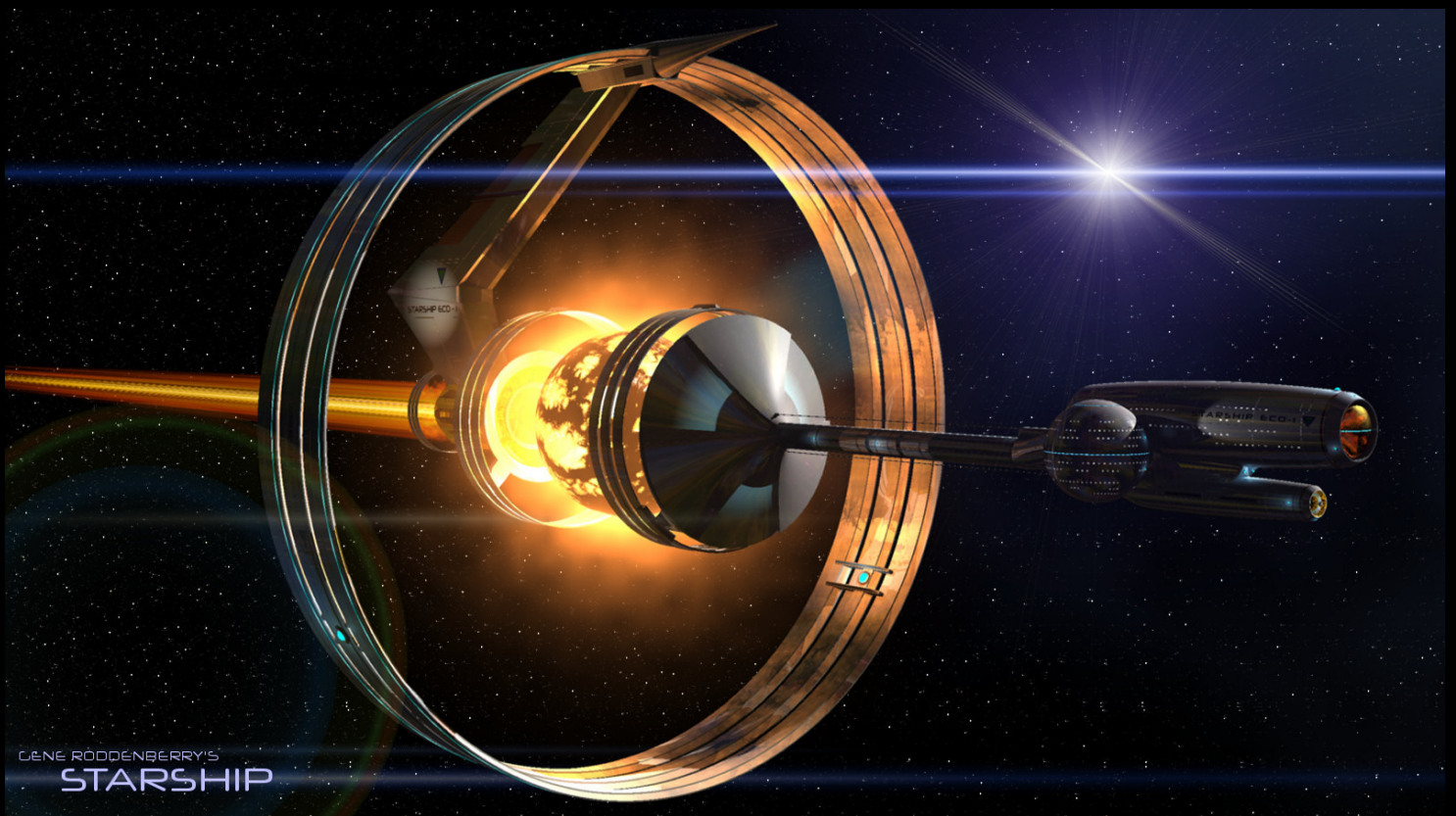


Stellar Reaches

A Fair Use Fanzine for Traveller



A Samardan Press Publication

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Table of Contents

Letter From The Editor	3
BITS Task System	4
Counties and Churches: An Outline	5
Counties and Churches: The Counties of the Empty Quarter	10
Counties and Churches: Beyond the Imperial Borders	26
Counties and Churches: Throne and Altar, Sword and Credit	38
Counties and Churches: Sophonts	46
Counties and Churches: History and Timeline	49
Counties and Churches: Sector & Subsector Maps	75
Counties and Churches: Large-Scale Imperial Maps	117
Counties and Churches: The Annoyance Known as Hebrin County	124
"We Die With Gratitude"	132
Legal	133

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Our website: www.stellarreaches.com

Credits:

Cover Art: *A Droyne starship, powered by a tiny star, streaks across the Empty Quarter.* The graphic is titled "Starship 2" © Richard Merk, at <http://richmerk.deviantart.com/art/Starship-2-254454351>

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The **BITS Task System**, although modified to include Traveller T20 difficulty classes, has been provided with permission by **British Isles Traveller Support (BITS)**. Its presence here does not constitute any challenge to the rights for this system, and we gratefully acknowledge Dominic Mooney and Andy Lilly for their generosity in allowing our use of this system to allow future adventures to be written in such a manner as to be more useful to all published Traveller rules sets.

For more information on BITS, check out their website at <http://www.bits.org.uk/>

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Letter From The Editor

Greetings, Fellow Sophonts:

This is a large issue, outlining another possible version of the Third Imperium. I had always wanted to create a proper Imperial theocracy, and after some hard work it has been finally done. I decided to incorporate some old work I did on the Empty Quarter as well, just to see the old system names again.

While the universe is detailed and varied enough to host all sorts of adventures, the main implied storyline is on one part of this mirror Empty Quarter, the County of Hebrin. It is increasingly going its own way, and as this Imperium is slowly sinking into decrepitude, it may actually try to secede in some way. But timing is important: try to leave a decade early, and you have wasted your time – and possibly millions of lives as well. And is really the reward worth the price? Perhaps a merely autonomous status can get you 80% of what you want, with only 20% of the risk of a full-blown war.

While this government is an Imperial Catholic theocracy, it is not a particularly oppressive one – despite ongoing hostilities with the Roman Catholic Church that dominates the Terran peoples. Still, while the nature of the Imperial Church is sketched out here, the main focus of the PCs would be in the relationship between Ultra-Orthodox (a form of Calvinism, the assumed religion of the PCs), Roman Catholicism, Imperial Catholicism, Judaism, and an alternate form of Islam. All of these religions are represented in the County of Hebrin, and how they relate to each other will shape the destiny of the region, and possibly the Imperium.

There are some interesting follow-on consequences of having Imperial Hebrin, and not Julian Ikon, the most wealthy world of the sector. Among them: *this* Empty Quarter is a lot more successful than the ‘official version’ depicted in most issues of Stellar Reaches. As it’s wealthier, it’s closer to the Imperial mainstream when it comes to attitudes: nobody here calls the locals ‘Emptyheads’. Even the local independence movement in Hebrin isn’t something completely alien to Imperial culture: while more extreme than is usually found, similar religious reformation & purity movements can be found across this Third Imperium.

Among the other distinctives of this setting – besides a clearly declining Imperium, independent nations behind the Claw, a high-tech Zhodani/Droyne civilization (in a universe where psionics is impossible for humans), Vilani origins for the Vargr (instead of Ancient ones), a creationist ‘young universe’ bias, and a rather different history for the Terrans, the Vilani, and the Ancients – there is a larger alien influence in the Empty Quarter. The Droyne have a stronger hold in the Rukadukaz Republic, and have more access to Ancient technology (which is more easily found in this universe: many governments keep stockpiles of these powerful artefacts.) The Rukadukaz Republic is run by self-altered Ovaghoun Vargr, who are persuading the Irilitok Vargr (geneered a second time by humaniti, for increased docility) to convert all of their pups to Ovaghoun racial specs ‘and leave those DNA slave chains behind.’ There are ancient machine armies locked in eternal war against each other, exceedingly powerful races the Imperium can barely touch, mystical species with powerful psionic minds, and starsystems infected with ‘green goo’, under study by the Imperial Scouts.

A suitable setting for a broad range of adventures, I would say.

Ω

The allowable size of uploaded files for www.stellarreaches.com was expanded from 10 MB to 128 MB. Curious, how technology influences storytelling.

Reading ahead,
Alvin W. Plummer
Editor, **Stellar Reaches** fanzine

BITS Task System

From pg. 8, BITS Writers' Guidelines June 1999. Copyright ©1999, BITS. All Rights Reserved.

T20 Open Game Content from the article "Extending the Task Resolution System to T20" Copyright 2003, Jason Kemp.

MegaTraveller (MT), Traveller: The New Era (TNE) and Marc Miller's Traveller (T4) all use a graduated system of task difficulty ratings – Average, Difficult, Formidable, etc. 'Classic' Traveller (CT) and GURPS Traveller (GT) use modifiers to the task rolls instead. Traveller T20 (T20) uses difficulty classes (DCs) to define target numbers for skill checks. The BITS Task System provides a simplified common ground for all these rule sets, using difficulty ratings with corresponding task modifiers for CT and GT and DCs for T20 as shown in Table 1. The means by which spectacular (GT: critical) success or failure are achieved are defined by the rule set used. Similarly, the GM should apply the rules for special tasks – opposed, co-operative, hasty, cautious, etc. – according to the rule set used. As always, these are only guidelines – the GM may alter any task roll as appropriate to enhance the game.

TABLE 1: TASK DIFFICULTIES

BITS Task Difficulty	T4 Difficulty	T4.1 Difficulty	GT Target Modifier	TNE Difficulty	MT Difficulty	CT Target Modifier	T20 DC
Easy	Easy (Auto)	Easy (1D)	+6	Easy	Simple	-4	10
Average	Average (2D)	Average (2D)	+3	Average	Routine	-2	15
Difficult	Difficult (2.5D)	Difficult (2.5D)	0	Difficult	Difficult	0	20
Formidable	Formidable (3D)	Formidable (3D)	-3	Formidable	Difficult	+2	25
Staggering	Impossible (4D)	Staggering (4D)	-6	Impossible	Formidable	+4	30
Impossible	(5D)	Hopeless (5D)	-9	Impossible	Impossible	+6	35
Hopeless	(6D)	Impossible (6D)	-12	Impossible	Impossible	+8	40

Ex. Maria Charles is forging a complex document, which the GM rules is a Staggering task. Maria has Forgery-4 (GT: Forgery-16, T20: Forgery +18) and the relevant attribute (MT, T4) is INT 10 (TNE: INT 9, T20: 15).

CT: Task success is normally $2D + \text{Skill} \geq 8$. Maria requires $2D + \text{Forgery} \geq 12$ ($8 + 4$ for Staggering difficulty). Alternatively, the GM may prefer to apply the target modifier as a negative modifier on the dice roll, i.e. $2D + 4 - 4 \geq 8$.

MT: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to MT's Formidable (15+), thus the task is $2D + \text{Skill} + (\text{Stat} / 5) \geq 15$. For Maria this is: $2D + 4 + 2 \geq 15$.

TNE: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to TNE's Impossible, thus the task is $d20 \leq (\text{Skill} + \text{Stat}) \times \frac{1}{4}$. For Maria this is $d20 \leq 3$, i.e. $(9 + 4) / 4$ rounded down.

T4: Maria requires $4D \leq \text{INT} + \text{Forgery}$. (Note that T4's Staggering rating of 3.5D is ignored.)

GT: Maria requires $3D \leq \text{Forgery} + \text{Target Modifier}$, i.e. $3D \leq 16 - 6$.

T20: Maria requires $d20 + 18 \geq 30$. (Note that the INT modifier is already factored into the skill check.)

Task definitions should always be used sparingly – the GM should be able to define the difficulty and required skills and equipment for most tasks using common sense. Where strange skills or equipment are needed, these can usually be listed, without requiring a full task definition. Where a full task definition is required, use the following format (you don't need to use the bold or italics formatting; plain text is fine):

To find a boar:

Difficult Recon (GT: Tracking), or

Difficult Hunting (T20: P/Hunting), or

Formidable Survival

+1 Difficulty if riding at full gallop.

+1 Difficulty if lost.

-1 Difficulty if moving slowly.

Spectacular Success: They have surprised a boar and have one round to act before it reacts.

Success: They have found boar tracks and can begin following them.

Failure: No tracks found.

Spectacular Failure: They have become lost.

+1 Difficulty indicates a harder task (e.g. an Average task becomes Difficult) whereas -1 Difficulty is an easier task (e.g. Difficult would become Average).

NOTE: This system has been extensively play-tested but suggestions for refinements are always welcome.

Counties and Churches: An Outline

By Alvin W. Plummer



Overlooking the wealthy yet regimented world of Nisaga, AD 3307

The graphic is titled "Cor" © Gabriel Gajdoš.

Please visit his gallery at <http://pipper-svk.deviantart.com/art/Cor-89225017>

Theme: "Lumen", Mannheim Steamroller, Fresh Aire V
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFtjx5-gHMg>

Thumbnail Description

"In a distant region of a declining, theocratic Imperium, dissent is brewing in the wealthy County of Hebrin."

A Quick Overview

This is an alternate take on the Third Imperium, using my old Empty Quarter data as a base. Compared to the 'mainline' Empty Quarter of 993 Imperial, this Imperial Empty Quarter is wealthier, and closer to the Imperial mainstream culture. With the shifting of the major high-tech/high-pop system from Ikon to Hebrin, the Imperium gains greatly at the cost of the Julian Protectorate. The Lorean Hegemony of this universe is stranger than the Hegemony of Lorean of the standard 993 timeline: it is also a nicer place to live, off the major worlds. The Vargr have a far lower population profile in this sector, but they still control the Rukadukaz Republic, and have more political pull than the more numerous, but also more quiet and reclusive, Droyne population that is present in this timeline.

Imperial culture is broadly tied to Imperial Catholicism, a synergistic religion descended from a variation of Roman Catholicism. As the Imperial Pontiff and the Magisterium teaches that there are many ways to gain Salvation, it is no longer a Christian faith in any meaningful sense, but it remains a popular and powerful faith. It is the Church, united with the intricate networks of the ruling families, which undergirds the Imperial government, rather than the Imperial megacorporations in Official Traveller.

The Imperial Navy is powerful, and her loyalty to the Throne is what keeps this fraying Imperium united. As previous Imperia conducted quite a lot of orbital bombardments in a vain attempt to keep their governments united, the Imperial Laws of War are taken a lot more seriously here than in the OTU, and most certainly applies to the Emperor's forces, as well as all others in the Imperium.

Church militant forces conduct current pacification programs in the ~~Solomani~~ Terran Rim. Relentless observation by both idealistic religious observers and hostile anti-Church critics help to insure that news of

atrocities, massacres, mass rapes, etc. is quickly propagated across the Imperium. Numerous attempts to enforce secrecy have been contemptuously crushed by the Emperor's courts, and gleefully circumvented by the numerous observers: so the leaders of the various Church military forces are driven to enforce great discipline on their men in the field – as the camera-bots hover, watching their every move. There is a broad antiwar movement across the Imperium, increasing in strength. It is currently focused on undermining Church violence in the Terran Rim, but one day may shift to the Imperial military, focusing on the heavy taxes needed to keep up the Imperial Navy.¹

To understand the Imperial media focus on military atrocities, it's important to see that the average Imperial citizen identifies with the locals being bombarded/gassed/nuked/raped etc. "What the Empress is doing to **them** today is what she will do to **us** tomorrow."

As of AD 3324, a solid majority of the nobles and even a good-sized minority of the commoners are willing to pay the price in time, treasure and blood to protect their freedom and liberty. And they well know that the greatest threat to their lives and wealth isn't some alien race from beyond the far frontier, but at home, starting with the Empress and the True Pope.

The Church is the weaker of the two, and – post Denebi War – the side doing most of the killing today, so that is the current focus of the antiwar movement. The Empress is happy to have the spotlight off her forces, but despite her best propagandic efforts, the levels of alienation between her and the local nobles & commoners has only slowed its increase.

Due to historical swirls and eddies – the shorter timeframe, and better-organized human resistance to Vargr expansion – it is the Droyne who are the 'second race' within the Empty Quarter, not the Vargr. However, the Droyne are not particularly energetic, preferring to maintain what they have rather than create new empires or push their society forward. The

¹ It helps that the Imperial Navy is just concerned about space and starports: without an Imperial Army, there is no bureaucracy pressing for expensive quagmires to justify itself. There is just the void, 'clean and pure', where technology and wealth is everything, and popular support, convoluted politics and subversive insurgencies are impossible/irrelevant. When vaporizing cities, all the media can see are awesome explosions from a distant, regal, even Imperial vantage point, not the gut-wrenching screams and bloody corpses that the media quickly ties to the Church Militant. <Stalin quote here.> Fortunately, there is enough antiwar sentiment that even the Navy shows some caution, despite its media advantages.

Vargr who reside in the Quarter are Irilitok and the Ovaghoun – both rather different than in the OTU.

