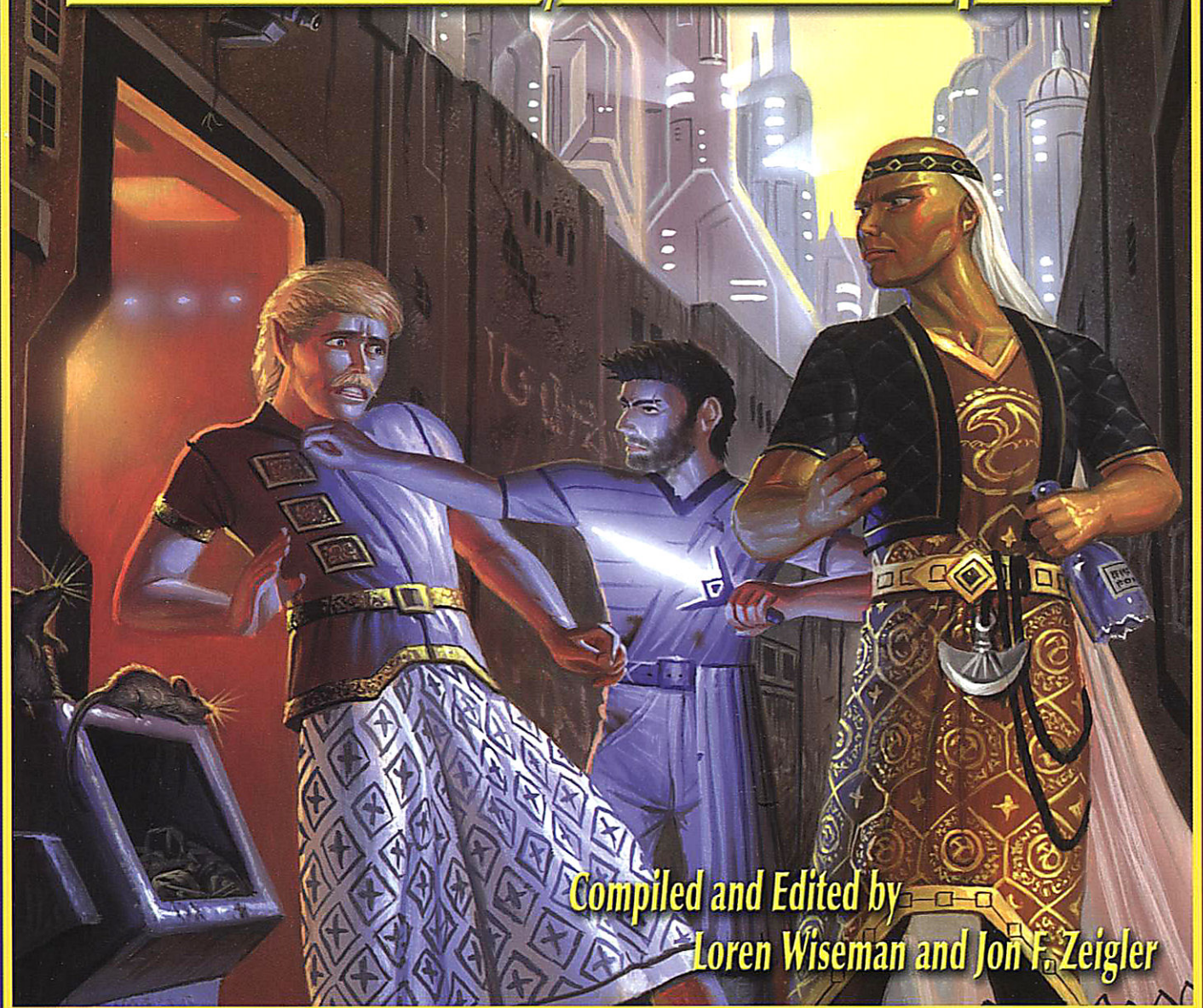


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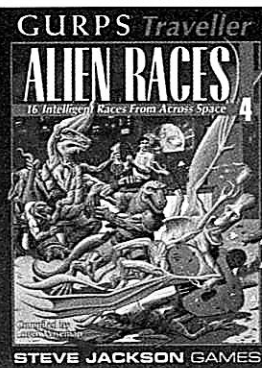
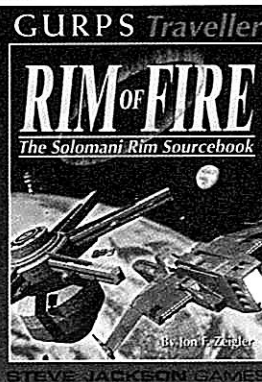
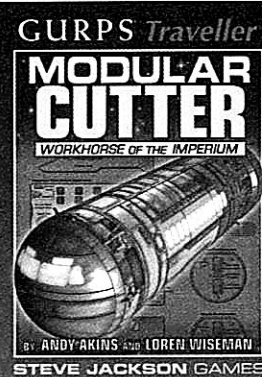
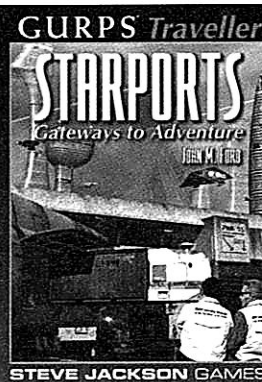
HUMANITI™

The Infinite Variety of Mankind in Space



Compiled and Edited by
Loren Wiseman and Jon F. Zeigler

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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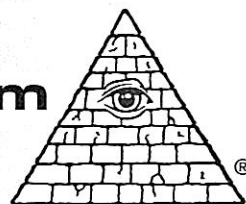
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HUMANITI[™]

The Infinite Variety of Mankind in Space

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"x12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit www.warehouse23.com.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see below.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, e-mail majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your web browser to gurpsnet.sjgames.com.

The *GURPS Traveller: Humaniti* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/humaniti/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are BIO for *GURPS Bio-Tech*, GT for *GURPS Traveller*, R for *GURPS Religion*, and UT for *GURPS Ultra-Tech*. The abbreviation for this book is T.H. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

It's a peculiarity of the *Traveller* background that many of the "alien" races are actually Human. Scattered across the galaxy by enigmatic aliens long ago, the various Human races have developed in dozens of distinctive ways. This book presents a collection of Human races. Most of them have been taken from past *Traveller* publications, but many are receiving detailed attention here for the first time.

In this book, you will find:

The *Acheron*, genetically-engineered inhabitants of a hellish world.

The *Answerin*, famed warriors who are rumored to be strangers to fear.

The *Azhanti*, impulsive and adapted to life in an extremely hot climate.

The *Darrians*, an important Imperial ally, heirs to an ancient civilization of miraculous technological accomplishments.

The *Dynchia*, proud tribesmen with their own small interstellar empire.

The *Floriani*, a dimorphic race which divides brains and brawn into distinct castes.

The *Geonee*, diminutive engineers and merchants who believe themselves to be the Ancients.

The *Iltharans*, once conquering warriors, now a downtrodden minority on the worlds of their ancient empire.

The *Irhadre*, desert-adapted and infamous for their practice of slavery.

The *Kargol*, freedom-loving people with advanced biotechnology.

The *Luriani*, one of the few truly amphibious Human races.

The *Nexxies*, genetically engineered for underwater life.

The *Otrai*, descended from ancient Terran religious dissidents.

The *Syleans*, native to the capital world of the Imperium and influential in its politics.

And the *Yileans*, founders of a major interstellar empire outside the Imperium, implacable foes of the alien Vargr.

Some of these Human races are restricted to a small region of the *Traveller* setting, a single world or a small cluster of worlds somewhere in Imperial space. Others are more influential, ruling interstellar empires of their own or taking an important role in the Third Imperium. Any of these races might provide the background for an interesting *Traveller* adventurer – or an equally compelling patron or adversary!

ABOUT THE LINE EDITORS

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 a Senior Editor and *Traveller* expert-in residence.

Jon F. Zeigler has been a science fiction fan since the cradle (literally). He and his wife and two children live in Maryland, where he works as a computer security consultant. He has written several past books for *GURPS* and *GURPS Traveller*, and currently serves as the *GURPS Traveller* Line Editor for Steve Jackson Games.

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

The long-running *Traveller* magazine is now online at jtas.sjgames.com. It supports all versions of *Traveller* with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are \$20 per two years, for 52 biweekly 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* links page (www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/links.html) links to the *Traveller* Web Ring, which includes most of the major *Traveller*-oriented websites. For information on subscribing to the *Traveller* mailing list, go to tml.travellercentral.com.

Humanity

The presence of multiple Human races in the Imperium carries a pointed lesson for us. An Aslan looks nothing like me, and indeed a pine tree is closer kin. I expect him to behave and think in ways that surprise me. I can be on my guard, ready to make the extra effort needed to interact with him as befits our common civilization.

But when I meet an Answerin, a Geonee, or a Sylean, my mind plays tricks. His appearance fools me into believing that he and I are alike. Indeed, his ancestors and mine doubtless scavenged for food and competed for mates on the same

ancient Terran savanna. We have the same blood. Yet all our separate history divides us. If we expect to easily understand one another, we will make mistakes, perhaps tragic ones.

Yet is the abyss between two Human races any greater than that between two Humans? Can we truly claim to understand someone else simply because he is of our family, our clan, our world, our race, our species?

This is the lesson: we are all aliens to one another.

– Sir Ardyn Crowell, *Basic Sophontology*,
Sylean University Press (published 1088)

Taxonomy

Taxonomy is the branch of biology which is concerned with naming and classifying diverse life forms.

Species

In taxonomy, the most important concept is that of the *species*. A species is composed of a population of related individuals, which resemble one another and are able to breed among themselves, but are not able to breed with members of other species. Animals which can mate and produce fertile offspring are defined as belonging to the same species. Note that animals from different populations can sometimes produce offspring which are healthy but sterile. For example, Terran horses and donkeys can mate, producing mules which cannot themselves breed. In this case, the two populations are not considered to be the same species.

Sometimes it's impossible to apply this definition. For example, a species may only be known through fossil remains, so there is no way to tell whether one organism could breed successfully with another. In such cases, biologists usually classify organisms into species on the basis of their anatomical structure.

Imperial biologists normally use the taxonomic scheme first developed by the Terran biologist Carolus Linnaeus about -2750. In this scheme, each species is given a two-part name in Latin, which was a major language of scholarship on pre-industrial Terra. The first word of the name (always capitalized) is the *genus* to which the species belongs, while the second word (always lower-case) is the specific name of the species. For example, the species name of the domestic dog is *Canis familiaris*. Similarly, the species name for Humans is *Homo sapiens*.

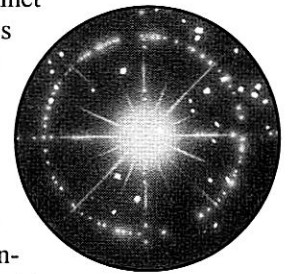
Subspecies

Sometimes there is significant variation within a species, even though there is no reduction in interfertility. In such cases, some biologists identify *subspecies*. Subspecies are identified by a third Latinate name after those for the genus and species. For example, *Homo sapiens sapiens* indicates Humans from Terra, while *Homo sapiens vlandensis* indicates Humans from Vland. The two populations were separated for many thousands of years, and evolved noticeable physical differences, but they were able to interbreed successfully once they come back into contact. Not all biologists consider the concept of a subspecies to be useful. In this view, Humans from Terra and from Vland are all equally *Homo sapiens*.

Race

The term *race* is not scientifically precise, and few biologists use it. In the Imperium, the word is normally used to indicate a distinct population of intelligent beings with its own homeworld. That usage derives from pre-starflight Terra, where populations originating on different continents often showed distinct physical characteristics. Terrans who speculated about the existence of non-Human intelligence often referred to “alien races.”

The idea of a “race” also shows Vilani influence. During the First Imperium, the word *nushibin* was used both for alien species and for Human populations from distinct homeworlds.



Of all the intelligent species inhabiting Charted Space, Humaniti has a unique history (and perhaps a unique destiny). Long before recorded history, Humans were transplanted from their homeworld to dozens of planets elsewhere in the galaxy. Since then, they have evolved in many diverging directions. Much of the cultural variety in the modern Third Imperium is due to the interaction among these widely scattered Human civilizations.

CLASSIFYING HUMANS

In the Imperium, the classification of Humans is not a dry scientific matter – it has profound political and social implications.

BIOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

The most significant event in Human evolution was the arrival of the Ancients on Terra, about 300,000 years ago. For unknown reasons, the Ancients were very interested in Terran life, and especially in the early Humans who had evolved there. They took samples of Human populations and transplanted them to dozens of worlds across a span of 360 parsecs. The homeworlds of over 90% of these transplanted populations, surviving and extinct, lie in an area stretching from Spica Sector to trailing to Eiaplial sector to spinward.

Imperial scientists know of 49 surviving populations descended from Human groups transplanted by the Ancients. This number may soon rise to 50. A group which may be descended from the Loeskalth, a minor Human race long thought extinct, was discovered in the Far Frontiers sector in 1108. The Imperial scientific community is still weighing the evidence in that case.

The Human Root Stock

Imperial scientists use the name *Homo sapiens antiquus* for the population sampled by the Ancients. In fact, it isn't clear whether the samples were all of the same biological species. The fossil record shows that, at the time, the earlier

Homo erectus was in the process of being replaced by *Homo sapiens*. At least some of the Ancients' samples may have been from wandering bands of *Homo erectus*.

The fate of the transplanted populations varied. Some were simply moved and abandoned, left to survive as best they could on a new world. Others were apparently trained for use as pets or servants. Many of the transplanted populations were subjected to genetic engineering, for purposes which remain unclear.

Eventually, the Ancients destroyed themselves in the course of their Final War. Many of their Human clients survived, to spend the next 300,000 years in isolation on their new homeworlds. On top of Ancient genetic manipulation, the scattered populations experienced millennia of separate evolution. This further encouraged them to diverge, into distinct varieties and even into distinct species.

Modern Humaniti

As a result, not all of the "Humans" in Charted Space are biologically Human. Instead, some of the Human-descended races are *hominids*, members of the genus *Homo* but not necessarily of the species *Homo sapiens*. Technically, biological Humans are hominids too, but the term is usually applied to distinguish those species which are not interfertile with *Homo sapiens*. On Terra, all hominids other than *Homo sapiens sapiens* died out long before the development of space-flight. Elsewhere, many of the transplanted populations eventually diverged enough from the root stock to become distinct species.

In the Imperium, the collective term for all intelligent hominids is *Humaniti*.

Most Imperial scientists reserve the word "Human" for members of the species *Homo sapiens*. It ought to follow that all Human races are interfertile, and that if a population of apparent Humans isn't interfertile with the others, it must be a different species.

Unfortunately, that definition is sometimes hard to apply in practice. Consider two populations which are *trying* to interbreed. If only one in a hundred matings produces fertile offspring, almost everyone will agree that the two populations are distinct species. And if only one in a hundred matings is barren, everyone will agree that they are the same species. Somewhere between these extremes one must draw the dividing line, and different scientists draw the line in different places. The result is a never-ending controversy, with scientists unable to agree on the number and identity of Human and hominid races.

Another source of controversy is advanced medical technology, which can enable members of otherwise incompatible populations to breed. Some scientists cite this as reason enough to consider them the same species, while others violently reject the notion.

Finally, some races insist on classifying themselves differently than the strict biological definition would imply. For example, the Zhodani regard themselves as a distinct hominid species (*Homo zhdoilas*). Meanwhile, the Geonee claim to not even be hominids, much less Humans. These claims are often made for ideological or political reasons,

The Imperial Race

In the more than 10,000 years since the Vilani first encountered another Human race, considerable interbreeding has occurred and many Humans can no longer be said to belong to any particular subspecies of *Homo sapiens*. Some Imperial citizens have taken to identifying with their mixed-ancestry status, considering themselves to be of the "Imperial" race.

Some laymen even use the subspecies name *Homo sapiens imperialis*. This is, of course, a fallacy, since the Imperium incorporates every conceivable mix of human races, from purebreds of every known human race to crossbreeds that are impossible to classify. Indeed, if any "race" can be said to be typically Imperial, it is the vast population of Humans with indeterminate (but thoroughly mixed) ancestry.



ignoring biological facts. For example, Zhodani have been demonstrated to have no difficulty interbreeding with other Humans, and so are no more than a Human subspecies. Many Imperial scientists classify the Zhodani as *Homo sapiens zhdotlas*.

Faced with all this confusion, most laymen (and even a few scientists) tend to ignore the standard species definitions. They use the term "Human" for all descendants of *Homo sapiens antiquus*, whether those descendants can still interbreed with *Homo sapiens* or not. In this book we will normally use "Human" in the popular sense, indicating all intelligent hominids whether or not they are biologically Human.

POLITICAL CLASSIFICATION

In fact, in the Imperium and surrounding areas, the biological classification of a branch of Humaniti is usually not as significant as the long-standing political distinction between *major races* and *minor races*. This distinction has existed in some form since the heyday of the First Imperium, and is still relevant to interstellar politics today.

Major Human Races

In the context of Humaniti, a major race is a Human population which developed the jump drive on its own, without benefit of foreign examples, before being contacted by another starfaring society. There are three known major Human races: the Solomani, the Vilani, and the Zhodani.

Minor Human Races

A minor Human race is a Human population that was planted on a world other than Terra by the Ancients, and which failed to develop the jump drive independently. Most of the branches of Humaniti described in this book are minor Human races. For example, the Dynchia (p. 50) barely missed developing their own version of the jump drive, but since their first jump-drive ships were purchased from Solomani traders, they are classified as a minor race. The Suerrat developed interstellar travel independently, but their method involved generation ships rather than the jump drive, so they are not classified as a major race.

The distinction between major and minor races originates with the First Imperium. The Vilani used their independent development of jump drive as support for an imperialistic ideology. Clearly, the Vilani were best suited to rule, since they alone had the technical skill to invent the jump drive and the dynamism to build an interstellar civilization with it.

In fact, aside from the Geonee (p. 68), the Vilani met no other jump-drive-using race until quite late in their history. In most cases, Human and alien races were *given* jump drive by the Vilani, and in return were forced to obey Vilani dictates. The major-minor race distinction thus proved to be a very useful ideological tool. Only after the First Imperium was in decline did the Vilani meet other major races: the Vargr about -2700, the Terrans in -2424, and the Zhodani about -2200. By then, of course, the Solomani rulers of the Second Imperium had their own reasons for supporting the major-minor race scheme. It was maintained as part of the fundamental ideology of the Rule of Man, and has been perpetuated ever since.

Variant Human Races

Of course, the major-minor race scheme has its exceptions and special cases. Many of these involve Humanity, which unlike the other starfaring species has suffered several rises and collapses of civilization in the past few millennia. There has been plenty of opportunity for Human populations to be cut off for centuries at a time from the mainstream of interstellar society.

None of these temporarily isolated groups qualify as minor Human races, since they were not transplanted by the Ancients. In any case, most of them have not shown significant biological change, so they are still grouped with the Human race from which they are descended. For example, the Sword Worlders are not considered a minor Human race, but an offshoot of Solomani and Vilani stock.

The major exception is those Human populations that have undergone genetic manipulation during historical times. The Solomani, in particular, have several times applied genetic engineering to Human stock. Some of the resulting populations are biologically distinct from the original *Homo sapiens* stock, and can be considered new hominid species. Examples in this book include the Acheron (p. 10), the Nexxies (p. 113), and the Otrai (p. 119).

Since genetically engineered groups have had no chance to invent jump drive on their own, but may be descended from races which did, they are not easily classified as major or minor races. Distinctive populations like the Acheron and the Nexxies are therefore not counted among the minor races, but many nevertheless persist in calling them minor Human races, a source of considerable confusion.

Most scientists use the term *variant Human races* to indicate these genetically engineered groups. Variant Human races may or may not rate their own taxonomic name. This often depends on political considerations, although sometimes there are sound practical reasons for the omission. The Nexxies, for instance, have not yet been assigned a taxonomic name simply because the geneticists are not yet done tinkering with them.

*"I guess you could call
them Medium Human Races."
– Anton Wilson Peale III*

USING RACIAL TEMPLATES

Each Human race in this book has its own racial template, describing biological or cultural traits that are consistent for almost all members of the race. Most elements of these templates can be applied as is, no matter what world the individual character is from. The major exceptions have to do with an adventurer's home gravity and his technological base.

HOME GRAVITY

Each racial template in this book assumes that the character is from the race's homeworld, and grew up experiencing that homeworld's gravity. For some races this is a good assumption; if a race is restricted to its homeworld, individual members aren't likely to be born in a stronger or weaker gravity field. Some races, however, are spread across many worlds and have adapted to a variety of local gravities.

When designing a Human character who was born in a different gravity field than the one his race evolved in, apply the following guidelines. These rules can also be used for the Zhodani (see *Alien Races I*) or for members of non-Human (but roughly Human-shaped) species. When applied to a Human whose race evolved in a 1 G gravity field, they approximate the variant Human race templates found in *GURPS Space* (p. S54).

Determine Gravity Types

First, determine the surface gravity on both the race's homeworld and on the character's own birth world. For this purpose, a world's gravity is *heavy* (more than 1.5 G), *normal* (0.71 to 1.5 G), or *light* (0.7 G or less). Each chapter in this book includes a description of a race's homeworld, including surface gravity.

Adjust Racial Template

If the two worlds' gravities are both in the same category (both heavy, both normal, or both light) then no adjustments are needed. Generate the character normally using the template for the desired race. Otherwise, the racial template must be adjusted to account for the difference in gravity. Apply the appropriate set of changes from the following list, and adjust the cost of the racial template to fit. All adjustments to height and mass take place *after* the character's height and mass have been computed based on his ST score (using the rules on p. B15, adjusted by the race's description).

Heavy Homeworld Gravity, Normal Birth World Gravity:
Reduce ST by 3 and HT by 1. If the racial template includes the Improved G-Tolerance advantage, remove it.

Heavy Homeworld Gravity, Light Birth World Gravity:
Reduce ST by 5 and HT by 2. If the racial template includes the Improved G-Tolerance advantage, remove it.

Normal Homeworld Gravity, Heavy Birth World Gravity:
Increase ST by 3 and HT by 1. If the racial template does not include the Improved G-Tolerance advantage with an increment of at least 0.5 G, add it with that increment. If the racial template does not include at least the Unattractive disadvantage, add it.

Normal Homeworld Gravity, Light Birth World Gravity:
Reduce ST by 2 and HT by 1.

Light Homeworld Gravity, Heavy Birth World Gravity:
Increase ST by 5 and HT by 2. If the racial template does not include the Improved G-Tolerance advantage with an increment of at least 0.5 G, add it with that increment. If the racial template does not include at least the Unattractive disadvantage, add it.

Light Homeworld Gravity, Normal Birth World Gravity:
Increase ST by 2 and HT by 1.

Generate Character

Using the adjusted racial template, build the character normally. Determine the character's height and mass using the rules on p. B15 and the racial description. Then adjust height and mass according to the following:

Heavy Homeworld Gravity, Normal Birth World Gravity:
Increase height by 20% and reduce mass by 20%.

Heavy Homeworld Gravity, Light Birth World Gravity:
Increase height by 20% and reduce mass by 20%.

Normal Homeworld Gravity, Heavy Birth World Gravity:
Reduce height by 20% and increase mass by 25%.

Normal Homeworld Gravity, Light Birth World Gravity:
Increase height by 25% and reduce mass by 20%.

Light Homeworld Gravity, Heavy Birth World Gravity:
Reduce height by 33% and increase mass by 60%.

Light Homeworld Gravity, Normal Birth World Gravity:
Reduce height by 20% and increase mass by 25%.

If the character's final height is at least 7'6", then he should also have Longer Arms, giving him +1 reach. This is a 20-point advantage (see *Extra Arms*, p. C154).

Example

A player wishes to design a Geonee merchant (see Chapter 8) who was born and grew up on a planet with a surface gravity of only 0.6 G. The Geonee evolved on a normal-gravity world (1.3 G) but the merchant's birth world has light gravity.

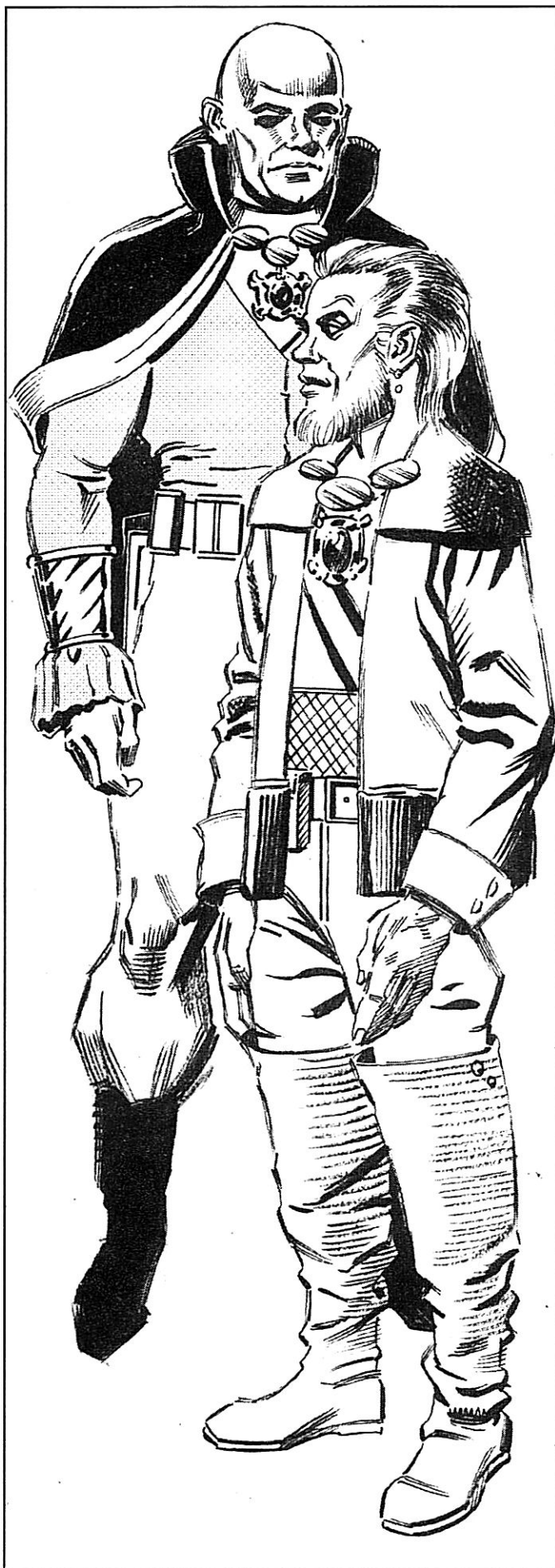
The player adjusts the basic Geonee racial template by reducing the ST bonus from +2 to nothing, and reducing the HT bonus from +1 to nothing. No other adjustments are necessary. This reduces the cost of the template to -17 points.

The merchant is designed normally. After determining his ST, his height and mass are computed as if he was a normal Geonee. The result is a height of 4'10" and a mass of 140 pounds. Now the player increases his character's height by 25% and reduces his mass by 20%. The final result is a height of 6' and a mass of 112 pounds. This is very tall and slender for a Geonee, but shorter (though not much lighter) than a normal Human born on the same low-gravity planet.

AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY

A few of the racial templates in this book include the Primitive disadvantage (p. B26) or the High Technology advantage (p. C126). These are templates for races which are confined to a single world or otherwise have little choice in the Tech Level available to them.

In this case, the circumstances for an individual character override the template. For example, an Iltharan (see Chapter 9) would normally have three levels of Primitive. An Iltharan who somehow got an education and access to technology at the standard Imperial TL would have to buy off the Primitive disadvantage. Similarly, an Answerin (see Chapter 3) would normally have two levels of High Technology. An individual Answerin who had somehow been isolated from his homeworld, and had no TL12 skills or equipment, could exchange the points for the High Technology advantage for something else.



Acheron

Acheron is a very dense, high-gravity world in the Diaspora sector. It boasts a hostile environment, with high radiation and a primitive, but competitive ecosystem. Volcanic outgassing, plant-derived spores, and pollen taint the atmosphere. A typical Human would be hard-pressed to survive on the surface for more than a few hours without protection.

Acheron would not normally be considered a good home for Humaniti, but the planet's mineral wealth attracted settlement during the Interstellar Wars era. To give the colonists a chance to survive, Terran scientists performed extensive genetic manipulation. Thus, the Acherons are an example of a variant Human race (p. 08).

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Acheron was surveyed by the Vilani in -4027. They named it Guumushii, and noted that it would be promising but for the atmosphere, the wildlife, and the radiation. They then moved on, leaving the world unexploited.

The Terran Confederation discovered Guumushii in -2236. The Terrans renamed it Acheron, after a river in Hell. As it represented a resource-rich world on the Vilani flank, they decided to colonize it, and instigated an ambitious genetic engineering project. A number of genetic templates were designed and built, each tagged with a letter from the Greek alphabet. The 13th template (Acheron-*nu*) proved satisfactory.

In -2202 the first Acheron-*nu* individuals reached maturity. The colonists were trained by Terran scientists, who informed them of their special origins and purpose. Engineers, advisors, and counselors mentored them for a few generations, giving them medicine and supplies in return for metals. Then one day they flew off, never to return.

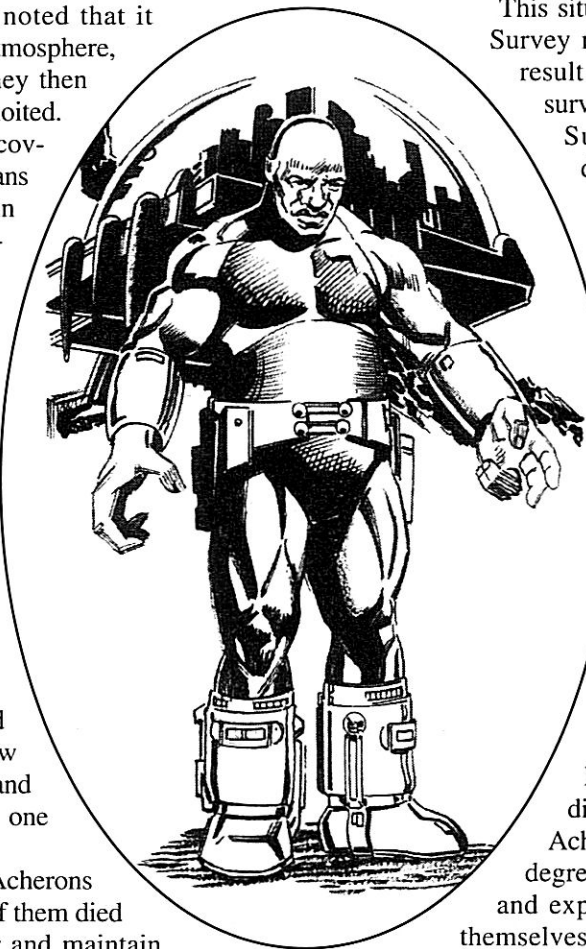
After the Long Night fell, the Acherons had to fend for themselves. Many of them died before they learned how to repair and maintain their habitats. Many more fell victim to disease and

poisoning. The few who survived spent the next 1,500 years working their way out from their towns, cutting back Acheron's native wildlife, and building a new civilization. Across the centuries, they remembered two things: the people of Terra had made them for service, and they had left them to die.

In 387, merchants from a nearby world discovered the existence of the Acherons. The Acherons were willing to trade minerals for manufactured goods, as they had done centuries before. For their part, the offworlders were quick to recognize the opportunity for tremendous profit. They worked from the abandoned Second Imperium space station, which they expanded into an orbital port. In order to protect their advantage, they kept the very existence of the Acherons a secret. They also carefully avoided giving the Acherons any independent spaceflight capability.

This situation lasted for centuries. The First Survey missed the Acherons, possibly as a result of a bribe which encouraged IISS surveyors to record false data. The First Survey recorded Acheron under a different name, and claimed that the world was uninhabited save for transitory mining camps. When the rimward portions of the Imperium were turned over to an autonomous Solomani government, the Acherons barely noticed. The Solomani government did discover the existence of the Acherons sometime in the late 800s, but the "natives" were not even recognized as Human at the time. The relationship between the Acherons and their exploiters was left alone.

The Acherons did not discover the truth until the Solomani Rim War. In 991, an IISS ship crash-landed and brought its crew into direct contact with the Acherons. The Acherons were appalled to discover the degree to which they were being lied to and exploited, and decided to emancipate themselves. Somehow, they sneaked onto the highport, took control, and aligned their world with



the Imperium. Acheron fighters clamored to serve the Emperor, and did so with such distinction that the Navy named an *Azhanti High Lightning*-class cruiser after them.

Today, Acheron is a member world of the Third Imperium. The Acherons are adjusting well to their new-found independence, and are staunchly loyal to the Imperium (while being quite hostile to the Solomani).

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Acherons differ from “normal” Humans in having nictating membranes, retractable nose and mouth filters, massive skeletons, and beefed-up circulatory and respiratory systems. The overall effect is to make them strong, tough, and more resistant to radiation than their offworld cousins.

Acherons are short and barrel-chested, with limbs like tree trunks, ending in big hands and feet. Their bodies are almost fat-free, with highly defined muscle mass. They have very pale skin and thick, dark hair. Eye color varies from violet to green. Their nictating membranes are prominent, giving them a cross-eyed look.

Acherons generally give birth to twins or triplets, but this birthrate is offset by very high infant mortality. Children of the species develop very quickly, acquiring adult features at about eight standard years of age. Acherons can usually have children of their own by age 10, and adolescence is over by the age of 13. Aging is rapid, and begins to take a severe toll in the mid-30s. Despite the benefits of modern medicine, Acherons usually die of heart disease or cancer.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The Acheron language is descended from the Anglic which served as one of the primary languages of the early Rule of Man. It is distantly related to modern Galanglic, but centuries of separate development have made the two languages mutually unintelligible. Many Acherons speak Galanglic.

Acheron names were once taken almost entirely from ancient Terran languages. In recent years, the distaste for all things Terran and Solomani has led some Acherons to begin using Vilani names. Acherons use a typical naming convention, with a given name preceding a family name. The family name is inherited from the mother rather than the father; neither partner changes the family name when entering a marriage.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Acheron psychology is strongly shaped by the race’s short lifespan and the harsh conditions of its homeworld. Most individuals are driven by superstition and the need to earn self-esteem.

Impiety

Despite their prevalent belief in luck and other superstitions, the Acherons have very little use for organized religion. Most of their objections hinge on the concept of *theodicy* or divine justice. To the Acherons the universe is a hostile place, where Human evil goes unprevented and unpunished. Thus any deity must either be helpless or actively evil – not worth worshipping in either case.

Acherons tend to greet religious arguments with amused, but firm, contempt. “What have any of your gods done for us?” they ask when approached by missionaries. “Have they done anything about our infant mortality rate? Where were they when scientists created us and condemned us to Hell?”

Superstition

Due to the high infant mortality rate, Acheron parents are usually unwilling to invest emotionally in their children until it seems likely that they will survive. Meanwhile, adult Acherons are constantly aware that they can expect to die young, compared to other Humans. This shared experience produces fatalism, tinged with superstition.

Acherons tend to think of the world as a grim joke, full of malevolent forces which cannot be predicted or appeased. When children die or an adult succumbs to illness, Acherons will look for any explanation they can find, however irrational. Beyond the obvious “we were not genetically compatible, so our child died,” they look for more subtle reasons. Did the mother put a hat on her bed, or did the father put new shoes on a table? Did anyone in the house spill the salt? Who opened the way for bad luck to enter the home?

Along with the prevalence of superstitions, many Acherons believe in malefaction. They are convinced that they can somehow inflict bad luck on one another, and regularly consult sources for hexes and counter-spells.

Essentialism

Even in a world where superstition is pervasive, there are some people who deliberately walk under ladders and break mirrors. Surviving all of the universe’s bad mojo to reach adulthood makes some Acherons unusually self-confident and irreligious, to the point of falling into full-blown hubris. Among the Acherons, such individuals have formed a loose philosophical school called Essentialism.

Essentialists acknowledge that being born Acheron is a very bad break, but they don’t let it worry them. Rather, they prefer to emphasize just how far they can outstrip their origins. They actively seek out challenges and do their best to *excel*. They also tend to pour scorn on people who want to live long, comfortable lives. Essentialists are the most outgoing and risk-loving Acherons, and are willing to serve in hazardous environments where possible.



Esteem

Like most Humans, Acherons need to feel self-worth. They know that by normal Imperial standards they are ugly and won't live long. Hence being admired for looks or for a long, successful career is out of the question. What remains is short-term achievement.

Most Acherons try very hard to be good at what they do. Short lifespan and brief childhood mean that they tend to be less well-educated than other Imperials. For that matter, their homeworld is not awash with high-paying jobs. Aware of these handicaps, the Acherons still tend to choose an occupation early and work hard at it. For them, doing anything consistently and well is a victory over jinxes and casual misfortune, so they can often take comfort even in limited success.

In the search for self-esteem, Acherons can be quite competitive – they like to win as much as anyone else. On the other hand, they are aware that the evil eye might be stronger on others than on themselves. Consequently, they are very generous with their praise, and supportive of those who fail.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Acherons are serially monogamous in their sexual relationships. Acheron law recognizes monogamous marriage, but divorce is very easy and a given adult may change partners several times.

Acherons live in extended family groups. The family is centered on a mother, her children, and her partner of the moment. Sometimes a small team of related women will form a group family, each bringing her own partner and children to the household. Family groups are intended to help with child-rearing, and provide general support to mothers. In particular, post-natal depression is very common, so after childbirth the family works hard to help the mother until she feels better.

If a child is conceived, the parents will usually remain together until the baby is born and appears likely to survive. The death of a child, while common, remains an emotional trauma for the parents. It baffles observers that Acherons should take the deaths of their children so badly, given that high infant mortality has been a common feature of many Human cultures. Still, the Acheron reaction to it is unusually strong. Some people speculate that the reaction is not cultural but biological, an unintended result of the original genetic tinkering.

Childrearing and School

Acheron parents watch their children carefully but rather indifferently until they are two, when it becomes obvious that they'll make it after all. After that, they smother the children with love.

Children begin attending school at age four. The sudden arrival of adolescence at age eight is a horrific experience for all concerned, and the next three years are nothing short of

hellish. To prevent unwanted pregnancies and psychological trauma, education between the ninth and 13th years is in single-sex residential schools. During this period, boys and girls only meet in closely chaperoned environments. Very strong social taboos keep them apart until they join the workforce.

Work

Acherons start work earlier than most Humans. They hold part-time jobs during their last three years at school, and join the workforce at 16. Due to their short period of education and their brutally fast adolescence, Acherons tend to be poorly educated. The planetary economy therefore emphasizes semi-skilled and unskilled labor, with a high degree of automation and computer control. At home, many Acherons are miners. Those who go offworld often take Imperial service, preferring the Marines or Scouts. Others take positions with offworld prospecting companies.

Lifestyle

Acherons are omnivores, like most Humans. Their cultural preference is for high-energy, high-protein foods with a lot of flavor.

Acherons divide their food choices into “inside” and “outside” categories. Inside foods are those which must be eaten in a clean environment, while outside foods can be eaten in the outdoor environment where they must pass through the mouth filters. Inside meals are elaborate multiple-course affairs, but outside meals are liquids – broth, enriched juices or milkshakes. The two categories are strictly divided and may never be served together; it is a huge *faux pas* to serve soup at a formal dinner.

Acheron’s native life is completely inedible, due to heavy-metal toxins and right-handed amino acids. Local food is grown in hydroponic gardens, or synthesized from yeast and single-cell proteins.

Acheron buildings are environmentally sealed, low-lying structures. They often incorporate wind farms or geothermal taps, feeding into power banks. This preference for natural energy follows the experience of the Long Night, when the Acherons could not rely on high-technology solutions. Communities cluster around essentials like reservoirs and hydroponic farms, and are near to mines, factories, or other places of work. Individual dwellings are usually near shared facilities like laundries.

GOVERNMENT

Acheron has a democratic government. The planet is divided into 144 Regions, each of which sends two representatives to the Planetary Assembly. The Regions are divided into 25,000-person constituencies, each of which elects a representative to the Regional Assembly. All representatives sit for a fixed four-year term, and all Assembly elections are two years apart, so the turnover of members in each Assembly is staggered. The Planetary Assembly elects the executive and higher judiciary. Acheron’s constitution forbids the establishment of formal political parties, so (in theory, at least) all representatives act solely as conscience dictates.

Acheron’s law divides into criminal and civil. Criminals can expect incarceration, community service, or fines. Civil law seeks to make good the harm done, usually with a combination of specific performance and awards of damages. Defendants in criminal cases are guaranteed a trial by jury, and the judges are elected from the ranks of suitable lawyers.

Arms Control

Acheron has a lot of emotional people, and quite a bit of violence. It also has guns. Although military hardware is forbidden to private citizens, the locals like to carry around very large pistols.

One of the planet’s major exports is mercenary cadre, so the government has always been reluctant to deflate fighting spirit. Instead of banning weapons, the law punishes according to the *consequences* of weapon use. The accused needs a very good defense if his possession or use of a gun leads to death or injury. Self-defense is a fair argument, but the police investigate the circumstances scrupulously.

Foreign Relations

The Acherons do not meet many foreigners. Their planet is unpleasant, and they have little to offer that is unique. The Acheron belief in superstition and magic has led some Imperials to guess that they are psionic. In fact, the Acherons have never showed any sign of unusual psionic talent, but this does not assuage the common prejudice.

The Acherons get along with other Imperial citizens, although their shorter average lifespan makes them self-conscious. They are perfectly cordial to any other species they meet. The main exception is the Solomani, whom the Acherons blame for 2,000 years of suffering and exploitation.

DEFENSE

Acheron maintains a strong system defense squadron, based around *Dragon*-class system defense boats and large orbital platforms. The main deterrent to any attack is the planet’s battery of 16 deep meson sites. Should any invaders reach the surface, they will be met by the People’s Guard. This includes six full-time divisions equipped to a TL12 standard, and 144 reserve divisions equipped at TL10 (one per Region). All are fully grav-capable.

As Acheron is within the peaceful Imperial interior, its forces risk atrophy to the point of uselessness. The government gets around this by rotating its career soldiers through the Horde from Hell, a division-sized mercenary organization available for hire at competitive rates. The Horde will work for anyone willing to abide by the Imperial Rules of War, but offers discounts if the enemy is likely to be Solomani. The Horde is available at full divisional strength, or as detachments from squad size upward. After a hitch with the Horde, a soldier learns the basics of instruction, then returns to his unit as experienced cadre. Career soldiers pass along their experience to the reserve formations in grueling exercises.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Acheron is a mainstream Imperial world, with access to all normal TL10 technologies. Acherons are wider and shorter than most Imperials, so although their clothes, armor, and protective gear have normal cost, they must be designed to fit. GMs should remember that what fits an Acheron is unlikely to fit anyone else.

Similarly, vehicle accommodations are often the wrong shape. The main issue is width, rather than length. Acherons find seats to be one size smaller than they are for anyone else. They will (barely) fit into cramped seats, but will export discomfort to those on either side of them.

Acheron is a supplier of heavy metals, exotic organic products, and military services. It imports anagathics, cosmetic medical care, agricultural produce, and most manufactured goods. The world is relatively poor, with low productivity and persistent unemployment. The local economy can support a domestic TL10 infrastructure, but it lacks skilled scientists and engineers, and tends toward stagnation.

ACHERON (0932, DIASPORA SECTOR)

Starport: Class V.

Diameter: 11,300 miles (18,200 km). *Gravity:* 1.7.

Atmosphere: Dense oxygen-nitrogen, with sulfur and micro-organic taints. *Surface Water:* 59%. *Climate:* Hot. *Population:* 520 million. *Government:* Representative Democracy. *Control Rating:* 2. *TL:* 10. *Gas Giants:* 3. *WTN:* 5.0. *Trade Classifications:* None.

Acheron orbits a hot F3 V class star at 2.6 AU. It has no moons. Also present in the system are a hot rocky world, a hostile “greenhouse world,” two asteroid belts, two gas giants, and three icy worlds on the system fringe.

Acheron’s terrain is relatively low-lying, as fast erosion and an active ecosystem wear down any landform pushed up by plate tectonics. The hydrosphere divides almost equally into freshwater lakes and saltwater seas. There is a sea at each pole, and no ice caps. The relatively low axial tilt means that there is little seasonal variation, and that weather patterns are well-established. It rains reliably almost everywhere on the planet.

Most of Acheron’s native species are semi-sessile, with a combination of animal and plant features. Aside from mats of fungus, free-floating spores, and biologically ambiguous gunk, the most common species is best described as a crinoid/wisteria hybrid which emits small bugs instead of spores or pollen. It appears in huge stands, either under water or on land, and even spreading from the sea.

Sessile, plantlike creatures can leach metals from the soil and incorporate them in their “woody” parts. They are also filter feeders, and can photosynthesize. Some are carnivorous.

Mobile, animal-like creatures are usually amphibious bugs, with lots of legs and tough exoskeletons. Some

free-swimming animals propel themselves with water jets. Very few native animals fly, but some have a gland which can deploy silk. These species use their silk to weave sails and exploit strong winds. None of the mobile species grow much larger than football-size. Animal-like species typically browse on the more plantlike forms, but some are omnivores, well adapted to opportunistic scavenging. Some actively hunt, and are not averse to attacking Humans despite the biochemical incompatibility.

Reformism

Some wealthy Acherons have decided that their horrible genetic heritage is reversible. These *Reformers* invest time and effort trying to recover their mainstream-Human origins. They often resort to plastic surgery, even to the drastic extent of shaving their own skeletons, flattening the rib cage or narrowing the shoulders. Genetic therapies are also in high demand, to engineer their children back toward the Human norm. After three generations, most of their Acheron features are gone.

Reformers also try to create safer home environments, like arcologies or orbital colonies, and do their best to extend their lives through anagathic regimes. Unfortunately, the more success a Reformer has, the less ability he retains to survive on the surface of Acheron. Many Reformers leave their homeworld as a result.

ACHERON CHARACTERS

An Acheron character is 10” shorter than a normal Human with the same ST. He is 30 pounds heavier than a normal Human of the same height.

Aside from the basic Acheron racial template, there exist several “racial” templates for the various stages of Reformer transformation. These stages represent either extreme medical intervention or a progressive program of genetic engineering. Certain features of the Acheron genome have so far resisted removal, so even a “fourth stage” Reformer retains some Acheron traits.

ACHERON RACIAL TEMPLATE 41 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST +4 [45]; HT +1 [10].

Advantages: Filter Lungs [5]; Nictating Membrane 1 [10]; Radiation Tolerance 2 [4].

Disadvantages: Delusion (Superstitious) [-5]; Intolerance (Solomani) [-5]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; Struggling [-10]; Ugly [-10].

Quirks: Responsive. [-1]

Skills: Occultism (M/A) at IQ+3 [8].

FIRST STAGE

REFORMER 31 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST +3 [30]; HT +1 [10].

Advantages: Filter Lungs [5]; Nictating Membrane 1 [10]; Radiation Tolerance 2 [4].

Disadvantages: Delusion (Superstitious) [-5]; Intolerance (Solomani) [-5]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; Struggling [-10]; Unattractive [-5].

Quirks: Responsive. [-1]

Skills: Occultism (M/A) at IQ+3 [8].

At this stage, the changes are cosmetic. A subcutaneous fat layer returns. More time spent in orbit, or simply indoors and inactive, lowers ST.

SECOND STAGE

REFORMER 6 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST +1 [10]; HT +1 [10].

Advantages: Nictating Membrane 1 [10]; Radiation Tolerance 2 [4].

Disadvantages: Delusion (Superstitious) [-5]; Intolerance (Solomani) [-5]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; Struggling [-10]; Unattractive [-5].

Quirks: Responsive. [-1]

Skills: Occultism (M/A) at IQ+3 [8].

The subject is now spending more time in lower-gravity conditions. He is given hormone treatments or surgical intervention, to thin and elongate the skeleton. Second Stage Reformers can (at the player's option) add 3" to their height.

THIRD STAGE

REFORMER -19 POINTS

Advantages: Radiation Tolerance 2 [4].

Disadvantages: Delusion (Superstitious) [-5]; Intolerance (Solomani) [-5]; Short Lifespan 1 [-10]; Struggling [-10].

Quirks: Responsive. [-1]

Skills: Occultism (M/A) at IQ+3 [8].

The subject can now pass as a mainstream Human. He still matures and dies young, though. The special height rules for normal Acherons no longer apply.

FOURTH STAGE

REFORMER 4 POINTS

Aside from retaining Radiation Tolerance 2 [4], the subject is a normal, mainstream Human. He still carries around the extra emotional baggage of his cultural inheritance.

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Delusion (Superstitious) see p. B32

The typical Acheron is actively superstitious, to the extent of performing little rituals to ward off bad luck, believing in curses (and occasionally attempting to lay them), and being gullible about "magical" talismans.



Filter Lungs see p. C156

Acherons have perforated membranes which they can sphincter shut, but the same effect is the same.

Intolerance (Solomani) see p. B34

As the Acherons believe that the Solomani created them as a race of freaks, imprisoned them in Hell, then abandoned them to die, they don't like them very much.

Nictating Membrane see p. C162

To prevent damage to their eyes, the Acherons have inner, transparent eyelids.

Occultism see p. B61

Being very superstitious, the Acherons are familiar with a variety of occult theories. This knowledge is acquired environmentally, rather than studied, so these points do not count against the age limit (see p. B43).

Responsive see p. C193

Acherons are sensitive to people's feelings, but do not necessarily feel the need to act upon this knowledge.

Short Lifespan see p. C104

Acherons do not live very long, and reach maturity earlier than normal Humans. Acherons mature at 13 and make aging rolls every nine months, starting at age 37.

Struggling see p. B16

Acheron is a relatively poor world, so the typical native is Struggling.

Adventure Seed: The Return of the Native

The adventurers, some of whom could be Acherons, are hired to escort a wealthy young heir to the planet so that he can observe his estates at first hand. An émigré with romantic tendencies, the heir has an idealized picture of "his people," and wants to be part of it. Unfortunately, he's a sixth generation Reformer, so he has no obvious Acheron features beyond skin, eye and hair color. He's tall and thin, too. Even worse, his estate, an oil-tree plantation with a small pitchblende drift mine, has developed an Essentialist bias, so they don't exactly welcome him home.

Once the heir arrives on Acheron, he feels that he has to win his tenants' approval. They think it will be funny to see him try, so they arrange a series of life-threatening challenges. To get paid, the PCs have to make sure the heir survives, without anyone else realizing that they are interfering on his behalf.



Ugly see p. B15

Acherons are short, broad, and pasty, with dark hair, extremely pale skin, and no body fat. They look like walking skeletons in bad wigs.

NEW ADVANTAGE

The following advantage first appeared in *Transhuman Space* and is repeated here.

Radiation Tolerance *Varies*

Your cells or circuits are less vulnerable to radiation. Divide the effective dose of rads you accumulate (after PF) by 2 (4 points), 3 (7 points), 4 (8 points), 5 (10 points), 10 (14 points), 20 (18 points), 50 (23 points), 100 (28 points), 200 (32 points), 500 (37 points), or 1,000 (41 points).

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

All the templates in *GURPS Traveller* and the Imperium-based supplements are open to the Acherons, except Barbarian. That said, the more cerebral templates are less common while the more focused, such as Martial Artist and Marine, are more so. In general, Acherons enter the adult world much younger than other citizens, and so should have fewer points invested in like academic disciplines. As they tend to specialize in one job, they are more likely to have one area of expertise, rather than a wide spread of abilities.

ESSENTIALIST -5 POINTS

The Essentialist lens can modify any of the Acheron racial templates, although it is relatively uncommon among Reformers. Essentialists lose Delusion (Superstition) [-5] and gain Overconfidence [-10] (p. B34), for a net cost of -5 points.

Answerin

The Answerin are renowned throughout the Imperium as soldiers without fear. Although that reputation is somewhat inaccurate, it nicely encapsulates what is commonly known about them. They are rarely encountered outside the Domain of Vland as anything other than soldiers or mercenaries, which has only added to their legend.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

After being transplanted to their homeworld by the Ancients, the Answerin lived in isolation. Early Answerin society was tribal, characterized by fierce philosophical debates and generations-long blood feuds. The rationality and contentiousness of modern Answerin culture were apparently in place long before the start of recorded history.

Vilani contact occurred late, despite the relatively short distance between Vland and Answerin. Early Vilani explorers had surveyed Answerin from orbit, but the planet appeared inhospitable. It was not until about -6500 that scouts actually landed and made contact with the Human inhabitants.

Answerin naturally fell into the Vilani sphere of influence. At the time of first contact, Answerin's most advanced societies were at a Bronze Age stage of development. Interaction with the Vilani encouraged the first large territorial states. About -6000 the Vilani sponsored a planetary government, based on a North Answerin state. As the Vilani empire grew into the Ziru Sirka, Answerin came under direct Vilani rule.

For thousands of years, the Answerin served the Ziru Sirka faithfully as soldiers and marines. During the Interstellar Wars, Answerin soldiers earned a fearsome reputation among Vargr and Terran foes of the Imperium. Even so, the fall of the Ziru Sirka had a generally positive effect on Answerin. The Answerin found Terran political and social models congenial, and prospered under the Rule of Man. By -2000, the planet reached TL9 and had become a minor trade center.

Unfortunately, the Long Night struck hard at Answerin prosperity. The civil wars of the late Rule of Man, pirate raids, and the loss of interstellar trade all served to undermine Answerin society. By -1500 the homeworld had fallen back to TL3 and was once again divided into dozens of warring states.

A renaissance came late in the Long Night, as Vilani explorers and traders returned to Answerin. Once again technology advanced and the planet was unified, although this time Answerin remained independent of Vilani rule. Answerin became a sovereign ally of the Sylean Federation in -28, immediately after Vland itself. It was a charter member of the

Third Imperium, and been a prosperous and loyal member world ever since.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

As with many minor Human races, physiological differences from the Solomani/Vilani norm are slight. Answerin are tall and slender, although not exceptionally so. All Answerin have dark brown or black skin tones. Hair color is likewise dark, with wavy hair three times as common as straight hair. Answerin eyes possess pronounced epicanthic folds, as protection against the light of the twin suns of their home system. These folds give some Answerin a "tired" look, while others appear to squint menacingly. This latter trait has contributed to their (undeserved) reputation as bullies and braggarts.

The native biochemistry on Answerin is compatible with Humaniti. As a result, the Humans transplanted there found no need for specialized food preparation techniques, such as developed on Vland. However, the ecosystem supports very little animal life, so the Answerin have developed a wholly vegetarian diet. An Answerin who was forced to eat meat would become ill until his metabolism adjusted.

The local day on Answerin is slightly longer than 25 standard hours. The Answerin divide their day into two eight-hour periods and one nine-hour period. Since Answerin is a hot world, the nine-hour night period is used for work, while the eight-hour periods are used for rest and sleep. Answerin have little trouble adapting to standard 24-hour days, although most Answerin prefer to work in the evenings.

Answerin senses are about average for Human norms. Their epicanthic folds protect them from higher intensities of light, and their nocturnal habits give Answerin a better-than-average level of night vision.

Answerin possess one other noteworthy anatomical oddity. The blood types most commonly found among them are extremely rare among the rest of Humaniti. These blood types, designated M, N, S, and P by medical scientists, exist in other Human races as anomalies. These blood types can be easily synthesized by Imperial technology, but they do pose a hazard for Answerin traveling to less-advanced planets.

The typical Answerin lifespan is somewhat shorter than that of other Humans. No Answerin is recorded to have achieved a natural lifespan of greater than 95 years. Of course, anagathic treatments can extend Answerin lifespans, but most Answerin reject the treatments as catering to a fear of death – which they regard as unbecoming and perverse.



Still, it seems unlikely that the surge could have arisen as a response to natural conditions. Adrenaline rushes are usually a consequence of fear or the presence of danger. However, the Answerin homeworld is devoid of large animals, including predators, so the primitive Answerin faced little threat from that quarter. It seems implausible that such an extraordinary ability would arise under such conditions.

Inevitably, some sophontologists offer the Ancients as a possible solution to this conundrum. However, the Ancients apparently never used Humans as soldiers. Why then would they have geneered such ability into the Answerin? What purpose would it serve? Of course, the present extent of knowledge about the Ancients is scanty at best, so it's not impossible that this enigmatic race may be responsible for the Answerin surge trait.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Precontact Answerin had dozens of languages and dialects. Under Vilani rule, a North Answerin dialect became

dominant, and remains the common language of all Answerin today. Answerin use both given and family names. The given name comes first, in a system similar to Solomani or Vilani usage.

ADRENALINE SURGES

The Answerin are justly renowned for their fighting skill. This dates back to the days of the Ziru Sirka, when the Vilani used them as shock troops and marines. Indeed, the Vilani word for "marine" is *aansherin*, believed by many socio-linguists to derive from the name of this minor Human race.

The Answerin fighting skill has two origins. First, Answerin psychology encourages mental toughness and resistance to pain. This is further reinforced by Answerin culture, which places great stock in a person's ability to withstand punishment for the sake of a greater cause. Both these factors provide an excellent basis for a formidable fighter.

Even more important is the fact that every Answerin can consciously produce an adrenaline-like reaction in his bloodstream. Like ordinary adrenaline reactions among all Humans, this "surge" enables the Answerin to increase his strength and dexterity temporarily in response to the presence of danger. However, for the Answerin the surge can be produced at will, whether he feels himself to be under threat or not. Enhanced strength and dexterity last for a minute, after which it takes an hour to recover.

The origin of this unusual ability is still open to considerable debate. Some sophontologists argue that it is a natural ability. Certainly, adults who have the trait are better fighters. Meanwhile, children and other noncombatants can use the surge to *escape* danger, an ability which was doubtless useful during the constant tribal conflicts of preunification Answerin.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

The most famous Answerin belief is the notion that fear in any form – simple lack of confidence, anxiety, or terror – is simply a "disease" of the mind. To the Answerin, fear has no objective reality. It is a corruption, a cancer on the natural calmness of the Human mind. Because fear attacks the reasoning faculties that make one Human, it is the worst of all diseases. Worse still, lesser illnesses such as pain and fatigue derive from fear, compounding the misery it causes. Fortunately, with proper training and mental discipline anyone can overcome such ills. The healthy Human mind looks at stressful situations with rational detachment, and concludes that nothing (least of all efficiency or success) is to be gained by giving in to fear.

This attitude is sometimes a difficulty when dealing with outsiders. Other Humans often find Answerin to be arrogant, smug, taciturn, and difficult to get along with. In fact, in most respects Answerin have typical Human psychologies. They are as capable of anger, joy, or sorrow as anyone else. They simply refuse to give in to fear.

The Answerin position on fear is part of a larger belief that the Human mind, properly trained and in good health, is capable of mastering the physical world. With true mastery of the mind comes freedom from the purely physical, and such freedom brings the ultimate Human happiness. Although the Answerin are a decidedly irreligious people, this belief is held so fervently that it comes close to being an article of faith among them. Of course, the Answerin themselves argue that their perspective is well-grounded in experience and empirical data, a claim that cannot be made of most religions.

Indeed, there has been a peculiar absence of organized religion throughout Answerin history. The Answerin look upon religious beliefs as an extension of a weakness of mind, resulting from fear. For millennia they have been quite content with a stoic view of the universe, believing that nothing is to be gained by deluding oneself with patently false beliefs about objective reality.

Despite this disdain for religious ideas, the Answerin aren't content to sit back and accept whatever comes their way. They still seek answers to the same questions that plague Human beings throughout Charted Space. Several atheistic philosophies take the place of religion. In one form or another, these philosophies all espouse the idea that the mind is supreme and can have a profound impact upon the lesser world of matter. Although many outsiders find Answerin philosophies bleak, they have gained many adherents among non-Answerin.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The basic Answerin social unit is the nuclear family, with two parents and (possibly) large numbers of children. Both parents share in the responsibility of raising children. Indeed, there is a fair degree of equality between the sexes in all areas of life. Labor has never been divided based on gender. Answerin see it as irrational and inefficient to place people in roles on any basis except expertise.

Democracy

Democracy is the traditional form of Answerin government. In the earliest times, individual voters served as their own representatives, voicing their opinions and ideas in tribal folkmoats. As populations grew, representative structures were established. Vilani influence added the idea of bureaucratic government. The size of any Answerin bureaucracy is small by Vilani standards, but its presence is one of the few lasting signs of Vilani influence on Answerin culture.

Answerin society is traditionally very discordant, and has a long history of tribal warfare. Although the basic form and assumptions of Answerin culture have been stable for millennia, the status and power of various Answerin states tends to fluctuate wildly. Periods of unified world government only sublimate and redirect this antagonism. In the modern Answerin state, various departments are often at odds with one another and with assorted occupational groups

Answerin Philosophies

The Answerin mindset has given rise to numerous schools of thought, each one of which offers a different perspective on the problems facing Humaniti. Two of these philosophies stand out as noteworthy: Nertomarism and *Ungat*.

Nertomarism derives its name from the Answerin thinker commonly known as Nertomar in Galanglic (his actual name was Nherdom Arratanwy). Nherdom argued that all that exists is mental in character, and taught a form of idealism that denied the reality of the physical world. He produced a powerful combination of empiricism and skepticism, questioning all knowledge of the world outside the mind, while at the same time acknowledging that Human beings can have an impact on that world.

Ungat (the name means "response" in North Answerin) arose as a reaction to the skepticism inherent in Nertomarism. Its chief proponent, Qensheri Defret, held that all that can be known of things is the way in which they appear through subjective Human experience. At the same time, Defret also held that the fundamental principles of all science are grounded in the constitution of the mind rather than being derived from the external world.

Neither philosophy holds much appeal outside the confines of Answerin society. What outsiders sometimes find attractive in them derives from the mental discipline that they encourage. Both Nertomarism and *Ungat* suggest that the Human mind determines a great deal about how one experiences the world. Consequently, the refinement of one's mind essentially determines the course of one's life – a position many non-Answerin find worthy of further study.

(guilds and unions). This makes the business of governance a very messy proposition, although somehow it never quite breaks down.

In many Human cultures, democracy arises from either an idealization of the individual or from a suspicion of hereditary government. In the case of the Answerin, it arose as the natural consequence of rationalistic philosophy. For thousands of years, they have believed that rational Human minds, unfettered by fear, are capable of properly ordering state affairs and creating just laws. Consequently, the Answerin view democracy as not merely the only just form of government, but the only *rational* one as well.

Although they are loyal Imperial citizens, the Answerin accept the Imperium's political philosophy grudgingly at best. They recognize the problems inherent in an interstellar democracy, but they are not yet convinced that such a goal should be abandoned simply because its attainment is difficult. For their part, many Imperial citizens point to the messy and contentious nature of Answerin democracy as evidence that the institution is not all that worthwhile.

"Visit Answerin and Learn Discipline"

Answerin has become a pilgrimage spot of sorts for Imperial businessmen, nobles, and others with too much time on their hands. These deluded individuals believe the Answerin hold great wisdom regarding mental discipline, which they hope to acquire by studying under an Answerin teacher.

For their part, the Answerin are somewhat bemused by the awe in which they are held by some outsiders. Although they don't deny that their philosophies possess genuine insight into the Human condition, they also realize that much of their race's discipline has a biological origin. Even adherents of Nertomarism argue that Answerin are "constituted" differently than other Humans, making some of their prodigious feats unattainable by others. This hasn't stopped pilgrims from coming – or unscrupulous Answerin from taking advantage of their naiveté.

Adventure Seed: Ivory Tower

A renowned Answerin philosopher is attacked by unknown assailants while visiting another world. At first, the attack appears to be a chance encounter, but further investigation reveals the assailants were students of a rival philosopher. Why would an intellectual dispute boil over into physical violence? And does it have anything to do with one philosopher's secret advocacy of psionic research?

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Answerin is a mainstream Imperial world, with a TL12 economic base. Having been in almost constant contact with interstellar society for several millennia, the Answerin have developed only a few distinctive technological items. For the most part, they have been content simply to copy the devices developed by others. The primary exception to this is in the field of mental diagnosis, an area where even Imperial medicine lags.

Mental Diagnosis

Psychiatry is highly developed among the Answerin. Their present-day lack of fear is in part due to thousands of years of intensive research and treatment. Their rationalistic outlook has also had a profound effect upon their culture, directing its energies into the development of many effective psychiatric and psychological methods.

In a similar vein, many breakthroughs in physical medicine came from observing the effects psychiatric treatments upon the body. Drawing on these observations, the Answerin have developed several technological devices that allow them to further explore the Human psyche – and determine the best treatments for various mental and physical ailments.

One of the major devices is a portable unit somewhat like an Imperial neural activity sensor, but much more sophisticated (p. 22). This device allows a qualified operator to detect stress and anxiety levels, so that appropriate actions can be taken. Because the device borders on psionics in its operation, its sale and use are restricted to the Answerin homeworld. Illegal versions can be found throughout the Domain of Vland and beyond.

ANSWERIN (O431, VLAND SECTOR)

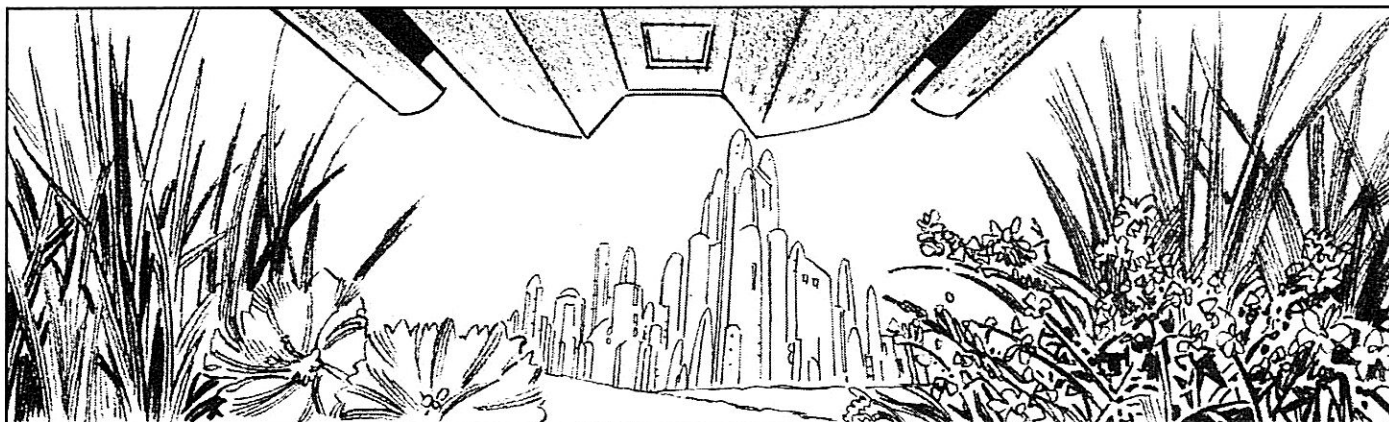
Starport: Class IV (Naval base).

Diameter: 5,000 miles (8,050 km). *Gravity:* 0.5. *Atmosphere:* Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 40%. *Climate:* Warm. *Population:* 4 billion. *Government:* Bureaucracy. *Control Rating:* 1. *TL:* 12. *Gas Giants:* 0. *WTN:* 5.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

Answerin orbits a warm G0 V star, that in turn orbits a large A7 II star. The complex orbital mechanics of the system give the planet a warm, habitable biosphere. They have also raised questions as to the likelihood of such a system arising naturally – although there is no evidence of any Ancient involvement in restructuring it.

The planet possesses a standard oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, without any significant atmospheric taint. Water covers less than half of the surface, mostly in the form of shallow, salty oceans.

Answerin's plant life shows a remarkable diversity. The oceans are full of plant forms, and there are hundreds of thousands of species on land. In fact, the varieties are so



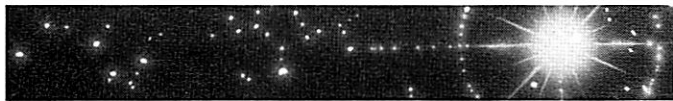
numerous that they draw researchers and connoisseurs from across the Imperium. Among the more notable plants are the Mariyel Black Lily (a favorite of Empress Iolanthe) and the Liqar, an herb with many medicinal applications. Megacorporations like Sharurshid and SuSAG have long taken great interest in Answerin's bounty, believing it to be a source of many potential products.

In contrast, Answerin's animal life is small and relatively primitive. Outside the oceans, extensive animal populations exist in only a few regions, mostly around the equator. The Answerin faced few threats from predators after being abandoned by the Ancients.

Answerin is a crowded world, dotted with numerous arcologies to support its teeming billions of inhabitants. Few regions of the planet escape these self-contained cities, including the world's shallow seas. Indeed, sea-based arcologies are quite common on Answerin, in part due to the desire of megacorporations that the planet's biodiversity not be damaged. Naturally, this desire derives from corporate self-interest, but the Answerin are generally willing to comply. The planet has seen significant capital investment from megacorporations hoping to cash in on the many remarkable local plant species.

The most noteworthy settlement on Answerin is Maweshen, the arcology nearest the planet's Class IV starport. Maweshen possesses a population of almost 30 million people, many of them offworlders and transients. The arcology is also home to many megacorporate offices, as well as the local Imperial trade representative. Consequently, it's the settlement most likely visited by travelers.

Like Maweshen, the starport stands in the middle of the Junyat Sea. After the disastrous destruction of an inland previous starport during the Rule of Man period, the planetary government felt an oceanic locale would be safer. Ironically, the presence of the new starport only encouraged the growth of Maweshen, thereby defeating the original purpose of the starport's position.



ANSWERIN CHARACTERS

An Answerin is 3" taller than a normal Human with the same ST. He is 10 pounds lighter than a normal Human of the same height.

ANSWERIN RACIAL TEMPLATE **87 POINTS**

Advantages: Fearlessness +3 [6]; High Pain Threshold [10]; High Technology (+2 TLs) [50]; Hyper-Reflexes [15]; Night Vision [10]; Reputation +2 (As great soldiers, to military personnel, 10 or less) [2].

Disadvantages: Odious Racial Habit (Arrogant) [-5].

Quirks: Vegetarianism [-1].

Adventure Seed: Forbidden Fruit

A Zhodani researcher has discovered that a plant on Answerin could serve as the basis for a potent psi booster drug. However, she realizes that attempting to obtain large quantities of it for further investigation would arouse the suspicion of Imperial authorities. Therefore, she hires the characters to act as her agents, purchasing small amounts of the plant and shipping each parcel on separate ships to her research facility in the Spinward Marches. It's an expensive and time-consuming undertaking, but one for which the researcher pays well. That's why it's so unfortunate the agents' actions draw the attention of megacorporate forces interested in the same plant . . .

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Common Advantages and Disadvantages

Many Answerin soldiers possess Combat Reflexes which, coupled with their innate Hyper-Reflexes, can make them frightening opponents in battle. Strong Will is also a common advantage. Their natural abilities sometimes blind Answerin to danger, giving them Impulsiveness or Overconfidence (or both).

High Technology *see p. C126*

Answerin learn all their skills at TL12. There are no Answerin offworld colonies. Almost all Answerin encountered away from their homeworld are ex-military personnel, who have been trained in the Imperium's TL12 equipment and techniques.

Hyper-Reflexes *see p. C158*

Answerin Hyper-Reflexes function exactly as described on p. C158, with the limitation that they cannot be used for more than one minute per hour. Given that most combats last less than one minute, this is not a significant disadvantage and does not incur any of the Limited Use cost reductions described on p. C111.

Status

The Answerin social structure is very fluid, with remarkably little stratification. Consequently, they don't require a distinctive Status chart beyond that included in the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Traveller*.

Few Answerin have been granted patents of Imperial nobility. Creating an Answerin with such an advantage might require an Unusual Background to justify it. A religious Answerin would likewise require an Unusual Background.

