wavelengths. Further study revealed the answer: the Inheritor sphereworld, which was absorbing much of the visible light from the star it surrounded.

Investigation revealed the sphere lay in the center of a small but rapidly expanding interstellar civilization. Cautious observation from 998 to 1027 led to the Federation initiating direct contact in 1008 with representatives of the Circle of the Sphere. First contact went peacefully and resulted in a tentative agreement for further cultural and economic exchanges, although the existence of the sphereworld was not made public until 1101.

There has since been sporadic contact between the Inheritors and Federation (and recently, Lithkind) traders and explorers. In some cases, Inheritor outposts have interpenetrated Federation space, primarily due to the lack of interest either side has in each other's planetary real estate. The Inheritor's passion for gadgets and mass-production techniques could result in them becoming major players in trailing interstellar thralldom, should they succeed in penetrating Federation marketplaces. On the other hand, they offer a vast market for anyone who can find something they want – at least until their engineers learn how to copy it!

The Queens rule Inheritor society. They are the leaders, executives, and policy-makers, as well as the mothers of children. The Drones generally fill middle-management, supervisory, and scientific positions, and are the most likely Inheritors to be assigned to liaison tasks such as dealing with Humans. The most important Drones are the dozen or so official consorts possessed by each Queen; it is impossible for a Drone to be a close advisor to a specific Queen without also being her mate. The Workers make up the proletariat of Inheritor society; they look after children, work in factories, and engage in what passes for agriculture. About 5% or so of a nest's Workers will be Soldiers, but in times of stress this proportion will rise as high as 30%, as instinct takes over and agitated Queens begin producing more Soldier eggs.

Since caste is biologically determined, social movement is limited, but there is a great deal of social competition within each class. This is strongest among the Queens, who constantly vie for ultimate power within the nest, and the Drones, with the ultimate honor being appointment as consort to a senior Queen. Even workers may strive to obtain better (or less dangerous) jobs.

Children have value proportionate to their caste, but no status until they reach adulthood. Juvenile Queens are raised by and obey the Drone consorts of the Queen that bore them; all other children are raised by members of their own caste. Juvenile Queens may also be placed in command of spacecraft or other important installations, usually with at least one experienced Drone consort "on loan" from the harem of their Queen-mother.

WORSHIP

Many religions have grown up on the Inheritor homeworld. Most are centered around the mysterious Builders, including legends that they will return at some point to reclaim their home, or that the Builders are secretly watching over the Inheritors. In some nests, Builder artifacts are considered sacred objects. Other common religious tenets include reincarnation into bodies of higher caste (Queens being reincarnated into Builders and passing beyond this reality) and the worship of Queens as living gods.

Religion is generally something that is left to the Drones, Soldiers, and Workers. Priests or ministers are always Drones, but the Queens have little use for religion themselves, although some Queens encourage it in their followers.

GOVERNMENT

Queens rule within each nest, with the larger nests simply requiring more Queens to run efficiently. Different systems have been tried for apportioning power among the various Queens within a nest. Most commonly, a nest is administered by one or two of the senior Queens as "controllers," with the others forming a "cabinet" with specific posts such as education, trade, technology, or defense. Positions may rotate among Queens, or superior positions may be held by virtue of popularity, age, success in physical tests or duels, or power struggles and assassination.

The population of the sphereworld is estimated at about 3 million nests, or about 300 billion Inheritors. Relations between these nests are similar to those between Human nation-states, running the gamut from friendly trade and alliance to open warfare. For the last three centuries, about a tenth of the known Inheritor nests have been united in a relatively stable confederation, the Circle of the Sphere, which has also taken the lead in developing interstellar travel and contacts with other races. The sheer size of the sphereworld means many nests are outside the mainstream of Inheritor politics.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Inheritors love gadgets, but they are not very good designers. Most of their technology was salvaged from Builder artifacts found within the sphere-world, rather than developed from scratch. As a result, they are better at modifying someone else's designs than creating new technology on their own.

Most scientists and engineers are Drones, since few Queens have time for anything other than politics and administration, and Workers lack curiosity and intellect (though they make good lab assistants, technicians, and factory workers). The Inheritor's earliest scientific discoveries stemmed from archaeological finds, artifacts left behind by the Builders. Science involved discovering what a Builder device did, how to operate it, and (if it was useful) how to build more, or at least something that worked in a similar if less efficient fashion. *Why* it worked was not much of a question, but gradually the Inheritors' engineer-archaeologists developed a piecemeal understanding of scientific principles.

The Inheritors still have some items of Builder technology whose principles their scientists do not fully understand, even though they do not know how to build copies of them. The exact nature of this technology is up to the GM – it might include a few black-globe force fields, "tamed" Builder robots, or exotic tools and power supplies, much of it of dubious reliability. Most of the rest of their technology is similar to that of the Hivers or Imperium, although being designed for use by eight-armed beings in a zero gravity/exotic environment, it doesn't look like Human or Hiver equipment.

The Circle of the Sphere and outworld colonies average TL10, with a few TL13 or higher artifacts as individual relics. As a whole, the sphereworld seems to average about TL8.

What the Inheritors are good at is copying things, and, since they are not obsessed with developing new technology, they are also skilled at making better (or at least, cheaper and easy-to-use) versions of existing technology, although they tend to go overboard at times. The latest Inheritor personal communicator may not have any radically new physics, but it will probably be lighter, more attractive, able to translate communications in 15 languages, and have the capability to display the person you are talking to in life-sized holographic projection. It also probably costs half as much as the original, but will break down four times as often.

The Sphereworld's Atmosphere

The hydrogen-fluorine-sulfur tetra-chloride atmosphere in the sphereworld is a deadly poison and corrosive for oxygen-breathers.

Leaks: Check each hour to see if a suit leaks. Roll 3d. On a 13 or less, the seal holds. On a 14-16, a slow leak occurs, on a 17 a fast leak, on an 18+ a blow-out. *Modifiers:* -1 if suit has DR 30+ or -2 if DR 100+. Check immediately at +6 if the suit is punctured by penetrating damage. Patching a leak takes 3 seconds and a Vacc Suit roll; roll at -1 per failed attempt.

Exposure: Roll vs. HT-6 every second; a failed roll does 1 hit damage. After two hits are lost, victim will begin coughing (-3 to DX until clean air reached). Each failed roll also reduces victim's Vision roll by 1 (maximum -10). Victims who lose three or more hits must also roll vs. HT-4 to avoid permanent blindness and vs. HT-6 to avoid lung damage (lose 1d HT permanently). Lung damage and blindness may be curable by transplants ($6,000 and 2 weeks in hospital for both eyes, $30,000 and 8 weeks for the lungs).

Lost Symphony

On an outstation somewhere in the trailing Federation or Two Thousand Worlds, the party comes across a strange sight: a multilegged alien in an elaborate exoskeleton under very poor control, lurching toward them, trying to operate an electronic translator. If they listen, they can make out the words "mercenaries," "Great Sphere," and "many credits."

The alien is an Inheritor Worker whose name sounds like brass windchimes. She is brave but desperate, fighting panic in an alien place and an exoskeleton she doesn't know how to use. If the mention of credits gets the party's attention, though, Windchime will calm down and explain . . .

Inheritor nests sometimes are torn by power struggles between rival Queens. Usually the loser is killed, but sometimes she escapes. Windchime's beloved Queen (long name, sounding like the opening bars of a symphony), is one such exile. A double-dealing cabal of lesser Queens conspired to overthrow her, and she was forced to flee with a mere two Soldiers and six Workers, and no Drones!

Queen Symphony remembered a story told her by one of her drone-consorts (now dead, alas) who had served as a trade delegate to the Imperium. Taking her personal fortune, she fled, seeking that strange race called Humans who would fight not for nest-love but for money. She has 10 million credits. Will the party journey to the Sphere to help regain a Queen's rightful throne?

One area of technology the Inheritors are not especially interested in is robotics and genetic engineering. In their Worker and Soldier castes, the Inheritors already have purpose-built soldiers and technicians, and see no need to develop new ones.

WEAPONRY AND WARFARE

While they were still in the equivalent of a Renaissance culture, some Inheritor scientists learned how to modify the Builders' laser tools into weapons, and how to operate existing automated factories to build them. They never developed gunpowder weapons, but did produce some pyrotechnic devices making use of exotic reactions only possible in a fluorine-sulfur environment.
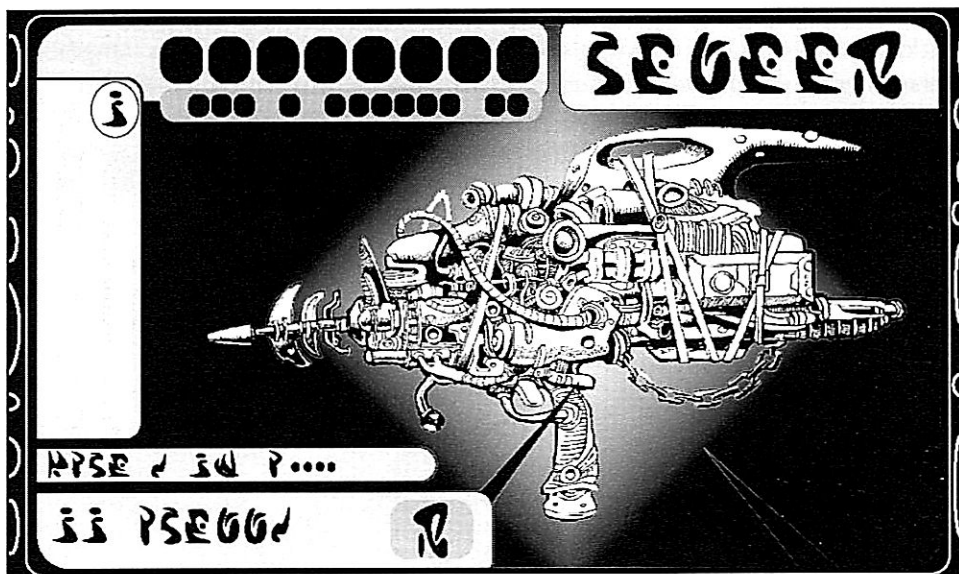
All weapons employed by Inheritors are designed for a zero-gravity environment, which means they must be recoilless. The favored weapons are lasers and plasma beams. Inheritor military vehicles are often small one- or two-being reactionless thruster vehicles (essentially, grav vehicles without contragravity), since many Inheritor military actions take place *inside* the buildings and corridors of their sphereworld.