A form of Islam does exist in this alternate universe, but there are several differences between this Islam and the Islam of our timeline. To remind the reader of this, the in-universe, fictional Islam is marked with an asterisk, Islam*.²

Shine, Perishing Imperium³

In the "Counties and Churches" Imperium, there are no megacorporations, and the Imperial Civil Service is heavily balkanized and increasingly ossified, with entrenched interests making reform impossible.

Without the ability of nobles to outmuscle, circumvent, or simply ignore the bureaucracy, the entire Imperial government would have ground to a standstill decades ago. As it is, most interstellar activity – corporate, civil, financial, religious, or military – requires a noble patron to secure the many licenses, permits, and administrative permissions needed to get anything done. Commoners unattached to any noble house have a very difficult time with red tape and the (official and unofficial) fees: it's as if the Imperial bureaucracy instinctively works to trap commoners on their homeworlds, giving free access to the stars only to nobles and their allies...

This Imperial state is less able to act quickly or change direction than the Official Imperium, but is far more stable: there is no foreseeable combination of internal or external threat that can quickly destroy the Imperium. A given interstellar culture tends to centre on individual worlds, and rarely expand the boundaries of their county. The Vilani and Terran supercultures are more fragmented than in the OTU, and the only people who care about the distant motherworlds of Vland and Terra are cultural snobs and Nobles putting on airs.

There is no reasonable way to *quickly* destroy the Imperium: a slow dry rot, on the other hand, is already well underway. Give it a century, maybe two, and the Imperium will be nothing but a hollow shell. A powerful Emperor *could* delay it for a few decades, but the cast has already been set. More to the point, the rewards of fighting the inevitable are very slim, while the risks, the costs, and the enormous amount of time and effort needed for that thankless fight against the inevitable turn away every ambitious and talented man, leaving only naive idealists and fools to seek the Iridium

² See page 131 for details.

³ A riff off an old poem, found here:
<http://www.antiwar.com/orig/jeffers1.html>

Throne. Better to carve out your own County, with material, swift rewards to match the risks and expenses.

Broad interstellar trade and the religious bond of the Imperial Catholic Church (that easily absorbs local beliefs into itself) had proven to be viable foundations for Imperial unity for over two centuries, but these bonds are beginning to disintegrate. Already, trade beyond a county's boundaries is uncommon, and beyond a sector's borders is almost unheard of outside of the Imperial Core. The doctrines Imperial Church have faded to indeterminate mush, unable to motivate anyone: now, it is little more than a cheering/chanting chorus for the Cause of Unity under the Iridium Throne.

Even a truly evil emperor can't do much damage when all nobles can and will ignore his more unreasonable

orders, and the forces sworn directly to him simply aren't enough to violently enforce his will across Core Sylea Sector, never mind the entire Imperium.

However, no truly good emperor can truly make his will felt across the Imperium either: always, his money ends up fritted away, his commands reinterpreted to suit the local aristocracy, and his forces chasing either their own interests and goals (in contrast to the Emperor's will) or becoming tools of the local potentates.

While many grow weary of the taxation demands of Empress Changpu, she has managed to neuter the more potent tax revolts, and the power and authority of the Iridium Throne still has some weight on even the most disgruntled world. Outside of Terran Rim, hatred and hostility to Imperial rule has noticeably declined in recent years, replaced with a shrugging indifference.



One of the greatest hideouts for native life on dry Rasu, the High Caverns of Hasaj remain an amazing geological structure – especially as it seems to be physically impossible. With a careful search for hidden technology revealing nothing, both engineers and geologists are left stumped.

The graphic is titled "Nimrods Palais" © Bramvan.

Please visit his gallery (and consider making a purchase!) at

http://www.fineartprint.de/index2.php?page=image_preview1.php&image=10952215&own=1&produkt_id=artist&typ_id=7&view=7

Different Roads to the End

The greater threat to the Empress remains a *fronde* – an aristocratic rebellion – but this has declined sharply, with the most rebellious nobles either

- reconciled to the Throne and ruling near-independent fiefs in the Terran Rim;
- impoverished or dead as a result of the Denebi War, trying to gain by conquest the wealth and freedom the Terran Lords enjoy;
- or fleeing the Imperium entirely and establishing independent fiefs. Most wish to remain connected with an already established interstellar civilization, and join either the Lorean Hegemony, or the Terran Confederation. Only a few strike out to the virgin

stars, rimward of the Confederation or in the distant regions like the Far Frontiers sector.

In contrast to an increasingly unlikely open rebellion in the near term, corruption, simple disinterest and a passively disobedient spirit grows slowly but steadily across the Imperium. This is most notable in the Terran Rim, where the nobles only occasionally acknowledge her authority and send only part of the taxes they owe. Most of the Counts are willing to send increased taxes in return for increased authority over their fiefs, but the Terran Lords have been quick to grab the power and very slow in delivering the cash. It is obvious that an example needs to be made, but how to do it without simply pushing the Terran Lords into open rebellion

and joining the Terran Confederation is a difficult conundrum to resolve.

Despite her encroaching senescence and the limits of her power, the Imperium still has some strength even now. The unified, high-tech Imperial fleets continue to be more powerful than the disunited, scattered abilities of the Colonial fleets, and attract more skilled and disciplined starmen as crew. Even as the noble grumbling grows more public, taxes continue to flow, if not as regularly as before.

Imperial patriotism as an energizing force is dead and gone, even in the Imperial Core, but patriotism as a habit and natural instinct has a long half-life. And the Imperial Catholic Church remains broadly united, with some loyal followers everywhere, and with few dedicated, determined enemies able to gain an audience outside of their county.

It can take a long time for an empire to die, and even longer to realise that it is dead.

Additional Notes

You Have to Know the Territory!

The Ssilnthi Zone is far less dangerous here than in the 993 Empty Quarter. Even though it is outside of the Protectorate, even the non-aligned worlds are routinely visited by Star Legion, Imperial Navy, and occasionally Droyne warships. Moreover, the dreaded Blood Vargr no longer resides here, removing much of the crawling fear and stark terror of the region.

Overwhelmingly, the most important world in the sector is Hebrin: at TL E, it's as dominant as Ikon is in the 993 universe. Ssilnthi and Nisaga are important to the coreward half of the sector. There are no high-pop, TL 9+ systems in the Rukadukaz Republic.

Alien Minds over Matter

Psionics does exist in this universe... it just does not occur among humans. The Vilani of this timeline are talented genetics, and they made several attempts to transfer psionic potential to humaniti, ending in failure. The Zhodani do better: as they are closely allied with the Droyne, they are far enough ahead in technology – around TL 21-22 – to have manufactured basic telepathic, telekinetic, and teleportation equipment.

In this timeline, humans who claim to be psionic can be universally dismissed as charlatans reaching for your wallet. A very few actually have access to Zhodani psionic equipment in working order. The Imperial Catholic Church does recognize miracles, but that is

claimed to be an incredible occurrence from the hand of the Imperial Trinity, and not an innate power of the human mind.

Referee: Yes, the Zhodani is a good deal more technologically advanced than the Third Imperium. No, they aren't interested in helping or trading with Imperial humaniti as they are too repulsive mentally/spiritually to tolerate as company ("You mean they *lie* at a drop of the hat!?! *gasp*")

However, waging a war of extermination is both expensive and unnecessary (Imperials can slaughter themselves with great vigor without outside assistance); occupation and enlightenment promises marginal gains in return for monumental costs. And if the Imperials learn to duplicate Zhodani technology?

Better to keep the Spinward States as a buffer between themselves and the Imperium. Low tech they may be, but they are ahead of the Imperium at TL 16 – 17. And the divided Spinward States are not the latent threat to the Zhodani Consulate that a properly unified Third Imperium could be.

Jumpspace is a Scary Place

Zoning is NOT tied to the danger of the system, but to the difficulty of jumping out:

Green Zone/Unzoned: Preparing for Jump is an average task, taking two minutes (using BITS terminology, see **Stellar Reaches**, page 4). Failure means no jump, with no damage.

Amber Zone: Preparing for Jump is a difficult task, taking twenty minutes. Failure means a misjump: determine the result normally. (An early jump is an automatic failure.)

Red Zone: preparing for Jump is a formidable task, taking two hours. Failure means a misjump: roll 2D6 and determine the result below. (An early jump is an automatic failure.)

2: Ship emerges 1D6 * 8 hours from destination world.

3: Throw 1D for the number of dice to throw. Then, throw that number of dice to determine the parsecs travelled. Finally, throw 1D6 to determine the direction of the misjump.

4,5: As in result "3", but only after 3D6 months in real time, one week in jumpspace time.

6,7: As in result "4,5", but the jump engine is fused solid, and must be completely replaced.

8: The ship exits jump exactly where it entered jump... 1D6 * (1D6 * (1D6 * 1D6)) years later in real time, one week in jumpspace time.

9,10: Timelost. Throw 2D for the number of dice to throw. Then, throw that number of dice to determine

the parsecs travelled. Throw 1D6 to determine the direction of the misjump. The ship exits jump 10D6 years later in real time, one week in jumpspace time.

11: Timelost. The ship comes out of jump when and where the Referee says it does.

12: Destroyed.

Most observers blame the bizarre weapons of the Ancient's Final War for messing up jumpspace to such an extent, especially within the Empty Quarter.

There is one other kind of zoned world, but it can only be found within the Zhodani Consulate:

Blue Zone: Similar to Green Zone worlds, but with special Droyne-tuned jump engines, you can make the jump with only half the fuel needed. This does not impact most Travellers, but liners looking to save on fuel costs value these systems.

There may well be other Blue Zone systems outside of the Consulate, but outsiders don't have the TL 21 Droyne/Zhodani technology needed to uncover them, and make them useful.

Counties and Churches: The Counties of the Empty Quarter

Theme: “Indian Summer”

Michael Jones & David Darling, *Amber*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtqNMGKnbug>

The Imperial Empty Quarter is divided into nine counties, and one Imperial Associated State. There are also three Imperial Systems (within the Imperium, but outside of any county) and eight Imperial Client States, formally outside of the Imperium but with trade and military treaties tying it to that massive interstellar government.

The County of Marhaban

The nobles of Marhaban County have elected scions of House Zogby to rule over them, and collectively represent them before the Duke and the Empress. While most nobles on Marhaban focus on financial deals, House Zogby has earned fame in the fields of poetry and the arts, eventually building a notable level of influence in Imperial intellectual circles. The current ruler of the County is Countess Dunya of House Zogby: like all of her ruling predecessors, she has chosen to surround herself with poets, writers, directors, and the occasional financier. Despite her power, the Countess prefers to remain veiled (in a high-tech and stylish fashion) in public occasions. She divides her time between the Ducal court on Nulinad, the County Court on Marhaban, and the transit time on her Jump6 yacht, the Ne’jema Melika (نكلمه مجن, “Star Queen”).

Like much of the local Imperial worlds, the region is quite poorly populated: even **Marhaban** herself, a very wealthy and comfortable world, only has about 3 million Arabs, six million Garamantes⁴, and one million Bwaps living on her. Unlike most Imperial Catholics, the Muslim inhabitants that dominate the world take their religion seriously. In another era, this could have been a powerful engine for war and aggression; but at this place and this time, the inhabitants directed their piety as a driver for a very high level of personal integrity, especially in financial matters.

The Arabs in this timeline, like the Jews, the Armenians, and the Overseas Chinese of our era, are a ‘market minority’, not a warrior race. Local Muslims benefited

during the Third Imperial Civil War (3031-3017), when large sums were deposited in Marhaban accounts for safekeeping. The local population was able to build on this start, to become the most important banking centre between Antares/Antares and Hebrin/Empty Quarter. As the money came in, several Bwap crèches were brought in to help manage it: the Bwap have grown to 10% of the planet’s population, and have established primarily Bwap settlements in the most humid parts of Marhaban. By AD 3324 – the current year – Marhaban became a local centre of Bwap culture, with strong connections to the Bwap communities within the Julian Protectorate as well as the major Imperial Bwap systems.

Another world of significance is **Mikik**. Due to jumpspace warping, it is quite difficult to exit this system, so earning a Red Zone⁵ warning to space travellers. Up to ~50 years ago, it was customary to exile large anti-Imperial populations to this world on one-way trips, where they can be then blissfully forgotten by interstellar civilization at large. Nowadays, the Imperium can’t spare the massive low-berth liners needed to exile millions anymore, so the Exile World designation has been removed from Mikik.

Currently, the motley groups of dissidents, heretics, freedom fighters, anarchists, and revolutionaries have managed to build a successful planetary society on Mikik. Interstellar contact is handled by a few sublight starships that run a circuit to **Thessalia**, with the crew and passengers put in low berth to wait out the 30-year journey, conducted at 10% lightspeed.

Of special interest to Imperial historians is the system of **Teutoburger Wald**. Originally named Samson, the system was – until the recent Denebi War – the site of the largest single Imperial defeat in history. At the time of the Julian War, the Samson system was home to a massive ‘Double Depot’, multiple orbiting battlestations, and the operational centre & staging area of the 1,500-ship Triumphant Fleet. However, Imperial complacency permitted the Julians to gather a substantial strike force, and destroy the Double Depot and a large percentage of the Imperial transport &

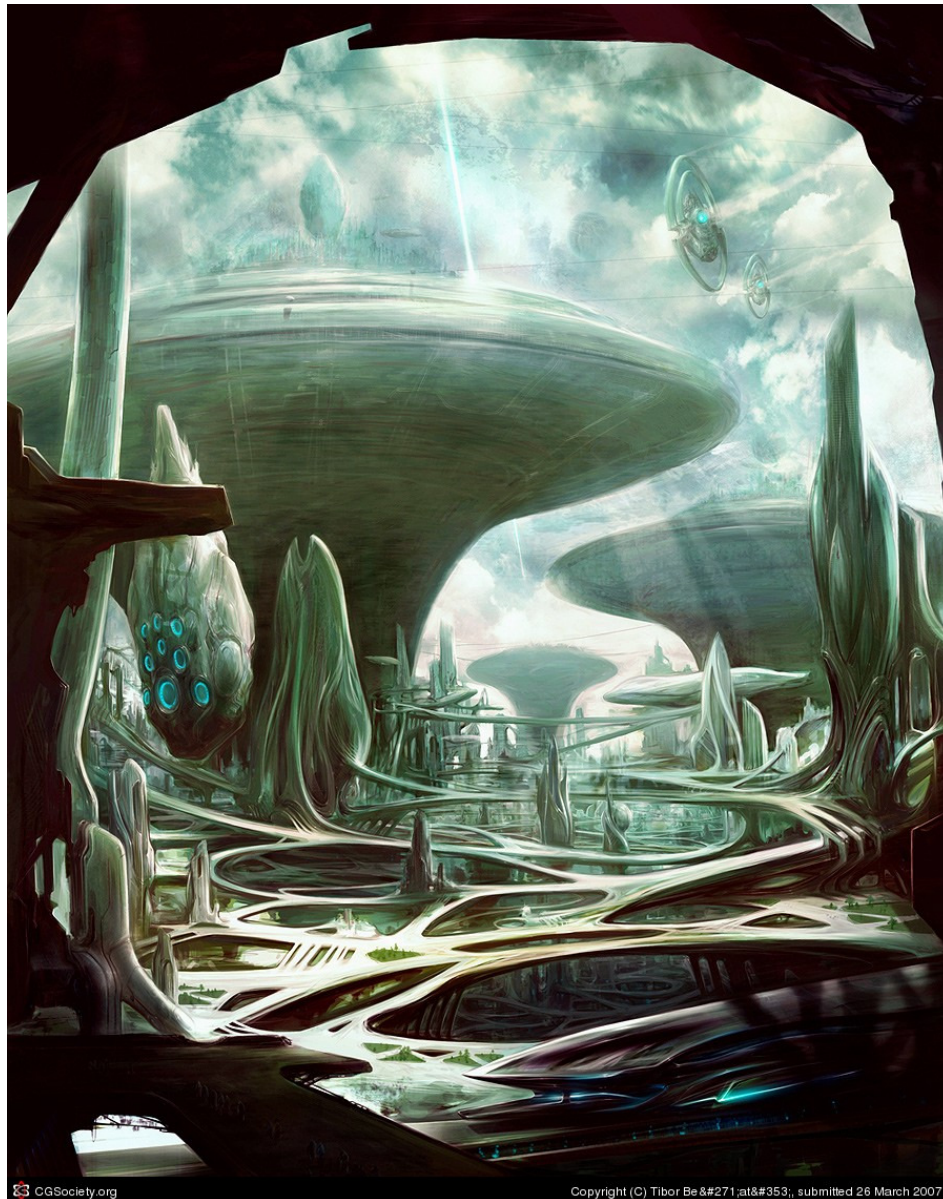
⁴ This is a race of North Africans that are now extinct in our timeline, but existed in Roman times.

⁵ In this universe, Red and Amber Zones are tied to jumpspace difficulty alone. Imperial blockades and dangerous worlds are unmarked on the starmaps.

resupply force as well in the Battle of Samson (April/May 3269).