Taboo Traits

As Humans, Answerin may have the full range of advantages and disadvantages found in the Solomani/Vilani norm. Normally, they should possess no disadvantages relating to fear or weakness of will, such as Combat Paralysis, Cowardice, Phobias, or Weak Will.

SKILLS

Most Answerin possess at least rudimentary knowledge of Psychology and Philosophy, reflecting the influence these two disciplines have in their society. Suitable specializations for Philosophy can be found in the sidebar on p. 19.

Using the Answerin

The Answerin can serve many purposes in a *Traveller* campaign. Most obviously, they can be deadly opponents or steadfast allies in any military situation. Many adventures could be built around their unique combat abilities. The Answerin skill with mental diagnosis could be used to aid an adventurer afflicted with a harmful mental disadvantage.

The Answerin – like all minor Humans – should serve to show that Humans can still be aliens. Their unusual psychology and culture will prove just as baffling and disconcerting to “mainstream” Imperial Humans as that of any non-Human sophont. Inventive GMs could easily construct scenarios about coming to grips with the Answerin worldview as the means to another goal.

MARTIAL ARTS

As a culture possessed of both martial pride and mind-over-matter philosophies, the Answerin have developed several unique martial arts styles. GMs with access to **GURPS Martial Arts** may wish to develop these martial arts styles. Answerin styles emphasize both speed and toughness, and would normally include maneuvers such as Close Combat, Feint, Ground Fighting, and Hit Location.

“The Answerin look upon religious beliefs as an extension of a weakness of mind, resulting from fear.”

It should be noted that most martial arts are considered archaic – or at least quaint – by modern Answerin. They recognize their historical importance, but question their value in an age of battle dress and advanced combat rifles. Thus, it will be a rare Answerin whose *preferred* form of combat is one of the many ancient martial arts forms native to their homeworld.

EQUIPMENT

Most equipment used on Answerin is standard Imperial make. The following item is the most famous (albeit illicit) piece of Answerin technology.

Mental Diagnostic Sensor (TL12)

This device consists of a small belt-worn processor unit and a handset. It can determine stress and anxiety levels in a sophont at 10 yards. Electronics Operation (Sensors) is required to use the sensor, while Psychology and Diagnosis are needed to interpret the data it provides. Successful use grants a +3 bonus to Will Rolls, Fright Checks, and similar things to the user or a person under his care.

The sensor is blocked by psionic shields and solid objects. Both the processor and the handset run on B cells, for one week. *Processor*: Cr40,000, 2 lbs. *Handset*: Cr25,000, 0.5 lbs.

The sensor can be legally purchased and used only on Answerin. Any attempt to do so offworld is an Imperial crime, punishable by a fine and imprisonment. Black-market versions are available for sale, usually at greatly inflated prices. A successful Streetwise roll at -6 (possibly higher outside the Domain of Vland) is needed to find a black-market sensor.

Answerin Mercenary Companies

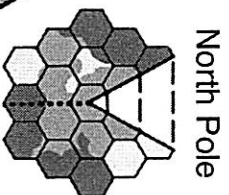
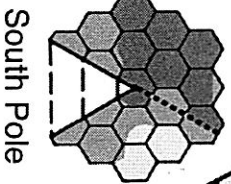
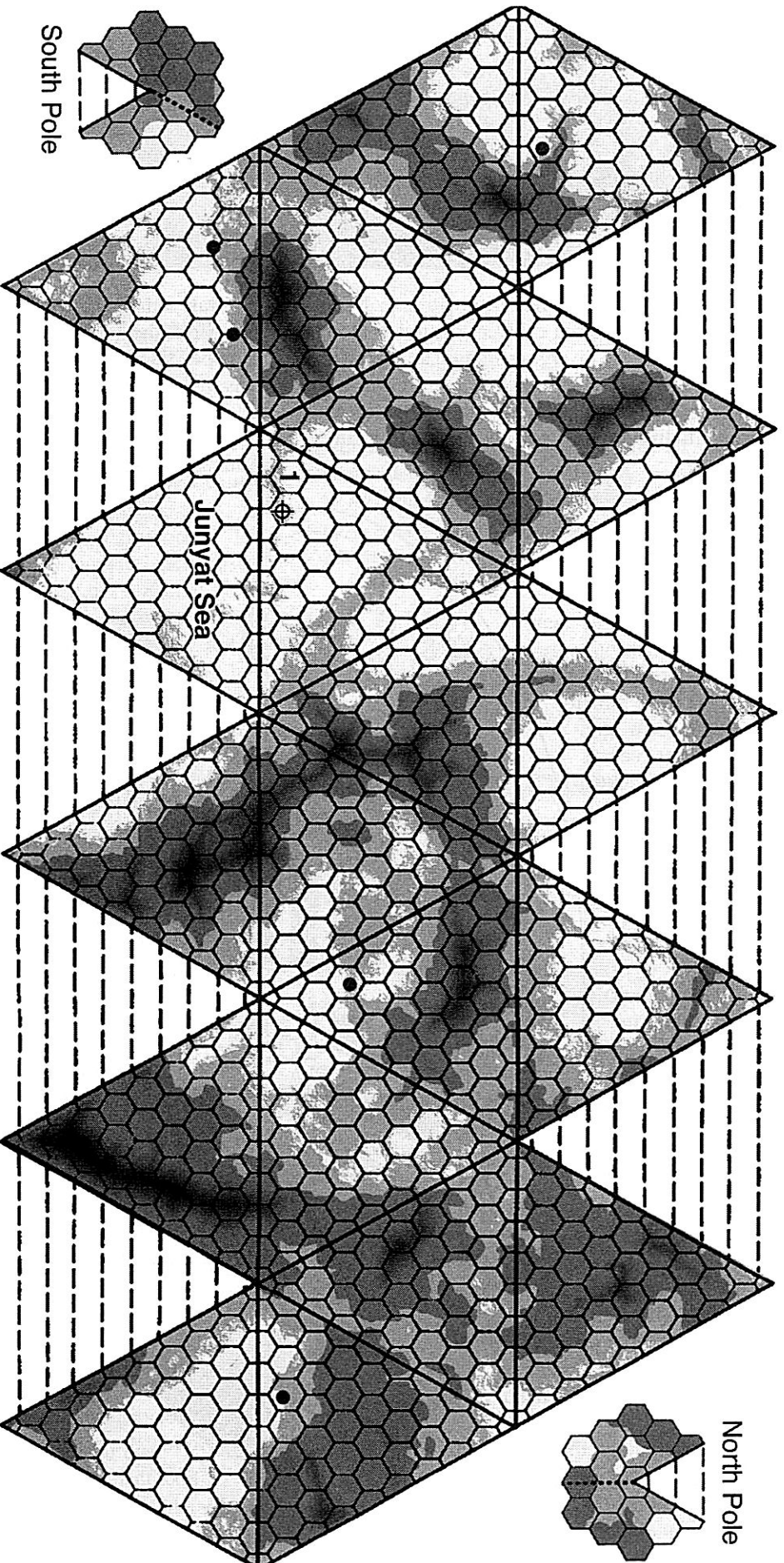
As consummate warriors with remarkable abilities, Answerin mercenaries are in great demand throughout the Imperium. They tend not to become involved in large conflicts, as they rarely form companies larger than a platoon. This fact stems from cultural factors; they prefer smaller, more egalitarian units if at all possible. Commando and striker tickets are by far the most common instances of Answerin involvement.

The most storied Answerin company is the *Freshynsi Laat*, or “Company of Heroes,” a band composed entirely of Marine veterans. Commanded by Aqanany Isa, the Company specializes in commando raids in the Domain of

Vland and nearby Vargr Extents. They’ve seen action in several local wars, including “tradewar” clashes between Imperial megacorporations.

Another noteworthy company is the *Manwysi Heshat*, called “Manwy’s Guardians” in Galanglic. The Guardians operate within the Domain of Deneb, particularly Trojan Reach and the rimward edge of the Spinward Marches. They work almost solely as an anti-pirate unit, excelling at zero-G maneuvers and boarding actions. In recent days, they’ve also seen action against Aslan *ihatei*, and have earned the grudging respect of even these enemies.

Answerin



- | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|--|-------------------|--|--------------|--|----------|
| | Icy/Barren | | Hilly/Rough | | Plain/Steppe | | Starport |
| | Ocean | | Mountain/Volcanic | | Major City | | |

KEY

Starport
1. Maweshen

Starport: Class IV
Diameter: 5,000 miles
Atmosphere: Standard, Oxygen-Nitrogen
Surface Water: 40%
Climate: Warm

Population: 4 billion
Government: Bureaucracy
Control Rating: 1
TL: 12

Azhanti

The Azhanti are a minor Human race native to Irale in Antares sector. The Azhanti have evolved to survive in high temperatures, in the process diverging significantly from the Solomani/Vilani norm. The impulsive, even combative Azhanti nature has often led to strife, but the present-day race is slowly learning to live within the bounds imposed by interstellar civilization.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Early Azhanti history was unexceptional. The proto-Azhanti were left on their homeworld (Irale) by the Ancients, then spent millennia adapting to their new environment. The earliest records of Azhanti civilization date to about -11,000.

Warfare was an almost constant occurrence on pre-contact Irale. By the time the first Vilani scouts arrived, the Azhanti had been civilized for over 6,000 years. Even so, their most advanced societies were still at the city-state stage of development. Every attempt to weld together a larger territorial unit invariably collapsed into a chaos of wars and honor feuds.

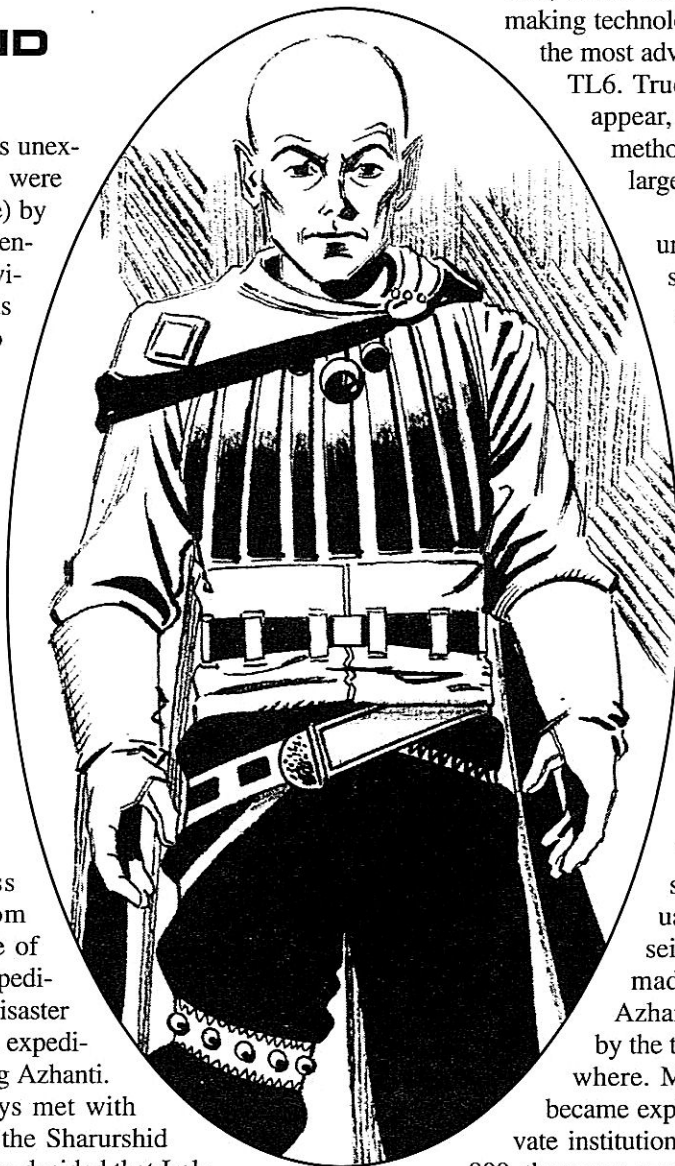
Azhanti combativeness also protected the race from falling into the Vilani sphere of influence. The first Vilani expedition to Irale (in -5908) met disaster when several members of the expedition were killed by marauding Azhanti. Later contact attempts always met with the same result. Eventually, the Sharurshid officials in charge of the region decided that Irale had nothing significant to offer. Rather than conquer the Azhanti, Sharurshid placed the planet under interdiction.

Irale remained isolated for millennia. After the fall of the Ziru Sirka, the Terran Navy examined Vilani records and sent an expedition to study the Azhanti from a distance. The Terrans saw nothing to counter Vilani opinions about the Azhanti, and maintained the interdiction of Irale. The Third Imperium followed suit when it first expanded into the Antares sector.

Still, across thousands of years the Azhanti *were* making technological and social progress. By -500 the most advanced nations on Irale had attained TL6. True nation-states were beginning to appear, as the Azhanti slowly developed methods for maintaining the cohesion of large societies.

After the rise of the Third Imperium, Irale was under almost-constant surveillance by the Scout Service. After the Civil War, the revitalized IISS was on the lookout for ambitious projects that could prove its value to the Imperium. Scout Leaders in the Antares sector decided to undertake contact with the Azhanti. In 676, after about a generation of intensive covert contact, the IISS lifted the interdiction of Irale and began the construction of a local scout base.

Imperial contact caused tremendous social upheaval on Irale, and the Azhanti as a race took a long time to integrate smoothly into Imperial society. The IISS maintained Amber Zone status on Irale for decades. Individual Azhanti, however, immediately seized the opportunities that contact made available. Within a few years, Azhanti were leaving their homeworld by the thousands to take employment elsewhere. Many Azhanti joined the IISS, or became explorers or colonists working for private institutions. Others became mercenaries. By 800, there was a substantial Azhanti population in the nearby Antares system, and other settlements were springing up all across the sector.



The IISS formally repealed the Irale Amber Zone in 837. Since then, the Azhanti have been loyal citizens of the Third Imperium. Indeed, their contributions in Imperial service have been so noteworthy that the first (and most famous) *Azhanti High Lightning*-class cruiser was named after them. Today, Azhanti are a common sight in the coreward portions of the Imperium, their impulsiveness and energy adding considerable verve to local culture.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Azhanti are close to the Human norm in height, but slightly more slender. An adult Azhanti male averages 5'9" tall and weighs approximately 140 pounds, while females are slightly smaller. The Azhanti cranium is slightly larger than the norm, and is set off by oversized ears. Azhanti eyes are brown and – most strikingly – their skin is a vivid brownish-orange. Azhanti of both sexes are completely hairless.

Like most Humans, the Azhanti are omnivorous. The native life of Irale is compatible with Human biochemistry, so neither the Azhanti nor other Humans have much difficulty eating local foods. Azhanti senses are about equal to those of other Humans, although Azhanti eyes are better able to endure bright light due to the intensity of Irale's sun.

The Azhanti trachea possesses a special filter that allows them to breathe Irale's sulfur-tainted atmosphere. The filter also enables the Azhanti to breathe on other worlds with contaminated atmospheres. As an additional side effect, the filter gives most Azhanti – even females – the deep and raspy voices for which they are well known.

Adapted to survival in high temperatures, the Azhanti prefer that type of environment. Below 95° they are calm and reasonable, but sluggish and lacking in personality. Above 95°, they become much more animated and charismatic, but they also lose their tempers easily and become exceedingly rash. Although the Azhanti are not unthinking brutes in hot climates, they are far from levelheaded or calculating. Other Humans often call the Azhanti "hotheads."

Another quirk of the unusual Azhanti physiology is that they do not perspire as efficiently as other Humans. This reduces their ability to function adequately in *extremely* high temperatures, despite their preference for heat.

Azhanti lifespans are somewhat shorter than the Human average. Most Azhanti begin to suffer the effects of age before reaching 50, and can expect to live 65 to 75 years. Anagathic treatments can offset this somewhat, but few Azhanti approve of such methods, believing them an effort to "cheat" the time allotted them by God.

Imperial scientists have difficulty deciding how to classify the Azhanti. They are somewhat interfertile with other branches of Humanity. However, the Azhanti's many physiological differences make mixed pregnancies difficult and prone to miscarriage. Most half-Azhanti children are born sterile. As a result, some biologists classify the Azhanti as a Human subspecies (*Homo sapiens iralensis*), while others consider them a hominid but non-Human species (*Homo azhanti*).

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Although there are a number of different Azhanti languages, there is a common language with which most Azhanti are familiar. This is a trade tongue called Rakhli, an amalgam of several Azhanti dialects that is widely used on Irale and beyond. Rakhli is the official language of the world government of Irale, used to mediate between the Azhanti nations of that planet (each of which has its own distinct dialect).

All Azhanti languages have very complex grammar and syntax. Meanwhile, their phonology is harsh and guttural, being well suited to the raspy-voiced Azhanti. Offworlders find it quite easy to make a grammatical mistake or mispronounce a word. Over the years, this has led to a great many misunderstandings. In *GURPS* terms, all Azhanti languages are considered Mental/Hard skills.

Azhanti have a clan name, a given name and a tribal name (which are used in that order). Here are some typical Azhanti names:

Clan Names: A'ami, Chakhme, Higlan, Zivismazh.

Male Given Names: Abechakhe, Ochova, Tuzha, Zhuvki.

Female Given Names: Lagalakh, Pankokh, Xichos, Zhaves.

Tribal Names: Dakhuya, Heshlani, Hayami, Joxya.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Azhanti psychology is colored by three distinct influences. Their natural psychology makes them *impulsive* and *curious*. These traits are emphasized by their most popular faith, *Ro'akh*.

IMPULSIVENESS

Under their preferred environmental conditions, the Azhanti are an impulsive people. Forethought and prudence are rare traits among them.

This impulsiveness also makes the Azhanti combative and aggressive. When an Azhanti is moved by strong passions, he tends to act on them. An angry Azhanti is likely to strike out violently at the target of his rage. An Azhanti in a fit of patriotic fervor will gladly march off to battle. Also, as with many warrior cultures, Azhanti have an inherent sense of personal honor. They are particularly prone to act rashly when they believe that honor has been impugned.

Historically, Azhanti impulsiveness has made it difficult for the race to build large social structures. For thousands of years, anything larger than a small city-state proved impossible to hold together. Over time, the race has painfully built a code of behavior which permits individual Azhanti to function within the context of a large, complex society. For example, Azhanti custom now includes extensive rules regarding how and when a war may be waged.

CURIOSITY

Another element of the Azhanti psychology is immense curiosity. While not as all-consuming as the curiosity of the Hivers, the Azhanti have a great desire to see and experience as many people, places, and things as possible. This curiosity is not a rational, scientific urge. Rather, it resembles the enthusiasm for new experiences that is common among Human children, but which is usually muted in adults. The Azhanti never lose this drive.

When the IISS revoked Irale's interdicted status in 676, Azhanti were soon flooding out into the Imperium. Their enthusiastic participation in interstellar affairs continues today. Having had access to space travel for only the last five hundred years, the Azhanti are eager to make up for lost time.

RELIGION

The *Ro'akh* faith is the most common Azhanti religion. The name means "Test" or "Challenge" in Rakhli.

Ro'akh teaches that God created the universe as a training ground for the faithful, deliberately including numerous obstacles for the faithful to meet and overcome. Each obstacle overcome prepares the worshiper for the next as he journeys through life. In fact, the believer is expected to actively seek out the greatest challenges possible. A *Ro'akhilan* ("Tested One" or "Challenger") who succeeds in these challenges accumulates *lishke* (or "grace") in what many outsiders jokingly refer to as "God's divine score-keeping system."

According to *Ro'akh*, those Challengers who acquire enough *lishke* in this life will be rewarded with the opportunity to take part in a final apocalyptic battle at the end of

time, when they will fight on the side of God against the forces of evil. These fortunate souls will receive unimaginable rewards after the battle.

Ro'akh is a very demanding religion to follow faithfully. However, its outlook makes the Azhanti look like incurable optimists to non-*Ro'akhilane*. Azhanti eagerly go forth and seek out whatever challenges await them. Nothing is considered too difficult a test. In fact, the more difficult the test, the more unlikely the odds, the more likely it is that an Azhanti will step forward.

This is not to suggest that *Ro'akhilane* are foolhardy, unthinking thrill-seekers. Rather, the Azhanti view adversity as an opportunity to test their faith. Sometimes an Azhanti will indeed judge a task too difficult, but he does so only after the utmost introspection. After all, the fate of his immortal soul is at stake.

Azhanti do not significantly differ from other Human races in their latent psionic abilities. If anything, they seem to be somewhat *less* psionically gifted than either the Solomani or Vilani. In any event, the Azhanti show no interest in the matter, believing psionics to be somewhere between merely "dishonorable" and an effort to "cheat" in the accumulation of *lishke*.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The Azhanti family unit is more like an extended family or clan. The head of a clan is usually a male (the Azhanti have a strong patriarchal streak, which is only now beginning to fade). The clan consists of this leader, his immediate relatives,



Azhanti Humor

Belying their dour reputation, the Azhanti are actually devoted to riddles and jokes. Of course, Azhanti humor is an acquired taste. It depends heavily on *Rakhli* puns and cryptic *Ro'akh* theological conundrums. Consequently, there are only a handful of non-Azhanti in the Imperium who can vouch for the hilarity of Azhanti jokes.

One of the few translatable examples of Azhanti humor is the story of a well-regarded *Ro'akh* practitioner, who made it his vocation to travel Irale and encourage others to seek out ever-greater challenges. The practitioner came to a rural village, where he exhorted the local inhabitants to live their lives as God intended. But one of the village's inhabitants disagreed strenuously, suggesting that the search for greater challenges held no meaning for him. The practitioner pressed his argument for days, citing *Ro'akh* scriptures and religious thinkers. Finally, exasperated at the man's stubbornness, he asked, "What's wrong with you? Don't you understand what I am saying?"

The man replied, "Of course I do, but I thought I should provide *you* with a challenge."

his servants, and more-distant kin related by marriage. Several clans will unite under a strong leader to form a tribe. Tribes, in turn, form nations. In recent decades on Irale, nations have joined to form a world government. Although Irale is currently united under a single impersonal bureaucracy, it still possesses several nations with their own histories and autonomous governments.

Given the prevalence of warfare in Azhanti history, children have often been necessary to replenish fallen warriors. Children were cherished, and the more children (especially sons) a warrior had, the greater his status within the community. Meanwhile, the constant warfare often caused Azhanti tribes to face gender imbalance, with more than one woman of childbearing age per adult male. Most Azhanti societies therefore allowed successful warriors or tribal leaders to keep more than one wife. Polygamy is still practiced by the Azhanti, although contact with mainstream Imperial culture has begun to discourage the practice.

Meanwhile the Azhanti still cherish children, and will tend to have as many as they feel they can support. As warfare becomes less common and advanced technology brings greater prosperity, Irale and other Azhanti worlds face serious population problems.

DISCIPLINE AND THE MILITARY

Organized military institutions have long been important to Azhanti society. Military discipline and honor are among the few concepts compelling enough to control Azhanti passions. As a result, most clans have a paramilitary structure.

Even the most democratic clans have definite chains of command that must be obeyed.

The concept of *patriotism* – the notion that an individual can be loyal to a social institution larger than his own family or clan – was a major innovation in Azhanti social development. Only with patriotism was it possible for the Azhanti to build large nation-states or a unified world government. However, the Azhanti version of patriotism leans heavily on military discipline and loyalty to a military leader. As a result, *all* Azhanti political institutions above the clan level are organized along military lines.

The Azhanti revere skilled warriors. Meanwhile, joining an offworld military can provide any Azhanti the opportunity to satisfy his curiosity about the cosmos. As a result, since Irale was opened to interstellar contact, the Azhanti have provided a disproportionate number of recruits for Antarean military units.

The structure of the Imperium, with its Emperor and hierarchy of nobles, suits the Azhanti quite well. Indeed, they usually conceive of God as a distant monarch, much like the Emperor. This has led some outsiders to mistakenly believe that the Azhanti worship the Emperor as a god. Nothing could be further from the truth, although such mistakes are understandable given the intricacies of the Azhanti language (which uses very similar words for "leader" and "God").

THE ARTS

Defying the stereotype of the dour warrior people, the Azhanti are neither humorless nor without emotion. In fact, they possess a remarkable body of literature and have contributed significantly to Imperial culture. More than one poet laureate of the Domain of Antares has been an Azhanti, the most notable being Hartim Makhiyus, composer of the famous *Odes to Certainty*.

The Azhanti have a fine appreciation for music and song. Azhanti musical compositions are famous throughout the Domain of Antares. Many Antarean military units sing Azhanti battle hymns – although none can match the sheer vocal texture of several dozen raspy-voiced Azhanti singing in unison.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The incessant wars of precontact Irale served as a spur to technological development, but that development was hampered by the lack of a structured scientific method.

Contact with the wider Imperium eventually pushed Irale's technological base up to higher levels. Still, even today there is little original research or development on Irale. A practical people, the Azhanti see little reason to reinvent the wheel. They recognize that Imperial science has been achieving great wonders long before they appeared on the scene. It would be foolish not to take advantage of these technological accomplishments. Thus, there has been little effort to do more than acquire and use technologies already developed elsewhere in the Imperium.

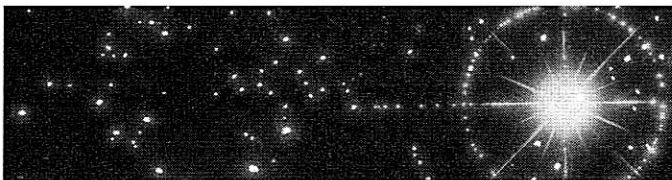
IRALE (2315, ANTARES SECTOR)

Starport: Class IV (Scout base).

Diameter: 8,100 miles (13,000 km). *Gravity:* 1.0. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen, with sulfur-compounds taint. *Surface Water:* 82%. *Climate:* Tropical. *Population:* 3.0 billion. *Government:* Bureaucracy. *Control Rating:* 5. *TL:* 9. *Gas Giants:* 0. *WTN:* 5.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

The homeworld of the Azhanti orbits a bright F9 V star at a distance of 1.25 AU. Irale has two moons, which were long objects of curiosity for the Azhanti – although they never set foot on either satellite until after first contact with the Imperium.

Irale's atmosphere has sulfur compound contaminants. Visitors must wear filter masks to eliminate these compounds. The Azhanti can breathe the atmosphere without any difficulty.



The Italian ecosystem is rich and diverse, consisting of both animal and plant life. Carnivorous predators such as the *vraumich* and *nevyur* have long been dangers to the Azhanti, although most such species have been hunted almost to extinction. The native biochemistry is compatible with that of Humans, although non-Azhanti must find some way to neutralize the sulfur compounds found in Italian lifeforms.

With a population of over three billion spread across five continents and two dozen nations, Irale has many settlements with populations in the millions. In fact, large settlements have been the norm since ancient times, when Azhanti clans and tribes would lay claim to a swath of land and build it up as a defense against their enemies. In time, these fortified towns grew into larger communities – a testament to the high Azhanti birthrate.

The largest city on Irale is the planetary capital of Menzit in the nation of Tlakan. With a population of over 7 million, Menzit is not only the seat of the world government but also the site of the starport and Scout base. Like most cities on Irale, Menzit has very strict, almost repressive, laws designed to maintain order at all costs. Menzit boasts a significant prison population – the result of the clash between Azhanti impulsiveness and the desire to prevent that impulsiveness from wreaking havoc on society.

For years, Irale has been lobbying Archduke Brzk to place a Domain of Antares military academy on the planet. Brzk holds the Azhanti in the utmost respect, but the politics surrounding such a decision are complicated. Many within the archducal court oppose granting such consideration to Irale, believing its backward ways and draconian local laws do not present the proper image of Antares. For now, the decision has been postponed.

AZHANTI CHARACTERS

Azhanti have normal height for their ST, but are 10 pounds lighter than a normal Human of the same height.

AZHANTI RACIAL TEMPLATE 2 POINTS

Advantages: Charisma +2 (Limitation: Only in temperatures above 95°, -20%) [8]; Composed [5]; Filter Lungs [5]; Polarized Eyes [5]; Temperature Tolerance 2 [2].

Disadvantages: Curious [-5]; Impulsiveness (Limitation: Only in temperatures above 95°, -60%) [-4]; Short Lifespan [-10]; Sleepy (Sleeps 12 hours/day; Limitation: Only in temperatures below 95°, -60%) [-4].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Common Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages like Imperturbable or Unfazeable might be appropriate for extreme devotees of *Ro'akh* (coupled with Fanaticism). Likewise, higher levels of Curious might also be suitable for Azhanti who possess even more curiosity than is typical for their race. Some Azhanti possess Common Sense, a consequence of years of struggling to strike the right balance between the dictates of *Ro'akh* and rationality. Those that do must buy off their racial Impulsiveness. Many conservative Azhanti possess the Chauvinistic quirk.

Although the Azhanti have settled on many worlds of the Domain of Antares, the majority of the race still resides on Irale. Homeworld Azhanti will probably have one level of Primitive, learning all skills at TL9.

Charisma *see p. B19*

When Azhanti are in their preferred high temperatures, they are very outgoing and charismatic.

Composed *see p. C122*

Azhanti are calm under pressure. They recognize dangerous situations, but are rarely panicked by them.

Curious *see p. C189*

Azhanti are naturally very curious and inquisitive.

Filter Lungs *see p. C156*

The Azhanti respiratory system can handle the sulfur contaminants in their homeworld's atmosphere. This helps them handle similar taints in the atmospheres of other worlds.

Impulsiveness *see p. B33*

When in their natural high-temperature environment, Azhanti are very impulsive. They lose this trait when the ambient temperature falls far enough.

The Azhanti have a well-ordered social structure that reflects the race's love of discipline.

Polarized Eyes *see p. C163*

The Azhanti eye is well-adapted to bright light, and can react very quickly to flashes of light.

Short Lifespan *see p. C104*

Azhanti do not live very long, and reach maturity earlier than normal Humans. They mature at 13, and make aging rolls every nine months starting at age 37.

Sleepy *see p. C104*

When in "normal" or cooler temperatures, Azhanti become sluggish and sleepy, needing to rest about half the time.

Status *see p. B18*

The Azhanti have a well-ordered social structure that reflects the race's love of discipline. The chart below represents only the *social* status of an Azhanti in his society. Religious Rank can be used to represent how well regarded an Azhanti is by other practitioners of *Ro'akh*.

Status	Description
5	Planetary Leader
4	National Leader
3	Clan Leader
2	Family Head
1	Well-regarded Azhanti
0	Average Azhanti
-1	Poor Azhanti
-2	Clanless Azhanti (Outcast)

Few Azhanti have been granted patents of Imperial nobility, although many have been knighted by the Archduke of Antares for their military service in his Domain.

Temperature Tolerance *see p. C130*

Under the standard rules for exposure to heat or cold (see p. B130), a temperature between 35° and 90° is thermally neutral; a higher or lower temperature may cause ill effects. Each point of Temperature Tolerance widens this range by HT degrees. Normally the addition is divided equally between the hot and cold ends of the scale (for example, a character with HT 10 and Temperature Tolerance 1 would have a thermally neutral range from 30° to 95°). But equal division isn't mandatory; it's even permissible to apply the entire increase to one end of the scale (for example, a thermally neutral range from 35° to 100°). The

resulting shift in the center of the thermally neutral zone is a zero-point feature.

For the Azhanti, the base "comfort range" is between 55° and 110°. The extra 2 × HT degrees of tolerance are applied to the high end of the range. So, for example, an Azhanti with a HT of 10 would be comfortable within a temperature range of 55° to 130°.

SKILLS

Most Azhanti will possess some knowledge of Theology (*Ro'akh*), but few will have Diplomacy or Merchant. Scientific skills of a theoretical sort (such as Research) will be similarly rare.

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

If using the character templates from *GURPS Traveller*, Azhanti may choose to follow any career, but military careers (especially the Marines) are the most common. Relatively few Azhanti become diplomats, bureaucrats, or scientists. Azhanti merchants are rare, but they do exist – if only because the career offers an opportunity for these Humans to travel and see more of the Imperium.

Adventure Seeds

Murder at the Khalumpoch Games

Every ten years, Irale hosts a festival in the city of Khalumpoch. The highlight of the festival is a series of games designed to test the devotion of *Ro'akh* practitioners. Like the Olympic Games of ancient Greece, the Khalumpoch Games are as much a religious devotion as an expression of competitive spirit. Travelers come from dozens of parsecs away to watch this remarkable event.

The adventurers are in attendance at the Games when a well-known entrant is found murdered, according to an archaic Azhanti ritual indicating an honor feud. Who murdered him and why? The party soon finds itself enmeshed in Azhanti clan-based violence, against the backdrop of a remarkable religious festival.

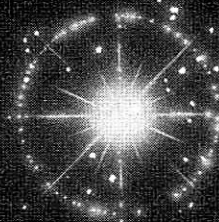
Troublemaker

While the heroes are on Irale, an Azhanti approaches them, wishing to book passage aboard their starship. Like many of her people, she is intensely curious about the universe beyond her homeworld. The Azhanti is well-spoken and offers a sizable amount of money for her accommodations. She asks only to be allowed to stay with the PCs as they travel from world to world, nothing more.

Unfortunately, the Azhanti's curiosity and rashness often get the better of her. On several worlds, she causes uproars or altercations, throwing her benefactors into the midst of troubles they didn't create.

CHAPTER FIVE

Darrians



The Darrians are native to a world in the Spinward Marches sector. After receiving jump drive from Solomani immigrants during the Long Night, the Darrians spread to a number of worlds before their civilization was destroyed by a technological accident. Some of their colonies survived, and since recovering starflight late in the Long Night they have returned to most of the worlds of the Darrian subsector.

The Darrians are known across much of the Imperium for three things. They have attained (and lost) a level of technology exceeding even that of the present-day Imperium. Even today, they are capable of inducing stellar flares, and use this capability to deter potential enemies. Perhaps fortunately, they are long-standing allies of the Imperium.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Long ago, an Ancient known in Darrian mythology as the god Onsorik transplanted a small group of Humans to the world later named Daryen. Archeological evidence does not indicate that the Humans were ever used as labor. Old legends suggest that Onsorik had a fatherly attitude toward the first Darrians, caring for their needs and protecting them from the dangers of their new world. Some scholars have speculated that the Darrians were part of a breeding experiment, but have been unable to come up with a plausible goal for such an experiment.

THE ORCHARDS

The surface of Daryen is divided by long, high mountain ranges into five *basins*. Each basin is centered on a sea, fed by rivers draining the surrounding territory. On Daryen, basins are the equivalent of continents. Some years after the Human arrival on Daryen, Onsorik split the population into five isolated groups, placing a community in each of the five basins. These communities were carefully designed to provide Humans with shelter, food, and warmth.

In the center of each community was a Flame Pit, a bed of glowing coals about 2,000 yards in diameter, fed from below by geothermal action. Natural gas flowing through the pit produced flames in the center, while a long vertical seam of coal produced the glowing coals that the Darrians used for their home fires. Natural action slowly forced new coals into the pit, where they could be gathered and transported to Human homes.

Each Flame Pit was surrounded by an extensive Orchard of trees. These trees extended to a radius of about six miles, providing both homes and food for the Human inhabitants. Individual trees were planted at intervals of about 10 to 12 yards, on rays extending from the central pit.

Darrian Orchard trees have semicircular trunks which enclose an area of about 6 square yards (the size of a small room). Individual families made their homes in these rooms, and as their numbers grew, they expanded out into additional trees. Orchard-tree fruit grows within the trunk, where it can be picked when needed. The fruit ripens slowly, and does not spoil while still on the branch. Picking fruit stimulates new buds, and thus more fruit. Uninhabited trees bear little fruit, but once a family starts to use it, a tree automatically begins to produce more fruit. The tree trunk itself protects its Human inhabitants from wind and rain. A natural hollow accepts Human wastes, which the tree uses as fertilizer.

The five communities, later named Abh, Boyr, Nyadh, Rimb, and Zlodh, were established not long before the Ancients' Final War (see *Alien Races 3*). Daryen was never subjected to the bombings or planetary devastation characteristic of the Ancients' war. Despite living in what must have looked like vast bull's-eye targets from space, the Darrians escaped the war unscathed. Perhaps they were shielded from detection by the trees; more likely, their lack of technology caused them to be ignored.

Onsorik himself was either killed in the fighting or fled Daryen for some other battleground. No trace has ever been found of any Ancient site that could have been Onsorik's base. One theory holds that Daryen used to have an eighth moon, where Onsorik's base was located and which was utterly destroyed in the fighting. If this is the case, the method of destruction didn't leave any debris behind.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Left on their own, the Humans of Daryen spent the next several millennia in idyllic peace in their Orchards. Each Orchard numbered about 250,000 trees, so in theory an Orchard could have supported a population of up to a million Humans. In practice, over the course of the next 10,000 years, each of the five communities reached a population of about 100,000 and remained stable at that level. That represented the limit of what the countryside surrounding each Orchard could comfortably provide of goods that the Orchard trees didn't supply: meat and hides from animals; fruit and berries from other kinds of trees; plant fibers for clothes, baskets, and a kind of paper; spices for flavoring; pigments for

dyeing and writing; and so on. The leaves of the Orchard tree provide an efficient contraceptive when chewed, giving the Darrians an easy way to control their population.

Whether by design or accident, the Orchards provided a number of stimuli for social evolution.

The Flame Pits made fire part of the basic Human way of life. Orchard fruit tasted better cooked, and fire provided warmth and comfort. Some of the first inventions made on Daryen were ways to collect and transport glowing coals from the Flame Pits to the trees.

The Orchards did not themselves provide water. From the beginning, daily expeditions were necessary to fetch water for basic needs. This stimulated the production of vessels to bring back water, and large containers to store it. More important, structured social organization was encouraged, as water collection gangs were formed and distribution rules developed. Humans thus learned to build tools to help themselves, and to cooperate in complex endeavors. They also learned that they couldn't stay in their Orchards all the time. Water-bearers were among the first to start hunting and gathering outside the Orchards.

The Orchards permitted the early Darrians to live in large, densely populated communities even at the beginning of their history. This had a profound influence on their genetic heritage, as evolution worked to weed out genetic factors that were inappropriate for populations. Troublemakers, neurotics, and psychotics – anyone whose negative traits were aggravated by close, continuing proximity to others – were eliminated from the population.

Living in the Orchards also gave the Darrians an unusual concept of acceptable standards of living. On the average, a family of four had about 10 Orchard trees at its disposal. Some of these were used to support domesticated animals, but each individual could have at least one room of his own and would never starve as long as he stayed close to home. To a Darrian, going hungry was an unacceptable hardship, a

private room for each individual was a necessity, and ample leisure time was a given. This would later influence the settlement of the basins, as only the richest and most bountiful areas were able to support Darrians in the style to which they felt entitled.

EXPANSION

Some 90,000 to 100,000 years after the Final War, the Darrians' idyllic existence was threatened. The Flame Pits in all five Orchards began to run down – sometimes snorting fire, ash, and smoke, at other times lying cool and almost extinguished. The pits in Boyr and Nyadh burned out entirely. This was a stimulus for learning how to create fire independently.

The Rimb Orchard was devastated by blight at about this time. Its fruit became inedible, and many of the trees died. As a result, the entire Orchard was abandoned, and the population scattered throughout the basin. Fortunately, by this time Orchard trees had established themselves elsewhere in the basin, although in far lesser numbers than in the Orchard.

During this period, there was no organized move to explore and settle the basins. People left or were expelled from the Orchards as they became less able to support the full population. New settlements grew until they were at optimum productivity, then stabilized and remained unchanged for millennia. Every once in a while, a few malcontents would leave and found a new community. At other times climatic change or natural catastrophe would force a settlement to split up and seek new pastures.

Over millennia, each of the Orchards was gradually abandoned as settlement spread across the basins. The Darrians learned agricultural techniques to grow their own food. Once multiple settlements existed, trade began. River and sea transportation were developed.

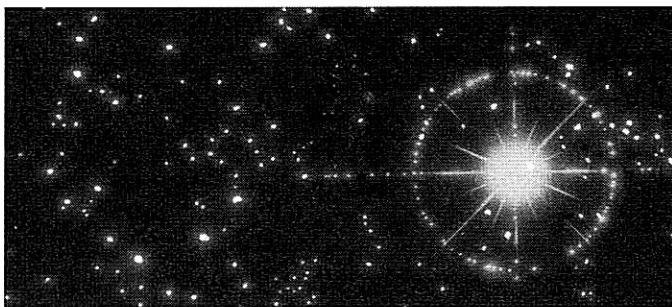
"The precise nature of Daryen's earliest cultures is a matter of considerable disagreement among sophontologists, except for the Darrians themselves. Every basin has been occupied for so long that almost every archeological site has been investigated many, many times, and new discoveries depend on some advance in technology that enables old evidence to be mined for new data."

*– Professor Harlan San,
Flammarian Institute for Sophontology*

THE RISE OF THE BASINS

Beginning about -100,000, migrations and expansions led to the extensive settlement of all five basins on Daryen. At first, there was little contact across the mountain ranges between the basins. Passage across the barren mountains required much preparation and considerable logistical support. This was especially true of the northern Zlodh mountain range, somewhat less so with respect to the southern mountain range surrounding the Abh Basin. In about -20,000, the people of the south polar Abh Basin began migrating through the mountains to the neighboring equatorial Nyadh, Rimb, and Boyr Basins.

After nearly 280,000 years of independent, isolated development, the inhabitants of different basins were quite alien to one another. Yet this encounter between aliens was surprisingly peaceful. The early genetic culling of aggressive personalities within the Orchards had given all Darrians a common mindset, and made peaceful contact possible.



The Code of Darrian

As people crossed the mountain barriers, ideas followed. Two basins evolved strikingly similar philosophies which were carried along in these early cross-mountain migrations. Although expressed in different languages, the ideas were nearly identical. In the Boyr Basin about -23,000, the philosopher-king Derir Lipit first formally stated the premise that has shaped Darrian thought ever since: "Every living thing has a right to live according to its own nature." In the Nyadh Basin about -22,000, the hermit-philosopher Yikan Yikan created the basic commandment: "All living things must be allowed to live their lives."

The interpretation in Nyadh was extreme. Strict followers refused to cut short the life of any creature. They gathered the fruits of plants, burned only dead wood, and wore only plant fibers or sheared wool. The interpretation in Boyr was more flexible. Man was seen as occupying a position at the top of the food chain, and his need to kill and eat other creatures was accepted. The Boyr philosophy concentrated on humane treatment of other animals and people.

Many years and many philosophers later, the Rimb law-giver Notan Taledh combined the two ideas into one: "Animals live by predation, but men because of their intelligence live by production." Thus, a man who lives as a predator is living as an animal and not fulfilling his true nature as a man. Men may use lower animals for labor or for food, but cruelty to them is not allowable. No man may prey upon another man.

The great Taledh school of thought taught that rationality is the true nature of man. Animal instincts and raw emotion were considered a lower, vestigial part of Human nature, which could not be allowed to gain control.

Taledh also promulgated the first great compilation of Darrian laws, the Taledh Code. The Code was divided into three parts: a definition of crimes, a definition of punishments, and a formula for determining the fitting punishment for each crime.

Taledh defined a crime as any action or inaction that harmed or could harm other people. If an action or inaction actually caused harm, it was a real crime; if it could have caused harm but did not, it was an imaginary crime. Only real crimes could be prosecuted.

Punishments were defined in terms of their effect on the criminal as well as on their relationship to the crime. A wealthy criminal should pay a larger fine than a poor criminal. A strong physique should be whipped longer than a weak one.

The third part of the Code created a formula for the computation of a punishment to fit the crime. This text is extremely convoluted, sometimes difficult to follow, and subject to misinterpretation – but it is also considered to be brilliant and innovative law. Under the Code, criminals must make restitution for their crimes. They must make agreements or contracts promising not to commit that crime again, and they must undergo some punishment which will reinforce the lesson to be learned.

In the centuries since Taledh's Code was promulgated, much of Darrian legal activity has been directed at clarifying and improving Taledh's Code.

THE ZLODH EMPIRE

The Zlodh Basin surrounds the north polar Zlodh Sea, the largest sea on the planet. Although its center is a solid ice cap, the sea's edges are ice-free and can support extensive maritime trade. The Zlodh Basin was the last to be opened by trans-mountain migrations, beginning about -16,000. It was on the shores of the Zlodh Sea that the first great empire arose on Daryen.

The Zlodh Empire was founded by a scientific priesthood. Navigation techniques, based on magnetic compasses, astronomic observations, and careful records, made it possible for travelers to sail directly across the sea without getting lost. This knowledge was hoarded by a priestly order, which was charged with navigating ships across the sea. Over time, the priesthood grew in power and extended its influence to the land. The priesthood never actually ruled the empire, but its approval was necessary before any emperor could be installed; its disapproval was sufficient for any emperor to be removed.

The priesthood regarded its knowledge as sacred mysteries, secrets to be revealed to only a few. Still, from the beginning the high priests treated the mysteries as real facts of the world, rather than the works and whims of gods. This encouraged an empirical approach, which led them to discover the inner workings of many aspects of the world. The

priests produced practical weather prediction, higher mathematics, and advanced naval architecture.

The Zlodh priests also mounted expeditions to the other basins. Those expeditions not only gathered new information for the priests, but they also spread knowledge of Zlodh scientific accomplishments. The Zlodh never shared their scientific discoveries, but contact inspired the people of other basins to make similar discoveries for themselves.

By -10,000, basic scientific accomplishments were available to all of Darrian's cultures (compasses, writing, printing, elementary construction techniques). The Zlodh priesthood no longer had a monopoly on basic science. As a result, it lost its power to control the government. Over time, the Empire broke up into a number of kingdoms and the government of the basin was replaced by less authoritarian forms.

Zlodh science spread across the globe, changed by the needs and perceptions of the people who used it. Just as the Zlodh priests had applied it to navigation on the Polar Sea, others used it to understand weather and the change of seasons, to help grow crops and raise animals, or to help use the world's resources. The social sciences were also popular, along with mathematics, logic, and abstract philosophy.

By -1511, Daryen had risen to early TL5. The theoretical aspects of some disciplines had reached as high as TL8 or TL9. The world was at peace – but the Darrians' entire future was about to change.

THE COMING OF THE SOLOMANI

More than a hundred parsecs from Daryen, events were taking place that would eventually have a profound effect on Darrian history. In the Solomani Rim, the Rule of Man had failed and its successor states were struggling to hold back the fall of the Long Night (see *Rim of Fire*).

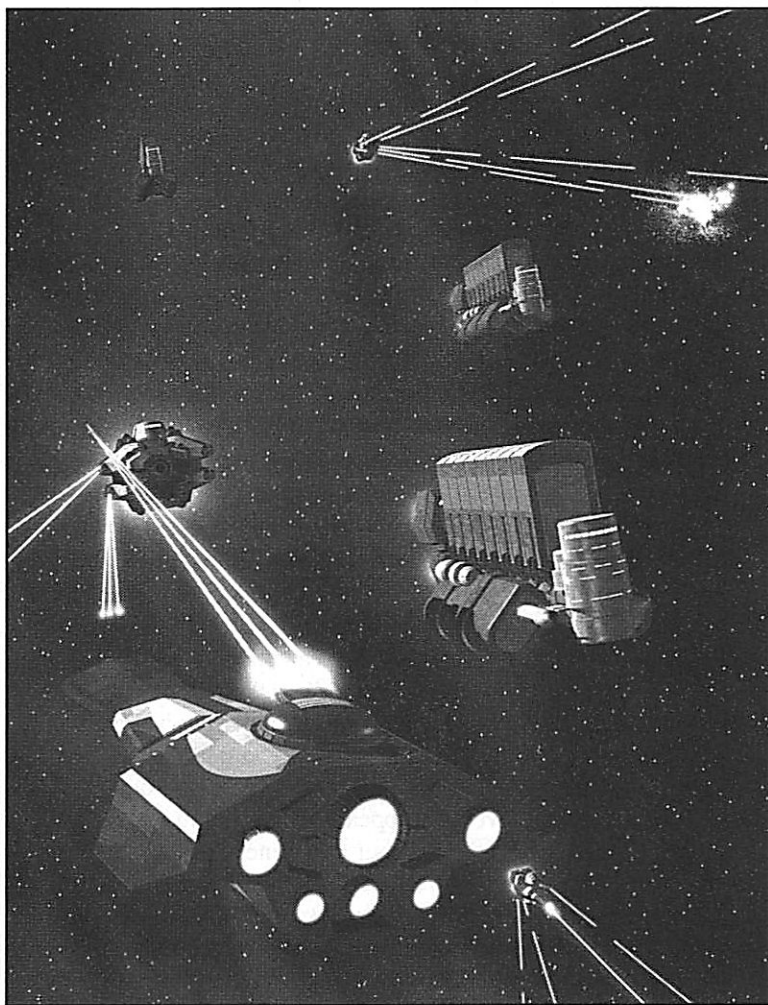
About -1530, the planet Dingir was in the throes of a recession. Economic forecasts were dire and political unrest threatened the stability of the government. The Dingir-based merchant corporation Itzin foresaw the continuing collapse of interstellar trade, and its owners decided to migrate *en masse* to a new world. A select list of employees was presented with an opportunity to leave with the company, bringing their families along on the venture. A fleet of transport starships was assembled. Supplies, maps, charts, and equipment were crated and stored. Dingir was a TL10 world at the time, but for economic reasons the expedition limited itself to TL9 equipment (with some notable exceptions, such as armed escort ships).

In -1520, the Itzin Fleet of 35 transports and 10 armed escorts set out from Dingir, bound for the far side of the Great Rift. Their journey was an adventure in itself. The fleet traveled through former Rule of Man territory to Vland. The migrants gathered written guarantees of free passage, and relied on the armed might of its escorts when those guarantees were not honored. After calling at Vland in -1516, they ventured into the sparsely populated territory of the Corridor, Deneb, and Spinward Marches sectors. In -1513, the fleet stopped temporarily at what is now Sacnoth and from there mounted a fast survey of the sector. After finding several potential world sites, the Itzin Fleet command selected Darrian as its new home.

Many worlds of the Spinward Marches had indigenous life forms, but at that point in history very few had Human populations. Of those, Daryen was by far the best choice, the home of an isolated Human minor race that would genuinely appreciate and benefit from an influx of Solomani settlers.

The Solomani came gently to Daryen. Their ships were hidden in orbit. The planet was quickly surveyed, from above and by secret teams on the surface. Soon the settlers selected the Rimb Basin for the initial landings. They constructed a secret base in the high mountain barrier where Rimb, Boyr, and Abh met. After a full analysis of the world and its society, the Solomani were ready to make their appearance.

In -1511, the people of the Itzin Fleet appeared in Rimb Basin itself. Since the Solomani had appeared on the ground instead of from the sky, many Darrians treated them as just another group of migrating Darrians. However, the newcomers brought many new technologies. Examples of equipment from late TL5 up to TL9 soon began to spread among the Darrians. The Solomani used their knowledge as capital – they spent it freely, and used it to build fortunes.



THE DARRIAN EXPLOSION

The total number of Solomani arriving at Daryen was slightly more than 30,000. From the beginning, the Solomani chose to integrate fully into Darrian society, merging into the mainstream of Darrian life. Solomani and Darrians intermarried. Darrians were hired to work for Solomani companies, while Solomani became valued employees of Darrian firms.

The assimilation of the Solomani into Darrian society took about 100 years. During the initial contacts between the two races, the Solomani concentrated on providing basic ideas and technology. Once the Solomani were an accepted part of Darrian society, more and more technology was shared.

The merging of the two cultures proved astonishingly fruitful. The Darrians were oriented toward logic and theoretical science, while the Solomani culture provided drive and a talent for applied science. Once social integration was complete, Darrian rapidly unified politically, and advanced from early TL5 to TL9. Next the Darrians took on the task of implementing the theoretical TL10 knowledge that had come with the Solomani. Beyond that, the new hybrid culture took a remarkably short time to surpass all previous Solomani achievements, reaching TL13.

The Darrian Astrography Service

During the golden age of Darrian exploration, the interstellar effort was managed by an organization named *Daryen Lonen Dodhin Notihl*, or the "Darrian Astrography [Star Mapping] Service." All Darrian starships were under the control of this organization, and any use of a ship had to be approved by it. Service headquarters was on a space station orbiting Darrian, which was destroyed with all its records in the *Maghiz*.

Today over 90% of all Darrians live away from the homeworld, and few people realize that the stars were once of limited interest to most Darrians. Throughout its history, the Astrography Service had very limited funds. Even late in the period, the Darrians kept a much smaller interstellar fleet than they were capable of maintaining.

From the start, the Astrography Service preferred slow, methodical exploration. After colonies and outposts were established away from Daryen, even more resources were diverted away from exploration. As a result, Darrian exploration didn't reach nearly as far as it could have with the means at hand. Only a few expeditions went deep into interstellar space, their exploits known mostly from archaeological evidence and obscure historical references. For example, it is known that the Darrians visited several worlds in the Cronor subsector. The Zhodani had also visited those worlds, and subsequently returned to them, but as it happened the Darrians and the Zhodani never actually met during this period.

Darrian Exploration

By -1400, the Solomani of the Itzin Fleet had been effectively absorbed into the mainstream of Darrian society. All major leadership positions were filled by individuals who had been born on Daryen. When the Itzin Fleet arrived, its commanders had decided to mothball the ships, and not use or share them. That decision was now ready to be rescinded.

Working from the old Solomani base in the mountains, the Darrians mounted an expedition to the fleet in its parking orbit above Daryen. Problems immediately became apparent. Over a century of unmaintained orbital storage had taken its toll – none of the ships were operable. Moreover, there was no longer a cadre of trained starship crew. Ambitious plans for using the existing store of ships proved unworkable.

Instead, the Darrians started over. They had access to proven theoretical principles in starship technology, along with a number of intact (but nonfunctional) examples. Darrian industrialists attacked the problem of building new starships. Within 10 years they had a working prototype. Within 30 years there was a fleet of jump-1 exploration ships in operation.

The first Darrian explorers were constrained by their jump-1 drives, and remained within a few parsecs of their home world. The first wave of exploration (-1395 to -1370) concentrated on the worlds of the Darrian Group (Spume, Mire, Condaria, Roget, Ilium, Rorre, Engrange, Ektron, Laberv, and 494-908).

By -1370 the next generation of starships was coming off the construction blocks, complete with jump-2 drives and fuel reserves. Certain ships within this class were equipped with jump-3 drives for even greater range. Between -1370 and -1270, Darrian ships explored nearby space to a radius of about twenty parsecs.

In this period the Spinward Marches had not yet been settled, and there was almost no reason for trade between worlds. The Darrians engaged in exploration, resource exploitation, and scientific investigation on a number of worlds. For example, signs remain today of the vast Darrian strip mine on Debarre (0830 Spinward Marches). The rusting ruins of a Darrian gas refinery can still be found on Talchek (1631 Spinward Marches).

The Golden Age

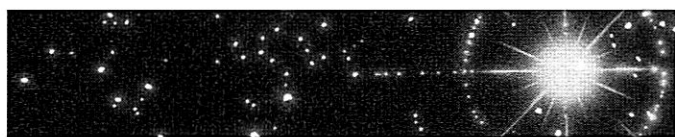
Pure scientific research remained a Darrian passion. Between -1500 and -950, Darrian scientists produced phenomenal advances in the physical sciences. Their understanding of the universe grew by leaps and bounds.

The scientific revolution gave rise to an industrial revolution. The very character of Darrian life was changed by increasing industrialization. At first the quality of individual life was adversely affected as industry grew. Around -1300 a strong labor movement appeared, demanding respect for the individual worker. For about two generations, society struggled with the question of how much consideration an employer owed to his workers. By -1250, Darrians generally accepted the ideas of a living wage and consideration for the individual worker. Prosperity and high standards of living became widespread.

This “Golden Age” came at a time when the Spinward Marches were only sparsely settled. Although Darrians explored their neighborhood to a radius of more than 20 parsecs, there was little that it could do to exploit hundreds of empty worlds. After a brief period of wide-ranging exploration, Darrians decided to concentrate on worlds closer to home.

Between -1250 and -1100, Daryen established scientific outposts on most of the worlds of the Darrian Group. Except for the settlement on Rorre, none of these outposts were originally intended as colonies. Even so, some of them (notably those on Mire, Engrange, Roget, and Jacent) slowly grew into semi-independent settlements.

By -1100 Darrian’s worlds constituted a tiny archipelago of settlements in a sea of unsettled, empty worlds. Darrian expeditions continued to visit and explore the empty worlds, but their primary motivation was research rather than colonization.



DARRIAN’S ULTIMATE DISASTER

In the 400 years since the coming of the Solomani, Daryen had bootstrapped itself from early TL5 to late TL11. It was a common belief among Darrians that they could easily push to TL15 or TL16 in the next 400 years. Everyone understood that the way to increased technology (and greater prosperity) was through research, so research became the primary focus of Darrian society.

Research was also the downfall of Daryen.

The Abh and Udh Projects

About -1000 the government of Daryen began a research project into the life cycle of Tarnis, Daryen’s sun. Expeditions to other systems in the Spinward Marches had revealed discrepancies between astrophysical theory and actual measurements of stellar energy output. As a result, scientists had become worried about the predicted lifespan of Tarnis.

In -950 two projects were established to better define the expected lifetime of Tarnis. The Abh (or Alpha) Project operated from a base in the asteroid belt close to Tarnis, while the Udh (Omega) Project was based at Zlodh University on the floor of Darrian’s Polar Sea. The two projects went into operation at the same time and were largely independent of one another.

The Abh Project concentrated on physically transporting protected sensors deep into Tarnis’ interior in order to recover new data. Its scientists felt that large quantities of accurate data would provide the answers that were needed. The Udh Project was more theoretical in nature, using powerful computers to analyze existing information. Udh Project researchers hoped to find patterns that would support one of a variety of theories about stellar lifetimes.

The LoTech Movement

The advance of Darrian civilization from TL5 to TL9 and beyond was not without its difficulties. Every new technology carries potential complications, and rapid technological advance can make it difficult to anticipate problems. So it was on Daryen. Nuclear power plant accidents, toxic waste spills, chemical contamination of the atmosphere and seas, the unforeseen side effects of drugs and chemicals – all of these disasters struck Darrian at one time or another. Some Darrians eventually decided that the advance of technology was not necessarily a good thing.

The LoTech movement began as a scatter of unconnected organizations, all opposed to some single aspect of Darrian’s increasing industrialization. Soon after Darrian began interstellar exploration, the movement was unified by the charismatic activist Ghorge Rorre. Under Rorre’s leadership, the movement chose to search out a new world that would not be contaminated by technology.

Eventually, the movement’s partisans settled on the world they named Rorre. The colony’s charter included long-term prohibitions against any technology not found on Darrian before the Solomani arrived. Away from the starport, the colonists fought hard to recover the society of a simpler era in Darrian history. They built an agricultural economy which emphasized the preservation of the ecology, and a stable society which did not need to deal with the changes brought by new technology.

Rorre’s rejection of technology was not blind. Citizens remained aware that higher technology existed, but they rejected it voluntarily in exchange for what they believed was an enhanced quality of life. The events of the *Maghiz* reinforced this belief, and Rorre has retained its low level of technology until this day. Indeed, a major tourist trade makes it possible for other Darrians to return temporarily to the idyllic early-TL5 existence of Darrian civilization before the coming of the Solomani.

In -925 the Abh Project finished construction of a Star Probe, a device that could survive in the heart of the sun itself while recording data for study. The first Star Probe survived for eight minutes and reached a depth of over 11,000 miles before being incinerated by Tarnis’ interior heat.

In -924 the second Star Probe was launched into Tarnis with improved shielding. It reached an operating depth of 190,000 miles, and began sending out information at a prodigious rate. The data flow delighted the project’s astrophysicists, until they realized that Tarnis was becoming increasingly unstable, and that the instability appeared to be centered on the Star Probe itself. Before the device could be turned off, Tarnis took on a slight wobble, enough to cause sheets of stellar material to cascade away from the outer layers of the star.

The Maghiz

Over the next three days, these sleeting stellar flares (perhaps 20 in all) brought chaos to the Daryen system. Indeed, the Darrian name for this event was *Maghiz*, which means “chaos.”

On Daryen, the stellar flares came almost without warning. The first effect was an electromagnetic pulse, which arrived at the speed of light and destroyed almost all electronic components. Grav cities tumbled to their doom. Transport aircraft lost control and plummeted to the ground. Surface transport either ground to a halt or raced on without control. Computers lost memory. Communication was disrupted or totally halted.

The physical wave front of expanding gas from Tarnis traveled at about 190,000 miles per hour, crossing the distance to Daryen in about four weeks. When it hit, the blast of superheated gas struck like blowtorch, temporarily raising local temperatures to more than 500°. The *Maghiz* destroyed vast areas of Daryen’s surface, scalding basins, evaporating shallow seas, burning forests and grasslands, and devastating populated areas.

Fortunately, the flares lasted only three days. When they ended, the surviving 20% of Daryen’s population came out and began rebuilding. Most of the survivors were those living in undersea cities. The rest were the lucky few, scattered all over the globe, who somehow found deep shelter as soon as the flares hit.

If anything, the *Maghiz* was even more devastating in space than on Daryen. The Abh Project station in the asteroid belt was destroyed, and most of its personnel were killed. The survivors spent four years repairing a single shuttle that would take them back to Daryen. Meanwhile, over half of Daryen’s starship fleet was destroyed by flare effects.

The electromagnetic pulse from Tarnis did not stop when it hit Daryen. It kept traveling through interstellar space at the speed of light, hitting each of the Darrian colony worlds in turn. The colonies were forewarned by the few starships that had survived the disaster. Even so, it was an impossible job to adequately shield every piece of electronic equipment from the pulse. Each system scheduled a “Pulse Day” for equipment to be powered down as the wave front passed, but even so much unshielded equipment was ruined.

NIGHT TIME

At the time of the *Maghiz*, Darrian’s colonies were still extremely dependent upon the homeworld as a source of supplies, knowledge, and starships. When Daryen was devastated, the colonies lost their logistic support and had to fall back to a much lower level of sustainable technology. Meanwhile the scientific community was decimated, since none of the colonies had been big enough to support a university of its own. As a result, Darrian civilization reverted to pre-jump drive levels of technology. Most of the old high-tech equipment that had survived the initial blast wore out, and was discarded or stored in museums.

For about two decades following the *Maghiz*, Daryen and its colonies tried to continue at the old levels of communication and trade. With fewer ships on hand and no new

ones being built, it soon became apparent that it was not possible to continue as before.

In -905 all of the Darrian colonies agreed that each would have to make its own way. The remaining fleet was divided among the colonies. Each received three starships, which were then mothballed and stored against future need.

Daryen itself kept about two dozen warships and about half a dozen transports (the exact number is a military secret to this day). Mindful of the fate of the Itzin Fleet, the homeworld took great pains to mothball its remaining ships effectively. The ships were pumped full of inert gas, and placed in hollowed-out planetoids in the trailing Trojan point of the gas giant Bidhes.

Although each world agreed to try to maintain contact about once every decade, all contact among the Darrian worlds ceased by -860. Between -860 and -275, all of the Darrian colonies devoted their efforts to rebuilding and survival.

REBUILDING THE DARRIAN COMMUNITY

By -275 the colony on Mire had rebuilt itself to TL9, in the process spreading out across the world and exploiting its resources. A team of researchers had investigated the museum-piece starships on hand, realizing that they had the technology to repair them and the industrial base to build new ones. After restoring two jump-1 freighters for use as explorers, Mire reestablished contact with the other Darrian colonies, as well as Daryen itself. Four years later they constructed their first new starship and began a new era of Darrian interstellar activity.

The rebuilt Darrian community was led by Mire, the world that began the recontact project. Daryen itself was politically balkanized, and responded slowly to the original contact. By the time the homeworld was ready to participate fully, the power structure was fully established under Mirean leadership. The new alliance relegated Daryen to the role of revered mother world, but gave it little real power (although the size of its population did give it some influence).

In -238 a treaty of mutual friendship and cooperation was signed between Mire and a recently reunified Daryen. Many historians hold this to be the real founding date of the Darrian Confederation, although it wasn’t formally established until 148. In the meantime, the Darrian worlds were held together by a web of interlocking treaties and cooperative endeavors.

The Sword Worlds

When the Darrians returned to space, one of the first things they discovered was that they now had neighbors. In -399, a new group of Solomani colonists arrived in the sector and settled on Gram, about seven parsecs to trailing of the Darrian Group. By -200, most of the worlds within four parsecs of Gram had been settled by secondary expeditions from there. These new colonists made a practice of naming worlds for swords out of Terran legend: Gram, Tizon, Orcrist, and Sting. Soon their community was named the Sword Worlds.

When the original Sword Worlders arrived in the Spinward Marches, their initial survey detected the low-tech

settlements on the Darrian worlds. The Sword Worlders feared being overwhelmed by the (much more numerous) Darrians, and wanted to create their own independent community of worlds. Hence they refrained from opening contact, and instead staked out a neighboring region. By the time the Darrians discovered the newcomers, the discrepancy in numbers had decreased, but the Sword Worlders still rebuffed all attempts at trade and cultural exchange. It wasn't until -164 that the two cultures even established formal diplomatic relations.

The Zhodani

The Zhodani were present in the Spinward Marches long before any other settlers (not counting those distributed by the Ancients). As chance would have it, none of the early Darrian surveys encountered the Zhodani, and no Zhodani expeditions touched Darrian space until very late. The Zhodani established a toehold in Cronor subsector in -2500, and soon established that region as the trailing border of the Zhodani Consulate.

Zhodani expeditions were common during the next 2,000 years, but they were concentrated in the Gvurdon, Provence, and Corridor sectors. A few exploratory trade expeditions traveled through the Spinward Marches; it was one of those expeditions that first met the Darrians in -187. Trade with the Zhodani was soon a lucrative activity. Darrians were adept at analyzing and reproducing prototypes, whereas Zhodani found it profitable to buy refined and processed goods rather than undertaking the refining and processing themselves.

After two decades of trade, the Darrians discovered (largely by chance) that the Zhodani had already been trading with the Sword Worlds for more than a century. It quickly became apparent that the Zhodani had known of the devastated Darrian worlds, and that they had deliberately avoided contact during the post-Maghiz period. Further, Zhodani observation posts had been established to keep an eye on the Darrian worlds during this period.

The Darrians took offense, and investigated further. Soon, they learned that no known culture had ever managed to do something the Darrians had accomplished – trigger an artificial stellar flare. Clearly, the Zhodani considered the Darrians to be a threat. Darrian-Zhodani relations suffered a major setback in this incident, which set the tone for continuing interaction between the two powers down to the present.

In -104 the Sword Worlds began to self-destruct. A vicious civil war caused the destruction of all interstellar capacity for a period of about a century. The Darrians kept

away while the fighting went on. When it stopped, they offered to help, but were again rebuffed by the proud Sword Worlders.

The Third Imperium

Scouts from the Third Imperium reached the Sword Worlds in 53. The same expedition made a brief visit to the Darrians in 54. Further contact was spotty, and ceased completely for a while when a war erupted in the Sword Worlds

subsector in 98. After the war, the Sword Worlds were unified under the so-called Triple Dominion, which did not allow passage to the Darrian worlds through its territory. It wasn't until 148 that the Darrians were recontacted by the Imperium and formal relationships were established.

Renewed contact with the Imperium marked a true change in the character of the Spinward Marches. Before this time much of the sector was very sparsely settled, mostly by groups exiled from or trying to escape the Imperium. Now the Imperium began to move into the Marches in earnest. After 200, the Imperium

mounted an effort to explore and develop the Spinward Marches, especially after the Vargr Campaigns (210 to 348) had secured the route from the Imperial core. Ties to the immense Imperium meant ready markets for goods and resources. The Darrian Confederation, as an established community of worlds with industry, resources, a labor pool, and a research establishment, was in an ideal position to support (for a profit) the Imperial exploitation of the Marches.

A natural rivalry with the Sword Worlds began, as both communities of worlds competed for Imperial markets and contracts. The Darrians had by then been overtaken by the Sword Worlds in raw industrial capacity, but their Confederation was more cohesive and was generally able to out-compete the Sword Worlds in the marketplace. In addition, the Sword Worlds proved less politically stable over time, prompting a preference for Darrians when long-term contracts were needed.

The Arrival of the Aslan

On the eve of the First Frontier War, a number of Aslan *ihatei* (see *Alien Races 2*) arrived in the Spinward Marches. These natural warriors found a perfect market for their skills – they sold them to the Darrians. In return Darrian provided an ideal payment – land on established worlds close to established markets. The relationship between Darrians and Aslan soon became close, encouraging more *ihatei* to make the journey and take up Confederation service.

*All the business about their naval technology is so much eyewash. The real reason everybody is so interested in the Darrians is that they can make stars blow up. At least they claim they did it once and nearly destroyed their civilization in the process – an event you'll find recorded in the history books as the **Maghiz**. It's not that I don't believe them, but . . .*

Well, actually, I don't believe them. I'm reminded of the guy who switched on his lights just as a power surge took out the city grid, and was afraid to touch the switch again. I'm a firm believer in the theory that if they could do it, they would have done it again by now. It's just human nature.

– Anton Wilson Peale

Aslan served the Darrian Confederation valiantly. Aslan soldiers served alongside Humans in Darrian troop units, as well as in special mercenary companies composed wholly of Aslan. Aslan spacers served aboard Darrian warships and on their own Aslan-built cruisers. Aslan in service to Darrian fought alongside Imperial forces during the First Frontier War (589 to 604). They maintained Darrian neutrality during the first half of the Imperial Civil War (604 to 622). They again fought alongside Imperial forces against the Zhodani in the Second Frontier War (615 to 622). Aslan commerce raiders even ventured deep into Zhodani and Vargr territory, to carry the fight behind enemy lines.

Foreven Sector

The Foreven sector, immediately spinward of the Spinward Marches, was designated a "GM's preserve" in 1991. GDW summed up the canonical information about the area that had been published so far (which was very little) and declared that no further official information would be established.

It is known that a Zhodani client state called the Avalar Consulate, an interstellar state of some 60 systems, lies about as far spinward of the Darrian Confederation as the Imperium lies to trailing. Logically Darrian history would include some interaction with the Avalar Consulate and the worlds between them and the Confederation. It is up to the individual GM to decide the nature of this interaction, whether peaceful cooperation, profitable trade, friendly rivalry, or centuries of bitter hatred and warfare.

The Frontier Wars

Darrian's choice of allies has always been dictated by its enemies. From the beginning of its second interstellar age, Darrian civilization has been faced with threats from the Zhodani Consulate and the Sword Worlds. Naturally, the Darrian Confederation has always searched for a diplomatic method of neutralizing these two natural adversaries. The only major power with the ability to achieve that has been the Third Imperium.

For 800 years after the Darrians regained the stars, the Confederation was content to pursue an independent course. Trade ties with the Imperium were inevitable, but Darrian maintained strict military neutrality.

In the 400s, the Darrian Confederation saw the need for greater military security, and established its Special Arm and deployed the Star Trigger as a deterrent to aggression (p. 45). The next century was one of uneasy peace. The Zhodani and various Sword World governments made overtures to the Darrians, proposing alliances against the Imperium. Darrian, determined to pursue a neutral course and not trusting its potential allies, turned them down.

At the same time, Darrian began to see that its Star Trigger deterrent was not a perfect deterrent. The threat of destroying whole stars was enough to stop most aggression,

but it would not be enough if the entire region was engulfed in war. Darrian paid careful attention to defense planning throughout the 400s and 500s.

The uneasy peace in the Spinward Marches deteriorated throughout the 500s. In 589, after 10 years of border incidents, the Zhodani Consulate attacked the Imperium with Sword Worlder and Vargr allies. The Darrian Confederation remained neutral at first, until provoked by a Sword Worlds invasion in 593. Darrian forces were mobilized, and diplomatic overtures to the Imperium produced a military alliance that pressed the Sword Worlds from two sides.