Weapons are usually borne only by the Soldier caste, who are trained in their use from infancy. Soldiers are superbly skilled in weaponry and small-unit tactics, but are somewhat deficient in large-scale operational planning, and hopeless in strategy.

Normal Workers receive no military or weapon training. Drones may receive rudimentary weapons training if serving as military or scout officers, but will undergo an extensive education in tactics, military intelligence, etc. Queens usually are skilled in military strategy, and sometimes tactics, but (unless promotion by assassination is the typical means of advancement in their nest) rarely have personal skill with weapons or unarmed combat.

SPACESHIPS

The lost Builders left some spaceships, antimatter-powered normal-space craft lacking FTL capability. But study of Inheritor craft will reveal that some of their starship systems are closer to Hive Federation design! Although details are unclear, it seems likely that at some point in the last century or so the Inheritors captured a Hive Federation scout or trading ship which blundered into their system.

In general, Inheritor ships are never streamlined, usually resembling a collection of globes joined together by tubes. Inside, the ships are a crazy three-dimensional labyrinth of small tubular passages, usually a yard or less across, connecting into spherical rooms. There is no internal gravity.

Large ships and space stations (with crews of 1,000 or more) may have a senior Queen, with the officers her consorts. Otherwise, a ship will be captained by a juvenile Queen or experienced Drone depending on the mission. A ship's officers are always Drones, with crew and marines being Workers or Soldiers.

Inheritor starships, especially larger military vessels controlled by Queens, will (when their musical notes are translated) have incredibly pompous and vainglorious names.

INHERITOR ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER

The armed merchant cruiser is used for exploratory trading and diplomatic missions into alien space. It shows a characteristic mish-mash of technology, including two distinct reactors and bolted-on drive components salvaged or purchased from the Hive Federation. Components are TL10 unless noted otherwise. The ship is not designed to be an economically viable merchantman – its purpose is to explore new worlds, make contact with other species, and lay down trade routes. The heavy armament shows the desire to protect the Queen (usually an older juvenile) who commands it.

■ **Crew:** Queen (master) and/or Drone consort (executive officer/navigator), three bridge crew (Drones: pilot, comm and sensors officers), 12 gunners (two Drones and 10 Warriors), two scientists/xenologists (Drones), two medics (Drone and Worker), 14 engineers (Drone and Workers), and cargo master (Drone). Frozen watch: 12 engineers (Workers) and 20 marines (Warriors) in low passage.

■ **Design:** 2,000-ton USL Hull, DR 200 (DR 100 turrets), eight Turrets with three Lasers each, two turrets with two TL12 Lasers each, one Particle Accelerator Bay, Basic Stealth and Emission Cloaking. *Modules:* 1 Command Bridge, 1 Engineering, 1 Engineering (TL12), 601 Hold, 80 Jump Drive, 600 Jump Fuel, 8 Low Berth, 540 M-Drive, 40 M-Drive (TL12), 1 Sickbay, 25 Staterooms, 1 Lab, 5 Fuel Processor, 40 Spacedock.

■ **Statistics:** EMass 4,707.9, LMass 7,431.9 (including gig). Cost: MCr561.2 (with gig), HP: 90,000. Size Modifier: +10.

■ **Performance:** Accel 3.44 Gs, Jump 3.

The gig here is functionally similar to the gig on p. GT140, but many other designs are likely. Usually each gig is customized to a particular ship.

ECONOMICS

An Inheritor nest is a communal economy. Money is not used. Queens may take any resources they wish, or commission any product they desire, within limits imposed by the power structure established by the other Queens and the overall wealth of the nest. Stores providing food, goods, and services do exist; Workers and Drones wear electronic medallions that show the type and level of resources that individual is authorized to receive. These resources are not limited to goods – they may include the service of servants or technicians, availability of computer time, access to records, etc.

Builder Robot (TL14)

A few of these robots can still be found roaming about uninhabited areas of the sphereworld. Inheritor efforts to study and reverse-engineer them have been hampered by both the extremely advanced technology involved and the fact that damage to the robots inevitably results in corrosive fluorine wreaking havoc on their systems.

Various designs exist, from tiny mouse-sized duct crawlers to huge space-going machines. This particular example is an electro-mechanical repair robot. It is egg-shaped, a bit larger than a basketball, with a sensor track along its equator, an underside cleaning unit, and four thruster ducts. It has no legs, but possesses three retractable tentacles tipped with various tools.

It does not use contragravity (unnecessary in the sphereworld). Instead, it relies on reactionless thrusters for lift. It can recharge at various energy conduits scattered throughout the sphereworld.

The robot is not artificially intelligent, but is quite sophisticated. It is programmed to repair itself or other robots, as well as the sphereworld's facilities. It will also defend itself against tampering, or flee if it cannot overcome an attacker. Some robots of this type have been known to behave in other ways that seem inexplicable (for example, cutting odd graffiti into walls) but which probably made sense to the Builders.

■ **Brain:** TL13 small brain (0.5 lbs., 0.01 cf, complexity 7).

■ **Sensors:** Basic with 360-degree vision and spectrum vision (0.65 lbs., 0.013 cf).

■ **Communicator:** Basic (0.25 lbs., 0.005 cf).

■ **Arms:** Two ST 10 arm motors, cheap, extra-flexible, extendable, retractable (each 6 lbs., 0.12 cf, 0.05 kW). One ST 20 arm motor, cheap, extra-flexible, extendable, retractable (12 lbs., 0.24 cf, 0.1 kW).

■ **Weapons:** Disintegrator energy drill. (Malf. crit., Damage spcl. (disintegrates one hex), SS 14, Acc 0, 1/2D 10, Max 30, Wt. 2, 0.05 cf, RoF 3~, shots 7/C). Aside from reduced accuracy (as it is a tool, not a weapon) and lack of psionic sighting, effects are as per Ancient disintegrators, pp. 116-117. Some robots are armed with simple laser torches instead of disintegrators (treat as X-ray laser pistols).

■ **Propulsion:** Four reactionless thrusters, vectored (each 3 lbs., 0.06 cf, 2 kW, 40 lbs. thrust).

Builder Robot (TL14)

[Continued]

- **Accessories:** Two integral electronics tools (each 2 lbs., 0.04 cf). Integral mechanical tools (10 lbs., 0.2 cf). Inertial compass (0.25 lbs., 0.005 cf). Cleaning unit (5 lbs., 0.1 cf).

- **Power System:** Power consumption 8.2 kW at full thrust, 2.2 kW at 25% thrust. TL14 rechargeable "E" cell (20 lbs., 0.2 cf, holds 720,000 kWS, good for 24 hours operation at full thrust or 89 hours at 25% thrust (the usual operating condition).

- **Body and Subassemblies:** Three arms. One "heavy arm" contains ST 20 arm motor, integral mechanical tools, and disintegrator (0.49 cf, area 4). Two "light arms" each contain ST 10 arm motor and integral electronics tools (0.16 cf and area 2 each). Body contains all other components including retraction space for arms (1.383 cf, area 8). Total surface area 16.

- **Structure:** Medium (16 lbs.).

- **Hit Points:** Body 12, heavy arm 6, each light arm 3.

- **Armor and Threat Protection:** PD 4, DR 100 metal armor (24 lbs.). Sealed.

- **Statistics:** Design and loaded weight 118.4 lbs. Volume 2.193 cf. Price Cr20,641.5. ST (arms) 10/20, Body 0. DX 11. IQ 10. HT 14/12. Flight speed: in sphereworld (zero gee but has atmosphere) 273 mph (Speed 137). On 1-G world: 140 mph (Speed 70). Space acceleration: 1.35 Gs.

- **Programs:** Ambidexterity (complexity 2). Full Coordination Level 1 (complexity 4). Skill programs: Any five Electronics Operation or Mechanic (specialization) [4*]-17 programs (each complexity 4). Beam Weapons (Tachyonic) [0.5]-11. Programs cost Cr26,000.

* as [16] due to Eidetic Memory.

These statistics apply to a Builder robot in good condition. Over hundreds of millennia most have repaired themselves several dozen times over, and in some cases original systems have decayed or broken down, or been replaced by scavenged lower-TL parts of Inheritor manufacture.

Off-world visitors making a long term stay in a nest (e.g., diplomatic or trade delegations) may be issued their own credit medallions. Most nests are happy to encourage trade with other nests, or with off-worlders. The Inheritors will often purchase (or steal) advanced technology from other cultures, trading their cheap, multi-function gadgetry for new ideas and scientific or engineering know-how. Their spies and agents are always eager to get access to new devices and discoveries that might prove useful.

In addition to technology exchange, the Inheritors are also eager for natural resources, particularly heavy metals. Their own solar system was swept clean of both worlds and asteroidal debris by the Builders, and since they have been sentient, the race has simply recycled existing Builder artifacts and structures to get construction materials.

SPHEREWORLD

The Inheritor's unusual home is located in Nooq Sector (Nooq 3201), on the far trailing fringe of Hiver and K'kree space. It is a Dyson sphere, a giant megastructure that encloses a star. The Inheritors' sphere is not, however, a solid shell. Much of the outer surface of the sphere is only structural rigging and giant continent-sized solar panels. Only a tiny portion – a fraction of 1% – of the structure is habitat modules that possess a functioning environment, and the inhabited regions are often separated by tens of thousands of miles of unpressurized or incomplete sectors. Yet even this fragment has a living area equivalent to 1,000 Earth-sized worlds!

Creating a Dyson sphere requires massive amounts of raw materials, and may necessitate the dismantling of an entire solar system to provide building supplies; only a very advanced technology could build it. Since any civilization with a faster-than-light drive would have little need of a Dyson sphere, the motives of the Builders in constructing the artifact remain uncertain. It is possible the Builders were Ancients who subsequently lost jump-drive technology. Another, perhaps more plausible, theory is that the sphereworld is not primarily intended as a habitat. Instead, it may have been built for solar-energy collection (to power some massive device?), as an experiment in stellar husbandry (to act as a frame for magnetic or other systems intended to manipulate the star's lifespan), or perhaps as a platform for research into a nova-inducing weapon similar to the Darrian Confederation's "star trigger" device.