The surviving Imperial forces and material was still able to conquer the Republic of Antares, but never truly

recovered from the blow. Even now, over a century later, dead ships, frozen corpses, shattered naval stations, and debris clouds are serious navigational hazards.



The architecture of the local Arabs and the immigrant Bwaps merge on the world of Marhaban, to create some surprising patterns.
The graphic is titled "Thistledown City" © Tibor Bedats. Please visit his gallery at <http://rawwad.cgsociety.org/gallery/> & <http://rawwad.blogspot.sk/>

St. David's Abbey is the centre of the Imperial Catholic Church in the sector. The sector does not rate a Cardinal, able to cast a vote on the next Imperial Pontiff, so an Archbishop directs his sector-wide flock from this system. As the major Court Religious of the region, religious and theological disputes between and among religions are adjudicated here. A small Church

Militant squadron of the Order of The Lady of the Sword is maintained for system protection, and several missionary and teaching orders maintain a local chapter house in this system. Moslems, Jews, Buddhists, Shintoist, the Imperial Cult (which remains semi-independent from Imperial Catholicism), Sun Worshippers & New Animists also maintain offices and

shrines in this system. Various flavours of Spiritual Atheism are interested in establishing mission houses here as well.

Orthodox (a.k.a. Catholics loyal to the old Trinity, the now-superseded Christian Bible, and the pre-Expansion Catholic teachings) and Ultra-Orthodox believers (dedicated followers of the old scriptures) are only occasionally permitted to visit the world. The last time any delegation from these two groups visited St. David's Abbey was in 3296, 28 years ago. Relations remain frosty.

Relations with the Third Imperium: In 3211, this county became the first within the Imperium to be lawfully ruled by a noble house outside of the Imperial Catholic Church. As part of the Imperium's ideology is grounded in this religion, the move was initially quite controversial: imagine the fuss of a U.S. state becoming an official absolute monarchy for an analogous example. Still, the experiment proved to be fairly successful (so far): in the century since then, about 5% of the Imperium's 347 counties have been placed under unbelievers, having sworn allegiance to the Catholic Iridium Throne in the name of their own gods,

instead of one from the Imperial Trinity: The Star Maker, The Universal Messiah, and/or the Queen of Heaven.

In the financial world, a large number of noble families and the more independent corporations keep a small portion of their wealth in Marhaban, largely for capital protection rather than tax efficiency or growth. Even a small bite from such a rich and huge pie is enough to make the county very wealthy indeed.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: While the Iridium Throne is satisfied with Marhaban County, the Seat of St. Peter is less so. The Imperium-recognized True Pope, Vieilo III, works steadily and quietly behind the scenes to bring back wayward counties – especially wealthy ones like Marhaban – into the fold of the Mother Church, and once again make the slogan “One Throne, One Altar” true on every world of the Imperium.

House Zogby keeps in close contact with Islamic* financiers and Moslem nobility in the Imperial Core to stay in the loop of court politics, and defend their rule against the politicking of the Church.



Gudina, March 3324. A broad selection of aliens are regular visitors to the fruit & vegetable stands near the starport, occasionally outnumbering the humans. The graphic is titled “Trip to the souk” © Andrzej Sykut. Please visit his gallery at <http://azazel.cgsociety.org/gallery/631686/> & <http://azazel.carbonmade.com>

The County of Gudina

Gudina County, the smallest (but not the least populous) County in the Empty Quarter, is administered by Scion Abdul-'Adl bin Qudamah Daaloub, in the name of his father, Count Qudamah

Daaloub, currently serving the Iridium Throne on Sylea, capital world of the Third Imperium. The County is traditionally a rank appointment: Count Qudamah is a powerful financier with connections throughout the Imperial Empty Quarter, Fornast, and Ley sectors.

This is a poor county: while there is occasional talk of merging Gudina County with a neighbour, the simple fact is that none of them want the bother of nursemaiding a money sink.

Instead of retaining his seat on the poor, Spanish, and heavily Imperial Catholic (Roman Rite) world of **Gudina**, the Scion has taken an uninhabited world, renamed it **El Quahira**, and has poured his father's money into it, trying to turn it into a viable Muslim Arab trading and commercial centre. Scion Abdul-'Adl has a hot & cold relationship with Countess Dunya, urging her to transfer some of her business to El Quahira, while repulsed by both her love of the arts and House Zogby's tolerance for a woman Archoness (head of household). The Count maintains an unofficial relationship with The Hidden Caliphate: while the organization is illegal within the Imperium, Empress Changpu tolerates his connections. She values his position as a go-between between the Caliphate and the Imperium, and likes the idea of underground assets she can call upon at need in The Noble's Dance.⁶

The county is something of a religious hodgepodge: in addition to the Catholic Gudina and the Islamic* El Quahira, **Iternum** is an attempt to resurrect the Roman pantheon, **Asaklon V** is a hedonistic centre of Dionysian religions and mystical Gnostic cults, and **Ci Xian** dwells on the Eastern Mysteries. **Toyama** is dominated by a Nihonese outshoot, a colony of militaristic Zen Buddhists who have dedicated their lives to a war against the green hell of their chosen world (instead of slicing up sentients). Using violence, careful observation, and their ingenuity, they have tamed one small island, which is more than has ever been done previously. If plans to upgrade their technology come to fruition, perhaps far more can be done soon....

Relations with the Third Imperium: Count Qudamah is a powerful man in the Imperial Court, and this means that the county has a certain amount of prestige other counties lack. However, the Imperial Court is not as glorious as it used to be, so the actual financial benefit that trickles to the county is quite small.

Unlimited money are the sinews of war.
Marcus Tullius Cicero

⁶ The current political situation simply does not warrant the term "Game of Thrones", where you win or you die. It's more like The Noble's Dance, where everyone positions themselves to get closer to money and power, but avoids naked grabs for power. "Your enemy today can be your ally tomorrow", so there are unspoken rules that everyone follows which restrict bloodshed to the little people. "When a noble break the rules that protect other nobles, he removes his own shield as well."

The Count has managed to win important taxation privileges for his demesne from the Emperor, and his son is working to turn El Quahira into a discreet tax shelter for wealthy commoners. However, the long-established financial competitors in Marhaban have squeezed the county out of many financial markets. So instead, Scion Abdul-'Adl has turned to certain grey-market financiers, who have quite a lot of money to clean: parties involved in current negotiations include

- the larger pirate, cartel, mafia & smuggling organizations,
- various illegal and semi-legal political, religious, and military organizations;
- black money deposits of various unnamed powerful families;
- funds that certain wealthy planetary governments prefer to keep hidden from the Imperial Ministry of Revenue

Outraged members of the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Civil Service have complained to the Duke: however, the sector leadership of these same organizations prefer that no action be taken, and whistleblowers have been harshly punished. Lesser nobility associated with the major factions have made it their business to harass and imprison 'libel-spewing pseudo-journalists and rumourmongers.' Duke Michael sees this issue as just one more problem pushed to the backburner: resolving the civil war in Nulinad County comes first.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: The Church keeps an eye on how this Muslim*ruler treats the Catholic subjects of Gudina. Catholic political manoeuvring has forced the Count to spend a token sum to provide protection for Gudina against the typical pirate/terrorist raider – enough to pay for one (1) decrepit System Defense Boat. For every credit spent the Count spends on Gudina (population c. five billion), 180,000 Cr is spent on El Quahira (population exactly 8644 – which rounds up to a 9 on the UWP listing).

The Church is considering dispatching a squadron of four patrol ships from the Military Order of St. Sebastian (based in Antares sector) to better protect the world. Scion Abdul-'Adl has explicitly forbidden such ships from entering his father's demesne, but if the world suffers once again from pirates, the Church will act, consequences be damned. Count Qudamah, serving the Imperial Catholic Empress directly on Sylea, has remained silent.

The County of Nulinad

The large and politically influential County of Nulinad is currently in turmoil, as a local dynastic conflict has suddenly shifted into a wave of assassinations, suicide bombings, and corporate violence. Much of the ruling nobility are trying to kill each other, gone into hiding, and/or have fled the County. Among the dead are the former Countess of Nulinad and her chosen heir: her surviving kinsmen are now just one more party of combatants.

Under the leadership of Duke Michael, Imperial forces have tightly contained the interstellar violence within

the county systems within the borders of the Empty Quarter, shifting the conflict to clearly marked battlefields far from population centers. However, while most of the population of the county is within the Empty Quarter, most of the systems are beyond her borders, and are subject to the jurisdiction of different Imperial Dukes. The other Dukes are not as interested in “cleaning up some other Duke’s mess”, yet they refuse to grant Duke Michael permission to send his forces to restore order to the county systems out of his sector. An appeal to the Empress is making its way to the Iridium Throne, but it will take many months before a reply arrives.



On Nulinad, you can find a rare example of the “Fantastic” architectural style outside of Delphi sector.

The graphic is titled “Alfenheim Overlook” © Jose Borges. Please visit his gallery at

<http://whatzitoya.deviantart.com/art/Alfenheim-Overlook-349868877>

In peaceful times, the County of Nulinad is a prosperous region of the Empty Quarter, with living standards only somewhat below that of the Imperial norm. The capital region on **Nulinad** is fairly cosmopolitan, with a broad smattering of alien races set against the predominantly human population. Outside of the capital city of Yulinz, the rest of the planet follows what is best described as a laid-back Mediterranean/Egyptian⁷ lifestyle, with a high-tech flavour of Imperial Catholic & Orthodox Catholic beliefs shaping the culture. The importance of saints and icons

⁷ Not today’s Egypt of hunger, the Muslim Brotherhood, and dictators. The picture in my mind’s eye is the old-school Egypt of belly dancers; big, close families; hookah parlors, and passionate street debates that *don’t* lead to massacres.

is hard to overestimate, and no work is done on the numerous saint’s days. The other major population centre in the region is **Zukhisa**; the local citizens there, who follow a separate culture and belief system, are eager to compete with the Nulinadians. Their world is even more pleasant to live in than Nulinad, with smaller deserts and a stronger gravity well, but the tech level still lags a bit.

A strong Pitth presence is present on **Nyambii Dal**. The friendly nature of the local psionic Jellyfish – the common nickname of the Pitth – has turned the world into something of a centre of mysticism, heretical secret societies, and vague, barely comprehensible belief systems.

"Do you know what I heard?
Blah blah, spiritual mumbo jumbo, blah blah,
something about space."

Toph, from
Avatar: The Last Airbender

The county extends beyond the borders of the Empty Quarter:

- one system in Antares Sector;
 - Kashikabiig, hex 3237, D667300-7
- four systems in Fornast Sector;
 - Imshuu, hex 3202, D999222-7
 - Allyn, hex 3103, B672868-9
 - Milshiish, hex 3104, B425265-D
 - Shaanar, hex 3204, C846767-5

- and eight systems in Ley Sector;
 - Amikel, hex 0101, A545833-9
 - Kagemushi, hex 0102, D435615-6
 - Econdora, hex 0201, A400674-E
 - Garakhu, hex 0202, C533666-6
 - Admidar, hex 0302, B570430-7
 - Irnak-Kodur, hex 0401, B536442-B
 - Ercuu, hex 0501, C540367-9
 - Gig, hex 0601, D876640-6

Relations with the Third Imperium: Historically, the County of Nulinad has always been willing to back the authority of the Iridium Throne: by doing this, the rulers of the county got a fair bit of Imperial spending and honours directed their way.



Ducal forces arrive at the deserts of Carthage, AD 3322.

The graphic is titled "Dreadnought"© Jeremiah Humphries. Please visit his gallery at <http://i-humphries.deviantart.com/art/Dreadnought-147022188> & <http://jeremiahdraws.blogspot.ca/>

As the Ducal throneworld, Nulinad system has a beefed-up system security flotilla, and is the home barracks of three Imperial Marine regiments.

Empress Changpu was expected to provide additional privileges to the county, but the outbreak of a county-wide war – fought primarily over which family of which world gets how much Imperial pork – has soured her on the idea. The Imperial military is doing a good job in restraining the local factions: but they should be ready to deploy across the sector at any time, instead of being tied down in peace-keeping actions in their home county. Some serious consideration is being made on relocating the sector capital to wealthy Hebrin.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: The Church is somewhat uncomfortable with the level of faith in this county (and isn't particularly thrilled by the level of piety of the rest of the Imperial Empty Quarter, either). Relations between Imperial Catholic and Orthodox Catholic believers are reached a stable peace, but large numbers of local Vilani refuse to be gently prodded and chided into the Imperial churches, despite the example of their more obedient brothers in Vland sector. Moreover, there are a distasteful number of heretical and Gnostic believers locally, claiming to have 'special spiritual knowledge' not available to the Imperial Catholic Magisterium: not influential enough to warrant a crackdown, but certainly enough to distract the ordinary believer from the True Path.



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The hollowed-out Mamshuusgir moonlet. Eninsish, AD 3291.

The graphic is titled "EON-Thistledown"© Mike Moir. Please visit his gallery at

<http://mmoircgsociety.org/gallery/>

The County of Cleon

With thirty-one systems spread across two subsectors, The County of Cleon is the largest County in the Empty Quarter. It is also the most populous, with roughly 18 billion inhabitants. This sprawling county is highly fragmented socially and culturally, and it is difficult to get any agreement among the inhabitants. This volatile region of space dissolves into civil war with remarkable ease, and it is difficult for any Count to keep the peace.

Fortunately, Count Frej of House Fassbinder is up to the job, and is almost as good at deal-making, forging agreements, and bringing feuding factions together as Michael II, the current Duke. Born a wealthy commoner, he was raised to the Nobility for his many political services in Core and Dagudashaag Sectors as both a powerbroker and a rainmaker. Count Frej focused his attention on the world of **Cleon** and – after building up the support of the local elites – is ‘frog-marching it into the future’ with lots of money and some stiff laws. There has been a terrorist backlash, but the Count trusts his personal forces and the supportive planetary government to eliminate them. Local law levels, police and military patrols, and covert surveillance have risen sharply in response.

The world of Cleon herself, with her cities and parks being torn apart and rebuilt to be an attractive model Imperial world, is worth a look from the wandering Traveller. Caution is advised, due to some unrest rooted in the rapid pace of change enveloping the world.

Outside of Cleon system, the vigorous Count has been working (with a fair degree of success) to turn the region into a prosperous & peaceful powerhouse of production. He has the knack of knowing how far to push a negotiation, sniffing out the right pressure points to build a stable deal, understands when to let sleeping dogs lie, and when to grease the right palm. Most notably, he has proven to be a good student on the use and misuse of violence for political goals. Count Frej plans to return to Sylea in triumph within the decade, and reinvigorate his broader political networks in the service of the Empress and the Imperium as a whole. He is grooming his firstborn daughter to rule the region as his Scion when he returns to his old stomping grounds on Sylea. Right now, Scion Elsa is directing the construction of a new County Naval Base over Cleon, and is hoping to get enough Ducal support and financing to quickly upgrade it to a full Imperial Naval/Scout base.

Unusual systems within Cleon County include the heavily patrolled and intensely studied Namgaleshim-

infected systems⁸ at **Sao Sapele** and **Delta Three**; the remarkable and extremely varied asteroid-based cultures of **Eninsish**, and the resort system of **Nahur**, where Duchy celebrities go to be seen. At one time, the world of **Blackglobe** was the most highly classified site in the Imperium, as it was the sole source of intact black globe technology: but with the removal of all the original Ancient black globes and successful Imperial reverse-engineering, it ceased to be of any great technological significance, and the unusual, functional TL12-15 Ancient ruins are now open to the public.

Relations with the Third Imperium: The county-folk have very little concern for the Imperium, and a lot of hostility and suspicion for their neighbours. The strongly pro-Imperial Count is attempting to rally the county around the Imperial Starburst as their shared point of loyalty: but he faces that classic local response, ‘Why should we?’ Answering this question in a lasting way that touches the hearts of her subjects, with far less bribery and violence than her father is currently using, is rapidly becoming the question that will drive the life of his daughter, Scion Elsa. It will be difficult to modify the numerous bargains that her wheeling & dealing father has made: deals that may well be rooted in nothing but credits and bullets, but deals that have materially improved the county all the same.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: The Church has very little influence or authority here: there are no indigenous religions that have a similar level of authority. This means that there are few religious controls on the lives of the local inhabitants, but this also means that there are few charitable organizations, few reasons to associate beyond the bounds of family and business, no community that crosses the bounds of family and locality, and no transcendent vision that calls forth dedication or endurance beyond self-serving or tribal desires.

House Fassbinder is a fairly irreligious Catholic family, generally just offering lip-service and token donations to Church causes. However, they are business-oriented, and building good repeat business relationships absolutely demands a basis of trust and a respect for property and contracts, something that will work when ‘enlightened self-interest’ recommends that you jam a knife into your business associate. Nothing but the expensive tools of bribes and force of arms are currently holding the county together: holding your nose and paying for four or five missionary brigades to get some religion into the skulls of the locals is looking like a cheaper long-term solution.

⁸ For more detail, see the book Bloom, by Wil McCarthy.