The war ended in 604. Although the Darrians had maintained their independence, they had lost the strategically placed Entropic Worlds. The peace that followed was only an uneasy interlude. While the belligerents accepted an armistice, the Imperium found itself faced with a political crisis that plunged it into civil war.

In 615, the Zhodani and their allies took advantage of the Imperial civil war to renew hostilities. Grand Admiral Arbelatra Alkhalikoi held the coalition forces at bay, built up her own forces, and in 620 routed the Vargr and invaded the Sword Worlds. She then negotiated a peace with the Zhodani and took her fleet to the Imperial core where she ended the civil war.

Unfortunately for the Darrian Confederation, the Imperial negotiators she left behind were unable to make the Sword Worlders give up the Entropic Worlds, despite the fact that half their own worlds were occupied by Imperial forces. After five years the Imperials gave up and accepted the status quo.

Recent History

In 788, the Darrians took matters into their own hands and retook the Entropic Worlds in a lightning campaign. The Darrian offensive took Imperials, Zhodani, and Sword Worlders alike by surprise. The Sword World government fell as a result of the loss of prestige, and was succeeded by an uneasy alliance of three interstellar states (the Trilateral Alliance). None of the new regimes felt up to retaking the lost worlds, or trusted the others enough to embark on a joint venture.

From 800 to 826 the people of the Imperium took a sudden and (to the Darrians) inexplicable dislike to psionics. The hysteria didn't strike the Darrian worlds, but in order to maintain good relations with the Imperium, the Darrians toned down their own use of psionics and took care not to advertise it. Since the PsionicsSuppressions, most Imperials assume that Darrians avoid the use of psionics. Those who know or suspect differently have chosen not to make an issue of it.

In 848 the Trilateral Alliance broke up. After four years of interstellar anarchy, the Sword Worlds formed the current Sword Worlds Confederation. Fortunately for the Darrians, the individual worlds of the Sword Worlds Confederation kept control of their own forces, and posed little threat to the Darrians as long as they remained separate.

In 1082 the Fourth Frontier War broke out and the Sword Worlds forces were united under Confederation control. In

Another biochemical curiosity is the high concentration of ozone present in the high altitudes of the Darrian atmosphere. Native Darrians can tolerate and even thrive in such ozone levels. When this trait was studied during the Golden Age, it was traced to a retrovirus in the Darrian environment that had merged with the Human genome. The newer Solomani settlers elected to vaccinate themselves with the same retrovirus, so all Humans in the Confederation now share this tolerance.

1084 they invaded and captured Anselhome, Entrope, and Winston. The Darrians counterattacked, but succeeded only in capturing Cunnonic in return. Peace was signed between the Imperium and the Zhodani later that year.

The Fifth Frontier War broke out in 1107. The Darrians played a waiting game, content to keep the Narsil Fleet engaged, tying down almost half of the Sword Worlds' total strength. In early 1110, the Darrians struck against the three Entropic worlds and recaptured them. The armistice went into effect before the Sword Worlds could attempt to retake them.

Today, the Darrian Confederation remains a staunch Imperial ally. Confident in their strong military, unified society, and diplomatic ties to the Imperium, the Darrians seem ready to play a significant role in the future of the Spinward Marches.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

The word "Darrian" applies to several distinct types of individuals. First, there are genetic Darrians, members of the Human subspecies *Homo sapiens darrianus*. The word also applies to citizens of the world Daryen, and citizens of the Darrian Confederation, no matter their ancestry. This section deals primarily with genetic Darrians.

Native Darrians tend to grow taller and thinner than their Terran counterparts. Darrian pelvic structure is wider than that of Vilani in both men and women, while Darrian legs go straight down rather than exhibiting the slightly knock-kneed skeletal structure of Solomani. Darrian footprints make two close, parallel lines, neither toed-in nor toed-out. Although Darrians have excellent balance due to the broader base of support, they usually find it difficult to walk on a narrow beam. The broad pelvis also means that childbirth problems are rare for Darrians.

Darrians are poorly insulated, because they do not readily develop subcutaneous fat layers. Instead, their metabolism adjusts quickly to the available food supply, whether feast or famine. Vilani and Solomani women look with envy on their Darrian counterparts, who have never heard of dieting. On the other hand, with ample food, a Darrian can be comfortable in a much colder climate because of his adjustable internal "furnace."

The variable Darrian metabolism also aids in water conservation, which was often important on water-poor Daryen. Adjustments in metabolic rate serve in place of profuse sweating to maintain a constant internal temperature when external temperatures climb. All excretion of water is minimized, though not as severely as in some desert animals of other worlds.

Darrian skin pigmentation protects Darrians from ultraviolet radiation from birth, without the need for acquiring a tan. This pigmentation contains a compound called *protomelanin*, which absorbs UV light without darkening in response, and can control vitamin D production in any amount of sunlight. The usual Darrian skin color is golden or grayish tan. Meanwhile, Darrians usually have white or light-toned hair, which serves to reflect excess heat.

Intermarriage with Solomani immigrants introduced somewhat ruddier skin tones, based on melanin pigments and darker hair. A mixed-ancestry child is born with one or the other skin pigment, not a mixture. This is only one of the many genetic oddities about Darrian-Solomani interfertility.

Nearly 40% of all Darrians are left-handed or ambidextrous. Darrian equipment designs will reflect this, usually by being neutral as to handedness. A larger-than-average bridge between the two halves of the Darrian brain appears to be the cause of this trait. It also gives rise to widespread inventiveness, mathematical ability, and musical talent.

Darrians have retained a mutation permitting them to metabolize an otherwise-indigestible amino acid in the fruit of the Orchard Tree. Because the trait is universal, it must have occurred early on in Human habitation of the world – probably after the first Orchard was established, but before Humans were distributed to the other four Orchards. Some scientists speculate that the mutation was engineered into the Darrians by Onsorik, but there is no way to know for sure.

Another biochemical curiosity involves the high concentration of ozone present in the high altitudes of the Daryen atmosphere. Native Darrians can tolerate and even thrive in such ozone levels. When this trait was studied during the Golden Age, it was traced to a retrovirus in the Darrian environment that had merged with the Human genome. The newer Solomani settlers elected to vaccinate themselves with the same retrovirus, so all Humans in the Confederation now share this unusual tolerance.

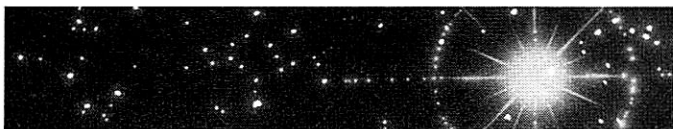
LANGUAGE AND NAMES

At the time of the Maghiz, Darrian had five major languages, one for each basin. One of these (*te-zlodh*, the language of the Zlodh Basin) was already, for historical reasons, the language of the international scientific community and thus the language most in use on the colony worlds. Due to the role the University of Zlodh played in the post-Maghiz recovery of Daryen, *te-zlodh* became the universal language of that world.

After recontact, the different dialects of the Darrian worlds merged into one language used everywhere in the Darrian Confederation. This language is known to the Imperium as Darrian, and to Darrians as *Daryene te-zapet* ("the Home Language"), or just *te-zapet* ("The Language"). Note that although *te-zapet* is common to all Darrian worlds, there are enough local variations that it is usually possible to identify someone's home world based on his speech.

In the 2,600 years since the arrival of the Solomani, Darrian has been considerably influenced by Anglic and other languages. Many Anglic loan words can be found in Darrian, but they are heavily modified by the Darrian pronunciation and are barely recognizable. For example, "cloud" is rendered as *ladh*. A more extreme example is the noun *rim* ("dream") and the verb *ramen* ("to dream"). Many Anglic loan words deal with technical terms and objects from TL6 and higher. For example *deloter* ("floater") means "grav vehicle," *radhir* ("radio") means "communicator," and *zbayes* ("spacer") means "spaceman."

In the past, Aslan citizens of the Confederation have clung to their own language in addition to learning Darrian. However, recently more and more young Aslan learn only Darrian (or Darrian and Galanglic) because of its usefulness in trade.



There are two ways to write the Darrian languages. Originally each of the basins had its own writing systems, just as they had different languages. The influence of the Zlodh priesthood caused the peoples of the other basins to adopt the script used by them even when they retained their own language. The system uses a syllabary, much like the Japanese *katakana* in construction (although not in actual form). This is called *yaser te-yulep* ("the old script").

With the arrival of the Solomani, a Latin alphabet called *rome te-yulep* ("the Roman script") was introduced. The Latin alphabet replaced the old script, and now *yaser te-yulep* is used only for legal documents, poetry and other significant items. Newspapers, books, and longhand are usually written with the new alphabet. The exception is on Rorre, where the desire to stick to a pre-Solomani way of life led to the retention of the older form of writing along with an archaic version of *te-zlodh*.

WORD STRUCTURES

The meaning of a Darrian word is carried by its root of 1-4 consonants. Vowels signify grammatical distinctions. Darrian verbs always have fixed vowel patterns that determine the conjugations. Often the consonant cluster is that of a noun that relates to the verb. *Doldin*, for instance, means "wind" and the consonant cluster for "to blow" is d-l-d-n.

Verbs are divided by their standard conjugations into two groups, A and B. 80% of all verbs fall in group A and the rest in group B. The following table indicates how to conjugate verbs from each group (a dash indicates the position of a consonant).

Verb Form	A	B
Infinitive	-a-e-	-a-
Present Tense	-u-i-	-u-
Future Tense	-i-e-	-i-
Past Tense	-o-i-	-i-

For example, *dalden* means "to blow," *duldin* means "blow," *dilden* means "will blow," and *doldin* means "blew."

Darrian needs only a few prefixes and suffixes. The most important are *te-* (the definite article), *-en* (plural noun ending), and *-e* (adjective and adverb suffix for nouns). Possessives are formed by placing the owning noun after the owned noun. For example, *te-doldin te-zebar*, "the wind of the ocean." Stress is always on the first syllable.

PARTICLES

The Darrian language also contains an important word class not found in Anglic. *Particles* are monosyllabic words that define the meaning of a clause. They are always first in the clause. The most common particles are listed in the following table.

Particle	Function	Example
<i>Nos</i>	Forms a question	<i>Nos ni rumin</i> ("do I dream?")
<i>Ze</i>	Indicates a desire	<i>Ze ni rumin</i> ("I wish to dream.")
<i>Kon</i>	Amplifies a statement	<i>Kon ni rumin</i> ("I dream vividly!")
<i>Me't</i>	Indicates iteration	<i>Me't ni rumin</i> ("I dream often.")
<i>Kas</i>	Indicates uncertainty	<i>Kas ni rumin</i> ("I am not sure that I dream.")
<i>Tik</i>	Indicates possibility	<i>Tik ni rumin</i> ("I may be dreaming.")

NAMING CUSTOMS

In the Darrian culture, every adult has three names. The first is the family name (*zem te-mizbek*). This is inherited from the father, and is kept for a person's lifetime (a married woman does not change her family name). Family names usually refer to an animal, a plant, or some natural phenomenon. Examples include *Barek* ("lightning bolt") or *Terin* (referring to an oak-like tree). The family name is never used alone.

The second name is the birth name (*zem te-natel*). This name is given to a baby by its parents, most often immediately after birth. It usually refers either to a personal characteristic or to a flower, for example *Ros* ("rose"), *Galyin* ("fair-haired"), or *Yundis* ("curious"). During youth and adolescence, the child is known by this name, or a diminutive (Gali is a shortened diminutive for Galyin, for example).

The third name is the "taken name" (*zem te-rutin*). When a Darrian reaches legal age (17 Darrian standard years, corresponding to 19.7 Imperial standard years), he or she chooses a taken name. In adult life, the person is known by this name. The name chosen is of particular significance to the individual. It may refer to someone (such as a parent or a great philosopher) that the citizen holds in high regard. It may refer to a career, or an event of importance. Technically, almost any word can be used, and in many cases the literal meaning of the word may not apply (a Darrian named *Kanyes* may not actually be a sailor, just as a Terran named Taylor may not make garments).

Solomani names are sometimes used, but they are converted into Darrian form. A few of the most common such names are *Geryen* ("explorer"), *Laris* ("pen-master," a writer), *Rengil* (referring to an equine animal), *Debhidh* (David), *Peter* (Peter), *Yander* (Andrew), *Zben* (Sven), *Kim* (Kim), *Rebhek* (Rebecca), *Rhondigh* (Rodrigo or Roderick), and *Miryem* (Miriam).

When a Darrian is addressed by a relative or a close friend, the taken name alone is used. Formal address is by family name and taken name. The full, three-piece name is used only in writing or for full identification. Titles are added before or after the name, as appropriate. Proper use of the name is essential to correct manners.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

In comparison with other Human cultures, Darrians tend to be quiet, dignified, and stoic. They are also constitutionally peaceful. Although true pacifism is limited to followers of the ancient Nyadh school (p. 32), Darrian history records remarkably few wars.

Darrian philosophy is based firmly on civility, tolerance and the veneration of intelligence and rationality as the highest expression of Humaniti. The basic philosophy demands that each creature be allowed to live in accordance with its own nature.

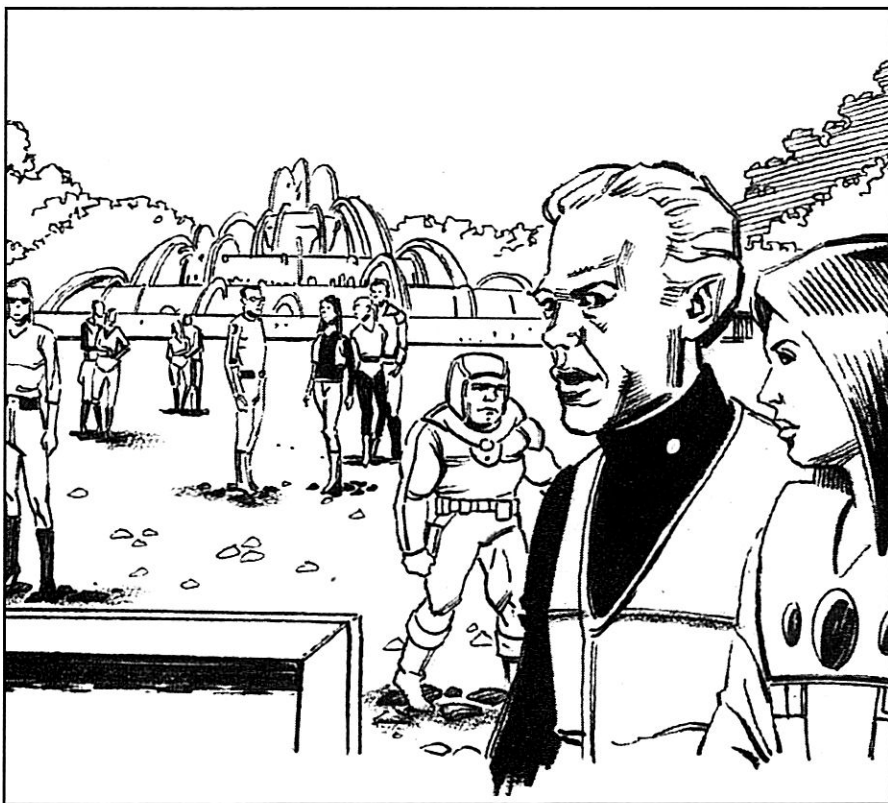
The Darrians have no difficulty reconciling the requirement for tolerance with strong prohibitions against cruelty to animals and stiff penalties for slander and assault. Humans who allow their animal nature to rule their conduct are not tolerated, since they ought to know better. Since Darrians have come into contact with other sapient species, the same philosophy has

been extended to them. Thus an Aslan trying to seize land against the owner's will or a Vargr trying to better his position by selling out his employer gets no sympathy from a Darrian. Darrian tolerance has certain very sharp limits.

SOCIETY

Darrian society is not monolithic, but despite local and planetary variations, there are distinctive common themes that make it possible to speak of "Darrian culture" in the singular.

Darrian society can be divided into three major segments: pure-strain Darrians, mixed-heritage Darrians (anyone with identifiable Solomani as well as Darrian genetic traits), and Aslan. Pure-strain Darrians constitute nearly 75% of the population, mixed-heritage Darrians make up 12% of the population, and Aslan comprise about 8% of the population. Solomani of more or less pure-blooded ancestry, mostly recent immigrants, amount to about 3% of the population. The last 2% are a small scattering of mixed Human and non-Human citizens.



There is no racial distinction between the population of Daryen and the population of the worlds colonized by Darrian, although the percentage mix of pure-strain, mixed-strain, and Aslan citizens varies from world to world. Many local cultural variations can be traced to differences in the ethnic mixture.

Darrian society is a tolerant one, easily able to accept many diverse beliefs and attitudes. This acceptance of differences may have been a reason why the Solomani, and later the Aslan, were so successful in their integration into Darrian society.

BASIC CUSTOMS

The specific customs of the Darrians vary from region to region, but some universal expectations exist.

Any form of marriage is legally allowed as long as the participants are all of age. Monogamous families are the norm. Aslan are normally polygamous and traditional Aslan view monogamy as a lower-class custom, but Darrian Aslan are more accepting of it.

Public education is the norm on any world with TL6 or higher. Depending on local technology, education may be provided in small schools, larger consolidated schools, or even via electronic systems. In any case, the norm is that all citizens receive a complete education through age 17 (19.7 Imperial standard years).

At 17, young people are of age and begin their careers or professional educations. Advancement in a scholarly or professional career depends on originality of work and productivity. Rank does not divide society as rigidly as among some races. It is not uncommon for executives to have personal friends among craftsmen and students.

Religion on Daryen is a philosophical matter, an expression of personal belief about God and the universe. The usual social functions of churches to fulfill (charitable work, emotional support, youth activities, and counseling) are instead filled by a variety of associations and organizations, including extended families. Many quasi-religious philosophies enjoy wide following on Daryen, but the common social conventions that encourage many diverse views also tend to keep such views from having any political power. Darrians tend to make a specific distinction between the philosophical or religious beliefs of the individual and their political beliefs. Many philosophical teachers have followings of those who agree with their teachings, but these do not form political power blocs.

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

Like all Humans, Darrians work and play. Their jobs are the ordinary ones necessary for profit and the well-being of society. They provide individuals with the basic necessities for life and leisure.

The unusual feature of Darrian society is not individuals' vocations, but their avocations. Darrians enjoy their recreation and consider leisure an important part of their lives. Tourism is a major industry on most worlds within the Confederation, and most tourists come from within the Confederation.

Yet idle recreation is not the only kind of leisure that Darrians pursue. Darrians have a keen fascination with all sorts of knowledge. Libraries and computer-supported information retrieval systems are standard utilities in every

community. Darrian educational systems encourage intellectual curiosity, and provide training in posing questions and finding answers. Many Darrians develop an avocation of research. Each selects a broad topic that interests him, and can spend a lifetime following that topic.

Darrians differentiate between original research and secondary research. Original research often requires extensive equipment and supplies. But even when that research is published, the researchers often do not fully understand the meanings of their findings.

Secondary research is an analysis of published information, in a search for new correlations and conclusions. For example, one original researcher may have studied the fauna of Ilium, while another may have studied the fauna of Rorre. Neither is aware of the other's work, but a secondary researcher with access to the published work of both researchers (as well as other information) may be able to make correlations or connections that others have missed.

Secondary researchers publish their work by placing it on the central information-retrieval system for others to review and analyze. Most Darrians have composed at least one analysis of existing research and placed it on the central system (if only as an exercise in school). Some secondary researchers become self-taught experts in a single field, making comments on original research in the field as it appears, and making correlations within the field when they can find them.

Every secondary researcher on Darrian dreams of making a world-shaking discovery by taking published research and using it to produce wholly unexpected results. Within Darrian society, a successful secondary researcher is a respected individual.

DARRIAN ART

Darrian art has passed through many stages. Standard forms such as painting, sculpture, drama, and literature all developed naturally. All are an accepted part of the decoration of Darrian lives.

Against a background of tens of thousands of worlds, only the very best examples or the most unusual approaches can expect to achieve more than local renown. Only one Darrian art form has been unusual enough to achieve a widespread reputation: the flame sculptures of Rimb.

Flame sculpture is an old art form on Daryen, originating in the heady, high-tech years before the Maghiz. Technicians working with gravitic generators applied them to gas flames, and were able to shape and mold the flames into required forms. The first applications were to cutting-torch heads. Soon, the flames were being molded to form letters, company names, and logos. Artisans learned to create images, busts, sculpted landscapes, and other three-dimensional forms from

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flame. In the process, they found that there was an appreciation and a market for this type of artwork.

Flame sculpture takes several forms. The simplest (and considered the purest) is the static image. A single flame generator produces a flame that is molded into a specific form by a number of interacting gravitic and magnetic modules. Typical simple sculptures are busts and animal figures.

More complex flame sculptures add a variety of features. Some use chemically enhanced flames to add color to the images. Others use computer manipulations to add motion. Still others have a repertoire of several images which can be called up on demand.

Darrian flame sculptures are broadly categorized as Early (dating from before the Maghiz, considered simple in form), Maghiz (-921 to -200, simple in form, notable primarily for their rarity), and Modern (since -200, tending toward complexity).

Darrian flame sculpture, because of its high-tech novelty, has a reputation in art circles within the Spinward Marches. Examples are on display as far away as Capital.

GOVERNMENT

Within the Darrian Confederation, government consists of a number of tiers. At the top is the government of the Confederation itself, an interstellar state consisting of 24 worlds in the Darrian and Querion subsectors. Below that stands the government of each individual world (or a union of national governments on balkanized worlds). Finally, there are the national or regional governments of the individual worlds.

THE CONFEDERATION GOVERNMENT

The government of the Darrian Confederation is a loose bureaucracy which has three responsibilities: collective defense of the whole Confederation, regulation of trade between member worlds, and the dissemination of knowledge to member worlds. To fulfill these missions, the bureaucracy is divided into five ministries: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Defense, and the Court of Confederation Appeals.

The Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for taxation. Each member world owes a contribution to the Confederation based on its annual trade volume. In addition, the Confederation finances some of its activity through taxes levied on interstellar trade. Passengers arriving at any Confederation world are subject to a Cr25 arrival tax. Cargo is charged a Cr50 per ton transit fee when delivered to a world's starport.

The Ministry of Trade

The Ministry of Trade is charged with the regulation of commerce. Its jurisdiction encompasses all trade, including cargo transport and passenger travel, between worlds of the Confederation. It does not deal with trade between companies and individuals on worlds. The Ministry sets standards

for quality and content for food products and pharmaceuticals. It maintains records on trade volume and statistics, and publishes data to help traders better understand their markets.

The Ministry of Information

The Ministry of Information is a peculiarly Darrian institution. Because of the Darrian preoccupation with research, the Ministry of Information was created to record the results of research and disseminate that information to all who want to use it. The Ministry of Information handles research subsidies, copyright registration, archival storage of all available information, publication of important data and statistics, and the establishment of standards for information transfers. The ministry also maintains a Court of Information to hear complaints of inaccuracy of information, including charges of slander and libel.

The Ministry of Defense

The Ministry of Defense maintains the armed forces of the Confederation. A few military formations are true Confederation units, answerable to no specific world. The majority of Darrian forces are local units, raised by the individual worlds and kept on reserve status. In an emergency, these militia units are activated and placed under the command of the Confederation.

The Confederation Navy patrols the borders and trade lanes, to deter incursion by enemy forces and to suppress piracy and commerce raiding. The Navy also provides search-and-rescue assistance to distressed starships. The core of the Navy is a permanent fleet of about 20 capital ships plus a corresponding number of auxiliaries.

The Confederation Navy is augmented on a rotating basis by local naval militias. If it can afford to, each world of the Confederation maintains its own naval militia. Each planetary militia patrols its own star system, providing much the same service as the Confederation Navy provides to the many systems of the region. Every year each naval militia provides one or more ships, complete with crews, to the Confederation Navy. These ships increase the total available strength of the Navy to about 40 capital ships. The crews of the militia ships gain valuable experience in working with the other ships from the Confederation, and everyone receives training in the latest available tactics and equipment.

The Confederation Guard is the ground-forces arm of the Ministry of Defense. A small training cadre is maintained, to help establish military policy and to help train new recruits. Primary responsibility lies with the local militias. Each world maintains its own militia and is responsible for training and equipping its forces. Local militias traditionally include all adults, but most worlds succeed in recruiting and training only about 40% of the adult population.

A few militia units are standard military formations such as infantry or armor. The remainder are *resistance units*, trained to be guerrilla fighters in the event that the world is invaded. The Darrians strongly believe in prevention and deterrence, so the presence of resistance units is widely advertised, and guerrilla training operations are featured prominently in news reports.

Legacy of Ages

The pre-Maghiz Darrian navy was composed of TL13 ships. Those that survived the stellar flares were eventually mothballed, hidden away in the outer Darrian system. These ships were not recovered for 1,300 years. Since then they have been an important element of the Confederation Navy.

The exact number of surviving warships is a military secret, but probably does not exceed two dozen. The ships are split into two squadrons, one deployed toward the Sword Worlds subsector, the other deployed toward potential Zhodani threats to coreward and spinward. Some naval analysts have theorized that a third squadron exists. This squadron may be in a deep reserve position, or deployed toward the Imperium, or used to equip elements of the Darrian Special Arm (see below).

Meanwhile, some surviving TL13 starships not originally of military design have also been pressed into service. At least four are reported to be transport ships refitted with TL11 or TL12 weaponry.

No known TL12 starship design could possibly last 2,000 years in good working condition. Very high endurance, possibly involving some self-repair capability, must therefore be a feature of the Darrian TL13 starships. This is fortunate, since the TL13 ships are difficult to service. Many parts and systems would be impossible to replace if destroyed. Special alloys are needed for use as raw material in order to replace parts destroyed in combat.

The TL13 ships present a perennial dilemma for the Darrian High Command. They are too valuable to be committed against powerful enemy forces, since they cannot be replaced. On the other hand, unless the Darrians are willing to commit them, they might as well not exist. The Darrians tend to use the ships in massed formations, preferably supported by conventional ships. This tactic maximizes the effect of the TL13 ships when they do appear, and suppresses their opposition as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, the ships are extremely capable of evading contact and breaking off from engagements, and are generally committed only when they will assure victory.

New TL13 Ships?

The Darrians recently found a hitherto undiscovered cache of eight mothballed *Barekdoldin* class cruisers, and used them to run a bluff. They quietly broadcast the story that they had finally managed to build new TL13 ships, and so no longer had to reserve their TL13 squadrons for situations in which the odds were heavily in their favor. The rumor was substantiated by an unprecedented attack on a Sword World outpost, on Ator (Spinward Marches 0729) in 1119.

As a result of this attack, the Darrian TL13 squadrons have become a more effective deterrent, and enemy intelligence agents are wasting time looking for a secret TL13 deep-space shipyard. In point of fact, the Darrians are unlikely to achieve true understanding of their TL13 artifacts for generations to come.

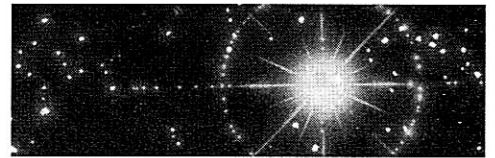
The Secret Base

The Darrian Confederation Navy's TL13 squadrons are carefully hidden from prying eyes. The Confederation discovered an enormous, dead comet, a ball of ice 200 kilometers in diameter, in deep space (Spinward Marches 0423). A secret base has been built here and is used to support the TL13 ships. While foreign intelligence agencies know of the base's existence, it is believed that none have managed to locate it.

The Court of Confederation Appeals

The Court of Confederation Appeals is the supreme arbiter of disputes within the Darrian Confederation. It does not handle criminal cases, which are handled by the courts of each world. Instead, it considers civil cases which have already been tried and judged on a local world and are then appealed to the Court. In addition, the Court considers disputes between individual Confederation worlds and between the Confederation Government and its member worlds.

The Court of Confederation Appeals has the authority to rescind orders by the Confederation Government and to require compliance by the member worlds. Even worlds whose local militaries are more powerful than the Confederation forces traditionally comply with adverse rulings without demur.



The Confederation Council

Above the five ministries the Confederation is governed by a council, composed of one representative from each world in the Confederation. Each council member is selected by his homeworld's government in whatever manner it deems appropriate. For example, the representative of Zamine (a balkanized world) is elected by the leadership of all of the nations of Zamine, while the representative of Terant 340 (a charismatic dictatorship) is appointed by that world's dictator. As a colony of Ilium, Engrange does not get a representative. Each representative is appointed for a term of four Darrian years (4.6 standard years) and may be reappointed any number of times. The Confederation Council meets in continuous weekly sessions in the Council Chambers on Mire.

The capital of the Confederation is Mire. The Confederation's bureaucracies are all based on Mire, as is all the supporting bureaucracy for the Council. Each Council member is accorded an office on Mire with a supporting staff to handle basic correspondence, legal and other research, and the other details which must be dealt with by a major political figure.

THE GOVERNMENT OF DARYEN

Scout Commander Soliman Rurik of the Imperial Grand Survey had a problem. Should he describe the government of Daryen as the technocracy its constitution said it was, or as the oligarchy it had gradually turned into? Usually the Scouts prided themselves of calling a spade a spade, but the Darrian oligarchs made a great to-do about the enlightened nature of their government and would feel grossly insulted to be labeled as oligarchs. And the Darrian Confederation was an important ally of the Imperium. In the end he sighed and bent over his keyboard. He really didn't have a choice.

The government of the Darrian homeworld is supposedly a technocracy, where people receive government jobs and advancement only as a result of academic achievement. At the lower levels the system works fairly well, but at the top it has mutated into something quite different.

The Darrian Council and Darrian Nobility

On Daryen, the supreme source of worldly power lies in the Darrian Council, a tripartite assembly of high-ranking individuals. The Council is constitutionally required to appoint a fraction of Darrian's population (currently one in 20,000) to the noble rank of *Bodek* (usually translated as Knight). The current number of Knights of Daryen is 106,571. The Knights of Daryen are the electors of the 100-man Darrian Council. Whenever a member of the Council dies or retires, the Knights elect a replacement from their own ranks. Election is for life and automatically raises the individual to the noble rank of *Monigh* (Baron) of Darrian.

Every four Darrian years the council elects one of their number as Prime Minister. The remaining 99 members are split randomly into three chambers. The Council is the legislative body for Daryen. All new legislation must be passed by a simple majority vote in all three chambers.

The surface of Daryen is divided by long, high mountain ranges into five basins. Each basin is centered on a sea, fed by rivers draining the surrounding territory.

The Council also appoints members from its own ranks to senior executive positions in the government bureaucracy. In particular, the Council appoints the Ministers of Trade, Finance, the Environment, Information, and Defense. Along with the Prime Minister, these officials serve as the supreme executive authority in the Darrian planetary government.

Any councilor who is selected by the Council to be a Minister is automatically raised to the noble rank of *Lezom* (Marquis) of Darrian. There are two more levels above Marquis, *Mehdar* (Count) and *Yisar* (Duke). Second and subsequent elections as Minister usually involve a promotion in noble rank. The Prime Minister is always promoted to a

The Special Arm

The Darrian Confederation perceives (rightly) that the major threats to its territorial integrity come from the Sword Worlds and the Zhodani Consulate. Most military and naval strength in the Confederation is directed toward the Sword Worlds. The Darrians understand that the overwhelming strength of the Zhodani Consulate cannot be countered by traditional forces.

In the 400s, the Confederation decided to embark on an ambitious program of deterrence. By then, it was widely known that the ancient Darrian civilization had managed to disrupt its own sun by technological means. The Confederation made it known that it still had the secret of the "Star Trigger," a device that could disrupt any star the Darrians chose to attack. In 489 the Star Trigger was demonstrated before a stunned audience including Zhodani delegates. To this day, the Zhodani consider the Star Trigger to be a formidable deterrent, and treat the Darrians with care even in wartime.

Today, the Confederation Ministry of Defense maintains a third arm of military defense (in addition to the Navy and the Guard) called the Special Arm. The Special Arm is charged with the maintenance and operation of the Star Trigger. It maintains its own fleet of six TL13 starships, each supposedly capable of carrying a Star Trigger to a distant system and detonating it there.

In point of fact, the original Star Trigger did not work. The people charged with recreating the means to provoke stellar flares were unable to figure out how, and in the end made up a fake one. The demonstration of 489 was carefully timed to coincide with a natural stellar flare, which Darrian astronomers were better able to predict than their Zhodani counterparts. Recently, however, new research has cracked the problem, and the Darrians are now able to build functioning Star Triggers.

rank at least equal to those of the other Ministers serving under him.

All noble rank on Daryen is granted for life. It can only be taken away by decree of the Darrian Council, usually for crimes against the state. Noble rank is not inherited, although higher-ranking nobles are often successful in having their children granted knighthoods. The nobles form cliques, that support each other in council and help each other's children advance. As a result, Daryen currently has a number of "noble houses," families whose members have sat on the Council for centuries.

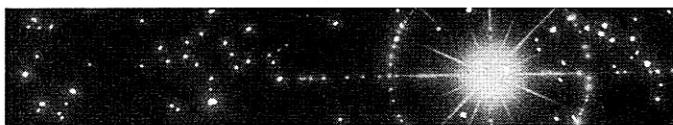
High noble rank on Daryen has its benefits. The Candidate Committee, responsible for drawing up the annual list of candidates for Knight of Daryen, is composed of all living Marquises (but *not* Counts and Dukes). Associates, friends, benefactors, and those who share common values and ideals with the Marquises are natural candidates for the list.

Knights of Daryen

When appointed, each Knight of Daryen is assigned a specific geographic region of Daryen roughly 200 square miles in size. That region is the knight's territory. The population of a territory can vary widely – some have only a few inhabitants, while others can be urban zones with millions of inhabitants. Land without population is rarely assigned to knights.

Each knight has a sworn responsibility to represent and look after the needs of those who inhabit it, functioning as a kind of ombudsman. The people of a territory can petition the Darrian Council to remove their knight, if he does not do a good enough job of representing them. Such a petition must be granted, after which the knight is usually transferred to a territory with few or no people, where he “can’t do any harm.” This is considered a great disgrace and effectively ruins the knight’s further career in government.

Since the number of knights is fixed based on the size of the population, a knight who is transferred in disgrace leaves a populated territory without a knight of its own. Ill health or simple old age can also prevent a knight from performing his duties properly. In these cases his people are permitted to express themselves to the knight overseeing a neighboring territory.



Implementation of Government

Standing government agencies such as the ministries, the local school districts, police forces, and environmental protection agencies are all financed by taxes levied by the Council. They implement policies and laws which are decided upon by the Council. Appointment and promotion within the bureaucracy is in the hands of the bureaucrats themselves. Each layer recruits the layer immediately below itself, with (theoretically) no input from superiors.

The Participation of the People

The Darrian Council and the Knights of Daryen are self-perpetuating institutions. They nevertheless recognize their responsibility to address the needs of the Darrian people. This responsibility is reinforced through the relationship between each noble and his specific territory along with the people living there. The ability to ruin any noble by petitioning to have him removed from his territory makes public opinion a powerful force in directing the activities of the nobles of Darrian.

The Courts

The Darrian legal code is a lineal descendant of the 20,000-year-old Taledh Code, heavily influenced by Solomani ideas. In theory, it does not distinguish between criminal and civil wrongdoing. However, the way justice is administered has created some degree of distinction between criminal and civil offenses.

In the official court system, all cases are prosecuted by the Darrian Counsel, an officer of the court who receives complaints and decides when to file charges. The official courts are preferred for the prosecution of violent crimes because the criminal can be sentenced to prison (or death in capital cases).

On the other hand, the people of Daryen long ago discovered that their legal system produced many inequities (depending on whether the local Darrian Council would file charges or not) and sometimes long delays (as the courts became clogged with cases). They therefore produced an alternative: binding arbitration.

Any case, criminal or civil, can be settled by arbitration. Individuals may enter a binding contract to settle a dispute (including accusations of a crime) by taking it to an arbitrator who will listen to evidence, consider it, and make a ruling. Arbitrators are independent individuals, hired by parties to the case being heard. In the case of genuine disputes, arbitrators attempt to mediate compromise solutions.

Arbitrators do not have the power to hand down jail sentences or capital punishment. As a result, criminals prefer to have their cases heard by arbitrators rather than the official courts. Victims of property crimes prefer to take their cases to arbitrators because they have a greater chance, if the perpetrator is convicted, of getting restitution or even punitive damages. Legal disputes concerning negligence or misdeeds are better handled by arbitrators, because the case is settled faster and more efficiently.

The presence of arbitrators in the justice system has legitimized a third method of resolving disputes: private settlement. Private settlement of lawsuits is a common occurrence in many legal systems. Under threat of lawsuit, either side may offer to settle in order to minimize the potential for losing. On Daryen, even criminals and their victims may come to a private settlement. A beating victim may convince his attacker to accept an equal beating instead of a jail sentence; a robbery victim may negotiate the return of double his losses, in return for pursuing the case no further.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Daryen’s tech level is usually given as TL13 in library data entries and survey reports, but strictly speaking this is not correct. Most of Daryen’s pre-Maghiz technology was lost in the Maghiz and has never been recovered.

Modern Darrian technology is generally about late TL10 for local products, with a liberal sprinkling of TL11 and TL12 products that are locally produced or imported from the Imperium. Most of the merchant ships are late TL10, and the Darrian System Navy is usually about the same – with two very important exceptions. Top ships of the line are now imported from the Imperium (under an Imperial military aid program), and some technicians have come along to maintain them. In addition a number of TL12 escorts, destroyers, scouts, and couriers are built locally.

Computers and Robots

Darrian technology has made extensive and profitable use of computers, integrating them into every aspect of local technology. Common computer technology in use rates about TL11, but with important distinctions. The Darrian experience with the Maghiz made them sensitive to the potential problems that another stellar flare could produce, so there is a clearly increased dependence on fiber optics. In many cases (especially with starship sensors and computers, vehicle computers and circuits, and life support equipment) the primary circuitry is fiber-optic. This is in sharp contrast to Imperial practice, where fiber-optic equipment serves only as backup in the event of battle damage.

Communications

At the time of the Maghiz, Darrian had achieved substantial success in the implementation of meson communication systems. Both the Abh and Udh projects depended on meson communications for data transmission and telemetry. Current Darrian science has regained meson communication technology, but there has been little practical application of the principles.

On the Darrian homeworld, communication needs are met by Zloril, the global communications monopoly. Its system of satellites and local relays produces a communications network allowing virtually instantaneous communication for anyone on or near Daryen's surface. Personal communications codes make it possible to contact anyone at any time, provided they want to be contacted. The network also allows access to the central computer service for message mail, computations, data base access, and centralized buying and selling.

Zloril recently established a message processing service called Standin. Standin is a rudimentary pseudo-reality communications system. Subscribers are profiled as to preferences and personality. Once the profile is complete, an enhanced computer simulation of the individual answers communication calls, providing answers to simple queries without ever actually bothering the subscriber. The caller never knows he has not actually gotten through to the real person. Priority messages are routed directly to the subscriber; important information is digested and kept in an easily accessible computer data file.

Medicine

Darrians, placed on a world where local biology was alien to Human biology, took a long time to discover the basic principles of medicine. They were quick to discover elementary trauma handling. Surgery was advanced, but antibiotics and immunization were introduced by the Solomani of the Itzin Fleet, who were fully conversant with the techniques the Rule of Man had developed for contacting isolated Human populations.

Environment

Considering the way the Darrians build their grav cars (see below), many find it strange that the most obvious of Darrian's high-tech symbols are its grav cities. Four major cities on Darrian (one in each basin except Zlodh) are grav structures held aloft by grav modules.

Unlike the grav cars, the grav cities of modern Darrian cannot be made proof against stellar flares. A second Maghiz would see them plummet to the ground, just as their numerous pre-Maghiz counterparts did. In a strange way these cities represent the otherwise-prudent Darrians' one rude gesture at Fate. They were built centuries ago, when the regional governments of the basins were still semi-autonomous, as prestige projects.

Of the grav cities, Rebhar was constructed as a mining platform, and it gradually makes its way along the mountainous rim of the Boyr Basin extracting metal ores from the rugged rock faces. Pororda, now a tourist center in the Rimb Basin, was originally designed as a sea farming center; it hovers above the waves of the Rimb Sea and provides amusement and recreation facilities. Kilulga, in the Abh Basin, hangs in the upper atmosphere above most of Daryen's cloud cover. Zehn Nyak in the Nyadh Basin is a migratory city, moving among seven different sites as the markets and seasons change.

Land Transportation

By the time of the Maghiz, Daryen had virtually abandoned surface transportation. Vehicles no longer traveled on the surface of the land or the sea; instead, they depended on gravitics to travel through the air, whether close to the surface or at higher altitudes. Since gravitic transportation had been used for more than a century before the Maghiz, other forms of transport were virtually nonexistent.

When the Maghiz struck, its electromagnetic pulse fused virtually every grav module on the planet. Those in operation plummeted like rocks. Those which were parked never rose again.

Modern Darrian transportation has been designed in response to the lessons of the Maghiz. Gravitic vehicles (air/rafts, speeders, g-carriers) are winged craft, capable of gliding to a landing in the event that the grav modules fail. Mass transportation systems are likely to be tube or rail systems rather than aircraft.

Water Transportation

Most water transportation on Daryen is recreational; boats are a favorite diversion for the Darrians. However, in the polar sea of Zlodh, the heritage of the Zlodh Empire and its seagoing fleets remains a powerful force. The establishment of cities under the polar icecap created a need for submarine transport access to the cities. The distances proved too great for the construction of tunnels; the only access is by scheduled submarine service.

Space Transportation

Darrian starships have always shown a Solomani influence. Not only were the original Darrian ships built from Solomani patterns, but Darrians have shown a preference for Solomani design features. Solomani design plans have been consistently imported by Darrian, and a small trade in naval design concepts exists between Terra and Daryen. Darrian ships may have fixed weapon mounts in the Solomani fashion.

The Darrian starship construction yards are capable of constructing a limited number of TL12 starships. This includes jump-6 capability, although ships with more than jump-3 are rare. Much of this capacity is tied up maintaining the Confederation Navy's starships.

Personal Military

Visitors to Daryen often have high hopes of finding exotic TL13 weapons which are simply not available in the Imperium. They find that such weapons are not available; however, they usually don't go away disappointed. Darrian sells a wide variety of personal military weapons, including gauss rifles, personal combat armor, and fusion guns (FGMP-11 and FGMP-12). For individuals not concerned with price, Darrian is a weapons heaven.



"Taboo" Disadvantages

The following mental disadvantages are very rare among Darrians: Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, Intolerance, Jealousy, and Megalomania.

Acute Vision

see p. B19

Darrians have slightly sharper senses than the Human average, and have particularly keen vision.

SKILLS

Research see p. B62

Almost every Darrian will have Research skill at IQ or better, along with at least one other Scientific skill unrelated to his occupation.

DARYEN (0627, SPINWARD MARCHES SECTOR)

Starport: Class V.

Diameter: 4,300 miles (6,900 km). *Gravity:* 0.52 G.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 33%.

Climate: Warm. *Population:* 2.1 billion (128,000 Aslan).

Government: Feudal Technocracy. *Control Rating:* 2. *TL:* 13.

Gas Giants: 5. *WTN:* 6.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

DARRIAN CHARACTERS

Darrian characters are very tall and slender, averaging 14" taller than a normal Human of the same ST, but as much as 100 pounds lighter than a normal Human of the same height. Pure-bred Darrians have golden or grayish-tan skin, with white or light-toned hair. Darrians with some Solomani ancestry are often ruddier and darker. Darrians have delicate features and slightly pointed ears, which many Solomani feel gives them an elfin look.

DARRIAN RACIAL TEMPLATE -18 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST -1 [-10]; HT -1 [-10].

Advantages: Acute Vision +1 [2].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Common Advantages

Ambidexterity, Mathematical Ability, and Musical Ability are all quite common among Darrians.

The Minifac

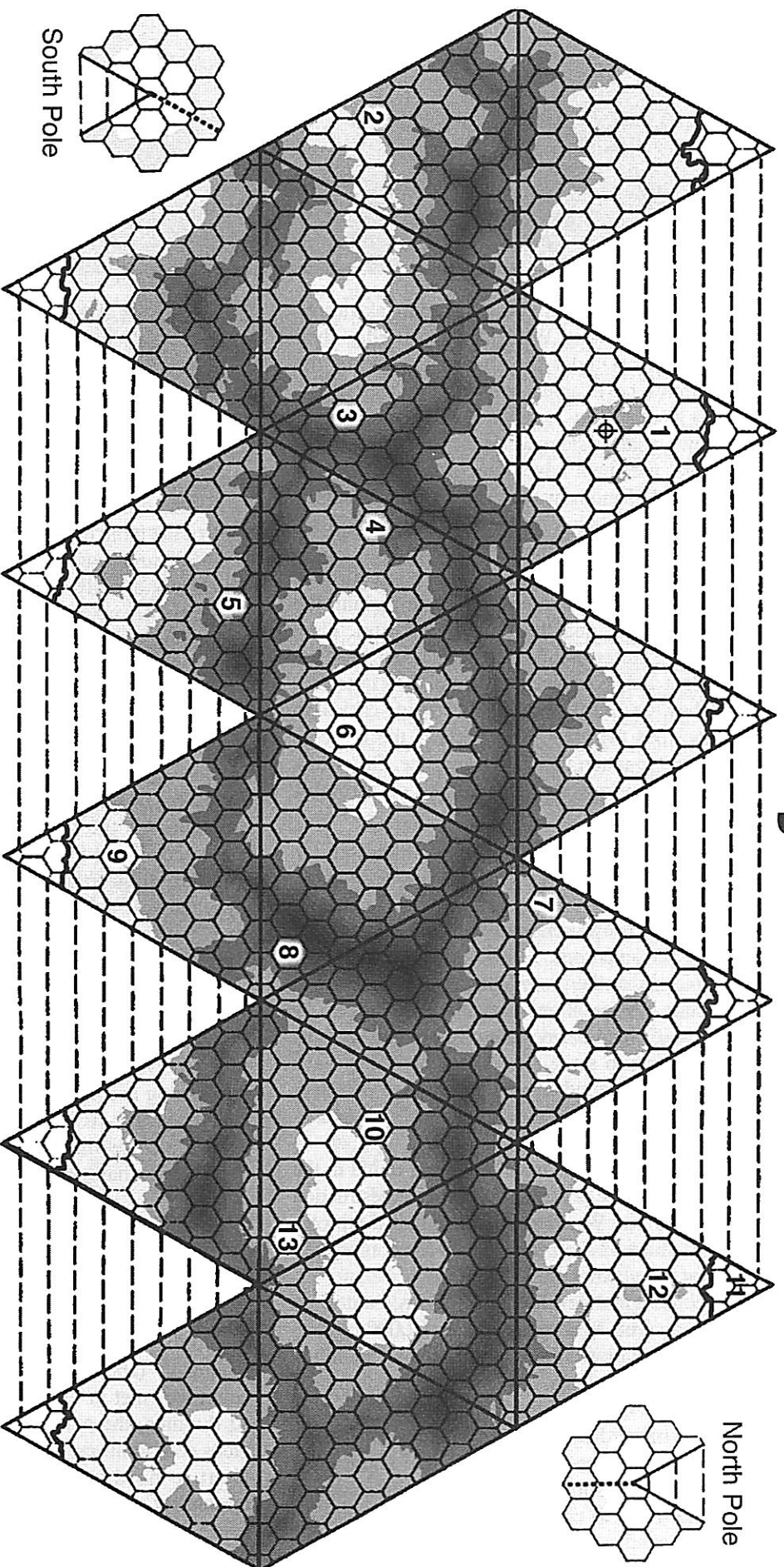
One of Daryen's best-kept secrets is a single TL13 minifac (p. UT17) that survived the Maghiz. Its exact location, and even its very existence, is known to only a few highly placed ministers.

The minifac is able to manufacture a wide range of spanking-new TL13 artifacts, provided it has the necessary raw materials. This includes some alloys that cannot be manufactured on Daryen today. Consequently, new artifacts can only be made if old, broken devices are available to feed into the minifac. There is always some loss in the process, so for every four or five broken items fed into the minifac, three or four items of similar bulk can be manufactured.

The minifac is also limited in its rate of production. It can take over a day to produce a single TL13 hand weapon, weeks to produce the parts for a single TL13 grav vehicle, years to produce the parts for a TL13 supercomputer. Hence the Darrian planetary government doesn't use it for mass production, only for small items that can be used in critical functions. The minifac is always kept busy, and there is considerable quiet infighting among government ministries on how to allocate its production.

Note that the minifac can't produce just *anything*. If something is not in its menu of templates, it can't make it. The minifac is mostly a plot device, permitting GMs to introduce TL13 "artifacts" to his campaign without giving the Darrians the knowledge or ability to make a lot of them. Such artifacts can be almost as desirable as Ancient artifacts, without being as powerful (or as illegal to possess).

Daryen



- Icy/Barren
- Hilly/Rough
- Plain/Steppe
- Starport
- Ocean
- Mountain/Volcanic
- Major City

KEY

Starport

1. Zlooth Basin

2. Nyadh Basin

3. Nyadh Orchard

4. Rimb Orchard

5. Abh Orchard

6. Rimb Basin

7. Zlooth Orchard

8. Stronghold

9. Abh Basin

10. Boyr Basin

11. Zlooth City

12. Drozh

13. Boyr Orchard

Starport: Class V

Diameter: 4,288 miles

Atmosphere: Standard, Oxygen-Nitrogen

Surface Water: 33%

Climate: Warm

Population: 2.1 billion (128,000 Aslan)

Government: Feudal Technocracy

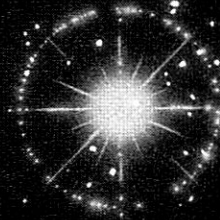
Control Rating: 2

TL: 13

WTN: 6.5

Trade Classifications: Hi

Dynchia



Most Human minor races have been forced to take a subordinate role in galactic history. While still restricted to their homeworlds, they came under the shadow of one of the galaxy's great empires, never able to strike out on their own.

The Dynchia were a lucky exception. They were already exploring their own solar system when they were first contacted by outsiders, merchant adventurers from the Rule of Man. The Ramshackle Empire was already in rapid decline, and left the Dynchia to develop independently. Before long, the Dynchia had built their own interstellar state.

Today, the Dynchia Comitia stands in the no-man's land between three great interstellar empires: the Imperium, the Solomani Confederation, and the Hive Federation. They remain a minor state in terms of brute power, but they are fiercely independent and determined to defend their interests.

Located as they are, they are rapidly becoming critical to regional diplomacy. As the great powers clash, the Dynchia may be hard pressed to retain their independence. Or (with a great deal of luck) they may be able to take on a role of unique significance.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Dynchia were transplanted to their homeworld (Melantris) by the Ancients some 300,000 years ago. Geneticists have determined that the proto-Dynchia were subject to considerable genetic manipulation during the Ancient era. As with all such cases, it's hard to say what purpose the Ancients might have been trying to serve. The experiment may have been intended to alter the fundamental psychology of a sentient species, producing a strain of Humaniti with a distinctive emotional makeup.

No significant Ancient sites have ever been found in the Melantris system, and there is no sign of massive destruction associated with the Final War. It is possible that the proto-Dynchia were left alone on their homeworld as soon as their genetic alterations were complete.

Dynchia technological development followed a normal pattern. They discovered agriculture about -12,000, underwent an Industrial Revolution about -2200, and launched the first space probes in -1926. Their social development was less typical. They never developed city-state or nation-state institutions, instead retaining a tribal organization even into their industrial era. Dynchia political history is a story of increasingly elaborate social adaptations, which allowed clans and tribes to cooperate across wider regions as technology advanced.

SOLOMANI CONTACT

By -1820, the Dynchia had a TL8 spacefaring culture. Orbital spaceflight was routine, and there had already been a few manned expeditions to other planets of the Melantris system. If left alone, the Dynchia might soon have developed the jump drive and become the fourth Human major race. Instead, it was at this point that Solomani traders first discovered Melantris. A few years later, the Dynchia developed a copy of the jump drive and began to explore nearby stars.

Melantris was far from the core of the Rule of Man, which was already in decline in any case. As a result, the Dynchia were never brought under Imperial rule. With jump-1 technology, they explored the worlds of the Melantris Cluster and then began to reach outward. The pace of expansion was slow and meticulous, with no technological backwaters or "lost colonies."

During the collapse of the Rule of Man, a number of Solomani migrated into the Melantris region. Some of these settled on Dynchia worlds, seeing them as a safe haven in the chaos of the time. Others settled nearby, but were later encountered by the growing Dynchia sphere. Conflicts resulted, some of them violent, but as time passed the Dynchia were able to absorb the Solomani worlds into their own civilization.

About -1500, the Dynchia made their second major foreign contact, with the feral Ithklur state of Iydoch Tryyliniy to trailing (see *Alien Races 3*). Conflict was immediate, although it was limited by astrography and the Dynchia tendency to avoid wars of aggression. After several centuries of skirmishing and cross-border vendettas, the Hive Federation intervened. In -1056, the Hivers mediated a comprehensive peace which set the border of Dynchia expansion to trailing. The Dynchia have respected that border ever since.

THE DYNCHIA COMITIA

Throughout this period of expansion, the Dynchia made several attempts to build a unified polity capable of dealing with other interstellar powers as an equal. This effort was very difficult and led to several episodes of social upheaval. Eventually (about -1200) the princes of the 12 most prominent tribes met in Council to establish the Dynchia Comitia. At the time, the new polity was rife with political and religious compromises, but the prestige of its founders was sufficient to hold it together. The Comitia has remained reasonably stable ever since, although none of the tribes who held Council seats in that ancient time still do today.

The Dynchia Comitia reached its present size about the same time that the Third Imperium was founded. For about 1,000 years, the Dynchia have concentrated on defending and developing the worlds they have. Occasional trade has continued with the Hive Federation, especially with the rise of the Hiver Young Worlds to rimward.

About 800, the first traders from the Third Imperium arrived in Dynchia space by way of the Harodar Hegemony, another pocket empire to coreward. The Dynchia accepted Imperial diplomacy and trade with equanimity. Since the Comitia is well outside Imperial space (and since the epic era of Imperial expansion was long since over by the time of contact) the Dynchia see no reason to worry about Imperial aggression. The Comitia has remained independent of the Imperium, but cultivates a loose alliance in order to keep the Harodar Hegemony in check. In recent centuries there have been several small wars between the Comitia and the Harodari, all of which have been won by the Dynchia.



PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

The Dynchia have diverged considerably from the Human root stock, due to Ancient genetic manipulation and subsequent evolution in their home environment. They comprise a distinct hominid species, unable to interbreed with any other branch of Humaniti.

Dynchia have evolved for life in moderately low gravity. They are very tall and robust, averaging over 7 feet in height and about 220 pounds in weight. Their build is slender and long-limbed. Skin tones are usually between pale and bronzetan, while the eyes are normally pale brown, hazel, or gray. Hair is brown or black, although a mutation causes snow-white hair to occur from time to time even among young Dynchia. The hair is always soft and silky, and runs in a bushy mane from the head down to the small of the back. Neither sex has facial hair.

The Dynchia are polydactylic, with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. Facial structure is robust, and usually tends toward high foreheads, wide-set eyes, high cheekbones, and strong chins.

While the Dynchia are omnivores, like most Humans, they have a very strong preference for meat in their diet. Their dentition consists of two bony structures, shaped as if the teeth in each jaw had fused into semicircular ridges. These ridges each have several fang-like extrusions. Other adaptations include alterations to intestinal structure and various biochemical changes, all of which improve the Dynchia ability to benefit from animal protein.

Dynchia exhibit an unusually low degree of sexual dimorphism. Male and female Dynchia average almost exactly the same height and are very close together in weight. There are no significant differences in facial structure. Dynchia females have a physical frame almost identical to that of the males. The Dynchia gestational period is unexceptional, but several physiological adaptations make it possible for a Dynchia woman to carry a baby without being more than mildly inconvenienced by her condition.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The Dynchia have many distinct languages, some of which are spoken by only one tribe or even one clan. For thousands of years they have developed "common tongues" to help members of different tribes to communicate. The capstone of this process is a language called Dynchia Standard. Over 95% of Dynchia are (at least) bilingual, speaking Dynchia Standard as well as their own tribal language.

Most Imperial visitors have no trouble learning Dynchia languages, since their grammar and syntax is usually similar to that of Galanglic. Dynchia Standard is no exception, and has in fact borrowed many words from various Terran languages.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

A Dynchia name follows a simple pattern: a personal name, the current place of residence, and an honorific name.

The personal name is given at birth, and always ends with a reference to the individual's tribe. For example, Astolian is really "Asto of the Lian tribe," Estravel is "Ester of the Avel tribe," and so on. The current Twelve Tribes of the Dynchia are, in order of seniority: Lian, Avel, Erol, Kirest, Nast, Otir, Kila, Sirne, Tros, Rhes, Saro, and Dera. GMs and players should feel free to invent similar names for lesser Dynchia tribes.

The current place of residence is always given as part of the name. The place of residence often gives a clue as to the individual's clan, since it is traditional to give reference to the nearest clan shrine if it is close enough to one's home. Thus, Astolian may be "Astolian of White Ford," a reference to a town near Astolian's residence, in which his clan maintains its principal shrine. If Astolian lived far from this shrine, he might call himself "Astolian of Rhyden" in reference to his current home city, or even "Astolian of the trade ship *Farventure*" if he is a starship crewman.

The honorific name is chosen by an individual's clan elders after he finishes the coming-of-age ordeals. This name is descriptive and is intended to represent the individual's personality, or some notable event in his life. Sometimes a Dynchia will take a new honorific name later in life, but this is socially risky (a self-chosen honorific can be very embarrassing if it is too grandiose). For example, Astolian of White Ford has the honorific name "Sharpeye," in reference to the alertness he evinced during his rites of passage. His full name, then, is "Astolian of White Ford, called Sharpeye." Note that even when these constructions sound awkward in Anglic, they are usually simple and euphonious in Dynchia.

When on active duty with the Comitia military, Dynchia drop the tribal reference in their personal names. They always give their current duty post as their place of residence, omitting this when actually at their post. They also drop their honorifics in favor of their titles of rank. Thus if Astolian is currently at his duty position on the bridge of a Comitia warship, he would simply be referred to as "Lieutenant Asto." When at a naval base or otherwise not on board his ship, he would be "Lieutenant Asto of the warship *Banners Flew*."

Solomani citizens of the Comitia name themselves similarly, but they use the usual Solomani custom of surnames in place of the tribal reference in their personal names. Solomani are so physically different from other Comitia citizens that their "tribe" is always obvious. For example, a Solomani living in the city of Tiren who is known for his mathematical expertise might be named "John Smith of Tiren, called the Reckoner."

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Dynchia emotional makeup is similar to that of other Human races in many respects, but they lack two instincts which are normally very strong in Humans.

First, they make few gender distinctions in their emotional lives. Dynchia certainly experience sexual attraction and an emotion similar to romantic love, but these emotions are felt almost identically by both men and women. Dynchia completely lack the emotional instincts which lead to male dominance in other Human races. Both men and women are proud, independent, and aggressive.

Second, the Dynchia are individualists to a degree unmatched by any other Human race. It is sometimes said that the Dynchia lack a territorial instinct, but this is not strictly true. Individual Dynchia defend their property with all the ferocity that they apply to any other matter of personal standing. What the Dynchia lack is the "herd instinct" that makes most Humans able to subordinate their individualism to a mass institution. Even their important clan and tribal relationships are a matter of personal rather than mass identity. A Dynchia is proud of his clan because it is *his* and because *his kinsmen* are also part of it – not because he feels that the clan is a concrete entity with a claim to his patriotic devotion.

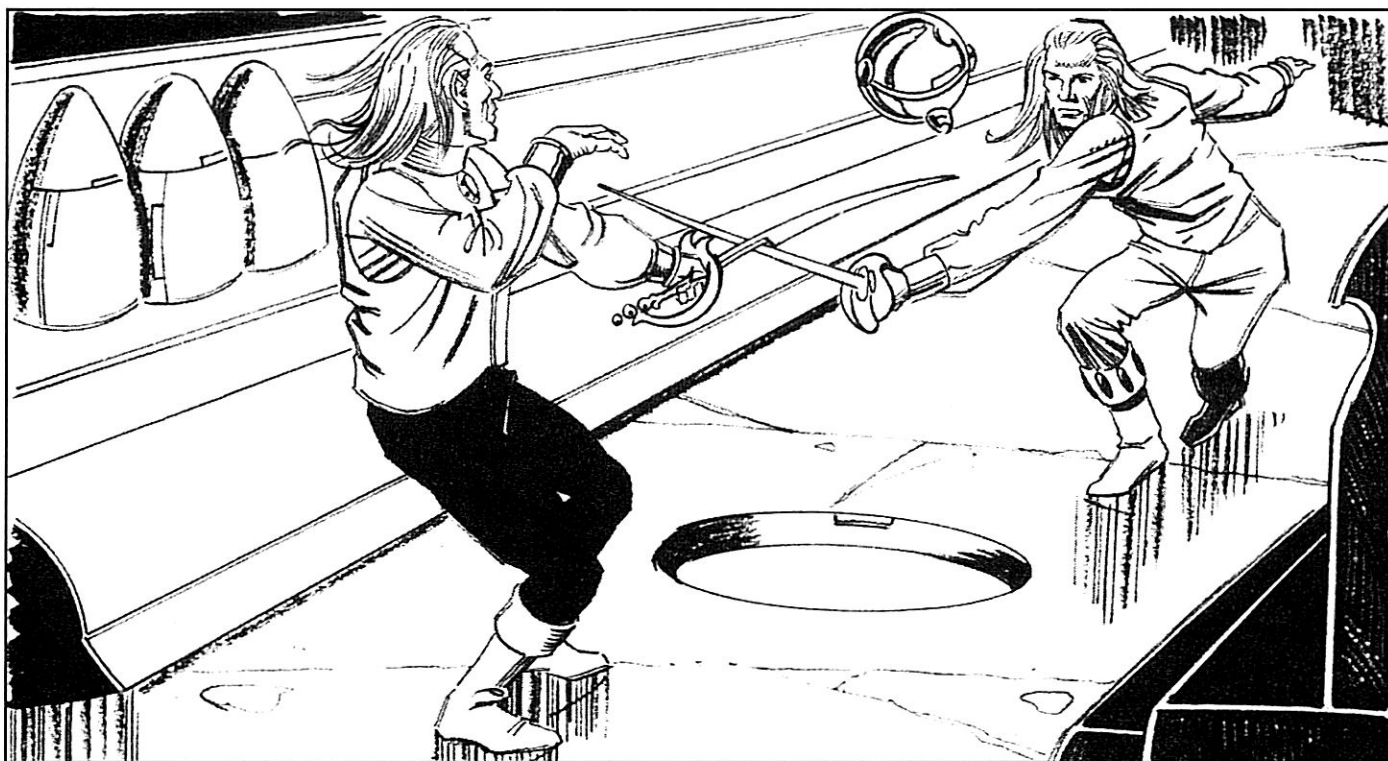
SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The Dynchia present a paradox. They are aggressive and fiercely proud, following a warrior code as demanding as any in Charted Space. Despite this, they are essentially peaceful as a race. Conflicts among Dynchia never escalate beyond the level of a vendetta between two tribal groups, fought as a series of personal combats. Every outbreak of mass warfare in Dynchia history has been directed against outsiders, and these have only occurred when the survival of Dynchia civilization was at stake.

TRIBAL GROUPS

Dynchia society is based entirely on blood ties. There are thousands of tribes among the Dynchia, each of which has up to a few million members. Most of these tribes have been in existence for hundreds or even thousands of years. Each tribe has its own set of legends, including the myth of a single hero who gave the tribe its name and is considered the ultimate ancestor of all its members. Each tribe maintains sacred shrines and observes unique customs. At the head of Dynchia society are the Twelve Tribes, representing the most prestigious lineages in the Comitia.

Each tribe is divided into clans, with up to a few thousand members each. Like the tribes, each clan is composed of all the descendants of a given prominent Dynchia. Each clan maintains its own shrines and keeps its own history. The clans are usually less stable than the tribes, and few of them can trace their lineage back more than two or three centuries. It is normal for a Dynchia to found a new clan if he must move away from his clan's ancestral shrines, or if he wishes to break away from his clan's traditions. A new clan which is isolated from others of its tribe will gradually take on independent tribal honors, thus forming the core of a new tribe (this usually takes several generations).



In one of the few violations of gender equivalence among the Dynchia, clan and tribal membership are always inherited through the female line. Clan leaders, however, are equally likely to be male or female.

The status of an individual within Dynchia society is inextricably tied to his position within his clan, the position of his clan within the tribe, and the position of his tribe with respect to the other tribes. Rising to the head of an influential clan will confer status on an individual. Conversely, someone from an obscure clan can raise it to prominence through personal excellence and good fortune.

None of these blood groupings hold territory of their own, aside from the clan and tribal shrines which serve as common places of worship. Individuals can own land as a commodity or as a place to live, but there is no reason why the holdings of clansmen must be adjacent. Dynchia worlds are a tremendous patchwork of tiny individual holdings, and all of the tribes live intermingled throughout Dynchia space.

DYNCHIA HONOR

Dynchia society is held together by a strong sense of honor. No right-thinking Dynchia would do anything to taint his personal honor, or that of his clan or tribe. The common code of honor has religious backing, since the Dynchia are devout ancestor-worshippers. The proudest aim of any Dynchia is to rise to glory within his clan, or establish a new clan which comes to be respected. Either process can lead to the Dynchia becoming an honored ancestor after death.

The core of the Dynchia code of honor is a warrior ethic. Every Dynchia adult is expected to be able to defend his rights in combat. Children are trained in unarmed combat, weapons, and tactics as part of their normal upbringing. When approaching adulthood, they undergo a rite of passage which involves several ordeals. About 7% of children fail to

pass the ordeals, and die in the attempt. Most adults carefully maintain their level of training throughout their lives.

Dynchia honor also calls for respect for the life, property, and customs of others. Killing and assault are considered terrible crimes, except in the context of an honorable duel. Theft and damage to property are also slights to honor, and subject to severe punishment. Significantly, the Dynchia have always regarded environmental damage as dishonorable. Anyone who pollutes the air or water, or ruins an ecosystem, has almost certainly damaged the property of others and is subject to penalties. Finally, every Dynchia is expected to respect the ancestral shrines and traditional rites of others. To treat another's sacred things lightly is considered extremely impolite and can quickly lead to a combat challenge.

Duels are fairly frequent in Dynchia society, and are a common method for resolving disputes. Most duels are fought unarmed, and resemble boxing or karate matches. Some duels are fought with traditional melee weapons, usually blunted ones such as the quarterstaff-like *piradyn* or the imported Solomani *bokken*. Only if the matter of honor is very serious will the combatants use edged weapons, with the accompanying likelihood of mortal damage. Duels are *never* fought with ranged weapons, since the dispute-resolution process requires disputants to confront each other face-to-face and at close quarters.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The Dynchia are natural libertarians, and have few laws. The code of honor which is respected by all right-thinking Dynchia performs many of the functions of law, and is enforced by the willingness of most adults to fight in its defense. As a result, they have little need for strong government. Despite this, they have formed a unified interstellar state, the Comitia of the Dynchia.

Tribal Councils

To support the traditions, each tribe maintains a hierarchy of *kyr* or "tribal councils." The lowest-level councils are associated with individual clans. About half a dozen of each clan's most prominent members will form its *kyr*, selecting one of their own number to act as *kyrren* or clan chief. The method for selecting *kyr* members varies from clan to clan, but the method usually combines the consensus of the clan's members with the ability of a candidate to win combat challenges. In most cases, the *kyr* recruits its own members by selecting likely candidates from the rank and file of the clan.

More senior *kyr* appear whenever there are more than a few thousand Dynchia present from any one tribe. Normally, a higher-level *kyr* recruits its members from among 30 to 50 lesser councils. Thus, every 100,000 or so members of a given tribe will be represented by a second-tier *kyr*, every few million by a third-tier *kyr*. The tribal *kyr* normally accumulate no more authority than this. There is no system of planetary *kyr*, for example, although some low-population Dynchia worlds effectively have them because they were settled predominantly by one tribe.

A *kyr* exists to lead by example, interpreting the traditions and making policy decisions for the clan or tribe. However, most *kyr* spend the bulk of their time resolving internal disputes. They do this by interpreting the traditions, and by providing arbitration when asked, often by refereeing a duel. The *kyr* makes sure that passions do not get out of hand and that the duel is fought fairly. In rare cases, the *kyr* may provide a champion for a wronged Dynchia who is likely to be outmatched by his opponent.

Naturally, the tribes must cooperate with one another. On a local level, this is usually accomplished by informal liaisons between the *kyr* for each tribe. The Dynchia have also established a formal system of intertribal councils. Any population of Dynchia above the level of a large city is likely to have a *parenkyr* (literally, a "two-hand council" or "council of 12") in place. The *parenkyr* make certain that the various tribal *kyr* do not work at cross-purposes, and they prevent intertribal disputes from getting out of hand. They recruit members just as the tribal *kyr* do, with the proviso that each member must be from a different tribe. This usually means that the 12 most prominent tribes in a given area will be represented on the *parenkyr*.

A few Dynchia worlds are military or corporate outposts, or are very new colonies which have been settled primarily by a single tribe. Every other Dynchia world has a single *parenkyr* which stands at the head of planetary government. As a result, almost all Dynchia worlds have the "oligarchy" government type.

At the highest level of the Comitia there is a *parenkyr* which acts as the Council of the Twelve Tribes, the highest intertribal council of the Dynchia. In theory, this Council acquires its members the same way that any of the lower councils do. In practice, there is actually very little change in the tribal makeup of the Council of the Twelve Tribes. When a Council Tribe is displaced, it is a very momentous event (and often the result of a major intertribal conflict).

Military Institutions

Surprisingly, the Comitia does maintain a standing military, with services corresponding roughly to the Imperial Navy, Marines, and Scouts. This military establishment is subject only to the Council of the Twelve Tribes, and its members are freed from any obligation to their own clan and tribe while they are in service. The Navy and Marines form the primary military arm of the Comitia, protecting Dynchia commerce and acting as the first line of defense for Dynchia worlds. The *restai* or Scouts are a combined survey and intelligence agency, working to ensure that Dynchia leaders have a clear picture of events inside and outside the Comitia's borders.

The Comitia's standing military forces are organized very similarly to those of the Imperium. They were originally founded after contact with the Rule of Man, and were deliberately designed on a mix of Terran and Vilani models much like those contributing to the modern Imperial organization. Dynchia Standard has borrowed many military terms, including most of its titles of military rank, from Galanglic.

Solomani in the Comitia

The Solomani who have settled in Comitia space have adopted many aspects of Dynchia culture. They follow the same code of honor, obey most of the same traditions, and resolve disputes with their neighbors in the same ways. The major difference is that the Solomani have never adopted the "rites of passage" in which so many Dynchia youths meet their ends. This does not make the Comitia Solomani any less martial in outlook. It means simply that they do not require their children to measure up to the Dynchia standard of toughness and aggressiveness.

Legally, Solomani citizens of the Comitia are regarded as belonging to the "13th tribe." They have representation on all levels of the government, with at least one Solomani on each *parenkyr* holding jurisdiction over a region with significant Solomani population. Even on the Council of the Twelve Tribes itself, a Solomani delegate is present (the Voice of the Thirteenth Tribe). The Voice has the right to sit in on meetings and speak, although in this case he has no vote.