Housing and Cities

A typical Inheritor nest is a city-sized region of corridors and rooms. Most nests are large modules attached to the sphereworld's structural cables. They seem to have been originally designed as spaceports or construction centers by the Builders, hence their functioning environment and relatively finished condition even prior to the Inheritors gaining their own technological know-how.

Nests are crowded, chaotic mazes of passages and chambers, filled with bustling activity, the whole taking place within the murky yellow-green haze of the fluorine-sulfur atmosphere. The edges of the nest contain spaceport facilities, quarters for the Workers, and barracks for the Soldiers. As the visitor penetrates deeper, storage areas, food vats, and manufacturing centers give way to offices and scientific labs, and the quarters of the Drones and Soldiers. Toward the center are executive offices, planning rooms, computer centers, and royal creches for raising young Queens. In the heart of the nest are the Queens' chambers and the egg nurseries.

Because there is no gravity, nests are arranged three-dimensionally. Passages are octagonal, with entrances on each face of the octagon. There's no difference between a wall, a floor, and a ceiling. Furniture and appliances are found on every side of a room. Humans or other vertically-oriented species visiting a nest can go crazy searching for an "up" and "down" to orient themselves.

Inheritors normally sleep coiled in large, round urns.

Travel

Two means of rapid transit are used on the sphereworld.

First, it is possible to board a spacecraft, leave by an airlock, and fly over the outer shell in search for a second airlock at the destination. Functioning spaceports are common, and regular vacuum trade exists between many far-flung nests.

Second, the Builders left behind a "cable car" system, which links environmental modules via huge pressurized cabs that run on bonded superdense wires. The cable-car network runs to all known Inheritor nests, and extends into unexplored regions of the sphere.

Clothing and Costume

The Inheritors do not make or wear garments, except for protective gear for use in hostile environments. Dyes and markers are used to distinguish individuals within Drone and Worker castes. Workers and Drones have indelible symbols imprinted on their bodies to identify their job and position, or carry electronic tags.

Queens and their Drone consorts tend to be vain about their appearance, sometimes having workers polish their scales for endless amounts of time.
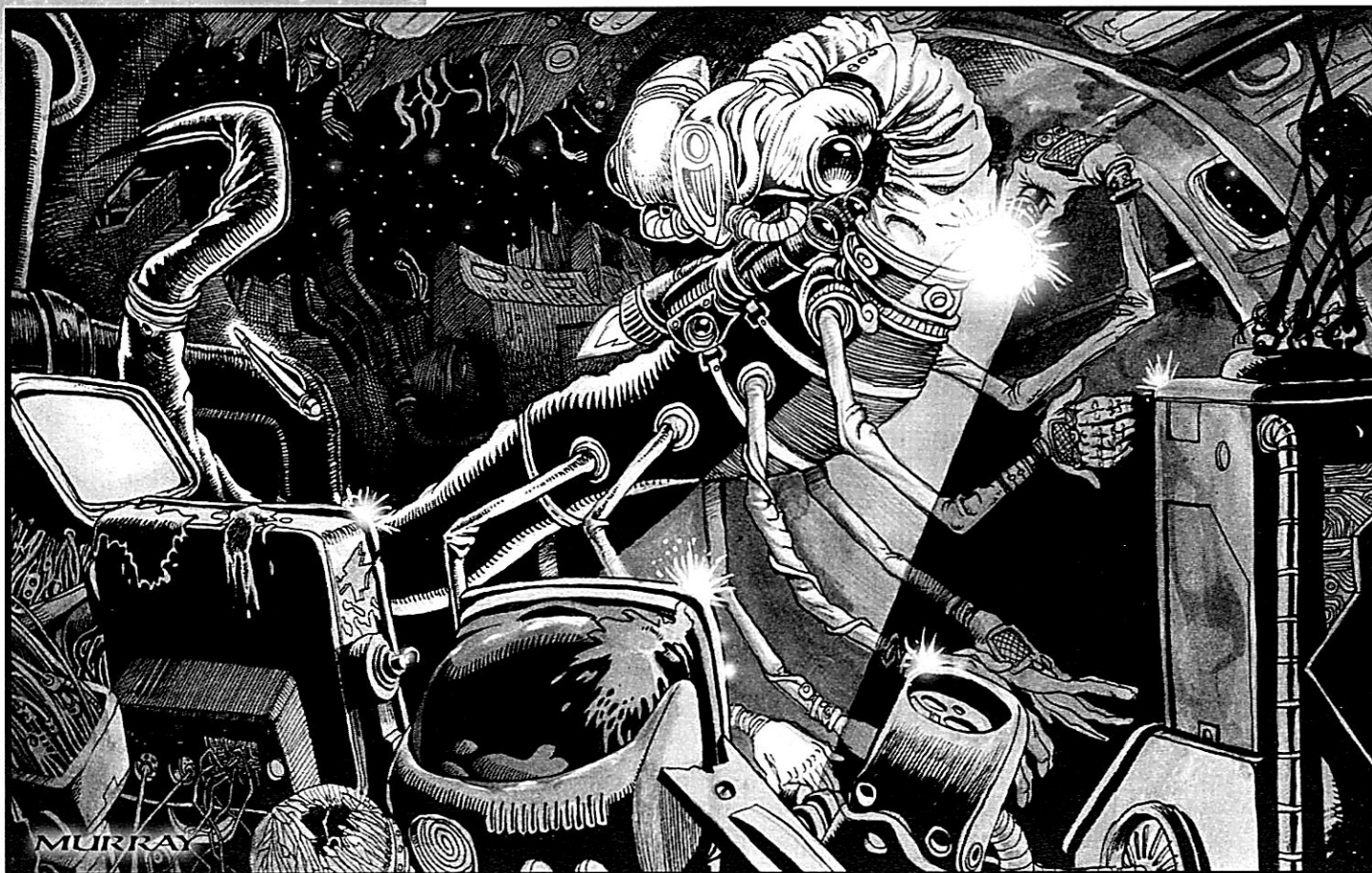
Inheritors as PCs

A possible role for a PC who doesn't want to be under the thumb of a Queen all the time might be that of an agent or trouble-shooter for a nest who has been sent to Human space, perhaps as a trade agent, diplomat, or spy, either on a specific mission or to travel with and observe Humaniti. The best way to introduce such a character is to have the adventurers visit the Inheritor sphereworld – the PC is the Drone assigned to the party as an interpreter and guide, and after the adventurers complete whatever mission brought them to the nest, the Queen may decide to reward (or punish!) the Inheritor PC by sending him off with the party when they leave.

Adventurers will have to wear Inheritor equivalents of heated space suits when adventuring with Humans, and the suits will have to be designed to be self-sealing to prevent any puncture from being catastrophic. Dealing with the crushing "normal" gravity of an Earthlike world is more difficult, but this can be cancelled in a starship or space station with artificial gravity. On a planet, a grav belt could be adapted to handle the difficulty. Of course, an Inheritor could also take an advantage like G-Experience.

CHARACTERS

Inheritors can be created using the racial templates below, and either the *Basic Set* or standard *GURPS Traveller* templates. Players should usually take Drones or Queens as PCs, since Soldiers and Workers tend to lack independence.

The races' natural gravity is 0 G and their comfort zone centers on 300° F.

WORKER   -23 POINTS

Attributes: ST -2 [-15], IQ-1 [-10].

Advantages: DR 2 [6]; Clinging (Requires low gravity, 0.2 G or less, -40%) [15]; Extra Arms (Six, short, also used as feet) [30]; Flexibility [15]; Hyperactive [30]; Manual Dexterity +1 [3]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Sharp Teeth [5]; and Striker (one-hex tail) [10].

Disadvantages: Anaerobic [-30]; Dull [-1];Gregarious [-10]; Reduced Hit Points -2 [-10]; Selfless [-10];Slave Mentality [-40]; Short Arms [-10]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; Sterile [-3]; and Workaholic [-5].

Racial Skill: Free Fall/TL at DX [2].

SOLDIER   25 POINTS

Attributes: ST -1 [-10], IQ-1 [-10].

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; DR 2 [6];Clinging (Requires low gravity, 0.2 G or less, -40%) [15]; Extra Arms (Six, short, also used as feet) [30]; Flexibility [15];

Hyperactive [30]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Sharp Teeth [5]; and Striker (one-hex tail) [10].

Disadvantages: Anaerobic [-30]; Callous [-6]; Careful [-1]; Congenial [-1]; Dull [-1]; Fanaticism [-15]; Humble [-1]; Reduced Hit Points -1 [-5]; Short Arms [-10]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; Sterile [-3]; and Workaholic [-5].

Racial Skill: Free Fall/TL at DX [2].

Drone   38 points

Attributes: ST -3 [-20].

Advantages: DR 2 [6]; Clinging (Requires low gravity, 0.2 G or less, -40%) [15]; Extra Arms (Six, short, also used as feet) [30]; Flexibility [15]; Hyperactive [30]; Manual Dexterity +1 [3]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Sharp Teeth [5]; Status 1 [5]; and Striker (one-hex tail) [10].

Disadvantages: Anaerobic [-30]; Careful [-1]; Chummy [-5]; Curious [-5]; Nosy [-1]; Reduced Hit Points -3 [-15]; Responsive [-1]; Short Arms [-10]; and Short Lifespan 1 [-10].

Racial Skill: Free Fall/TL at DX [2].

Queen   83 points

Attributes: ST -1 [-10], IQ +1 [10].

Advantages: DR 2 [6]; Clinging (Requires low gravity, 0.2 G or less, -40%) [15]; Extra Arms (Six, short, also used as feet) [30]; Flexibility [15]; Hyperactive [30]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Sharp Teeth [5]; Status 2 [10]; and Striker (one-hex tail) [10].

Disadvantages: Anaerobic [-30]; Chummy [-5]; Reduced Hit Points -1 [-5]; Selfish [-5]; and Short Arms [-10].