The Imperial Catholic Church abandoned the region long ago because of its fruitlessness: a well-trained missionary may found 1000 small churches, shrines, and meeting-houses in his lifetime in other regions, but would be hard-pressed to even create two in this part of space. The Magisterium sees no reason why they should waste the talents of their best men on empty gestures, when entire counties cry out for Church guidance in other parts of the Imperium. They also see no reason why they should show any favour for a family that cares little for Church teaching or religious authority.

Without Church assistance, House Fassbinder continues to promote the worship of the Demigod Cleon, founder of the Third Imperium. The official leaders of the Imperial Cult reject local worshippers, priests, and shrines of the genius of Cleon. One notable official, Bishop-General Hangiliban, wrote of the “ignorant provincialists, unable to truly understand the Sacred Majesty of Cleon, and unable to determine the true and ancient rituals needed to bring the Spirit of the Imperium into the cold hearts of men.” Even so, the Demigod is fairly popular in the system named after him, and his shrines are well tended and often visited by the locals.



KwaSwidi, the County Palace on Pacifica. The secretive Mathebula family has yet to allow outsiders to enter.

The graphic is titled “The Sanctuary” © Jose Borges. Please visit his gallery at <http://whatzitoya.deviantart.com/art/The-Sanctuary-359108188>

The County of Pacifica

This quiet and peaceful County is ruled by Count Dumisani, a member of one of the oldest ruling families of the Imperium, House Mathebula. House Mathebula, a Zulu family prominent in Lishun, Antares, and the Empty Quarter, holds eight counties, with Pacifica being the least important among them. Precisely because of its relative obscurity, the Mathebula clan uses the region as a hideaway for certain people and objects best kept out of the public eye ‘for the good of the House’. Count Dumisani, an older man, is the unofficial ‘keeper of secrets’ for the powerful dynasty, and dislikes anything that might draw the County of Pacifica into the Imperial news cycle.

Until two centuries ago, the central world of the county was **Arakaad**, but foolish economic and political policies by the ruling Count of the era led to a great loss of planetary wealth. The subjects of Arakaad remain hostile to Mathebula rule, which in response rules the worlds as a dictatorship, and relocated the county seat to **Pacifica**. Pacifica herself is an archetypical Noble world, primarily populated by household relatives, allied clans, sworn families and related minor houses. Most of the planet’s labour is on further development of the small world, but as the environmental and agricultural success of the world grows more assured, the place is growing into a minor cultural and artistic centre as well.

Relations with the Third Imperium: Excluding Arakaad, the Imperium is highly respected here: and even in Arakaad, most of the hostility to the Imperium can be directly tied to House Mathebula, not to the Imperium per se. News, symbols, and debates that affect the entire interstellar community easily gain an audience here, and there is a fascination with the pomp and pageantry of the aristocracy – as well as a strong market for rumours on noble misbehaviour. PCs with an aristocratic connection – even a knighthood – can bank on extra respect and authority here.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: Practically the entire population of the county adheres to one of the recognized Imperial Catholic sects, rites, or cults; but, while public attendance is strong, actual belief is rather superficial and pro forma. Few are interested in dedicating any more money or time than the bare minimum needed to be a recognized believer with the grasp of the basic doctrines of the faith. This makes the County of Pacifica a practical hotbed of fervent fanaticism, compared to the rest of the Imperial Catholic worlds within the Empty Quarter.



The roofed farming fields of the world of Kurayoshi put the soil to work in feeding the population, while retaining the vital water needed for life.

The graphic is titled "Farming unit 2" © Giorgio Grecu. Please visit his gallery at

<http://shardanas.deviantart.com/#/art/Farming-Unit-2-196602237?hf=1> & <http://shardbook.blogspot.ca/>

The County of Kurayoshi

The County of Kurayoshi is one of the larger Counties, with 26 systems, with a wide variety of Nihonese, Chinese, Arab, Anglo, Arab, and French residents. An isolationistic/xenophobic culture dominates the sole high-population world of the region, **Gimushi**. Excluding Vilani-influenced Gimushi, Kurayoshi County is dominated by the Nihonese culture of the Empty Quarter, pursuing a vision of life that is at very elegant, very hierarchal and very pitiless.

Kurayoshi is the only TL 15 system in the entire sector. The local culture is incredibly technophilic, and is the source of all the high-tech gadgetry, robotics, and weaponry within the Imperial Empty Quarter (and hosts a vast and highly classified Imperial Research Centre.) Also unlike most of the Quarter, Kurayoshi is tied into the general Imperial economy, with strong trading and supply links to important firms as far as Antares, Sylea, and Vland; and is a notable fashion, and music nexus as well for the sector as well. The ruling Noble, Count Jiro no Kurayoshi, is a grim and harsh ruler in the Shogunate style who demands – and

receives – total loyalty, absolute obedience and uncompromising excellence from his clan and subjects.

The vast majority within the Imperium loathes cybernetics, seeing it as either a form of rebellion (Vilani) or innately soul-killing and evil (many Terrans, including most Imperial Catholics). In contrast, the Kurayoshese are very comfortable with cybernetics and have a Datamesh that is simply amazing in complexity and depth. Middle-class individuals have a build-in data link to their brain, permitting easy access to the Datamesh. Very high-bandwidth and sophisticated Datamesh work still requires a physical connection. The poorest often survive off of their earning in virtual games and contests, typically as soldiers, servants and adventurers in the employ of a clan. A high degree of obedience and loyalty is rewarded by serving full-time in realspace, instead of virtual space.

As part of their tribute to the Iridium Throne, the Count provides a regiment of highly trained cybernetic soldiers to serve the Duke: this infantry force, the Third Kurayoshi Line Regiment, is the most decorated Imperial unit in the sector. It has twice been selected as

the Empty Quarter Guard Regiment, providing security for the Imperial Palace on Sylea. On both occasions, their service was an occasion for controversy within the distrustful Imperial Moot.⁹

Beyond Kurayoshi, there are several systems of note, such as **Diefenbaker**, home of Diefenbaker Works, an important starship hull manufacturer for the sector; **Sio'mawasi**, where an entire human culture has managed to thrive under the earth, escaping their poisonous sky; **Narada**, where the human population have chosen to live in a partially flooded environment, enjoying the health benefits of the waters; and **Sarbaz's Tomb**, an official Imperial pilgrimage site where the greatest hero of the Empty Quarter has been laid to rest.



Cloud valleys of the Iwasski small gas giant. Local spacers swear by Iwasski, insisting that any ship refuelling from this world three times consecutively is certain to never misjump for a full year. Whether this is true – and, if it true, why is it so – is a matter for the Referee and the Players to determine together.

The graphic is titled “Neptune Image” © Matthew Attard. Please visit his gallery at <http://priteebboy.deviantart.com/art/Solar-Scapes-art-slideshow-144166327>

Relations with the Third Imperium: The Imperium is respected as the Defender of Humaniti in this county, with Imperial laws, traditions, and nobles respected by nearly the entire population. The Count's authority is nearly absolute in the county, and the demand for unstinting loyalty to the Imperium (and the Count that represents it locally) is nearly inescapable.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: Variations of Shintoism & Zen Buddhism, centred on Kurayoshi,

⁹ It would be amusing to hear what the fictional Major Motoko Kusanagi thinks of the Third Imperium.

make up the traditional beliefs of the county. These faiths are within the fold of the truly *universal* Imperial Catholic Church is *very* broad-minded on the subject of doctrines and gods (or the lack thereof). However, while the forms of the religion are followed on rites of passage and public holidays, there is little real interest in doctrine or spiritual truths; even the local prophets, hermits, bodhisattva, and high priests are either echo chambers for the political authorities, competitors for devotees (and the money they bring), or at best, isolated esoteric mystics detached from reality.

The Lazisar Star Directorate

An Imperial Member State, the Lazisar Star Directorate gained their freedom from Imperial rule during a major anti-Imperial uprising in the 3200s. The government was quite isolationistic and very anti-Imperial for over eighty years, with relations softening only at the turn of the century. With her recent change in status to an Imperial Member State in 3318 – six years ago – the **Lazisar** system has again been brought under Imperial authority, but with a lot more autonomy than most Imperial systems.

The Lazisari are an eclectic mix of artificial human races, broadly interfertile with the Terrans (and, not so successfully, with the Vilani.) The results of innumerable Master Race experiments reside here, in exile far from the Imperial Core and Terran Space. There is a steady flow of immigration from assorted cast-offs and persecuted experiments, looking for a safe and quiet home to live out their lives, have families, and build a civilization. While most of the Übermensch are incredibly strong and astonishingly smart, some have unusual geneered powers – like the ability to live in vacuum, or underwater. The more extremely re-engineered individuals have extraordinary dietary requirements (and – due to energy requirements – are highly vulnerable to starvation and the absence of certain supplements), but can do amazing things, as super-soldiers or augmented near-human psions.

Despite the amazing abilities of her citizenry, Lazisar doesn't have an awesome tech level, nor does she have a greater cultural or economic impact than her population and current tech level dictate. Still, these two systems were able to defeat two Imperial attempts to forcibly reconquer them with limited technology and wealth, and even now, still retain substantial independence from most Imperial rules and authorities. Perhaps all those genetic superpowers are good for something after all.

Relations with the Third Imperium: Relations are cool and formal between the Directorate and the rest of the Imperium. Respect is shown only to the Imperial and the Ducal families of the sector: other nobles are treated as persona non grata. Imperial military inspections are tolerated, and the Imperial Credit grudgingly accepted, but Imperial traders need to stick to the letter of the law.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: After the failures of Imperial military force, it was the Imperial Catholic Church who brokered first an armistice, then a political resolution between the Imperium and the Lazisari. The Church has managed to convert some of the political capital gained into a small but growing church, with the Cathedral of Sol Invictus now being built in the city of Layoni. All forms of humaniti (and non-human sophonts) can join one of the many long-established Imperial Rites, or (with the Church's blessing, easily given) just found their own recognized

Imperial Sect or Cult: Sol Invictus caters to the rapidly growing number of genetic super-soldiers attracted to the more militaristic religious views of the Metelen Rite of the Imperial faith. Beyond the Metelen Rite, Imperial Catholicism has zero impact in the lives of local inhabitants, who are far more devoted to their genetic subgroup than to any religious system.

The County of Iswaladan

The twenty-three system County of Iswaladan is primarily located in Ley Sector, in Nightmare and Noir Deep subsectors. Only two worlds of the county are found within the Empty Quarter, neither of which is of any great importance. The poorly populated and rather low-tech County of Iswaladan is of little significance either: but **Ryukyu** is an important port of the Hebrin – Newsphere – Shamokin trade route. (Note that Shamokin is called Didshep/Ley Sector in the Official Traveller, 1105 Imperial universe.)



Most of the permanent population of Ryukyu resides here, in the city of Son Lit.

Safe from the poisonous atmosphere, the two independent habitats sell some minerals via automated mines to passing free traders, as well as providing starport services to all.

The graphic is titled "Cities Within"© Maurice Graham. Please visit his gallery at

http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=97500 & <http://osiris9creations.webs.com/>

The County of Hebrin

The Hebrin system is the shining star of the sector. Initially populated by odd Islamic* sects, unorthodox mullahs, and utopian societies, **Hebrin** has long had a welcoming attitude to visitors, strangers, and new ideals. Currently, the world is most famous for hosting a vast mishmash of cults, sects, and religions tied to Abrahamic monotheism, which are united only in their hostility to the Imperial Catholic Church.

The sharp trading skills of the locals, along with an eye for value, have blazed the way to an enduring prosperity in the desert sands. The County of Hebrin has often become an independent Imperial state, the Caliphate of Hebrin, but right now, the general population is satisfied with direct Imperial rule.

Currently, they are eagerly mapping out a strategy to quickly move up to TL 15 – and put those Kurayoshese in their place.

Other notable systems within the County are: **Mugama**, a comfortable but reclusive and tightly controlled African-dominated system, linked to House Mathebula; **Omerta**, a formerly notorious human pirate haven that was hammered by the Imperium and turned into an Imperial exile world for criminals; **Schulz**, an internal Imperial exile world for particularly troublesome thinkers, nobles, and activists; **Rethmnon**, a colony of artists who focus on exotic starship design and production, and **The Golden Ring**, a system where humaniti has chosen to inhabit the unusual ring system of a gas giant rather than a proper planet.



The city of Asyut, capital of the bone dry yet incredibly wealthy world of Hebrin.

The graphic is titled "Sea of Lights"© Robert Maschke. Please visit his gallery at

<http://airage.deviantart.com/art/sea-of-lights-30858064>

Relations with the Third Imperium: Relations tend to run hot and cold between the Hebrinites and the Imperial government. Sometimes the Imperium is seen as an alien oppressor, a creature of over-pampered and over-privileged aristocrats. Other times, it's the binding

force of human civilization, the source of justice for the traveller and the sturdy shield protecting our families from evil space aliens. A local may ridicule the Lords of Space, while at the same time carefully imitate the

business fashions and corporate fads established by the aristocratic corporate moguls.

For their part, local Imperial nobles tend to be rather exasperated with the Hebrinites. The system is the wealthiest in the sector, but her loyalty to the Imperium seems to shift with her desert winds. Her penchant for temporarily seceding at inconvenient times is well-known, but the taxes she provides (as well as the powerful allies her money can buy) deters any serious Imperial punishment. For now, her political fickleness remains within Imperial margins of tolerance: she leaves but can always be persuaded to return, and while Hebrin has often been an independent system for a few years, she has never switched allegiances to a foreign power.

Referee: There are rather more civil conflicts and political disorder within this Imperium than in the Official Imperium. At any given time, about 5%-10% of Imperial worlds has seceded from the Imperium; is re-joining it (forcibly, willingly, or as a negotiated settlement); is in a local conflict with Imperial neighbours; is in an interstellar civil war; is economically imploding; is in an economic boom; is in the grip of a religious mania; is under Imperial martial law; or is in a state of pure anarchy. However, while there is a great and varied range of local and regional conflicts, there are no Imperium-wide conflicts.

Moreover, even the most stubborn secessionists tend to re-join the Imperium after a decade or two, even if their military is stronger than what the local Imperial authorities can muster up – the advantages of the Imperial economy – even in its current long decline – are just too good to pass up for long.

In Hebrin Country, there is a strong tradition of dissent, unconformity, publically celebrated whistleblowers, and rebellions both low-key and countywide. While corporations and powerful families are occasional targets, the arguments and grievances usually centre around the exercise and abuse of governmental authority, from town mayors to the Empress herself. Violence is typically avoided, at least in conflicts with planetary, county and Imperial governments, as those nations are going to win in those conflicts.¹⁰ Instead, other ways are used to send the message.

There is also a tradition of lesser magistrates – priests, local managers, planetary governments and the Count

¹⁰ But as the Imperial economy continues to weaken, and the source of reliable funding becomes locally rooted, the possibility of actual, violent rebellions increases...

– ignoring or circumventing higher orders. As these men typically have greater pull than the typical random discontent, they can and do create greater and more painful headaches for those in higher authority.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: The current religious climate is shifting rapidly, to the detriment of Imperial Catholic supremacy. Due to the prominence of Moslems and Jews in the region who stubbornly refuse to join the Universal Faith, the Church has never gained the universal allegiance she enjoyed on the majority of Imperial worlds. But over the last century, the situation has deteriorated drastically, with radical Orthodox Catholics – rapidly growing in number, actually breaking away from any allegiance to the Throne of St. Peter. The entire diocese is disintegrating rapidly.

While the official Trinity of the Stars celebrated by the current Imperial Catholic Church centres on the Star Maker, the Queen of Heaven, and The Chosen One, there has always been a small group of throwbacks that disagreed with this shift in authoritative Imperial Catholic Doctrine. Over the centuries, they have been accommodated successfully, so long as they recognize the validity of other systems of beliefs and admit that there are many roads to heaven, all within the generous folds of the Church.

But an ancient form of the Exclusivist Heresy – the insistence that there is only *one* way to please God, and all other ways lead to hell – has surge here to such an extent that the local Imperial Catholic establishment is crumbling swiftly. Modern, up-to-date Bibles broadly rejected for translations of ancient, obsolete Bibles, and the permissive Trinity of the Stars is increasingly rejected for primitive, narrow-minded beliefs in an uncreated Father, a single begotten Son, and the transcendent Holy Spirit.

Of all the regions of the Imperial Empty Quarter, the County of Hebrin is the only site of widespread strong faith: and it is a faith diametrically opposed to the Imperial faith. What people believe shapes their actions, and while the industrious behaviour of the residents of Hebrin does help in wealth (and thus taxes) there are some troubling implications as well.

Despite the cries for support from the County Bishop, no aid has been forthcoming: the upper reached of the Magisterium is uninterested in the doings of some distant county. Even if the entire county leaves the Church, so what? There are dozens of counties in newly conquered regions that need proper indoctrination, and the Universal Church cannot be threatened by

some isolated throwbacks. For its part, the Iridium Throne couldn't care less about some invisible King who claims to own the entire universe, so long as the taxes come in: and on this point, Hebrin is far from the most troublesome thorn in the Empress' side.