The Comitia maintains no equivalent to the Imperial Army. Instead, the Dynchia warrior ethic leads all Dynchia adults to maintain their martial skills. As a result, the entire Dynchia population can act as an effective militia when needed. It might be possible to eradicate the Dynchia race, but it is generally believed that the fanatic resistance of the population would make it impossible to conquer any Dynchia world. Since the Dynchia do not fight wars of aggression, army units are not only unnecessary, they are almost unthinkable.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Dynchia Comitia is limited to TL10, but this is not a serious handicap. Few of the Comitia's close neighbors have even that level of technology. In any case, the Dynchia approach to technology involves a distinctive set of design theories. Dynchia equipment is always designed for maximum efficiency and beauty. Dynchia architecture, too, is renowned for its superb design and aesthetic value. The Dynchia tend to get the most out of the limited technology they have.

The Dynchia use the typical equipment, vehicles and starships of a TL10 civilization. GMs who wish to design items of Dynchia manufacture may assume that they follow Imperial models with regard to game mechanics. Dynchia equipment tends to be slightly more reliable or efficient than its Imperial counterpart. Weapons may have a slightly lower chance of malfunction, a few more shots per energy cell, or (in rare cases) a +1 to Accuracy. Other equipment may have a little more endurance, slightly longer range, and so on. Meanwhile, all Dynchia equipment will be designed for beauty as well as function. Items of Dynchia manufacture are usually available in the nearest Imperial or Solomani regions, at about 5% above the cost of analogous local equipment.

The Dynchia have a relatively low rate of population growth. As a result, they usually have plenty of time to develop a world with care before being forced by population pressure to expand. Dynchia worlds tend to be marvels of ecological engineering, with all urban and industrial areas fully integrated into the local ecology. Melantris, for example, has almost no pollution problem, despite a population in the billions. Meanwhile, the Dynchia ability to make the most of their technology means that they have more sheer economic power than one might expect from their population and technological base.

Where Is Melantris, Anyway?

The original article on the Dynchia was prepared without reference to some *Traveller* source material, notably GDW's *Atlas of the Imperium*. As a result, the article was somewhat incompatible with this other canonical material.

Fortunately the incompatibility is not hard to resolve, so long as we are not wedded to the maps and world data in the *Atlas of the Imperium*. In this book, we assume that the Dynchia are where they were originally placed: in the "neutral" space between the Imperium, the Solomani Confederation, and the Hive Federation. In this view, the Comitia controls most of the spinward-rimward quarter of what is now called Leonidae Sector, along with a few systems across the border in Hinterworlds Sector. The exact location of Melantris can be left up to the individual GM (the original Dynchia article placed it in subsector M of the sector later named Leonidae).

This location makes the Dynchia Comitia an interesting place for adventure, with Imperial, Solomani, and Hiver influences. The Comitia pursues a course of proud independence, but there is doubtless considerable political intrigue behind the scenes as the three major powers all try to push their influence into the region. The Solomani Confederation is probably the most aggressive in this respect. Consider that the Comitia is probably the most important Human state near the Solomani border that is run by a *minor race*, rather than Solomani expatriates. Such a situation is a clear challenge to the Solomani Cause . . .

Meanwhile, Dynchia characters are likely to appear in the Solomani Confederation, in Hiver space, and in the Imperial Old Expanses. Such Dynchia are most likely to be merchants, scouts, or adventurers.

Dynchia worlds tend to be marvels of ecological engineering, with all urban and industrial areas fully integrated into the local ecology. [T]he Dynchia ability to make the most of their technology means that they have more sheer economic power than one might expect from their population and technological base.

MELANTRIS (LEONIDAE SECTOR)

Starport: Class V.

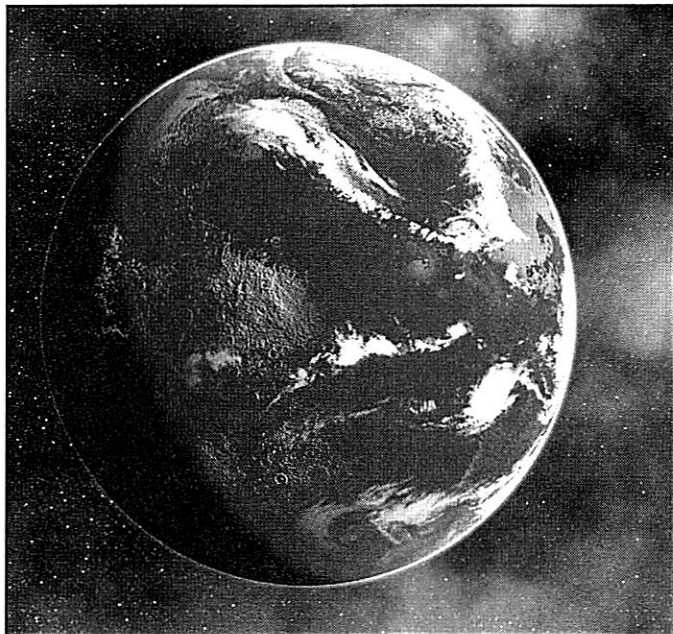
Diameter: 6,200 miles (9,980 km). *Gravity:* 0.77 G.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 62%.

Climate: Cool. *Population:* 4.6 billion. *Government:* Oligarchy (the Council of the Twelve Tribes). *Control Rating:* 4. *TL:* 10. *Gas Giants:* 2. *WTN:* 5.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

The primary star of Melantris is Sialann, a G7 V star with mass about 0.89 of Sol and luminosity about 0.62 of Sol. Melantris is the third planet of Sialann, orbiting at a distance of 0.9 AU.

Inside the orbit of Melantris are two smaller worlds, neither of which is inhabited. The fourth planet of Sialann is a large terrestrial world, with considerable liquid water, ice, and a hostile nitrogen-dominated atmosphere. This world (Peren-tris) is being slowly terraformed by the Dynchia, who are attempting to raise its surface temperature and alter its atmospheric composition. There are no gas giants in the Sialann system, although there is a dim (M8 V) red dwarf companion. This companion star has an average separation from Sialann of about 70 AU, but its orbit is fairly eccentric. Every few centuries, at closest approach, it comes within 20 AU.



There is evidence that Sialann is almost exactly the same age as Sol, and it is possible that the two stars formed in the same nursery cloud billions of years ago. Whether or not this is the case, Melantris and Earth are of almost identical composition and have very similar geology and ecology. Each is tectonically active, with high mountains, wide plains, and deep oceans. Each has extensive and diverse native ecologies. The local biochemistry is entirely compatible with Human life, although some native foods are hard for non-Dynchia to digest. Melantris does not appear to have given rise to native sentient life, and the most intelligent animal species on the planet have IQ of about 5.

DYNCHIA CHARACTERS

Dynchia of either sex are 16" taller than a normal Human with the same ST. Their weight is 70 pounds less than that of a normal Human of the same height.

DYNCHIA RACIAL TEMPLATE

12 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: DX +1 [10].

Advantages: Sharp Teeth [5].

Disadvantages: Dull [-1]; Proud [-1]; Undiscriminating [-1].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Clerical Investment *see p. B19*

Every clan and tribe maintains its own shrines, at which rituals are held in honor of revered ancestors. Each shrine is held by one or more priests, who are responsible for maintaining the shrine and leading rituals. The position is somewhat prestigious, and gains its holders a +1 reaction from almost all Dynchia (whether or not they are from the same clan or tribe). It may be associated with a Duty, although this is rarely more than "occasional" (a -2-point disadvantage).

Military Rank *see p. B22*

The Dynchia have adopted a system of military hierarchy very similar to the Imperial or Solomani models. Dynchia characters can therefore use the normal rules for Military Rank. A character in the Comitia military is considered to have one level of Status for every three full levels of Military Rank.

A Dynchia who honorably leaves the Comitia military can retain his Courtesy Rank. His Status is considered equal to that derived from his previous Military Rank or that of his clan position, whichever is better.

Sharp Teeth *see p. C167*

Dynchia teeth do cutting damage.

Social Status *see p. B18*

The basic Status of a given character depends on his clan's fame (or notoriety) and his position within the clan. For example:

Status	Clan Membership
4	Leading clan of a tribe
3	Clan is prominent on a single world
2	Clan is prominent in a local region
1	Large or successful clan
0	Ordinary clan
-1	Small or unsuccessful clan
-2	Obscure or infamous clan
-3	Clanless outcast



Add +1 to Status if the character is a junior member of his clan's *kyr*, or +2 if he or she is the clan chief. If a Dynchia founds a new clan, the base Status of his newly established clan is normally 2 less than that of his original clan. The GM may modify this if the clan founder is a famous or influential person in his own right.

Characters serving in the Comitia military are considered to stand outside the clan system, deriving Status from their military rank. Solomani citizens of the Comitia also stand outside the clan system, and are considered to have Status no higher than 0. Non-Dynchia who gain prestige within Dynchia society normally acquire a positive Reputation rather than levels of Status.

Code of Honor (Dynchia) *see p. B31*

A respectable Dynchia follows a strict code of honor. He always speaks the truth, and never breaks his word once it is given. He obeys the traditions of his clan and tribe, and listens to the advice of his tribal councils. He never overlooks an insult to himself, to his clan or tribe, or to his revered ancestors. He respects the lives and property of others. He protects the harmony of the natural environment. He never attempts to coerce others through force or threat. He stands

ready to defend his rights or avenge insults through honorable combat. This code of honor is a -15-point disadvantage, and – although it is not part of the Dynchia racial template – it is shared by almost all members of the race.

Dull *see p. C189*

Dynchia are traditionalists and rarely innovate.

Proud *see p. C193*

Dynchia are easily offended and very touchy about matters of personal honor.

Undiscriminating *see p. C194*

Dynchia tend not to make “us versus them” comparisons, whether between men and women, between members of different tribes, or between Dynchia and offworlders.

SKILLS

Certain skills work slightly differently for Dynchia, or have a special emphasis within Dynchia society.

Combat Skills

Almost all adult Dynchia characters have several points in combat and survival skills. These are not innate to the race (and so are not in the racial template), resulting from early training and the rite-of-passage ordeals. No matter what career a given Dynchia eventually follows, a reasonable minimum would be skills of 11 or more in one Survival specialty, one of either Beam Weapons or Guns, and one of either Brawling or Karate.

Aside from the usual skills useful in high-tech combat situations, the Dynchia have a number of traditional weapons which are used in duels. Katana skill is useful for Dynchia bladed weapons, the most prestigious of which strongly resemble the Japanese longsword. It also applies for the *bokken*, the wooden “practice” sword which was enthusiastically adopted by the Dynchia from Solomani models. Staff skill is also handy, as the Dynchia often use the quarterstaff-like *piradyn* for ritual combat.

Heraldry *see p. B58*

The Dynchia make much use of heraldic symbols. These resemble the *mon* of feudal Japan, symbols to be painted or embroidered on banners rather than on shields. Each tribe has its own overall motif; clans within the tribe develop their own embellishments on the basic tribal symbol. Anyone aware of this symbology has an advantage when dealing with Dynchia, since they can recognize the clan and tribal background of people, places, or things at a glance. Anyone taking Heraldry for use in Dynchia society must specialize.

History *see p. B61*

Any character may specialize in the history of a specific Dynchia tribe or clan. Each bloodline group keeps its own chronicles, which may differ in content or emphasis from those of other clans.

Adventure Seeds

The Holy Grail

An important Dynchia clan leader has learned that one of his tribe's sacred relics, long thought lost, has appeared in Imperial space. The relic is a chalice, made of gold, beautifully embossed, and decorated with gemstones. The clan leader hires the PCs to accompany an expert in tribal history into Imperial space, acquire the chalice, and return it to the tribe's foremost shrine on Melantris.

Naturally, the job isn't as easy as it sounds. The chalice itself may not be authentic (the Dynchia expert will know for certain, if she has a chance to examine it closely). Unfortunately, the Imperial art collector who is currently in possession of the chalice is unwilling to sell it and refuses to allow a close examination. Meanwhile, as the PCs travel, they find that they are being followed and hindered by Dynchia from a different tribe. If they do manage to recover the chalice, the followers become actively hostile and attack the party, attempting to seize the relic for themselves.

Why would any Dynchia hinder an effort to recover sacred relics? And how was the chalice lost in the first place? Neither the patron nor the Dynchia accompanying the party is very forthcoming. As the adventure proceeds, it should be obvious that the party has fallen into the middle of a matter of Dynchia honor.

The Contender

While visiting the Comitia, the PCs are contacted by a young Solomani woman. She explains that she has been adopted by a Dynchia from the Lian tribe. While such cross-racial adoptions are rare, they do occur, and they mean that the Solomani adoptee is legally considered a Dynchia and a member of the Twelve Tribes. Most such adoptions are into obscure clans, but this young woman has been adopted into a major clan and could potentially become an important figure in Dynchia politics. That is, if she can win a leadership position in her adopted clan.

The patron wishes to hire the PC party as unofficial bodyguards, advisors, spies, troubleshooters, or anything else that fits their skills. With their help, she intends to climb the ranks of clan leadership and seize a place for herself on the clan's *kyr*. This will require a variety of maneuvers, including business negotiations, political intrigue, and a series of personal-combat challenges. She will face opposition, both from within her clan and from outsiders who will resent any intrusion of a non-Dynchia into tribal politics.

If the patron succeeds in her quest, she will be in a position to reward the adventurers handsomely. If she fails, of course, they will likely earn the enmity of many powerful Dynchia.

Star-Crossed Lovers

The adventurers are contacted by a pair of young Dynchia. Their two clans have been feuding for many years, but they themselves are in love and wish to mate formally. They plan to escape from their families and travel to a world on the opposite side of the Comitia. There they hope to establish a clan of their own, far from the vendetta that threatens to blight their relationship. However, they are quite young, uneasy at the prospect of traveling such a long distance alone. They wish to hire the party to escort them until they are safely away from their families' influence. The young woman reveals that a friend has already moved to their target world and established a prosperous business, which she and her lover intend to join. Thus, although they have little money on hand, they should be able to reward the adventurers once they reach their destination.

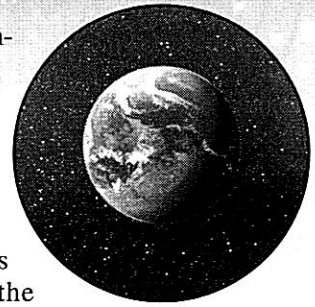
Naturally, both clans regard the escape as an insult to their honor and send agents to hinder or attack the fleeing couple. Other clans may interfere out of a desire to avoid being pulled into the vendetta. On the other hand, the young Dynchia are only naive, not helpless, and both of them fight alongside the PCs when necessary.

Power to the People!

The Solomani citizens on a Dynchia world have been exhibiting disturbing behavior of late. They have been mounting mass demonstrations, demanding their "Human rights" and greater autonomy within the Comitia. Young Solomani have openly rejected Dynchia folkways in favor of an idealized version of ancient Terran culture. Some of the protests have turned violent. In particular, several Dynchia have been mobbed after trying to press honor challenges against particularly insulting demonstrators.

An important Dynchia clan leader hires the adventurers (some of whom should be non-Dynchia) to infiltrate the protest movement. She wishes to know whether any outside forces are behind the protests. Although the protestors are not openly avowing the Solomani Cause, some of their rhetoric does sound as if it was written within the Solomani Confederation. To make matters more complicated, an unusual number of Hivers have recently been visiting the planet, and it's possible that they are performing some kind of obscure manipulation.

The infiltration requires that the PCs understand both Dynchia culture and the new ideology of the protest movement, the better to blend in. They will find that the inner circle of the movement uses strict security procedures . . . and is ruthless toward potential spies.



Law

see p. B58

Although Dynchia law varies from tribe to tribe and clan to clan, the variations are relatively minor. Any character may specialize in Law (Dynchia), but narrower specializations are not very useful.

Tournament Law

see p. C1147

This skill is particularly useful for those who take part in, or referee, Dynchia honor duels. A specialization in the Dynchia dueling code is required. This code was standardized by the Council of the Twelve Tribes centuries ago, and applies to all Dynchia (and to non-Dynchia, when they take part in duels).

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Most of the character templates in *GURPS Traveller* are suitable for Dynchia characters. The Barbarian template is unavailable, since the Dynchia sphere contains no technologically backward worlds. The Army templates are available, but should be quite rare since Dynchia worlds do not maintain large standing army units. Most Dynchia looking for a "soldier" background should choose the Marine templates.

The following template is specific to Dynchia society.

Kyrantis (Councilor)

66 points

The leaders of any given clan are its *kyrantis*, the members of its clan council. Such individuals do much of the work of holding Dynchia society together, coordinating the efforts of various clans and preventing disputes from getting out of hand. The job requires quick wits, a talent for negotiation, and enough hand-to-hand combat skills to be able to knock heads when necessary. The higher status the *kyrantis* holds, the more influence he wields. A Status 1 *kyrantis* is an ordinary councilor of an ordinary clan, while a Status 6 *kyrantis* sits on the Council of the Twelve Tribes.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Status 1 [5] and 20 points selected from Charisma [5/level]; Claim to Hospitality (Clan) [5]; Clerical Investment (Priest of clan shrines) [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Common Sense [10]; Reputation [Varies]; Sanctity [5]; additional levels of Status [5/level]; Voice [10]; and Wealth [10 or 20].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Dynchia) [-15] and a total of 15 points selected from Age [-3/year over 50]; Duty (To clan, 9 or less) [-5]; Enemy (Personal or clan rival) [Varies]; Overconfidence [-10]; Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10]; Sense of Duty (To clan) [-10]; and Truthfulness [-5].

Primary Skills: Karate (P/H) DX+1 [8]-13; Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Politics (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [0]-14*.

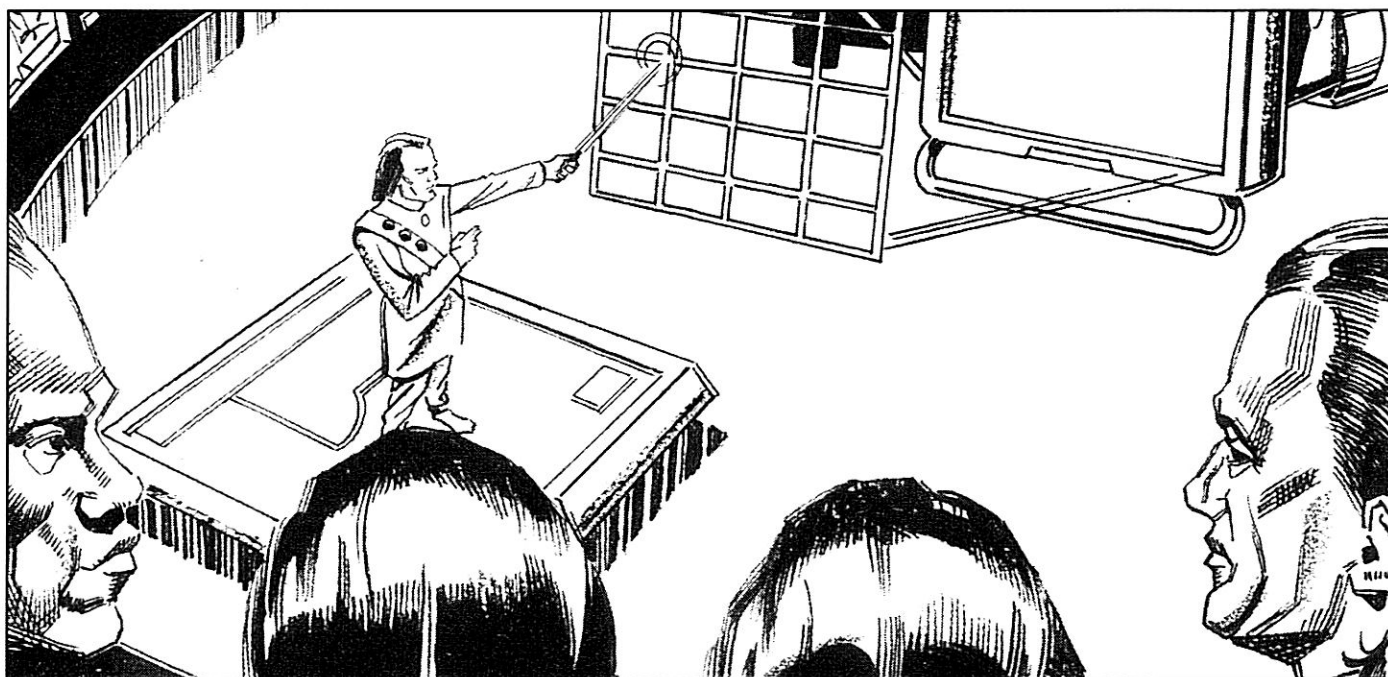
* Default from Status.

Secondary Skills: Administration (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Beam Weapons (any) (P/E) DX+1 [1/2]-13*; Diplomacy (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Guns (any) (P/E) DX+1 [1/2]-13*; Survival (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Tournament Law (Dynchia dueling code) (M/E) IQ [1]-12.

* Includes +2 for IQ.

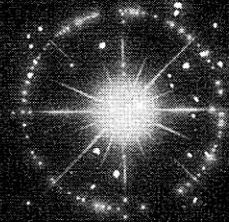
Background Skills: A total of 5 points in Appreciate Beauty (M/VH); Detect Lies (M/H); Fast-Talk (M/A); Heraldry (Dynchia) (M/A); History (Clan) (M/H); more Karate; Katana (P/A); Law (Dynchia) (M/H); Staff (P/H); Tactics (M/H); or Theology (clan) (M/H).

Customization Notes: Use the background skills (and specializations) to flesh out the kind of councilor the *kyrantis* is. An expert in duels has extra Karate skill, Katana (for the *bokken*), or Staff, and probably has more Tournament Law as well. An expert in clan lore has Heraldry and History. A mediator has Detect Lies, Fast-Talk, and Law.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Floriani



The Florian League is a small interstellar state in the Trojan Reach sector, some distance to spinward of Imperial space. This enigmatic civilization is dominated by *two* Human-like species, the Barnai and Feskals, living in a symbiotic relationship. The two species exhibit a brains-vs.-brawn division, with the diminutive Barnai making decisions and the powerful Feskals working as laborers.

As the Imperium expands into the Trojan Reach, the Floriani are of interest as a potential ally or client state. On the other hand, the connection between the two Floriani species is uncomfortably close to a master-slave relationship, which makes Imperial relations with the Florian League difficult. Still, over time the League and its mysterious inhabitants are likely to be increasingly important to the Imperium.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Although there are clear signs of Ancient activity in the Floria system, the exact origin of the two Floriani species is unclear. Biological evidence indicates that the Barnai and Feskals were both subjected to massive genetic manipulation during the Ancient era. Neither of the Floriani species has shown significant biological change in the last 300,000 years. Paleontologists working on Floria have turned up both Barnai and Feskals skeletons from the Ancient era, their physiology virtually identical to that of the modern species. It seems likely that the Ancients designed the Floriani to be very resistant to mutation, a feat which would require drastic changes to the Human genome.

Although there are clear signs of Ancient activity in the Floria system, the exact origin of the two Floriani species is unclear.

In any case, both Floriani species were apparently specifically designed for servitude. The Barnai had the cognitive skills necessary to work with advanced technology, but were psychologically incapable of creative thought. Meanwhile, the Feskals were physically powerful, ideally formed for strenuous labor, but docile and subservient.

How the Floriani fared during the Final War is unknown. The two species appear to have adapted to the loss of their Ancient masters with little difficulty, the Barnai smoothly taking over a superior role as the Feskals continued to serve.

Floriani civilization is extremely old, and it's possible that the early Floriani never lost all of the technology that they had learned from the Ancients.

The first known agricultural cultures on Floria appeared at least 50,000 years ago; there may be older examples that have not yet come to light. On the other hand, while Floriani civilization was very stable in isolation, it also advanced with glacial slowness. The first Florian space probes were not launched until the middle of the Long Night, about -1000.

THE END OF ISOLATION

The reason for the glacial pace of Floriani advance was rooted in Floriani psychology. Almost completely lacking in imagination, the Floriani were unable to innovate. New technologies or cultural patterns sometimes required thousands of years to appear, simply because the Floriani could not *imagine* a better way of doing things.

This state of affairs came to an abrupt end in -170. In that year, an Aslan scout ship misjumped to the Floriani home system and went into an unstable orbit around Floria. When they investigated, the Floriani were shocked to discover a crew of dead aliens and machinery unlike any they had seen before. The ship was disassembled in orbit, and every weld and mechanism scrutinized with the greatest care.

The Floriani mind may be unimaginative, but when presented with a working example of new technology, it can find applications with lightning speed. Within a few years, the first Floriani starship was ready to test.

The Floriani expanded slowly and methodically into nearby space. Initial expansion was hampered by astrography; Floria is relatively isolated, with the nearest star systems at jump-3 distance. The Floriani spent decades simply exploring the nearest star systems, establishing no outposts or colonies. Each new system they reached was thoroughly examined before the next expedition was launched.

First contact with living aliens came in about 50, at a world named Trossachs. The inhabitants were of Vilani origin, descended from refugees who had fled the fall of the First Imperium. In recent years they had become increasingly concerned at the presence of Aslan *ihatei* in the region, so they were happy to make the acquaintance of new Human neighbors. The Barnai quickly learned the Trossach language, and negotiations began.

Both worlds brought valuable resources to the table. The Floriani had advanced to TL10 almost overnight, thanks to the Aslan ship they had found. Trossachs had the population to exploit that technology for the benefit of both worlds.

THE FLORIAN LEAGUE AND OTHER HUMAN STATES

Floriani scouts encountered a large Human state for the first time about 150, when several Imperial traders reported meeting the Floriani in what was to become the Pax Rulin subsector. These early meetings were brief and never amounted to more than a superficial exchange of information. Formal diplomatic contact opened with the Imperium in 185. The Zhodani were the next to contact the League, reaching the edge of Floriani territory early in the third century.

Events were moving too quickly for the methodical League. The Zhodani contact set off a long period of isolationism, while Barnai leaders struggled to establish rules for dealing with other races. On one hand, these strange Humans evidently were not about to try to overrun the League. On the other hand, the foreigners' ability to innovate was terrifying to the hidebound Barnai.

As the Floriani learned more about the state of interstellar affairs, they realized that their own security required the foundation of an interstellar state. In 506, the Floriani and their closest Human neighbors formed the Florian League. This League cautiously set out making new contacts with the Imperium, the Sword Worlds, the Darrians, and the Zhodani. League scouts kept the exact location of their home stars secret, preferring to hold these new neighbors at a distance while learning about their technologies. This period of sporadic contact came to an end in 589, with the outbreak of the First Frontier War. Once again, the Floriani withdrew into isolation.

The League expanded slowly, fearful of creating an incident with nearby *ihatei* worlds. By about 700, the League had reached its current size of about two subsectors. At that point, the time to travel between Floria and the periphery of the League had become great enough to interfere with the League's system of representative government. Rather than look for a new form of organization, the Floriani simply halted their expansion.

Within the League, Floriani life continued as it had for centuries. Most League worlds forgot about the larger states. The Floriani turned to nearer and more urgent concerns, such as *ihatei* encroachment and the growing threat of a renegade Aslan state, the Glorious Empire.

THE LAST CENTURY

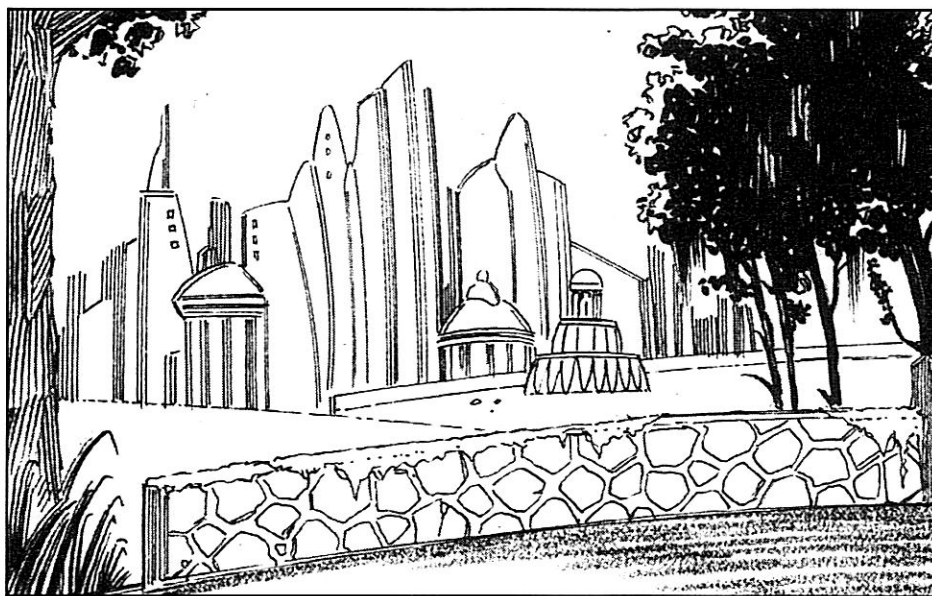
In the last 100 years, the Floriani have begun dealing with the fact that they cannot stand alone. Increased pressure from Aslan *ihatei* and the Glorious Empire has pushed several worlds to the brink. Traders have been arriving in greater numbers, from more distant Aslan clans and from the Imperium. Florian society is being forced to change again, and few among the Barnai can foresee the end result.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Strictly speaking, the Floriani are not biological Humans, or even hominids. Although some Floriani genetic sequences can also be found in various Human races, the overall genetic structures are utterly different. Scientists have speculated that the two races are completely artificial genetic constructs, built by the Ancients on a template of Human DNA. The two races are certainly incapable of interbreeding with any other Humans (or with each other), and must be considered a pair of completely distinct species.

In fact, although Barnai and Feskals cannot interbreed, there is a poorly understood biological link between them. Although they do not engage in common mating activity, each species appears to need the presence of the other to permit conception and successful pregnancy. Barnai and Feskals therefore act as a pair of symbiotic species, unable to survive without one another. Multiple births are common among the Feskals, but extremely rare and dangerous among the Barnai.

Both Floriani species have dark skin, ranging from chocolate brown to almost black. Both have four fingers and toes, and deep-set eyes under heavy brow ridges. They lack an appendix and do not grow the "wisdom teeth" found in many other species of Humaniti.



Both species are well-adapted to Floria's 32-hour day and chilly temperatures. Floriani spend close to 60% of their time asleep, taking frequent naps even during the daylight hours. They are difficult to rouse from sleep. Floriani cannot tolerate temperatures above 80 degrees, quickly becoming fatigued and dehydrated under such conditions.

The Floriani have excellent senses of taste and smell. They consider cooking to be a high form of art, and are very picky about the cleanliness of any place they have to live. This sense doesn't approach the levels of acuity enjoyed by the K'kree, but it sometimes allows them to identify friends by scent.

Barnai

The average Barnai stands 5'4" and weighs 125 pounds. They are slim, with thin limbs and long fingers and toes. On the other hand, they have slightly larger braincases than other Human races, giving them a slightly childish look. They grow body hair, which is usually very thick and dark. Due to their slim, large-brained physiology, Barnai women find pregnancy to be unusually difficult. Multiple births are quite rare and very dangerous.

Feskals

In contrast to their smaller cousins, the Feskals tower over most other races. The average Feskai stands 6'5" and can weigh up to 300 pounds. All Feskals are heavily muscled, and exhibit extremely high endurance. Unlike the Barnai, Feskals never grow body hair. Instead, they have a layer of fat that gives them a deceptively plump, rounded look. This fat layer helps them withstand cold weather, but makes them even more susceptible to heat than the Barnai.

Feskals are robust and strongly built, suffering none of the handicaps that slow Barnai reproduction. Feskai women bear children with ease, and multiple births are common. In a normal Floriani population, there are usually about five Feskals for every Barnai.

Feskai bodies are optimized for physical labor. Their muscles are well developed, and their tendons are heavier than those of most creatures of similar size. The Feskai backbone is

heavier, with fewer bones than is normal for other Humans. This makes the Feskals less limber, but reduces back injuries. Feskals are relatively insensitive to pain, because the density of their surface nerves is lower than that found in Barnai or in other species of Humaniti.

Feskals are vegetarians, and can digest grasses that most species of Humaniti cannot. They often chew on a wad of pleasantly flavored grass while working. Strictly speaking, Feskals do not chew cud, but this habit can give that impression.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The primary Floriani language is extremely complex, with multiple intonations and stresses. To an uneducated listener, it is very difficult to understand (treat it as a Mental/Hard skill). The Feskals use a simplified dialect among themselves, and the Barnai also use this dialect to give orders to Feskals. They never use the Feskai language with outsiders, understanding that this might be insulting.

The Barnai are capable of learning and using non-Floriani languages. The most common language used for trade and diplomacy is the Vilani-descended dialect originally spoken on Trossachs. A few Barnai speak Galanglic or the primary Aslan language.

"Although my years in the Florian League were commercial rather than diplomatic, my group was treated as if we had diplomatic credentials (working for Hortalez et Cie has its advantages), and we were invited to all the important state affairs. I made a muddle of my first formal reception when I neglected to consider that (to my hosts) my choice of cologne and shampoo clashed in a most uncomplimentary way. After a few minutes of conversation, every native found some excuse to move on. I later discovered that the Barnai have a highly developed sense of smell, and an even more highly developed sense of perfumery."

– Ioshi de la Mare,
Forty Years with HeC

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

The Zhodani who first contacted the Floriani described them as "the most uncreative race known to the stars." There is some truth to this perception, although the situation is not quite so simple.

The Barnai are quite intelligent, and possess remarkable reasoning powers. More than half of them exhibit some level of eidetic memory, and many individuals possess unusual ability in mathematics or language. Despite these talents, Barnai are hidebound in the extreme. They find it very difficult to follow an unfamiliar chain of reasoning, or to make leaps of inductive thought. As a result, true creativity is almost unknown among them. They do not regard change or innovation as evil, but they find such concepts very difficult to understand.

Meanwhile, although the Feskals have awesome physical capability, they are dull, incurious, and very poor at abstract thought. Few of them ever bother to learn to read, much less study any subject outside their immediate concerns of daily life and work. They are also very docile and compliant. If a Barani were to order a Feskai to dig a mine with his bare hands, the Feskai worker would comply, never questioning the order, never even thinking of the possibility of digging tools.

With these handicaps, the Floriani are dismal innovators. On the other hand, the Barnai in particular are superb at copying what others have already done. They are also quite capable of making incremental improvements to technologies or ideas with which they are already familiar. As a result, the Floriani are far from stagnant. When offered the chance to advance by copying the technologies of others, they can adapt and grow at astonishing speed. For example, an Aslan ship misjumped into Floria in -170, giving the Floriani their first working example of the jump drive. Within 10 years, the Floriani had mounted their first interstellar expedition.

RELIGION

The Barnai take the observed ratio of five Feskals to one Barnai, and apply it to their beliefs about the spiritual world. According to Floriani faith, there is a guardian spirit for every five Barnai, a more powerful spirit overseeing those five, and so on. At the top of the pyramid is an all-powerful deity that the Barnai equate with the universe as a whole.

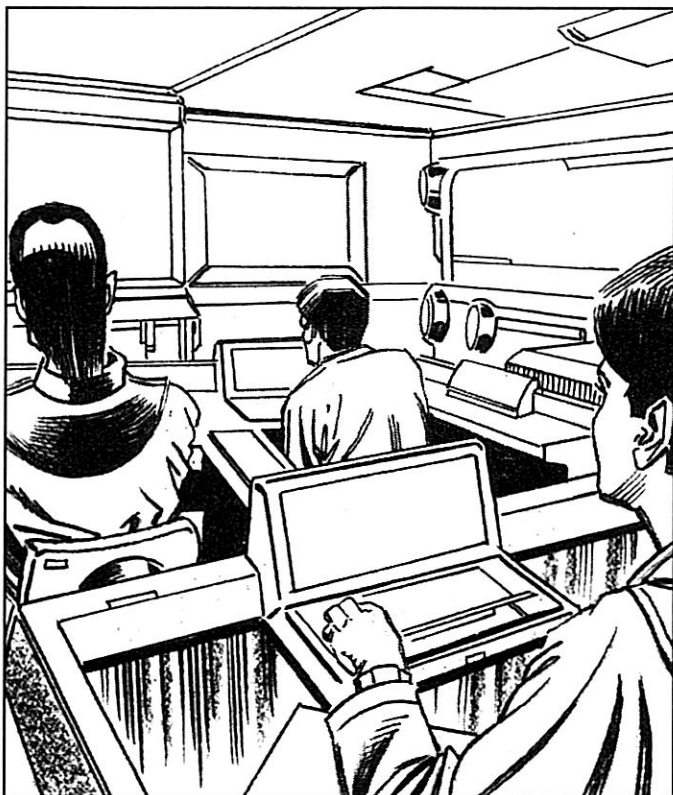
The Barnai believe that souls are reincarnated into higher forms after death. A Barnai who lives a particularly meritorious life will not return as a Barnai, but will be promoted to existence as a guardian spirit. From there, he may climb the spiritual ladder into greater heights of wisdom and contentment. It is seen as the personal duty of each Barnai to work toward ascension into the spirit realm, by living his life according to the rules of the faith. These rules resemble those of Zen Buddhism. Devout Barnai spend will spend hours meditating and performing yoga-like rituals. Killing is seen as a stain on the soul of both the killer and the victim.

Feskals do not take a direct part in Floriani religious life. The official view is that the Feskals are perfection in



servitude, and a necessary step in the advancement of the soul. Feskals who show signs of unusual intelligence are considered ready to advance to a stage in which they will be reincarnated into a Barnai form. Such Feskals are sometimes invited to take part in rituals which prepare them for their next life.

Floriani religion had to make major adjustments when alien races were contacted. After much discussion and meditation, it was decided that other Humans were "lesser vessels," souls that had not yet achieved the level of advancement necessary to become Floriani. Non-Human aliens are considered little better than animals, and doomed to oblivion after death. These views can be seen as condescending when expressed poorly.



SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Despite its small size, the Florian League incorporates a number of distinct cultures. Aside from the Barnai and Feskals, there are large numbers of non-Floriani Humans, and even a few Aslan who have sworn allegiance to the League. The League's structure permits all of these diverse groups to live according to their own customs.

BARNAI SOCIETY

The dominant Barnai live in extended families, in which several adults live together to share responsibilities and sexual relationships. These relationships can become very complex, since each family will have its own hierarchies of primary and secondary partnerships. Families do not necessarily live in the same location.

Among the Barnai, there is no legal concept of marriage. The law recognizes that an individual joins a family by simple mutual consent. The individual and his prospective partners simply declare publicly that they desire to live as a family.

The Barnai treasure their children, who are rare and born with difficulty. There is no special significance attached to being a child's birth parent, although a woman is normally excused from family duties for a period following birth. All of a family's children are raised cooperatively by the adults.

Barnai live a life of leisure for their first 16 years. Schooling consists of directed personal study, with each student pursuing individual interests. Once a Barnai reaches maturity at the age of 20, he is expected to perform some sort of public service for a few years. This can be military service,

or working in the bureaucracy that runs the Florian League. After that, he can find work in the private sector as he pleases, or go into business for himself.

Barnai tend to specialize in one profession, which they retain for their entire lives. A Barnai who wishes to change professions as an adult is regarded as somewhat perverse. It is socially acceptable to take up a hobby that duplicates some other job field, but wanting to be paid for it is wrong. Ironically, a common figure in Barnai fiction is the talented amateur who sees an answer that the professionals have missed.

FESKAL SOCIETY

Feskals live in similar situations, with less complex social interaction. A group of Feskals will simply assume that they are a family until they are told differently. Unlike the Barnai, Feskals do not seem to bond with their children, and easily accept their loss to job training at an early age. There have been rare cases of Feskals forming strong pair bonds, or trying to keep their children, but this is regarded as a sign of mental illness.

The Floriani are socially dependent on the Barnai. Feskals are not *owned* by the Barnai, but every Fesk is always assigned to a Barnai "master" who gives him orders and is responsible for his actions. Assignments are managed by a complex system of Barnai social precedence, involving family and professional relationships; the Feskals are not consulted. Oddly, the Feskals do not seem to mind this. Naturally, the association between the two races sometimes resembles a master-slave relationship, which is a serious stumbling block to normal relations with the Imperium.

Feskals do all the hard work in the Florian League. They are trained almost from birth for a specific job, and never change jobs. The training for each job is intensive and never-ending. Feskals are capable of learning low-level technical skills, repairing equipment, or operating heavy weaponry. Feskals who hold such technical positions are considered to be the upper class of Fesk society.

Although Feskals are dependent on their Barnai "masters" and have little freedom of movement, they are paid a modest wage above their room and board. They have access to a variety of entertainment when off duty. Feskals who grow too old to serve are retired to state-run facilities, where they are allowed to live out their lives in peace. Those who are too ill or injured to be saved are granted euthanasia.

GOVERNMENT

Political philosophy is one area in which the Floriani have generally refused to imitate outsiders. The current government of the Florian League is a representative democracy, whose institutions are almost unchanged from those of pre-industrial Floriani city-states.

Within the League, each world has a parliament whose various committees oversee the details of the legislative process. These parliaments, called *Tenee*, meet almost constantly on the worlds of the League. Seats in a *Tenee* are assigned to citizens at random, with terms lasting about three standard years. Law forbids serving more than one term in a row, and parliamentary service is not supposed to interfere

with the member's primary career. Once laws have been made, they are handed over to a large merit-based bureaucracy for implementation and enforcement.

Each *Tenee* elects a member to serve on the *Conlee*, the parliament for the Florian League as a whole. Since there are no professional politicians, each seat in a *Tenee* has a permanent staff assigned to make the member's job easier. These staff members hold a great deal of power in the state through their influence over the *Tenee* members.

Inside the League, all member worlds follow the same governmental plan. Laws vary slightly with local conditions, but in general are light. All citizens of the League are treated equally and expected to obey the laws.

All sophonts living within the League have equal rights, except for Feskals. A Feskai is not considered a full citizen; responsibility for his actions rests with his current Barnai "master." Slavery, in its technical sense of ownership of another sophont, is illegal in the League.



MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The *A'noss Rianell Floriani* (Floriani War Group) is the front line in the defense of the League against all foreign enemies, especially Aslan clans. The War Group consists of both ground and space forces, organized along similar lines. They have been fighting the Aslan for hundreds of years, and almost always win. The Aslan treat them with great respect.

Organization

The League Navy does not use the massed fleet formations common in other races' forces. Instead, it makes use of numerous independent squadrons under the loose overall command of the senior officer present. Such ad-hoc fleets are normally assembled out of whatever elements happen to be present in a star system when a threat appears.

On their own, the independent squadrons enjoy a remarkable amount of freedom in deciding how to carry out assignments. A cruiser squadron, upon receiving orders to patrol a section of border, will have complete autonomy in executing that order. The only thing that matters is results.

The largest vessels in Floriani service are 50,000-dton battlecruisers, most of which are concentrated near the border with Aslan space. Most fighting ships are much smaller, averaging in the 10,000-25,000 dton range. There are hundreds of lesser ships, displacing 500-1,000 dtons, serving as escorts and independent patrol ships.

The space fleet is almost exclusively staffed by Floriani. The intelligent Barani serve as officers and advanced technicians, while the Feskals can accept intensive training that creates highly skilled, if focused, crew. There are navy personnel from the other races, but these are few and far between. A few ships are crewed exclusively by League Aslan.

Floriani ground forces are organized in fairly typical fashion, although with some unique twists. Once again, the Feskals serve as the equivalent of enlisted men. They make excellent soldiers, and seem to enjoy fighting. Above them is a level equivalent to NCOs or junior officers. Mostly Humans of non-Floriani descent, these field officers provide direct leadership in battle. Barani serve as staff officers at all levels. In the League's early years, the Barani monopolized the upper command ranks, but they eventually recognized that other Humans have better battle instincts. As a result, even the highest ranks of the League's ground forces include many non-Floriani.

In infantry units, eight troopers are a squad, with a leader making nine. Eight squads make up a cohort, eight cohorts a group. Cohorts and groups are lead by senior leaders with small staffs. Floriani units do not include vehicles and crews; those are kept in separate units and assigned as needed. Tank units are grouped in a similar way, with four tanks to a cohort.

Groups (equivalent to a battalion or brigade) contain additional support units like artillery and transports. Eight groups make up a division, with more support. This is normally the largest unit found, even in battle.

Tactics

In battle, the League Navy executes detailed and precise tactical plans with ease. Aslan who have survived these fights describe Floriani ships engaging in dozens of course changes and maneuvers that suddenly coalesce into a terrifyingly effective battle formation. All through this period of maneuver, each ship puts down devastating fire, even from extreme ranges.

The Floriani Navy regularly wins fights, even when it is badly outnumbered. Even crippling a ship isn't enough, as a vessel will continue firing until it is destroyed or boarded. The Aslan mistakenly attribute this to Floriani honor and courage; in fact, Feskals gunners will simply continue to fire until killed or ordered to stop.

The army specializes in grinding, bloody attacks and defenses. The usual attitude toward the Feskals makes ordering such operations easier (almost all League citizens, including the Feskals themselves, see them as expendable resources). Tactical doctrine emphasizes heavy use of mines and point-defense weaponry to chop the enemy up during his attack.

For centuries, the League's most frequent enemy has been Aslan. Tactics have adapted to the Aslan way of war. Intelligence units attempt to determine the identity of different families fighting, and then concentrate attacks against each family in turn. This often causes other warriors to launch ill-advised attacks in hopes of gaining honor for themselves. Floriani units, prepared for these attacks, can then deal with the foe piecemeal and defeat him in detail.

Technological Assimilation

The Floriani have managed to progress from TL8 to TL12 with almost no original research. Instead, they have learned by reverse-engineering the innovations of others. Barnai engineers are superb at stripping machines down to their basic parts, deducing their functions and mechanisms from observation. Most of the engineers have no idea *why* a particular item works, and have little interest in learning fundamental scientific principles.

Once the Barnai understand how an item works, they can turn to reproducing it. When they decide to produce their own version of some found piece, the turnaround time is often astonishingly short. After discovering an Aslan wreck in orbit around Floria, it took the Floriani only a year to build a working starship of their own.

One peculiarity of Floriani technology is its strange combination of styles. Equipment produced in the League does not *look* borrowed, but close examination reveals that on the mechanical level, it is based on a variety of very different sources. For example, the basic plasma rifle is based on a Zhodani design. Starships use jump drives that resemble Aslan models, but the maneuver drives are close copies of Imperial technology.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Florian League is mostly concerned with defensive issues, but does promote trade as a matter of course. Trade volume within the League is lighter than what is seen in the Imperium. Worlds are encouraged to become self-sufficient in order to resist attacks from Aslan states on the borders. Most of the trade is in luxury items.

The standard unit of exchange is the *tlientir* (TI). Each *tlientir* has roughly the same purchasing power as an Imperial credit. Since neither state has formal relations with the other, the actual value of the currency outside its state of issue depends on what the market will give it; this is rarely more than a quarter of face value. The few merchants who travel between the two realms normally use barter. If they must take payment in local currency, they take great pains to either bank it or spend it before leaving.

All the League worlds use the *tlientir* for all transactions. One of the requirements for League membership is acceptance of the *tlientir* and opening of all trade barriers. Trade is accepted from any source, so long as traders obey Floriani law. Even the occasional ship from hostile Aslan clans will dock at a Florian port. League customs patrols seek out only dangerous items and pieces of technology that haven't been seen before. Such items are impounded and thoroughly researched before being returned.

The League imposes a moderate income tax on all citizens and resident noncitizens. This tax is supplemented by various fees paid to the government for services. Fees and taxes are normally waived for traders with "honored guest" status, a courtesy currently extended to Imperial merchants.

FLORIA (0213 TROJAN REACH)

Starport: Class V (Naval base present).

Diameter: 8,100 miles (13,000 km). *Gravity:* 1.1 G.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 72%.

Climate: Chilly. *Population:* 6.4 billion. *Government:* Representative democracy. *Control Rating:* 1. *TL:* 12. *Gas Giants:* 4. *WTN:* 5.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

Floria is a chilly but pleasant world. Its cities are sprawling affairs, carefully separated into different districts for the Barnai and Feskals races, with other quarters allocated to the various other races that make up the League. Floriani enjoy gardens and parklands, so the cities tend to allow wide spaces for greenery. In particular, the Floriani enjoy placing fruit-bearing plants among purely decorative varieties, so they can pick a fresh snack while going about their business. Many buildings, even the largest, will have terraces for gardens and hanging plants. Some cities sport so much vegetation that the buildings are hard to spot.

In the heart of Talenek, the largest city, is the Old Palace. This sprawling complex covers several square miles and parts of it are thousands of years old. Most of it is off-limits to all but select Barnai leaders and their slaves. Rumors

abound in the Visitors' District of extensive subterranean chambers and even an Ancient site buried under the complex.

Floria's starports are always busy, with goods from all across space changing hands. Ships from *ihatei* clans, the Glorious Empire, even occasional ships flying the Imperial sunburst trade with ships from the Beyond sector and even farther.



FLORIANI CHARACTERS

Barnai are short, slender, and childlike in appearance, with thin limbs and slightly oversized heads. A Barnai will be 2" shorter than the norm for his ST (which is already likely to be low). He will also be 10 pounds lighter than the norm for his height. Barnai are dark-skinned, and normally have profuse, wooly body hair. Males grow thick facial hair as well.

A Feskals will be 3" taller than the norm for his ST, and 50 pounds heavier than the norm for his height. Feskals are also dark-skinned, but they lack the body hair of the Barnai. Instead, they have a thick layer of subcutaneous fat, giving their massive bodies a rounded appearance. Feskals of both sexes lack facial hair.

BARNAI RACIAL TEMPLATE -5 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST -3 [-20]; IQ +2 [20]; HT -1 [-10].

Advantages: Discriminatory Smell [15].

Disadvantages: Hidebound [-5]; Incurious [-5].

FESKAL RACIAL TEMPLATE 15 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST +5 [60]; IQ -2 [-15]; HT +2 [20].

Disadvantages: Bad Sight [-10]; Slave Mentality [-40].

NOTES ON ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Bad Sight see p. B27

Feskals are somewhat farsighted, and have difficulty focusing on small nearby objects. Since Feskals are primarily used for heavy physical labor, the Barnai rarely bother to provide spectacles, contact lenses, or other corrective aids.

Common Mental Advantages

Most Barnai have up to 30 points in various mental advantages. Eidetic Memory is very common in the species; up to 50% of the population has some level of it. Other common advantages include Absolute Direction, Absolute Timing, Alertness, Language Talent, Lightning Calculator, Mathematical Ability, and Strong Will.

Discriminatory Smell see p. C152

Barnai have a very keen sense of smell, and can distinguish among people and things on the basis of their odor. Barnai are very particular about the smells in their environment.

Epilepsy see p. B28

Epilepsy is quite common among the Barnai, especially among the most intelligent and talented members of the species.

Hidebound see p. C191

Although Barnai are quite intelligent, they are almost incapable of innovation or creative thought.

Incurious see p. C191

Barnai are goal-driven. They almost never explore or experiment for the sake of mere curiosity. Any action a Barnai takes is in pursuit of a plan, with a concrete benefit in mind. Barnai regard other Human races, which do exhibit curiosity, as slightly mad.

Slave Mentality see p. C194

Feskals do not do anything without orders, either from a Barnai or some other individual who has taken up a master's role. Left to themselves, they eat available food and continue to do the last thing they were ordered to do. If they complete their task, they wait where they are for further orders.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Geonee

The Geonee are native to Shiwonee, a world in the Massilia sector. They stand out among other Human races for their unusual culture and advanced technology. They are also famed for their claim to be the Ancients. Although this hypothesis is rarely supported by outsiders, the Geonee certainly boast one of the oldest interstellar cultures in charted space, surpassed in age only by the Vilani.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Although the Geonee claim to be the Ancients themselves, the most widely accepted theory states that, as with all other Human races, they were brought from Terra by the Ancients about 300,000 years ago. Their destination was Shiwonee, a world which today is geologically unstable, with active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes. Some geological evidence suggests that Shiwonee's current geological instability is the result of Ancient manipulation during the Final War.

Shiwonee's instability appears to have had drastic impact on Geonee culture, particularly on their inclination toward technology. Early Geonee tribal communities were frequently affected by natural disasters, a situation which gave high value to technical skill and technological advantages. Shiwonee's drastic climatic cycles also affected Geonee culture, forcing them to adopt a nomadic lifestyle.

Humans evolved on Geonee through several stages. Paleontologists place the rise of modern *Homo sapiens geonensis* close to -15,000. The Geonee invented agriculture and writing soon after their appearance as a species, around -14,000. The first known written record is *The Chronicle of the Fall*, a text which apparently gathers legends from an earlier oral tradition. According to these legends, the Geonee were survivors of a civilization "from the stars" that was destroyed in a Great War.

Natural disasters shaped the rise of early civilization on Shiwonee, including at least one "volcanic winter" caused by the simultaneous eruption of several large volcanoes. The atmosphere was polluted with ash and dust, blocking solar light and heat. Temperatures plummeted and most of the local flora and fauna died out. Civilization almost collapsed. Historians date this catastrophe to about -10,700.

When the effects of this volcanic winter diminished, the survivors started to reconstruct their culture. Technical knowledge had been crucial for survival, and was even more important for reconstruction. Technicians had become the most important members of society, a position that they still hold today.

THE SPACE ERA

By -9300, Shiwonee was an early-TL9 world, full of small, semi-nomadic communities. These communities retained their independence and identity, but achieved a certain grade of coordination through an assembly called the Meeralo Council. The Council sponsored the Space Service, which explored much of the Shiwonee system. The declared goal was to "travel again among the stars."

In -9270, one expedition found a derelict Ancient starship in one of the system's planetoid belts. After 30 years of research, the Geonee were able to copy jump drive technology and build their first starships. The only world at jump-1 distance from Shiwonee was visited and named Prindee, which means "promise." Despite the unappealing conditions (low gravity, tainted atmosphere), a small colony was established. Taking Prindee (Massilia 1330) as an intermediate stop, a small fleet of jump-1 starships explored and colonized the nearby Stenardee Cluster.

During this period, the first colonists at Lagna (Massilia 1029) discovered relics of Ancient origin, including Geonee and Chirper skulls. This find was taken as evidence finally proving the interstellar origin of the Geonee race.



THE GEONEE EMPIRE

In -9100, following a strong debate on the future of the colonies, a member of the Meeralo Council was able to gain enough support to force a more centralized form of government. He declared the Geonee Empire, and was confirmed Emperor Bradasee I by the Meeralo Council. The new empire emphasized space exploration, surveying most of the Shiwonee and Shokee subsectors over the next 20 years.

Most of the newly explored worlds were empty, but a few held some surprises for the Geonee. Among these surprises was the presence of Chirpers at Theradway (Massilia 1534), the remains of an extinguished Human (but non-Geonee) race at Tanny (Massilia 1238), and the presence of an intelligent (if primitive) alien race at Llyrn (Massilia 0931). Based on these finds and their own legends, the Geonee deduced the existence of Ancient civilization – but concluded that the Ancients had been their own ancestors.

VILANI CONTACT

Around -9000, the Geonee were contacted by scouts of a starfaring Human race: the Vilani. The meeting was a surprise to both parties, each of whom had believed itself alone in a universe of primitives.

Contacts between Geonee and Vilani were full of misunderstandings and suspicion. The Vilani had legends of fearful god-rulers in the distant past, which made the Geonee think that the Vilani had been slaves to an ancient Geonee civilization. Once cultural exchange was more advanced, the Vilani attitude toward technology and research seemed alien and foolish to the Geonee. In all, the Geonee came to disdain the Vilani, thinking of them as servile and stagnant.

Even after Vilani contact the Massilia sector was full of empty worlds, and the Geonee expansion continued. In -8700, a colony was established as far as Forquee (Massilia 1719), 13 parsecs coreward from Shiwonee.

In -8600, the Massilia sector was under the formal supervision of the Vilani bureau Sharurshid. Traders from this bureau discovered that the first Geonee jump drive had been copied from a derelict of unknown origin. This was a serious blow to Vilani respect for the Geonee.

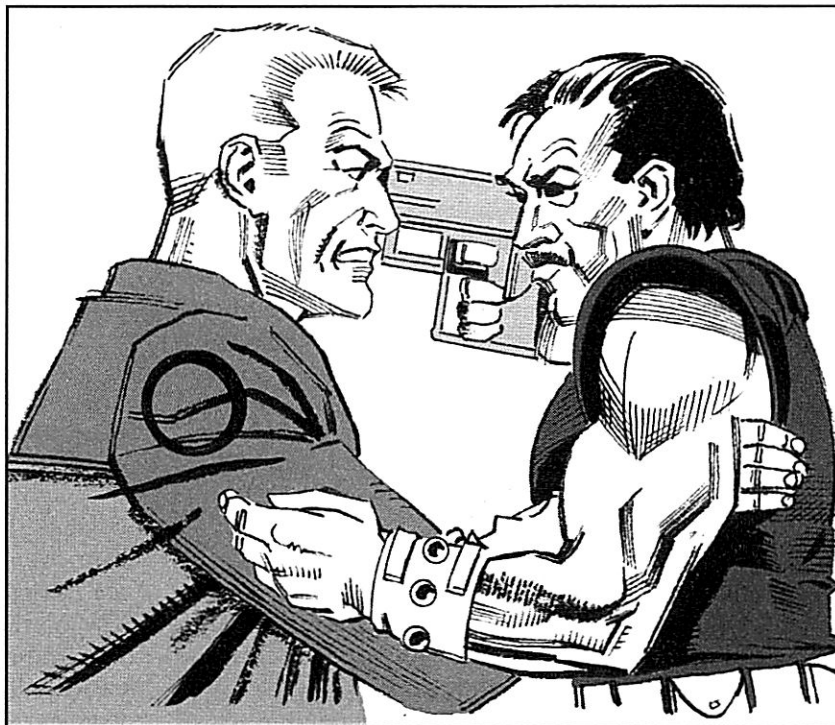
For their part, the Geonee argued that the vessel was not of unknown origin, but rather an antique ship from the time of the first Geonee civilization. In any case, to the Geonee the issue was not very important. They had an interstellar society with advancing technology, active exploration, expanding trade, and progressive technical research. Vilani opinion was regarded as irrelevant.

THE FIRST CONFEDERATION

In -8300, a colonial revolt overthrew the Emperor and turned the Geonee Empire into a loose Confederation. The Meeralo Council administered the "original worlds," while the more distant colonies like Forquee and Parahee were granted almost total autonomy.

The Vilani remained neutral during the colonial revolt, but Sharurshid increased commercial activity in Massilia, aggressively competing with Geonee commercial interests. In the centuries that followed, the Vilani and Geonee stood as rivals for interstellar power. Both races were involved in the exploration and development of worlds in the Massilia, Zarushagar, Core, Diaspora, and Delphi sectors. Although occasional military skirmishes occurred, the relationship between the two starfaring races remained generally peaceful.

By -7100, the Geonee were on the edge of reaching TL10, although the jump-2 drive had not yet been developed. When the Vilani acquired it, they kept the knowledge to themselves, much to the dismay of the Geonee. Some Geonee scholars defend the theory that undercover Vilani agents prevented the Geonee discovery of jump-2 by kidnapping key researchers and sabotaging critical experiments. Vilani scholars defend the alternative view that, as major



jump drive achievements rely on extensive theoretical knowledge, the practice-oriented Geonee technicians had little chance to develop them.

By this time, nomadic Geonee communities had settled as far as the Lishun sector. The Geonee Confederation maintained only loose ties with these settlements; its true territory never encompassed more than the equivalent of four subsectors in the Massilia sector.

THE GEONEE-VILANI WAR

About -5100 the Vilani started the Consolidation Wars, hoping to consolidate all of the "minor" races of known space into a Vilani-ruled empire. The Geonee Confederation resisted by all available means, starting what is known as "The 200 Years' War." The Geonee mobilized against the Vilani, dealing out heavy casualties and even forcing them to retreat from central Massilia sector for decades. Finally, Vilani war tactics and the jump-2 advantage proved decisive. The Geonee were defeated about -4900, and their worlds were incorporated into the new Ziru Sirka.

After the Geonee defeat, Sharurshid systematically tried to eliminate the Geonee as a significant influence in Massilia. Geonee worlds were placed under military rule. Most Geonee communities were deported back to the core Geonee worlds, or forced to meet strict population control measures. By about -4100, most of the far-flung Geonee colonies had been depopulated and resettled by Vilani colonists. Nevertheless, Geonee communities, some of them quite large, survived on at least 30 worlds in Massilia.

For the following two millennia, the Geonee were a subject race in the Ziru Sirka. Military occupation was eventually lifted, but the Geonee worlds were always ruled by Vilani bureaucrats. Occasional uprisings were promptly and quietly crushed, and law levels were kept high.

Devil Marines

The Llyrnians are a minor alien race, native to an underground environment. They play an important role throughout most of Massilia sector. Their homeworld, Llyrn (Massilia 0931), is a member of the Duchy of Shiwonee. By tradition, the Llyrnians serve as security troops on many Geonee ships, and Geonee technicians do much of the work of maintaining high-technology civilization on Llyrn.

Homeworld

Llyrn is a cold world, a satellite of a gas giant orbiting a small star. Its upper crust is full of huge natural caves. Life developed around geothermal energy sources in these caves, consuming sulfur compounds to produce energy and leaving sulfur-rich waste products. Higher life forms, such as the Llyrnians themselves, also have a secondary metabolism which uses oxygen to convert waste products back to organosilicates and sulfur. Llyrnians exhale sulfur dioxide, a waste gas, in order to cool themselves, giving them their typical brimstone smell.

Physiology

The Llyrnians are tunnel dwellers. Their cylindrical bodies exhibit trilateral symmetry, with three "legs" on the bottom and three "arms" spreading from the top. Three "mouths" open under the arms as feeding organs. The body is covered by a tough external coat made of organosilicates, and the arms end in tough claws. The Llyrnians dig tunnels "upward" using all three claws. They are able to vibrate their arms and claws in order to loosen rocks.

Their main sensory organs are three "ears" built into the arms. With these, Llyrnians can sense both vibrations in rock and the faint noises transmitted by the very thin atmosphere. Three vibrating membranes are positioned on the upper part of the body, giving them a limited sonar capability.

The body ends in a "head" which holds the secondary sensory organs. These include three breathing orifices which also function as olfactory organs, and a visual band which circles the whole head. Vision centers on the infrared part of the spectrum.

Llyrnians are trisexual, with Delver, Feeder, and Warrior genders. Delvers build and maintain tunnels, Warriors defend the community, and Feeders bear and care for offspring. Adult Llyrnians vary in size by gender, but most Delvers and Warriors are about 5'6" long and weigh about 140 pounds.

Customs

The Llyrnian society is built upon the community, a group composed of up to 10,000 individuals of all three sexes. The community leader, always a Delver, has almost absolute power.

Warriors perpetually try to capture tunnels belonging to rival communities, while defending their own settlements. Conflicts between Warriors are ruthless battles fought in narrow, dark tunnels. The Warriors rely heavily on their vibration perception, infrared vision, and sonar sense. They adapt easily to life aboard spaceships, and make excellent marines.

History

The Llyrnians were first contacted in -9070 by the neighboring Geonee. The Geonee helped the Llyrnians to upgrade their technology, introducing heavy machinery which allowed the Delvers to build larger and deeper tunnels.

During the Interstellar Wars era, thousands of Llyrnians served as troops aboard Geonee starships. The Llyrnians proved to be fearsomely effective in boarding and infiltration operations. Llyrnian Warriors could easily defeat Humans in a fight through the corridors of a boarded starship, especially once the lights went off and the artificial gravity failed. Llyrnian claws could drill big holes in vacc suits, and even had some possibility of breaching combat armor. Llyrnian Warriors have often served as marines aboard Geonee and Imperial starships ever since.

After the Long Night, Llyrn was a client state of the Second Geonee Confederation. It was absorbed into the Third Imperium in year 80. Today, Llyrn is a member of the Duchy of Shiwonee.

THE VILANI-SOLOMANI WAR

In -2408, the Interstellar Wars erupted between the Ziru Sirka and a recently contacted Human race from Terra. Over the next two centuries, the declining Vilani empire was conquered by the Solomani.

The Geonee welcomed the Terrans as liberators. When the Terrans approached, the Geonee worlds rebelled against the Ziru Sirka and allied themselves with the newcomers. Quickly organized Geonee forces made up a significant portion

of "Terran" forces in Massilia during the later wars. Geonee communities became advance bases and safe ports for the Terran forces. Interestingly, Geonee naval forces used thousands of Llyrnians as ship's troops during the war. This started a long tradition of Llyrnian marines and mercenaries serving on Geonee ships.

When the wars ended, the Terrans were forced to rule over a vast territory. They came to rely heavily on Geonee advisors in the Massilia sector.

THE RULE OF MAN

Shortly after the end of the war, the Second Imperium was established. In -2200, Hiroshi Estigarribia granted self-government to the Geonee worlds. Together with Llyrn and a few nearby Vilani worlds, the Geonee created the Geonee Autonomous Region.

For the Geonee, the early Rule of Man was a time of euphoria. The Vilani bureaucracy was eliminated, and all restrictions on research and technology abolished. The Rule of Man allowed the Geonee to freely travel through known space, and some new worlds were settled. The Terran love for personal independence and initiative matched perfectly with Geonee instincts.

By -2000 several Geonee worlds were at TL10, on the cutting edge of technology. Interstellar trade was flourishing, and the long Vilani occupation was all but forgotten. Once again, the Geonee were a common sight in the Massilia sector and beyond. In the following centuries, significant numbers of Geonee joined the Second Imperium's navy, army, and scout service. They promptly developed a well-deserved reputation for their technical skills.

THE LONG NIGHT

The year -1776 is usually taken as the starting point of the economic collapse of the Rule of Man. The Terrans were not able to maintain an empire of thousands of worlds, and the economic recession destroyed what they had conquered. Soon the Long Night descended.

The Geonee Autonomous Region managed to maintain interstellar trade for some centuries, but its volume diminished steadily until the individual worlds were all but isolated. The Region had been too thoroughly integrated into the Second Imperium to be able to construct a viable interstellar economy alone.

Only three Geonee worlds survived the Long Night, falling all the way from TL10 to TL5. Once these worlds were at a locally sustainable tech level, progress started again. The Geonee felt they had lost the stars again, but they were not discouraged – after all, it was not the first time. Over centuries, they painfully reconstructed a self-sufficient economy and advanced technology. By -250, the Geonee worlds were able to launch space expeditions once again. Contact between them followed almost immediately.

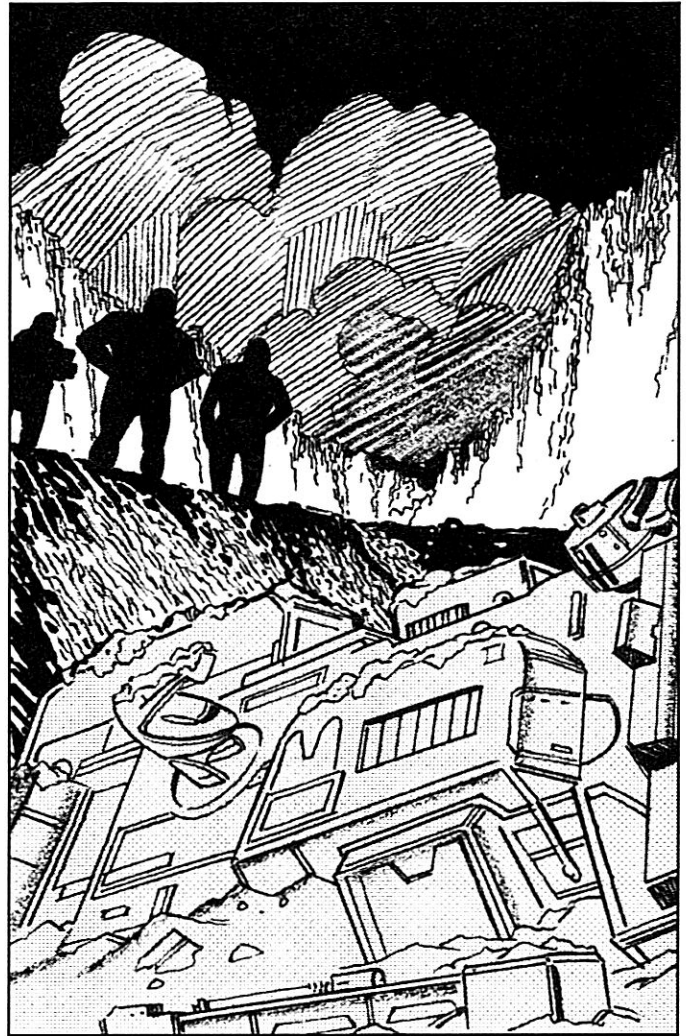
THE SECOND CONFEDERATION

In -190 a collection of Geonee representatives, again coordinated by the traditional Meeralo Council, met at Prindee and declared the Second Geonee Confederation. Its declared goal was “to reclaim the stars.”

The Confederation was born as an agreement between the different dominant classes of the three Geonee worlds: the high-ranking bureaucrats of Hiponee (Massilia 1027), the industrialist backers of Lagna's dictatorship, and the Meeralo Council and nation-state leaders of Shiwonee. It was natural that in the early stages, all these classes agreed to recognize each other's authority on equal terms and establish a system

of nobility. The Confederation issued noble titles to the most powerful families of each member world. It is precisely this nobility which has ruled the Geonee worlds, in one form or another, until today.

In -180, the Confederation started a program to reclaim all the former Geonee worlds. The empty worlds of the Stenardee cluster were surveyed, and small colonies were built. On these worlds, the Geonee found remnants of the former inhabitants, including relic technology from the Rule of Man.



CONTACT: SYLEANS

In -150, advanced scouts from the Sylean Federation meet the Geonee. The Syleans were too far away for trade between the two interstellar states to be profitable, but cultural and technical exchange was fruitful. For several decades, the Geonee Confederation was an almost obligatory stop for the long-range Sylean scouts and traders.

This was a time of internal conflict on the Geonee worlds. A bloody civil war at Hiponee ended with the use of nuclear weapons, nearly wiping out the population. The Confederation made the radical decision to deport all survivors to the inhospitable world of Dreva (Massilia 1028), reserving once-heavenly Hiponee for the nobility. This reserved status has been maintained ever since, although the planet fully recovered from the effects of war centuries ago.

THE THIRD IMPERIUM

In year 0, Grand Duke Cleon Zhunastu of Sylea transformed the Sylean Federation into the Third Imperium. Vland and the Vilani core worlds joined almost immediately.

At the time, the Sylean ambassador formally asked the Geonee Confederation to join the Third Imperium as well. The Confederation itself refused, bowing to radical voices which refused to exist under the same rule as Vland. However, as Geonee traders spread through space, many of

them accepted Imperial citizenship as individuals. Geonee colony worlds outside the Confederation core eventually began to join the Imperium. As the Imperium opened new markets, the Geonee profited from it as much as any Imperial citizen. Nevertheless, this was not enough to convince the Geonee nobility to integrate the Confederation into the Imperium. Commercial conflicts, espionage, and even minor military skirmishes lasted for decades.

By 80, the Imperium was mounting the Pacification Campaigns to unify nearby space under its rule. The Imperial Navy made a show of force in the Shiwonee subsector. A few isolated battles ensued, after which the Geonee worlds accepted Imperial rule. Adding insult to injury, the Imperial authorities placed the subsector capital at Tlasov (Massilia 1328) rather than Shiwonee itself.

Integrating the Geonee into the Imperium proved difficult. In 120, a major anti-Imperial insurrection ended with the establishment of three naval bases at Shiwonee, Hiponee, and Ashavakuna (Massilia 1131). The Geonee worlds were under close watch for centuries. Geonee nobility was not granted Imperial recognition until about 350.

All of this changed during the Imperial Civil War. Kaner, a Geonee admiral, was an early aspirant to the Imperial throne and managed for years to maintain a stronghold around Shiwonee. When Kaner was killed in battle in 615, Geonee troops and starships fought against Kaner's enemies, supporting several candidates.