Racial Skill: Free Fall/TL at DX [2].
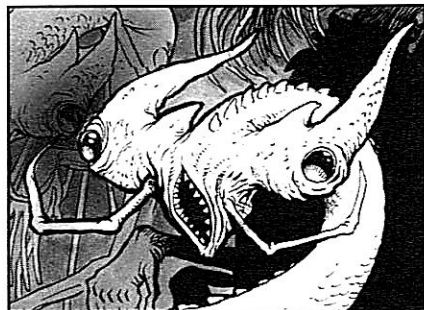
SOCIAL STATUS

Status	Description
5	Influential Queen
4	Queen
3	Juvenile queen
2	Drone consort
1	Drone
0	Average worker or warrior

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

GURPS Traveller template suitability will vary by caste, as follows:

Queen: Wealthy Traveler, Army (Officer), Navy (Officer), Marine (Officer).

Drone: Bureaucrat, Computer Technician, Diplomat, Entertainer, Journalist/Reporter, Manager, Medical Doctor, Merchant, Navy (Officer), Professor, Scientist, Scout.

Soldier: Hunter/Guide, Law Enforcer, Scout, Army, Marine.

Worker: Engineer, Farmer, Mechanic/Technician, Medical Technician.

The Lithkind

The Lith Kindriu a-Izyme evolved in the tree branches of their planet Izyme's southern land masses. When climactic changes threatened this habitat, the Lithkind became nomadic hunters. They developed fire, clothing, tools, and weapons, and tamed the fierce Icebats that came up out of the frozen south. When the ice retreated, the Lithkind returned to their trees, but developed vast arboreal cities, domesticating many varieties of fungus, animal, and insect. With cities came science, industry, and eventually, the stars.

Interstellar Relations

The Lithkind date their first alien contact to -2120. At this point in their history, SELK – the Lithkind interstellar government – had only recently been formed, and the Lithkind were expanding through the rimward reaches of Gzirr!k'l sector using reactionless-drive sublight vessels. Their furthest outpost was in the Yezial system, 6 parsecs to coreward and spinward of their homeworld Izyme.

In -2102 Izyme lost radio contact with Yezial. In -2080 a follow-up expedition arrived, discovering a wrecked colony scarred by beam-weapon fire. They also found a derelict scout ship of strange design that had crash-landed on the planet. It contained the bodies of large six-limbed aliens. It possessed sophisticated technology including a better reactionless drive, superior fusion plants and weapons, and an FTL drive that used a totally new principal – jump drive.

Over the next few decades, Lithkind scientists struggled to reverse-engineer these technologies. Politicians struggled to handle the challenges this discovery posed for Lithkind society. In particular, a massive military buildup was begun to prepare against possible alien invasion.

Fortunately for the Lithkind, the aliens were slow in following up on the loss of their starship. Early Lithkind j-drive experiments had revealed the danger of "misjump," and as 60 years went by without further contact, the Lithkind assumed the scout force that had attacked their colony had perhaps arrived by such an accident.

In -2027 their wait ended. A K'kree cruiser squadron – the vanguard of a larger fleet – jumped into Lithkind space.

PHYSIOLOGY

Standing only 4' and weighing 60-90 lbs., the Lithkind are among the smallest of sentient races. Their faces are similar to a delicate-featured Human's, save for large, slit-pupiled emerald green eyes, pointed ears, and a total lack of eyebrows or facial hair. Concealed by their thin lips are multiple rows of needlelike teeth. A Lithkind's smile can be a shock.

Aside from their small size, their most exotic feature is their "hair," a mass of rippling blue and green pencil-thick tendrils that reaches halfway down their back. Their skin is smooth and hairless, blue as the sea. Their limbs are Human-like, although their legs are a trifle longer in proportion to their bodies than those of mankind, and fingers and toes have an extra joint. They are slim for their height, and possess a long, prehensile tail.

The Lithkind are nocturnal. They have very sharp ears. Their eyes can see well in anything but total darkness. Their color vision distinguishes fewer shades then Human eyes. For a Lithkind, yellow, green, and blue blur together, as do red and orange.

Lithkind have two sexes, with the females slightly larger. They are not mammals, and neither male nor female Lithkind possess breasts. Lithkind reach their full physical and mental growth after 13 Imperial years. They are then socially adults and have reached their full growth, but they don't achieve puberty until 35 to 40 years old.

REPRODUCTION

The Lithkind *must* mate at the appropriate age, or suffer a fatal buildup of hormonelike chemicals. As these hormone-analogs begin to surge through its body, a Lithkind will feel an increasing desire to mate. A Lithkind who does not do so by age 40 suffers insanity followed by death through painful convulsions.

When Lithkind mate, both partners are consumed by a raging flood-tide of desire, but the female's strength will be artificially enhanced by adrenalinelike chemicals. Courtships are violent affairs. They end when the female rips open her husband's stomach and devours his spore-pods and then the rest of his body. The now-fertilized (and bloated) female collapses into a deep sleep lasting several days. Afterward, a pregnant Lithkind is listless and quiet. Any threat is met with a berserk defense. (In game terms, she suffers from Berserk and Laziness.)

IZYME

North Pole

South Pole

⬡ Ice Cap   ⬡ Water   ⬢ Forest   ⬢ Desert
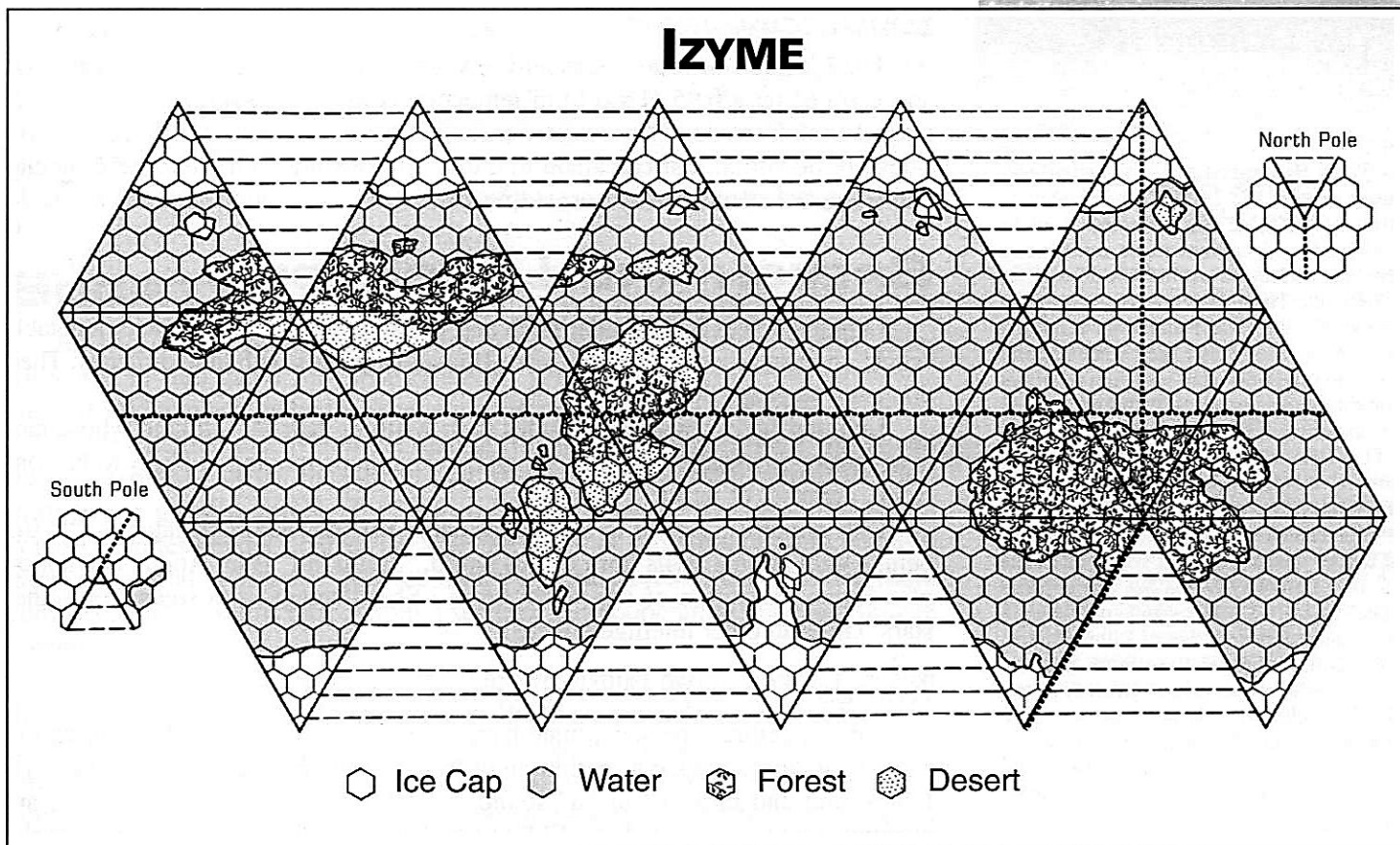
The Lithkind digestive tract (and those of other animals on their world) does double duty as a reproductive vessel. Eating the male provides both the male genetic material needed for reproduction and the initial nutrients for the fetuses that grow inside her own stomach. As the female's own digestive tract converts to its reproductive role, she gradually ceases to eat.

Lithkind females develop three to six pairs of matched male and female fetuses. The exact number depends on the age at which mating takes place (the older she was, the fewer children) and her own health. As the fetuses grow they absorb nutrition from the mother's body, much of it initially provided by the body mass of the devoured father. However, developing Lithkind fetuses also compete fiercely in the womb. When food is scarce the largest fetuses may use the smaller as food (in much the same fashion as terrestrial hyenas or sharks).

Normally, one to four pairs will survive. As the fetuses develop, more and more of the mother's own nutrients are also consumed. Their birth means the mother's death. The baby Lithkind eat their way out of their mother's stomach.

DIET

Lithkind have a very high metabolic rate. Because of their small size, they must eat often to maintain their body temperature. Lithkind require slightly more food than a Human does, and regularly eat five meals per day.

They are omnivorous, raising a variety of animals and plants for food, although they prefer eggs, small grubs, and insectoids to larger meat animals. The interiors of their dwelling-trees are always crawling with small 10-legged bugs native to their homeworld. Lithkind consider these a great delicacy, especially when cooked with the fat orange pseudo-fungi that thrive in the lower reaches of the forest.