The County of Newsphere

Up to 3287, the County of Newsphere was known as the County of Irash, named after the notable Vilani-dominant system of **Irash**. **Belumar**, a wealthy and pleasant Terran-dominant world at the time, was providing increased competition in trade and weakening Irash's hold on her markets. Seeing the writing on the wall, Irash's government launched a ferocious war against Belumar. The war raged for a single year, long enough to trash the entire cluster and dividing the subsector Imperial fleet into Belumaran and Irashi factions (enraging the Duke, among other things.) By the time three subsector fleets from Ley Sector arrived to ram a ceasefire down the throats of the combatants, over two billion were dead, Belumar's atmosphere was completely poisoned, not a single starport remained intact, and the economy of the region was hammered flat.

Now, almost forty years later, the region is still struggling to recover from the war. Imperial terraforming teams have done a good job cleaning up Belumar, but they still have a long way to go. Irash has

managed to restart their interstellar economy, but the trickle of free traders and the occasional liner are only a pale reflection of the past. Major funding poured into **Newsphere**, building up the new regional capital.

Countess Ghazala of House Palijo – the younger sister of the Countess of Hebrin – has recently inherited the county from the previous ruling house. The Countess continues to build up Newsphere as a place of peace and free trade, where the Belumarans, Irashi, and the 'new men' of Newsphere can make a new and better county out of the ruins of the old. However, her focus on this system to the near-exclusion of other systems has stroked envious attitudes across the county.

Despite their attitude, the other governments are unable to do anything about it – excluding **Signet**. This system's ruling family, House Stoaf, has developed a viable, Class-A starport, capable of building TL 9 jumpships (despite the TL 7 nature of her industrial base). The population has had to sacrifice greatly to build and maintain the starport – and pay for the needed off-world expertise and goods, as well. House Stoaf hopes that increased trade and ship production will bring in the monies needed to bring the entire planet to TL 9 in a century. Until then, the high law level (and the high taxes) will continue.



House Ghazala's family starport on Newsphere. While the Imperial starport handles most of the planetary traffic, this private starport is useful for keeping certain secrets from prying eyes.

The graphic is titled "Port Hooke"© Jeremiah Humphries. Please visit his gallery at

<http://j-humphries.deviantart.com/art/Port-Hooke-341231331>

Relations with the Third Imperium: Newsphere ties to the Imperium were good before the Irashi War of 3287. Imperial support for cleaning up the mess has kept ties strong, but the widespread discontent towards the investments in Newsphere (and lack of technological investment elsewhere) has somewhat cooled pro-Imperial attitudes. Several Barons have appealed for justice over the head of the Countess, to the Duke – but he is busy with other matters, and no interest in getting involved in a strictly minor-league local mess.

Relations with the Imperial Catholic Church: After the Irashi War, several missionary groups took the opportunity to spread their religion in the area. At present, the Imperial Catholic Church is a quickly expanding minority religion overall, rising to majority status on several worlds – including Newsphere.

However, while the religion has grown in raw numbers, the depth of belief is still very shallow overall. Without donations to the poor (effectively purchasing their support) and the followings of a few charismatic clergymen, the religion would be in a far weaker position than it is. To better ground the converts in the Imperial Faith, several Imperial Catholic orders have established several chapterhouses and institutes on **Saint Ashley** to better serve the increasing Catholic population. These orders are far more focused on delivering food, housing, medical care, and technological assistance than they are in spreading the rather nebulous Imperial Catholic doctrine.

More intellectually-minded religious orders are expected to arrive in the coming years: naturally, they ground their teachings in the reasoning of the rational mind, and their aim is to guide others to a peaceful, well-balanced and prosperous life. This is in contrast to the Church-rejecting missionaries seeping in from Hebrin County to coreward, where a holy book, not careful reasoning, is held to be the guide to a good life; even the very definition of ‘a good life’ is tied to unstinting obedience to a demanding ethical standard to gain an eternal afterlife, rather than the very practical Imperial Catholic goal of a pleasant and comfortable existence in the here and now.

The Hebrin Focus

While the counties of the Empty Quarter are detailed, the intended battleground is the County of Hebrin.

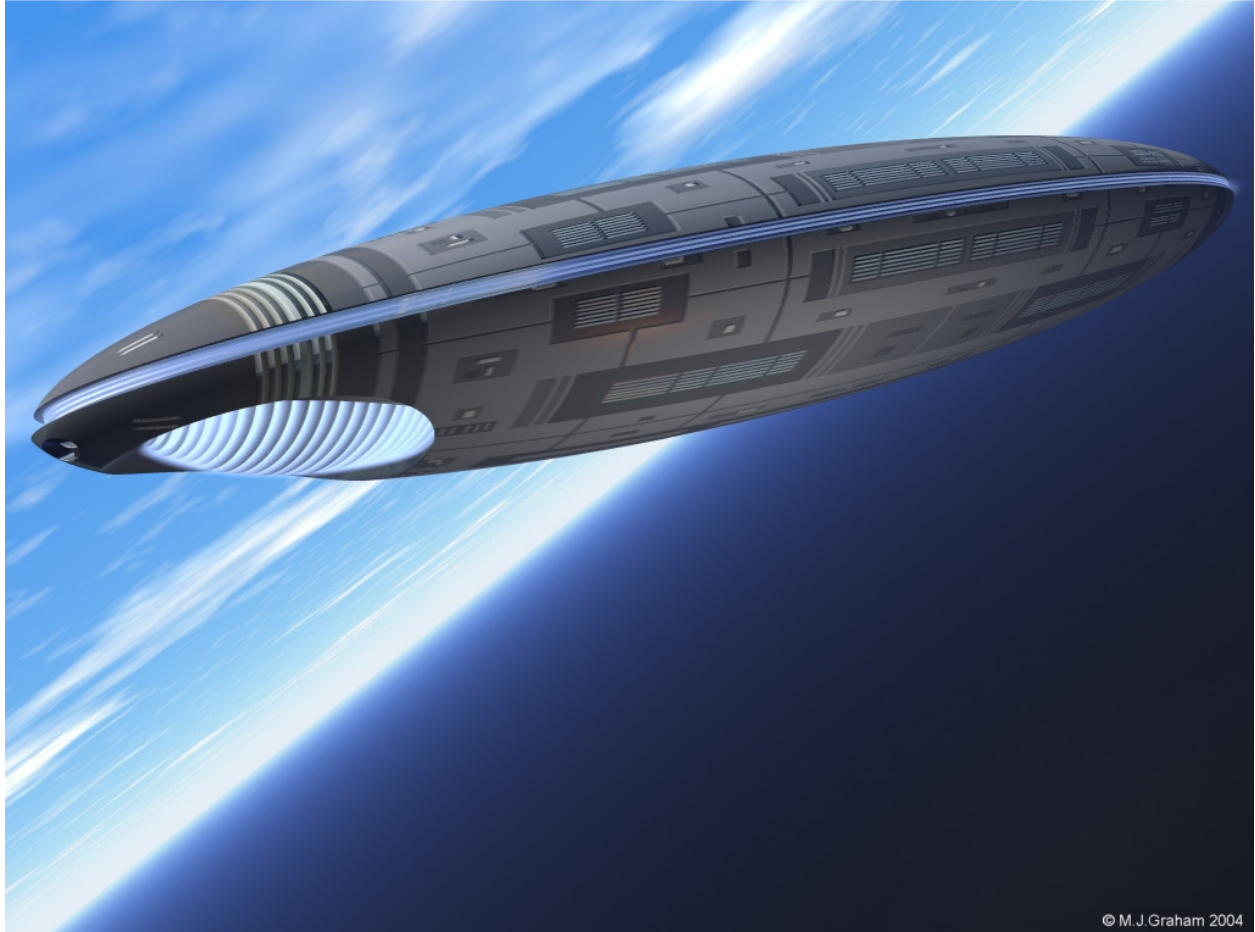
That was then: The typical Imperial citizen does not live a bad life, not even in these sunset days of the Imperium. The Vilani tend to live more structured lives, tied to the needs of his clan, while the Terran life has more risk and uncertainty. But both enjoy a familial culture, an easygoing religion that emphasises unity and compassion, and the strong protection of the Imperial Navy. There is still a genuine sense of community, a meaning to life, and productive work across most Imperial societies.

This is now: The problem is that it’s harder and harder to gain profits in interstellar trade you can’t personally manage. The heavy levels of taxation have led to increasing corruption, which steadily weakens the bonds of trust the farther you go from home. A religion of little more than nice feelings, good food, and flashy ceremonies can go a long ways in prosperous times, but frays and crumbles under the pressure of hard times.

The very lack of spiritual demands and restrictions made by the Imperial Catholic religion, coupled with its focus on supporting the Imperial power structure ‘for the sake of peace and unity’, has made it repulsive to people who have experienced severe injustice first hand. These people on the margin (physical margins, like the Empty Quarter, or social margins, like the poor, isolated reform-minded nobles, or free traders) are increasingly open to harder faiths with a stronger emphasis on righteousness and judgement. The first large society of independently-minded Imperials who have experienced financial success, thanks to their tough-minded morality and rigorous business dealings, happen to have arisen in the County of Hebrin, within the Empty Quarter.

So far, the Imperium has managed to convince them to remain under the Iridium Throne, tolerates their rejection of Imperial Catholicism, and taxes them more lightly than in the Imperial Core. Their lack of flash, tied to religious demands of modesty, helps shield them from covetous eyes from the Imperial Core. But one wonders how long local elites will tolerate Imperial bonds, and how long a weakening empire will restrain herself from reaching for Hebrinite wealth.

Counties and Churches: Beyond the Imperial Borders



© M. J. Graham 2004

A typical warship of the Julian Protectorate. The pure Asimi lines point to the strong Vilani influence that shapes local starship design. Solstice, AD 3322.

The graphic is titled "Star Frigate 2" © Maurice Graham. Please visit his gallery at

http://www.renderosity.com/mod/gallery/index.php?image_id=733214 & <http://osiris9creations.webs.com/>

Theme: "Cameroon Border Post"

Hans Zimmer, *Tears of the Sun*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD8WXxO11wU>

The New Vargr Wars

Both sides of the Lesser Rift was Imperial territory during both the Vilani Empire and the New Imperium: but after the devastating self-destruction of the New Imperium was completed by 2946, the Vargr found the damaged societies of the sector to be easy pickings.

Casual murder & routine theft were backed by (comparatively) high technology, and – outside of military strongholds, warships, and weapons – the

Vargr were not inclined to improve the local economy at all, nor were they clued in enough to encourage their human prey to increase their wealth for occasional Vargr fleeing. "Why should we give their erstwhile oppressors any mercy at all? It's far more satisfying to teach them who's the *real* master now!" The subjected human worlds were not obliterated, but instead kept poor and subjugated: Vargr get more charisma when they have vast populations under their claws, but owning vast numbers of uninhabited radioactive ruins grants no charisma. And of course, more humans means more occasions for hunting.

The Droyne of these worlds were not particularly aggressive: this did not spare them from regular theft

of their artifacts and technology, for transport back to the major Vargr worlds. However, it was the Vilani humans who created and enslaved the Vargr in this universe, not the Ancients: so while the Droyne would be killed if they caused trouble, the Vargr would not go out of their way to harm and humiliate them, as they would the humans – especially the Vilani, who dominated the region.

Most of the inhabited worlds of the Empty Quarter In the Empty Quarter, the mainworld of hex 1308, now called Ksedhing, was planned to be the first of the Great Lairs of the sector. Simultaneous colonization and terraforming initiatives were launched, to reshape the world into a Vargr paradise, invigorating to health and laden with difficult, delicious prey to hunt and kill.

The sector was still being developed, so there were few local resources available when the New Vargr Wars began in 3160. As the Imperium waged a war of extermination to retake lost human worlds, they discovered that the real Vargr production & population centres were dozens of parsecs coreward of the fighting. Imperial warships were a predictable quality, based on tech levels and classes; the Vargr warships were of wildly variable quality, as was the level of their organization and leadership. Imperial progress was steady but slow, with the occasional sharp setback and unexpected disaster.

Despite the fact that this was a genocidal war, only a few nearby worlds were solidly Vargr: and these worlds were defended with stolen or unearthed Ancient/Droyne weaponry that was devastating... when properly maintained and used. Even today, the near orbit of Ksedhing is littered with dead Imperial warships. Many were simply cracked open like an egg, while others are translucent starships, white ghosts floating among the stars. Across the sector, you can find dozens of perfectly preserved ships, entombed in solid blocks of orange crystal, like insects in amber: they are the result of the once-common Ancient timeskipping missiles, beloved by Vargr raiders of the era for their perfect accuracy and effectiveness against any spaceborne starship entering or exiting jumpspace.

For most of the war, the most productive Vargr worlds were too deep into the Extents for any Imperial fleet to survive the trip. Both the Imperium and the Vargr drew on stocks of found Ancient weapons, but the Imperium's stocks were largely depleted – as three vast Imperia has used them up aggressively – while there were more untouched Ancient relics and stores to be found in the Vargr Extents.

But as the decades wore on, the better organizations of the humans started to be felt in the battlefield. The Imperium still couldn't push deep into the Extents, but their forces were more resilient. There were – and are – Vargr geniuses who can easily grasp the design of Ancient equipment, but they are scattered & disorganized: what these Vargr learn tends to die with them. Human discoveries, on the other hand, are rapidly disseminated, and used as a foundation for better understanding. The Vargr packs kept on making the same mistakes over again, but the Imperium could learn over time.

Despite this, the Third Imperium lost territory when it was again convoluted in a civil war. But unlike the civil war that destroyed the New Imperium, the coreward Imperial forces remained united, avoiding the Core controversies and husbanding their resources, especially their precious Ancient equipment. The Vargr attacks were as chaotically organized as ever, with their ships armed with a mix of near-magically effective, one-shot Ancient weapons and trashy, indifferently maintained Vargr equipment.

When Sector Admiral Count Unio became head of the Vland Fleet in 3193, he gained control of the largest caches of stored Ancient equipment in Imperial possession: and thanks to careful politicking, many other Coreward Admirals were willing to contribute a substantial portion of their irreplaceable Ancient treasures to his care. Instead of betraying their trust and wasting his resources by proclaiming himself emperor and joining in the grab for political power, he organized several teams to understand the equipment, and lay out a plan that leveraged each piece of Ancient weaponry, tool and device to its maximum effectiveness against the Vargr.

One of the key factors allowing the offensive of the Wars of the Claw was the fact that a substantial amount of low-level (TL14 – 17) Ancient equipment was theoretically understood, and a good portion of it – from replicators¹¹ to black globes – could even be reverse-engineered and mass-produced, to a limited extent. This meant that ordinary, cheap, well-understood mass-produced Imperial warships were increasingly competitive to the one-of-a-kind, hand-crafted, barely-understood, exceedingly temperamental Vargr warships.

¹¹ Traveller is set in a retro-future, so 3D printers replicators are far-future Ancient technology. Obviously.



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Soldiers of the Imperium on deployment, Nulinad, AD 3205

The graphic is titled "The battle of secret base"© Fangqiang Ding. Please visit his gallery at <http://beaverman.cgsociety.org/gallery/1096600/>

The planning and equipment used in the Wars of the Claw are still highly classified two centuries after their end, but what is known is that Ancient-tech wormholes and portable jump-projectors were one of the three keys to the campaign, allowing Imperial forces incredible mobility in otherwise impossibly short timespans. A second key was quite low-tech, but freely used: the gigaton EMP bomb. The New Vargr Wars were set on a genocidal footing, but when push came to shove, the Imperium was more eager to destroy Vargr technology than to kill the Vargr themselves. The third key was a secret development: the Third Imperium had learned how to reverse-engineer and reproduce the black globe.

There were secondary Ancient technologies that were carefully used as well: notably grey goo nanites, ship repair nanobots, safe antimatter reproduction,¹² and to nigh-invulnerable white globes. But the reality-warping dark-energy jumpspace mines, for example, were generally reserved for special targets, and their loss wouldn't be critical for the campaign as a whole. Even the loss of the Imperial FTL telepathy communication grid (powered by Ancient tech and maintained by chanting Droyne technopriests) to Ancient-powered Vargr countermeasures – non-material mindworms, in this case – proved to be less devastating than feared, thanks to some serious contingency planning. Three

¹² Yes, it's the retro-future again. Admittedly, we can't create antimatter easily today, but we should be able to in a century – NOT three thousand years from now...

cheers for Vilani thoroughness and compulsive record-keeping!

There were quite a few instances when Admiral Unio's 'good fortune' ran to ridiculous levels.¹³ Intrepid Researchers tracing his path across the Extents – all Vargr themselves, for obvious reasons – end up rather shocked by just how many things could have gone wrong, how narrowly the Sector Admiral sidestepped a lethal trap, or just happened to show up at the precise time that his Vargr enemy was vulnerable. The implications of this ridiculous chain of impossible coincidences – that either the Sector Admiral was guided by God Himself, or was actually God in the Flesh – have inflicted a deep wound of self doubt into the Vargr psyche, with serious consequences to be discussed later.