In 622, a Geonee fleet intervened decisively for the future Empress Arbellatra in the Second Battle of Zhim-away. The fact that the male chauvinist Geonee supported an Empress became a common joke, but Arbellatra repaid their help by creating the Duchy of Shiwonee in 625 and moving the subsector capital to Shiwonee. Kaner's young son was made the first Duke, and became the principal representative of the eight Geonee "core" worlds before the Imperium. He was eventually accepted by all Geonee as the representative of their whole race, the *Geonee-Irkaveera*.

After the Civil War, Geonee integration into Imperial society proceeded much more smoothly. Old colonies across the whole Imperium soon sent ambassadors to the Duke, and new commercial networks were established. The Geonee worlds soon knew prosperity, to the extent that Tlasov had to become a colony of Shiwonee in 796 in order to repay its huge commercial debt.

THE PRESENT

Since the Civil War, the Geonee worlds have flourished under Imperial rule. Geonee technical skills have gained them an edge over the surrounding worlds and earned them a prominent place in Massilia sector. The Duchy of Shiwonee is composed of 10 worlds: the eight "core" worlds, the Tlasov protectorate, and Llyrn (see box, p. 70). Duke Darnaaga Neowashee still holds the title *Geonee-Irkaveera*, and is viewed not only as the ultimate authority in the duchy, but also as the representative of the whole race before the Imperium.

ADRAT

The most important Geonee institution is known as *Gradeeva Bresaal Adonee Gaal*, or (freely translated) the "Association for the Development and Retrieval of Advanced Technology." To non-Geonee, the organization is known by its Galanglic acronym ADRAT.

The original ADRAT was founded in -175 as a means to coordinate technical research and antique technology retrieval. It was dissolved under Imperial rule. After the Imperial Civil War, ADRAT was revived and given an Imperial charter to "foster technical knowledge and market technological innovations." Half corporation, half altruistic organization, ADRAT possesses a network of over 500 offices throughout Imperial space and beyond. These offices continue to increase in number even today.

An ADRAT office is composed of three parts. The first is the Technical School and Academy, an institution devoted to educating technicians and expanding technical knowledge through research. In any ADRAT technical school, at least half of the teachers are Geonee. These schools are renowned throughout Charted Space for the high-quality training they offer. Any graduate from an ADRAT school can easily find well-paid jobs, ranging from starship engineer to computer programmer.

The second part of an ADRAT office is the Commercial Service, which assists Geonee traders and coordinates a commercial network centered on novelties and high-technology items. The Commercial Service helps to market advanced technology to the appropriate worlds. It is known to have sponsored in-depth survey missions to backwater worlds, in order to determine the most profitable way to market high-technology goods.

The third section of each ADRAT office is the Retrieval Service. This service focuses on the retrieval of technological items. It frequently sponsors expeditions to backwater worlds, looking for the technical artifacts of extinguished civilizations. Naturally, the Retrieval Service is specifically interested in Ancient artifacts.

In the Third Imperium, all Ancient artifacts belong by law to the Imperium, and their recovery is usually handled by the Scout Service. However, the IISS often works with the Retrieval Service when dealing with Ancient sites and artifacts. In fact, on Geonee worlds Ancient sites are supervised by ADRAT rather than directly by the IISS. Rumor has it that ADRAT sometimes defies Imperial law, by trying to recover Ancient technology even when not under an IISS contract.

PHYSIOLOGY

The Geonee evolved on a high-gravity world with a dense atmosphere, and are well adapted to such conditions. A typical individual averages just under 5' in height and weighs about 160 pounds. There is no significant difference between males and females in size. The Geonee are rather short and stocky when compared to other Human races.

The percentage of muscle tissue in the Geonee body is the highest among Humans, making them very strong. They have very little body fat and are less resistant to cold. All this gives them a "muscular" appearance.

Most Geonee senses are equivalent to those of other Humans. The dense atmosphere of Shiwonee carries sound well, so the Geonee ear is not as sensitive as that found in other Human races.

The Geonee are omnivorous, but meat has a very strong appeal to them. Vegetarians are almost unheard of.

Geonee females bear children after a gestation period of approximately 8.25 standard months. This corresponds to nine Shiwonee "months" of 30 22-hour days each. Multiple births are rare (roughly 1 percent of the cases) and limited to twins. The Geonee can interbreed with other Human races, but this is rare due to the peculiar characteristics of their society.

The Geonee lifespan averages 70 standard years, although anagathics can increase this figure.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The most widespread Geonee language is *Irkonee*, or "the language of the old ones." This language is official in all Geonee worlds. Its origins are lost in time. Linguistic studies have failed to show any similarity to other Human languages. Most Geonee do not learn other languages; those who do typically speak Galanglic.

PSYCHOLOGY

Three characteristics must be taken into account in order to understand Geonee psychology: ownership, pride, and technical mastery.

OWNERSHIP

The Geonee view the concept of *ownership* as critical to establishing order in a society. The value of an individual is directly related to his possessions as a measure of his achievements. Conversely, everything must belong to somebody. When a Geonee encounters any object, one of his first questions is always "Who owns this?"

Foreigners sometimes fail to recognize the importance of ownership, viewing the Geonee obsession with it as egoism or greed. This marks a failure to understand the very essence of the Geonee. For them, the system of ownership

creates an order that allows society to prosper, and gives individuals concrete objectives. Ownership offers a sense of purpose in life.

Nearly every aspect of Geonee society is related to this basic trait, which in turn influences the way society is conceived. To the Geonee, the most crucial function of government is to create a general framework to guarantee property rights. The objective of law is to protect ownership. By doing so, it prevents the emergence of chaos and allows society to grow upon solid foundations. Businesses are viewed as the sum of mechanisms that allow ownership to change, avoiding stagnation.



PRIDE

Geonee pride and self-image is almost always bound up in group membership. They feel a proud sense of belonging to their race, their social class, their profession, and to any other group they can identify with. This pride is what gives value to individual actions.

In Geonee society, the individual's position is related to the position of the groups to which he belongs. They believe that a second-class group must be composed of second-class people. Thus, every Geonee constantly struggles to demonstrate the superiority of his profession, his planet, and his race.

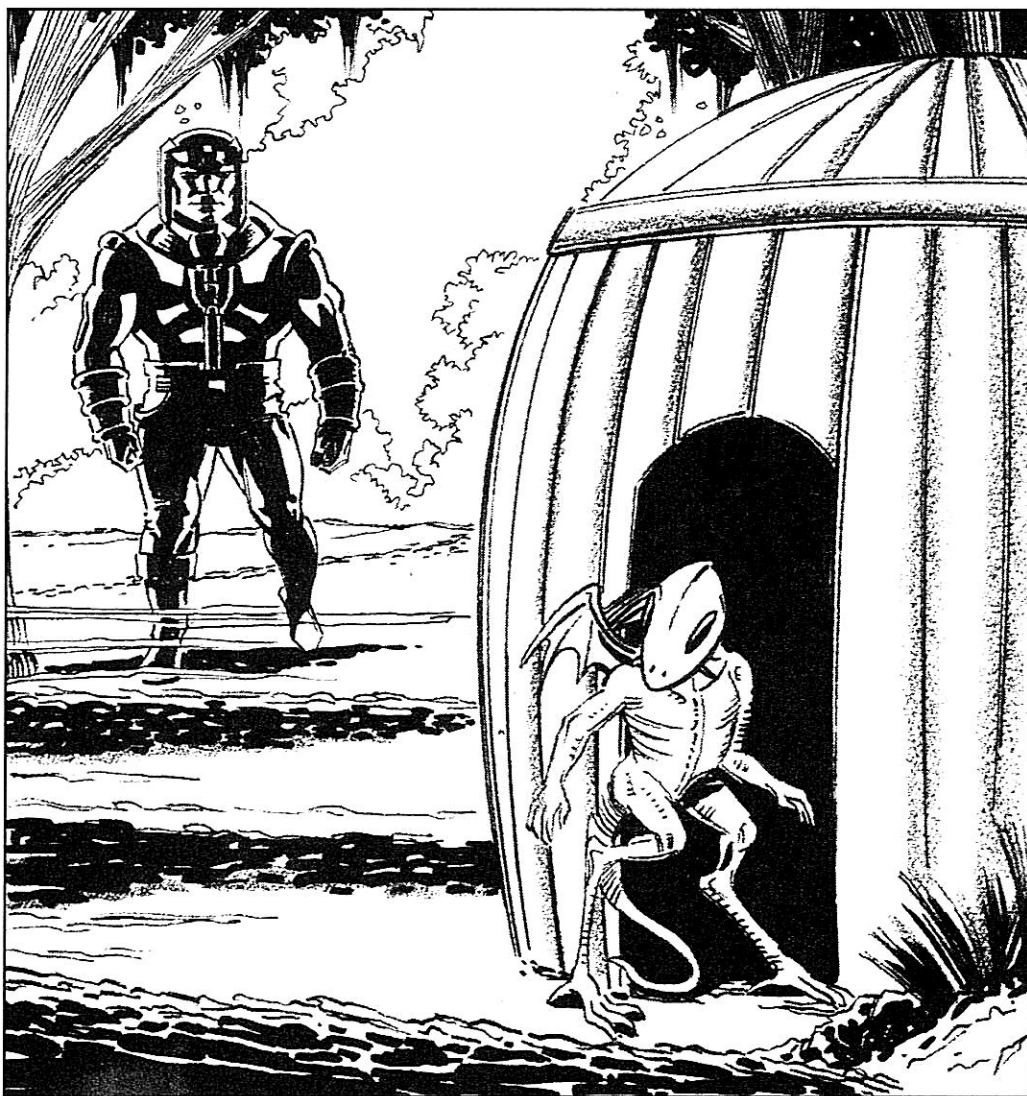
Racial pride is one of the strongest aspects of this Geonee tendency. Among other things, it explains the almost-fanatic Geonee insistence that they are direct descendants of the Ancients.

TECHNICAL MASTERY

The Geonee place an enormous value on technology and on technical skill. This has its roots on the difficult environment of their homeworld, whose seismic activity has almost no parallel among Human-inhabited worlds. During early Geonee history, quakes and volcanoes provoked frequent disasters, repeatedly forcing communities to start from scratch. As a result, the Geonee regard nature not as a friend but as an evil force which must be feared. Technology is viewed as the means to conquer and dominate nature.

The Geonee take pleasure in experiencing technical devices at work. The race's aesthetic sense is closely attuned to elegant design and smooth functioning. When handed a clever gadget, a Geonee will react with amusement and delight. When viewing a large, smoothly functioning work of engineering – a dam, a grav city, or a starship – he will experience admiration and even awe.

Of course, technology and science have a definite purpose in Geonee society. They must provide practical solutions to everyday problems. As a result, the Geonee tend to produce technicians and engineers rather than theoretical scientists. This sometimes poses a handicap for the development of major scientific breakthroughs.



SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Although the Geonee exhibit considerable cultural diversity, there are a number of customs and habits common to almost all Geonee.

CHIRPERS

A subspecies of Chirpers (see *Alien Races 3*) is native to Shiwonee. The Geonee have integrated these Chirpers into their society, taking them to every Geonee-settled world. The Chirpers are something between pets and friends, and play a key role in a traditional Geonee society.

In Irkonee, a Chirper is called a *selweeda* or “matchmaker.” When a Geonee male wants to marry, he must attract and befriend a Chirper, which then becomes a symbol of the marriage. Chirpers are, of course, very shy – and they have the psionic ability to obscure the minds of others in order to avoid being seen. Establishing a lasting relationship with a Chirper is therefore a considerable challenge.

To prepare for marriage, a Geonee typically builds a small dwelling and begins to put fresh food and water in it regularly. After some time, a Chirper adopts the dwelling as home. When the Chirper is satisfied (and comfortably familiar with its Geonee host) it may decide to reveal itself. Eventually the Geonee performs a special ceremony known as *krandee* or “calling out.” In this ceremony, the Geonee must convince the Chirper to show itself for a few seconds to his closest male relatives.

After the *krandee*, the Geonee is allowed to marry. The Chirper's trust is seen as a crucial symbol of the marriage bond. Indeed, if the husband ever loses his Chirper's confidence to the point that the *selweeda* leaves him, the marriage is instantly dissolved. Of course, the disappearance of a *selweeda* is seldom noticed by anyone, given its invisibility. Still, most Geonee take the relationship between marriage and the *selweeda* very seriously. For instance, a Geonee never entrusts care of his *selweeda* to anyone else, so it follows him whenever he travels. This applies even to starship crew.

Shiwonee Chirpers

The Chirpers which inhabit the Geonee worlds belong to a distinct subspecies, which differs from the mainstream Chirper race encountered elsewhere. They have unusually low intelligence, putting them on the boundary between dull sentients and bright animals. They are also stronger than other Chirpers, and have larger wings. These give them flying capability in Shiwonee's dense atmosphere, despite its relatively high gravity.

Like other Chirpers, members of the Geonee subspecies exhibit limited psionic powers, especially the power to become invisible to other beings when they feel in danger.

MALE CHAUVINISM

Traditional Geonee society is very patriarchal. Only males can own property, and females are excluded from nearly all aspects of business and politics. Every Geonee female must be under the protection of a male relative (her father, her husband, or one of her sons). In extreme cases, this protection is exaggerated to the point that females are kept under lock and key. This seclusion is common on Shiwonee, less so on other Geonee worlds.

One unusual Geonee custom is marriage by abduction. Under some circumstances, a female can be kidnapped ("captured") by a male, forcing her family to acquiesce to the situation. The Geonee thus avoids the necessity to befriend a *seldeeva*. This form of marriage is recognized in Geonee law, and is very different from the standard form. In particular, the female is seen as animate property rather than as a wife. Naturally, the existence of this form of "marriage" does nothing to discourage the Geonee from overprotecting their females.

"WE ARE THE ANCIENTS"

The Geonee do not consider themselves to be Humans, and reject the usual taxonomic classification *Homo sapiens geonensis*. Instead, they firmly believe themselves to be the Ancients. In fact, the word *geonee* means "old ones." The singular, *adonee*, is seldom used to refer to an individual member of the race. Instead, a Geonee will refer to himself as *Geonee-draveera* or "descendant of the old ones."

Geonee legend claims that their ancestors came from the stars after a cataclysmic war of galactic dimensions. "Official" history says that the core Geonee worlds have been inhabited ever since the Final War, when the Geonee ancestors sought an ultimate refuge.

Encountering the Geonee

Geonee are a common sight throughout the Imperial core, and are not unknown elsewhere. They are nomadic in nature, traveling enormous distances while engaged in trade or exploration. Over the millennia, Geonee communities have been established as far from their homeworld as the Spinward Marches or the Solomani Rim sector.

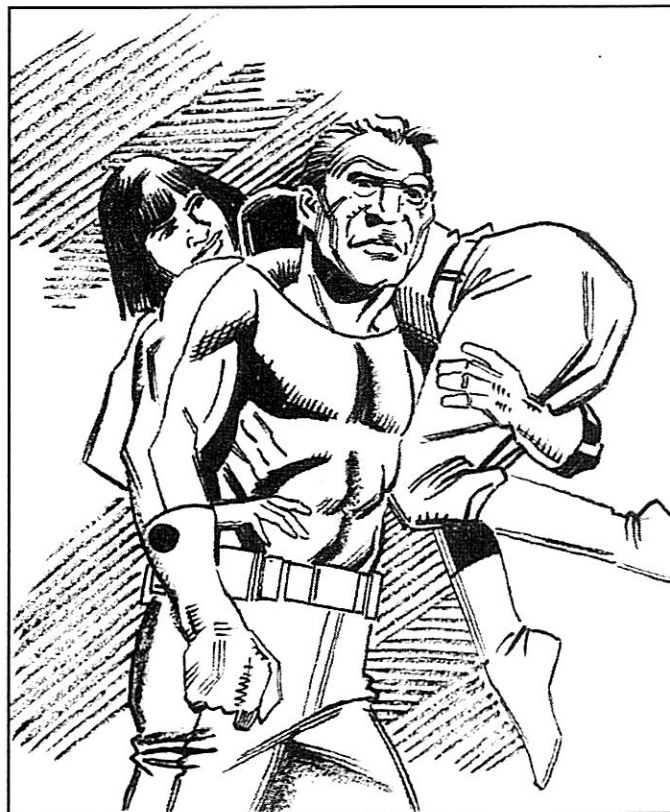
Lone Geonee can be encountered while traveling. A lone, unmarried Geonee technician will find it easy to get work to pay for his travel expenses. Many Geonee males spend years seeking their fortunes, sometimes dozens of parsecs away from home, before returning to settle down and marry. On the other hand, married Geonee usually travel exclusively in Geonee ships, where their Chirper companions can be cared for properly.

According to the Geonee, their ancestors once had godlike technology, uplifting several Geonee-like species into sentience – including the Vilani and the Solomani. These species formed the basis for Humanity. Meanwhile, the Geonee also uplifted Chirpers into Droyne and scattered them across the Galaxy. The Vargr were the result of another uplifting experiment.

These claims have found little or no support among independent scholars. Nevertheless, some surprising facts have to be taken into account. For example, all of the Geonee

core systems have extensive asteroid belts, probably originating in the Final War. There are Ancient sites in all these systems, and these sites include facilities obviously constructed for Geonee. Finally, throughout history Geonee technology has usually been among the most advanced known.

Naturally, the Geonee consider themselves to be a major Human race, equal in prestige with the Solomani, Vilani, and Zhodani. Other races dispute this, since the Geonee gained jump technology by copying an Ancient derelict. The Geonee respond by pointing out that the ship they copied belonged to their own ancestors . . .



Captain Lockwood's Diaries

This is a packed world if I ever saw one. Fortunately these guys are small. Even with the high technology they have here, I doubt they could pack in so many people if their ceilings weren't so low. Damn inconvenient for an average Human, I tell you.

Strange people, too. Didn't see a single female. For that matter, didn't see a single Chirper; and there should be about a billion of them around.

But the female thing was a problem. Janzia went shopping and turned up missing. It took us the whole day to find out that she was locked up just outside the starport, not detained, merely locked away while the police looked for her husband. Once we found her, Mazun got nervous and started shouting at the guards to have her released. I

guess he thought they were like shy dwarves, easily intimidated. Ha. Mazun was out of breath for a good while after the guard's body blow. Then Janzia was offended because I had to say she was my property in order to have her released.

Well, it's their world, I figure. Anyway, I would have taken it a bit better if they had stopped calling me "Human," as if they weren't. On top of it, I also underestimated them. Maybe it was their height, but the damn dwarves tricked me. What am I going to do with a ton of holo suites, so advanced that nobody can repair them anywhere else?

— Entry for 200-1112, on Lagna (Massilia 1029)

NOMADISM

In addition to its geological instability, Shiwonee presents several climatic peculiarities. In effect, the habitable temperate zone physically moves across the planet's surface, following a 95-year cycle. All native life has adapted to this cycle by acquiring nomadic customs; the Geonee are no exception. Even in eras of high technology, entire Geonee cities move to follow the climatic changes.

This has endowed the Geonee with a nomadic attitude. In the face of necessity, they quickly abandon their estates (but not their property rights) and move to find new ones. Geonee living off the homeworld are similarly rootless — they willingly move from world to world, following economic opportunities as they arise. As a result, Geonee can be found almost anywhere in the modern Imperium.

GOVERNMENT

For millennia all Geonee worlds have been governed, directly or indirectly, by oligarchic noble families. For example, Shiwonee is governed by the Meeralo Council, an ancient body composed of 18 married men. Members of the Council hold their position for life, and have the right to designate their successors. In theory, any married Geonee male could be elected to the Council, but in practice all 18 positions are always held by nobles.

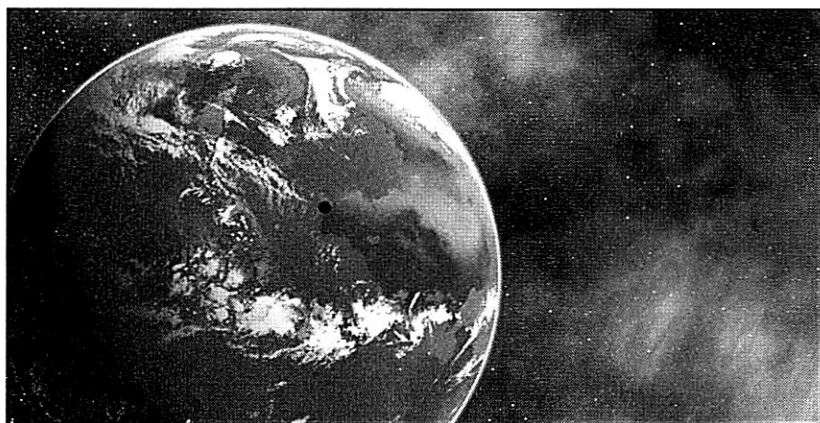
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Geonee are known throughout the Imperium as engineers, technicians, and merchants. They have access to the full

range of Imperial technology, and most of their worlds are at or above the Imperial average of TL10. Their main handicap in interstellar trade is their semi-nomadic nature, which limits their ability to build or use large-scale industrial facilities. Due to this restriction, the Geonee do not produce as many high-technology manufactured goods as their population and technology might suggest.

On the other hand, Geonee nomadism has led to a network of colonies and settlements, covering the entire Imperium and beyond. These scattered Geonee communities often share information about commercial opportunities, making them very effective in trade over long distances.





SHIWONEE (1430, MASSILIA SECTOR)

Starport: Class V (Naval base present).

Diameter: 10,300 miles (16,600 km). *Gravity:* 1.3 G.

Atmosphere: Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 61%.

Climate: Warm. *Population:* 470 million (95% Geonee). *Gov-*

ernment: Oligarchy (The Meeralo Council). *Control Rating:*

1. *TL:* 13. *Gas Giants:* 3. *WTN:* 5.5. *Trade Classifications:* Ri.

GEONEE CHARACTERS

A Geonee male is 12" shorter than a normal Human with the same ST. He is 50 pounds heavier than a normal character with the same height.

Geonee facial features are generally thick, with wide lips and noses. Geonee skin color is typically white or light brown. Hair varies between white, brown, and black, with reddish tones almost unknown.

Traditional Geonee clothing is made of tough, damage-resistant materials cut in angular shapes. Often, the clothes include a combination of hat and helmet which features long cloth "sideburns" hanging from the temples.

GEONEE RACIAL TEMPLATE

13 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST +2 [20]; DX +1 [10].

Advantages: Improved G-Tolerance (0.5 G) [10].

Disadvantages: Delusion (We are the Ancients) [-10]; Odious Racial Habit (Treat women as property) [-5]; Reduced Hit Points -2 [-10].

Quirks: Proud; Strong group identity. [-2]

Female Geonee should take Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Delusion see p. B32

The Geonee believe that they are the Ancients, and are often quite aggressive about the racial pride fostered by this belief. While the Geonee are not actually insane, their claim is regarded by most others as being delusional.

Improved G-Tolerance see p. C126

Normal Humans measure their tolerance for different gravitational fields in increments of 0.2 G. Having evolved in a high-gravity environment, Geonee are more adaptable in this regard, and measure their tolerance in increments of 0.5 G.

Odious Racial Habit see p. B26

The Geonee tend to treat women, even non-Geonee women, as property.

Proud see p. C193

Geonee are very concerned with personal success and prestige within society.

Roleplaying Geonee

Geonee should probably be introduced to the campaign as patrons or casual encounters. Another easy way to make players familiar with the Geonee would be to introduce an NPC ally – most likely, an expert engineer or technician. Here are some quick ways to make the distinctive Geonee mindset real.

Almost every Geonee encountered by non-Geonee is male. Females are kept secluded, and do not usually "go on adventures." A Geonee partner will have difficulties dealing with independent females. He will tend to think (and even state openly) that they should be kept separate for their own protection. A female *leader* will make things even worse.

If a Geonee male is married, then an invisible Chirper is around him most of the time. The Geonee will be able to see it, but no one else can. This will make him behave strangely, staring at or speaking to apparently empty space. On board a starship, a Geonee adventurer will insist in having a large stateroom for himself (the Chirper will sleep in the room).

Ownership is of key importance. A Geonee traveler will clearly mark his belongings, and will constantly be trying to clarify issues of property. "Who owns this?" will be a frequent question.

A Geonee will be fascinated by advanced technology, whether he is a technician or not. Gadgets and complex mechanical devices will provoke intense curiosity, especially if they are very advanced or unfamiliar. A Geonee will take pride in any technological advance he can trace to his race.

The Geonee do not think of themselves as "Humans," and use the term "Human" rather disparagingly. When speaking languages other than their own, they usually translate *geonee* as "Ancients." "Humans" are something else . . . the PCs, for example.

Geonee internal structure makes wounding a more serious matter than for other Humans. A Geonee suffers unconsciousness or death more easily than others.

SKILLS

Geonee have a strong interest in technical skills. Geonee characters should emphasize “practical” technical skills, such as Engineering, Electronics, or Mechanic, over more theoretical science skills.

The Geonee tend to treat women, even non-Geonee women, as property.

Geonee Adventure Seeds

The following adventure seeds work well with Geonee patrons, and are good ways to introduce the Geonee to any *Traveller* campaign.

Retrieving Antique Technology

A Geonee patron tells the party that a nearby system (now low-technology and low-population) is rumored to hold the relics of a highly advanced civilization dating back to before the Rule of Man. This civilization supposedly developed an advanced type of meson communicator in which the patron is interested. He is looking for an exploration team to travel to the system, locate any ruins, and find any information or artifacts related to this communicator. He will pay Cr10,000 for any useful findings, with an additional Cr10,000 premium for a working device.

Surveying a Cluster of Worlds

A Geonee trader wants to know the exact, detailed, up-to-date TL data for all the worlds in a nearby cluster. He needs this information in order to determine the profitability of trading in high-technology devices in the cluster. He will pay Cr5,000 for each world surveyed in detail, plus a special bonus of Cr10,000 if the whole cluster is covered. There will be another special bonus if the survey team makes any commercial contacts that the Geonee can use for trading.

Some of the worlds in the cluster are matriarchies, so the Geonee will not be very comfortable trading with them. In fact, Geonee sexism does not make them very popular anywhere in the cluster. The surveyors will need to overcome this prejudice (or conceal their patron's identity).

Researching the Researchers

A Geonee agent of a mid-sized corporation tells the party rumors about the local military of a neighboring world. Apparently, the planetary government has imposed secrecy on a research project studying techniques for automated starship piloting. The Geonee wants the adventurers to investigate the truth of the rumors, even if it means infiltrating military

headquarters. Of course, he will also be interested in having access to the research data.

The Geonee believes that the researchers are very unhappy with the new requirement for secrecy. They may be willing to accept an offer to flee the world and work for a new employer. Unfortunately, the leading scientist is female, a fact which calls for the spies to act as middlemen.

Upgrading the Starship

A Geonee technician working for the Aryal Corporation offers to upgrade the party's starship with the newly developed Aryal Thruster Upgrade System, improving efficiency by at least 10% and giving the ship better performance. The Aryal Corporation is willing to install the prototype package at a very low price, if the buyers agree to return in a few months to report on their experience with the upgrade. Aryal guarantees the results, but before marketing the package to the whole Imperium it is interested in any observations, comments, or minor complaints the party may have.

Unfortunately, a rival corporation wants to obtain the technology before Aryal markets it, and will not hesitate to make a hijacking attempt.

Expedition

A Geonee corporation is sponsoring an expedition to a nearby backwater world, and needs a multipurpose team: drivers, scouts, technicians, security guards, and so on. The Geonee are looking for the remains of an ancient (but not necessarily Ancient) civilization.

Unfortunately, a team from an Imperial megacorporation is pursuing the same objective, and claims that the world is now under their authority. The Geonee wants the surveyors to negotiate with the megacorporate team, and is willing to share any information recovered.

Meanwhile, the rival team has put up some automatic defense measures. When a Chirper belonging to the Geonee team leader is shot, it threatens the whole expedition, as the leader becomes preoccupied with saving his companion. To complicate things, an IISS team might arrive any moment and take over the entire expedition.

Iltharans

Appearing on the galactic stage during the Long Night, the Iltharans built a small empire long before the arrival of the Third Imperium. Unfortunately, the psychological limitations of the Iltharan race ensured that they would never take a leading role in galactic history. Never great builders or great innovators, the Iltharans were essentially parasites. They lost any chance at a greater role as soon as they encountered a civilization too powerful for them to conquer.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

During the Ancient era, the Iltharans were transplanted to Drexilthar, a world which eventually fell in Reaver's Deep sector. The region was a backwater, never incorporated into the Vilani Empire, the Rule of Man, or the Aslan Hierate. Instead, offshoots of all three cultures settled in the region, often fighting among themselves but rarely taking an important role in galactic events.

One of the few periods of importance for local society came in the waning days of the Rule of Man. A loose alliance of local worlds became infamous for its piratical raids into Imperial space. These "Reavers" harried worlds as far away as the Solomani Rim and the heart of Aslan territory before their alliance collapsed about -1100. Even after that point, raids and petty wars continued throughout the sector, as the Human worlds fought each other and the encroaching Aslan.

It was a Reaver warlord who first landed on Drexilthar, about -1030. Fleeing from more powerful enemies, Grand Admiral Izanak needed a haven where he could repair a number of his ships. At the time, the local Humans were divided into three major ethnic groups (the High Iltharans, the Tring, and the Akakhad). The High Iltharans were the least-advanced of the three, but even they had an early-industrial civilization. Izanak found the High Iltharans to be ideal for his purpose: advanced enough to perform the needed repairs, backward enough to be dominated by superior weaponry and promises of technical assistance.

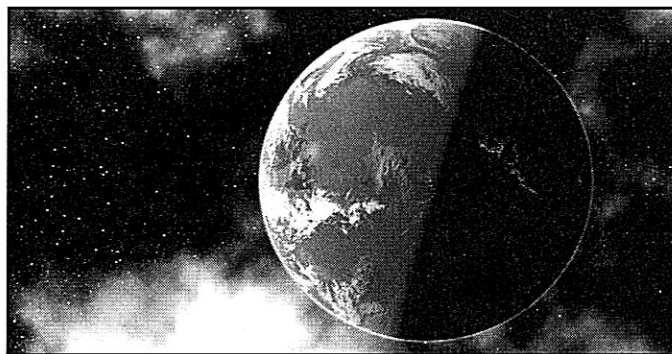
After eight years, Izanak's ships were fully repaired and ready to return to the stars. The Grand Admiral left Drexilthar and vanished from history. The boost to Iltharan technology proved significant. Over the next few decades the High Iltharans applied their new knowledge to the conquest of their homeworld. By -1000 the Akakhad and Tring were subjugated, and the Iltharans were launching jump-1 starships of their own.

Once they were out among the stars, the Iltharans quickly conquered several nearby worlds that were inhabited but less technologically advanced. Other worlds, too populous to

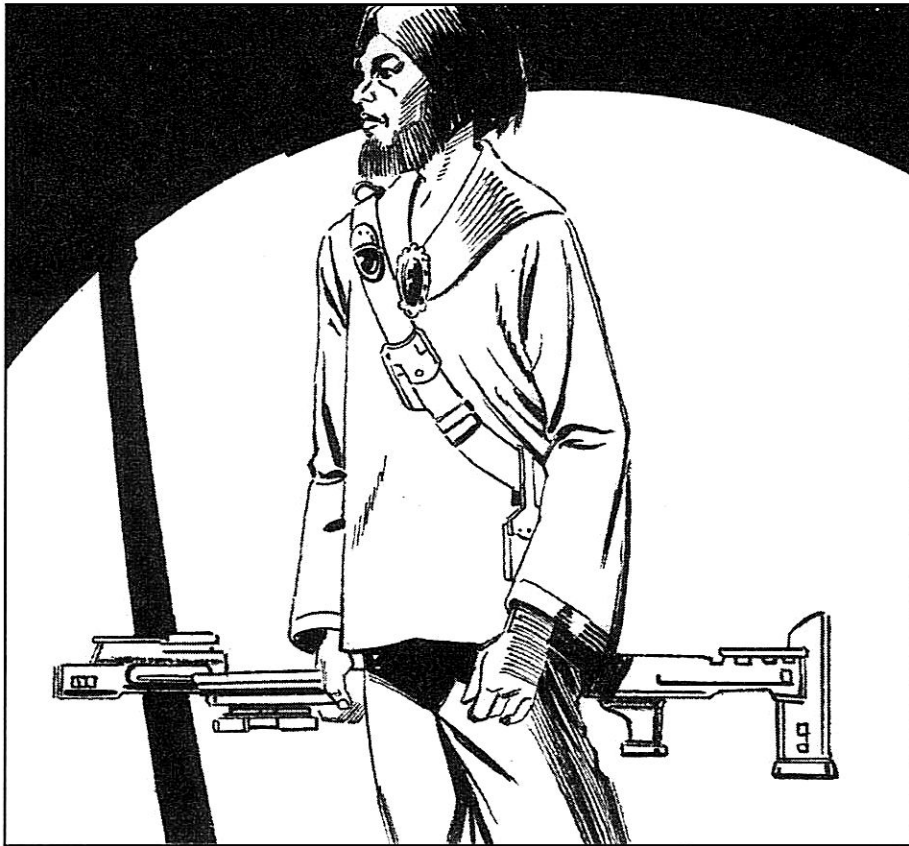
be conquered outright, were raided for "taxes." Worlds that were Earthlike but uninhabited were usually ignored. The Iltharan Empire established few colonies during its lifetime, and most of those were populated by Tring and Akakhad refugees. The Iltharans were conquistadors, living by the conquest of more populous and technically advanced worlds.

The Iltharan Empire was unchallenged for almost 800 years (from about -890 to -100). It finally met its match in the Principality of Caledon, a Solomani splinter state founded late in the Long Night. The Empire attacked and conquered several outlying Caledonian worlds, but the Principality's core resisted Iltharan attack.

About 100, scouts from the Third Imperium entered the region, and trade began to pick up considerably. This led to a sharp increase in Iltharan attacks on the colonies and shipping of others, and finally led to a direct confrontation between the Iltharan Empire and the Imperium. About 250, the Caledonians engineered rebellions on several of the Empire's subject worlds, triggering open war and Imperial intervention. By 267 the last Iltharan subject worlds had been conquered by Caledonian forces, supported by the Imperial White Fleet. In 268, the White Fleet subjected Drexilthar itself to nuclear bombardment, devastating the Iltharan homeworld and bringing the Empire to a fiery end.



Today Iltharans exist scattered around Reaver's Deep sector. In most places they are a minority, living among larger populations of Solomani and other races. Only on a few worlds in the core of their old Empire are they the dominant population. Iltharans remain a confrontational element in local society, combining all their historical aggression with a sense of grievance against the forces which destroyed their Empire. Although renewed imperialism is likely out of their grasp, they continue to disrupt the worlds of Reaver's Deep with terrorism and small-scale piracy.



PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Iltharans are fairly close to the Human root stock, and can usually interbreed with other Humans (particularly Solomani) without difficulty. Most of their divergences are adaptations to light gravity and a cold climate.

Adult Iltharan males average about 6'6" in height and weigh about 210 pounds. As with most Human races, the females are shorter and lighter than the males. Skin tones vary from light bronze to milk-pale. The eyes are normally

blue, gray, or hazel (although members of the Akakhad ethnic group often have brown eyes). Hair tends to be dark brown or black, profusely covering much of the body. Adult males always grow beards. Facial structure is strong-boned, with prominent cheekbones and heavy lower jaws (but little or no chin).

The most significant difference between Iltharans and the rest of Humaniti lies in the reproductive cycle. Iltharans are relatively infertile, but in compensation they enjoy an unusually long life expectancy. An Iltharan will reach maturity at about 18 standard years, but does not feel the onset of aging until about 100 standard years of age, and with reasonable medical care he can expect to live over 150 standard years.

Iltharan populations tend to grow slowly even under ideal conditions. Even at its height, the population of Drexilthar was little more than 100 million. Since the devastation at the end of the Empire, the planetary population has been nearly static.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

There are several Iltharan languages still in use today. The most common is Common Iltharan, which was the main language of the Empire and is still spoken by most people on Drexilthar itself. Akakhad and Tring are also spoken by some minority communities. Since the end of the Empire, most Iltharans have learned to speak Galanglic and other "foreign" tongues, but they jealously preserve their ancestral languages.

The Parasite Culture

The slow pace of Iltharan population growth and technical development does much to explain the historical pattern behind the race's expansion.

The arrival of Grand Admiral Izanak was a revelation to the pre-spaceflight Iltharans. Suddenly the Iltharan leadership knew that there were people out among the stars, with superior technologies and the ability to innovate quickly. Even so, clearly the outsiders were no more *intelligent* than Iltharans, who could easily absorb technology developed by others.

The Iltharans of the "contact era" were not blind to the potential gain. Historical records show that these architects of the Iltharan Empire were interested not simply in the loot of surrounding worlds, but in the pool of innovative talent those worlds could muster. Iltharan "raiders" were

often seen capturing artists, writers, scientists, and technical specialists along with the usual inanimate plunder.

In effect, for over a thousand years, the Iltharan Empire was a parasite civilization, battenning on a dozen other worlds in order to maintain their own society. This may explain why, for all their reputation for cruelty, the Iltharans never developed a taste for genocide. Killing off the host cultures, or even damaging them so severely as to retard their development, would have been counterproductive. Of course, the method was inefficient, and as soon as the Empire came in contact with a completely superior civilization it would have to transform itself or die. Unfortunately the Iltharans failed to adapt to new historical facts, and ran headlong into the confrontation that destroyed their Empire.



PSYCHOLOGY

Iltharans are close to the Human psychological norm, but their long lives and slow rate of reproduction have given rise to differences.

In most Human races, creativity and the ability to innovate are strongest in young adulthood. The same is true among the Iltharans, except that (because of their greater lifespan) they spend most of their adult lives after this creative period is over. By the time an Iltharan is old enough to have any power or influence in society, he is well into what another Human would consider middle age, and his habits of thought are thoroughly set.

An Iltharan can gather decades of experience while still remaining physically and mentally healthy. As a result, leaders are almost invariably drawn from the older members of society. Indeed, Iltharans seem to fall naturally into age-based hierarchies of command. Iltharan elders expect and require obedience from younger members of society. An Iltharan who is less than 50 years of age is still an apprentice, line worker, or private soldier. He is subject to strict discipline, and his opinions are generally ignored. Only when he approaches 75 standard years of age will he begin to reach leadership positions, attaining command rank only as he reaches his century mark.

The overall effect is to make Iltharan societies profoundlyly conservative. The history of pre-spaceflight Drexilthar includes few great social collapses, but at the same time the pace of innovation has always been very slow. Scientific discoveries, new technologies, new styles in art and architecture – all have taken long periods of time to develop. Archaeologists believe that agriculture was developed on Drexilthar as much as 50,000 years ago. Even so, when Grand Admiral Izanak found the planet, its most advanced cultures had barely developed radio and electrical power. Remarkably, some local myths and histories appear to have been preserved across that entire span of time, making Iltharan cultures among the most enduring known.

Iltharan societies also tend to be highly militaristic. Even the Akakhad and Tring minorities, regarded as “soft and peaceful” by the dominant High Iltharans, are more aggressive and strictly regimented than most Solomani or Vilani. Young Iltharans are unusually combative by nature, a trait which Iltharan elders try to keep in check, but which can be directed against enemies as necessary.

Unlike many Human races, the Iltharans have never been particularly patriarchal. Even in pre-industrial times,

women had near social and political equality with men. This may be another consequence of Iltharan infertility. Iltharan women spend a relatively small portion of their lives on childbearing, and so are available for other social roles.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The core institutions of Iltharan society are its professional guilds. Iltharan children are given a general education by the state. Upon reaching adulthood, every citizen enters one of the guilds as an apprentice (usually the same guild as one or both parents). The guilds provide advanced training, employment, and professional discipline for their members. They also act as matchmakers, help with child care, and provide other social services. At times, the guild acts much like a clan or tribe.

The Iltharans never developed the concept of the industrial corporation. Instead, most business ventures are sponsored by one guild, and staffed by hiring members from the others as necessary. The system is inefficient, and leads to a great deal of bickering among the guilds, but it seems to fit the Iltharan mindset. Under this system, the military forms one guild among many (although the largest and most prestigious).

Iltharan society has traditionally been dominated by the military, particularly by certain families which contribute senior military officers generation after generation. This is still true on Drexilthar today, although since the fall of the Iltharan Empire the military has had little opportunity to win wealth or glory. As a result, real power has fallen into the hands of a civilian bureaucracy. The so-called “Iltharan Dominate,” a council of top-ranking military officers, is effectively a figurehead.

At present, Drexilthar is a one-world Imperial client state. The Dominate lost most of its interstellar technology in the bombing of 268, and today controls only a few antiquated spaceships without jump capability. Imperial authority is enforced by the presence of an Imperial consul and an IISS base. Meanwhile, the Imperial border is only a few parsecs away, and Imperial naval forces sometimes make the jump to Drexilthar to “show the flag.” The Dominate is considered a moderately dangerous place to visit, especially for Imperial or Caledonian civilians. Drexilthar has been given Amber Zone status by the Travellers’ Aid Society.

DREXILTHAR (1826, REAVER'S DEEP SECTOR)

Starport: Class IV (Scout base).

Diameter: 4,200 miles (6,760 km). *Gravity:* 0.53 G.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 88%.

Climate: Chilly. *Population:* 9.3 million. *Government:*

Bureaucracy (executive agencies of the Iltharan Dominate).

Control Rating: 6. *TL:* 7. *Gas Giants:* 4. *WTN:* 4.0. *Trade Classifications:* Ni Ri.

Drexilthar's primary star is Ildran, a G4 V star of 0.97 solar masses and 0.87 solar luminosities. Drexilthar is the third planet of Inshaan, orbiting at a distance of 1.24 AU.

Inside the orbit of Drexilthar are two small rocky worlds, neither of which is inhabited. Outside Drexilthar's orbit is a thin planetoid belt. Beyond that are four gas giant worlds, the second of which is a massive Jupiter-sized planet. There are no companion stars.

The K'tring

Ironically, in 1120, the largest single population of Iltharans in the galaxy is not on the Iltharan homeworld, but several parsecs away on the homeworld of another sentient species.

About -850, a single Iltharan warship was damaged in a raid on a world near Drexilthar. Suffering a misjump, it ended up in the Gaajpadje system, seven parsecs away from Drexilthar and separated from known space by a two-parsec gap without star systems. The warship crashed on Gaajpadje's rugged East Continent. Most of the mixed-race crew survived, but they were stranded on Gaajpadje.

Once the shock of the crash was over, the castaways found conditions to be quite good. The environment was harsh compared to that of other regions on Gaajpadje, but not compared to conditions back on Drexilthar. The climate was quite pleasant, the native life was edible, and the region of the crash site was rich in arable land and mineral resources.

Better yet, there was a native sentient species, the J'aadje (see *Alien Races 4*). The local J'aadje peoples were technologically backward (TL3) and easily dominated by superior Iltharan weapons. Within a generation, the Iltharans were overlords of a conquistador state. Many of them were Tring rather than High Iltharans, and so in time they came to be called the *K'tring* in the local J'aadjean dialect.

Further conquests were hindered by a lack of industrial base and the usual slow rate of Iltharan population growth. Even so, by about 1100 the K'tring state had expanded to take in all of East Continent, with as many as 10 million Humans ruling over about 40 million J'aadje. More importantly, the K'tring had access to TL6 technology, considerably in advance of anything the independent J'aadje of West Continent could muster. The ocean between the two continents was a formidable barrier, but by itself it could not hold back the K'tring.

The first K'tring attack on West Continent was against the city of Rijudjya, traditional capital of the continent's city-states, in 1108. The attack would almost certainly have succeeded, were it not for the coincidental presence of a far trader and her crew. Although the attack was scotched by the visiting offworlders, the K'tring have probably not given up on their dream of conquest. Gaajpadje is rarely visited by outsiders, and anything might have happened there in the last 12 years.

News of the existence of the K'tring caused some consternation in the Principality of Caledon. Caledonian analysts are very concerned at what might happen should the K'tring complete the conquest of their world. An Iltharan conquistador state, with access to the resources of a rich planet and the labor of hundreds of millions of subjects, could be a formidable threat to local peace. So far the Imperium has taken little notice of the situation, but the Caledonians are exploring ways to keep Gaajpadje friendly.

Adventure Seed: Day of Conquest

The Principality of Caledon has decided to intervene on Gaajpadje. It lacks the military force to attack the K'tring directly, and fears to provoke Imperial or Aslan interference. On the other hand, freelance troubleshooters may be able to affect the situation, especially with discreet offworld support.

The mission will be to land at the J'aadje capital of Rijudjya, make friendly contact with the local J'aadje authorities, and offer assistance against the K'tring. The nature of the assistance will depend on the skills of the PC group. Mercenaries may offer cadre training, engineers may offer technical assistance, and diplomats may offer mediation between the J'aadje and K'tring. The group will be provided with large amounts of the appropriate equipment at a TL9 standard. The group's patrons will not keep a starship on station, but the PCs will be able to call on support from any Caledonian merchant ship that stops by, and there will be occasional shipments of extra weapons or equipment.

In any case, the party must be careful not to disturb the existing (but rather fragile) friendship between the J'aadje and various Caledonian merchant companies. The Gaajpadje trade is particularly profitable, but it depends on J'aadjean willingness to trade cultural treasures to offworlders.

When the PCs arrive, they find a number of obstacles thrown in their path. The J'aadje are culturally advanced, but nonviolent and technically backward. They are generally uninterested in military or technical aid, and (despite earlier incursions) they hold the K'tring in contempt. Then, not long after the PCs arrive, the K'tring launch a full-scale invasion of the West Continent, and the adventurers find themselves about to earn their pay.

Drexilthar is an anomalous world. Its entire star system is fairly young, and as often happens in such cases Drexilthar is quite dense for its size. The planet is still geologically active, and has produced a substantial atmosphere of its own. Regardless, Drexilthar should not be habitable, being too small and light to retain water over billion-year periods. The planet's substantial hydrosphere is apparently due to large-scale terraforming, probably during the Ancient era.

Anomalous or not, Drexilthar remains marginally habitable, small and cold but with substantial oceans. Since neither pole is land-locked, warm currents are able to reach almost to the poles. Meanwhile, the planet's axial tilt is significant, exposing each pole to direct sunlight for hundreds of standard days each year. The result is that Drexilthar has no permanent ice caps. In the long dark of local winter, the polar oceans can freeze to a depth of dozens of yards. In each hemisphere's spring and early summer, the ice cap breaks up, sending great ice floes and bergs down toward the equator. Only in the tropics is the temperature comfortable for Humans year-round, and even there seagoing navigation can be quite dangerous.

Drexilthar has three significant land masses, the largest of which is about the size of Australia on Terra. Fortunately for Human habitation, all three mini-continents are in the tropic zone, where temperatures are fairly comfortable year-round. In this region, local climate is usually characterized by mild temperatures, plenty of rain, and a great deal of fog at night and in the early morning.

Drexilthar's native life is primitive and restricted to the sea. Most local life forms were apparently imported by the Ancients, from Terra itself and from other worlds scattered across Charted Space. Before the modern era, much of Drexilthar's land area was covered by dense temperate-climate forests, in which aurochs, mastodon, and saber-toothed cats were among the dominant animal species. Naturally, the Iltharans have affected local ecosystems, although – since Drexilthar never became an industrial center – the damage was never severe. The Imperial nuclear bombing of 268 had more effect on the ecology than millennia of Iltharan habitation.

Drexilthar suffers unusually intense meteoric bombardment. The system's planetoid belt is quite close by. Geologists have found evidence of a number of minor asteroid impacts since the Ancient era. Although none of these have been of a size sufficient to do serious damage to the biosphere, at least one center of ancient Iltharan culture is known to have been destroyed by an impact. Meanwhile, small planetoids (up to a few meters across) continue to fall to the surface several times a year. The Imperium has set up a "sky-watch" facility to provide warning of major asteroid impacts.

CHARACTERS

Male Iltharans are 9" taller than a standard Human with the same ST, but 10 pounds lighter than a standard Human of the same height. Female Iltharans average 2" shorter and 10 pounds lighter than males. Iltharans are taller and more

robust than most Humans, but their low-gravity heritage means that they have the same average ST.

ILTHARAN RACIAL TEMPLATE -13 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: HT +1 [10].

Advantages: Early Maturation [5]; Extended Lifespan [5].

Disadvantages: Hidebound [-5]; Intolerance [-10]; Primitive (-3 TLs) [-15]; Sterile (Limitation: Most of the Time, -35%) [-2].

Quirks: Humble. [-1]



NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Administrative Rank *see p. C119*

Iltharan society is very rank-conscious, with subtle gradations of social rank built into the guild system. The armed services (i.e. the "military guilds") naturally use Military Rank, but almost anyone active in Iltharan culture will have some form of Guild Rank. Modern Iltharan guilds usually use the following system of ranks (with the titles translated into Anglic for convenience):

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Military Equivalent</i>
6	Guild Commander	Colonel
5	Councilor	Lieutenant Colonel
4	Master	Captain
3	Principal	Lieutenant
2	Senior Apprentice	Senior Sergeant
1	Junior Apprentice	Sergeant
0	Novice	Private or Recruit

Ancient guilds used a more extended system of ranks, but a number of rank titles have fallen into disuse over the last thousand years. Since the end of the Empire, most Iltharan communities have no more than a few million members, so the many-tiered rank systems of ancient times are no longer appropriate.

It is very unusual for any Iltharan to reach Rank 3 before the age of 50. An Iltharan who stays in good standing in his guild but has no particular gifts will usually be promoted one Rank about every 20 standard years after reaching maturity. However, most guild members never go higher than Rank 4 (Master).

Early Maturation *see p. C153*

Despite their longer lifespan, Iltharans reach physical maturity at about 18 standard years of age, just as most other Humans do.

Extended Lifespan *see p. C154*

Iltharans begin making aging rolls at age 100, with the frequency increasing at 140 and 180.

Hidebound *see p. C191*

Iltharans are very poor at skills which require creativity or innovation.

Humble *see p. C191*

Iltharans tend to put the concerns of the group ahead of their own individual needs.

Intolerance *see p. B34*

Iltharans look down on and distrust members of other races.

Primitive *see p. B26*

The Iltharan homeworld is currently at TL7, and most of the scattered Iltharan populations are also at relatively low tech levels.

Sterile *see p. C184*

Iltharans have few children, despite having a typical sexual drive. An Iltharan couple is about one-fifth as likely to conceive as a standard Human couple under similar circumstances. This infertility is modeled as Sterile, with a -35% limitation.

Status *see p. B18*

The basic Status of a given character in Iltharan society is largely dependent on his guild standing. For example:

<i>Status</i>	<i>Description</i>
6	Members of the Iltharan Dominate
5	Guild Commanders
4	Senior officers in important guilds
3	Senior officers in most guilds
2	Principals in important guilds (military or administration)
1	Well-regarded guildsman, most Principals
0	Ordinary guildsman
-1	Below-standard guildsman
-2	Orphan or guildless adult
-3	Outlaw

An Iltharan character with Administrative or Military Rank in a guild may take one level of Status free for every three full levels of rank.

Wealth *see p. B16*

Iltharan society does not encourage the massing of large amounts of wealth under individual control. It is very rare for any Iltharan to be more than Wealthy.

SKILLS

Certain skills work slightly differently for Iltharans, or have a special emphasis within Iltharan society.

Bard *see p. B47*

Somewhat surprisingly for such a grim and regimented culture, the Iltharans have high regard for storytelling skill. Characters who master tales from Iltharan history or myth, and are able to tell them with clarity and passion, can always find an audience. Any Iltharan character with artistic skills should probably begin with Bard. A good second skill would be Bardic Lore, allowing the character to memorize many traditional tales. Poetry skill is *not* very important for this endeavor, since the composition of new epics is not so highly regarded. Most Iltharan patrons of the bardic art like to hear familiar stories over and over again, and are not interested in experimental poetry.

Combat Skills

Most Iltharan characters specialize in weapons available to an industrial but pre-starflight level of technology. The Guns skill will be most common, with the Light Automatic, Pistol, Rifle, or Shotgun specializations available. Most Iltharan characters have at least a few points in Guns, and members of the military caste are superb marksmen.

Some Iltharans know how to use traditional melee weapons as well. The High Iltharans use a large one-edged knife for slashing or stabbing (this uses Knife skill), while the Tring and Akakhad each have their own variation on the one-handed sword (using Shortsword skill). Iltharan open-hand fighting has never developed elaborate schools of martial art, but warriors often have high levels of Brawling.

Conspiracy Theory *see p. C155*

This skill actually has some utility in Iltharan communities. Iltharans are racial chauvinists – very aware that they once held a glorious Empire, but also very aware that they have lost almost everything they once had. How could this have happened, if not through the machinations of some anti-Iltharan conspiracy? This skill can represent knowledge of the many conspiracy theories that have arisen over the past few centuries. It is mostly useful for understanding or winning influence within Iltharan society. Of course, one or more of the theories may actually be *true* . . .

Leadership *see p. B63*

Since even “civilian” institutions in Iltharan society have a paramilitary flavor, anyone with Administrative Rank higher than 0 should probably invest in Leadership skill.

Iltharan society has always emphasized the ability of the individual to survive on his own, and this tendency has grown stronger since the devastation of Drexilthar. Almost any character can justify having a few points in Survival, probably in the Arctic, Woodlands, or Mountain specializations.

"Once you become acquainted with Iltharan culture, it will come as no surprise to learn that the word Iltharan has come to mean 'pirate' in many local dialects. It is also no surprise that the Iltharans view this with a certain degree of pride."

*– Professor Daffyd Zhugasvilli,
Comparative Sophontology
Lecture, University of Sylea*

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

The character templates from the *GURPS Traveller* core rules are not all suitable for Iltharan characters. The Barbarian, Bureaucrat, Farmer, Hunter/Guide, Manager, and Merchant templates are all particularly appropriate, as are the various Army templates (customized for the TL of the character's homeworld).

The various templates oriented toward interstellar travel (notably the Corsair and Navy templates) are difficult for Iltharans to get into on their own. Iltharan characters may use them if they have served in the starfaring institutions of other societies. Among these, the Corsair template is particularly attractive, since many Iltharans who do manage to gain starfaring experience eventually go pirate.

Templates which are particularly *inappropriate* for Iltharan characters include Belter (they rarely invest in resource development in hostile environments), Bounty Hunter (the profession is alien to their culture), Journalist/Reporter (a "free press" is also alien to their culture), Rogue (Iltharan outlaws and criminals face a very brutish and short existence), Scientist (Iltharans make poor researchers), and Scout (they make even worse explorers). Once again, Iltharans who have left their home society might take part in some of these occupations.

Adventure Seeds

The following adventure seeds involve contacts with Iltharan society.

Send in the Clones

The adventuring party is contacted by an agent of Imperial Intelligence. He reveals that his agency has tracked certain shipments of high-tech medical equipment out into the wilds of Reaver's Deep sector. The equipment's final destination is unknown, but it appears to be coming into the hands of the Iltharan Dominate. His concern is that the Iltharans may be attempting to use genetic engineering or cloning to offset their low natural birthrate. If so, they may be planning a revival of their Empire.

The agent asks the PCs, as loyal Imperial citizens who are not attached to any known intelligence agency, to "keep their eyes open." If they spot any of the medical equipment, they can report the fact to his agency and be rewarded. Any proof that the Iltharans are engaging in illicit genetic research would be rewarded handsomely.

The GM should decide how truthful the agent is being. Perhaps the medical equipment is not going to the Iltharans, but to a covert research station operated by an Imperial megacorporation. Perhaps the "Imperial agent" himself works for a megacorporation and is trying to steal a march on the competition. Or perhaps the story is completely true. The PCs might begin seeing large numbers of Iltharan soldiers, all bearing an eerie resemblance to one another . . .

Youth Movement

Soon after the PCs land on an Iltharan world, they are discreetly contacted by members of the Rising Sun League. The League is a secret society of young Iltharans, who have decided that the dominance of their elders is the main reason why their people have been downtrodden for centuries. The League are overcoming Iltharan chauvinism by contacting visitors from other Human races, hoping to gain inspiration for their eventual overthrow of the "elder tyranny."

The League offers a reward for inspirational examples of achievement by young Humans from other cultures. To this end, it will pay the adventurers to perform research on artists, scientists, soldiers, or other figures who have performed important deeds before the age of 40. A single, completely researched example might be worth as much as several hundred credits. If the PCs can present the League with an epic poem on one of the research subjects, in the ancient Iltharan style, then the reward might be increased to about 2,000 Cr. If the PCs have good research skills and access to a major Imperial library, they might be able to rack up thousands of credits in short order.

PCs who own their own transportation may also be offered payment to allow young Iltharans to take "working passage" on their ship. Potential candidates have only rudimentary technical skills, but they work hard and learn quickly, and they are fiercely interested in observing how non-Iltharan civilization works.

Naturally, the Rising Sun League is an illegal organization, and the PCs are watched by any Iltharan authorities they encounter. Elder Iltharans may use official harassment or even violence to prevent the League from gathering propaganda materials, and may cast out any young Iltharan who joins the PCs for offworld experience.

CHAPTER TEN

Irhadre



Hailing from the harsh desert world of Chanad in the Lishun sector, the Irhadre possess a culture that appears bizarre and scandalous to many, even in the cosmopolitan Imperium. One of the pillars of Irhadre culture is the practice of *jak'aat mihal*, or "fortunate service," a form of lifelong servitude that binds half of all adult Irhadre. Critics of the practice consider it slavery, a violation of the Imperium's basic charter.

The Irhadre pay little heed to such criticisms. They point out that Emperor Artemsus did not demand an end to *jak'aat mihal* when Chanad joined the Imperium in 69. Thus "fortunate service" is not a form of slavery, whatever outsiders may think. To judge the truth of each contention requires a deeper examination of the Irhadre, including their physiology and psychology.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Irhadre history has been unremarkable for thousands of years. Chanad came under Vilani influence about -7500, when the Irhadre themselves were still at a Bronze Age level of development. The Irhadre adapted well to life under Vilani rule, with early forms of the *jak'aat mihal* institution fitting smoothly into the Vilani caste system.

The Irhadre never advanced beyond TL5 under the First Imperium, remaining content to trade with Vilani merchants for high-technology goods. At first, the Rule of Man had almost no effect on Chanad, simply replacing Terran governors for Vilani. About -1800 there was a change in the planetary government, and the new regime took an interest in expanding interstellar trade and local industry. The resulting economic and technological boom was short-lived, aborted by the financial collapse of the Rule of Man. During the Long Night, Chanad slipped back to a pre-industrial economy and was divided among dozens of small nation-states.

About -200 Chanad was recontacted, by Vilani merchants who were slowly rebuilding interstellar trade throughout the Vland and Lishun sectors. The new contact stimulated Irhadre society, encouraging the reunification of Chanad and a surge in local industry. Over the next 250 years, Chanad advanced from TL4 to TL8. Although the Irhadre remained independent throughout this period, their leaders encouraged offworlders to invest in the local economy. The *jak'aat mihal* system reached its modern form during this period, and may help to explain why the Irhadre were able to progress so quickly with relatively little social unrest.

Chanad joined the Third Imperium in 69, on very favorable terms that included a generous package of technological and industrial aid. When the existence of *jak'aat mihal* became widely known, Chanad's favored treatment became very controversial. The resulting scandal caused the political downfall of the first Duke of Lishun, and resulted in a backlash against the Irhadre in Imperial politics.

Since their entry into the Imperium, the Irhadre have found themselves badly handicapped in their conduct of interstellar affairs. Few of them have ever received patents of Imperial nobility or gained influence in the Imperial bureaucracy. Indeed, Imperial bureaucrats tend to treat Chanad harshly. For example, the Irhadre have never been permitted to establish interstellar colonies. This treatment is likely to remain as long as the practice of *jak'aat mihal* continues.

Despite this handicap, the Irhadre have done well for themselves under the Imperium. Chanad is currently a prosperous world at the cutting edge of Imperial technology. Irhadre merchants and explorers are a common sight throughout the coreward regions of the Imperium, and beyond.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Despite millennia of genetic drift and environmental adaptation to the rigors of Chanad, the Irhadre are unmistakably Human. Differences from the Solomani/Vilani norm are slight, and highlight the general homogeneity of Humanity throughout Charted Space.

Irhadre males stand approximately 5'10" tall. Females are only slightly shorter. The average Irhadre weighs approximately 176 pounds, whether male or female.

The Irhadre possess dewlaps of water-retaining tissue that grow when saturated. Because of these dewlaps, Irhadre skin has a wrinkled appearance, becoming parched and taut when the conserved water is needed. The biological mechanism behind this water-retention system is quite different from similar measures seen on other worlds. This leads some sophontologists to theorize that the Ancients may have introduced the adaptation. They argue that Irhadre folklore and myths include tales of being "shaped by the gods" so as to gain mastery over Chanad. Skeptics point out that most cultures include similar creation myths. Moreover, the lack of any Ancient sites on Chanad does present an interpretive problem.

Dark hair and eyes are the norm among the Irhadre. A chance mutation gives about one in 1,000 Irhadre blond hair, which is considered especially beautiful. Some Irhadre (of both genders) bleach their hair to achieve what nature has denied them.

In general, Irhadre anatomy differs little from the Human mainstream. Irhadre ears have narrower auditory canals, and the earlobes are set slightly tighter against the sides of the head to protect against wind-blown sand. The eyes are much more slit-like for similar reasons. An Irhadre does not express surprise by opening his eyes more widely. Instead, an Irhadre thrusts forward his open palms, as if to stop the approach of that which surprised him.

Chanad's native biochemistry differs little from Terra's, allowing the Irhadre to eat freely. Like most Humans, the Irhadre are omnivorous, although their diet consists largely of vegetable matter. Many of Chanad's desert plants and roots have high water content. In primitive times, these plants were eaten for survival rather than for taste. Ironically, the Irhadre palate takes great pleasure in foodstuffs without such high water content. Imports of such foods have been a thriving business since first contact with the Vilani.

Irhadre reproductive physiology does not differ in any significant way from the Human norm. Multiple births are rare, and were once considered an ill omen. That belief persists only among extreme traditionalists on Chanad itself.

Irhadre vision and hearing are generally equivalent to those of other Humans. Because blinding sandstorms often make the eyes useless, the Irhadre have developed keen senses of touch and smell. In some individuals, the degree of sensitivity in these senses is impressive.

The Irhadre lifespan is relatively short in comparison to that of other Humans. The average life expectancy is about 65 standard years. Anagathics have their normal effects on Irhadre.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The official language on Chanad is *Sue'a Medad*, a common dialect that has been in constant use for over 4,000 years. Most Irhadre also speak Galanglic. In *GURPS* terms, *Sue'a Medad* is a Mental/Average language skill.

All Irhadre possess a given name and a surname, used in that order, as is common among many Human races. Here are a few sample Irhadre names.

Male: Aloni, Hagelaar, Suma, Talman.

Female: Daost, Liss, Maret, Mitu.

Surnames: Adalat, Aninch, On, Radin.



PSYCHOLOGY

To understand the Irhadre psyche, one must grasp three basic traits: superiority, survival, and conservatism.

SUPERIORITY

The Irhadre sense of *superiority* is the trait easiest for outsiders to comprehend. Like many races, the Irhadre see themselves as inherently superior to all other sophonts. They base their claim on numerous factors, chiefly their ability to survive and thrive in Chanad's hostile environment. They argue that the distinction between "major" and "minor" races based on the development of jump drive is meaningless. Instead, it is the inherent strength of a race, its endurance in the face of the odds, which truly sets it apart.

This superiority complex does not restrict itself to a purely physical plane. The Irhadre claim that being physically capable of withstanding adversity is not enough. Like jump drive, mere physical strength is meaningless if not used properly. Thus, the Irhadre also admire mental stamina, concentration, and strength of will.

The Irhadre appear to be resistant to pain and suffering. There is no evidence that the Irhadre can actually endure greater levels of pain than other Humans, but as a race they remain stoic in the face of adversity. To them, it is a sign of weakness to ask for "unnecessary" help or give in to suffering. Of course, not all Irhadre are stoics. Many manifest their superiority complex through simple stubbornness, making haggling with an Irhadre merchant a memorable experience.



SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

If there's one thing the average Imperial citizen knows about the Irhadre, it is the *jak'aat mihal*, the ritual servitude which claims half of the adult population. This unusual practice can be traced beyond recorded history. The extreme harshness of Chanad made certain tasks essential to the survival of Irhadre society (for example, gathering the plants and roots from which a tribe derived much of its water). Without the assurance that these vital tasks would always be undertaken, Irhadre society was

at constant risk. Thus was born the idea of binding members of society to certain tasks in perpetuity.

There is no denying that the *jak'aat mihal* restricts the rights and privileges of those bound under its provisions. Although the Irhadre care little for what outsiders think of the practice, they do not draw attention to it. When criticized by outsiders, the Irhadre point to the decree of Emperor Artemus that admitted Chanad to the Third Imperium, which does not demand an end to the institution. This fact has not ended protests and boycotts by pressure groups seeking to correct Artemus' supposed "oversight."

"Fortunate service," unlike genuine slavery, is not hereditary. The children of *jak'ut* ("servants") may be *habbrut* ("freemen") and vice versa. No Irhadre assumes his place in society by right of birth alone.

SURVIVAL

The Irhadre regard life as a constant struggle for survival in a harsh environment. They are commonly dispassionate and even callous. Showing overt concern for others, or giving in to feelings of sadness, takes energy that might be needed for the business of staying alive.

The primitive Irhadre did not care for their sick and wounded to any great degree. Doing so was not necessarily thought of as a sign of weakness, but a wounded person might slow down a group and create additional problems. Consequently, the Irhadre never developed advanced medical techniques before Vilani contact. Even then, it took centuries before the Irhadre saw any wisdom in tending to the sick and dying. Today this psychological trait exercises minimal influence, manifesting primarily in the Irhadre habit of stubbornly denying any signs of illness or injury until treatment is absolutely necessary.

Paradoxically, the Irhadre are a bellicose race, not given to quiet cooperation even when survival might require it. Although physical violence is rare, verbal assaults and insult matches are common. Irhadre are masters of verbal confrontation. Most Irhadre explain this trait by observing that killing one's own people is counterproductive to survival. Verbal "violence" is an acceptable social safety valve, a way for Irhadre to vent their emotions without placing themselves or the community in real danger.

CONSERVATISM

The Irhadre, like other Human races native to hostile worlds, are rather conservative. To them, death is always nearby, so innovation can lead to unpredictable risks. Better to stick to tried and true methods – however ineffective – than risk a worse fate through experimentation. The Irhadre are still slow to deviate from traditional methods. Many old and outdated customs continue among them, despite centuries of Imperial contact and technological advance.

Irhadre Insults

The Irhadre are renowned for their skill at insults, many of which derive from their unique cultural perspective. Here is a handful of the more unusual ways in which these Humans have been known to verbally skewer their opponents.

"Even the wind cannot silence you." This is an expression of exasperation at an opponent who will not simply shut up. The implication is that his droning voice can be heard even above Chanad's high winds.

"Unfortunate servitor." This insult is a play on the literal meaning of *jak'aat mihal* ("fortunate service") and suggests its target was allotted to an inappropriate place in life. It is used mostly by *jak'ut* among themselves, but has applicability even to the *habbrut*.

"Waste of water." Given the value of water in Irhadre society, this insult is especially grave, as it suggests the target is unworthy of existence.

"You are as clever as the sand trapper." The sand trapper is a medium-sized carnivore that builds elaborate traps to catch its prey – so elaborate it often falls prey to its own traps. This insult expresses the Irhadre's belief that innovation can often be as dangerous as it is helpful.

"You would give aid to the doomed." The Irhadre do not believe in wasting resources on those deemed beyond help. To do so is considered foolish to these sometimes-callous people.

Interstellar Relations

Were it not for two factors, the Irhadre would be unknown outside their own subsector. The first is the practice of *jak'aat mihal*, which makes the Irhadre one of the most well-known minor Human races in the Imperium. The second is the sophistication of their high-tech devices – and their desire to sell them. Irhadre merchant vessels are common sights throughout the Domain of Antares, including the unincorporated sectors of Meshan and Mendan.

Long-distance trade has brought the Irhadre into regular contact with the Vargr, whom they view with a combination of curiosity and disdain. On the one hand, the Vargr are remarkably open-minded. Few comment upon, let alone condemn the Irhadre for, the *jak'aat mihal*. At the same time, the disorganization of Vargr society runs so counter to Irhadre notions of civilization that they find it hard to believe such a race could survive long enough to reach the stars.

Other than the Vargr, the Irhadre have limited contact with any other major race. They have grudging respect for the Vilani, who recognize the value of tradition. The Solomani are held in less esteem, even though the Rule of Man interfered little with Chanad's native culture. However, the irrational (to the Irhadre anyway) Solomani love of "liberty" is at the root of the movements to overturn the *jak'aat mihal* and therefore anathema to them.

Interestingly, the Irhadre are staunch supporters of the Third Imperium, which they see as an almost perfect fusion of traditionalism tempered by laissez-faire governance. While culturally opposed to hereditary leadership, they're willing to overlook this "flaw" in the Imperium because the nobility have never negatively impacted Chanad. They are suspicious of activist nobles like Archduke Dulinor, who seemed to exemplify the worst elements of the peerage. His death was greeted with little unhappiness on Chanad.

Upon reaching adulthood (16 local years of age, or about 17 standard years), all Irhadre submit their names to a "draft board," the *Juk'hat Morbet Hal* (literally "dispenser of service"). The board randomly determines who will be assigned to life as a *jak'ut* or as a *habbrut*. Since the invention of the computer, the determination of an Irhadre's place has been decided by an automated process, generally accepted by the Irhadre as fair and equitable.

Jak'ut are assigned to the homes of *habbrut* and to the Irhadre government. *Jak'ut* are not eligible to vote or hold public office, although only *jak'ut* hold civil service positions (indeed, they run the bulk of the planetary bureaucracy). They may not own property or use weapons. Their movements are restricted, requiring authorization to leave the area to which they are assigned. Nevertheless, *jak'ut* are well treated and even respected. Commensurate with their responsibilities, they are granted lodgings, food, and other amenities (for this reason, there has never been a "slave revolt" in Irhadre history). Thus the *jak'aat mihal*, while called slavery by its critics, is more akin to a nonhereditary caste system.

In the past, there was little commingling between the *jak'ut* and *habbrut* classes, based on the philosophical belief that contact between the two classes "contaminated" the *habbrut*. In recent times this belief has largely disappeared. Today there are few restrictions against interaction in most areas, although marriage across caste lines is frowned upon.

Irhadre leaders have always possessed sweeping powers to ensure the well-being of the whole society. These leaders created the *jak'aat mihal* with popular approval to ensure survival. While there are occasional calls for modification of the practice, there are few voices in favor of its outright abolition. Chanad depends heavily on the *jak'aat mihal* and would probably not function well without it. Moreover, even *jak'ut* usually cannot find fault with the scrupulous way in which it is administered.

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TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

One of the great ironies of Irhadre culture is that its conservatism has not impeded *technological* progress. In fact, modern Chanad is one of Lishun sector's leaders in the development and manufacturing of computers and electronics. Irhadre are quite willing to accept technologies already developed by others. Technological innovation is also an odd byproduct of the *jak'aat mihal*, as generations of *jak'ut* have created many tools to aid them in keeping Irhadre society running smoothly.

Irhadre technological designs favor utility over aesthetics. This hampers their desirability in markets such as the trendy enclaves of the Core sector, but increases it in places like Vland where good workmanship counts for more than outward appearance. Attempts to teach the Irhadre "marketing" techniques have met with little success; they remain stubbornly resistant to change.

The Irhadre have been slow in the area of robotics. With half the adult population bound to their jobs by the *jak'aat mihal*, Chanad lacks the usual social pressures that promote greater automation. It's one of many contradictions that make this tradition-bound yet high-technology world so fascinating to sophontologists in Lishun sector and beyond.

CHANAD (0935, LISHUN SECTOR)

Starport: Class V.