Lithkind body chemistry is based around left-handed amino acids like terrestrial life. However, much of their food is poisonous to Humans.

The Lithkind-K'kree War

Ironically, the K'kree were unaware of the Lithkind's presence – they were embroiled in their own interstellar war in Kaa G!'kul and K'trekreer sectors. While seeking to outflank Hiver defenses, they ran right into the Lithkind. The K'kree saw the Lithkind as G'Nakk of the worst kind – individuals who ate not only animal flesh, but even devoured their own mates! War broke out immediately.

Conflict between SELK (the Lithkind government) and the Two Thousand Worlds raged across Gzirr!k'l sector from -2026 to -2012. Six Lithkind colony worlds were devastated by orbital bombardment and ground fighting, and on two occasions K'kree strike cruisers penetrated into the Izyme system, bombarding the Lithkind homeworld and causing millions of deaths.

The Lithkind saw their main disadvantage as a severe shortage of jump-capable ships. Actually, this helped them: the K'kree diverted relatively small forces to engage them, concentrating on the more dangerous Hivers. K'kree captives revealed the existence of the Hive Federation. The Lithkind mounted a desperate diplomatic expedition in search of aid. This resulted (in -2019) in the Mutual Defense Treaty of Guaran, where the Federation offered SELK technological and material aid against their common foe.

ENVIRONMENT

The Lithkind breathe a standard oxygen-nitrogen mix at 0.97 atmospheres, and evolved on a 0.95 G world in temperate conditions. Their world has a 32-hour day/night cycle. They usually stay awake for 21 hours, then sleep for 10. They are nocturnal, but can adapt to a diurnal schedule with the same difficulty that a Human would to a nocturnal lifestyle.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Lithkind voices have similar pitch and timbre to Human voices, with a notable "click" in most accents. They can learn Human languages with little difficulty. Their dominant language is Jethra.

Lithkind body language includes their writhing hair. A Lithkind whose hair is in motion is usually content; one whose hair stops moving is likely to be confused, agitated, or upset.

Lith Kindriu a-Izyme is the Jethra name for the race, translated as "living beings with eternal souls born of our world." "Lithkind" is an Anglic corruption of a Hiver translation of this. Lith Adriu i-Sha ("beings with souls from other stars") refer to other intelligent races.

Names

Among Jethrac-speakers, male names are usually four syllables, and end in an "en" or "ah" sound, e.g., Jedikirah or Fileetwaken. Female names are two syllables, and end in a "k" or "a" sound, e.g., Ystrack or Quilla. All names are accompanied by job and clan ("Eld") titles. These tend to be florid. For example, Prisslock, Walker in Light for the Legion of Death, Captain of Sixteen Sixteens, Ninth of Shadow in the High Trees Eld, is a female Lithkind serving in the military's battledress infantry branch (to this nocturnal race, "walker in light" implies something like "night stalker") who leads a battalion-sized military unit. She is from the Eld, or clan, called Shadow in the High Trees. As the "ninth" she is ninth in line for the position of Ozelda, or clan-head.

PSYCHOLOGY

Lithkind are proud, secretive, and fatalistic. They often seem aloof from all but close friends. It isn't easy to win a Lithkind's friendship, but once won, the Lithkind will remain steadfast, supporting the friend against the outside world, right or wrong. Failing to reciprocate, or betraying this trust, is seen as treachery of the worst sort.

At the heart of the Lithkind's belief system is their faith in reincarnation, which may be an attempt to come to terms with their cruel biology. When a child claws its way from the mother's womb, it is assumed to be the reincarnation of its father (if male) or mother (if female). When more than a pair of children are born, it is assumed that the souls have "split" among the children – this is a good sign, showing that the parents' souls have grown in strength.

In their own minds, Lithkind can only suffer final death from accident or mischance, since they never experience old age. Adult Lithkind take care to record every detail of their lives for their children to study, describing their plans, goals, and so on, so that the records can be given to their latest incarnation.

Lithkind rarely forgive an injury or forget a favor, and because of their belief in reincarnation, they have been known to continue blood-debts and blood-feuds that last centuries. In an effort to prevent major bloodshed, a justified blood-feud ("ariseth") is legally recognized if registered with local government bodies. Law emphasizes settlement between individuals and clans rather than state authority.

Lithkind are very superstitious. Their belief in mysticism permeates their daily lives. However, they are not gullible, merely conservative, and the traditions of their ancestors have a strong hold on them.

Lithkind enjoy nature, and prefer to surround themselves with animals and plants. They like to keep pets. Houses are often adorned with attractive local plants. A common domestic animal is the crimson snakebat (see sidebar, p. 141).

SOCIETY

Among prehistoric Lithkind, young were cared for by their parents' relatives, and in turn cared for those relatives' young. The next development was cultural, taking place in the Lithkind equivalent of the late stone age.

Some Lithkind discovered the mating frenzy could be delayed if males and females avoided contact, thus increasing lifespans and allowing individual communities a greater measure of reproductive control. In turn, the ritual control of inter-gender contact became the basis of most major Lithkind religions and social structures. This led directly to the development of much more complex social systems based around separate but cooperating male and female communities.

Today, Lithkind society is divided into two distinct hermicultures, in which the sexes are totally segregated. Traditionally, the cultures lived in adjoining villages. Today, cities, towns, and large space stations are divided into male and female quarters by the "Crimson Wall" which separates them. At the boundary between male and female quarters are the Houses of Conjunction, where male children are delivered after their birth.

Outside of certain rituals associated with mating, males and females usually have no contact with each other, even by radio or television. No Lithkind would dream of violating these boundaries. If a female did wander into a male area (or vice versa) she would be totally ignored, for such an act would be so unthinkable that it is easier to pretend it does not exist. Images of the opposite sex are prohibited, and only veiled references to them exist in art or literature. The taboo is so extreme that if a Lithkind stumbled upon an injured member of the opposite sex, he or she would walk away rather then help.

Relations between Lithkind sexes are strictly egalitarian. Aside from their separation, this results from the fact that (unlike Humans) a Lithkind male cannot impregnate multiple females, nor can a female mate with multiple males. Thus, there is no incentive for one sex to be more protective of the other.

THE ELD

Since males and females live apart, biological families have no place in Lithkind society. Replacing them is the Eld (literally "dwellers in the life tree"). It is similar to a Human clan, but its members are all of one gender. In fact, the Eld is closer to a village or city ward, for membership is based on residence in a geographic area rather than blood relationship. Each Eld has anywhere from 50 to 2,000 members. An Eld's greatest obligation is the care and education of its members' children.

Before mating, every Lithkind will arrange to entrust his or her wealth and worldly possessions to the Eld. After children are born, the males go to the father's Eld and the female's to the mother's. That Eld raises them and makes sure that they inherit the parent's name, home, goods, and status. Just as importantly, the Eld uses a portion of the inheritance to pay for their education in the same profession as the parent. The Eld's goal is to ensure the child grows up into as close a copy of the parent as is possible and socially desirable.

Hivers and the Lithkind

As the Lithkind and Hivers became more acquainted, it was inevitable that the Lithkind would become aware of the Hiver predilection for manipulations. The coincidence that the Lithkind encountered a K'kree vessel at the start of the Hiver-K'kree War under circumstances that led them to attack the K'kree and ally with the Hive Federation has furnished ample ground for Lithkind conspiracy theories. These suggest the Lithkind were technologically bootstrapped and nudged into conflict with the K'kree to distract the Two Thousand Worlds in their war with the Hivers.

The "bright conspiracy" theory suggests that the Federation destroyed or removed the Lithkind outpost at Yezial, then placed a captured K'kree vessel and dead crew in the area, simulating damage to it by Lithkind weaponry. The "dark conspiracy" theory is more benign. It supposes the Hivers were monitoring Lithkind expansion, but did not intervene until after a K'kree scouting force exterminated a Lithkind colony. The Hivers then attacked the K'kree scouts and erased any sign of their own presence. They left enough evidence to spur Lithkind development of jump drive and defenses sufficient to resist K'kree aggression.

Some conspiracy theorists go further, suggesting that the Hivers may have been aware of the Lithkind for a longer period of time. They postulate that the unification of the Lithkind elden, creation of the Council of Noon, and even the Ileet Exodus (see sidebar, pp. 137-138) might all be evidence of covert Hiver manipulations to altering Lithkind society. Are the Agents of Destiny unwitting Federation pawns?

Lithkind fears – in particular, a fear that the Hivers may wish to "convert everyone into Ileet" – are a major factor in SELK's continued independence from the Hive Federation. Nevertheless, SELK maintains close economic and military ties with the Hivers, and most Lithkind see them as eccentric but friendly giants. Individual Lithkind regularly visit Hiver space as traders, diplomats, academics, or exiles fleeing blood-feuds. Hiver visitors to SELK are just as common.

Elden are administered by their eldest member, the Ozelda (tree-guardian). He or she is the local head of government and spiritual leader. Ozeldas negotiate for their Eld with higher levels of city or rural government, collect taxes, act as magistrates, and preside at the Time of Mating.

Mating takes place at the start of each of Izyme's seasons (every 2½ months) and lasts for nine days. Masked and robed Ozelda from neighboring male and female Elden meet at the Places of Conjunction to arrange details of courtships for members who have gone into heat.

Partners are selected based on availability and eugenic considerations, without input from the actual individuals. After many rituals, the affair is consummated in a private chamber, after which the exhausted females are removed, and the male's remains are cleared away. When the female gives birth, the male child is deposited at the Place of Conjunction for the father's Eld to reclaim.

Arranging these courtships is the official justification for male and female Ozelda to meet, but the Time of Mating, with its ceremony, rituals, and purification rights, is also the only period that the separated local male and female governing bodies of the Lithkind can actually meet.

Each Place of Conjunction is a sacred neutral ground where male and female Ozeldas can settle outstanding disputes over legal issues, resources, land use, and economics. Even so, lengthy purification rituals take place before and after each meeting.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

The Lithkind acknowledge no gods. The only spirits they believe in are those of the living and the dead. Nevertheless, mystical traditions play a vital role in their society, and belief in magic is commonplace.