Especially as the primary result of the Wars of the Claw was the crippling of Vargr power and technology, the deaths of over a trillion Vargr (directly or indirectly), and the re-invigoration of the enemy human race.

¹³ Unio's amazing accomplishments was so incredible and of such importance as to lead many to consider him far more than a mere man, even after his death. The worship of Unio as the Creator/Saviour is mistaken: but it's a mistake that is more tragic than moronic. The Admiral did not rise from the dead or break the back of Satan, but he did free billions of men, women and children from the slavery and oppression of a spiteful alien race. At the end of the day, though, a sincere error will kill you as surely as willful ignorance, if the stakes are high enough.

The Julian Protectorate

The **Julian Protectorate**, founded in 3221, started out as an organization is rather more centralized and disciplined than in the Official Traveller Universe, due to a larger Vilani (and smaller Vargr) percentage of the population. The character of the Protectorate is different as well: while the Menderes family remains as a unifying symbol, corporate and financial interests, led by Menderes Corporation, dominate the actual Protectorate government. Before the Julian Revolution of 3203, the member states were clearly under the authority of the capital world of Asimikigir, and (excepting Associate Members like the Lorean Hegemony) didn't have the right to secede. Due to the prosperity the Menderes Corporation brought in at the time, few complained about this state of affairs. "Money answereth all things..."

...until, one day, it didn't.

Rebellion

The Menderes Corporation used its powerful pull on politicians and dynasties to create ever more self-interested laws and rules, driving more and more of their competitors into bankruptcy. Standard procedure followed this sequence: first, establish expensive industrial standards that only they themselves could meet "in the interest of the consumer, or the environment, or fairness, whatever". After the competitors have been driven to the ground, gasp in shock at the monopoly situation that has been created, and organized a Protectorate Production Board to "rein in the out-of-control cartels". Staff that board with corporate and political cronies, and you're set to go! Any problems? Insist on increased funding and increased regulations, making it impossible for anyone but a bought-and-paid for specialist to know what's going on while making it impossible for any competitor to get off the ground. Ideally, the business should grow to achieve "too big to fail" status, guaranteeing government support forever.

As always, the monopolies – led by the Menderes Corporation – were soon far more interested in enforcing their IP rights and stomping out black market competition rather than serving the customer. By the late 3290s, the worlds whose economies were not disintegrating were becoming served by 'shell companies': outsiders who would locally rent out the name and licences of the legal monopolies, to snatch market share from the official businesses. The situation began to spiral out of control as branches of Menderes Corporation fell into open warfare against themselves.

In 3203, the Julian Rebellion kicked into high gear when all of the starnations of Mendan sector – some having been members of the Protectorate for only a decade or so – declared independence from the Protectorate. In the resulting war, Star Legion forces found their equipment, training, logistics network, and leadership deficient. Wary of requesting assistance from the totalitarians leading the Gashikan Empire, the Menderes family bribed the Ovaghoun Vargr nations of Meshan sector to cross the borders and provide assistance to the Star Legion.

The end result of that decision was rather unpredictable. A good percentage of the Vargr actually sided with the rebels, and fought both the Star Legion and the Vargr who remained loyal to their agreement. Others made agreements with individual worlds, standing against any and all starnations in the name of their own freedom. Finally, there were the thieves and the scammers, out to make a quick buck or some dangerous pirating in an active warzone.

The mess finally settled down in 3309, with the Protectorate controlling about 3/4ths of Mendan sector, with the rest of the sector dominated by three new independent starnations, and a scattering of unaffiliated worlds. The fighting had exhausted the Star Legion and the Protectorate government, and enforcement of all the myriad laws controlling commerce (and favouring the monopolies) has declined sharply. Even Menderes Corporation has been warped beyond recognition, focusing only on consumer goods, transportation, and the luxury trade. Even the jewel of the crown, the Menderes banks, was broken up after the ruling Menderes dynasty was no longer able to fund its failures and shield it from its own incompetence.

As the Protectorate's budget fell, so did its power, giving greater authority to the member starnations. Traditionally, the Regent preferred to give the appearance of independence to the member states, but substantially controlling them via their economic dependence on the good graces of the Menderes Corporation. But with the Corporation substantially diminished in wealth and respect, the member states are increasingly free in deed, as well as in law. For a few years, the Menderes family tried to browbeat the member states into obedience, but as this proved increasingly counterproductive, the ruling family now simply assumes that they rule, brushing aside disobedience as a temporary matter. The member states of the Protectorate are willing to grant the Menderes family the appearance of power, mainly

because none of them are strong enough to decisively take leadership themselves.

For now, there is still political and economic value in remaining a member of the Protectorate. So long as “the threat of the two emperors exists” – the Emperor of the Third Imperium to rimward, and the Gashikan

Empire to coreward – the usefulness of a military pact for mutual protection also provides a powerful glue for the remaining member states. But lacking the corporate wealth needed for leadership, the Menderes family grows increasingly passive, and the member states grow increasingly assertive.



A Vilani pilot/engineer does some tornado chasing, on behalf of his community.
Graithairekt, Rukadukaz Republic, AD 3305. The graphic is titled “Above and Beyond” © Andrzej Sykut.
Please visit his gallery at <http://azazel.cgsociety.org/gallery/81454/>

The Rukadukaz Republic

The Rukadukaz Republic, created in 3297, is the result of a banding together of Menderes-financed Ovaghoun pirates, which overthrew the Vilani starnation of Ismiika Akuim. This Vilani culture was as well-known for its poverty and collectivism as for its deeply anti-Menderes attitudes, and while the fall of the Ismiika Akuim was very bloody and brutal, their lack of technological progress and rigid command-and-control structure made the eventual outcome certain.

The new, Vargr-led Republic had not finished its first decade of life before the Julian Rebellion struck. Due to the poverty of the region, the Republic was unable to provide much active assistance. But as a passive and loyal member state, it was useful as a resource and staging area for the Star Legion, and a safe location for training and repair when needed. Moreover, a large percentage of the Vargr packs the Menderes family had need to call on were paid with land from the better worlds of the Rukadukaz Republic.

The eager dealers, scroungers, and entrepreneurs of the Ovaghoun are primarily interested in making profitable business networks and partnerships in every way possible, without flaunting the law too blatantly and angering the central Julian government. The local Vilani are still unhappy with Vargr rule, but there is very little the low-tech majority can do about it: and it would be a crying shame to pass by all those interesting new opportunities to build Prosperity for the Community...

Menderes Corporation may have financed the takeover: but their desire to re-establish their monopoly was simply ignored. Before they could take action against the Ovaghoun pirates for betraying them, the other starnations – not willing to go against their native anti-Menderes populations and the power of the local black markets – pressured the Menderes Dynasty to cut their ties with the Corporation. They didn’t do this, but to appease the masses and dissuade

the starnations from seceding, they did force a great reduction and sale of Menderes assets, ceased enforcement of many of the pro-monopoly laws, dissolved numerous Production Boards, and forced the megacorporation to drop their planned reprisals against their many enemies, including their plans against the Rukadukaz Republic.

Strangely, even as they grow in authority, the Irilitok numbers are in steady decline everywhere. The Ovaghoun Vargr¹⁴ of Meshan sector are eager to release the Irilitok from their genetic chains, and join the Ovaghoun in true Vargr living. Many Ovaghoun 'missionaries' play on the Irilitok unease with their heritage of enslaving genetic modifications, and encouraging the newly wealthy Irilitok to genetically modify their offspring to fit the Ovaghoun genetic profile – and of course, train them in the Ovaghoun way. When the Ovaghoun pups of Irilitok parents reach maturity, they generally prefer to leave human-ruled Julian space entirely, and relocate to the Ovaghoun star nations of Free Meshan.

One of the more crucial aspects of the Rukadukaz Republic is the lack of any TL B+, Pop 9+ system within her borders. This makes the 117-system interstellar republic poorer than some heavily populated *islands* of the top-flight high-tech/high-pop systems found elsewhere within the Julian Protectorate. This widespread poverty makes it easy for the Ovaghoun Vargr pirates to control the interstellar state, but it also means that they are completely unable to make any serious challenge to the Regent's will. Nowadays, the Rukaduk leadership is trying to build up their relationship with the powerful system governments of the Protectorate, ignoring both the declining Menderes Dynasty and the shrinking Menderes Corporation.

The Lorean Hegemony

Like the Hegemony of Lorean of **Stellar Reaches #13**, the Loreans have spent several centuries fighting the Blood Vargr. Unlike those Hegemonio, though, these Loreans leaned more Terran than Vilani, developing a culture of revered charismatic Heroes to lead the war against the Vargr, instead of creating a highly conformist and militaristic culture, compared to Official Traveller Vilani (who already had a rather approving attitude regarding genocide).

¹⁴ In this universe, Ikon was never the homeworld of the Ovaghoun. Instead, it was a human agricultural plantation tended by Irilitok Vargr slaves until their emancipation only a century ago.

Rather bizarrely, precisely because these Loreans chose to follow charismatic heroes, they could better relate to the charisma-driven Suedzuk, and vice-versa. The entire tone of hostilities was less vicious, wantonly cruel, and genocidal than in the 'mainline' universe. The eventual end of this theatre of the New Vargr Wars was also less destructive: instead of a doomed Blighted War and the slaughters of the Era of Horror, there were a series of agreed-upon heroic Champion Duels between the respective human and Suedzuk leaders. The Hero's Peace that both victors and vanquished built continues to be respected by both sides, over a century later.

The strong emphasis on one-on-one combat, heroic leadership from the front, and the occasional massive personality cult is still powerfully felt in the Lorean Hegemony. Each world is represented by a Hegemon: the Hegemon has religious significance as a Sacred Hero of the Gods, as well as political importance as a True Leader of Men. On Damlaer, capital of the Hegemony and the homeworld of the Lorean people (in this timeline), the Hegemons occasionally gather to debate, duel, bargain, chase women, punch each other out, feast all night long, and boast of their personal magnificence. Leadership among the Hegemons is a very temporary affair, and these Assemblies of Hegemons tend to disintegrate as quickly and as unpredictably as they arise. But this is the only place where any Hegemony-wide law can be made or annulled.

The high-pop systems tend to be scary places to live, where the local Hegemon can do anything, and command anything. Awe and terror follow in the Hegemon's wake on these worlds. Justice is a prime example of what most Hegemons dream of becoming, at least in secret.

The Hegemons that rule the world are treated much like the Greek gods of old: and to the greatest extent possible, they have laboured to reach that level of power. They are universally ageless and endlessly struggle to gain true immortality; hoard a lot of personal Ancient gizmos and weaponry on their person; are constantly driving themselves to more easily seize control of the humans and aliens around their person; and routinely build up cults that hang on their every word. Envious of the military achievements of Emperor Unio of the Third Imperium – which the Imperial Catholic Church raised up to a Demigod, and is seen as the Star Maker Himself in the Protectorate and the Gashikan Empire – many are actively working on

equalling or surpassing the feats of that Emperor: but so far, all have come up short.¹⁵

Numerous exiled Imperial Noble families initially resided on Justince, as guests of the Hegemons. Those that remained on that world are now mere muppets and mouthpieces of the Hegemons now: the wiser ones who wanted to keep their liberty and their minds moved on to other worlds with less domineering Hegemons (a.k.a. lower law levels).

While all Hegemons aspire to be as powerful, independent, and self-sufficient as those on Justince, most must make some concession, grant some reward, to their followers. Instead of Gods Walking on Earth, a Law Unto Themselves, most are Fabulous Celebrities. The local Hegemon could take on the role of Everyone's Favourite, the Golden Boy, the Wise Sage... whatever builds the greatest popularity. Even the boring Impersonal Bureaucratic or Non-Charismatic Dictatorships governments within the Hegemony try to look like something other than what they are.

The Hegemony and the Protectorate

The relationship between the Lorean Hegemony and the Julian Protectorate is rather convoluted. The Regent needs their support to help rebuild the Star Legion, and the Loreans need Menderes money. The Loreans stoutly supported the central government at Asimikigir during the Julian Rebellion, but this hasn't been as financially rewarding as they expected. However, both the human Julians and the human Loreans have been influenced by the Vargr love of Charisma, and the public respect the Julian leadership has shown to their Lorean peers has served to reduce their anger substantially, although they are still rather miffed at all the unpaid debts they are owed.

While the Loreans tolerate what they feel is Julian incompetence, they have a real animosity to the Rukadaz. They don't like Vargr ruling humans, and they don't like Vargr raiding their worlds and traders. As the Loreans are only an Associate State of the Protectorate, they don't have the pull needed to expel the pirates, and are currently fighting a proxy war – usually non-

violent – against the Rukadaz in the Ssilnthi Gap. The Menderes Corporation owes both nations big money, and is unlikely to ever pay it back: but the Loreans have opened up negotiations, putting complete loan forgiveness for the Corporation and strong support for the Menderes Dynasty, in return for full membership and the expulsion of the Rukadaz.

The various Hegemons are more than willing to offer their forces in assisting the weakened Star Legion with the expulsion, if necessary.

Nisaga

The Loreans wish they owned Ssilnthi – described later – but at least they have Nisaga. It is a powerful world in its subsector, and has a certain pull among all of the Lorean stars within the Empty Quarter, and extending even to Star's End. However, the simply insane law levels (closely tied to the whims of the charismatic Hegemons that rule that world) makes it far too weird, exotic, and dangerous for mainstream Julian tastes.

Nisaga also serves as the main destination for Imperials entering the Lorean Hegemony. A long, long time ago, Nisaga was a culturally deviant Vilani world infused with strong Turkish/Indonesian Malay immigration, but the migrations, wars, cultural shifts, new religions, and controversies of centuries have washed most of the old culture away. The Nisaga of 3324 would be completely unrecognizable to the original Terran settlers of 2849, just as any American of five centuries ago – native or white – couldn't even conceive of the United States of 2013.¹⁶

The Ssilnthi Gap

In the 993 universe, the Gap is lawless zone of dangerous Suedzuk pirates. In this universe, the pirates are more deeply established, with the region divided among the various Vargr bands. The Ovaghoun Vargr pirates are interested in making easy money from weak travellers, not Blood Vargr thirsting for slaughter. Looting cargo and taking valuable hostages is their main stock in trade, not "the joy of the hunt, the pleasure of the kill." Many of them have forged informal links with a given interstellar government, giving traders from said government a free pass through their territory.

¹⁵ While they hunger for the fame and reverence given to that Imperial Catholic Demigod, the Hegemons of Justince they have nothing but scorn for the scraps of Christian belief that remain within that church. "We make our own morality... our own reality!" the local Hegemons would roar. It's best not to mention Jesus Christ in their presence, lest these Superior Men "show you what a True God-man can do!" Oddly enough, the proofs of the Justince Hegemons' glorious godhood have everything to do with control and killing, rape (mental and/or physical) and dominance... and nothing to do with self-sacrifice, forgiveness, liberty, healing, or peace.

¹⁶ Here I am, writing a story set over a thousand years in the future – so to speak – but do you really think I can guess what either the population or the culture of the United States will be really like even a *century* from now? Really?



Visitors approach the city of Calvage, capital of Nisaga, Lorean Hegemony. The queer mix of high and low technology is an odd puzzle – and sometimes a fatal one. The graphic is titled “Lake City”© Jose Borges. Please visit his gallery at <http://whatzitoya.deviantart.com/art/Lake-City-355625529>

The centre of Ssilnthi culture and trade is the world of **Ssilnthi** herself. It is quite a powerful world, with a rather high law level and a stolid, sensible dictator at serves as a massive trade & production centre for the coreward regions of the Empty Quarter. A substantial amount of goods flow from this world, and money flows in. Unlike the Ssilnthi of the 993 Imperial universe, *this* Ssilnthi is almost entirely human. Also unlike the 993 Ssilnthi, there is no tolerance for pirates in this system: something that puts them at odds with the neighbouring interstellar governments. It is the Ssilnthi trader that suffers most from local pirates, but as the pirates are allied with the various great powers, Ssilnthi can't destroy the corsair bases outright.

Ssilnthi is something of a technological centre, with the highest combination of technology and population in the coreward half of the Empty Quarter.¹⁷ Only Nisaga is a reasonable competitor on the coreward side of the Empty Quarter. For Julians outside of the sector, Ssilnthi is the only system worth talking about. The fact that it insists on staying outside of the Protectorate, adroitly defying a powerful interstellar government, has made it a centre of mystery and intrigue for much of the Julian population.¹⁸

¹⁷ Don't forget: the Red Zone refers to the difficulty of jumping in and out, not to the danger of the world herself.

¹⁸ Yes, Hebrin is far more powerful, but it's so far from Protectorate borders, it might as well not exist to the Julian population.

The Imperial, Rukadaz, and Lorean governments quietly compete for client states in the Gap. While the Imperium has snagged the most populated world among them – Tokitre – the Rukadaz and the Lorean governments have linked up with higher-tech systems as their local 'jewel in the crown': Togo, a well-populated asteroid system for the Loreans, and Delibes, a mining and refinery mecca for the Rukadaz.¹⁹ The competition rarely gets violent, as both the Lorean and Rukadaz governments are tied to the Julians: but everyone believes in being prepared, Just In Case.