Diameter: 8,119 miles (13,066 km). *Gravity:* 0.49 G. *Atmosphere:* Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 0%. *Climate:* Cool. *Population:* 600 million. *Government:* Representative democracy. *Control Rating:* 4. *TL:* 12. *Gas Giants:* 2. *WTN:* 5.0. *Trade Classifications:* De Ri.

The homeworld of the Irhadre orbits a hot, yellow star (A'archu) at 0.99 AU. The system also holds two gas giants and a remarkable six planetoid belts, as well as two other uninhabited rocky worlds.

At 0.45 standard atmospheres, Chanad's air has an oxygen/nitrogen composition with strong inert-gas contaminants. While the atmosphere is not thin enough to require breath masks, visitors often take some time to adapt to its relative thinness. A desert world, Chanad has neither freestanding water nor polar ice caps.

Chanad possesses a small but diverse ecosystem of plants and animals, all of which are biochemically compatible with the Irhadre. The native plant life consists largely of semi-subterranean roots and tubers, as well as a smattering of cacti. Native animal life includes a number of carnivorous species, mostly of the scavenger and trapper varieties.

In ancient times, the Irhadre rarely built large permanent settlements. Although this changed somewhat as they developed higher technology, there remains an almost atavistic preference for smaller communities. Consequently, few Irhadre cities possess more than 500,000 inhabitants, with most being in the 200,000-300,000 range.

The single largest settlement on the planet is Unwalla, the planetary capital and site of Dareen Downport and its accompanying naval base. With a permanent population of over 1 million, Unwalla is Chanad's public face. Few outsiders visit smaller cities like Durch or Sh'laan, let alone isolated desert communities such as Ikban – which is a shame, or so say the Irhadre. Ever conscious of the way in which many Imperials view their culture, they have often made unsuccessful efforts to encourage offworlders to see the "true face of Chanad," away from the bustling capital and its legions of *jak'ut* bureaucrats.

IRHADRE CHARACTERS

The average Irhadre is 2" taller than a normal Human with the same ST. He averages 10 pounds heavier than a normal Human of the same height.

IRHADRE RACIAL TEMPLATE 44 POINTS

Advantages: Acute Taste and Smell +1 [2]; High Technology (+2 TLs) [50].

Disadvantages: Callous [-6]; Reputation -2 (As slavers, among anti-slavery advocates, 7 or less) [-1].

Quirks: Channels aggression into insults rather than violence; Dull. [-2]

Skills: +1 Intimidation [1].

This racial template is appropriate only for a *habbrut* character. A *jak'ut* Irhadre may be unsuitable for use as a character in most *Traveller* campaigns. *Jak'ut* can sometimes be found in the service of Irhadre who travel the Imperium. Such characters incur disadvantages (such as an expensive Duty) that make them a challenge to roleplay.

One of the great ironies of Irhadre culture is that its conservatism has not impeded technological progress. In fact, modern Chanad is one of Lishun sector's leaders in the development and manufacturing of computers and electronics.

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Acute Taste and Smell see p. B19

On the average, the Irhadre senses of taste and smell are more sensitive than those of other Humans.

Callous see p. C186

Irhadre are insensitive to the feelings and suffering of others.

Dull see p. C189

Irhadre are poor at innovating, although they are quite capable of using technologies and ideas developed by others.

High Technology see p. C126

Irhadre learn all their skills at TL12, the tech level of Chanad. The Irhadre have no offworld colonies of their own.

Reputation see p. B17

Irhadre are mildly infamous as slave-holders because of the *jak'aat mihal* system, although most Imperial citizens are either unaware of the institution or are not concerned about it.

Status see p. B18

Within Irhadre society, the following system of Status ranks applies.

Status	Description
6	Chancellor of Chanad
5	National Leader or Head of Civil Service
4	Local Leader or Well-placed Civil Servant
3	Successful Merchant
2	Civil Servant or Merchant
1	Well-regarded Citizen
0	Average Citizen (<i>Habbrut</i> or <i>Jak'ut</i>)

Interestingly, there is no social stigma attached to *jak'ut* status, as it is an honorable vocation supported by the weight of tradition. Thus, a well-placed *jak'ut* bureaucrat could possess higher status than an average *habbrut* citizen. A *jak'ut* is bound to a particular occupation, and is not obliged to blindly obey the orders of any *habbrut* he encounters – especially if doing so would interfere with his allotted job.

Few Irhadre have ever possessed a patent of Imperial nobility. Their culture espouses democratic and collaborative ideals, and recoils at the thought of a hereditary aristocracy. In addition, their reputation as slaveholders (however undeserved) makes them unattractive candidates for such patents. Creating an Irhadre character with an Imperial noble title would require the Unusual Background advantage.

SKILLS

Jak'ut naturally have a more limited skill selection than *habbrut*. The purpose of the *jak'aat mihal* is to guarantee that “essential” services are always staffed by knowledgeable individuals. This means that most *jak'ut* have extremely high skills in a few areas, but lack the breadth common to most other characters – yet another reason they may be unsuitable as player characters.

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Irhadre characters may use any template listed in *GURPS Traveller*, although few of them enter direct Imperial service, such as the military or the Scouts. Merchant careers are by far the most common for those who leave Chanad. Players should remember that all Irhadre bureaucrats are *jak'ut*, and never leave their homeworld unless accompanied by *habbrut*.

Adventure Seeds

The Warrant

Although the *jak'aat mihal* retains the support of the vast majority of Irhadre, it offends many elsewhere in the Imperium. *The Warrant* is one group opposed to the institution, a Lishun-wide organization dedicated to “educating *jak'ut* slaves about other options” (by which they actually mean inciting riots and other public demonstrations against the Chanad planetary government). In 1117, one such demonstration got out of hand, killing 10 Irhadre and throwing the capital into chaos.

Agents of the Warrant may approach the PCs to spark new protests on Chanad, hoping to draw attention to the injustice of the *jak'aat mihal*. Alternately, the characters may be hired by the planetary government to uncover proof of the Warrant’s complicity in illegal activities, so as to ruin their reputation in Lishun and beyond.

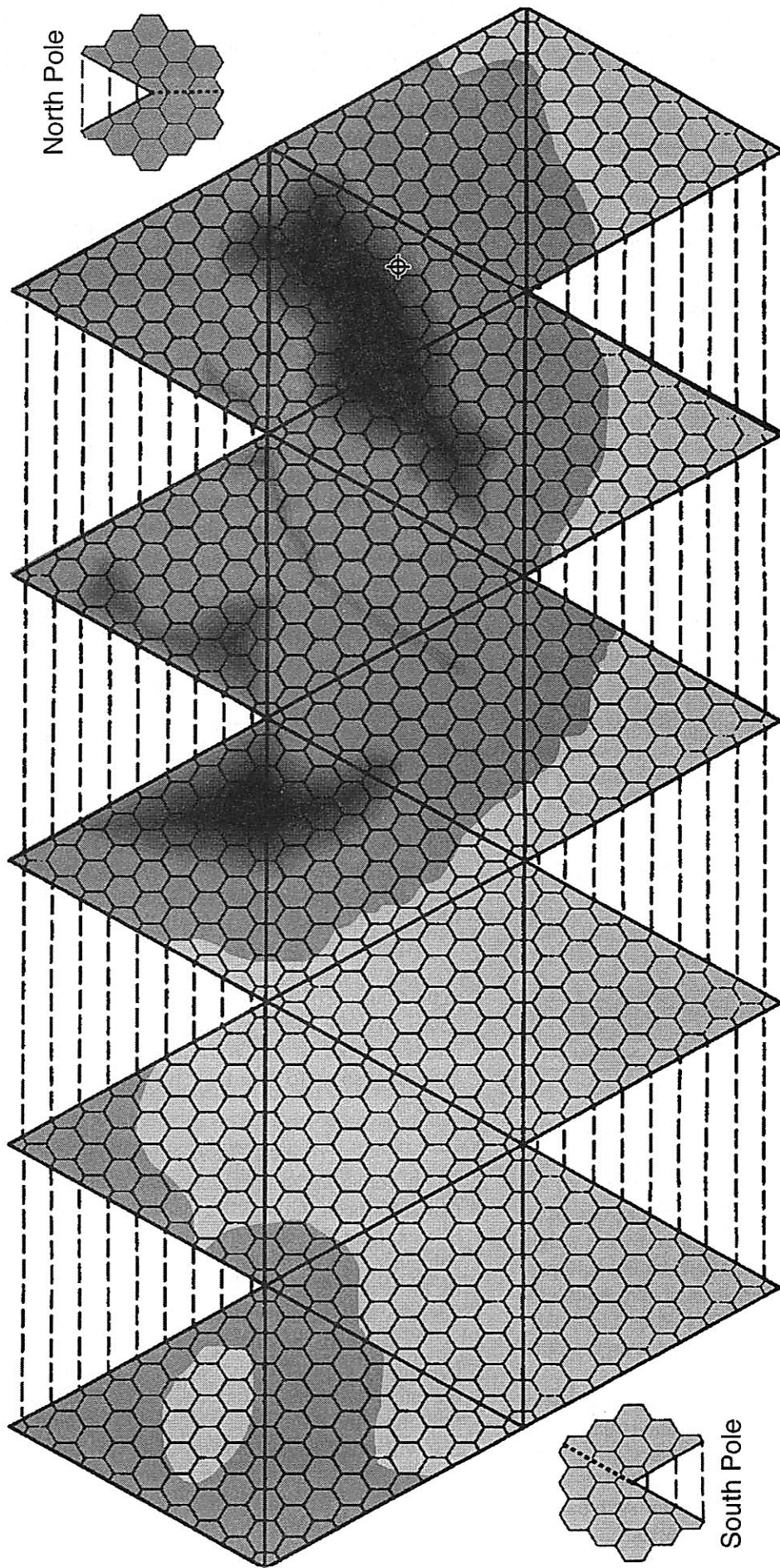
There's Been a Mistake!

A young *jak'ut* approaches the characters, claiming that she’s been wrongly assigned to a life of servitude. She explains that a rival has found a way to crack the computer algorithm used in the *jak'aat mihal*, in order to rig the results in his favor. Unfortunately, no one believes her story and she must turn to outsiders for assistance.

If what the *jak'ut* says is true, she’s uncovered a potentially explosive secret, one that could undermine the entire tradition of “fortunate service.” The characters may thus find themselves enmeshed in political intrigue that will rock Chanad’s society to its very foundations.

Alternately, the *jak'ut* may be sympathetic to (or an agent of) the Warrant, hoping to use the characters as a way to sow chaos on Chanad.

Chanad



1 hex = 566.8 miles

Starport

Plain/Steppe

Hilly/Rough

Icy/Barren

Ocean

Major City

Mountain/Volcanic

Starport: Class V

Diameter: 8,119 miles

Atmosphere: Standard, Oxygen-Nitrogen

Surface Water: 0%

Climate: Cool

Population: 600 million

Government: Representative Democracy

Control Rating: 4

TL: 12

KEY

Unwala Starport

Kargol

The Kargol are native to a world in the Leonidae sector, well outside the boundary of the Imperium. Their 14-world confederation is one of the most technologically advanced states in this sector.



ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Ancients engineered the Kargol for life on their homeworld. From a small initial population, they rapidly spread over the entirety of this planet.

The Kargol reached TL2 about 10,000 years ago. In this era, the civilized world was divided into two groups: a scattering of small towns and cities, and loosely allied nomadic bands. Urban dwellers created most of the finished goods: saddles, ceramics, metalwork, and clothing. Nomads traded goods between settlements, and sought out raw materials such as clay or metal ores. Each group produced its own food, but traded with the other for delicacies. The nomads kept several species of large, domesticated floater animals. These were used as living airships, transporting people and cargo across both land and sea.

Kargol was never contacted by offworlders during the First Imperium or the Rule of Man. The nearest foreign settlement was Shan's Landing, an isolated Solomani colony established only one parsec from Kargol about -1800. Shan's Landing was hard-hit during the Long Night, and struggled for centuries to recover its technology base.

By -900 the Kargol had attained TL8 and were beginning to colonize their own star system. In -896, scientists detected intelligent radio broadcasts emanating from Shan's Landing. A generation later, a fusion-powered ship traveled from the Kargol system to Shan's Landing. The ship carried dozens of Kargol's best diplomats, scientists, and engineers in cold sleep. Arriving after a decade-long journey, the Kargol worked hard to help the Shan rebuild. In particular, they assisted with the construction of new jump-drive starships. By -830 the two worlds were in constant contact.

The two races soon discovered that they had quite a bit in common and enjoyed each other's company. While individual Kargol and Solomani occasionally fell out, there were no significant hostilities between the two worlds. In -778 diplomats from both worlds signed the Articles of Union, formally establishing the Kargol Confederation. For the next 200 years, the Confederation expanded at a rapid pace.

THE THOSTAN PLAGUE

Disaster struck in -586. In that year, a Shan expedition discovered a small Ancient base in an asteroid in the Thosta system. Archeologists found the bodies of several early hominids resembling the modern Kargol. When the bodies were brought to Kargol, a deadly viral plague infected much of the Kargol population. Almost 10% of the planet's population died within two months. Only rapid action by biologists and physicians prevented the death toll from climbing even higher. This disaster marked the Kargol, provoking a deep-seated fear of the Ancients and their artifacts.

The Kargol had never before experienced serious epidemic disease. While fighting the plague, the Confederation worked hard to rediscover and then expand upon Solomani biological science. Today the Kargol have highly advanced medicine and genetic technology. While most genetic engineering of embryos is illegal, they regularly practice great feats of advanced genetic surgery, and use tailored retroviruses to alter the bodies and minds of willing citizens.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Kargol is a drier, cooler, and smaller world than Terra, orbiting a dim, red M0 sun. The Ancients genetically modified the Kargol to allow them to digest local plants and animals more easily. The Ancients also altered Kargol vision, giving them very large, slit-pupiled eyes that are sensitive to both normal and infrared light.

Aside from these modifications, 300,000 years of evolution produced numerous other changes. Present-day Kargol closely resemble the classic Neanderthals of Western Europe. They are short and stocky, with an average height of 5'5" and an average weight of 165 pounds. They have long, low heads with massive brow ridges. Their bones are thick and heavy. As an adaptation to the cold, all Kargol are covered with thick, soft, cat-like fur, usually in black or gray. Kargol are more cold-resistant than most Humans, but they also become overheated slightly more easily.

Kargol's native life largely ignores the world's day-night cycle, so the early Kargol learned to do the same. Kargol tend to sleep when it is convenient, and take many short naps rather than a single period of continuous rest.

Kargol are omnivores, although they prefer meat. They learned early on to excel at hunting, but found that only a few local plants provided much nourishment. Their lifestyle has therefore always centered on hunting, supplemented by gathering.



LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Among the Kargol, there are almost 100 separate languages spoken by one or more nomad bands. Most of these languages are tonal, and are considered challenging for outsiders to learn. Meanwhile, the Kargol have a dominant common language known as *Kator*, which is taught to all citizens of the Kargol Confederation. *Kator* is a simple, nontonal language (in *GURPS* terms, it is a Mental/Easy skill).

Written Kargol is ideographic. The same system is used by speakers of all the various Kargol languages. Many Kargol also know Anglic, which was originally introduced from Shan's Landing. Today, most Kargol languages contain many Anglic loan words.

NAMES

The Kargol use a two-name system similar to that of the Solomani or Vilani. Many Kargol now use Anglic names such as John or Mary. Kargol choose names based solely on the enjoyment of the sound, or on positive associations with historical or mythic figures. They do not consider names to have gender, so it's quite possible to find male Kargol named Joann or female Kargol named Richard.

Native Kargol names typically have three or four syllables and generally end in a consonant sound like "l," "m," "n," or "r." Examples include Tanikar, Indraniral, or Janisan.

Kargol last names are normally composed of a combination of the parent's first names, although some individuals simply choose interesting words for their children's last names. Typical examples are Tanijan, Indralisol, or Nebula.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Harsh conditions on their homeworld encouraged the Kargol to become somewhat more cooperative and less aggressive than most Humans. However, they are by no means pacifistic and fight when threatened.

The Kargol are naturally extremely curious. The primary exception has to do with the Ancients. The discovery that the Ancients placed their ancestors on Kargol, combined with the devastating effects of the Thostan Plague, has produced a profound distrust of both the Ancients and their artifacts. Despite their innate urge to investigate all potential mysteries, Ancient sites are normally seen as dangerous places that are best left alone.

Fur, a robust build, and other evolutionary factors make for fewer differences between male and female Kargol than are found in most of Humaniti. Sexism of any kind is totally foreign to Kargol culture. Contact with sexist species like the K'kree has left both sides quite confused.



SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The greatest cultural distinction among Kargol is the division between city-dwellers and nomads. This division dates back to early Kargol history, when nomadic bands carried on trade and communication among the isolated city-states. Today, Kargol nomads are linked by bonds of clan and lineage, rather than by common residence. Even the most sedentary nomads will rarely live in the same place for more than a year or two. In contrast, most urban Kargol reside in the same city for their entire lives.

Individual rights and choices are quite important to the Kargol, but so is a sense of loyalty and belonging. Urban dwellers are loyal to their home city, and it is uncommon for them to move to another. Loyalty within the nomadic bands is even stronger – the vast majority of nomads remain in the band into which they were born. As a result, the cities and bands of Kargol are quite diverse. Architecture, cuisine, and customs differ greatly from one city or band to the next.

KARGOL CITIES

Kargol cities tend to be low and densely built. Few buildings are over 20 stories tall. While the streets are wide, parks and open spaces are infrequent. Many older cities include the remains of walls that were once built to keep out invaders and dangerous wildlife. The dangerous wildlife still exists, but the area around each city is now cleared and patrolled. Kargol architecture is traditionally stone and brick; even the tallest buildings generally have stone or brick facades.

While each city forms a complete urban unit, the long history of extensive trade networks on Kargol has caused most cities to become somewhat specialized. For example, Sarjoth is the primary spaceport, Thusis is the largest manufacturer of air/rafts, and Jhista is widely regarded as the best source for fine clothing.

While urban Kargol rarely move, they usually know a great deal about other important cities and are fond of traveling. Most urban Kargol reserve several weeks each year to travel to one or more other cities. Summer is the most popular time for such traveling.

NOMAD BANDS

To this day, the nomad bands are in charge of transportation, exploration, and primary resource extraction. Sailors, traveling merchants, scouts, and miners are all nomads. Many Kargol nomads are space travelers; each of the several interstellar merchant lines based on Kargol is composed of a single large nomad band.

Nomads do not wander continually, but their lifestyle is quite mobile and generally very distinct from that of the city dwellers. Nomadic Kargol rely on bonds of family and band, rather than common profession or residence. Nomad space-ships are always run by a single family or, for larger ships, an entire band. Modern electronic communications allows the nomads to maintain a vigorous “virtual community” even while physically separated.

RELIGION

The majority of Kargol belong to one faith, known as *Dujik*. This is an intricate blend of ancestor worship, totemism, and polytheism. Believers honor their ancestors, their totem animals, the spirits of various sacred locations, and the spirits of households and cities.

In spite of the great diversity of Kargol culture, *Dujik* is almost universal, in part because it borrows cheerfully from other faiths. Currently, *Dujik* includes spirits and gods borrowed from various surrounding races, including a number of Solomani deities.

Like most highly polytheistic faiths, *Dujik* lacks a single uniform standard of practice or belief. There are three large seasonal festivals a year, during which the Kargol honor their ancestors and local patron deities. Every city and nomad band celebrates these festivals somewhat differently, but the emphasis is usually on large parades along with massive offerings of food, flowers, and incense at the temples. The lavish public displays during these festivals are a marked contrast to the otherwise sedate Kargol way of life.

Kargol regard the major festivals as a time when normal rules of conduct no longer apply. While crime and violence are still not permitted, violations of most other social taboos are generally ignored. Each festival lasts a full week, during which time most work on the planet stops. Only essential services and festival-related business are maintained at full capacity; all other businesses are shut down entirely or run with a greatly reduced staff.

AESTHETICS

The Kargol mind is restrained and detail oriented. Some Imperial visitors describe them as somewhat dour and dull, but in truth the Kargol simply possess a different aesthetic. Simple perfection in both form and function is considered the height of beauty and utility. A typical Kargol device is small, simple to use, well built, and fits comfortably in the hand. Such devices are usually quite elegant and extremely finely finished, but devoid of decoration.

Among the Kargol, clothing tends to be well made and elegantly designed, but also fairly simple, using muted colors and little ornament. Kargol aesthetics is made even harder to understand by the fact that the Kargols' sensitivity to infrared light means that many colors visible to them are indistinguishable by the other races of Humanity.

HUNTING

Beyond the cleared areas surrounding the cities, Kargol is still extremely wild. Visitors are advised to obtain guides and appropriate equipment before venturing into such areas. This untamed wilderness has attracted a number of offworld tourists interested in hunting or photo safaris.

Hunting is strictly regulated. Most large, impressive animals are totems for some family, clan, band, or city. Such animals are considered sacred, and may only be hunted while on foot and armed with unpowered weaponry. Such hunts are regarded as sacred rites, and require permission

Time on Kargol

The Kargol pay little attention to the day-night cycle, especially since they see equally well at night. They usually sleep 11 hours out of 38, dividing this sleep into short naps spread throughout the day. The average Kargol work day is about 10 hours long, with the rest of the day being devoted to home life and recreation.

Kargol communities work and play throughout the day and night. Different workplaces have different scheduled hours, and nothing operates on a standard timetable. Many visitors find this lack of schedule very disorienting, especially combined with the long days. Special medications are available to allow visitors to adapt to the Kargol schedule of life without seriously disrupting their circadian rhythms.

Most Kargol allow plenty of time for recreation, hobbies, and play. Kargol consider the serious pursuit of a hobby to be the mark of a cultured and intelligent person. Collections are quite popular, as are mechanically oriented activities like tinkering with grav vehicles. Many Kargol will eagerly display either their collection or the latest modification they have made to some household device.

Wilderness-oriented hobbies like hiking or nature photography are also popular, but can be somewhat dangerous. Pursing them is the mark of a daredevil, an eccentric, or a very traditional nomad.

from (and payment to) the groups which venerate the creature. However, hikes and photo safaris are popular with adventurous Kargol.

While in the wilderness, it is acceptable to kill dangerous animals in self-defense. However, careful investigations make certain that such killings are not actually illegal hunts.

DEMOCRACY

On every level, from small city-states to the Kargol planetary government, the basis for Kargol government is direct democracy. Every citizen is expected to vote on all important issues. Councils of managers are employed to take care of the daily business of government, but almost everyone votes in the weekly policy elections. Voting is regarded as an important civic duty, and individuals who do not participate are held in low regard.

Kargol regard democracy as the only reasonable way to run a society, and strongly disapprove of governments that allow the people no voice. Organized meritocracies are regarded as acceptable, but both primitive and limited. Aristocratic institutions, such as the Imperial noble hierarchy or the K'kree patriarchal rule, are regarded as distasteful and oppressive. When the Kargol Confederation was first contacted by Imperial scouts, the citizens almost universally rejected the idea of Imperial membership. The current alliance with the Imperium permits the Confederation complete political autonomy, and is as close a relationship as most Kargol are willing to consider.

Freedom and liberty are very important to the Kargol. Most Kargol have little hesitation about using violence to protect their own freedom, and are willing to use it to defend the rights of others as well. Some Kargol even travel to other worlds to encourage the citizens to overthrow unjust government. While such activists are regarded dangerous radicals by foreigners, on Kargol they are considered only rash or optimistic. In the few cases where such intervention has actually made a difference, those responsible have won widespread acclaim. Most authoritarian governments in the surrounding sectors regard visiting Kargol with a great deal of suspicion.

To the Kargol, all politics are local. Issues at the level of the city or band are thought of as quite important, but planet-wide problems are generally only discussed in times of crisis. Each city is an independent political unit that sends representatives to the larger Council of Cities. Each nomadic band is also a separate political unit, participating in the larger Nomad Federation. The Council and Federation cooperate to manage a loose planetary government.

Law on Kargol is strict, but not oppressive. All weapons not obviously designed for use against dangerous animals are illegal, as are all addictive or harmful drugs. Activities like gambling and prostitution are legal, but are carefully taxed and regulated.

Trials on Kargol are simple affairs. Both parties state their cases, with or without the help of attorneys. Trained legal experts work for the court, and are available to explain or discuss the relevant laws. A jury of 10 citizens

decides guilt, innocence, and punishment. Criminal penalties range from fines and the temporary loss of certain privileges to temporary indentured servitude. Prisons are regarded as both inhumane and impractical. Instead, individuals convicted of serious crimes are made to work, either for their victims or for the state.

THE PRESS

Since every citizen is expected to be highly knowledgeable about all relevant issues, access to accurate information is an essential part of the Kargol government. Journalists are highly respected professionals. Kargol news reports are unusually clear and well-written. Sensationalism and yellow journalism are both unethical and illegal on Kargol. Journalists on Kargol take an oath, similar to the Terran Hippocratic oath, to reveal the truth and to never knowingly distribute lies. On Kargol, news is usually disseminated by way of electronic documents which can be accessed through the planetary data network.

The high quality of Kargol journalism is widely known. Today, the largest news-providers on Kargol also provide a wide range of sector-wide news, as well as news of the Third Imperium. A growing number of planets outside of the Kargol Confederation are purchasing the right to distribute Kargol news.



INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Today, the Kargol Confederation encompasses 14 different star systems in the Leonidae sector. While a few Kargol merchant ships have traveled as far as the fringes of the Third Imperium and the Solomani Confederation, most of their trade is carried out with the neighboring sectors.

Today, many Kargol have little interest in the worlds outside their Confederation except as a source of trade and tourism. Both Kargol and Shan's Landing have reached TL12 and frequently sell goods to less-advanced worlds in Leonidae.

Kargol's active organized-crime community has expanded its operations well into the Hinterworlds, and are working their way into a few Imperial client states there. In these states, criminal Kargol clans recruit members of all species and generally engage in smuggling, contract theft

and illegal drug and gambling operations. Some of these clans also smuggle advanced Kargol biodevices onto Imperial worlds which normally limit or prohibit the use of such technology (p. 98).

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Kargol Confederation has access to TL12 technology, much of it equivalent to the most advanced equipment available in the Imperium.

The Kargol are particularly well-known for their widespread use of advanced biotechnology. They are probably the foremost biotechnologists in present-day Charted Space, and they use this technology much more openly than is usually the case in the Imperium.

Kargol biotechnology has nearly eradicated infectious disease, cancer, and genetic disorders. Specially tailored retroviruses can be administered to cure a variety of physical and mental handicaps, or to "improve" the performance of body or mind. Similar benefits can be gained from the use of bioengineered implants.

Surprisingly, the Kargol do *not* engage in genetic engineering on Human subjects. Under Kargol law, it is highly

illegal to manipulate the mind or body of a sentient being without informed consent – which only adults or children older than the age of 12 standard years are considered able to give. This ban is considered to cover any extensive modification to the genome of a Human embryo. The only exception to the law is in the case of medical necessity, and Kargol bioethicists take a very narrow view of what is "medically necessary." Thus the Kargol have never divided into subspecies through genetic engineering, although individual Kargol sport a wide variety of biomechanical modifications

(all acquired after reaching maturity).

The 14 worlds of the Kargol Confederation engage in considerable interstellar trade. The Kargol also engage in a large amount of speculative trade with the Imperium, the Solomani Confederation, the Hivers and various smaller states in the Crucis Margin, Glimmerdrift Reaches, Hinterworlds, Leonidae, and Spica Sectors. Almost all Kargol trade is carried out by nomad bands who own one or more ships. Some of the largest bands possess vast ships, flying cities devoted to trade or asteroid mining. Many of the nonaligned worlds of the region are overjoyed by the arrival of one of these great ships, anticipating the influx of high-technology goods.

Kargol traders are noted for honesty and the high quality of their goods. On the other hand, they are also known for driving extremely hard bargains.



KARGOL (1205, LEONIDAE SECTOR)

Starport: Class V.

Diameter: 7,030 miles (11,300 km). *Gravity:* 0.92 G. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 53%. *Climate:* Cool. *Population:* 2.1 billion (1.9 billion Kargol). *Government:* Athenian democracy. *Control Rating:* 3. *TL:* 12. *Gas Giants:* 2. *WTN:* 6.0. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

Kargol is the second planet in its star system, orbiting the cool M0 red dwarf star Drala at a distance of 0.2 AU. The system also contains two gas giants, a dense planetoid belt, and two airless rocky worlds.

Kargol rotates once every 38 hours. It is a cold world, characterized by dark mists, tundra, glaciers, and extensive polar ice caps. Even at the equator, temperatures almost never exceed 85°. Much of the world is perpetually shrouded in fog, causing visibility to rarely exceed 400 yards. The Kargol themselves can perceive infrared light, and can easily pierce the gloom – most visitors wear infrared goggles while outside.

Using Kargol Biotechnology

The Kargol provide *GURPS Traveller* GMs with another way to introduce advanced biotechnology into the *Traveller* universe. Campaigns set in the Kargol Confederation can incorporate a wide variety of such technology. Campaigns set in nearby Imperial space can use the technology more sparingly, possibly as an illicit element imported by Kargol organized-crime networks.

GMs with access to *GURPS Bio-Tech* can use that book as a source for possible Kargol biotechnology. The Kargol have access to all of the items at TL10 or less listed under *Bodysculpting* (p. BIO61), *Transplants* (p. BIO65), *Neurosurgery* (p. BIO71), and *Tissue Engineering* (p. BIO72), and *Chemical Enhancements* (p. BIO73). They can also use all items at TL11 or less listed under *Genetic Surgery* (p. BIO75), except for the Methuselah Program (p. BIO78). Finally, the Kargol can provide Level 1 or Level 2 Panimmunity (p. BIO84).

The Kargol are willing to apply genetic engineering to nonsentient creatures, so much of the material in Chapter 4 of *GURPS Bio-Tech* is also potentially useful. They do *not* apply germline engineering (p. BIO25) or species modification (p. BIO26) to Humans.

Inside the Kargol Confederation, biotechnology costs are as given in *GURPS Bio-Tech* (substituting Imperial credits for *GURPS* \$). Elsewhere, follow the guidelines on p. GT116, under *Cyberware and Bioware*.

Kargol has five large continents separated by deep, seas. These continents tend to be dry, with dense forests and other lush ecosystems confined to the coasts. The continental interiors are dominated by tundra, scrub forests, low mountains and desert. Lakes and navigable rivers are plentiful.

Kargol's seas have rarely provided a barrier to migration. Island chains, glaciers, and other natural bridges have served to allow most species to spread uniformly over the entire planet. For most native life forms, climate and the availability of local resources are the only limits to expansion.

Weather on Kargol can be extremely hazardous. The dense atmosphere puts a great deal of force behind storm winds, which often reach 60 mph or higher. The native life is well adapted to such extremes of wind, and the local architecture is carefully designed to be relatively wind-proof. On the other hand, visitors caught out alone during a storm are sometimes injured or even killed.

NATIVE BIOLOGY

Life on Kargol never evolved eyes. Kargol's animals combine keen senses of hearing and smell with large patches of infrared-sensitive skin on their heads and bodies. These senses permit them to move about with equal ease during both day and night.

Life on Kargol never developed fur, feathers, or any other insulating covering that could block infrared reception. Animals are insulated from the cold by thick fat layers. Some have bony internal armor to protect them from predators. Almost all land animals are smooth-skinned, eyeless quadrupeds with highly flexible limbs. To normal Human sight most animals appear gray, black, or dark blue. However, native Kargol life makes frequent use of infrared bioluminescence as a method of display and communication. For example, several species of pack-hunting predators coordinate their hunts by changing the patterns of their bioluminescent spots.

Kargol's dense atmosphere has encouraged a rich airborne ecosystem, many of whose species are *floaters* rather than flyers. Clouds of tiny air plankton drift through the skies, held aloft by minute bladders filled with hydrogen. Numerous other airborne creatures, some of them quite large, consume this air plankton. Most of these are also held aloft by large bladders filled with internally generated hydrogen.

Many floaters are wingless and unstreamlined, growing into a variety of bizarre forms while traveling at the mercy of the winds. Other creatures are streamlined, propelling themselves with large fins and jets of compressed air. The largest of these beasts, dubbed *air whales* by visiting Shan colonists, are living dirigibles that grow up to 200 yards long.

The Kargol have long exploited the floater ecology. They supplement their diets by weaving large, fine-meshed nets and harvesting air plankton. Meanwhile, the air whale

was domesticated as a beast of burden very early in Kargol history.

Kargol's wilderness areas are largely undisturbed, with farmland always located very close to cities. The Kargol discovered early on that the local food animals could be domesticated much more effectively when allowed to live in wilderness settings. This ranching technique helped to prevent most of the planet's wilderness from being cleared. Meanwhile, Kargol nomad bands have a tradition of using but not owning large stretches of land, which are usually kept as wild as possible.

Many species of native Kargol life are quite large and dangerous. Several species of animals regularly try to attack Humans. These predators are considered sacred animals by the Kargol; they have not been exterminated or even widely hunted except when they stray near cities or other settlements. Today, large animals are kept from approaching the cities by networks of sonic projectors. However, everyone wandering through the wilderness is advised to go armed. Part of the nomadic adulthood rite involves spending a full day in the wilderness, alone but armed.

KARGOL CHARACTERS

A Kargol will be 6" shorter than a normal Human with the same ST, but will be 5 pounds heavier than a normal Human of the same height.

KARGOL RACIAL TEMPLATE

28 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST +2 [20]; DX -1 [-10].

Advantages: Disease-Resistant [5]; Infravision [15]; Fur [4]; Longevity [5]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; Rapid Healing [5]; Temperature Tolerance 2 [1]*.

* Includes one level free from Fur.

Disadvantages: Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Limitation: Only in direct sunlight from a K5 or larger star, -50%) [-5]; Curious [-5]; Phobia (Ancient technology) [-5]; Unattractive [-5].

Quirks: Broad-Minded; Congenial; Prefer cold, high-pressure environments. [-3]

Offworld Settlements

The Kargol system is unusual for the number and size of settlements away from the main world. Millions of Confederation citizens live in these deep-space settlements. The space around Kargol is primarily the domain of city-dwelling Kargol, while the rest of the system is inhabited largely by nomad bands working as belters, researchers, search and rescue teams, or tour guides.

Dleina Settlements

Dleina is the larger of the Kargol system's two gas giants. Several of its moons are the site of research or mining bases.

The largest settlement in Dleina space is the hotel-city Kasa, which orbits so as to boast a superb view of the planet's enormous rings. Kasa is a large flattened sphere, with an upper dome made entirely of transparent material. The city is several kilometers in diameter, and has a capacity of almost a million residents.

Kasa is a very popular travel and resort spot, both for wealthy Kargol and for rich tourists from beyond the Confederation. Recently, Kasa has been mounting an advertising campaign to become a popular resort for wealthy Imperial tourists. Kasa features gambling, elaborate masked balls, live theater, zero-G dance competitions, fine food from several sectors, and exciting shuttle tours through the rings and outer atmosphere of Dleina. Rumor has it that Kasa is secretly owned by one of Kargol's largest organized-crime clans, the Das-thon.

Jestoy Settlements

The gas giant Jestoy is in the next orbit in from Kargol, orbiting only 0.1 AU from the primary star. Jestoy's warm environment encourages the formation of a wide variety of exotic chemicals. To take advantage of this chemical bounty, the Kargol have built several cities that float in the Jestoy's upper atmosphere. Although each city has an emergency gravitic back-up, the cities are normally supported by the lift generated by the less-dense, breathable air within them. These bubble-cities extract the chemicals from Jestoy's atmosphere and refine them on-site. Each is a transparent bubble, between 500 and 2,000 yards in diameter, built using advanced TL12 materials.

Most of the Jestoy cloud-cities are purely industrial in nature, although some of the larger cities also have a growing tourist trade. Many tourists come to enjoy the spectacle of Jestoy's atmosphere, clearly visible through the city shell. Meanwhile, some of the cloud-cities rely on tourists interested in disreputable entertainments. A variety of illegal intoxicants can be found in these cities, and there are numerous rumors of even more illegal practices like live gladiatorial combat and a black-market slave trade.

Planetoid Belt Settlements

The system's planetoid belt is moderately rich, and provides work for tens of million of nomads working as belters. Most of these live in large, mobile ships that travel from asteroid to asteroid searching for rich ore deposits. These ships can be as large as 250,000 dtons, with crews of 20,000 or more.

The largest vessels are huge ore-processing facilities that turn raw materials into refined metals and finished industrial goods. A number of these ships are fitted with jump drives, and travel between the worlds of the Kargol Confederation searching for ores and selling their goods. Some of the city-ships travel beyond the Confederation, and several of the largest regularly venture into the Imperium in search of new resources and additional markets.



NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Common Genetic Surgery

The Disease-Resistant (p. CI24), Longevity (p. B21), and Rapid Healing (p. B23) advantages are not natural to the Kargol. Instead, upon reaching the age of informed consent, the vast majority of Kargol undergo genetic surgery which grants them these advantages. A tiny number of Kargol refuse genetic surgery for religious reasons, and so lack these advantages (reducing the racial template cost to 13 points).

Bad Sight *see p. B27*

The Kargol evolved on a world with a dim, red sun. Their eyes are unequipped to cope with bright visible light. On any world with a K5 or brighter star, the Kargol are effectively nearsighted while in direct sunlight. They suffer the standard penalties for nearsightedness unless they are wearing sunglasses or a pair of tinted goggles.

Broad-Minded *see p. CI86*

Kargol get along well with other races and species, rarely taking notice of strange appearances.

Congenial *see p. CI89*

Kargol like company and work well with others.

Curious *see p. CI89*

Kargol are more curious than the Human mainstream, and must exercise willpower to avoid poking into interesting situations.

Fur *see p. CI56*

Kargol fur is about as thick as that of a cat or dog, providing DR 1 and additional Temperature Tolerance (see below). Kargol fur is normally black or dark gray.

Infravision *see p. CI58*

Kargol vision extends into the infrared portion of the spectrum, enabling them to function at night and in foggy conditions.

Manual Dexterity *see p. CI27*

Kargol are somewhat *less* agile than the Human mainstream, but they have superb fine motor control.

Phobia *see p. B35*

While the Kargol are naturally quite curious, this curiosity does *not* extend to sites or artifacts associated with the Ancients. The vast majority of Kargol fear such sites and artifacts, and must exercise force of will to have anything to do with them. This is a mild Phobia, worth only -5 points since Ancient artifacts are fairly rare.

Sense of Duty *see p. B39*

Kargol are as likely as other Humans to commit themselves to a person or cause. This is particularly common for nomadic Kargol, who almost invariably possess Sense of Duty toward their own nomad band. This is usually a -5-point disadvantage, possibly rising to the -10-point level if the band is particularly large and powerful. Although a nomad can travel far from his or her clan, if any in the clan require significant aid the nomad will drop everything and come help.

Prefer Cold, High-Pressure Environments

Although Kargol can function in standard temperatures and atmospheric pressures, they are far more content in cold, high-pressure environments. All Kargol able to afford high passage (or similar pleasant accommodations) insist on having quarters equipped to provide a comfortable range of pressure. Transportation or hotel services provided by non-Kargol

often add a small surcharge to the price when providing such an environment.

Temperature Tolerance *see p.C130*

Under the standard rules for exposure to heat or cold (see p. B130), a temperature between 35° and 90° is thermally neutral; a higher or lower temperature may cause ill effects. Each point of Temperature Tolerance widens this range by HT degrees. Normally the addition is divided equally between the hot and cold ends of the scale (for example, a character with HT 10 and Temperature Tolerance 1 would have a thermally neutral range from 30 to 95 degrees). But equal division isn't mandatory; it's even permissible to apply the entire increase to one end of the scale (for example, a thermally neutral range from 35 to 100 degrees). The resulting shift in the center of the thermally neutral zone is a zero-point feature.

Kargol gain one point of Temperature Tolerance from their Fur (see above), and gain another from the explicit Temperature Tolerance advantage. For the Kargol, the base "comfort range" is between 15° and 70°. The extra 2 × HT degrees of tolerance are applied to the low end of the range. So, for example, a Kargol with a HT of 10 would be comfortable within a temperature range of -5° to 70°.

Unattractive *see p. B15*

Although many Humans consider their fur to be quite lovely, the Kargol have low foreheads, thick brow ridges, and dead-white skin. Their appearance is considered somewhat disturbing and unattractive by most of Humaniti.

EQUIPMENT

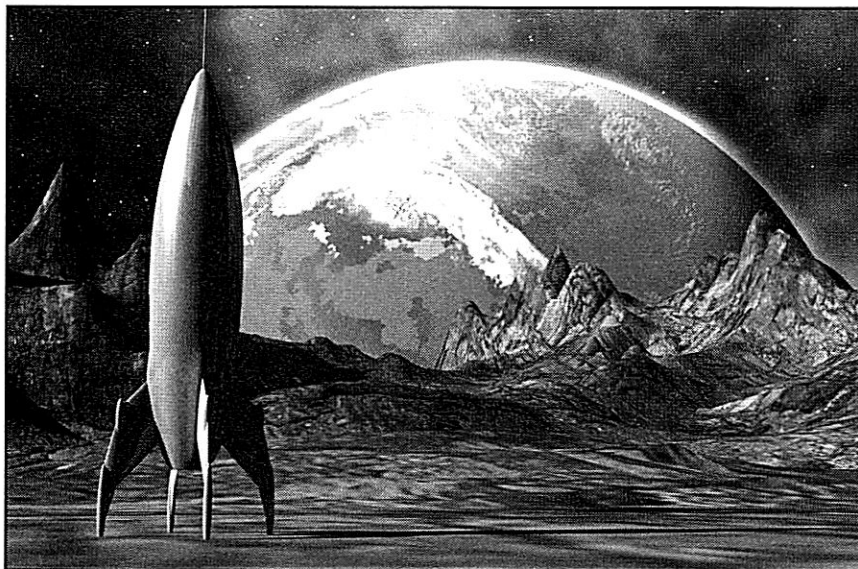
VALIANT-CLASS 150-TON FAST COURIER (TL12)

The Kargol have developed a small, fast courier vessel for use by reporters and diplomats. Since the Kargol are particularly noted for their love of news stories, the fast courier is generally associated with heroic journalists attempting to bring back important news stories before their competition. The top three Kargol news agencies each maintain a small fleet of these vessels, for use by their top reporting crews.

A number of small merchant firms have turned these couriers into passenger carriers, permitting the crew to transport one or two passengers and their cargo to neighboring subsectors with great speed. Since such ships are often the only rapid way to travel to or from worlds on the Imperial border, passage on such a ship can sometimes exceed 10 times the normal cost of a high passage ticket.

First created 50 years ago, the *Valiant*-class design was based upon images found in ancient Solomani vids then

popular on both Kargol and Shan's Landing. The ship is a bullet-shaped cylinder, equipped with four large triangular fins that function as both landing legs and aerodynamic stabilizers. The class is normally unarmed, but is designed so that a single turret weapon can be mounted at the nose.



Normally, the ship carries six crew: pilot, navigator, sensor operator, comms operator, and two engineers. See *GURPS Traveller: Far Trader* for information on required skill sets per crew position. These crewmen can share all of the ship's staterooms, or they can double up into three staterooms and leave the fourth for passengers. *Valiant*-class ships have a reputation for being extremely reliable but somewhat difficult to pilot. Many pilots regard them as premier berths.

Subassemblies: SL Hull +8, Turret +5.

Powertrain: Engineering, 8 Maneuver, 8 Jump.

Fuel: 60 fuel.

Occupancy: 4 staterooms

Cargo: 20.5 dtons

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
All:	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

Weaponry

None, usually, but the turret can be filled with a normal weapons load.

Equipment

Modules: Basic bridge; Fuel processor; Spacedock (holds one air/raft, up to 250 cf volume); Utility.

Statistics

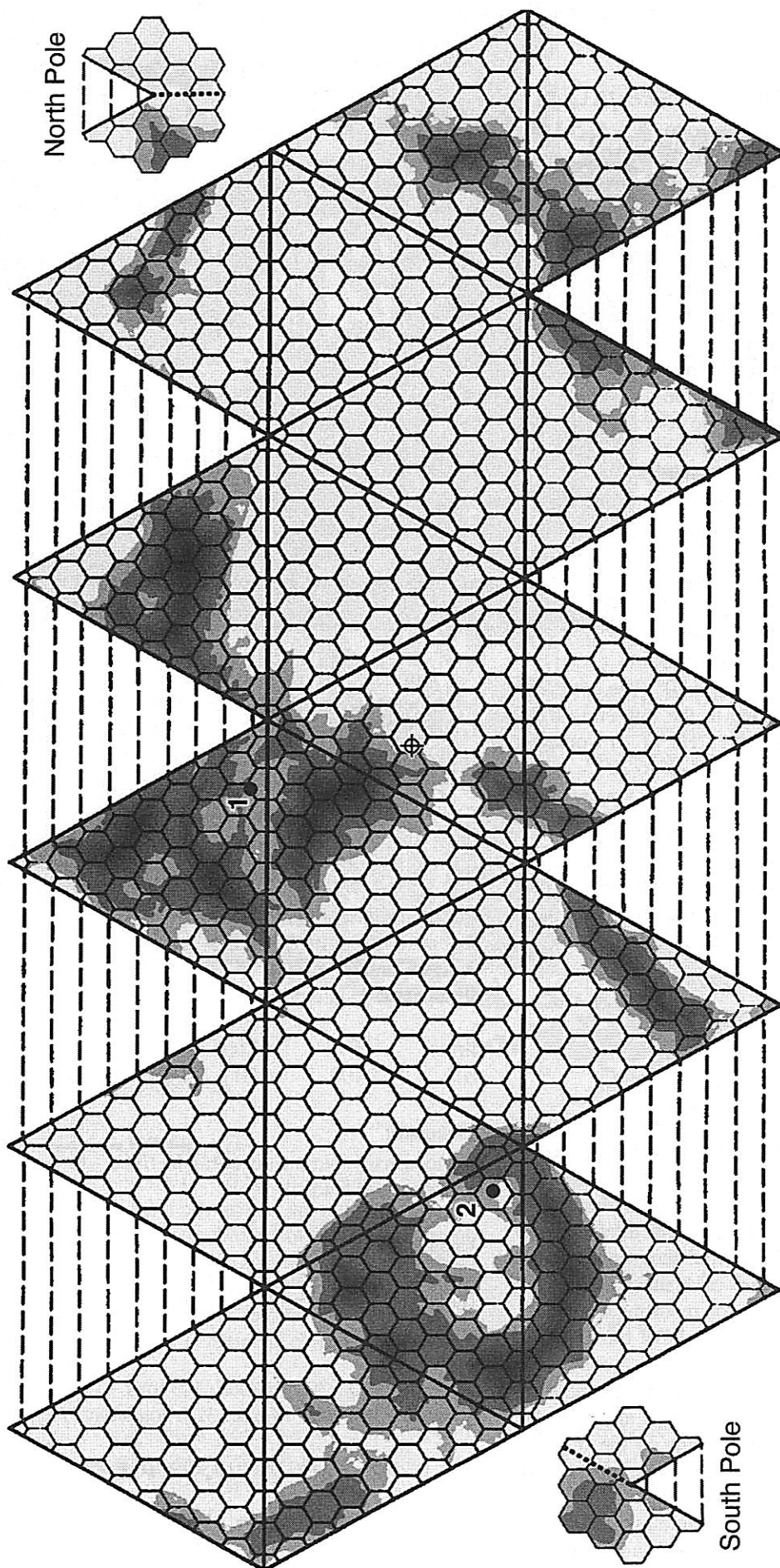
Size: 106'×30'×30' **Payload:** 103 tons **Lwt.:** 317 tons
Volume: 150 dtons **Maint.:** 32.6 hours/day **Price:** MCr46.1

HT: 12. **HP:** 22,500 [Hull] 1,200 [Tur]

sAccel: 2.5 G/3.1 G empty

Jump: 4 **aSpeed:** 1,778

Kargol



1 hex = 490.8 miles

Starport

Plain/Steppe

Hilly/Rough

Icy/Barren

Ocean

Major City

Mountain/Volcanic

Starport: Class V

Diameter: 7,030 miles (11,320 km)

Atmosphere: Dense Oxygen-Nitrogen

Surface Water: 53%

Climate: Cool and slightly dry

Population: 2.1 billion (1.9 billion Kargol)

Government: Direct Democracy

Control Rating: 3

TL: 12

KEY

⊕ Sarjoth Down Starport

1. Thusis

2. Jhista

Luriani

While the Luriani are unmistakably Human, they have several unique characteristics which are a result of both natural evolution and genetic tampering by the Ancients. The Luriani are often referred to as “aquatic” Humans. This is not strictly true; while they are far more at home in a water environment than most Humans, these adaptations do not go as far as (for example) the Solomani-geneered Scanians. It would be more fitting to describe the Luriani as amphibians.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Luriani homeworld (Daramm) is officially classified as a water world, with only about 5% of its surface covered by land. The planet has 11 “continental” plates, but these are almost entirely below sea level. Daramm is covered by a number of continent-sized archipelagos, each surrounded by shallow seas (500’ to 800’ in depth). Deep oceans (6,000’ to 16,000’) surround these “continents.” It would appear that the Ancients initially deposited the Luriani on several islands in one of these archipelagos.

The semi-aquatic nature of the early Luriani helped them use the shallow seas for hunting and gathering, allowing denser populations than might otherwise have been expected. Even so, population pressures eventually led to development of the technology necessary to strike out across the oceans. This development came remarkably early in Luriani history, long before the first city-states and territorial empires. The first ocean-going ships were built by Luriani hunter-gatherers about -250,000. By about -150,000, there were ships capable of circumnavigating the entire planet. At this point, Luriani society was at an overall TL0, but had TL4 water transportation.

This advanced maritime capacity preserved the remarkable homogeneity of Luriani culture; though separated by hundreds or thousands of miles of water, each Luriani settlement was connected to the others by a web of migrating ships. Indeed, some Luriani lived their entire lives at sea, only setting foot on land to gather supplies or build new ships.

Given this migratory environment, it was only natural for the Luriani to quickly develop the concept of trade, leading to the first Luriani civilizations. By -100,000 the Luriani had developed a thriving, world-spanning barter economy. Fleets of nomadic ships traveled between islands, trading with the various communities.

With the growth of trade, however, came the rise of piracy and warfare. Both seagoing nomads and island settlers found a need for fighters to defend against the depredations of raiders. These fighters would eventually evolve into the Luriani warrior class. The Luriani established a planet-wide trading civilization by -30,000, complete with sophisticated politics and organized warfare – all on the basis of a TL1 hunter-gatherer society which lacked both domesticated animals and agriculture.

Over the next 23,000 years, the Luriani gradually improved their technology and culture. Around -28,000, the first signs of agriculture appeared on a number of islands; animals were domesticated around -25,000. Metalworking was only achieved around -15,000. When Vilani-influenced traders contacted the Luriani in -7500, they found an early TL6 world.

TO THE STARS

Interstellar contact had a profound effect on the Luriani. They proved to be adept in absorbing advanced technology. By -7200 they had achieved early TL9, and were launching their first “migrating” ships to the stars. By -6000 they had established a vigorous interstellar culture encompassing over 30 worlds, most of them located to spinward of Daramm. However, just as the Luriani had never truly developed a planetary government, they never grasped the concept of an interstellar state. Their worlds remained a loose community, closely bound by their starfaring caravans. This somewhat idyllic situation didn’t remain for long.

The Vilani had come into direct contact with the Luriani sphere centuries before. At first they regarded the Luriani as a minor threat, located as they were far to the trailing fringes of explored space. This proved to be a miscalculation. When the Vilani finally began incorporation efforts around -4700, the Luriani rapidly formed a united front to face the common enemy. Early attempts to incorporate the Luriani by economic pressure failed, so in -4582 the Vilani opened the Luriani Consolidation War.

Initial Vilani offensives were turned back with heavy losses inflicted by determined resistance. The Luriani proved to be formidable opponents, well-adapted to the three-dimensional nature of space combat. Eventually, the superior economic weight of the Vilani began to tell. One by one the Luriani worlds were overrun, until in -4547 Daramm fell and the Luriani were forced to capitulate. Despite several revolts, they remained firmly under Vilani rule until the coming of the Solomani in -2223.

THE ZIRU SIRKA AND THE RULE OF MAN

Under Vilani rule, Luriani culture remained largely intact due to their emotional and independent nature. When the Solomani arrived in the Ley sector in -2223, the Luriani greeted them as liberators and allied with the Terrans. A number of Luriani units served in the Terran forces during their final drive on Vland, proving that they had lost none of their fighting abilities.

Unfortunately, any Luriani who expected the Solomani to restore their independence were sadly disappointed. Unlike the Geonee or Suerrat, the Luriani were not granted autonomy under the Rule of Man. This bred resentment, leading to a Luriani revolt against the Rule of Man in -2186. With a limited production base, the Luriani faced an alliance of Terran and Vilani forces. The Luriani hoped that the other minor races would come to their aid, but these hopes proved futile and the Luriani were gradually worn down. Their final stronghold fell in -2180, leading to another Vilani occupation.

After the rebellion, Luriani art and music found a wide audience among the Solomani, creating widespread sympathy for their situation. In -1932, the Empress Juliana established the Luriani Cultural Region (LCR). With this decree, each Luriani community was granted internal autonomy while answering to a Solomani planetary governor. The entire region was placed under the control of a military governor-general. This arrangement helped reconcile the Luriani to Solomani rule, and prevented further rebellion.

THE FIRST PROTECTORATE

With the collapse of the Rule of Man in -1776, the Solomani governor-general of the LCR found herself isolated and vulnerable. Admiral Martinez solved her problems by reaching an agreement with the Luriani, transforming their Cultural Region into the Luriani Protectorate. Under this compromise, her fleet provided protection for the Luriani, who supported Martinez in exchange for considerable independence. The Protectorate continued to exist into the Long Night and gradually evolved into a unique system. The Solomani provided the skills to administer an interstellar government, while the Luriani provided support facilities. Meanwhile, much of the manpower for the Protectorate fleet came from the Luriani warrior class.

Unfortunately, by -1200 the Protectorate fleet had dwindled to just a handful of vessels, and contact between the Luriani worlds had all but ceased. In -1183, Protector De Valine acknowledged that the Protectorate could no longer defend its territory. The Solomani settled permanently on the Luriani worlds and the Protectorate succumbed to the Long Night. From that point onward, the only contact between the various Luriani worlds was managed by a few migrating caravans, flying ancient starships long past their expected operating lifetime.

THE SECOND PROTECTORATE

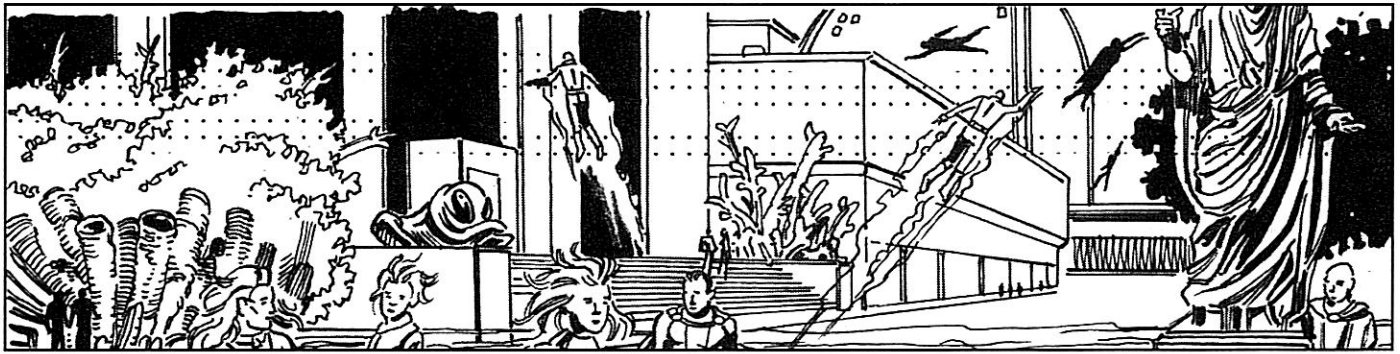
Daramm remained at TL8 throughout the Long Night. When the Sylean Federation Scout Service reached the area in -29, the Luriani reapplied themselves to colonizing the stars. It took them just 30 years to recover to mid-TL9 and to reestablish the Protectorate (officially formed in -8). By 12, the Second Luriani Protectorate was a thriving interstellar community, encompassing most worlds within 5 parsecs of Daramm.

The Protectorate was a curious state, one that the new Imperium found hard to deal with or understand. The bulk of the population was Luriani, but virtually all the higher levels of administration were provided by local castes of Vilani and Solomani ancestry. Eventually, the Imperium tried to incorporate the Luriani through diplomatic means. This approach appeared to make progress, but negotiations stumbled on the Protectorate's demand to be allowed to retain its identity within the Empire.



At this point, Archduke Ishargi of Gateway made a huge error of judgment. Believing that a show of force would soften the Luriani negotiating stance, the Archduke took a sizable Imperial squadron and jumped to Rurur (an important frontier system inside the Protectorate). By sheer bad luck, a substantial portion of the Protectorate fleet was conducting exercises in the Rurur system at the time. The Protectorate commander interpreted this action as the opening move of an invasion, and engaged the Imperial forces.

During the resulting Luriani War (93-96), the Protectorate forces proved they had lost none of their flair for three-dimensional warfare. They inflicted several sharp defeats on Imperial forces and eventually led to a cease-fire on terms very favorable to the Luriani. Despite the face-saving



settlement, the Luriani War left a legacy of mistrust. Tensions between the Protectorate and the Imperium remained high for many decades after the war.

With the end of the Luriani War, Emperor Artemsus appointed Duke Sirean of Dirir as the new Archduke of Gateway, Archduke Ishargi having been killed at Rurur. Duke Sirean chose to concentrate his efforts on incorporating the rimward portions of Ley sector, while attempting to repair relations with the Protectorate.

This policy bore fruit by 162, when Archduke Acla reopened talks about incorporation amid the brewing Julian War. With memories of the Luriani War fading, securing the rimward flank of Antares had become a matter of some urgency. Still, these negotiations proceeded slowly, yielding no positive results by the outbreak of the Julian War in 175. The Protectorate chose to remain neutral until the Star Legion drove into Ley in 185. At this point, much to the surprise of the Imperium, the Protectorate offered an alliance and joined the war on the Imperial side. Though the entry of the Protectorate had little effect on the ultimate outcome of the war, Luriani forces were an important factor in halting and reversing the Star Legion's drive into Ley. With the end of the war in 191, negotiations resumed on a more positive note and in 202, the Protectorate was incorporated into the Imperium.

THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Second Protectorate was not immediately dissolved upon its admission into the Imperium; in order to ease the integration, the Treaty of Daramm allowed for its continued existence as the Luriani Cultural Region until 217. Over this period, preparations were made to ensure effective local government. Protectorate military forces were either incorporated into the Imperial forces or assigned to one of the local Luriani governments. The Luriani Cultural Association (LCA) was also established (with Imperial funding) to maintain the distinctive Luriani legacy.

The LCA concentrates most of its efforts on facilitating regular exchanges between Luriani worlds, through cultural events and a subsidy of Luriani migrating caravans. It also provides governmental services for Luriani worlds which are either unwilling or unable to do so themselves. These services are provided under contract according to the wishes of the local population and generally take the form of civil service bureaucracies. Since the foundation of the LCA, between

three and 10 worlds have availed themselves of this service at any given time.

This provision of governmental services has caused friction between the Imperium and the LCA. The Imperium is suspicious of multi-world governments within its domain, and the LCA has on occasion walked a thin line between simply providing local administrative services and acting as an interstellar government. Fortunately for the LCA, it has been able to retain the patronage of the Archdukes of Gateway. That patronage, and the fact that its charter is embodied in the Treaty of Daramm, has allowed the LCA to survive all Imperial attempts to limit its scope.

Luriani Nobility

The Luriani have little in the way of hereditary nobility. There are precisely 34 Luriani among the Imperial hereditary peerage. This is not to say that the Luriani have had little impact on the Imperial nobility. This limited number includes Archduke Tranian of Gateway and three Subsector Dukes (all Verasti Dtareen; see p. 109). In addition, there are many Luriani honor nobles, recognized for their achievements with life peerages.

The Luriani hold their handful of nobles in very high regard. More than any other races within the Imperium, the Luriani give their primary allegiance to their Archduke rather than the Emperor. Despite the reality that they are as much a part of the Imperium as any other race, the Luriani prefer to regard themselves as an extremely close ally. Among the Luriani, honors granted by the Archduke are far more prestigious than the corresponding honors granted directly from the Imperium. In official proceedings the Archduke is almost always mentioned first.

Despite this attitude, the Luriani have ever been regarded as potentially disloyal. The Imperium overlooks it as long as its expression is confined to ceremonial fiction. The key to this is the position of the Archduke. For centuries, the Archdukes of Gateway have always remained staunchly loyal to the Imperium without becoming involved in court intrigue. Even during the Civil War, no candidate for the throne arose within the domain, and the Archdukes remained neutral with respect to all factions. Consequently, the Emperor realizes that an imposition of his full rights would bring far more trouble than any potential gain.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

The Luriani are not interfertile with other Humans without medical intervention. Consequently, the Luriani were originally classified as a separate species (*Homo luriani*). However in the wake of the fall of the Solomani Movement in the Imperial Court, there was a movement among Imperial taxonomists to reclassify them as a subspecies of *Homo sapiens* (*Homo sapiens luriani*). This classification is not generally accepted outside of the Imperium and still provokes considerable controversy within it. The Luriani themselves reject the reclassification and still regard themselves as a separate species, viewing the entire affair with considerable distaste.

Children From Another Family

As the Luriani interact with other branches of Humaniti, individuals do fall in love across species lines; inevitably, this results in children. Without medical intervention, such children are born infertile and with severe mental handicaps. Never very common and now almost eliminated by improvements in medical technology, these unfortunate children are referred to as *Leramiyasins* ("children from another family"). At one time, they demonstrated a darker side of the Luriani psyche, one that most would rather keep hidden.

The *Leramiyasins* first appeared with the Vilani conquest of the Luriani and were seen as an unwanted sign of collaboration with the Vilani occupation. These unfortunate parents and children were shunned and excluded from Luriani society, callously abandoned to survive as best they could. Most of the *Leramiyasins* did not survive to adulthood and their parents were forever condemned to live at the fringes of Luriani society. The situation of the *Leramiyasins* did not begin to improve until the coming of the Long Night.

As the Verasti Dtareen and Mmarislusant were gradually incorporated into Luriani society, the *Leramiyasins* slowly came to be seen less as evidence of treachery and more as unfortunate victims of nature. Gradually, charitable organizations were established (often by the Mmarislusant) to provide them with care and shelter, though the Luriani chose to keep them hidden from view.

With the end of the Long Night, advances in genetic medicine provided techniques permitting interspecies matings to produce healthy offspring. *Leramiyasins* births have now been all but eliminated; those that are born are cared for by charitable organizations. But they remain an unwelcome reminder of a matter most Luriani would sooner forget, and consequently remain hidden from view.

Physiologically, the Luriani are unmistakably Human, but they do possess a number of unique physical characteristics which become apparent on a close inspection. They have a transparent second eyelid which improves underwater vision and protects the eyes from pressure and irritants. They possess muscles that can seal the inner ear, protecting it at extreme depths. Luriani naturally produce a number of body oils that protect them from cold and irritants. Their feet and

hands are webbed. A subcutaneous layer of fat cells stores oxygen and they carry increased hemoglobin levels in their blood. This allows them to collapse their lungs and reach far greater depths (around 1,600') than other Humans, as well as permitting them to remain in an oxygen-free environment for up to an hour. This also gives the Luriani their heavy, rounded appearance.

Distinctive as these characteristics are, the most influential adaptations are found in the Luriani brain. The vast majority of all Luriani (at least 96%) are right-brain dominant, and consequently left-handed. Their language centers are located in regions of the brain usually associated with music and singing. It is theorized that these modifications were made in order to enable the Luriani to function more effectively in the three-dimensional environment of the

ocean, but they help in outer space as well. These features of Luriani neurology have led to speculation that the Ancients' intent was to produce a fully aquatic race, but the Final War intervened and the Luriani were left "unfinished."

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Even before contact with Vilani-influenced traders, Luriani languages displayed a marked tendency toward homogeneity. Their seafaring culture encouraged the spread of a single language to facilitate trade and communications. This common language started as a pidgin of several common Luriani tongues, but eventually developed into what is now known as Standard Luriani. This was the official language of both the Luriani Protectorates, and is still considered the native tongue of the Luriani.

Virtually all Luriani are now trilingual. In addition to Standard Luriani, they learn Galanglic and Old High Vilani during childhood. Additionally, several older pre-space-flight Luriani languages still exist (notably Sistena, Vermalin, and Opinwa), though they have generally been reduced to the status of second languages. Standard Luriani is a Mental/Average skill in *GURPS* terms, but all the older Luriani languages should be regarded as Mental/Hard skills due to the different location of the Luriani speech centers in the brain.

Formal Luriani names are traditionally rather cumbersome. At birth they are given a personal name. This is followed by the personal names of their parents; boys take their father's name followed by their mother's, while girls reverse the order. This is followed by the name of their birth family and then the family they are currently attached to (this name can change throughout their lives). On coming of age, the name of their current profession is added (children all use *Yasa* in this position).

Thus *Ora Renal Despi Corig Lanis Tobras* is a female engineer (*Tobras*) called Ora, whose mother's name was Renal and father's was Despi, born into the Corig family and currently a member of the Lanis family.

Fortunately, most Luriani also use a shorter informal name. This is based on their personal and their current family name. Thus Ora Renal Despi Corig Lanis Tobras would use the informal name of *Ora Lanis*. During the First Protectorate it became fashionable for Luriani to adopt names based on Solomani words that took their fancy. Consequently, odd-sounding names such as Melody, Priestess, Doctor, and Tango are not unheard of.

The Verasti Dtareen (p. 109) have adopted the same system of formal names, using Solomani names in place of Luriani. Conversely, the Mmarislusant (p. 108) have retained the traditional Vilani system of a personal name followed by a family name (p. GT77). In formal situations, a Mmarislusant will add *Mmarislusant* followed by his caste title at the end of his names to avoid giving offense.



PSYCHOLOGY

The Luriani are close to the Human mainstream in mindset. The most noticeable distinction is their unusual emotional volatility. Luriani feel their emotions very deeply and are not shy about expressing them. They have a reputation for hot-blooded passion throughout the coreward and trailing sectors of the Imperium.

Luriani Art

Luriani art reflects their turbulent and restless nature. Its essence is movement and energy; very little of it can be classified as static. Music is the most prominent Luriani art form, but they are also drawn to most other performing arts such as dance. Few Humans can resist being affected by the pulsating, up-tempo, bass rhythms of Luriani music – and these are even more intoxicating when coupled with the sensual nature of Luriani dance.

Luriani music is quite distinctive; the most obvious defining characteristic is its 10/8 time signature. Virtually all Luriani music makes extensive use of the voice as an instrument. Slight differences in Luriani physiology have resulted in their vocal cords being longer than the Human norm, contributing to the strong bass tendencies in their song. Luriani singing features a secondary voiced note when inhaling in addition to the usual note when exhaling, making a distinctive “breathy” sound. This effect is remarkably difficult for non-Luriani to reproduce.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Many outside observers characterize Luriani society as communal. In fact the Luriani are strongly individualistic, but they use a form of group marriage in which a number of adults form a distinct family grouping. Relationships among the adults of a family are in a constant state of flux. Any children born into the family are regarded as brothers and sisters, and all the adults regard them as their children. Because of this, the universal Human incest taboo is slightly altered among the Luriani. It is accepted that some “siblings” will form relationships with their “brothers and sisters” during puberty. Such relationships are discouraged, but they are tolerated as long as the children do not share a biological parent.

The Luriani believe in individual and family honor. The Luriani code of honor evolved as a mechanism to limit the negative effects of the Luriani emotional nature. Luriani honor holds that effort and intent are far more important than actual results; their mythology is replete with stories of heroic failure. The three basic tenets of Luriani honor are: protect your family; offer hospitality to all who seek it; and treat your foes fairly.

The Luriani code of honor does not encourage physical combat as a method for settling differences. Instead, matters of personal honor are settled by contests of nonviolent skill. As long as both parties have given their best, there is no stain on one's honor for losing such a contest.

The Luriani warrior caste is particularly careful about the Luriani honor code. The Luriani hold that warfare is a matter for nations and tribes, not individuals. War does not remove the obligations of honor. For example, an individual Luriani is required to grant personal hospitality, even to foes in time of war under some circumstances.

SUBCULTURES

Three distinct subcultures exist within Luriani society. These include the Verasti Dtareen, the Mmarislusant, and the Wurlana or “Voyagers.”

The Verasti Dtareen and Mmarislusant derive from the incorporation of non-Luriani Humans into Luriani society. The Verasti Dtareen are the descendants of Solomani settlers from the Rule of Man era. The Mmarislusant are the descendants of Vilani colonists planted among the Luriani during periods of Vilani occupation. The Wurlana, on the other hand, have been part of the Luriani culture from pre-historic times.

The Wurlana

One of the central facets of Luriani culture has always been their “migrating” ships. The first migrating ships were the huge vessels that traversed Daramm’s oceans in Luriani prehistory. Each of these early ships was virtually a floating town with hundreds of inhabitants, trading with the various island settlements. These voyagers were the catalyst that led to the rise of civilization on Daramm, and subsequently provided the glue that bound it together. Over time, the crews of these vessels evolved the distinct subculture that is now known as the Wurlana.

When the Luriani reached toward the stars, it was natural for the Wurlana to be among the first. Rather than constructing huge ships in imitation of their oceangoing vessels, the Wurlana chose to produce fleets of small asteroid ships that traveled in caravans among the Luriani worlds. Each ship carried a complete set of backup machinery and controls – so when a new ship was required, it was a simple matter to hollow out a new asteroid hull and fit it out from the parent ship. Both ships then gradually replaced their backups. Thus the number of starfaring ships slowly increased.

With the end of the Luriani Consolidation War in -4547, the Vilani banned the caravans. Some managed to escape the final defeat, and continued their travels far beyond the borders of the Ziru Sirka. These wanderers founded the scattered Luriani worlds that are far removed from Daramm – for example, two such caravans are recorded as having reached the Zhodani Consulate about -4100. However, a few caravans chose to remain relatively close to the former Luriani worlds and occasionally returned. Sometimes these caravans conducted clandestine trading, sometimes they encouraged

Luriani uprisings, but mostly they just watched to see when they could come home. It was this handful of Wurlana that would re-establish the migratory culture during the First Protectorate.

The Wurlana became less numerous during the First Protectorate, but they continued to provide limited communication among the Luriani worlds even after the Protectorate had fallen to the Long Night. With the rise of the Second Protectorate, steps were taken to ensure that the Wurlana were preserved. They soon flourished under official patronage. Once the Second Protectorate was incorporated into the Imperium,

the Treaty of Daramm established the Wurlana as a protected culture, subsidized and exempted from many commercial regulations. To this day, they survive throughout the Imperium, known by their Anglic name of “Voyagers.”

The Mmarislusant

The Luriani word *mmarislusant* literally translates as “victims of history.” During the Ziru Sirka, numerous Vilani were settled on the Luriani worlds in an attempt to assimilate the Luriani. This practice proved fruitless, but the colonists remained when the First Protectorate was formed, presenting a unique problem for the new state.

The solution adopted was an interesting example of the Luriani code of honor. While the Luriani bore a “grudge” against the Ziru Sirka in general, the Luriani could not honorably hold individual Vilani responsible for the actions of their society. Mean-

while, the tenet of hospitality required that the Vilani colonists had to be treated as honored guests. Thus, the Protectorate went to considerable lengths to ensure that these Vilani were able to continue their lives as before. State-funded Vilani schools were established, and great efforts were made to encourage the Vilani to retain their distinct identity. As a result, present-day Mmarislusant preserve much of the original culture and language of the Ziru Sirka.