The Lithkind are a nocturnal race, and the day contains the same terrors for them that the night holds for Humans. It is a time when predators stalk the forest, and the harsh, blinding sun beats down. Noon is an especially unlucky time, the Lithkind witching hour, where angry spirits are abroad.

Lithkind believe that parents' spirits are reborn into their children, but any Lithkind slain by anything other than mating or childbirth may return as an angry ghost to haunt the living members of his Eld. Ghosts ("Hriu") appear at noon over their sleeping victims, and drink their blood, causing illness or nightmares. To stop this happening, the body must be fed to the crimson snakebats with full funeral rites within three days of death.

There are countless rituals and taboos in Lithkind society to ward off ill fortune. Every Lithkind casts zrang sticks or reads the stars at the start of the evening, to see what the night's events will bring. Being introduced to a new person requires the ritual of greeting, a touching of opposite palms. Any business or political negotiations must be preceded by divinations and a ritual exchange of token gifts.

More formal rituals center around important events, such as the adoption of a new member into the Eld, beginning a major enterprise, and of course, funerals, mating, and childbirth. These rituals involve ceremonial dress, chanting, music, and dance, burning of incense, and veneration of the ancient relics and banners of the Eld. After the formalities (which can drag on for hours), ceremonial events turn into parties where delicacies are consumed and intoxicating vapors are inhaled, to the accompaniment of music.

All Lithkind believe in fortune-telling, faith-healing, and precognitive dreams, as well as astral projection, possession by ghosts, seances, and clairvoyance. Curses and blessings are believed to have real power behind them, especially if pronounced at death or birth (reincarnation). Many Lithkind practice a

Ethnic Groups

In present Lithkind society two major ethnic groups exist: Jethrac and Cythrac. The Jethrac are the most numerous, and are typical Lithkind described in this chapter.

The Cythrac developed the earliest global Lithkind civilization, and are said to have originated the Council of Noon. Cythrac have a reputation for magical powers similar to that of the Gypsies of Earth. Their ears are sharply pointed, and they evolved in the tropical regions of Izyme, giving them a darker blue shade of skin than other Lithkind. Today, Cythrac are relatively few in number (5% of the populace), and are considered by turns exotic and sinister.

complex astrological and necromantic system known as Xyastra, in which sympathetic magic is used to alter probability and ceremonial magic calls up the ghosts of ancient sorcerers, binding the Hriu to give a magician advice or attack his foes. Among believers, the power of suggestion can make its effects very real.

Everyone knows simple magical rituals to ward off ill fortune or bring good luck, or curse a rude stranger. These are used casually, on a day-to-day basis. For more important matters, Elden have one or two members who are "Iristi," ("wise") who are Xyastra scholars. These preside at rituals affecting the entire Eld and instruct children in the rudiments of psychic self-defense and family lore. Any Lithkind whose parent was an Iristi will receive similar training.

Those rare individuals who have real psionic powers (as common among Lithkind as among Vilani and Solomani) see their talents as magical in nature, and will seek to hone their powers through disciplines such as Xyastra – possibly with some success, through meditation and visualization. Lithkind psions will often use "magical talismans" or words of power as a psychological crutch to focus their psionic skills. This may convince credulous adventurers who encounter them that all Lithkind magicians are real psions or wizards!

Numerology is a vital part of Lithkind mysticism. Important mystic numbers vary by regional and ethnic subcultures, but three and 16 have universal significance. Three is the number of death, and avoided at all costs – no Lithkind will enter or leave a group if it would result in it having three members, for instance. Sixteen is lucky: Elden are traditionally founded by 16 members, and 16 times 16 Agents of Destiny serve on the ruling Council of Noon.

Lithkind superstitions may seem silly to others, but they are a real part of the racial psyche. Offworlders visiting Lithkind planets who wish to avoid giving offense should learn these customs, or no business will be done. Woe to the party of three adventurers (especially of mixed sex) who show up at noon to meet a Lithkind client, especially if they arrive without a proper ritual of greeting, wearing bright colors, and not carrying the requisite gifts of friendship: "Many apologies, but this meeting is ill-omened. Evil would surely come if it continued. I must leave. Perhaps we can meet next year . . ."

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The daily workings of Lithkind society are run by local Elden, who handle such matters as power, telecommunications, legal arbitration, and emergency services.

Beyond the Eld the workings of government become increasingly convoluted and impenetrable to outsiders, although some Hiver academics have delighted in its study. On most worlds, two parallel bureaucracies handle everything from internal revenue and justice to defense and foreign affairs, one run by females, the other by males. Although it has a functional central bureaucracy, the Lithkind state seems to have no chief executive or legislature. Local Ozeldas have jurisdiction over local affairs; the bureaucracy (with ranks up to senior ministers) enforce and recommend policy, but does not make it.

SELK

The Lithkind's interstellar government is the Sha Elden Lith Kindriu ("the Interstellar Families of Peoples"). SELK is a federation of 22 planetary governments (chief among them Izyme) and 47 dependencies (colonies with very limited autonomy). Each planet has a paired set of male and female bureaucratic ministries. SELK's population is 29 billion.

The Ileet

The Ileet are a minority Lithkind culture, consisting entirely of females of Jethrac descent. The Ileet are named after their founder, a genetic engineer from a female Eld. Seven centuries ago, Ileet discovered a hormone that blocked the onset of puberty. She advocated manufacture of this chemical for those who wished it, and the option to use cloning to reproduce.

Ileet found many supporters within her own Eld, and was elected Ozelda. However, the Council of Noon decided that her ideas threatened the fabric of Lithkind society. Facing execution but unwilling to give up her beliefs, Ileet and her followers fled Izyme, eventually founding their own colony in the Zikarah Diadem, a resource-rich asteroid belt on the trailing fringes of SELK. Their colony prospered, and the result was the creation of a society of all-female Lithkind. They reproduce by cloning themselves, and live substantially longer than ordinary Lithkind. Their average lifespan is 45-60 years. They are somewhat taller and slimmer then normal Lithkind (up to 5′ tall, but with the same body weight).

Aside from their all-female culture and rejection of some beliefs relating to reproduction, Ileet society is similar to that of other Lithkind. Their Elden may be hollowed-out asteroid stations or large spacecraft instead of Iz trees, but they are still run by an Ozelda. Families do not exist: Clones are only created after a Lithkind dies, and are raised by the Eld as new versions of the original person – the current ruler is a clone of the original Ileet, for instance, and has been trained as a leader and a genetic engineer just as she was. The Ileet retain many Lithkind superstitions, and have added their own (for instance, a common belief is that meeting any Lithkind male can instantly trigger a sudden urge to mate with him, something that is not, of course, true).

The Ileet have spread to a dozen other systems (they prefer asteroid belts and gas-giant moons). They maintain a tenuous existence as free traders, asteroid miners, and smugglers or pirates on the fringes of Lithkind society, and today are pariahs but not outlaws. SELK and the Council of Noon tolerate them as long as they don't try to spread their beliefs and remain in their ships when visiting port. Among the rest of the Lithkind, they are considered somewhere between perverts and sorcerers. No one likes to travel in an Ileet ship, but most Lithkind merchants will hire them to carry cargo or buy ore from them, particularly as their rates are often lower then anyone else's.

Over the last century, the Ileet have become somewhat more aggressive, establishing some small colonies and outposts in resource-rich asteroid belts and gas-giant moon systems within K'trekreer sector. This has led to some conflicts between Lithkind and other Hiver and K'kree and minor race clients in the region. SELK has reacted to diplomatic complaints by referring to the Ileet traders, smugglers, and settlers as "pirates," but has refused to take any serious action to rein them in.
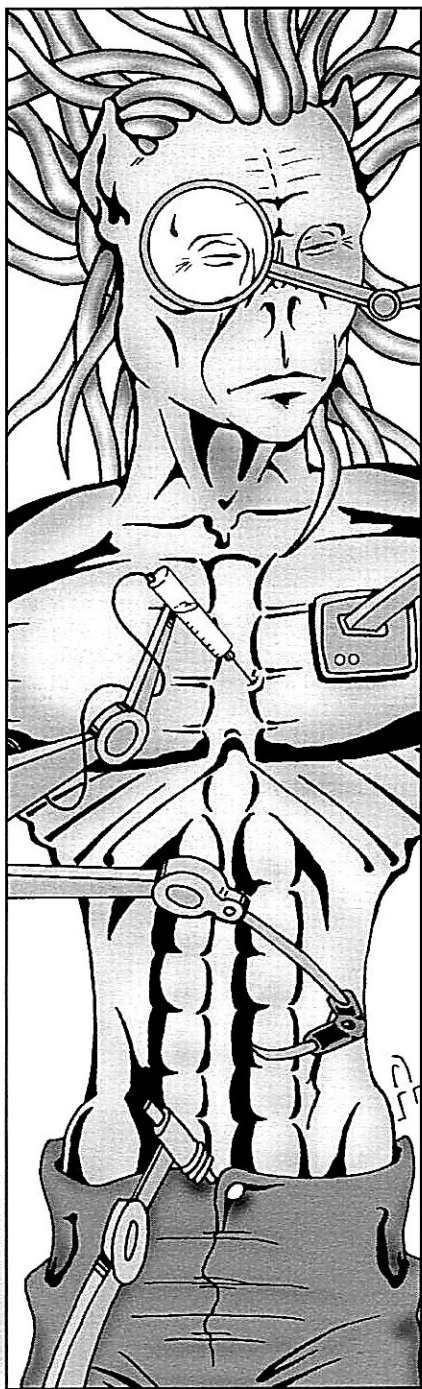
SELK is located in Gzirr!k'l sector, occupying 2½ subsectors and portions of two more, forming an uneasy buffer zone between the K'kree and the Hive Federation. SELK maintains trade and diplomatic relations with the Hivers, but fears of "Hiver manipulations" have prevented closer alliance. Relations with the K'kree are poor at best, with constant border skirmishes.

The Lithkind have occupied all habitable planets in their zone (see map, p. 18) and are slowly expanding through the rimward and trailing gaps into Kaa G!'Kul and K'trekreer. They have fought both K'kree and Hiver clients and independents on both fronts. This "infiltration" has not sat well with either major race.