The most unlikely residents of the Zone are the unusually aggressive and wealthy Droyne oytrips that now control the world of Pekryaay, in Daskomo subsector. Having recently completed a naval base, the local Leader castes are now working to insure the security of the Droyne and Chirper population throughout the Empty Quarter. After several heated clashes, Vargr corsairs now avoid the world, and neutral merchantmen are attempting to hire some Droyne Starmercs – preferably the ones with access to Ancient goodies – as escorts when crossing the turbulent region.

The Droyne of Pekryaay are also getting entangled in the cold war hostilities between the Loreans and the Rukadaz. So far, the Rukadaz have the upper hand, with

¹⁹ Note that both of these systems are 'protected' by Vargr corsair bases.

the Vargr government of the Rukadukaz Republic inviting the Droyne to establish an Ancient-equipped garrison at Gaashi Mukipu, the capital of the Republic, for a publically unspecified quid pro quo. The Lorean Hegemons feel that they can surpass the Rukadaz on the rebound, strengthening their trade relationships they are quickly building with the Droyne within and outside Lorean space.

Appendix: Within the Vargr Extents The Trailing Vargr

The deliberate genetic shift of the human-serving Irilitok into the human-ruling Ovaghoun is not the only tectonic shift going on in the Extents. Even as the Irilitok immigrate into and expand the holdings of the Ovaghoun Vargr race, the Ovaghoun and their other kin, the powerfully-built Urzaeng with their vision of 'might makes right' and the 'Blood Vargr' Suedzuk are slowly building a bond called the Hunter's Pack...

...but, this time, not against the humans. The Vargr sense the increasing weakness of the Imperium, but they also believe that attacking the humans at this time would only reinvigorate their hatred of the Vargr. Instead, the Hunter's Pack would prefer to remove an old stain on Vargr pride: the loss of a host of systems in Gelath sector to the K'kree (who have renamed the sector to Gn'hk'r).

While the Ovaghoun can provide the money and the organization, and the Suedzuk and the Urzaeng the ground troops, it is astrographically easier to amass and organize the required fleets near the Julian Protectorate. Right now, the main rally point is the system of Vrgaarrmmigvi (Gzeengoumez/Ktiin'gzat 1037, B000304-C), a small yet toothy Suedzuk starnation, located nice and close to the Protectorate.

Careful probing and questioning of K'kree traders and captured K'kree data banks have revealed that the K'kree destroy every Ancient weapon and artifact they find. This creates the possibility that the Hunter's Pack can re-create Sector Admiral Unio's Ancient-powered rampage in the Vargr Extents, but this time targeting the K'kree worlds. Despite the widespread elimination of Ancient weaponry from the Extents, many scroungers and explorers have renewed their search for these powerful artifacts.

The Spinward Vargr

With the end of the Denebi War, the Vargr starnations behind the Claw have proven their willingness to co-operate with the regional Darrian, Zhodani, Droyne, Aslan, and Vilani counterparts against Imperials. Most

of the Vargr within the Spinward Marshes and Deneb are of the Aekhu Vargr race: as such, they feel that 'patterns are made to be broken' and real change – to the extent of unpredictable chaos – is the Aekhu trademark. Despite their fickleness, it is safe to predict that they will continue to surge into Corridor sector to replace the human cultures decimated by the war: cultures that had exterminated the earlier Aekhu Vargr inhabitants in the New Vargr Wars.

With other Vargr, it would be predictable to see what would happen next, especially when you factor in the racial pride of the Vargr... and the common desire for vengeance. But with the Aekhu, it has proven to be truly difficult to predict the outcome. Some Aekhu do exact genocide vengeance, and others do enslave or expel the weakened human population: but this is far from the most common outcome. There has been numerous instances of actual aid given to the humans, and even times when the remnants of the human planetary government was recognised as the rightful rulers of the Vargr settlers as well. And of course, what the Aekhu Vargr do today has no reliable relationship with what they will do tomorrow.

The Orarg

Few Imperials bother to learn much about Vargr history or culture: the overwhelming concern for most is learning how to fight them.

During the Wars of the Claws, though, Imperial military forces went deeper into the Extents than ever before, and many Imperial officers and men brought back odd souvenirs, relics, curios, artefacts, and untranslated writings on both paper and electronic media. The Imperial military took all the items that could prove valuable in battle, but the cultural, religious, and cultic items were given to the scholastic orders of the Imperial Catholic Church for further analysis.²⁰

Making sense to this chaotic mess was strenuous, difficult, and exacting work. But it was also quite rewarding and enlightening: for example, the current understanding of the Vargr subcultures – Logaksu, Gvegh, Aekhu, Urzaeng, Ovaghoun, Suedzuk, and Irilitok – was first conceived of and clarified based on the information gathered during the Wars of the Claw. In recent times, a most interesting branch of study focuses on the various stages of Vargr development:

²⁰ Of course, not *everything* fell into the hands of the Imperial military or the Imperial church. You'd be surprised what some poor cancer-ridden spacer is willing to sell at a reasonable price...



(c) andrzej sykut
CGSociety.org

Copyright (C) Andrzej Sykut, submitted 13 February 2013

A Julian explorer investigates the world of Nightraven. The graphic is titled “The Journey - Surveying BXT83-10” © Andrzej Sykut. Please visit his gallery at <http://azazel.cgsociety.org/gallery/1093648/>

- the original race of uplifted dogs created by the Vilani in 970 BC,
- the Vargr that rebelled against the Vilani Empire in 647 BC, setting in motion the Old Vargr Wars
- the Vargr that sacked Gashikan in AD 1381,
- the Vargr that were eliminated by the Vilani-engineered Wolvesbane plague in AD 2033,
- the Vargr that the Imperium fought in the New Vargr Wars of AD 3160-3207,
- and the Vargr of today, AD 3324.

The original protoVargr, and the early Vargr that rebelled against the Vilani, are fairly well-known, as even today the Vilani scientific records are available at the AAB (Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin, “Vilani Repository of All Knowledge”) on Vland. Little is known of the Vargr that gutted Gashikan, and the ones what were exterminated by Wolvesbane: the few records available – Yilean²¹, Vilani, or Vargr – are very sparse and fragmentary.

The Vargr that the Third Imperium fought during the Old Vargr Wars and the Vargr that are seen today can be clearly proven to be fundamentally different beings, to the extent of being separate species within the same genus. It can be confidently asserted that the Vargr continued to experiment on themselves after driving out the Vilani. By the time of the New Vargr Wars, the Vargr species had differentiated into various forms of slaves and servants under the leadership of the Orarg, a geneered Ideal Vargr combining great strength, intelligence, charisma, and aggression.

The Orarg were never very numerous, but a century before the New Vargr Wars, things took a disastrous turn. The level of raw aggression of the Orarg made it impossible for them to reproduce successfully, as they kept on killing their kin in insane fits of violent paranoia. When the Wars of the Claw drew close to the Vargr Great Lairs, the slow decline of the Orarg turned into a freefall off a cliff, and they were simply unable to recover from the resulting devastation. Inevitably, the lower Vargr races struck at the Orarg at the time of their greatest vulnerability.

The Orarg Vargr are believed to be extinct, at the present time. Of course, they *could* be reborn from stored genetic material...

²¹ The Yileans are the original minor human race native to Gashikan.

The Irilitok, the Ovaghoun, and the Orarg

So, just how are the Irilitok and Ovaghoun Vargr of the Counties and Churches universe different from Official Traveller?

First, note that the Vargr are literally dogs uplifted by the genetically skilled (in this universe) Vilani as disposable servants over three thousand years ago. The Vargr *know* who their creators are – and have no intention of bowing down and worshipping. Hatred, envy, resentment, and murderous rage are better descriptors of Vargr attitudes regarding humans.

The Irilitok are the primary exception to the general Vargr frame of mind. Their aggressive instincts were not as broadly neutered as the human genetic engineers of Asimikigir (and the Arzul who followed their lead) aimed for. Instead, they were altered to regard humans as natural pack leaders, and themselves as docile, natural pack followers. These Irilitok are willing to fight and kill, but because of envy, they refuse to grant other Vargr the respect and honour of ruling over them. They are less hostile and jealous when humans rule them, instead: less likely to challenge the human, and more likely to obey them.

This is a common occurrence in low-status cultures. “The Master Class is a different kind of man – the gulf between him and us is very great, so there is no real envy. But having my fellow Servant Class brother gain power? They are no better than I am – why should they have authority over me?” The paradigmatic example, naturally, was Moses killing the Egyptian slave overseer: when he tried to intervene in a Hebrew squabble, the offender challenged his right to judge. “Are you going to kill me like you killed the Egyptian?”

As is often the case when overthrowing oppressors, the greatest threat is not the enemy outsider, but your envious brothers.

The Irilitok Vargr populations that remain within the Rukadukaz Republic follow a variety of means to decide a given issue: direct votes usually, but sometimes duels to first blood and duels to the death are used.

Charismatic leaders always have to play humble, and give away much of their wealth to the pack, to avoid envious eyes. Those Irilitok Vargr that stand out too much from the pack suffer for it. “Wealth is meant to

be shared, not hoarded,” which means that it is consumed immediately, not invested to provide greater

and greater returns for all. Too much wealth leads to envious eyes...



The Cold Lands of Solstice are renowned for their icy, luminescent beauty – just remember not to taste any of the ice, however pure and clean they look... The graphic is titled “Ice World II” © Matthew Attard.

Please visit his gallery at <http://priteeboy.deviantart.com/art/Ice-World-II-329274397>

The Ovaghoun face life from a different perspective. *These* Ovaghoun have no great love for the Vilani, but they do respect their accomplishments, and strive to match – and one day surpass – them. Their pattern-seeking intuition is not rooted in abstract mathematics per se like the Vilani, but in the patterns of behaviour, for both prey herds and hunter packs. The Vilani eye for the long term is transferred to the Vargr herdsman, careful not to kill too much of the cattle at any one time.

Additional genetic selections were made by ‘proto-Ovaghoun’ Vargr bioengineers, to spread desired traits and preferences throughout their race. Intelligence was only slightly increased ‘as more millionaires and billionaires have an IQ of 125 than of 160. Results, not bragging rights, is the goal!’ More to the point is increased patience, an expansion of pattern detection, a stronger ability to ‘read’ both Vargr and human emotions, and a stronger mother-cub bond compared to baseline Vargr. Today’s Ovaghoun bioengineers continue to refine the race, looking to strike the perfect balance between aggression (needed to win wars, forge new ideals, and launch new businesses) and co-operation (to build the unity of the pack and reduce in-house strife).

In the Counties and Churches universe, the Vilani not as corporate as in Official Traveller, but are instead more

clannish; both versions of the Vilani remains closely bound to Tradition. The Ovaghoun Vargr transposed the Pack to the Clan, and replaced the Tradition with the culture-wide Laws of the Long Hunt. Both the (post-First Imperium) Vilani and the Ovaghoun Vargr have a deep respect for the wealth generating effects of capitalism: but the Ovaghoun are more “lone entrepreneurs” which grow into nebulous, loosely-affiliated conglomerates which can shape up to very well-organized combines at need, while the Vilani prefer the industry-wide, vertically integrated cartels with strong links to the local government and major families. If the Vilani business model is like the early 20th century mechanical factory, the Ovaghoun business model is like a group of stem cells, able to seep in, form up and dissipate at need.

Unlike the Vilani – here or in the Official Traveller Universe – the Ovaghoun welcomes change, most definitely including technological and economic change. The Vilani love the safety of stability, but the Ovaghoun see opportunity in every crisis. Both groups see inequality as a natural outcome of liberty: something the Vilani carefully limit to keep the team united, but the Ovaghoun joyfully push to the limit – sometimes reaching great heights, sometimes just blowing up spectacularly.

Counties and Churches: Throne and Altar, Sword and Credit



***A young ostiarius, keeping watch for any visitors to the Serene Shrine of Stars and Sky.
While traditional Christian faith is undergoing a strong renaissance on Hebrin,
there still remains a substantial number of followers of the Imperial Trinity.***

**The graphic is titled “Keeper of the Temple”© David Renn. Please visit his gallery at
<http://postapocalypsia.deviantart.com/art/Keeper-of-the-Temple-107143018>**

Theme: “Daphne”, Yuki Kajiura, Boogiepop
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxkzYbYfY4Y>

Religion, Warfare, and Trade **Imperial Religions**

The majority of Imperial citizens, subjects, and serfs (corporate and agricultural) follow the Imperial Catholic Faith. The syncretic religion is a distant relative of the old Roman Catholic Church, but no longer views Christian theology as any more normative than any other religion. It officially worshipping the Imperial Trinity: The Star Maker, The Universal Messiah, and/or the Queen of Heaven, but it's as welcoming of atheists as of polytheists, Buddhist as much as the Imperial Cult, so long as the correct rituals are performed – tied to a small monetary payment, naturally.

Aliens are seen to be ensouled and of worth in the eyes of the Imperial Trinity, but in general they are left alone, to follow their own religions as they desire. Those who do join Imperial Catholicism are generally welcome – excluding the Vargr. While officially they are as important to the High Gods²², in reality they are

excluded from most congregations due to a bad history of conflict. This is especially true of the Vilani, who have fought a very, very long series of (ongoing) hostilities against their rebellious servants.

Christians are as welcome to join the Imperium-backed religion as any other group, and need not change their theology substantially: the only modifications required is that the Bible is not the *only* recognized Word of God, the Jesus is not the *only* way to salvation, and heaven is available to *all* sophonts who ‘live good lives’, and is not restricted to those who have faith in Jesus Christ. Christians who make these changes in doctrine enjoy the tax, cultural, political, and monetary advantages membership brings. Those who don't adjust their doctrine don't get the privileges, and are grouped with the ‘Primitive Exclusivist Monotheistic Religions’, Islam* and Orthodox Judaism.

Until a century ago, the Old Monotheists were simply excluded from the Imperial service: even now, these are seen as clannish, reactionary, and profoundly bigoted delusions compared to the enlightened and gentle hand of the Imperial Catholic Church. Still, by

²² The High Gods include both the Imperial Trinity and the “Spirit of the Imperium”: this Imperial Spirit is seen as a hidden

fourth member of the Trinity, and is often seen to be intertwined with the Emperor's Will.

order of the Throne of St. Peter, these obsolete religions are to be tolerated to a certain extent, until they willingly embrace the True Light of Salvation. The Iridium Throne prefers to keep believers of these religious outside of the inner circles of Imperial authority, but is willing to accept their work in support of the Imperium, especially in the lower rungs (i.e. up to County level) of the Civil Service, the Military, and the Nobility – so long as their beliefs do not interfere with prompt and respectful obedience to the Throne, as so long as they do not use their position to promote their supremacist, narrow-minded, and retrograde beliefs, in public or on private, implicitly or explicitly.

Imperial Warfare

The Duke of a sector is the point man for Imperial military operations: the Sector Admiral reports to the Duke, who reports to the Emperor. Due to the lengthy communication times involved, the Duke is given broad latitude in enforcing the Emperor's Will, up to and including the ability to declare war on behalf of the Imperium. Because of the great power at his command, though, he and his House are much more closely scrutinized by the Throne than Counts are.

In the Imperium, planets and systems are responsible for their own defense: they pay tribute to the Emperor to have high-tech Imperial forces provide interstellar defense against non-Imperial worlds, and to enforce the Imperial Laws of War – laws that apply to Imperial forces as well as local ones, in this timeline. The more powerful Counts have extended the Laws of War beyond “No mass rape, no mass genocide, no mass slavery, no NBC weapons” to restrict environmental damage as well. This expands their authority and makes them look good at the same time.

Counts only have direct authority over the forces they personally have raised and paid for. Counts may also command forces *on loan* from the various planets, corporations, and other associations operating in his demesne.

While the Counts and the Dukes cannot command worlds to turn over their military units to their commands, the Emperor, with his unlimited military authority, can. This authority – i.e., his *imperium* – is the very foundation of the Third Imperium, and serves a similar purpose as “The Divine Right of Kings”, “the Mandate of Heaven”, or “the Will of the People”.

However: every time the Emperor personally orders military personnel outside of the regular Imperial Armed Forces, he puts his authority at stake. First, if a

‘sufficiently large minority’ of Minor Nobles refuses a direct order, his very *imperium* is put into question. This opens the door to the Imperial Moot revoking his right to rule, or even civil war. Second, if the Iridium Throne 1) leads both Regular and Colonial forces into battle, and 2) loses, then again his right to command could well be revoked. A sufficiently large military disaster would not only mean the loss of the *imperium* from a given emperor's hands, but the very destruction of the Third Imperium as an interstellar government. Finally: in this timeline, the Imperial willingness to suffer losses, even lose wars, rather than conduct substantial violations of the Imperial Laws of War *within Imperial borders* is an important foundation to Imperial political legitimacy, and is an integral part of the Charter of the Third Imperium (the ruling document that governs the use of Imperial power.)