Over time, the Mmarislusant came to be valued members of Luriani society, well respected for their bureaucratic and diplomatic skills. Citizenship was extended to them in -1372, and they were gradually incorporated into the administrative structure of the Protectorate. It is interesting to note that with the incorporation of the Protectorate into the Third Imperium, the Mmarislusant have resisted every invitation to reintegrate into mainstream Vilani culture.



“The presence of pre-Human (and even pre-Ancient) intelligent life cannot be established with any rigor. Proponents of pre-Luriani sophont life on Daramm point to over 100 sites, claiming that sheer numbers can make up for the lack of conclusive evidence at any individual site.”

*– Professor Daffyd Zhugasvilli,
Comparative Sophontology Lecture,
University of Sylea*

The Verasti Dtareen

The term Verasti Dtareen is usually translated as “Terran Protectors” or “Protectors from Terra.” Unlike the Mmarislusant, the Verasti Dtareen were regarded as members of Luriani society from the founding of the First Protectorate. The Verasti Dtareen provided the Protectorate with the vital administrative skills required to manage an interstellar state. They also formed the bulk of the early Protectorate’s military forces. As the Protectorate evolved, the Luriani gradually replaced them in this role, but they continued to make up the administrative core of society, providing it with stability and focus that it had previously lacked.

Verasti Dtareen culture is an intriguing fusion of Luriani and Solomani traditions. Exposure to the Luriani has resulted in the adoption of many Luriani cultural norms (such as group marriages and the Luriani code of honor). In many ways, the Verasti Dtareen are a less extreme version of the Luriani. They are prone to displays of emotion with which most Solomani would feel uncomfortable; they are strongly drawn toward music and the arts. However, they are also expected to behave with greater restraint than would be expected of a Luriani.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Luriani are an important partner in trade networks throughout the trailing sectors of the Imperium and beyond. Aside from the Wurlana caravans, many merchant lines in the region are run or staffed by Luriani. The Luriani have access to the full range of Imperial technologies, although they have not historically been leaders in technical innovation.

DARAMM (0821, LEY SECTOR)

Starport: Class V (Naval base present).

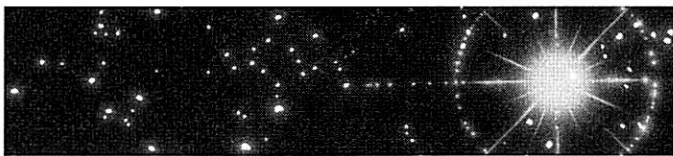
Diameter: 7,230 miles (11,600 km). *Gravity:* 0.96 G. *Atmosphere:* Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 95%. *Climate:* Earth-normal. *Population:* 19 billion. *Government:* Bureaucracy. *Control Rating:* 4. *TL:* 11. *Gas Giants:* 2. *WTN:* 6.0. *Trade Classifications:* Hi Wa.

Daramm orbits Basijk, a solitary K0 V star, at a distance of 0.6 AU. It possesses two moons, Mrai (134 miles diameter) and Aryn (1,010 miles diameter), which act to steady it on its axis. Small axial tilt (2°), minimal orbital eccentricity, and vast oceans acting as a heat sink have combined to produce a pleasantly mild climate. There is little seasonal variation. Daramm has no polar ice caps; 95% of the surface is under water.

Daramm is an ancient world, approximately 5.5 billion years old. Life arose in its vast oceans over 4.5 billion years ago, and has evolved into a vast array of highly sophisticated creatures. There is some debate as to whether the Luriani were the first intelligent species to make Daramm their home. Evidence has been uncovered on Daramm and a number of other bodies in the system which leads some scientists to claim that it was home to an intelligent race long before the arrival of the Ancients and the Luriani. According to this theory, a native intelligence arose on Daramm only to become extinct around 350,000 years ago. This theory is highly controversial and not widely accepted.

Whatever the truth of this theory, Daramm is now home to almost 19 billion sophonts, 80% of whom are racial Luriani. The remaining 20% is composed mostly of Verasti Dtareen and Mmarislusant, with a small percentage of other races.

Originally the Luriani made their homes on Daramm's many islands, but most of the population now lives in vast arcologies anchored in the shallow seas surrounding the island archipelagoes. The islands are now given over to agricultural production or preserved as natural reserves. Most of the exploitable mineral reserves on the islands have long been exhausted, but extensive seabed mining is now a major industry. Despite this, Daramm is still dependent on offworld supplies to meet its industrial needs.



LURIANI CHARACTERS

Luriani have normal height and weight for their ST. Although their physical appearance is superficially similar to the Human mainstream, they have a very distinctive sense of fashion which sets them off.

Traditional Luriani clothing is almost as unique and powerful as their music. The usual style is based on lightweight, flowing, layered garments, often over a close-fitting bodysuit. This is intended to be simultaneously functional and sensual, provocative, and revealing. The concept of completely utilitarian clothing appears to be alien to the Luriani. All Luriani clothing has to serve a dual purpose (the Luriani were scandalized by the Solomani and their "sack-like" ship suits).

Luriani fashions do not use muted or subdued colors; their clothing features many irregular blocks of strong discordant colors with sharp dividing lines between them. These blocks swirl and interlock, with the intention of giving a sense of movement and energy. Attention is drawn to certain parts of the body and away from others. Likewise, the Luriani make extensive use of body decorations. Rather than using permanent forms of body-marking such as tattoos, the Luriani use body paints and dyes to adorn themselves. The average Luriani is a sight to behold – dressed in vibrant clothing, with his body painted many bright contrasting colors, one cannot fail to recognize his origins.

LURIANI RACIAL TEMPLATE

41 POINTS

Advantages: 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Amphibious [10]; Faz Sense [10]; Musical Ability +1 [1]; Nictating Membrane 1 [10]; Oxygen Storage [14]; Pressure Support 2 (Limitation: Only to 25 atmospheres, -30%) [7]; Temperature Tolerance 2 [2]; Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: Chummy [-5]; Code of Honor (Luriani) [-10]; Curious [-5]; Intolerance (Vilani) [-5]; Reputation -1 (Irrational and unpredictable; to all non-Luriani) [-2]; Unusual Biochemistry [-5].

Languages: Galanglic (M/A) at IQ [2]; Old High Vilani (M/A) at IQ [2].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

3D Spatial Sense *see p. C131*

Luriani have a superior form of Absolute Direction, never becoming confused about three-dimensional spatial relationships.

Amphibious *see p. C149*

Luriani are equally at home in water as on land. They function normally underwater, and swim at their normal Move rate without needing the Swimming skill.

Chummy *see p. C187*

Luriani like the company of others, and work well in groups. They become unhappy and distracted when alone.

Code of Honor *see p. B31*

The Luriani code of honor is held by most Luriani, especially members of the warrior class. An honorable Luriani protects his current family, offers hospitality to anyone who needs it, and always treats his foes fairly. Any challenge to a Luriani's honor must be contested, although the challenge normally involves a contest of nonviolent skills rather than an aggressive confrontation. Verasti Dtareen characters are required to take this disadvantage.

Curious *see p. C189*

Luriani are curious, always investigating interesting items and situations.

Enemy *see p. B39*

Wurlana characters are particularly likely to pick up this disadvantage if they have abandoned their home caravan. The Voyagers are quite clannish, and regard those who leave their caravans as traitors. This should be considered a -10-point disadvantage (Voyager clans; 6 or less).

Faz Sense *see p. C155*

Luriani have a well-developed sense for vibrations and currents in their immediate environment. This sense permits them to detect the presence and (in general terms) the size and shape of nearby objects.

Intolerance *see p. B34*

Luriani have a long-standing grudge against the Vilani for thousands of years of oppression under the Ziru Sirka and Rule of Man. This grudge does *not* extend to the Mmarislusant, who are considered a valued part of Luriani society. Verasti Dtareen and Mmarislusant characters are not required to take this disadvantage, despite their ties to Luriani culture.

Musical Ability *see p. B22*

Due to a quirk of neurology, the Luriani have a significant talent for music and song.

Nictating Membrane *see p. C162*

Luriani have a retractable, protective membrane over their eyes, protecting them from irritants and injury.

Oxygen Storage *see p. C162*

Luriani can store up to an hour's worth of oxygen in their tissues, permitting them to operate underwater for extended periods.

Pressure Support *see p. C163*

Luriani can survive at up to about 25 atmospheres of pressure, permitting deep dives.

Reputation *see p. B17*

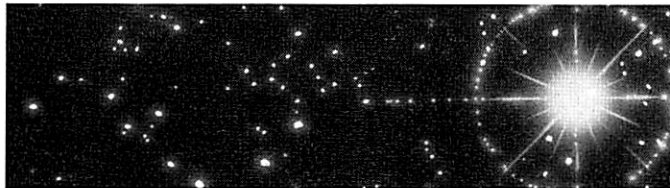
Among others, the Luriani have a reputation for being hot-headed, irrational, and unpredictable. This Reputation does not affect reactions among the Luriani themselves, nor does it affect reactions from members of the Mmarislusant or Verasti Dtareen subcultures.

Temperature Tolerance *see p. C130*

Under the standard rules for exposure to heat or cold (see p. B130), a temperature between 35° and 90° is thermally neutral; a higher or lower temperature may cause ill effects. Each point of Temperature Tolerance widens this range by HT degrees. Normally the addition is divided equally between the hot and cold ends of the scale (for example, a character with HT 10 and Temperature Tolerance 1 would

have a thermally neutral range from 30° to 95°). But equal division isn't mandatory; it's even permissible to apply the entire increase to one end of the scale (for example, a thermally neutral range from 35° to 100°). The resulting shift in the center of the thermally neutral zone is a 0-point feature.

For the Luriani, the base "comfort range" is the same as for mainstream Humans, between 35° and 90°. The extra 2 × HT degrees of tolerance are applied to the low end of the range. A Luriani with a HT of 10 would therefore be comfortable within a temperature range of 15° to 70°.



Unusual Biochemistry *see p. C1106*

Luriani biochemistry has diverged sufficiently from the Human norm that many drugs have reduced or different effects on them.

Versatile *see p. C131*

Luriani are imaginative and inventive, constantly developing new concepts and finding new approaches to old ideas.

Taboo Traits

Luriani cannot have any of the following advantages: Collected, Composed, Disease Resistant, Imperturbable, Single-Minded. Luriani also cannot have any of the following disadvantages: Disturbing Voice, Low Empathy, Shyness, Workaholic.

Adventure Seed: Circus Games

Dame Mission Aulatee is a renowned Luriani fashion designer, whose creations have recently found favor with a member of the Imperial household. It is long-standing tradition that designers whose garments are worn by members of the household should be presented at court. Normally this would be a straightforward matter of protocol. Unfortunately, Dame Mission is also renowned for regarding such concerns as extremely pointless and irritating, referring to them as "circus games" (*cerusgam*, a derogatory Luriani term for formal protocol).

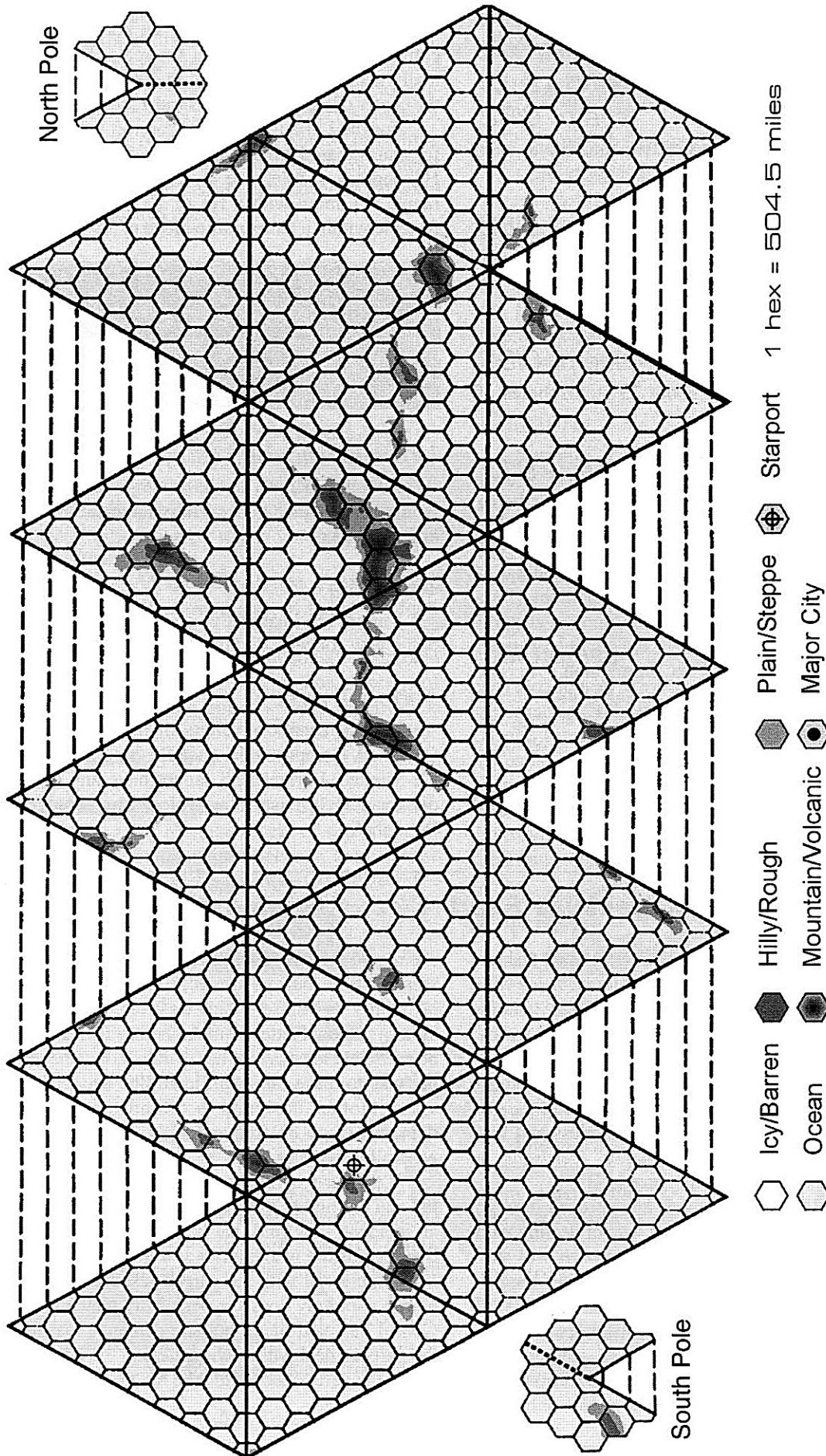
The Imperial Consul feels that an approach through unofficial channels would be the best way of dealing with the situation. He recalls that such an approach was successful in getting Dame Mission to accept her knight-hood. He is therefore seeking an independent group, well versed in protocol and diplomacy, to chaperone her through the affair.

Any group undertaking the task finds Dame Mission to be petulant, irrational, and demanding. Not only does

she regard the whole affair as a monumental waste of her valuable time, but she also constantly refers to the Imperial family as "those Vilani wastrels." The Consul provides a personal letter from Archduke Tranian that should be sufficient to convince her to attend, but she goes out of her way to make things difficult. She is deliberately late, wears clothes designed to offend local sensibilities, demands to go on frequent sightseeing detours, and is generally annoying.

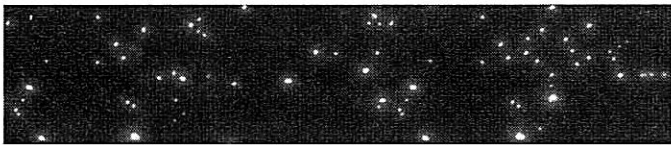
If the party is finally successful in getting her to Capital and seeing her through the reception without creating an incident, they find that her whole demeanor changes. She regards the whole affair as a monumental joke and is most impressed with the party's resourcefulness and tolerance. Not only does she personally match whatever the Consul has paid them, but she demands that he employ the party to deal with such matters in the future. Whether or not the party chooses to take her up on this depends on their patience.

Daramm



Nexxies

Of all the branches of Humaniti, the Nexxies are the most recent in origin. Indeed, they have only existed for a few years as a distinct Human race. Constructed as a deliberate exercise in fitting Humans to their environment, the Nexxies seem destined for a prosperous future in the Spinward Marches.



ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Nexine is a water world located in the Spinward Marches sector. The planet is most notable for the presence of metal- and mineral-rich spheres called “gemores,” which can be mined from the floor of the vast world-ocean.

Over a century ago, the Nexine Mining Consortium (NMC) was formed as a coalition of small mining companies. The NMC was granted a charter to develop Nexine, and began using destructive underwater mining techniques to collect gemores. At the time, the NMC did not realize that these valuable spheres were actually produced by a local life form known as *Nexine coral*. The coral was considered a nuisance to the miners, as it tended to grow over the gemores and foul mining equipment.

Before long, the NMC’s aggressive mining techniques were destroying the coral faster than it could grow, threatening not only the coral but other local life forms. In 1085, IISS marine biologists discovered the potential threat to the biosphere, and also uncovered the link between Nexine coral and the gemores. They immediately informed the NMC and the Ministry of Conservation (MoC).

After some debate, the NMC ceased large-scale mining operations and began to study alternative ways of recovering the mineral wealth of Nexine. After several years and numerous tests of alternative methods, the Consortium decided to “harvest” the gemores rather than mining them. At first, conventional underwater harvesting operations were attempted using submersibles, diving suits, and underwater habitats. Unfortunately, it soon became clear that even the gentlest conventional methods tended to stress the coral to the point that it no longer produced gemores. A different method had to be found.

Soon, the Consortium chose a bold strategy. It would create a workforce of altered Humans, capable of living

amphibiously and harvesting gemores without any of the high-technology equipment that tended to damage the Nexine coral.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

This decision made Nexine a center of attention for cutting-edge biotechnology corporations from throughout the Imperium. New research facilities sprang up almost overnight. After closed-door negotiations with the Ministry of Conservation and the biotechnology firm Imperial Gentech, the NMC offered shares to anyone willing to undergo bionic and genetic alteration at the Consortium’s expense. Early projections regarding the potential productivity of the Nexine coral beds was strong inducement – the new population of underwater “miners” was almost guaranteed to become millionaires in a relatively short period of time.

In 1094, after intense consultations with legal counsel, aquatic engineers, and marine biologists, the Consortium asked the Ministry of Colonization to oversee its harvesting and reseeded efforts. In effect, the NMC threw itself on the mercy of the Imperium in an effort to avoid huge fines for the damage that its past operations had caused to Nexine’s ecosystem – fines that would surely bankrupt them.

The next stage of the project required the design and creation of Nexine’s new population. Under Imperial supervision, the NMC retained the services of Imperial Gentech to perform the necessary physical alterations, and to research genetic enhancements that would breed true in future generations. Bionic and genetic modifications to the first volunteers began in 1096. Among these volunteers were several senior Consortium officials, who hoped to demonstrate public contrition for harm done to the Nexine biosphere, and to prove that the procedure was relatively safe.

The bionic enhancements performed on the first generation of Nexxies included biomechanical gills, protective membranes for eyes and ears, and alteration of the digestive system. Most significant was a modified, scaly skin that helped retain moisture, provided webbing for hands and feet, and offered protection from the irritating waters of Nexine. Second-generation Nexxies had these modifications written into their genetic codes, making them naturally amphibious.

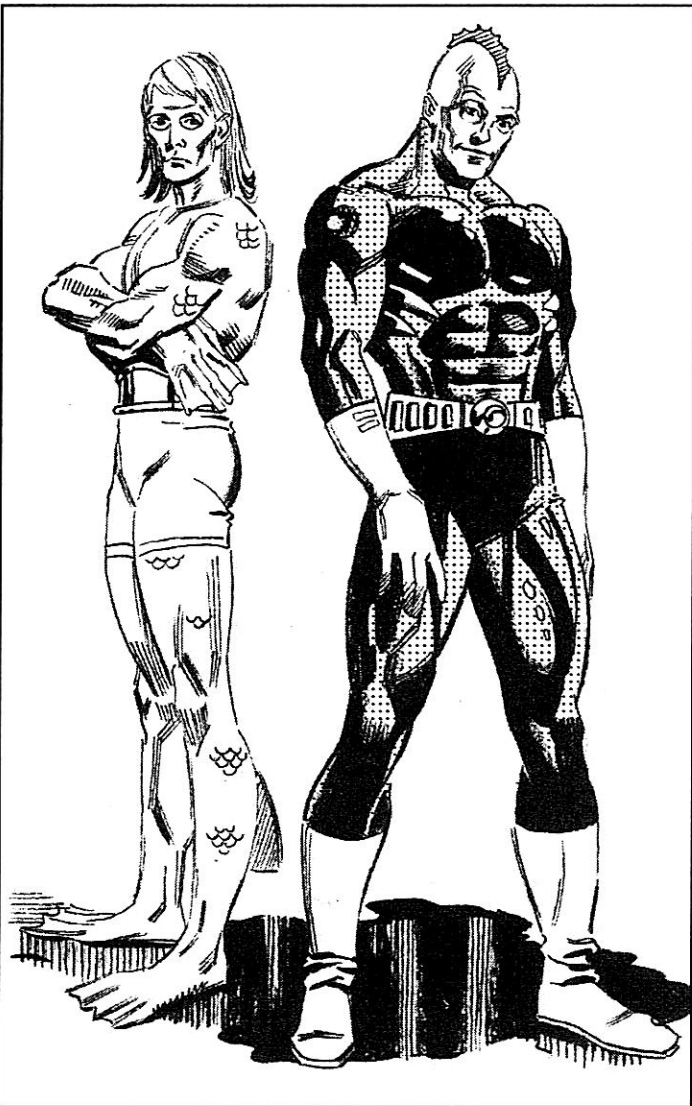
Today, there remains a distinction between “Alpha” Nexxies (those who began life as mainstream Humans) and “Beta” Nexxies (those who were born with the Nexxie genome). Later generations of Beta Nexxies are expected to breed true, producing a variant Human race (p. 8).

THE FUTURE

The first few years after the change in mining strategy were difficult for the NMC, but it appears that the changes have begun to bear fruit. After suffering a steep decline from the high costs of implementing the new strategy, profits have slowly increased. The strategy has proven a public relations coup as well; the NMC is now touted as an example of an environmentally friendly company, reformed through hard work and altruism. Many Imperial officials would like to see such behavior from other corporations, in the Spinward Marches and elsewhere.

With the first generation of “true” Nexxies coming of age, Nexine can expect to see a purely genetically engineered population in less than a century. Naturally, there will always be bionically altered “newcomers” mixed in with the genetically engineered “native” population – the money to be made is a strong inducement to immigration. As the population increases, however, immigration will probably be more strictly curtailed in order to help ensure that Nexine doesn’t suffer another environmental disaster.

As the Nexxies’ population increases, their world promises to become one of the richest in the Spinward Marches.



Although Nexine could be exploited more aggressively, the Nexxies and the Company have learned their lesson and would violently oppose any such development. They have no intention of killing the coral that “lays the golden eggs” as they almost did before.

The NMC actually employs fewer people today than it did a century ago, as most of its employees have resigned to become “freelance” gemore harvesters. Since they sell most of their gemores directly to the NMC, and since all citizens of Nexine are shareholders in the company, they are in effect selling to themselves. As a result, many Nexxies are very wealthy by Imperial standards, and their simple aquatic lifestyle requires little money in order to maintain a decent standard of living. Most of the mining company’s employees on Nexine are unaltered Humans who run the starport platform and collection barges, broker the gemores to offworld buyers, and operate two conventional mining sites in locations that have been deemed “safe” for such development.

The previous damage to Nexine’s ecosystem is rapidly reversing itself. Nexine coral grows at the rate of five inches or more per year, drawing its building material directly from the mineralized waters of the world-ocean. With their years of experience, Nexxies have discovered ways to cultivate the coral that increases yields and even allows them to shape the coral to form underwater structures and fanciful sculptures. As the coral recovers, it has increased the habitat available to other native life forms, and is bringing some species of fish and aquatic plant life back from the brink of extinction.

PSYCHOLOGY

Biomechanically altered Nexxies are identical to unaltered Humans in outlook and temperament. In contrast, young “true” Nexxies are beginning to exhibit noticeable changes from the Human psychological norm. They are gregarious among their own kind, playful and openly affectionate even among those of the same sex, but more reserved when in a mixed group of Nexxies and “dryfeet.” While they do not necessarily suffer from a sense of inferiority, they are acutely aware that they are the product of an effort to create a new race of Humans, rather than the result of natural processes. They tend to be sensitive to discussions of their origins, and quickly (but not unkindly) deflect any questions.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Nexxies, despite their radically altered physical make-up, tend to be much like other Human residents of the Third Imperium. They have access to the best educational materials and teachers in the Spinward Marches, ensuring that the children of Nexine are among the top academic achievers on a yearly basis. While the majority of Nexxies go on to become harvesters, marine biologists, or underwater engineers, there is no limit on career opportunities for young Nexxies.

While Nexxies are rarely encountered away from their native world (due to their small numbers and the fact that there is little to make them want to leave), some Beta Nexxies have left to find their fortunes among the stars. With their lifelong experience in a “weightless” underwater environment, some Nexxies have found that they have an aptitude for zero-G work such as starship construction. Others have found their aquatic abilities useful in military service or as consultants on other water worlds. As Nexxies become older, wiser, and more experienced (individually and as a race), there will no doubt be many more areas where their unique upbringing and experiences will prove useful.

Although unaltered Humans are still employed on Nexine, the actual harvesting is done by the Nexxies themselves using specially designed equipment and, in most cases, harvesting by hand in order to avoid stressing the coral any more than necessary. Unaltered Humans find Nexine an unpleasant world; the excessive topside humidity tends to exacerbate respiratory infections and fungal growth, and the warmer than average temperatures make working on the surface highly uncomfortable.

First-generation Nexxies still prefer to spend as much time as possible out of the water, constructing air-filled underwater arcologies – Nexxie towns – that dot the ocean floor. Younger Nexxies have adapted more closely to their watery environment. Biologists and sociologists feel that Nexxies will inevitably become a wholly aquatic species.

Nexxie society is not terribly different than that of any other small, close-knit group of miners or farmers. Nexxies are intensely loyal to each other and their kind, wary of outsiders, and uncompromising in their work ethic. They are acutely aware of the fact that they were “custom built” for the difficult conditions of their homeworld, but they do not use this fact as an excuse for failure or success. They retain a rugged pioneer spirit that many other Imperial citizens have lost.

Nexxies enjoy a true participatory democracy. Every adult over the age of 16, male or female, has a voice in the affairs of the local community and of the world as a whole. Unaltered workers who live on Nexine are also allowed a vote if they have at least three years of residency. Since unaltered Humans find the conditions on Nexine uncomfortable and tend to rotate offworld after a two-year tour, there are few enfranchised “dryfeet” (as Nexxies call them). Despite this, Nexxies maintain an amicable relationship with their unaltered co-workers in the Consortium.

Each Nexxie community is centered on a cluster of underwater buildings that forms a rough town square. These buildings include temporary gemore storehouses, small businesses such as general stores, medical clinics, religious facilities, and governmental offices. These buildings are always small affairs, as the average Nexxie community serves just over 500 people spread over hundreds of square miles of ocean floor.

The exception to this rule is the Nexine Underport, a cluster of artificial and natural structures that has literally grown beneath the starport platform. Underport was the first true Nexxie community, and is the nominal capital of Nexine. It was the testing site for Imperial Gentech’s first altered and

natural-born Nexxies, and as such it is home to many of the original altered Nexxies and their offspring. It is here, among a population of almost 25,000 Nexxies and dryfeet, that most offworlders will encounter their first Nexxies – at the customs clearing house, at one of several “amphibious” bars, or at the local Port Authority office.

GAINING NEXINE CITIZENSHIP

Any mainstream Human can apply to undergo the necessary alterations to become an Alpha Nexxie and earn full Nexine citizenship. Working with Imperial Gentech and the Ministry of Conservation, the NMC authorizes about 500 alteration procedures per year for immigrants who wish full citizenship status on Nexine. The NMC and Imperial Gentech require applicants to undergo extensive background and personality-profile tests. Those who succeed receive genetic and surgical alterations over a period of several months.

It is possible for an unaltered Human to acquire a permit to harvest gemores. However, such permits are short-term, difficult to obtain, and prohibitively expensive (over MCr1 per person for a six-month contract), so most people who wish to partake of the potential wealth of Nexine readily submit to alteration.

The operations, post-surgical care, and training required to turn a normal Human dryfoot into an Alpha Nexxie are expensive. A complication-free transformation can cost upward of Cr500,000. New arrivals that can afford to pay upfront for the procedure are granted full citizenship upon their release from the IG facilities on Nexine. More commonly, those who undergo the alteration are required to work off their debt by becoming employees of the NMC. Such individuals are granted citizenship as soon as their debt to the Consortium is paid. NMC’s generous stock and partnership options, along with its near-monopoly on gemore harvesting, ensures that most Nexxies continue to work for the Consortium long after they have paid for their alteration.

THE DOLPHINS OF NEXINE

In addition to the unaltered Humans and Nexxies, there is a population of about 700 Dolphins on Nexine. Unfortunately, their future is very much in doubt. Dissolved metallic and mineral salts in the planet’s seawater irritates their skin and eyes, making for uncomfortable living conditions. The Dolphin pods are limited to the polar regions of Nexine where, due to deepwater currents, these mineral concentrations are lower than elsewhere on the planet. Visitors to the cool polar waters find that the Dolphins are aloof at best – they tend to keep to themselves, and are strangely territorial regarding certain natural caverns.

The Dolphin population has been decreasing in recent years through natural attrition. By unanimous consent, the remaining Dolphins have instituted a “no birth” policy as they deem it irresponsible to bring more young into such a harsh world. Offworld officials and the Dolphins’ relatives are undertaking efforts to relocate those who wish to leave, and both the Nexxies and the NMC have offered to help pay the relocation costs.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Nexine has little local industry, and produces only a few TL8 goods locally. However, the Nexine Mining Consortium imports a great deal of TL10 equipment, and many Nexxies buy high-technology consumer goods from offworld.

Once the Nexine Mining Consortium began to study the mechanisms that produce gemores, it was found that Nexine coral was valuable in many ways. Among other potential uses, the coral is being considered for use on other worlds as a natural alternative to more destructive oceanic mining techniques. It is hoped that the coral will allow worlds with little or no other natural source of mineral wealth to economically harvest minerals suspended in seawater, increasing commerce and industry on worlds currently thought too expensive to develop. Nexxies employed by the NMC have already begun to travel to other worlds as advisors, consultants, and traveling salesmen, seeking new markets and environmental niches for Nexine coral.

Many people are concerned that exported Nexine coral could overtake native corals and destroy the habitats of other oceans. Because of this, living coral has been declared a hazardous biological cargo, requiring strict quarantine procedures at all ports. Hopes are high, however, that Nexine coral may help bring life to biologically dead waterworlds, and as an aid to terraforming worlds where oceans are being created with cometary impacts.

GEMORES

The gemores produced by Nexine coral range in size from 1/3-ounce grains up to 2-pound rocks. Their appearance varies widely depending on their exact composition, but they generally resemble russet-red pearls. Their concentrated mineral content makes them valuable. After minimal refining efforts involving crushing, heating, and centrifuging, gemores yield quantities of very pure materials of strategic importance.

Gemore production on Nexine currently averages 10,000 tons of pre-refined gemores per month. Exceptional "gem-quality" examples, with unusual clarity or color, can sell for upward of Cr10,000 each. Gem-quality stones are used in rings, brooches, and necklaces. A Fifth Frontier War commemorative medallion presented to Archduke Norris was set with five perfect, blood-red gemores valued at over Cr100,000 each.

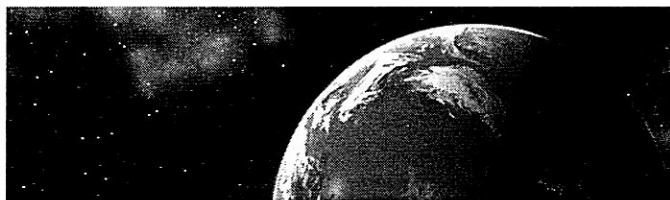
The gemore-harvesting industry permits Nexxies to enjoy a very high standard of living, with more free time than the average Imperial citizen. Average monthly income for a Nexxie adult is Cr8,000, well above the Imperial average. This does not take into account generous "profit sharing" bonuses, paid by the NMC to every employee and citizen of Nexine at Holiday each year. Naturally, this vast wealth is tempting to outsiders. There have been numerous instances of "claim jumpers" attempting to move in and harvest gemores, but these attempts are usually thwarted by the Nexxies or by corporate security forces.

NEXINE (3030, SPINWARD MARCHES SECTOR)

Starport: Class III (Scout base present).

Diameter: 9,050 miles (14,600 km). *Gravity:* 1.16 G.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen-nitrogen, tainted by excess moisture. *Surface Water:* 100%. *Climate:* Tropical. *Population:* 2,700 (2,000 Nexxies, 700 Dolphins). *Government:* Representative democracy. *Control Rating:* 1. *TL:* 8. *Gas Giants:* 1. *WTN:* 2.5. *Trade Classifications:* Lo Ni Wa.



NEXXIE CHARACTERS

Nexxies are of normal height and weight for their ST. There are two distinct Nexxie types, the first-generation "Alpha" Nexxies and the later-generation "Beta" Nexxies. Although they share many traits, they can be distinguished by appearance and personality.

ALPHA NEXXIES

Whether the original subjects of Imperial Gentech's bio-engineering, Nexine Mining Consortium employees who have become the parents of the Beta Nexxies, or recent arrivals bent on earning a fortune harvesting gemores and willing to pay the physical price, Alpha Nexxies are triumphs of genetic and biomechanical engineering. Almost without exception, Alpha Nexxies are driven, goal-oriented people who were willing to undergo months of painful body alteration and permanent physical changes, all in hopes of striking it rich.

Alpha Nexxies are, paradoxically, stranger in appearance than their natural-born children. Their silvery scales, obvious gills, and strange eyes ensure that they stand out in a crowd. As a general rule, Alphas wear their differences with pride, and are quick to defend their fellows from derision or criticism from dryfeet.

Alpha Nexxies take both the Nexxie racial template and the Alpha Nexxie lens below.

BETA NEXXIES

Beta Nexxies tend to be young (in 1120, the oldest is only 25), playful, flirtatious, and disdainful of those deemed too "serious." They are also fastidious workers who throw themselves into their studies and work with as much enthusiasm as their play. Beta Nexxies love their world and its aquatic environment. Some have become roaming ambassadors for Nexine and the Consortium, seeking out new markets for Nexine Coral on far-flung water worlds. A handful of

others serve with pride in the armed forces of the Imperial Navy and Marines.

Beta Nexxies are obviously Human, but their appearance is decidedly exotic. Their supple gray skin, hairless bodies, small ears, and the webbing between fingers and toes mark them as different to any but the most casual observers. Although body hair was genetically removed to help with streamlining, the modification does not breed true in all cases. Some Nexxies sport full heads of hair, a trait considered exotic among Betas.

While out of water, Beta Nexxies usually wear normal Human clothing, preferring close-fitting, neck-to-ankle jumpsuits that help keep their skin from drying out too quickly. In the water, Nexxies wear minimal swimsuits and little else – if even that. Nexxies in general have little nudity taboo, although the more puritanical Alphas frown upon their children's "freedom" when it comes to clothing.

Beta Nexxies take both the Nexxie racial template and the Beta Nexxie lens below.

NEXXIE RACIAL TEMPLATE 63 POINTS

Advantages: Amphibious [10]; Cast Iron Stomach [15]; DR 1 [3]; Gills [10]; Nictating Membrane 1 [10]; Polarized Eyes [5]; Pressure Support (up to 100 atmospheres) [10].

ALPHA NEXXIE LENS -5 POINTS

Disadvantages: Unnatural Feature (Skin, gills, and eyes) [-5].

BETA NEXXIE LENS -15 POINTS

Disadvantages: Chummy [-5]; Disturbing Voice [-10].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Amphibious *see p. C149*

Both Alpha and Beta Nexxies are well-adapted to life in the water. They have smooth skin and webbed fingers and toes, making it easy for them to swim.

Cast Iron Stomach *see p. C151*

Nexxies can derive nourishment from just about any organic matter found on their home world, although they prefer well-prepared food similar to that eaten by other Humans. This advantage also helps them deal with the dissolved salts and minerals in their watery environment.

Chummy *see p. C187*

Beta Nexxies love to work and play in groups, and dislike being alone. They prefer the company of other Nexxies, but are not chauvinistic and are happy when in the company of mainstream Humans.

Damage Resistance *see p. C152*

Nexxie skin is tough, designed to protect against the jagged Nexine coral, predators, and dehydration. It provides the equivalent of DR 1. On the Alpha Nexxies, this skin is biomechanical in nature, and is obviously artificial with a layer of fine, matte-gray scales. Beta Nexxies' skin is more natural in appearance.

Disturbing Voice *see p. C181*

This trait is a byproduct of the genetic mutation of the respiratory system in Beta Nexxies, modifications that allow them to communicate underwater more effectively. Beta Nexxie voices are deep and raspy, punctuated with higher-pitched notes.

Gills *see p. C156*

Nexxies can extract oxygen from seawater, remaining underwater indefinitely. In Alpha Nexxies, this trait is due to a set of biomechanical implants. Beta Nexxies have natural gills.

Nictating Membrane *see p. C162*

Both Nexxie varieties have protective membranes over their eyes. In Alpha Nexxies this is a biomechanical implant which gives the eyes a strange fish-like appearance. In Beta Nexxies it is a true nictating membrane, which can be retracted when not needed.

Polarized Eyes *see p. C163*

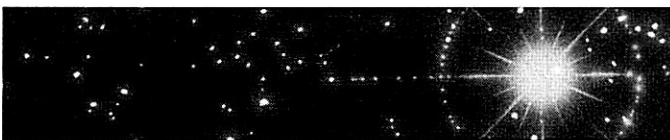
The Nictating membranes built into Nexxie eyes are designed to protect against rapid changes in illumination.

Pressure Support *see p. C163*

Nexxies can easily survive at pressures up to 100 atmospheres. This permits them to dive to considerable depths while searching for gemores or doing other underwater work.

Unnatural Feature *see p. C185*

Alpha Nexxies appear very strange, due to modifications to their eyes and skin.



SKILLS

Aside from standard languages such as Galanglic, many Nexxies (and all Beta Nexxies) speak an artificial language called Nexine. This is a combination of signs and audible words developed for underwater communication. Although it is structurally simple, it is difficult for anyone other than Beta Nexxies to speak; it requires tonal qualities that are difficult to mimic with an unaltered larynx. In *GURPS* terms, non-Nexxies and Alpha Nexxies learn Nexine as a Mental/Hard skill, while Beta Nexxies learn it as a Mental/Easy skill.

	Icy/Barren		Hilly/Rough		Plain/Steppe		Starport	1 hex = 632 miles
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Trade Classifications: Lo Ni Wa

KEY

 Φ Nexine Underport

Otrai

The Otrai live on the Imperial fringe and are generally ignored by most of the universe. Unlike many branches of Humaniti whose origins are lost in the mists of time, the origins of the Otrai are known with precision. They were genetically engineered during the Rule of Man, and are therefore an example of a variant Human race (p. 8). As a race they are drawn toward religion and spirituality, and have chosen to reject technology and violence. By a curious twist of fate, despite their dedication to pacifism, they are best known for their rare practice of unforgiving violence.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The first contact between the Terrans and the Vilani in -2422 had a profound effect on Terran society. Among other things, it sparked a massive religious revival, as the Terrans discovered that they were not alone in the universe. It is in this religious renewal that the roots of the Otrai can be found.

One of the more popular movements in this revival was Neopaganism. The term is somewhat misleading, implying as it does some form of unified belief system, whereas the movement was in reality a range of many different faiths with widely differing beliefs. However, most of these Neopagan faiths shared common characteristics. Most contained deep mystic and ritual elements, distrusted technology, and believed that mankind should work in harmony with the natural environment. More important, perhaps, many opposed the conflict with the Vilani.

As the Interstellar Wars dragged on, the Neopaganist movement's frequent opposition to the wars moved them to the fringes of Terran society, often viewed with mistrust by the average Confederation citizen. The situation did not improve with the foundation of the Rule of Man, and Neopaganists found themselves frequent targets of persecution.

In the early years of the Rule of Man, one group of Neopaganists decided that their fate would be best served by settling on a new world, far from the worlds of the former Terran Confederation. They approached the imperial government for assistance, and the world Otrai was eventually selected as their new home.

Otrai was a world only marginally habitable by Humans. Organic chemicals poisonous to Humans heavily tainted its atmosphere and the biochemical basis for its life was substantially

different. Rather than relying on technology to adapt to their new home, the colonists elected to be genetically modified to suit the world. Thus were born the Human subspecies later to become the Otrai.

THE LONG NIGHT

The subsequent history of the Otrai was unremarkable. The Otrai have never concerned themselves greatly with matters outside of their immediate surroundings, and have no interest in interstellar politics. They first settled their world in -2137 under the auspices of the Rule of Man. In -1891 the Rule of Man lost contact with the world and the Otrai passed quietly into the Long Night.

During the Rule of Man the Otrai had not developed any substantial technological base, and their world presented little of value to raiders. Consequently the Long Night went largely unnoticed. Their genetic modifications made their new home comfortable. Along with their deliberate avoidance of dependence on technology, this prevented the population crises that afflicted many other marginally habitable worlds.

During the Long Night the Otrai turned even more introspective, gradually forgetting much about space outside their limited horizons. As their population slowly grew, their original faiths fragmented and splintered into the bewildering array of religions that now characterizes the race. The one and only organized Otrai state came into existence in -1113 (p. 112), only to fall again in -1084.

During the Long Night, the Otrai turned even more introspective, gradually forgetting much about space outside their limited horizons. As their population slowly grew, their original faiths fragmented and splintered into the bewildering array of religions that now characterizes the race.

IMPERIAL CONTACT

Scouts from the expanding Third Imperium first contacted Otrai in 165. The world had little to offer the expanding empire and was ignored, marked as just another lost Solomani colony. Eventually the borders started to approach Otrai and a closer investigation was ordered. In 384, the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service dispatched a mission to conduct a detailed survey of the world. It was this survey that recognized the Otrai as a distinct Human race.

In 484 the first attempts to incorporate the Otrai into the Imperium began. These attempts met with outright hostility. The Otrai had not forgotten their persecution under the Ter-ran Confederation and Rule of Man, and wanted no part of an interstellar state. The Archduchess of Gateway at this time was Valisan, a Verasti Dtareen (p. 109) who was quite aware of the difficulties attendant on the incorporation of hostile worlds. She chose to leave the Otrai alone and engage in low-key efforts to change their views. Gradually the Imperial border crept closer to the Otrai and the overtures were stepped up.

In 568 attempts at incorporation were resumed in earnest, but once again met with widespread hostility. Slowly, however, the patient approach was starting to bear fruit. The Otrai gradually lost some of their fear of interstellar government, and were on the verge of accepting client state status when the Civil War broke out in 604. This unrelated event undid all the patient work of the previous Archdukes. The Otrai once again became hostile to incorporation and elected not to accept client-state status. With the end of the Civil War in 622, the Otrai remained just outside the Imperial border and attempts to integrate them were abandoned.

The situation has remained static down to the present day. The Otrai remain an isolated, independent culture and the Imperium has made no further attempt to incorporate them. This is not to say, however, that the Otrai have no interaction with the Imperium. Some Otrai feel the need to spread their faith to the universe beyond their world and travel the Imperium, teaching to all who will listen. Some Imperial citizens feel drawn to the deep spiritualism of the Otrai and travel there, seeking wisdom. Occasionally, matters of faith require an Otrai to leave his world and travel beyond. Meanwhile, the Otrai produce many fine art objects and there exists a small but thriving trade in them.

The Otrai and the Solomani Movement

The Otrai were one of the first new Human races created since the fall of the Ancients; their genome is entirely based on that of the Solomani. But, on a genetic level, there is a greater difference between them and the Solomani than there is between the Solomani and the Vilani. This poses a particular problem for some hard-line members of the Solomani Movement. The Otrai have a clear and indisputable Solomani heritage, their genetic make-up has not been diluted by any "inferior" race, and yet they are as genetically distinct as any other Human race. Most Solomani supporters ignore this as irrelevant, but some find it very hard to reconcile with their belief in Solomani superiority.



PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

The Otrai retain much of their Solomani heritage and are externally indistinguishable from them. Taxonomically, they are still members of the species *Homo sapiens* (*Homo sapiens otrai*) and thus are fully interfertile with most other Humans. To deal with the higher levels of energy put out by their F5 star, they were modified (or have evolved, records are uncertain on this point) to produce a higher level of melanin. Consequently, they tend toward darker skin tones, but they remain within Solomani norms in this respect.

Actual modifications to Otrai physiology were confined to those necessary to adapt to life on their new world, and are only apparent on the biochemical level. Otrai biochemistry naturally filters many organic poisons, such as those found in Otrai's atmosphere. Their digestive system has been modified to allow them to draw sustenance from Otrai's biosphere. An unwanted side effect of these modifications causes many normal Human drugs, chemicals, and foods to have unexpected results on them.

A few investigators have suggested that the modifications made to the Otrai were far more extensive than would appear to a casual glance. This theory points to the persistence of a number of beliefs (such as pacifism, dualism, and the concept of *Tralle*) that are common to the entire race. Proponents of this theory also point to the fact that, while every Otrai faith has a different definition of *Tralle*, apparently none of them has ever produced a definition that includes the routine practices of another faith. These are put forth as evidence that Otrai psychology was itself modified through genetic engineering. This theory is not widely accepted, but it may indicate that the Rule of Man possessed a level of genetic technology far more advanced than is commonly believed.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The Otrai originally spoke a variant of Anglic used by the Rule of Man. During the Long Night, linguistic drift resulted in the evolution of a distinct language that is now known as Otraic, which continues to be the native tongue of the Otrai. Otraic is similar in structure and form to Galanglic, and most speakers of one language can learn the other with little difficulty. Most Otrai encountered offworld have acquired at least a working knowledge of Galanglic.

Otrai names are all Solomani in origin, but they tend to be rather fanciful and are often drawn from obscure pre-spaceflight languages. Names such as Monnbem (Moonbeam), Sarlit (Starlight), and Trechid (Treechild) are also fairly common. Otrai usually have a personal name followed by a family name, and often add a clan name as well. In addition, many Otrai take a nickname based on some favored thing or concept when coming of age; they prefer to use this nickname in their day-to-day dealings.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

The Otrai retain much of their Neopaganist heritage. They are a deeply spiritual people, vitally concerned with matters of religion and faith. To put it bluntly, many Otrai are fanatics, devoting their lives to following the dictates of their religion as closely as possible. When an Otrai speaks of matters of faith, he is speaking of an unshakeable personal truth.

On the other hand, the Otrai are surprisingly free of bigotry or prejudice. The extreme pluralism of their beliefs has led to a culture of tolerance and acceptance. A person's choice of faith is a deeply personal thing and the Otrai recognize that what may be right for one individual may not be right for others. The potential for conflicts of faith is further reduced by the tendency for people of the same faith to congregate in their own settlements.

The original colonists of Otrai were drawn from a number of Neopaganist groups and consequently they lack a single belief system. However, all their religions are descended from Terran Neopaganism and share a common foundation.

Femininity and Masculinity

The Otrai divide the world into *dualities*, pairs of mutually opposing concepts (p. R130). For every concept, there is an equal opposing it; one can not exist without the other. Good is opposed by evil, love is opposed by hate, charity is opposed by greed, and so on. To the Otrai, one side of each concept is desirable and one is not, but neither can exist without the other.

The most important of these dualities involves *femininity* and *masculinity*. Most Otrai beliefs hold that masculinity is the undesirable side of this duality. They define masculinity as being structured, hierarchical, inflexible, and exclusive. On the opposing side, femininity is seen as informal, consensual, flexible, and inclusive.

This is not to say that the Otrai are matriarchal (though some Otrai faiths certainly are). In fact, their concept of the masculine and feminine has become almost totally divorced from concepts of gender. Rather, they most value the characteristics they associate with the feminine principle. Much of the Otrai opposition to the Imperium can be found in this concept. To the Otrai, the Imperium is fundamentally a masculine construct, and therefore being a part of it is undesirable.

Otrai religions are animistic and totemistic in nature (p. R127). Most of them lack formalized sacraments. Many characterize themselves as "feminine" (see box). They prize communion with the natural world, often valuing it above life itself. Most tend toward a loose organization rather than a strict hierarchical structure, and place a heavy emphasis on the individual. However, it is wise not to take this too far, as there are Otrai religions such as the Kai-leak (p. 122) that are hierarchical, possess formalized sacraments, and characterize themselves as "masculine."

The focus on spirituality and love of nature has resulted in a very strong pacifistic trend within Otrai culture. The Otrai place a very high value on life and are loath to take it. Organized violence is almost unheard of in Otrai history, and such violence as does occur is the result of individual passion

rather than premeditation. The Otrai have no military and only minimal police forces. Most Otrai will, reluctantly, use violence in self-defense or to protect those unable to protect themselves, but the concept of choosing to use violence to gain an end is entirely alien to them. The only exception to this is when dealing with those things they regard as *Tralle*. Not only *can* violence be used against *Tralle*, it *must* be used against it.



Kai-leak Spirit Urns

Central to the Kai-leak faith are the artifacts called *spirit urns*. The Kai-leak believe that these ceramic urns contain the spirits of the various natural dualities. Spirit urns are beautifully crafted, and as art objects are valued at Cr10,000 or more. Unfortunately, if a nonbeliever gazes upon one, the act instantly marks him as *Tralle*. Naturally, the blaspheming foreigner must then be killed – the only restriction being that a spirit urn is so holy that blood must not be shed in its presence.

Spirit urns were unknown to Imperial society until the 420s, when one came into the possession of an Imperial duke. There followed a bloody incident in which Kai-leak paladins killed several high ranking Imperial nobles while trying to recover the urn. Eventually the duke's family arranged for the urn to be returned, and the Kai-leak tactfully accepted assurances that no one else had viewed the urn.

After the incident, Kai-leak craftsmen made several replica urns and made gifts of them to Imperial museums and galleries, so that their beauty could reach a wide audience. The Kai-leak hoped that this would dispel any foreigners' desire to acquire any more true spirit urns. Unfortunately, the gifts had the opposite effect. Now that they were widely known, their beauty seemed to create the very demand that the Kai-leak had sought to avoid. Still, to this day obtaining a true spirit urn is extremely dangerous for any offworlders; a mere glimpse of one marks the viewer for death.

and discover exactly what it regards as *Tralle* before having any dealings with its followers.

THE KAI-LEAK

The *Kai-leak* represents the best-known exception to the general "rules" about Otrai religion. This harsh religion dominates the badlands on Otrai. It shares the common Otrai traits of animism and totemism, and the common reverence for the natural world, but otherwise it is entirely unlike the mainstream Otrai creeds.

The Otrai Guru Jandra Keth founded the Kai-leak in -1218. She rejected orthodox Otrai beliefs on masculinity and femininity, claiming that the masculine was more desir-

able than the feminine. Her teachings struck a receptive note in some Otrai, and she quickly gained a substantial following. Naturally, most Otrai viewed her teachings as scandalous; in -1211, she and her followers withdrew into the hostile badlands. Despite their exile, the sect slowly grew in numbers, both from new disciples and natural growth. This growth slowed with Keth's death in -1184, but the sect gradually grew into a powerful theocracy dominating the badlands.

In -1114, the Kai-leak exploded out of the badlands and embarked on a campaign to unify their world. The resulting "war" was remarkably bloodless, with probably less than 100 lives lost in total. By -1113, Otrai was controlled by the Kai-leak theocracy.

The Kai-leak Empire was an extremely traumatic experience for the Otrai. Never before had they experienced a religion that attempted to dominate others. Even the relatively benign rule of the Kai-leak created deep resentment. In -1084, dissidents seized on the death of the current Kai-leak leader and launched a general uprising. Although the subsequent rebellion resulted in fewer than 1,000 deaths, it represented a bloodbath to the Otrai. Still, it was successful; the Kai-leak Empire was broken and the sect was driven back to the inhospitable badlands, where it has remained since.

Many mainstream Otrai still despise and fear the Kai-leak, seeing them as violent and expansionistic. In truth, some Kai-leak still dream of re-establishing the Empire, but most are content to quietly live apart in the badlands while dedicating their lives to their religion. Violence is no more a part of the Kai-leak way of life than it is of any other Otrai culture. Still the possibility remains that, one day, the Kai-leak may again seek to bring their particular version of Otrai culture to their coastal cousins.

TRALLE

Tralle is a fundamental component in all Otrai beliefs. The word *tralle* is an Otrai noun with uncertain origins. It is usually translated as "the unnatural." Outsiders often assume that the concept is one side of yet another Otrai duality, paired with the concept of "the natural." This is a serious mistake, one that can easily cost the unwary their lives.

Tralle is the concept of something that cannot be. It is that which prevents the perfection of the natural world. The Otrai view it as an abomination to be removed at all costs. As such, it stands as the one exception to the race's generally peaceful nature. If a person knowingly commits an act that furthers or expands the *Tralle*, he becomes part of the *Tralle* and must be killed. The Otrai do not see this as violating their belief in nonviolence. When someone becomes part of the *Tralle* they are no longer alive; killing them is not only a religious duty, but also the greatest kindness that can be done for the unfortunate's soul. It is important to note that a person can never be *Tralle* simply for a trait that is intrinsic to him – he can only become *Tralle* as a result of his actions.

While all Otrai beliefs include the concept of *Tralle* and accept that it involves defiling nature in some way, there is no commonly accepted definition as to what is and is not *Tralle*. This presents serious danger to the ill-informed foreigner traveling among the Otrai. Behavior that one faith may see as merely distasteful, another may regard as *Tralle*. It is relatively easy to make a simple mistake that will result in being branded as *Tralle*, after which the offender's life is forfeit. Fortunately, even the most hard-line Otrai religion has only a handful of offenses that can result in this fate, and the Otrai go to great lengths to warn those who seem likely to offend. It remains extremely wise to study any Otrai religion

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The Otrai see little need for organized forms of government. They prefer to grant authority only to those with whom they are in direct contact. They keep to simple clan structures based around faith and family. When more complex forms of administration have proven necessary (for example, in the few large towns on Otrai) they normally use a council of clan elders chosen for their experience.

The Otrai choose not to participate in any interstellar state, seeing them as superfluous and potentially dangerous. For matters truly affecting their entire world, a Grand Conclave may be called. A Grand Conclave consists of the senior member of every faith and clan. It reaches its decisions by consensus after lengthy deliberation. While those decisions have no formal status, they have considerable force of tradition behind them; it would be an extremely bold clan leader who ignored them.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

The Otrai prefer to avoid relying on advanced technology. Otrai technology has remained at early-industrial levels for millennia, and they show no great interest in advancing it. However, they do not blindly reject technology. They are aware that it can bring great benefits when properly used. For them, technology must supplement and enhance the natural environment, rather than dominating or replacing it.

Of course, the Otrai race would not even exist without the highly advanced genetic technologies developed by the Terrans during the Interstellar Wars. The Otrai themselves are quite aware of this apparent dichotomy and generally avoid discussing it. Some Otrai are disturbed by their origins, regarding it as a kind of "original sin" which needs to be atoned for in some way.

The Otrai have little interaction with the universe outside their world and generate comparatively little trade. Their agrarian culture and low technological base limits the opportunities for trade in industrial products. Some Otrai manufactured goods do find markets on worlds with a similar technological base, where they are well regarded for their attention to environmental concerns. However, the bulk of Otrai trade is in the form of agricultural and other primary products.

OTRAI (0329, GLIMMERDRIFT REACHES SECTOR)

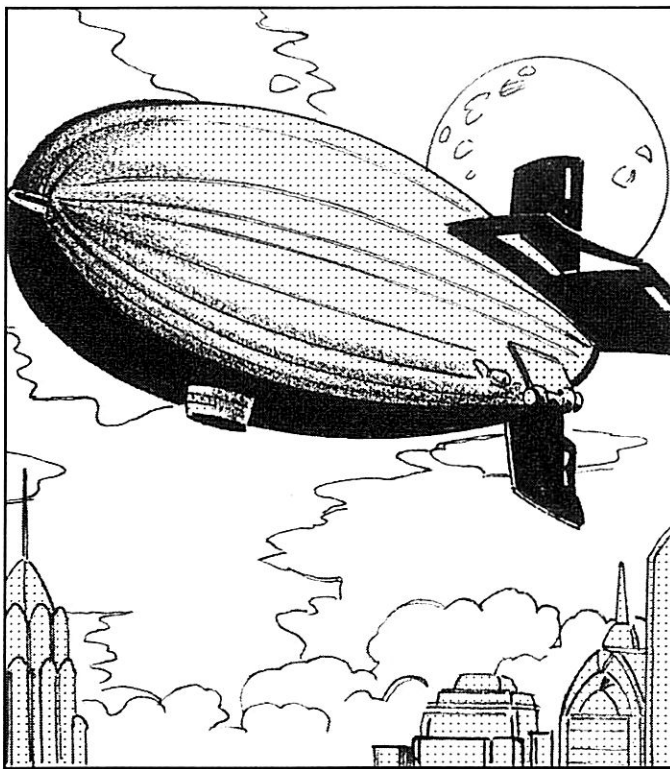
Starport: Class III.

Diameter: 8,160 miles (13,100 km). *Gravity:* 1.12 G. *Atmosphere:* Standard oxygen-nitrogen, tainted with organic poisons. *Surface Water:* 78%. *Climate:* Earth-normal. *Population:* 230 million. *Government:* Clan/Tribal. *Control Rating:* 2. *TL:* 7. *Gas Giants:* 3. *WTN:* 4.5. *Trade Classifications:* None.

Otrai orbits a solitary F5 V star at a distance of 1.55 AU. It has a sidereal day of 18.02 standard hours and completes one orbit every 617.17 standard days (823.23 local days).

With an average temperature of 74°, the world is significantly warmer than the Terran norm, but still comfortably within the habitable range. The planet's atmosphere is tainted by a number of organic poisons. The exact cause of the taint is unknown (and in fact has never been extensively studied), but it is believed to be related to the unusual biochemical basis of life on the world. The Otrai have been genetically engineered to deal with the taint, but most Humans would find exposure to the atmosphere to be fatal within a matter of minutes.

Otrai is currently in a "supercontinent" phase, with most of its landmass concentrated in a single continent straddling the equator. The interior of this supercontinent is a harsh, inhospitable desert. Human habitation is confined to the fertile coastal rim, with limited settlement of the badlands between that and the interior desert.



OTRAI CHARACTERS

Otrai appear to be mainstream (Solomani) Humans. Their height and weight are normal for their ST.

OTRAI RACIAL TEMPLATE

-28 POINTS

Advantages: Filter Lungs [5]; Resistant to Poison [5].

Disadvantages: Intolerance (*Tralle*) [-5]; Pacifism (Cannot Kill; Limitation: Only applies to non-*Tralle*, -10%) [-13]; Primitive (-3 TLs) [-15]; Unusual Biochemistry [-5].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Code of Honor see p. B31

Many Otrai follow a strict code of honor in keeping with their personal religious beliefs. Otrai paladins (p. 125) have a specific Code of Honor when going into battle against *Tralle*: bystanders are totally innocent and may not be harmed; a *Tralle* individual's bodyguards may be harmed but not killed; only the *Tralle* may be killed, and even that killing must be merciful.

Disciplines of Faith see p. C189

Particularly devout Otrai may have some version of this disadvantage. Otrai religions are diverse enough that almost any of the specific examples given in *Compendium I* are possible.

Filter Lungs see p. C156

The Otrai respiratory system is very good at filtering out irritants and poisons from the air.

Intolerance see p. B34

Otrai are violently intolerant of those behaviors they consider *Tralle*, and will behave aggressively toward people who mark themselves as *Tralle* by exhibiting those behaviors.

Pacifism see p. B35

Otrai pacifism is identical to that described in the *Basic Set*, with one very important exception: Otrai pacifism does not apply to those who are considered *Tralle*. Not only can these people be *harmed*, they must be *killed*. The Otrai have no problems with this apparent contradiction; those who are *Tralle* are not considered truly alive and therefore can be killed with impunity. This exception is reflected by the accessibility limitation on their Pacifism.

Some Otrai have Pacifism (Total Nonviolence; Limitation: Only applies to non-*Tralle*, -10%) [-27]. This reduces the template cost to -42 points.

Primitive see p. B26

The Otrai rarely leave their homeworld, and normally have access only to TL7 technology. They learn all their skills at this level.

Resistant to Poison see p. C129

Otrai biochemistry is resistant to organic toxins like those often found on their homeworld.

Unusual Biochemistry see p. C106

Otrai biochemistry has diverged from the Human norm due to the need to deal with the poisons found in their natural environment. They do not react as expected to most drugs.

Taboo Traits

Otrai cannot have Military Rank. They do not suffer from Berserk, Bloodlust, or Sadism.



CHARACTER TEMPLATES

The following templates represent those Otrai most likely to be met off world. On Otrai itself, these types of characters would be rare, being supplemented by those character types one would normally expect to find in any low-tech agrarian society.

Guru

75 points

Some Otrai are compelled to leave their world to spread the word of their faith to the universe. These individuals are known as Gurus.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 30 points chosen from Ally (Follower) [Varies]; Charisma [5/level]; Clerical Investment [5/level]; Composed [5]; Cultural Adaptability [25]; Favor [Varies]; Imperturbable [10]; Language Talent [2/level]; Pious [5]; Reputation [Varies]; Sanctity [5]; Sensitive [5]; Strong Will [4/level]; and Voice [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -30 points chosen from Age [-3/year]; Charitable [-15]; Delusion (The universe wants to be converted) [-5/-10]; Dependent (Follower) [Varies]; Disciplines of Faith [Varies]; Duty [Varies];

Fanaticism [-15]; Honesty [-10]; Obsession (I must convert all I meet) [-15]; Odious Personal Habit (Preaching) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Poverty [Varies]; Reputation [Varies]; Selfless [-10]; Sense of Duty (To faith) [-15]; Truthfulness [-5]; and Vow [Varies].

Primary Skills: Bard (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Theology (M/H) IQ+4 [12]-16.

Secondary Skills: Carousing (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; Diplomacy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Performance/Ritual (Conversion) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Performance/Ritual (Sanctify Ground) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Politics (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Psychology (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Teaching (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

Background Skills: A total of 11 points in Judo, Karate, or Staff (all P/H); Climbing or Riding (both P/A); Fishing (P/E); Body Control or Linguistics (both M/VH); Archaeology, Autohypnosis, Body language, Ecology, History, or Naturalist (all M/H); Acting, Administration, Animal Handling, or Survival (any) (all M/A); Area Knowledge (any) (M/E); or any Language skill.

Customization Notes: In addition to the listed skills, Gurus should have Performance/Ritual skill with least one of the following specializations: Bless, Funeral, or Wedding. Gurus seek to convert others through persuasion and argument, and should have a high level of social skills. Most Gurus are aware that the universe is not always a friendly place, and may have practiced various forms of self-defense.

Paladin

90 points

Paladins are Otrai who have dedicated their lives to the destruction of *Tralle*. Often portrayed by the popular media as heartless killers, they in fact seek to avoid harming those who have not transgressed against their faith. They are most commonly associated with the Kai-leak (p. 122), but can be found in a number of Otrai faiths.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: A total of 30 points chosen from Acute Hearing [2/level]; Acute Taste and Smell [2/level]; Acute Vision [2/level]; Alertness [5/level]; Alternate Identity [15]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Danger Sense [15]; Intuition [15]; Patron (Religion) (9 or less) [10]; Single-Minded [5]; and Strong Will [4/level].

Disadvantages: Vow (Destroy all *Tralle*) [-15]; plus a total of -25 points chosen from Code of Honor (Otrai Paladin) [-10]; Disciplines of Faith [Varies]; Enemy (Target) [Varies]; Fanaticism [-15]; Honesty [-10]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Reputation [Varies]; and Stubbornness [-5].

Primary Skills: Poison (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14.

Secondary Skills: Area Knowledge (any) (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Judo (P/H) DX-1 [2]-11; Karate (P/H) DX-1 [2]-11; Knife (P/E) DX [1]-12; Knife Throwing (P/E) DX [1]-12; Stealth (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11; one of Detect Lies (M/H),

Adventure Seed: Do This to Remember Me

The Otrai sect known as *Mie-Yonal* teaches that in order to atone for the "original sin" of their genetic engineering, its members must travel among nonbelievers and show them the "light" by engaging in charitable works. Recently a Mie-Yonal Guru (Glagod Michen) died on such a pilgrimage, and the sect would like to ensure that his remains receive proper disposal. Unfortunately, Michen died on a world that the sect now considers unclean; it is now *Tralle* for any believer to set foot on the world.

The party is approached by a group of Mie-Yonal and offered a standard mercenary ticket to travel to the world and conduct a proper burial (the Mie-Yonal require their members to be buried where they die). The Mie-Yonal offer a success-only contract for Cr5,000 per party member plus expenses. They insist that the ceremony be recorded and provide detailed instructions on the ritual required (this should be relatively simple, but the GM may elect to inject a few potential difficulties).

Unfortunately, the world on which Michen died is home to an intolerant faith which considered his teachings anathema and arranged for his murder (this is the reason why the world is now considered unclean by the Mie-Yonal). The world is not a theocracy, but the religion in question is very influential and the government does not want further provocations. If the planetary government is approached, it blankly refuses to allow the burial on-world and demands that the party leave immediately.

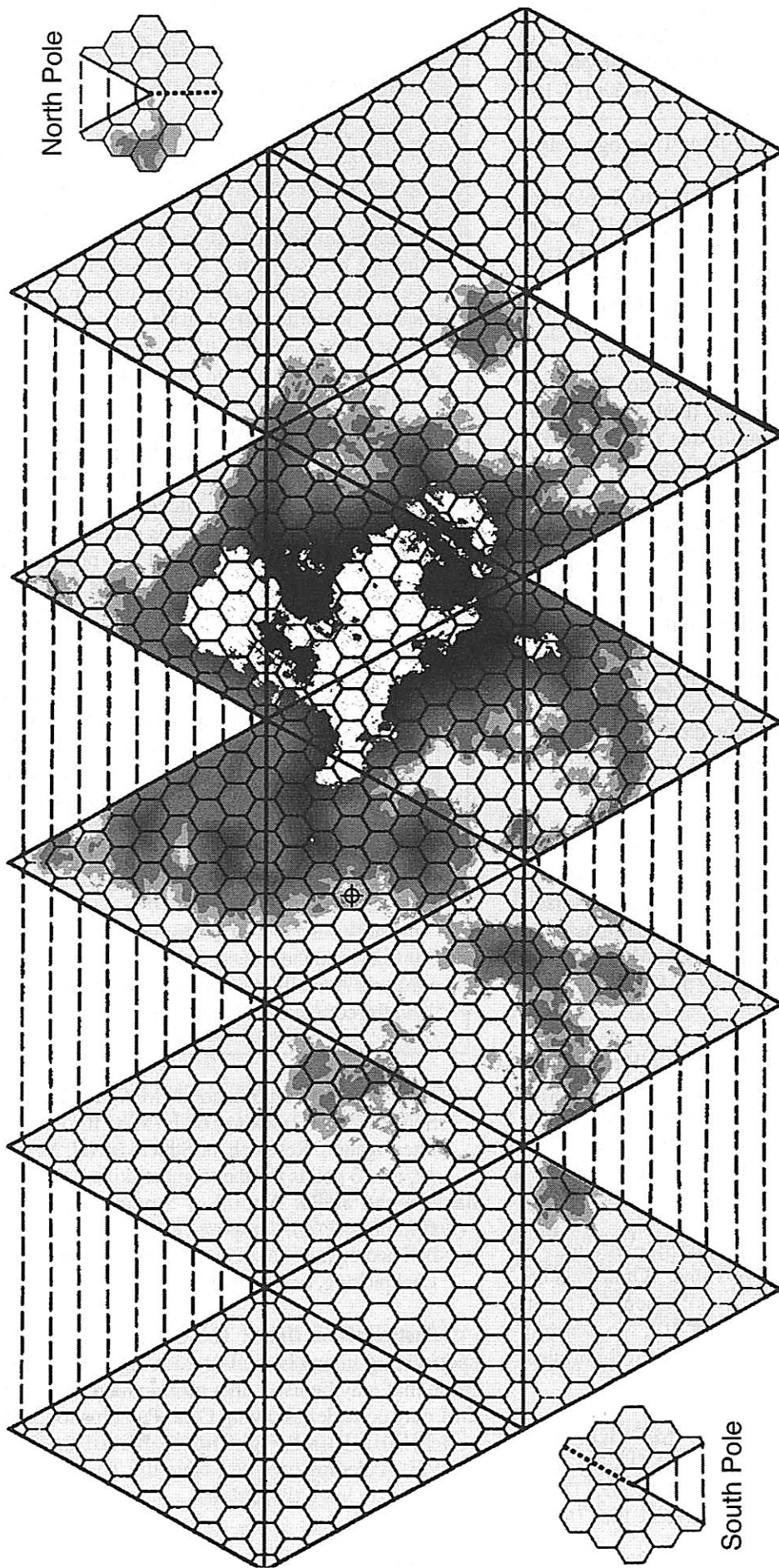
Michen is currently entombed in a nonbelievers' cemetery, and the location of his remains is not hard to establish. Actually disinterring his remains and giving them the correct burial, however, will prove difficult.

IQ-2 [1]-10, or Intimidation (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; one of Shadowing or Tracking, both (MA) IQ-1 [1]-11; two of Interrogation, Research, or Streetwise (all M/A) at IQ [2]-12; plus 3 points in other combat skills.

Background Skills: A total of 5 points in Escape (P/H); Climbing (P/A); Jumping (P/E); Herbalist, Psychology, or Theology, all (M/H); or Disguise, Fast-Talk, Holdout, Lockpicking, or Survival (any), all (M/A).

Customization Notes: The Otrai Paladin is an assassin specializing in precision. His faith dictates the level of violence that may be used. In a more-cinematic campaign, the GM may consider allowing Otrai Paladins to learn the Esoteric skills Blind Fighting or Blinding Touch, both (M/VH). Paladins need not have the Trained By A Master advantage to learn these skills.

Otrai



Icy/Barren Hilly/Rough Plain/Steppe Starport 1 hex = 569.5 miles
 Ocean Mountain/Volcanic Major City

Starport: Class III

Diameter: 8,157 miles (13,051 km)

Atmosphere: Tainted Oxygen-Nitrogen

Surface Water: 78%

Population: 231 million

Government: Clan/Tribal

Control Rating: 2

TL: 7

WTN: 4.5

Trade Classifications: None

KEY

⊕ Starport

Syleans

Dozens of Human minor races came under Vilani domination during the First Imperium. In many cases, these minor races were assimilated into Vilani society. Such races lost their distinctive identity, and have since vanished into the general population of the Imperium.

One race which narrowly avoided this fate was native to Sylea, in what is now the Core sector. The Syleans were in their Iron Age when first contacted by the Vilani. Conquest soon followed, and the race was subject to Vilani rule for thousands of years. Only an unlikely combination of historical accidents permitted some Syleans to retain an independent civilization. When Sylea became the capital of the Sylean Confederation (and later the Third Imperium itself), the native Sylean culture became uniquely influential. Today, pure-blooded Syleans still survive, and have influence on Imperial affairs out of proportion with their numbers.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Syleans are an “orphan” branch of Humaniti. Evidence indicates that the original Sylean population was simply abandoned after being transplanted from Terra during the Ancient era. There are few signs of Ancient presence or activity in the Sylean system, so the reasons for the transplant to Sylea are even more obscure than usual.