SELK's capital is the Lithkind homeworld Izyme (see p. 140). The SELK's bureaucracy co-ordinates communication between the planetary ministries, and handles foreign relations, interstellar development, colonial administration, and the Lithkind's two military arms. Officials most likely to interact with aliens are bureaucrats from SELK Adriu i-Shaka (SELKIS), the office of foreign affairs, either from the SELKIS-K (female office) or SELKIS-R (male office).

Who's the supreme executive? When Lithkind are asked they give one answer: the Council of Noon. But no one ever sees the council, and no one knows whom its members are!

THE COUNCIL OF NOON

The Council of Noon does exist, and is accountable to no one but itself. It is an oligarchy, but a very unusual one, for it operates in utmost secrecy. It meets periodically, but the location may vary among hundreds of government facilities across Lithkind space.

The council has 16 times 16 members, half male and half female. Each serves for a term of 16 Lithkind years (about 10 Imperial years). Councilors are known as Agents of Destiny. The routine business of Lithkind government is left to bureaucrats and local Elds. The Council of Noon deals with foreign powers, important new technology, and major crises. They manipulate social and economic trends to maintain a healthy, functioning society.

Agents of Destiny are expected to take a long view, looking out for the race as a whole rather than any particular segment. They sometimes maneuver events to act as catalysts for necessary change in the conservative Lithkind society, shattering traditions that have become dangerously outmoded.

Agents of Destiny are recruited from those rare individuals who have the potential to change or destroy society: social or economic theorists, charismatic revolutionaries, ground-breaking inventors, and scientists. An Agent of Destiny must be willing to renounce his name along with his ties to his Eld, friends, and companions. Agents' deaths are faked, and their appearance surgically altered. After an agent's term expires, or if he decides to leave the Council of Noon or is expelled, his memories will be erased through neurosurgery and drugs. Similarly, anyone learning an Agent of Destiny's true identity faces death or similar memory erasure.

All Agents of Destiny are injected with a *crisis key,* which is a sophisticated biological computer implant. The crisis key enables the Agent to access Eld and council data and command systems using an array of passwords which command instant obedience from all government and military computer networks. It can store information, giving the user total eidetic memory and photographic recall while within range of such networks. It can provide instant estimates of the probability of success for actions the user undertakes. It is coded to the user's metabolism and genetic pattern, and will self-destruct if the Agent dies or if removed from the Agent's body.

Through their crisis keys, social invisibility, and their own talents, Agents of Destiny have access to the full wealth of the Lithkind civilization. They have the

power to initiate research projects to develop new technology, to call upon military and civilian forces, and to commandeer spacecraft and monetary funds as necessary. Agents of Destiny are sometimes called upon to intervene personally in major crises, although they will usually do so in disguise.

An Agent of Destiny functions in much the same way as an Imperial official on a covert mission with an Imperial Warrant. Hiver academics believe the agency is a necessary "defense mechanism" to allow Lithkind society to cut through the twin layers of male/female bureaucracy and actually get crucial things *done.*

Agents of Destiny rely on subtlety and secrecy, using computer directives and lesser agents. They never appear in public. Agents have been known to rely on their ability to change government records to give themselves false identities that place them in the middle of any developing situations. This enables the Agent to have access to first-hand knowledge of what is going on, rather than relying on the sanitized information filtered through subordinates. When they reveal their status, Agents do so to as few people as possible, using their computer codes to establish authenticity.

Agents of Destiny are not incorruptible. Over their 1,000-year history, some have sought to serve themselves, their Eld, or particular ideologies rather than the race. Each time, loyal members purged the rogue elements.

MILITARY

Lithkind armed forces are small in number, but well trained and equipped. There are two branches, the female Legion of Midnight and the male Legion of Starlight.

Ground Forces

The Legion of Midnight is the ground, aviation, and space-transport forces: 250,000 soldiers, organized into 16 division-sized battlegroups plus supporting and special units. Thirteen battlegroups are "planetary defense" (army) units with aviation and artillery (including deep meson gun) contingents. Four are elite "expeditionary" (marine) units capable of space to ground assault.

As the Lithkind are smaller than most other races, their infantry are less effective in personal combat. Size and strength do not matter much in a firefight *per se*, but do enable a stronger soldier to carry heavier weaponry, more armor, and more ammunition. As a result, Lithkind ground troops are primarily grav armor crews or pilots. Regular infantry are de-emphasized, except for the elite Walker in Daylight battledress-equipped units (one brigade per battlegroup), a few special forces units, and military police who also provide security at starport and government installations. A wide variety of war robots and drones replaces more traditional lift infantry formations.

Space Forces

The Legion of Starlight is the Lithkind naval forces, consisting of 12 battle squadrons, 20 cruiser squadrons, four assault squadrons, and several SDB wings. Assault squadrons have fewer combat ships, but possess assault carriers capable of lifting an entire Legion of Midnight expeditionary battlegroup.

The Web of Warding complements these forces. It is an automated planetary defense system of a very high order of sophistication, with a command system buried on Izyme's moon. The Web of Warding is essentially an intelligent mine field in orbit around Izyme and scattered among strategic sites in its solar system. Combined with the Legion of Midnight's control of fighter wings and deep meson gun sites, it is sufficient to protect Izyme against anything short of a battle fleet.

Weaponry

Individuals and Elden practice a militant self-reliance, and the practice of blood-feud ensures that most citizens go about far better armed then the average Hiver citizen. Almost everyone carries some form of weapon, even if it's only a ceremonial knife or needler. Martial sports, such as knife-fighting and blowgun and pistol shooting, are also popular.

Lithkind personal weapons are rarely larger than a Human carbine – most weapons with a weight over about 6 lbs. are too awkward for them to use unless mounted on a bipod or tripod; pistols over 1 lb. must be used two-handed. Soldiers prefer lightweight, recoilless weapons. Favored melee weapons are knives and shortswords. Favored ranged weapons are auto snub pistols, body pistols, accelerator rifles, lasers, and very small caliber gauss guns (Gauss Needler, p. B208). Lithkind in battledress may carry heavier weaponry.

Body Armor

Lithkind body armor or vacc suits weigh and cost two-thirds as much as those for Humans. Cloth and CES are popular. The Lithkind's smaller size is an advantage when designing battledress. The Walker in Starlight Mark 5 (Beth'Tchar Vakari-5) is the latest design built to enable Lithkind marines and infantry to counter the K'kree strength advantage and carry heavy man-portable weapons. Its statistics approximate Improved Battledress (p. GT118), but it is more compact and cheaper: Cr49,000, 206 lbs. (empty). BTV-5 is about 5'8" tall.

140

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Lithkind have had a spacefaring civilization for at least 3,000 years. They are almost as advanced as the Hive Federation, with a mix of TL10, TL11, and TL12 worlds. Partly through long contact with the Hivers, Lithkind technology is highly advanced in computers, computer programs, robotics, electronics, and anti-gravity technology. Industrial and household robots are common, not all of them imported from Hiver sources.

Lithkind biotechnology can produce such things as tailored microorganisms for fighting disease, but their bio-sciences do not measure up to those of the Hivers in most other fields, such as the creation of artificial organisms.

STARSHIPS

The Lithkind manufacture their own spaceships, but many Elds prefer to buy Hiver vessels, with internal modifications for chairs, controls, and staterooms. All but the largest ships normally have all-male or all-female crews and carry only passengers of the same gender. In situations where carriage of opposite gender passengers is unavoidable (for example, a rescue or military spacelift) they will keep to their own section, and robots will be used to provide service or expensive and time-consuming cleansing rituals will be performed. (It's a paradox in Lithkind manners that they will spend considerable time "cleansing" themselves after coming into contact with someone whose presence they do their best to ignore when possible . . .)

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Lithkind import TL12 starships, advanced weaponry, and machine tools, and most of their larger ship classes are at least partially assembled in Federation yards. Lithkind also get along well with many brands of alcohol: good, strong drink produces a warm euphoria which leaves them feeling calm, soft, and safe.

They also like alien food products compatible with their metabolism, exotic fabrics, and some cultural works. They prize certain K'kree perfumes (but usually acquire them via piracy rather than trade). Traders may wish to buy Lithkind gravitics, robots, and cultural goods (in particular, fine textiles and wood carvings). Lithkind are also known for producing unlicensed knock-offs of Hiver software, which are sometimes both cheaper and easier for Humans to use than the genuine article.

IZYME

Starport: Class V.
Diameter: 7,753 miles. *Atmosphere:* Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Gravity:* 0.95 Gs. *Surface Water:* 65%. *Climate:* Temperate. *Type:* Low iron. *Population:* 3 billion. *Government:* Bureaucracy. *Control Rating:* 2. *TL:* 12.

Izyme, the Lithkind's homeworld, is the fourth planet of a yellow G0 star. The planet rotates once every 32 hours. On average, the planet is warmer than Earth, but the long nights are cool and comfortable for both Human and Lithkind alike. There are six major land masses, but no single large continents. Two-thirds of Izyme is covered with water, and most of the rest of the world is heavily forested, with marsh and jungle terrain predominating around the equator. Izyme's forests are dominated by the great Iz trees, which average 500′ high and 60′ across.

Izyme has a single small moon, Trishkat. Izyme has six large orbital and two lunar spaceports and thousands of satellites.

Housing and Cities

Lithkind prefer high, slim buildings. Even residential buildings are tall, with 50 floors being average, but each story will be only about 6' high. Commercial buildings regularly have 200-400 floors. Most connect to three to five other buildings via branching tubes. The lack of lighting and favored dark green and gray color schemes can make a Lithkind city resemble a giant forest. Windows are uncommon if air conditioning is available; Lithkind are not very claustrophobic. Many buildings have sub-basements with underground fungus gardens. These are often beautiful, with carefully sculpted terrain and quiet, still pools.

About 2% of Lithkind dwell in traditional Iz trees, mainly in rural areas of Izyme and on those colony worlds where the Iz has successfully been introduced A tenth of an Iz tree is hollowed out, giving some 5,000 cubic feet of living space without harm to the tree. Most have 5 to 10 separate rooms in the tree's outer trunk. Iz branches support houses, either made of traditional wood and paper or fiberglass and light alloys.