Left to themselves, the Syleans developed along unexceptional lines. By -12,500 there were dozens of agricultural communities in the Bren Tan Pem region, a set of rich river valleys which archaeologists often call “Sylea’s Fertile Crescent.” Bronze-working, city-states, and the first territorial empires followed.

“The reason for Human presence on Sylea remains a mystery to this day. Like many other worlds, the Syleans were apparently abandoned by the Ancients with no attempt to provide a support structure or assist the relocatees to adapt to local conditions. On other worlds, the discovery that they were ‘orphans’ would have led to a racial inferiority complex, but the Syleans have avoided this.”

*– Professor Daffyd Zhugasvilli,
Comparative Sophontology lecture,
University of Sylea*

VILANI CONTACT

The first Vilani scouts surveyed Sylea about -9100, during the first wave of Vilani exploration of the Core sector. They found the planet to be quite attractive – hospitable, rich in natural resources, located on a major jump-1 main, and inhabited only by primitives. On the other hand, many other equally interesting worlds existed closer to Vland. For over a thousand years, Vilani merchants made only sporadic visits to Sylea, trading with the most advanced Sylean city-states.

At this point, Sylea was of almost no importance to Vland, but the converse was not true. The occasional Vilani contact had a drastic effect on Sylean culture, especially in the Tas Var Ken culture-district.

Tas Var Ken was an area of mountain valleys, rough sea-coasts, and chains of small islands, a coastal outlier of the vast mountain chain called *Mer Ren Thyl Len* or “Spine of the World.” It was some distance from the original cradles of Sylean civilization, but by -9000 it had become semi-civilized in its own right through trade with the older cultures. The Tas Var Ken societies cultivated several crop plants which were not available elsewhere on Sylea, and which they already exported to the Bren Tan Pem region. Soon, Vilani merchants began trading directly in Tas Var Ken, providing metal tools and small high-technology items in exchange for wines and plant oils.

For the Tas Var Ken, the *ideas* brought by the Vilani were more important than the trade goods. Within a century, the region was enjoying a tremendous surge of cultural growth and technological progress. The Tas Var Ken were the first Syleans to invent systematic empirical science, sophisticated philosophy, and a limited form of democracy. They were also the first to forge iron and the first to venture directly across the oceans instead of working laboriously around the coasts.

At first, Tas Var Ken civilization was far from unified. Hundreds of city-states were involved in the culture’s advancement, many of them quite small. These polities bickered over territory, trade routes, and petty issues of prestige. However, by -8500 Tas Var Ken was unified under a single empire centered on the major city of Ton Sarn. This Sarnese Empire used advanced technology and sophisticated military tactics to conquer a vast area, spreading across 2,000 miles of Sylea’s surface and including the ancient civilizations of Bren Tan Pem.

VILANI COLONIZATION

The Sarnese Empire continued to trade with the Vilani for centuries. Indeed, the Empire was regarded with unusual favor by the Vilani merchants who came to Sylea. At one point the Vilani bureau Sharurshid signed a treaty with the Sarnese kings, agreeing to sell limited quantities of TL5 weaponry in exchange for large-scale trade in Sylean food and luxury products. Rifles and handguns helped the Empire consolidate its territory, and proved likely to set off yet another round of conquest.

Unfortunately, at this point Sylea fell victim to a shift in Vilani politics. Sylea's galactic region was within Sharurshid's sphere of influence. However, about -8150 the rival bureau Naasirka won the right to develop a region of space to trailing and coreward of Sylea, near Antares on the far side of Sharurshid territory. As part of the agreement, Naasirka won the right to establish bases and colonies in a corridor stretching completely across Sharurshid's region. Sylea was one of the worlds chosen for a Naasirka presence. Although the plan would take centuries to implement in full, Sylea was already doomed to an onslaught from space.

Sharurshid's withdrawal from Sylea began about -8050. The Sarnese Empire was not mortally injured by the loss of Vilani trade, but it did hasten a process of decline that had already been under way for over a century. As a result, the Empire was politically fractured and weak when the first Naasirka colonists arrived about -8000. The Vilani invaders took advantage of Sarnese disunity, turning factions against one another in a civil war. Before long, major cities and whole provinces were coming under direct Vilani rule, backed by devastating TL9 armament.

The fall of the Sarnese Empire began centuries of bloody retreat for the native Syleans. Many of them resisted, especially in the old Sarnese territories, but these "rebels" were either exterminated or driven into the most remote mountain districts of Mer Ren Thyl Len. Sylean populations elsewhere on the planet, less technologically advanced to begin with, were simply bludgeoned into submission as soon as the Vilani chose to make the effort. By -7500 there was no significant resistance on Sylea.

Sylea prospered under Vilani rule, although it never reached the anticipated level of importance as a Naasirka base. Most native Syleans assimilated into Vilani society, marrying into the lower castes and accepting the invaders' customs. Over time, these Syleans became indistinguishable from ordinary Vilani, and merged into the common population of the Imperium.

THE SYLEAN RESERVATION

Meanwhile, a few Syleans managed to keep their independence. In remote areas of the planet, scattered tribes survived by avoiding any outside contact. Most of these holdouts were primitive and desperately poor. Only in the

mountain fastness of Mer Ren Thyl Len was there a remnant of Sylean civilization.

The original population of Mer Ren Thyl Len had been influenced by the old Tas Var Ken culture, although in the heyday of the Sarnese Empire the mountaineers were regarded as hopelessly crude and barbaric. During the fall of the Empire, a few Tas Var Ken and other imperial citizens fled into the mountains, seeking shelter from the Vilani invasion. These refugees brought a veneer of sophisticated culture to the high mountain valleys, preserving traditions from the Sarnese Empire and earlier Sylean civilizations.

As the centuries passed, the highlanders reached a tentative peace with the Vilani. There was nothing in the high mountains that the Vilani wanted, no strategic locations or (it was believed) valuable resources. So long as the highlanders kept the peace, the Vilani chose to leave them alone. About -6900 the Mer Ren Thyl Len range was officially set aside as a "reservation" for unassimilated Syleans.



Conditions on the reservation were always austere, and there was no high-technology manufacture above the cottage-industry level. Still, the reservation Syleans had sporadic access to offworld technology and a trickle of news from the galaxy as a whole. There was occasional migration across the reservation border, as reservation Syleans went out to find work in the Vilani world or returned with high-technology skills.

On the reservation, Sylean culture became clannish and insular. Reservation Syleans were almost obsessively proud of their history of independence. They almost never married outsiders, refusing to mingle their blood even with Vilani-assimilated Syleans.

Over time, the reservation Syleans turned inward and became very conservative. They survived in their mountain fastnesses, barely noticed by interstellar civilization, for over 4,000 years.

SOLOMANI CONTACT

The end of Vilani rule on Sylea was quite sudden. As of -2218, the Naasirka authorities on Sylea were still in charge, managing the planet much as they had for millennia. Suddenly, word came that the Imperium had surrendered to an upstart Human race from far to rimward. On the heels of that news, a small foreign detachment arrived – a squadron of escort ships and a single lift infantry regiment. The Terrans had come to Sylea.

At the time, the population of Sylea was about a billion Humans. Of these, 95% were Vilani or thoroughly assimilated Syleans. Only about 50 million inhabitants could be clearly identified as being of Sylean ancestry, and of those only about 5 million lived in the Mer Ren Thyl Len reservation. At first, the new Solomani administrators saw no reason to treat Sylea as anything but another conquered Vilani world. Before long, however, they uncovered the existence of the distinctive reservation culture. The belated discovery that they had “liberated” an independent Sylean civilization proved a useful bit of propaganda.

Soon, the Syleans were guaranteed cultural autonomy, the right to practice their own religions and customs anywhere on Sylea. The Solomani deliberately invited reservation Syleans to take part in the administration of the planet. Reservation Syleans were offered high-technology education, to be followed by positions in the planetary bureaucracy and in Solomani-run business enterprises. Not many Syleans accepted the offer, trusting the Solomani no more than they had trusted the Vilani. The Mer Ren Thyl Len region remained isolated and rather backward under the Rule of Man.

THE LONG NIGHT

It was the slow decline of the Rule of Man that finally broke the long isolation of the Sylean reservation.

By about -1900, the Rule of Man was fragmenting as central authority found it impossible to maintain control over its far-flung territories. One of the Emperors of the time created the Sylean Protectorate as a semi-independent state within the Rule of Man. Governor Frances Repzinski, a Solomani administrator with Sylean ancestry, was named the first High Protector of Sylea. The office carried authority over about 300 worlds in the vicinity of Sylea, and made Repzinski one of the most powerful officials of the Rule of Man.

While much of the Imperium was suffering increasing chaos and depression, the designation of Sylea as a regional capital actually improved conditions there. It also triggered an outburst of Sylean nationalism. Citizens with Sylean ancestry began to take an interest in their world's pre-Vilani history. The reservation Syleans enjoyed a surge of popularity and interest, as the mainstream population began to lionize their long struggle for independence. This did not actually improve living conditions on the reservation, but it did encourage the reservation Syleans to come out and participate in the affairs of the Protectorate.



The Maar Ki Zon

Religion was a major component of the Sylean cultural revival. In -1866 scholars came across a nearly complete text of the *Maar Ki Zon*, or “Book of the Way,” a text which appeared to be related to a major religious sect of the late Sarnese Empire. Once it was translated into modern Sylean, it became wildly popular among both reservation Syleans and those outsiders who were promoting Sylean nationalism. Soon there was an organized religious movement on Sylea, following the precepts of the Book of the Way and called simply *Maar Zon*.

Ironically, the Maar Ki Zon may have been a forgery. Linguistic and archaeological evidence suggest that at least parts of it were indeed derived from late-Sarnese texts. On the other hand, many passages address moral and philosophical issues that would not have been important during the Sarnese era, but which were important under the conditions faced by reservation Syleans during the early Long Night. For example, the religious prohibitions against the concept of intellectual property (p. 131) seem unlikely for an Iron Age culture, but they make much more sense in the context of a culture that has been interacting with interstellar civilization for millennia.

In general, the book provided a surprisingly sound religious basis for renewed Sylean nationalism. Pious adherents to Maar Zon believe that this simply indicates the miraculous provenance of the book. Nonbelievers are more skeptical.

The Successors

It was about this time that the reservation Syleans began a concerted effort to reconstruct the planet's pre-Vilani culture. This effort concentrated on the late Sarnese Empire, the last great era of Sylean independence. Archaeologists examined the remains of Sarnese cities. Scholars gathered the few scraps that remained of late-Sarnese literature. Linguists reconstructed a Sarnese dialect called Old Sylean, and revived it as a language of scholarship. Artists struggled to

recover the conventions of Sarnese forms, especially in mosaics and sculpture.

Eventually, the reservation Syleans began to call themselves *Thar Ven*, or “Successors,” with the implication that they were the sole heirs of independent Sylean civilization. The Successors lived under an odd hybrid of reconstructed late-Sarnese culture, recent reservation-Sylean customs, and a legal code influenced by Solomani practice. Despite its partially artificial origin, Successor culture proved surprisingly durable and survives today.

Wealth on the Reservation

Over time, the reservation Syleans and their “Successor” culture became increasingly influential on Sylea. This trend came to a head about -1400, as Sylea began to feel the increasing economic pinch of the Long Night. The planet’s fusion power plants were breaking down, and replacements were becoming increasingly difficult. Eventually, the Sylean Protectorate (now shrunk to about four subsectors) invested in a careful search for alternative power sources, including fossil fuels and radioactives. It turned out that the planet had rich deposits of thorium and uranium – in the midst of the Mer Ren Thyl Len reservation.

After long negotiations, a bargain was reached. The radioactives would be mined by a consortium controlled jointly by the Solomani and Sylean parties. Proceeds from the sale of radioactives would go toward extensive economic development of the Mer Ren Thyl Len reservation, although the Successor ruling council would control that development so as not to wreck the reservation community. Meanwhile, Solomani industrialists would gain an almost complete monopoly over power generation and distribution worldwide, courtesy of a new network of fission power plants.

The new arrangement pulled the reservation Syleans out into the mainstream of Sylean society for good. The Successors became quite wealthy, and for the first time in millennia more citizens were trying to *enter* the reservation territory than to leave. As the Long Night passed, the Successors became an integral part of the upper class on their homeworld. There was even an increase in intermarriage between upper-class Syleans and Solomani, although a stubborn core of traditionalists continued to marry only among themselves.

SYLEA ASCENDANT

While the Syleans finally returned to a position of power and influence on their homeworld, the Long Night came in earnest. Sylea itself stabilized at TL9, retaining minimal starflight capability. Through the worst of the Long Night, it maintained trade links with about a dozen nearby worlds. This trade network was never firm enough to be considered a “pocket empire,” but Sylea did become a center of trade and political influence. Native Syleans took part in this effort, financing trade ventures and establishing their first small settlements offworld.

Over time, the Sylean trade sphere evolved into the Sylean Federation, which in turn acted as the kernel of the Third Imperium. As the Sylean government’s power grew, native Syleans retained their position of influence, seeking out opportunities throughout the Core sector and beyond. Although the Zhunastu family which established the Third Imperium had little Sylean ancestry, a number of native-Sylean leaders supported Cleon I and were rewarded with positions in the new Imperial framework.

SYLEANS TODAY

Today, it is very common for Imperial citizens to have some Sylean ancestry, especially in the Core sector. Most of these Sylean descendants have completely assimilated into

Imperial society. In most cases, it would take careful genealogy or a genetic assessment to prove Sylean ancestry.

A clear connection to the Sylean race is almost entirely restricted to members of the Successor community, which has retained its ancient folkways and continues to resist intermarriage with outsiders. There are about 2 billion Successors, over half of whom live on Sylea itself.

Away from Sylea, the Successors have established settlements of varying size on hundreds of other worlds. Successor communities are usually cohesive and wealthy, operating extensive industrial or commercial interests. They tend to support institutions of higher learning, which teach Sylean history and philosophy along with the other disciplines of modern Imperial civilization.

Successor communities can be found almost anywhere in the Imperium, although they are rare in the rimward provinces. A typical example of such a settlement is the community on Mora/Spinward Marches. It includes over a million Syleans, and is deeply involved in the planet’s mining and heavy industrial sectors. It also supports the Sylean University of Mora, a small but prestigious institution which counts many of the sector’s peers among its alumni.

In the last century or so, the Authentic Movement (see *Rim of Fire*, p. 60) has led many Imperial citizens to take an interest in ancient Sylean culture. Sylean Authenticists study Old Sylean, read Sarnese literature and Successor commentaries, and sometimes convert to the Maar Zon faith. This phenomenon is actively discouraged by the Successors themselves, many of whom resent being imitated by outsiders. Most Successor communities are very strict about the requirements for “conversion,” and insist on a sincere commitment before permitting Authenticists to associate closely with them.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Pure-blooded Syleans are biologically Human, members of a subspecies of *Homo sapiens*. They tend to be slightly taller and more massive than the average Solomani, well within the typical range for Humans who have adapted to moderate-gravity worlds.

The original Sylean population was apparently quite small, and vulnerable to genetic drift. A few traits rare in other Human races are common among pure-blooded Syleans. For example, over 60% of all Syleans are left-handed. Albinism is also quite common, and appears in almost 10% of the population. Syleans are otherwise quite unremarkable amid the variety of Human races.

Before Vilani contact, Syleans exhibited significant physical diversity. Today, the vast majority of pure-blooded Syleans come from a single physical type. They tend to have round heads with broad faces, wide-set eyes, long noses, and very square chins. Sylean skin coloring is quite pale, hair is usually dark brown or black, and eyes are usually dark brown, steel-gray, or violet. Male Syleans have moderate facial hair, and usually grow at least a mustache. The body is usually slender and wiry, with little excess body fat.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Almost all Syleans are fluent in Galanglic and use it as their primary language, but two major Sylean languages are still used today. Old Sylean is a language of scholarship and religious liturgy, and is almost never used under ordinary circumstances. Modern or "Low" Sylean is spoken by most pure-blooded Syleans who adhere to the Successor tradition. It has several dialects, all clearly related to Old Sylean but borrowing words from other languages (notably Vilani and Galanglic).

Sylean languages closely resemble ancient Terran languages such as Mandarin or Vietnamese. They are highly *isolating* languages, in which every word consists of a single syllable. Complex concepts are expressed by strings of words, in which the order of words is significant. Old and Modern Sylean are also *tonal* languages, in which the exact meaning of a word depends on the pitch in which it is spoken.

Syleans who have assimilated into Imperial culture tend to use Solomani naming conventions, and in fact many of them use given names and surnames derived from Vilani or from Terran languages. Syleans who follow the Successor tradition tend to use names derived from Modern Sylean. These names always consist of three words: a clan name, a family name, and a given name (in that order).

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Sylean psychology is well within the normal range for Humaniti. Syleans have always proven able to adapt smoothly to Solomani, Vilani, or mixed-Imperial cultures. The dominant Thar Ven culture is somewhat reactionary, but individual Syleans are not inherently conservative in outlook.

Before the arrival of the Vilani, Sylea exhibited considerable cultural diversity. Almost all of the pre-Vilani cultures were eradicated during the millennia of Vilani domination. The single significant exception was the Thar Ven or "Successor" tradition, which was reconstructed in the early Long Night. Thar Ven eventually became the dominant culture among

Intellectual Property

One of Maar Zon's more unusual features is its attitude toward economic activity. Unlike many Terran religions, Maar Zon does not forbid the loan of money or resources at interest, although the religious law codes limit the allowable *rate* of interest. On the other hand, Maar Zon specifically forbids the notion of "intellectual property." All ideas, whether technical or artistic, belong to the Creator and can't be claimed by any mere mortal. An innovator is under no obligation to share his ideas, but if others copy them he has no recourse under religious law.

Assuming that this provision of Maar Zon ethics actually derives from First Imperium times, it may be a reaction to the Vilani intellectual-property system. Vilani intellectual-property laws tended to concentrate social power in the hands of megacorporations, at the expense of the First Imperium's minor races.

Maar Zon's attitude toward intellectual property concepts remains a thorny issue today. Devout adherents of the religion cannot sell writing, art, or technical ideas in any form that will be copyrighted. Thar Ven communities therefore maintain nonprofit organizations (often supported by religious donations) that publish everything from genre fiction to software, placing all of this material in the public domain so that devout Syleans have an outlet for their work.

Meanwhile, corporations owned by devout Maar Zon adherents are sometimes at a disadvantage when competing with businesses that are permitted to hold patents and copyrights. Such businesses normally use trade secrecy and copy-protection technologies to protect their innovations. Many corporations based on Sylea use a similar strategy even if owned by non-Syleans. For example, Zhunastu Industries (the corporation which provided the first Emperors with their power base) made extensive use of trade secrecy, using elaborate technological solutions to defeat "reverse engineering" of its products.

Of course, since pure-blooded Syleans were influential in the Third Imperium from the beginning, they have had some influence on Imperial law and policy. While the Third Imperium recognizes intellectual property as a valid legal concept, it does not enforce it at the Imperial level. Indeed, the Ministry of Commerce tends to frown on local intellectual property regimes, if they are so strict as to hamper the free flow of interstellar trade.

Unlike many Terran religions, Maar Zon does not forbid the loan of money or resources at interest . . .

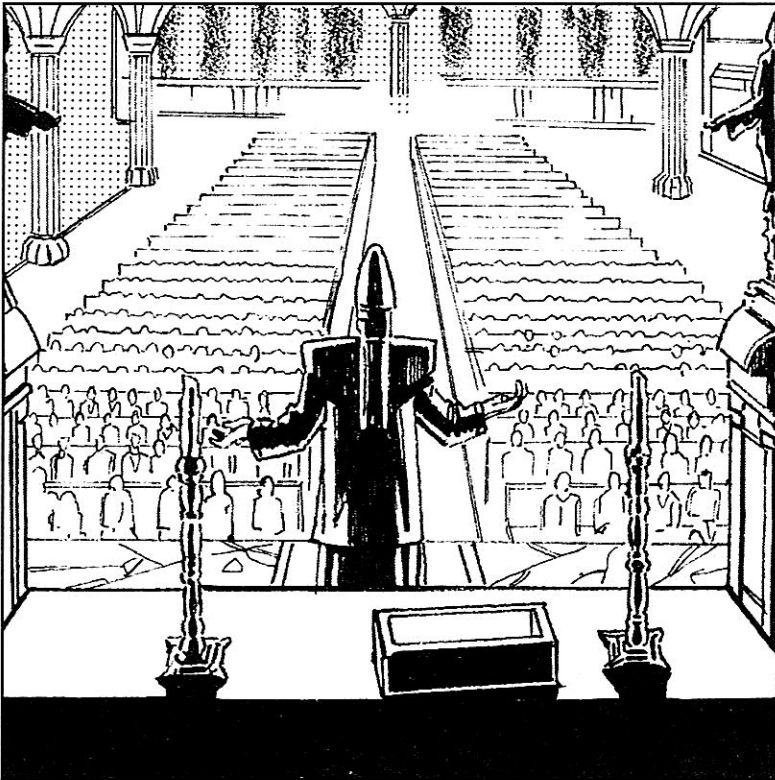
those who identify themselves as pure-blooded Syleans, and survives today.

Aside from a few nonreligious customs and artistic conventions, Thar Ven culture is dominated by the Maar Zon religion.

MAAR ZON

Maar Zon is a monotheistic religion which (according to legend) was first established on Sylea in the last centuries before the Vilani conquest. In Sylean, Maar Zon adherents are called *Lan Ki Zon* or "Followers of the Way." In Galanglic, they are usually called "Maarists," but that word is never used by members of the faith.

Maar Zon was allegedly based on the teachings of a single charismatic philosopher, although modern Maar Zon traditions never give that founder a name and there are no independent records of his existence. If the legends are true, Maar Zon appears to have been an attempt to synthesize several earlier schools of Sylean religious thought, while addressing the problems posed by the presence of the Vilani on Sylea.



According to Maar Zon, the universe was created by a supreme deity, but that being has since withdrawn from contact with its creation. It is up to Humans to discover the purpose behind the universe's creation, and further that purpose through their actions. Maar Zon does not describe that purpose, and indeed claims that Humans will never be able to discover it until they have attained a higher plane of consciousness. Maar Zon treats all Humans as potentially equal in spiritual terms (although there are many passages in Sylean scripture which refer to the Vilani as "given over to evil").

Maar Zon claims that Humans undergo reincarnation after death, but it concerns itself very little with the process of future reincarnation. Instead, it concerns itself with an ethical and productive life in the present. Maar Zon ethics are unexceptional, and strongly resemble those of many Terran

religions. Adherents are taught to be honest, truthful, hard-working, self-reliant, moderate in their pleasures, and charitable toward others.

Maar Zon has an extensive canon of holy writings. The core of this canon is the *Maar Ki Zon* (p. 129), a scripture that is comparable to the Christian Bible in length. Most Maarists read the *Book of the Way* cover-to-cover several times in the course of their lives. It has been translated into many languages, including Galanglic. Meanwhile, there are dozens of volumes of commentary on the *Book of the Way*, all of which are permitted to be written only in Old Sylean. These commentaries lay out the details of Maar Zon religious law and philosophy.

Maar Zon has no organized hierarchy of priests. The religion's authority figures are its *kel ten zon* or "masters of the way." Only those of pure Sylean descent (at least as far as can be proven) may become *kel ten zon*, but the only other obstacle is a grueling course of study. Candidates must be fluent in both the written and spoken forms of Old Sylean, and they must master the entire canon of Sylean sacred writings. Candidates for the office of *kel ten zon* must memorize the *Book of the Way* verbatim. They must also be intimately familiar with all of the supplementary volumes of commentary. As a result, every *kel ten zon* has a religious education roughly equivalent to a doctorate in another field of study.

Every Maar Zon community is led by a small number of *kel ten zon*. These individuals lead communal prayers and other rituals. They also administer the local *vaan tel shan* (literally, "together-teaching place"). The *vaan tel shan* is equivalent to a church or synagogue, a place where Maarists gather to study their religion or engage in sacred ritual. There is usually about one *vaan tel shan* for every 1,000 members of a Sylean community. Large communities may support large, cathedral-like *vaan tel shan* which can accommodate thousands of worshippers.

Devout Maarists must engage in brief ritual prayers every day. This is primarily regarded as a symbol of devotion and a form of religious meditation – there is no belief that the Creator hears or answers prayers. Prayers are usually said at home, although devotees are expected to come to the *vaan tel shan* every few days for communal prayer and symbolic ritual. Maarists also give a portion of their earnings to charity, usually through charitable organizations sponsored by the *vaan tel shan*.

Finally, an extensive list of religious prohibitions must be observed. There are no dietary restrictions as such, but alcohol and other intoxicants are prohibited. Sexual activity is restricted to married adults.

Most importantly, every Maarist is strictly limited in his display of wealth. His clothes, home, vehicles, and personal equipment must be plain and functional, and he may not own more possessions than he can personally use. This prohibition posed no problem during the era when Syleans were restricted to the *Mer Ren Thyl Len* reservation. In the modern Third Imperium, it is probably the most-evaded portion of Maar Zon religious law.

SOCIETY AND POLITICS

Syleans are a minority everywhere in the galaxy, including on their own homeworld. As such, they have little in the way of independent politics. The vast majority of Syleans are normal citizens of the Third Imperium. They participate normally in Imperial politics and in the diverse political systems of their worlds of residence.

Successor communities also have their own religious law and government. For this purpose the community is broken up into congregations, each associated with a single *vaan tel shan*. Each congregation is led by a small religious council, composed of one or more *kel ten zon*. The exact size of this council varies with the congregation, but it is always an odd number, so that decisions can be made by simple majority vote. Members of the council appoint their own successors, although it is expected that they will listen to the members of the congregation when making their choice. In some congregations, seats on the religious council are hereditary.

A congregation's religious council is responsible for advising its members on religious law. It has no power to *enforce* religious law, except by expelling members from the congregation. Syleans are free to choose their own congregation, and may "shop around" for one with congenial views on the interpretation of religious law. In rare cases, truly debauched individuals may be cast out of *every* congregation through a rite of excommunication. This cuts the excommunicate off from Sylean society altogether.

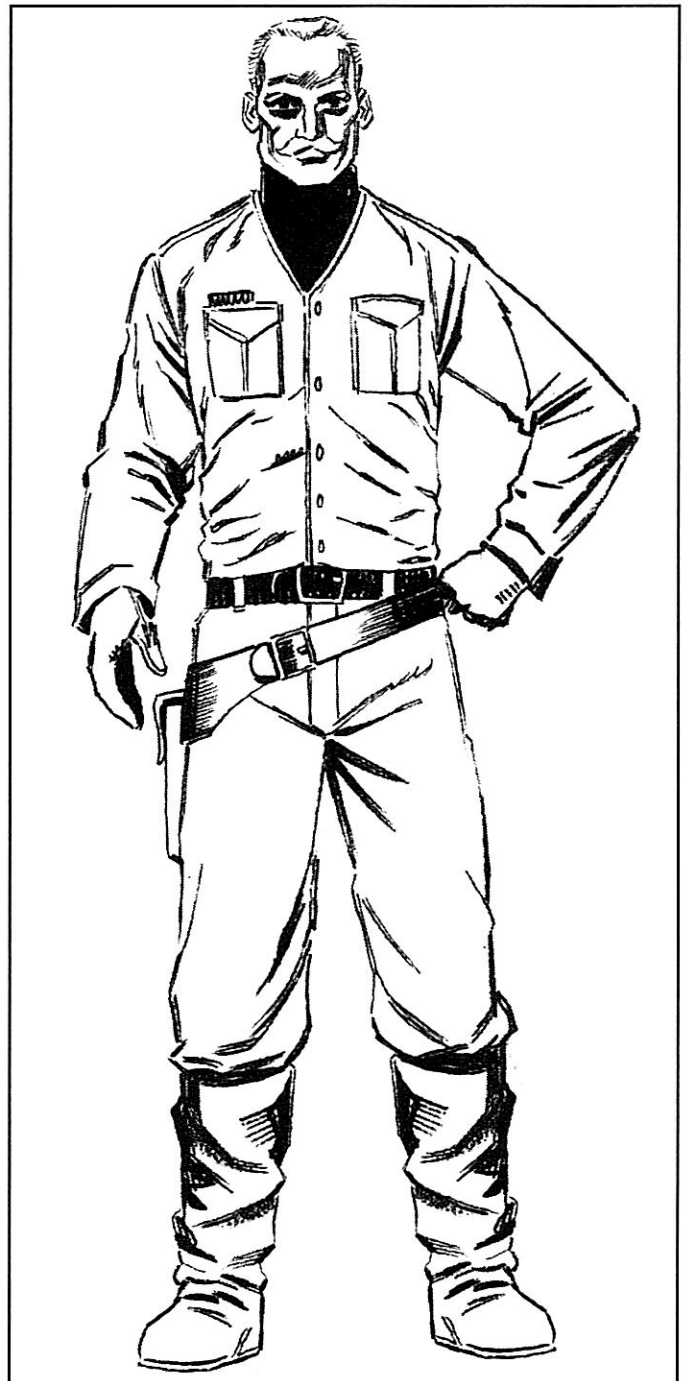
Syleans usually have no difficulty living under outsiders' legal systems. In particular, Imperial law is almost completely compatible with Maarist religious law, so Syleans are enthusiastic participants in the Imperial political system. Indeed, Syleans hold positions in the Imperial peerage out of proportion to their numbers.

Local legal codes are more likely to conflict with Sylean religious law, and this sometimes leads to social or political tension. Sylean marriage customs (which include polygamy and concubinage) are the most likely points of contention. Syleans also come into frequent conflict with strong intellectual-property laws, and are sometimes regarded as thieves or pirates in societies that have such laws.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Even Syleans of nearly pure ancestry who are part of the Successor culture are completely integrated into the Imperial economy. They buy, sell, trade, and use the same goods as other Imperial citizens.

Syleans are often thought of as unusually wealthy. There is some truth to this perception. Some Sylean family lines have accumulated large fortunes, often dating back to the foundation of the Third Imperium or even the radioactives strikes on the Mer Ren Thyl Len reservation. Successor cultural values may also be relevant. The Maar Zon faith encourages hard work and thrift, and raises few objections to the accumulation of money. Meanwhile, Syleans who fall on



very hard economic times tend to drift away from the Successor community – and if their misfortune lasts more than a generation or two, they usually marry outsiders and assimilate into the mainstream of Imperial culture. As a result, there is a social "selection effect" which keeps wealth among pure-blooded Syleans slightly above the Imperial average.

Several major Imperial corporations are partly or wholly owned by Syleans. Most of these are restricted to the Core sector or nearby regions. The notable exception is Geschichtkreis Sternschiffbau AG or "GSbAG," one of the Imperium's megacorporations. Although GSbAG claims to have been founded on Terra long before the Long Night, it currently includes substantial Sylean representation among its shareholders. About 10% of GSbAG stock is held directly or indirectly by Syleans.

CAPITAL/SYLEA (2118, CORE SECTOR)

Starport: Class V (Naval base, Scout way station).

Diameter: 4,720 miles (7,600 km). *Gravity:* 0.69 G.

Atmosphere: Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 63%. *Climate:* Earth-normal. *Population:* 36 billion (about 1.2 billion pure-blooded Syleans). *Government:* Bureaucracy. *Control Rating:* 5. *TL:* 12. *Gas Giants:* 5. *WTN:* 6.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi.

Capital (still called Sylea by a few traditionalists) is the central world of the Third Imperium: throne-world of the Emperor, site of the Imperial Moot, headquarters of all of the Imperial agencies and armed services, central office for hundreds of major Imperial megacorporations, and one of the primary cultural centers of Charted Space.

"I often wonder what would have become of Sylea had the Third Imperium never existed. Would it still be the capital of a (smaller) interstellar polity?"

*– Smyrna Masterson,
Three Decades that
Changed the Galaxy*

Capital is small but quite dense, with a large nickel-iron core. Millions of years ago, the planet went through a period of fierce volcanism and rapid mountain-building activity. That violent period is long since over, but it has left the planet with an unusually dense atmosphere and massive mountain chains. The combination of dense atmosphere and relatively low surface gravity means that the air remains comfortably breathable even on very high mountain slopes and plateaus. On Capital, there are small towns and agricultural settlements over three miles above sea level.

Capital has a rich native ecosystem, with animal life forms up to the presentient level. The Ancients do not appear to have imported any Terran species other than Humaniti, although many foreign life forms have been imported in the 9,000 years since first Vilani contact. Capital's native life is compatible with Human biochemistry. Most native foods are edible for a wide variety of Humans, although offworlders are likely to experience mild digestive upset if they are careless with Sylean delicacies. Pure-blooded Syleans have evolved to fit the local biochemistry and have no such difficulty.

SYLEAN CHARACTERS

Pure-blooded Syleans are somewhat taller and more massive than the Human norm. For a male Sylean who grew up in Capital's 0.69 G environment, add 14 inches to the normal height and 50 pounds to the normal weight for his ST. For a female Sylean, add 10 inches and 35 pounds to the normal results for her ST.

SYLEAN RACIAL TEMPLATE -15 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST -1 [-10].

Disadvantages: Intolerance (Vilani) [-5].

NOTES ON ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Albinism *see p. B27*

About 10% of the pure-blooded Sylean population is albino. This proportion is actually higher among upper-class Syleans, who consider albinism to be attractive (possibly as a status symbol, indicating that the individual does not have to work outdoors).

Clerical Investment *see p. B19*

Being a *kel ten zon* is a 5-point advantage. It grants a +1 reaction from Maarists and those who respect the Maar Zon faith.

Disciplines of Faith *see p. C189*

A true devotee of the Maar Zon religion will follow a strict religious code. He will set aside a period every day for prayer, and will visit the *vaan tel shan* regularly. He will observe religious restrictions on sexual activity and the use of intoxicants. He will give at least 10% of his income to religious charities. Most importantly, he will avoid any overt display of affluence, no matter how wealthy he actually is. A devout Maarist receives a +1 on all reactions; even non-Maarists respect his self-discipline. These Disciplines of Faith are worth -5 points.

Note that a *kel ten zon* is not expected to observe harsher restrictions. Indeed, not all *kel ten zon* even qualify for the above Disciplines of Faith. The office requires knowledge and wisdom, not unusual devotion.

Intolerance *see p. B34*

Distaste for Vilani individuals and Vilani culture is almost universal among pure-blooded Syleans. Humans of mixed ancestry are less likely to meet this prejudice, as are Imperial nobles of Vilani background.

Status *see p. B18*

Syleans use the same system of Status as other Imperial citizens (p. GT83). The "Sylean nobleman" is a staple of Imperial adventure fiction, so it would be entirely appropriate for any Sylean character to have above-average Status.

Wealth *see p. B16*

Syleans are, on average, slightly more affluent than the Imperial average. It would be appropriate for any Sylean to have at least Comfortable wealth. Meanwhile, pure-blooded Syleans are significantly less likely to be poverty-stricken. Sylean characters with less than Struggling should be rare.

Yileans

The Yileans are native to Gashikan, a world beyond the coreward borders of the Imperium. They are founders of the Empire of Gashikan, which occupies parts of the Gashikan, Trenchans, and Mendan sectors. They are notable for being one of the most influential Human minor races outside Imperial space, and for their implacable hostility to the Vargr who surround them. Interbreeding with Solomani and Vilani settlers means that few purebred Yileans remain. Today, the term Yilean is most commonly used to refer to a citizen of the Third Empire of Gashikan, or occasionally a resident of the world of Gashikan.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Aside from a few isolated island arcs, the entire land area of Gashikan is part of a single supercontinent. By the time the Yileans reached TL3, they had created a single unified planetary state known as *the Gashikan*. Although this state occasionally collapsed due to rebellion or natural disaster, it was always rebuilt. Depending upon the era, the Gashikan was ruled by hereditary monarchs, charismatic leaders, or occasionally councils of wealthy oligarchs. The details changed, but the basic pattern of life remained the same. Over the millennia, most Yileans came to consider the concept of multiple governments with horror, a state little better than anarchy.

By about -4400, Gashikan had attained TL4. At this point, Vilani merchant explorers arrived and contacted the Yileans. Integration into the Vilani political system followed quickly. While some Yileans were distressed by the loss of self-government, the traditional institutions of Gashikan easily fit into the Vilani regime. In any case, many Yileans considered it sensible to become part of a still larger, unified interstellar state. Within 200 years, Gashikan had been transformed into a productive Vilani-run world at TL9.

THE VARGR INTRUSIONS

The majority of Yileans greeted the collapse of the Ziru Sirka with dismay and horror. During the chaos of the Rule of Man and the desolation of the Long Night, the people of Gashikan attempted to rebuild their own portion of the vanished empire and protect their worlds from invasion and collapse.

Once the Ziru Sirka fell, Vargr raiders began attacking the now-undefended worlds of the Amdukan and Gashikan sectors. In response to this threat, the Yileans declared the formation of the Empire of Gashikan in -1784. They

increased naval production, strengthened anti-piracy patrols, and launched numerous attacks against the Vargr raiders. At first the Yileans were successful, but eventually the raiders banded together to mount a counterattack against the heart of the Gashikan Empire. In -1658, these raiders attacked Gashikan itself with nuclear missiles, looting and sacking the devastated world. In less than a year, 400 million Yileans died and the Empire of Gashikan collapsed.

Since the Vargr attack on Gashikan, the majority of Yileans have harbored a deep hatred of all Vargr. To Yileans, Vargr represent the personification of chaos, disruption, and anarchy.



THE LATER EMPIRES

In -1646 the Yileans founded the Second Empire of Gashikan. The leaders of this empire regarded Vargr as a plague, to be destroyed by any means necessary. The Second Empire frequently used biological weapons, creating Vargr-specific plagues to wipe out entire populations. Although the Second Empire failed to destroy the Vargr species, it managed to remove all Vargr from Gashikan space by -1000.

The Second Empire's use of biological warfare is still remembered by many Vargr. Some Vargr worlds still have holidays to honor the millions who died during these Human-Vargr race wars. Meanwhile, after the conflict came to an end, the fervor of Yilean hatred of Vargr diminished. The majority of Vargr avoid all contact with the Empire of Gashikan, while the Yileans have been left without a readily available enemy.

The Second Empire of Gashikan collapsed in 1070, due to economic problems and a massive civil war. In 1078 the winning faction declared the formation of the Third Empire of Gashikan. This state is also known as the Trenchans Empire, since the winning faction was originally based in the Trenchans Sector.

The civil wars did serious damage to the imperial economy. Many border worlds have declined membership in the Trenchans Empire, and have since joined one of the more advanced, prosperous, and stable Human-Vargr states of the region. The Empire has not acquiesced in this situation, and border conflicts remain common.

PHYSIOLOGY AND APPEARANCE

Pure-blooded Yileans are relatively tall and quite thin. The average Yilean male is about 5'11" tall and weighs about 110 pounds. Females average about 5'8" tall and 100 pounds. Obesity is almost unknown among the Yileans. Medical studies have revealed that adaptation to Gashikan's proteins altered the Yileans' fat-storage mechanism, causing them to exhibit a significantly lower percentage of body fat than most other Human races.

Gashikan is subject to periodic waves of ultraviolet radiation from its variable sun. Like all native Gashikan life, the Yileans were forced to develop protection against this damaging radiation. All Yileans have blue-black skin, similar in color to blued steel. Hair on the head is black, and typically straight or somewhat wavy. Neither sex grows more than a trace of body or facial hair.

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

The Yileans have had a single language for more than 6,000 years. Their time as part of the First Imperium led to widespread adoption of the Vilani language, so the modern Gashikan tongue contains numerous Vilani loan words.

Yileans use a system of given and family names with the given name coming first, like most Solomani and Vilani. The

high degree of cultural uniformity among the Yileans means that there are fewer than 1,000 last names. Most last names have two or three syllables, with *Grika*, *Venatir*, and *Kashri* being the three most common.

The majority of male given names begin with an "ah," "aa," "ra," or "ga" sound and are normally two or three syllables long; examples include *Raskin* or *Galorak*. Most female given names begin with a "oh," "ee," or "yi" sound and are typically three or four syllables long; for example, *Olearan*, *Yiveal*, or *Elarina*.

PSYCHOLOGY

Yilean psychology is fairly close to the Human norm. Pure-blooded Yileans tend to be egalitarian and community-oriented in mindset. They prefer to work in groups and will usually subordinate their individual concerns to those of the community.

ATTITUDES TOWARD VARGR

One unusual quirk of Yilean psychology is the almost-universal intolerance for Vargr. This attitude is cultural in origin, but it has been so firmly reinforced across centuries that it is now firmly ingrained.

The Empire of Gashikan encompasses more than 400 worlds, each of which has its own unique history and culture. While anti-Vargr sentiments are common on almost all Yilean worlds, the exact nature of these feelings is highly variable. These opinions tend to fall into one of three categories.

The Imperial Core

In the central regions of the Empire, especially near Gashikan itself, Vargr are nearly unknown. Widespread censorship prevents information about Vargr from reaching the public. Only individuals who require extensive interstellar news, or who work with institutions outside of the Empire, have routine access to information about the Vargr.

There is also a general feeling that Vargr, and anything associated with them, are not appropriate subjects for polite conversation. Looking at pictures of or information about Vargr is thought of as an illicit activity, only engaged in by social deviants. Most inhabitants of the Empire's core regions have only encountered brief references to the Vargr in their history books. When such individuals encounter Vargr, they frequently feel uneasy curiosity or embarrassment rather than hatred.

The Border Worlds

Attitudes on the worlds near the border of the Empire are quite different. Here, everyone who works in interstellar trade regularly comes into contact with Vargr. While all worlds in the Empire exclude Vargr from permanent immigration, many poor Vargr come to the border worlds to work as contract labor. These workers are treated as second-class citizens, but actual violence against them is normally rare. Most citizens regard the Vargr as a normal fact of life.

The main exception involves Vargr who engage in political agitation. Contract laborers who work to improve the social standing of Vargr often suffer both physical violence and legal trouble. Most of the border worlds have numerous ancient anti-Vargr laws, which are normally only enforced against visiting Vargr who cause social or political trouble. Vargr who merely work out their contract and then leave the Empire usually need endure only social exclusion and unsavory comments.

The Danger Zone

The worlds between the Empire's core and its borders are the center of the deepest anti-Vargr prejudice. Here, there is only sporadic contact with Vargr, enough to excite bigotry but not enough to make them a routine fact of life.

Many on these worlds regularly discuss the Vargr threat, in spite of local laws that sometimes forbid speaking of the Vargr in public. Electronically distributed tracts and even holovids depicting Vargr as hideous villains are quite popular. On those worlds that do not completely prohibit Vargr from landing, Vargr visitors have occasionally been lynched, or kidnapped and tortured to death. While most Yileans do not pathologically hate Vargr, the actions of a few extremists in the "danger zone" have encouraged Vargr to continue to associate the Yileans and the Empire of Gashikan with xenophobic horrors.

SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

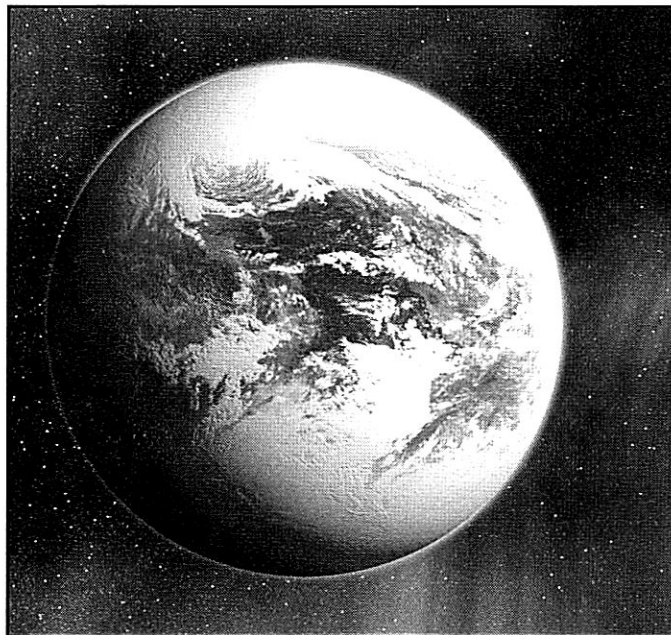
To most Yileans, concepts like local autonomy or decentralized authority are either threatening or completely incomprehensible. Most see total anarchy as the only alternative to a unified centrally planned state. As a result, Yilean government has been monolithic and authoritarian for millennia. The flexible, chaotic, and amorphous nature of Vargr politics is one of the reasons that Yileans continue to see the Vargr as dangerous barbarians.

The Yilean emphasis on order, control, and stability extends far beyond the government. Every Yilean is expected to become a stable, contented citizen. To aid this process, children and young adults regularly take sophisticated aptitude tests. While each citizen retains ultimate control of his own destiny, these tests determine the educational and career opportunities that are made available to him. While it is possible to change career paths, it is seen as a somewhat suspect disruption. Normally such changes only occur when an individual's life has been thrown into chaos by some personal or economic crisis.

GOVERNMENT

Although the Gashikan Empire rules more than 400 worlds in three sectors, its government is extremely centralized. Each world in the Empire is allowed to determine its own form of government. However, this government is only responsible for purely local matters.

Every member world is assigned an imperial envoy known as a *Velja*. The Velja have veto power over all decisions made by the planetary government relating to space travel, defense, or interactions with other worlds. Some overly rigid Velja attempt to control all aspects of offworld policy, but most are willing to take a more light-handed approach. As a check on the Velja's power, each local government can dismiss its Velja and request a replacement once every two years. Governments that ignore the decisions of the Velja face economic sanctions and eventually military action by the Empire.



In practice, the Empire's government is considerably harsher and more rigid than that of the Imperium, but citizens accept this level of control because they believe it is the only way to protect the Empire from Vargr incursion.

Now that the civil war is over, the Empire has once again concentrated the majority of its attention on its borders. While the governments of worlds in the interior of the Empire rarely need to contend with harsh directives, the border worlds are normally assigned military-trained Veljas who tolerate no action that could possibly endanger the Empire. To discourage opposition to such policies, the Empire maintains especially strict control over the news and other information received by the inhabitants of the border planets. By encouraging the inhabitants of the border worlds to fear the neighboring Vargr states, the Empire helps diminish dissent. Anyone who protests the Empire's high taxes or strict trade laws risks being branded a traitor, or worse yet, a dog-lover.

The various Gashikan Empires have traditionally been ruled by an adoptive monarchy, in which the current ruler selects his or her successor from the ranks of the Empire's nobility. This choice is traditionally kept secret until the current ruler dies or abdicates. The Third Empire of Gashikan is currently ruled by Aithilin, a charismatic dictator who was the victor in the recent civil war. In keeping with Gashikan tradition, Aithilin picked her successor on her 30th birthday.

after which security forces arrested 24. The detainees were quartered temporarily at the Benat Facility while their injuries were assessed and treated, then transferred to the penal facilities at Lenay, where the group will be held until a trial date can be set for the survivors.



THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND SAFETY

The Ministry of Information and Safety (MIS) has existed since the earliest days of the Second Empire of Gashikan. Although it is technically an arm of the imperial government, in many ways it behaves independently. The Ministry's ostensible mission is to prevent the spread of damaging Vargr propaganda, and to promote peace and unity throughout the Empire.

To accomplish these goals, its agents maintain careful control of all news and information. All information about Vargr is carefully edited or altered. Most stories that present Vargr in a heroic or positive light are suppressed, while others are given a more dubious or threatening cast. The MIS maintains careful search routines on all planetary databases and electronic networks. These programs collect all new information about other governments or the Vargr, and send this information to a series of electronic and Human editors for approval.

Although outsiders are permitted to carry nonapproved information into the Empire, attempting to distribute such information is highly illegal. Any attempt to upload suspect information onto any planetary network results in the data being forwarded to the local Ministry office. MIS officials will edit the information and pay the person responsible a visit. The penalty for uploading or distributing unapproved information is several years of hard labor on one of the Empire's prison planets.

After more than 2,500 years of continuous operation, the MIS has shaped all aspects of imperial society. Today, all of the history, news, and fiction presented to the Empire's citizens make up a coherent whole, without any obvious gaps or omissions. However, this information is subtly different from that received by citizens of the Third Imperium or residents of the neighboring Julian Protectorate. For example, Yileans who leave the Empire are shocked to discover that the Vargr were not primarily responsible for the collapse of the Ziru Sirka, and that the Vargr did not secretly back Zhodani aggressions in the Fifth Frontier War.

The MIS possesses great power due to its control over all information within the Empire. Aside from employees of the MIS, only the Empire's elite have access to uncensored information. Although it is legally forbidden from doing so, the MIS sometimes edits the information received even by high-ranking politicians and business leaders.

The headquarters of the MIS is located on Gashikan, in the capital city of Khasla. The current head of the MIS is Jarob Milligar. Like many of his predecessors, he dislikes the Vargr, but realizes that they are currently not a direct threat to the Empire. However, to keep the Empire unified and strong, he is happy to encourage the citizens of the Empire to support strong government by playing upon fears of Vargr invasion. Milligar is the most powerful person in the Empire, and is largely responsible for the outcome of the recent civil war.

No one outside of the MIS, including the Empress, is aware of the true extent of the Ministry's power and influence. Revealing the truth about the MIS would produce an extremely serious scandal. However, since the MIS effectively controls all news inside the Empire, such a revelation is unlikely to occur.

Visiting Vargr

In recent years, some of the Empire's border worlds have begun importing poor Vargr to work as ill-paid menial laborers and service workers. Only the most destitute Vargr take such assignments. When his 5-year contract ends, a Vargr laborer is shipped home with whatever meager savings he has accrued.

This practice began in 1079 to help alleviate labor shortages caused by the recent civil war. Although these shortages are now over, many worlds have found that "visiting Vargr" form a cheap and controllable labor pool. While under contract, all Vargr laborers must be implanted with special radio trackers that continuously broadcast their location.

Although most of the inhabitants of these border worlds have grown used to seeing Vargr carrying heavily loads and performing menial similar work, many Yileans further from the Empire's boundary are horrified by the thought of Vargr living on any of the Empire's worlds. Holovids depicting these laborers as Vargr spies and terrorists have been growing in popularity. Recently, several border worlds have seen demonstrations against Vargr being imported to take Human jobs. A number of Vargr have been harassed, and a few have been injured or killed. The MIS has been helping to publicize these demonstrations in an effort to help keep the Empire isolated from outside influence.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

While the Empire is moderately hostile to all of the surrounding Vargr and Vargr-friendly states, it does maintain loose ties to some of the smaller Human-only states.

The Imperium is officially neutral toward the Empire of Gashikan. There is open trade between the two states, but no political recognition or open alliances. However, a number of radical pro-Human groups within the Imperium possess ties to the Empire. Also, while the two states are too far apart to have a meaningful alliance, the Empire of Gashikan maintains contact with radical anti-alien groups in the Solomani government.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Within the Empire, the highest available technology is found on Gashikan and a number of other TL10 worlds. Since trade with the neighboring Vargr states is discouraged, very few worlds inside the Empire have access to TL11 or TL12 technologies.

Using contracts inside the Imperium, the MIS regularly purchases TL11 ships and equipment. In particular, the Ministry maintains a small fleet of 200-ton armed courier ships, built to a TL11 design and capable of jump-4. Since no commercial vessel built inside the Empire can exceed jump-3, these ships help the members of the MIS to

Genetic Yileans

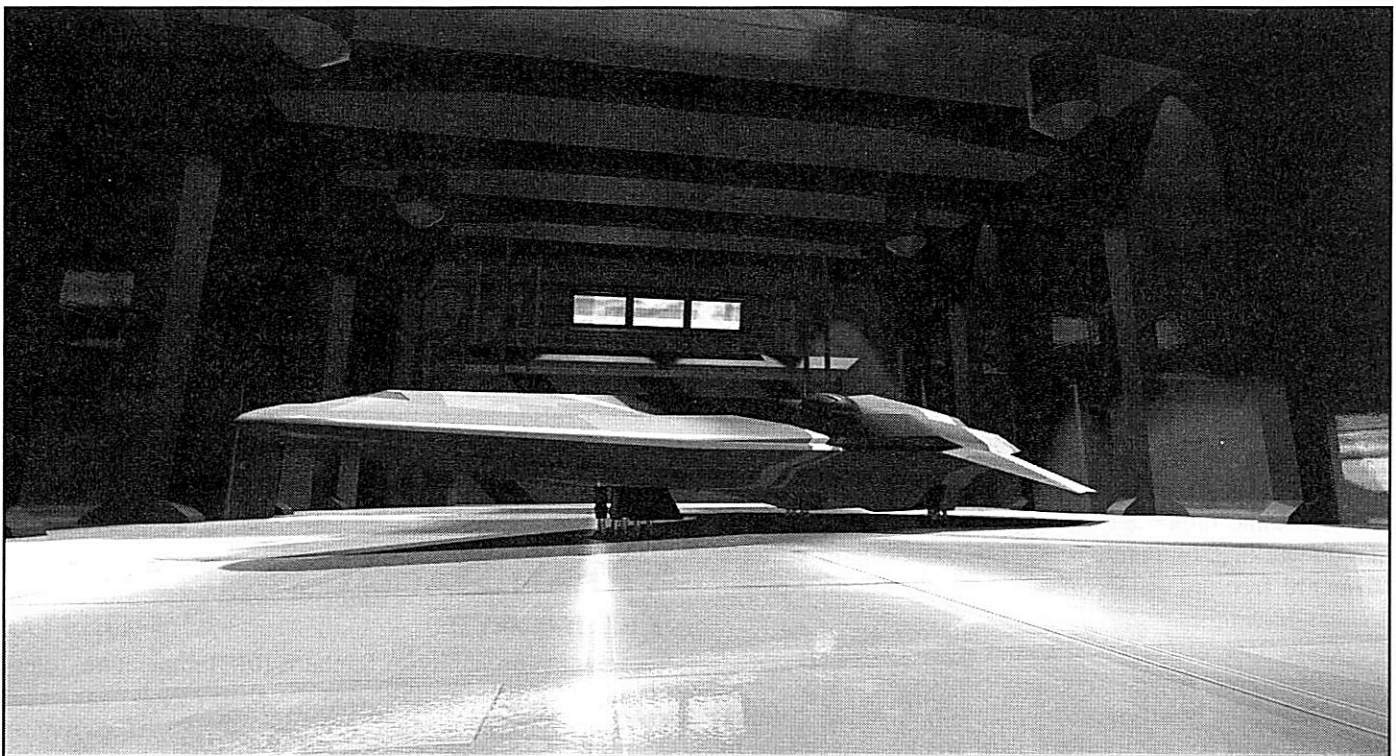
During the millennia of Vilani rule, many Yileans married Vilani colonists and administrators. This pattern of intermarriage has continued. Today, there are no purebred Yileans on Gashikan itself, and it is estimated that only 5% of the inhabitants of the Empire are purebred Yileans. Even so, almost every Human inside the Empire's borders has some Yilean ancestry. Both blue-black skin and straight, black hair are quite common in this region of space. On many worlds in the Empire these traits are considered quite desirable, and individuals with obvious Yilean features are frequently members of the upper class.

Today, being Yilean is far more a matter of culture than race. While there are now more than 100 million individuals with some Yilean ancestry living outside the Third Empire of Gashikan, few of them would consider themselves to be Yilean. For Humans in the neighboring sectors, Yilean ancestry and the xenophobic politics of the Empire of Gashikan are inextricably intertwined.

exchange information between worlds faster than most dissident plots can spread.

While there is regular trade between the worlds of the Empire, trade with worlds outside the Empire is sparse and heavily regulated. All ships leaving or entering the Empire are subject to strict inspection.

While Vargr are allowed to travel to most border worlds, many of the worlds of the Empire's interior do not allow Vargr to land. A number of Vargr merchants who regularly travel into the Empire hire Humans or other aliens to act as intermediaries. Also, several Vargr trading companies have illegally hired imperial citizens to act as the owners of dummy trading companies, thus preventing their customers from learning they are actually purchasing Vargr goods.



GASHIKAN (2732, GASHIKAN SECTOR)

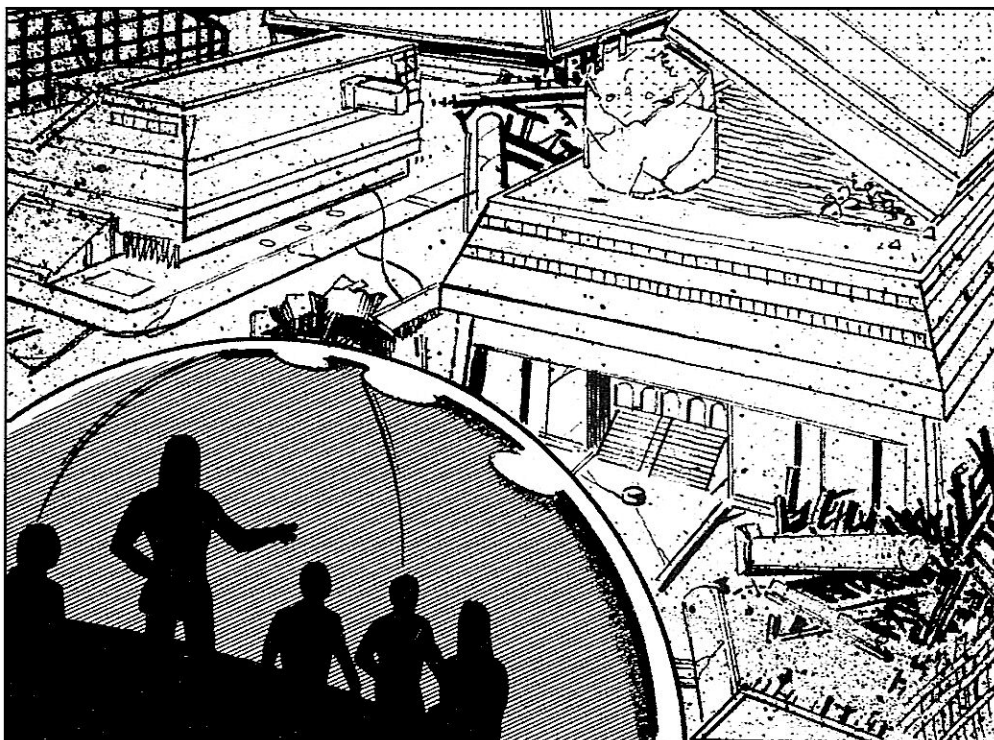
Starport: Class V.

Diameter: 7,910 miles (12,700 km). *Gravity:* 0.98 G.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 72%.

Climate: Warm. *Population:* 3.1 billion. *Government:* Dictatorship. *Control Rating:* 5. *TL:* 10. *Gas Giants:* 3. *WTN:* 5.5. *Trade Classifications:* Hi In.

The capital world of the Third Empire of Gashikan orbits a variable star at a distance of 1 AU. There is a large airless world at 0.7 AU, three gas giants at 1.8, 3.0, and 10 AU, and a sparse asteroid belt at 6.0 AU. Gashikan has no moon.



Gashikan remains marked by ancient wars against the Vargr. Although the last great Vargr attack occurred more than 3,500 years ago, the radioactive ruins of the once-great city of Nitholis have never been decontaminated. To this day they stand as a monument to the rapacity of the Vargr. Tourists from throughout the Empire still come to pay homage to those who died in the capital city of the first Empire of Gashikan.

Except for a few such monuments, the planet recovered from the bombing long ago. It remains a lush and verdant world. To protect its beauty, the Empire has imposed strict limits on immigration and new construction. Unless hired to perform some important job, visitors are not permitted to stay longer than two months. However, short-term visitor's visas are free, and tourism is one of Gashikan's major sources of income.

Over 35% of Gashikan's land is officially protected wilderness area. Anyone building permanent structures in protected areas is severely fined and imprisoned. Similar penalties exist for environmental destruction, even due to

accident. While everyone is free to camp in these vast parks, orbital satellites make certain that visitors leave these wilderness areas as they found them.

In addition to its historical interest and natural beauty, Gashikan is also the traditional capital of the Empire. While the capital was temporarily located in the Trenchans Sector from 1078-1098, it was returned to Gashikan in 1099.

To help protect the Empress and the high nobles, law on Gashikan is especially strict. Except for the well-armed police, no one on Gashikan can own a weapon more deadly than a small pocketknife. Hunting is also prohibited, so visitors have no excuse to possess weaponry.

Meanwhile, a network of spy cameras constantly monitors the entire planet. In addition, ground-based cameras watch all public streets and the interiors of all public buildings. Except for the interiors of private dwellings, everyone on Gashikan is under observation at all times. The monitoring systems automatically detect any incidence of weapon use or physical violence. Also, while the monitoring computers cannot detect most nonviolent offenses, once a crime has been reported, law enforcement officers can scan the tapes and quickly identify the criminal.

In addition to being used by local law enforcement officials, all surveillance camera recordings are also accessible by the MIS. The MIS maintains similar surveillance networks on all of the of the Empire's worlds with populations of more than 500 million.

YILEAN CHARACTERS

A pure-blooded Yilean character will be 2" taller than a normal Human of the same ST, but 50 pounds lighter than a normal Human of the same height.

The normal collection of Yilean traits divides neatly into two templates. The Yilean racial template includes those traits which are common to all pure-blooded Yileans, whether raised inside the Empire of Gashikan or not. The Empire of Gashikan citizen's template includes those traits common to all citizens of the Empire, whether they are pure-blooded Yileans or not.

YILEAN RACIAL TEMPLATE

-2 POINTS

Advantages: Immunity to Sunburn [0]; Temperature Tolerance 3 [3].

Disadvantages: Skinny [-5].

EMPIRE OF GASHIKAN CITIZEN TEMPLATE -10 POINTS

Disadvantages: Intolerance (Vargr) [-5]; Reputation -2 (As anti-Vargr bigots, to all Vargr) [-5].

NOTES ON RACIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Intolerance (Vargr) see p. B34

Everyone raised inside the Empire of Gashikan is taught that Vargr are sub-Human and dangerously erratic.

Reputation see p. B17

The association between Yileans and anti-Vargr bigotry is quite widespread. Almost all Vargr will be suspicious of anyone who looks like a purebred Yilean or who comes from the Empire of Gashikan.

Skinny see p. B29

Genetic Yileans are naturally quite slender. Obesity is extremely rare among them.

Temperature Tolerance see p. C130

Under the standard rules for exposure to heat or cold (see p. B130), a temperature between 35° and 90° is thermally neutral; a higher or lower temperature may cause ill effects. Each point of Temperature Tolerance widens this range by HT degrees. Normally the addition is divided equally between the hot and cold ends of the scale (for example, a character with HT 10 and Temperature Tolerance 1 would have a thermally neutral range from 30° to 95°). But equal division isn't mandatory; it's even permissible to apply the entire increase to one end of the scale (for example, a thermally neutral range from 35° to 100°). The resulting shift in the center of the thermally neutral zone is a 0-point feature.

For the Yileans, the base "comfort range" is the same as for mainstream Humans, between 35° and 90°. The extra 3 × HT degrees of tolerance are applied equally to both ends of the range. A Yilean with a HT of 10 would therefore be comfortable within a temperature range of 20° to 105°.

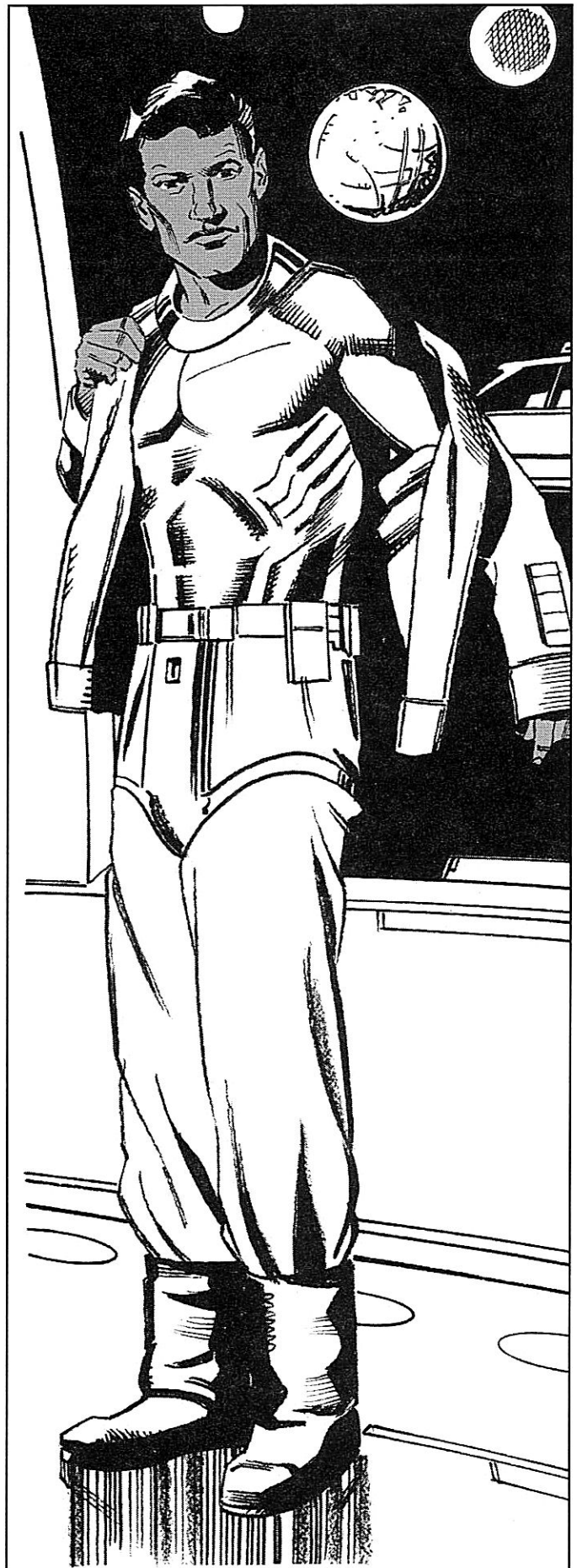
NEW ADVANTAGE

Immunity to Sunburn 0 points

A Yilean's blue-black skin is distinctive in appearance and resists ultraviolet radiation exceptionally well, making him immune to sunburn. This trait is equivalent in cost and effect to very thin Fur (p. C156).

CHARACTER TEMPLATE

The following template is unique to the Empire of Gashikan.



Many MIS agents who leave their profession before retirement age do so because they have become disillusioned with their job. Since the MIS carefully watches ex-agents, many of them leave the Empire of Gashikan and seek their fortune elsewhere.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 25 points chosen from Alertness [5/level]; Contacts (Any; skill-18, 9 or less, somewhat reliable) [3/contact]; Intuition [15]; Language Talent [2/level]; Lightning Calculator [5]; Mathematical Ability [10]; Security Clearance 1-5 [2/level]; Status 1-3 [5/level]; and Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: A total of -25 points chosen from Addiction (Stimulants) [-5]; Curious [-5 to -15]; Duty (MIS, 9 or less) [-5]; Low Empathy [-15]; Obsession (Stop the Vargr Threat) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Paranoia [-10]; Phobia (Vargr, mild) [-10]; Sense of Duty (Empire of Gashikan) [-10]; and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (any) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Computer Operation (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Electronics Operation (Comm) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Electronics Operation (Sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Writing (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-14.

Secondary Skills: Computer Hacking (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Computer Programming (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Intelligence Analysis (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Interrogation (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Language (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Psychology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Research (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Speed Reading (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12.

Background Skills: One of Driving (any) or Piloting (any), both (P/A); and 6 points in Photography or Video Production, both (M/A), Cryptanalysis, Cryptography, or Forgery, all (M/H).

Customization Notes: Your skills should reflect the exact nature of your duties. Most MIS agents are technicians who collect and alter news articles. However, a few are field agents who look for subversive behavior. Such characters should possibly reduce their Computer Programming or Computer Hacking skills and put points into Body Language, Forgery, and Psychology.

*"Applicants for the position of pilot/commander on **Gauntlet**-class Armed Couriers are required to pass rigorous qualifying exams, and must score 4A or higher on the MIS Polyphasic Personality Profile."*

EQUIPMENT

GAUNTLET-CLASS MIS ARMED COURIER (TL10)

Gauntlet-class couriers are the special elite ships of the Third Empire of Gashikan's Ministry of Information and Safety. These vessels are secretly purchased in the Imperium. They are converted *Beowulf*-class traders where most of the cargo space and two of the staterooms have been replaced by additional engines and fuel tanks. Although they still appear to be ordinary trading vessels, they are actually capable of jump-4.

The MIS uses these vessels to carry information and personnel between worlds faster than any conventional civilian or military ships available within the Empire. Careful deployment of these ships is one of the reasons the MIS is able to effectively control all news and information inside imperial territory. Currently, the MIS has about 300 of these vessels.

The usual crew complement includes: captain/pilot, navigator/sensor/communications officer, two gunners, two engineers, and a medic. See *GURPS Traveller: Far Trader* for the most likely skill requirements for these positions. These ships usually carry at least one MIS agent and two computer technicians as supercargo.

Subassemblies: SL Hull +8, 2 Turrets +5.

Powertrain: Engineering, 20 Maneuver, 10 Jump.

Fuel: 80 Fuel.

Occupancy: 8 staterooms

Cargo: 8.5 dtons

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
All:	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200

Weaponry

2 Turrets w/1 Laser, 1 Missile Rack (77 each), 1 Sandcaster (200 each) +2.

Equipment

Modules: Basic bridge, 2 Fuel processors, Spacedock (holds one air/raft, up to 250 cf volume), Utility.

Statistics

Size: 100'×48'×25' **Payload:** 446 tons **Lwt.:** 570 tons
Volume: 200 dtons **Maint.:** 40.8 hours/day **Price:** MCr72.4

HT: 12. **HP:** 22,500 [Hull] 1,200 [each Tur]

sAccel: 1.4 G **Jump:** 4 **aSpeed:** 1,900

Design Notes

The *Gauntlet* class adds radical emission cloaking to the basic *Beowulf*-class hull.

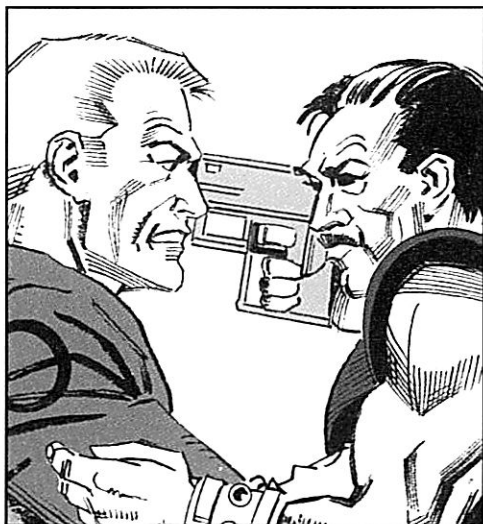
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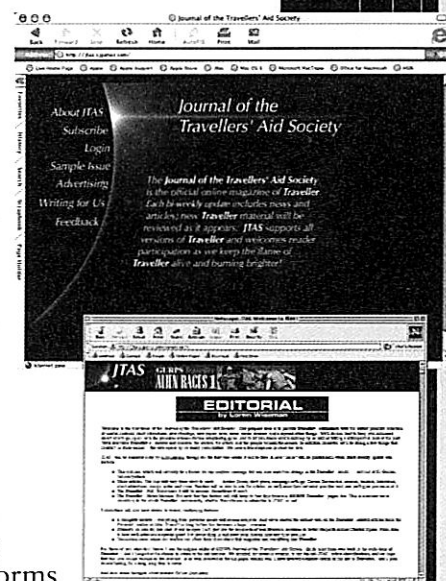
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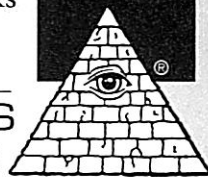
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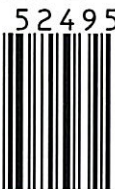
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