Lithkind cities are quiet by day, but come alive at night. They are not lit. Moving sidewalks, often above ground level, are used in preference to buses or automobiles. There are no roads, only ground-level sidewalks. Grav vehicles are in common use for those who can afford them. Landing pads can be found on most buildings. Intercity transport is provided by elevated monorails using grav or magnetic levitation.

Visiting a Lithkind city is very difficult for Humans, who are inconveniently large. Lithkind starports may have Human-scale lounges and hotels, but normal doors are 4' high and 1½' wide, and ceilings rarely exceed 5'.

Clothing

Lithkind hate bright, light colors and disdain patterns, but love texture, preferring soft, sensual fabrics. They like simple, tight-fitting clothing which covers most of their body save for their tail and face. Lithkind fashions have changed little over the last few centuries, and are conservative and homogenous; with sexual attraction playing no role in society, fashions tend toward the utilitarian. In cold or wet weather, males add a poncho and beret, while females wear a hooded cloak but go bare-headed. In hot weather, nudity is common.

Slugthrowing or laser sidearms and knives are worn casually by adults of both sexes at all times.

Art

Lithkind believe it is bad luck to create images of intelligent beings, for it binds the soul to the object, possibly interfering with reincarnation and resulting in deformed children. Art and sculpture tend toward abstract landscapes, animal shapes, and mystic symbolism.

Common symbols are an entwined double Iz-tree, symbolizing life and rebirth, and the spiral in a circle, a warding symbol.

Lithkind music is intricate, weaving complex synthesized harmonics together with haunting lyrics. The preferred Lithkind format is the long ballad: Lithkind regard music that fails to tell a story as trite. Lithkind literature and drama is rich, but its cultural allusions and fragmented abstract style make it almost impenetrable to most other species, with the exception of many Hivers, who find it amusing or fascinating.
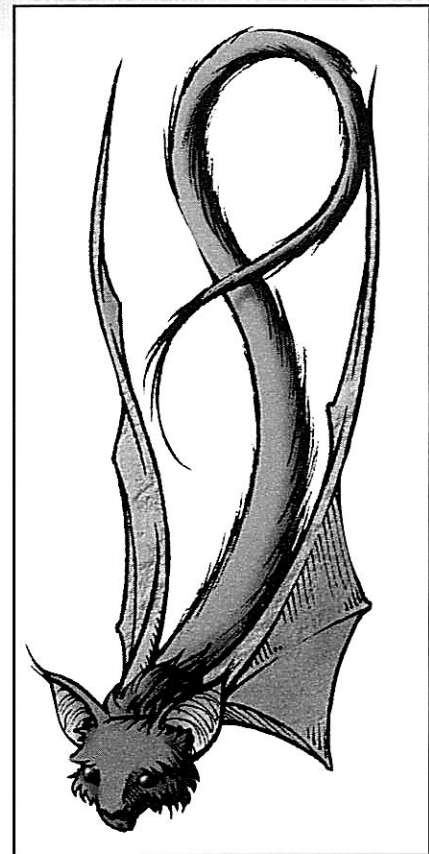
Crimson Snakebat

ST: 2   **Move/Dodge:** 20/10   **Size:** 1 hex
DX: 14   **PD/DR:** 0/0   **Wght:** 20 lbs.
IQ: 6   **Damage:** 1d-3 cut   **Home:** Izyme
HT: 11/3   **Reach:** C

As common as cats or dogs in Lithkind cities (and some space habitats), these animals are long, lithe, and limbless serpents with soft crimson-furred bodies, large-eared batlike heads, and leathery wings sprouting from their necks just below their heads. They are fairly bright (but not sapient) and have a dog's loyalty to their owner and a natural homing instinct, and for that reason are allowed to run wild when not in use. They have the same relationship to the fierce Icebats of the Lithkind prehistory that dogs have to dire wolves.

Other than playing a crucial role in certain death rituals (see p. 136), the snakebats tend to keep Lithkind households free of various vermin.

LITHKIND CHARACTERS

The Lithkind racial template is shown in the sidebar. The following also applies to cultural Lithkind:

Social Status

Lithkind status is shown below. Uniquely, Status 5 Lithkind aren't well-known but instead become invisible to most of their society; see pp. 138-139.

STATUS TABLE

Level	Status
5	Agent of Destiny
4	High official
3	Middle official, Olzelda of wealthy Eld
2	Low official, Olzelda of average Eld
1	Minor bureaucrat, Olzeda of poor Eld
0	Average individual
-1	Poor individual
-2	Eldless individual

Lithkind Racial Template (-35 points)

Lithkind average 1'1" shorter and 65 lbs. lighter than a Human of identical ST.

Attributes

ST -2* [-15], DX +1 [10].
* Females get +2 ST during mating; there is no point cost for this.

Advantages

Acute Hearing +3 [6]; Extra Arm (Prehensile tail) [10]; Night Vision [10]; and Sharp Teeth [5].

Disadvantages

Color Blindness (partial, -50%) [-5]; Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism) [-10]; Intolerance (Opposite sex) [-5]; Proud [-1]; Reduced Hit Points -2 [-10]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; and Self-Destruct [-20].

Agents of Destiny

Agents of Destiny will have these advantages: Alternate Identity [15]; Interface Jack [10]; Legal Immunity [20]; and Status 5 [25] and be built on 200+ character points.

Ileet

Members of the Ileet culture (see sidebar, pp. 137-138) replace Self-Destruct [-20] with Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]. They also suffer from Phobia (Male Lithkind) [-5]. An Ileet costs 5 points more than an ordinary Lithkind.

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Most *GURPS Traveller* templates are suitable for Lithkind. Those unsuitable include the barbarian, marine commando, scout, and marine commando (officer). The stereotypical Ileet (see sidebar, pp. 137-138) is a belter, corsair, merchant, or professor. Midnight Legionaries are army and army aviation (planetary defense) or marines (expeditionary). Starlight Legionaries are equivalent to navy personnel. Agents of Destiny may come from any background, but the diplomat template is appropriate.

IRISTI   75 POINTS

A practitioner of Xyastra. Iristi exist at all levels of Lithkind society, and may serve as de-facto chaplains in the military. Many pick up additional skills not related to their "magical" disciplines. Iristi with psionic talents are rare but not unknown.

Attributes: ST 8 [0], DX 12 [10], IQ 13 [30], HT 10/8 [0].

Advantages: A total of 25 points in Animal Empathy [5]; Autotrance [5]; Charisma [5/level]; Claim to Hospitality [5]; Clerical Investment 1 [5]; Mathematical Ability [10]; Psionics [varies]; Reputation [varies]; Sensitive [5]; and Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages: A total of -15 points in Delusion (Xyastra works) [-10] and Sense of Duty (Eld) [-5].

Primary Skills: Occultism (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-16 and any *two* of Astronomy, Cryptology, Diagnosis, Exorcism, History, Hypnotism, Philosophy, Psychology, or appropriate psionic skills for psionics, all (M/H) IQ [4]-13.

Secondary Skills: Teaching (M/A) IQ [2]-13 plus *either* Sleight of Hand (P/H) DX [4]-12 *or* Ventriloquism (M/H) IQ [4]-13.

Background Skills: Any *three* of Abacus, Bard, Fortune Telling, Mind Block, Performance, Teaching, – all (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12 – or Mathematics – (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11.

GMG '00

The Hivers Should Worry You . . .

Openly cooperative, apparently pacifistic, reportedly cowardly, the starfish-shaped **Hivers** don't seem to be empire-building material – but they hold one in a secure grip. They won the only interstellar war they've fought after losing every battle, but with this most alien of the major races, looks almost always deceive. Inscrutable, patient, and subtle, the Hivers puzzle their neighbors more than they worry them. It should be the other way around.

The Droyne Should Awe You . . .

An insectoid race scattered across the Imperium like so many gypsies, the seemingly insignificant **Droyne** often fall beneath the notice of Humaniti . . . and most Humans are foolish enough to think that's their own choice. A series of puzzles in their history and culture suggests that huge secrets lurk behind the compound eyes of these tiny sentients . . . and that the most awesome of the major races may come in the smallest package.

Ancient Answers Await!

Alien Races 3 offers an expose on the Ancients themselves, and examines in detail the biology, homeworlds, culture, and society of the enigmatic Hivers and cryptic Droyne. Included are racial and career templates, sample equipment and starships, Ancient artifacts, and much more.

This book also includes a set of 36 Droyne "coyns" and instructions for predicting the future and making decisions, Droyne style.

Two new minor races are presented here as well:

- The **Inheritors**, a race of fluorine-breathers living on the shell of an ancient Dyson sphere and "improving" on the technology left behind;

- The **Lithkind**, a nocturnal species for which mating means death and death means rebirth, and who treat the opposite sex as taboo!
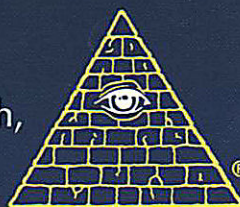
STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com
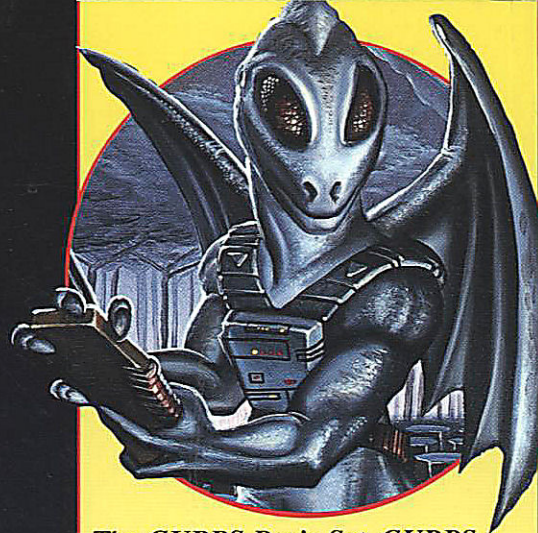
The *GURPS Basic Set, GURPS Traveller,* and *GURPS Space* are required for full use of this book in a *GURPS* campaign. *Psionics, Ultra-Tech,* and *Ultra-Tech 2* are not required, but will be very useful. The background presented here will be of great value to any *Traveller* campaign, and will also serve as a source of inspiration for other SF games.