“That run, it's not that it's supersteep, or there are cliffs, or that it's a really rowdy run,” Carlson, one of the Stevens Pass regulars, said. “It's that if anything goes wrong, it's a terrain trap. If somebody happens to set off even a slough slide and you're below them in Tunnel, it all bottlenecks and really adds up superfast. That's the reason that run is heavy. It's notorious.”

Keith Carlsen, talking about the Tunnel Creek run

(and not, say, high-level Imperial politics)

In “Snow Fall: Descent Begins”

<http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=descent-begins>

Militarily, the Imperium remains united, as no county-based Colonial Fleet can challenge the sector-based, high-tech, lavishly funded Imperial military establishment. Moreover, the military takes pride in being “an Instrument of Law, Justice and Honour, not Power, Theft and Rape”. This position of moral superiority, honestly & broadly held, is a major source of Imperial legitimacy – quite likely the primary one.

Of course, the Laws of War are implicitly biased: weak nations and desperate insurgents claim that they can't afford to uphold them strictly, and the Imperium takes great pleasure in using the atrocities of her enemies to further demonize and isolate them. However, the horrific destruction and innumerable nasty incidents in the Denebi War²³ – much of it committed by Imperial forces – has led to a broad repentance and recommitment to the Laws of War: especially as the violations of the Law are seen by the Imperial Catholic Church to have incurred Divine Displeasure, and

²³ Note that this war was largely fought *outside* of Imperial borders...

insured the loss of the war. The future will reveal whether this repentance is real or not.

Imperial Trade

The Imperium takes payment in commodity currencies, or in kind: the Imperial Credit is merely the yearly determination of what one gram of gold can buy in the free market. A hard currency, coupled with no restrictions or taxes on interstellar trade within the Imperium (except on the slave trade, and classified Imperial information) has bonded the Imperium more closely than costly armies or the orbital bombardments of high-tech savages could ever do. It even permits the Imperium to tolerate minor secessionists as mere

nuisances. In the Imperial experience, Imperial money works wonders to silence local grievances, given enough time. Where gold doesn't work, other discreet and effective options can often be uncovered.

Closely tied to Imperial Trade are the foundations of Imperial Law and Imperial Honour. Both Law and Honour are important in military operations, but they are of equal importance in Imperial trade. If businessmen can't trust in the Imperial courts, they will settle their disputes using other tools, undermining and discrediting Imperial Authority. Attempts to shore up the integrity of the Imperial courts have proven only sporadically successful, so the rot continues to spread...



The Duke and Duchess of the Empty Quarter. The desert-loving Layitin have now established a substantial presence within the sector, following the example of House Yoon. Directly behind them is the Charm of Hisy, the symbol of their house: in both glyph and enmeshed forms. The graphic is titled "Children of Dune"©

Kindra T. Haugen. Please visit her gallery at <http://ulafish.deviantart.com/>

Imperial Leadership

The Duke

The current Duke is Michael II (born January 4, 3272), is the third member of the House Yoon to command the Imperial forces of the Empty Quarter. Fifty-two years old, in command of Imperial forces for 23 years, Duke Michael has been largely successful in his charge.

Duke Michael is of the Layitin minor human race of Lishun sector, who long ago assimilated Vilani cultural mores – with a few quirks. As a member of a powerful Layitin clan that quickly converted to Imperial Catholicism and swore allegiance to Cleon Himself during the founding of the Third Imperium, House Yoon

has prospered mightily during the 246 years of the existence of the current Imperium.

Assisting the Duke is his consort, Duchess Mary. When marrying, she was given the choice of either taking up mothering duties as the House Mother, to bear and raise well as many strong, noble, and quick-witted children as possible for her husband; or to rule with him as House Matriarch, but accepting sterilization as the price for the total dedication the Matriarchal position requires. Duchess Mary chose sterilization and political power over fertility and the domestic life: after Duke Michael dies, his brother's eldest son will inherit the Ducal throne.

When mastery of the Empty Quarter Duchy was transferred to House Yoon in 3236, over 40,000 Layitini emigrated from their homeworld to Nulinad: over the last 88 years, this number has grown to over 110,000 strong.

House Yoon has held the hereditary right to command the Imperial military for 88 years, since AD 3236. In addition to the Ducal title for the Empty Quarter, House Yoon also holds four baronies, 16 baronets, and 39 knighted members in the family. It is intimately tied to efforts to end the current civil war within the County of Nulinad: but, while most of the county population is within the Empty Quarter, most of the county systems are in Ley Sector. As no Duke can hold a County title in the same sector as his duchy, the Duke is seen as a fairly decent honest broker: but he has found it difficult to get co-operation from the neighbouring Dukes, who don't care to waste their wealth and manpower cleaning up someone else's mess.

House Yoon, like all nobles of Ducal rank and above, follows Imperial Catholicism. Duke Michael II has no particular interest in religion, and merely follows whatever beliefs are most popular among the High Nobles of the Imperial Core. Right now, that's a combination of high-tech nature worship, variations of Zen Buddhism, and visiting nearby shrines dedicated to the Trinity of the Stars and the senior saints.

Despite his personal disinterest in religious matters, he remains quite conversant with the religious beliefs of his subjects. Locally, Islam* is a religion held in high esteem, due to its emphasis on personal integrity. On the other hand, the Orthodox Christians of Hebrin increasingly insist on the primacy of Jesus as the *only* way to salvation. This naturally led them to spurn any ties to Imperial Catholicism, an act that makes the Duke somewhat uncomfortable (even as he tunes out the complaining cries of the local Imperial prelates).

Challenging the population of that wealthy world over such airy and mystical matters is not on the Duke's agenda, though. He has better ways to spend his time.

The Archbishop

Archbishop Girlet of House Hoor maintains his island-estate on Nulinad, the sector capital. His primary interest is in leading public ceremonies and festivals on the major church holidays, and constantly working to bring a closer unity on the multiple branches of the Imperial Catholic Church in the Empty Quarter – Imperial Catholic proper, Orthodox Christians (Catholic and otherwise), Zen Buddhism, Animism, Hosters (a strongly Epicurean religion), and Sun Worshipers. Relations with the Islamic religious leaders are reasonably stable, with the Archbishop strongly supportive of the mystical traditions of that religion – while undercutting the more rigid and moralistic elements every chance he gets.²⁴

Some of the more reform-minded Jewish congregations have been persuaded to join Imperial Catholicism in every way but formally – while comfortable with the broad liberties to worship what and how they please, they still shy away from the term 'Catholic'. The Orthodox Christians of Hebrin are rapidly cutting all ties with the Holy See, which is a cause of regret. However, Archbishop Girlet is determined not to overreact, and strongly restrains the Bishops under his authority from alienating the wayward flock: in time, the fanaticism will fade, and the Universal Faith will always be here to welcome back again with open arms.

Like the Duke, Archbishop Girlet's authority is limited to the Imperial territories within the Empty Quarter. The Vilani within the Julian Protectorate follow their traditional rituals, while the Hero-worshipping faiths of the Lorean Hegemony have no interest in following the lead of the Pope. Still, there are no hard barriers to their membership in the Faith, if they could be persuaded to join...

The Empress

Empress Changpu of House Lee (Dec 7, 3268 – current; reign February 13, 3299 – current) officially holds the Third Imperium in her person; that is the legal right, granted her by a majority vote of the Imperial Moot, to directly control the Imperial military.

²⁴ The Archbishop has a lot of quiet support within the Islamic* community regarding his actions. It helps that he long ago completed the ceremonies needed to join Islam* – and about 22 other religions, all of them of equal worth in the Archbishop's eyes.

All County forces outside of their borders may only operate by her leave. It is her face that is stamped on the coins, and it is in her name that the Imperium

wages wars and issues law. There is no single human being more powerful than she is: not even the Pope rises to her levels of authority and respect.



Her Imperial Majesty, Empress Changpu of the Lee Dynasty.

The graphic is titled "Queen Production Sketch" © Steven Stahlberg. Please visit his gallery at <http://stahlberg.cgsociety.org/gallery/522161/>

However, the integrity of her Imperium is rather threadbare. The failure of the Denebi War has further weakened her authority among the more distant nobles, the nobles of the Imperial Core hate the

massive tax hikes she has loaded on her shoulders, and the more distant Counts are more willing to test her power than they used to be. Still, her authority over the Imperial military proper remains unquestioned, and the

Dukes continue to respect her right to command. So long as that's true, her words still have power.

Empress Changpu's failure in the Denebi War did not involve the lost of territory, and few **Imperial** civilians were killed in the conflict, so her right to rule was not immediately called into question. Even so, the loss – and the ongoing heavy taxation tied to it – has visibly weakened her grip on the Throne. Her public penitence for Imperial war crimes has won the approval of some influential intellectuals, though, and additional powers for the Counts have reduced the pressure on her.

Due to her weakened finance and authority, she has had to bargain with the power brokers within the Imperial Moot, always trading a bit of authority for more money and more time. The Counts are steadily eroding and undermining the underfunded Imperial bureaucracy, who remains near full strength only in the Imperial Core. And even in the Core, there have been several scandals that have shaken the public's faith in the even-handedness of the bureaucrats. A strong anti-corruption drive has been launched from the Iridium Throne, and heads are beginning to roll, but the Empress is uncertain if there is still time to stop the rot.

Interestingly, the current Empress – while somewhat manipulative – is not some howling sociopath willing to do anything to crush her enemies and centralize power in her Gentle and Trustworthy Hands. To some extent, she really does want her military to be respected as well as feared, she really does want everyone to get along, and she really does want to be liked by everyone, or at least not hated and despised. Her religious piety is highly exaggerated for PR reasons, but it isn't *all* an act.

The Pope

The True Pope of the Imperial Catholic Church, Vieilo III of House Eyrei (June 10, 3223 – current; reign October 8, 3280 – current) remains on the Throne of St. Peter, which was finally, physically transported to the Great Cathedral on Sylea soon after the end of the Second Rim War and the Conquest of Terra (including the Eternal City of Rome) on 3265. With the Conquest came the capture, trial, and execution of the False Pope, but the title 'True Pope' has been retained by the Imperial Pontiff.²⁵

²⁵ The actual justification for execution was **not** Exclusionary Teaching or Divisiveness of the Church: these were the reasons for the False Pope's excommunication and eternal damnation. No, the reason for his execution was Aiding and Abetting Treason Against the Imperial Throne. However, to the Throne and Altar Imperial Catholics that make up the bulk of the

The great surge of piety and religious observance that came out of that victory has largely ebbed away, and the Terran Rim remains disobedient to the Magisterium and the Empress. Partly to help support the Iridium Throne, partly to insure greater obedience to Imperial Catholicism, the solid majority of Indoctrination and Militant Orders are tied down in the Terran Rim: many are preparing to labour there for several generations, planting deep roots on certain worlds and cultures to bring all under the gentle yoke of Throne and Altar.

A major task of Pope Vieilo III is to bring the Right Faith to the millions, nay billions, who have lost contact with the Imperium during the turbulent thousand years. Hundreds of teams of far-ranging missionaries, indoctrinators, educators, propagandists, activists and re-contact teams are roaming across the coreward half of Charted Space, looking for lost Imperial colonies and isolated groups of believers. Within the Imperium, bishops and archbishops are working to harmonize all the major strands of Catholic belief – from the most sophisticated 'ritual-respecting atheist' to the most ancient 'deep nature worshipper' – into 'One Coherent, Universal Faith'. Imperial Catholic Institutes pursuing this goal has been established in every sector of the Imperial Core, and the foundations for more Institutes are slowly being laid in all the Frontier Sectors as well – including the Empty Quarter.

With the Pope's blessing, many laymen – educated and uneducated alike – are organizing themselves on working for the poor in the name of the Church.²⁶ Numerous orders which are dedicated to Service to the Poor have been founded, some providing food, others medical care, and still others education. While certainly dedicated and self-sacrificing, they are not particularly interested in encouraging piety or repentance: even the educational orders have a strongly practical/vocational cast of mind.

Why do you halt between two opinions? Atheism not only casts doubt upon the idea of a benevolent God (which it certainly does) *but it also destroys the very concept of benevolence itself*. Benevolence is simply a chemical reaction that some organisms experience in their bone box.

Douglas Wilson,
Letter From a Christian Citizen, pp. 58-59

believing population, these crimes are effectively one and the same.

²⁶ "In Jesus' name" is way too divisive and reactionary: and in any case less than 20% of the Faithful view Jesus as the Only Begotten Son of God. About 30% see Him as one of many Demigods, and over half of Imperial Believers see Him as a great prophet or holy man, but certainly not God-in-the-Flesh.

Gaining special prominence among these orders are the followers of St. Socrates. The Socratic Orders follow this Imperial Catholic Saint's teachings, insisting that the ability to Reason is the Spark of the Gods in Man. And it naturally follows that even the Gods, even the Trinity of the Stars, must be reasonable to men before they can earn his worship. The Imperial Catholic Church long ago welcomed Socratic Thought as 'one of the many rivers that lead to the Truth', and copies of the revered Vilani artist Laddiam Uurgirku's firefresco "The Martyrdom of St. Socrates" can be found in schools across the Imperium.

"...you know, the highly respected believer, a close associate with Jesus himself, and so highly trusted that he was placed in charge of the money. I hear he often spoke up in defense of the poor, too, even before the face of Jesus Himself! What a man!"

"But...but... didn't Judas betray Jesus to His enemies?"

"What are you, some kind of repressed traditionalist? Unlike you, the Imperial Church has grown broad-minded over the centuries, outgrowing primitive distinctions between 'good' and 'evil'. Surely, all will be welcome in the Coming Time of Plenty, as all have the Spark of the Divine within us. No Law, No Judgement, No Sin, No Hell: just ease and comfort for all, forever, without any small-minded discrimination."

— from *The Dialectics of Lies, Death, and Hell*,
Imperial Faith Publications, AD 2944²⁷

The cost of the Denebi War bears down hard on the nobility: but it hits the trillions of the Imperial poor even harder. Wasted wealth and wasted lives; war-fevers over reasoning; the cost of nine years of excitement and fire-forged bonding under the Throne will be paid for with decades of pain, at least. Many of the better Imperial Catholic intellectuals spend at least part of their time organizing relief for the swollen ranks of the impoverished, most notably the Iscariot Orders.

But at least some of the Pope's sermons, rebuking the nobles for weeping over their own losses ("I lost half the family fortune – and three of my sons – because I trusted in the glorious wisdom of the Empress!") and focusing on the losses of their subjects ("I'm left begging in the street, with all the men of my entire family either dead or scattered across the stars!") hit the mark. Even the most impious and arrogant noble can sometimes be shamed to share a bit of his wealth,

²⁷ I will let the reader guess the percentage of today's churchgoing population that would support these teachings, with the right optics and endorsements.

if only for the sake of the cameras. And a few of the more guilt-ridden nobles can be hectored to give more than that.²⁸

Pope Vieilo III has been unable to persuade the Empress to expand social spending beyond the dependents and veterans of the Military and Civil Services. But, he and his fellow prelates have been more successful among the Barons. In return for more welfare cheques and social spending for the poorer worlds, the Barons gets more popularity and fewer rebellions, while the local churchmen and intellectuals preach endlessly about the Holy Demand to Pay Your Full, Fair Share of Taxes. "To Rob from the State is to Rob God!"²⁹

Finally, Pope Vieilo III is looking to encourage True Faith among the nobility: something that is increasingly hard to find, even in his own traditionally religious family. Drawing on Islamic, Stoic, Sun Worshiping and Hindu traditions – and explicitly downplaying "hegemonic Christian beliefs" – an entire selection of Holy Scripture readings focusing on the need for noble piety is being carefully planned out by both the Holy Office and the Indoctrinating Orders of the Imperial church.³⁰

Appendix: Archdukes

The Archduchies remain purely ceremonial positions, as was the case for most of Imperial history. They do have domains, where they criss-cross the stars hosting ceremonies and galas, chair commissions on the pressing issues of the day, give endless speeches, and lead the social circles of their domain.

Their most important real powers are as follows:

²⁸ In contrast to the consistent preaching on the importance of charity, alms, and a strong social net – extending to soft-core socialism/paternalistic feudalism – Vieilo III has little good to say about capitalism, the only *actual* road that brings the poor to the middle classes. Then again, starting a business is risky, working hard is hard work, while lining up for the dole is easy – and keeps power in the hands of the State, the Nobility, the Church... and the Financiers who prefer to collect interest on loans to socialist states (backed by armed tax collectors) rather than risk it on private businesses (resting on the fickle desires of demanding customers.)

²⁹ Inspired by

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillips/2013/06/19/archbishop-says-those-who-avoid-taxes-are-actually-robbing-god/>

³⁰ Despite the claims of the materialists, **culture** remains far more important than guns and gold when describing how a society works. Even now, cultural/religious indoctrination does a more cost-efficient job of entrenching Imperial power than any amount of machine-gun fire, bankster bribery or 'control of the means of production' could ever do.

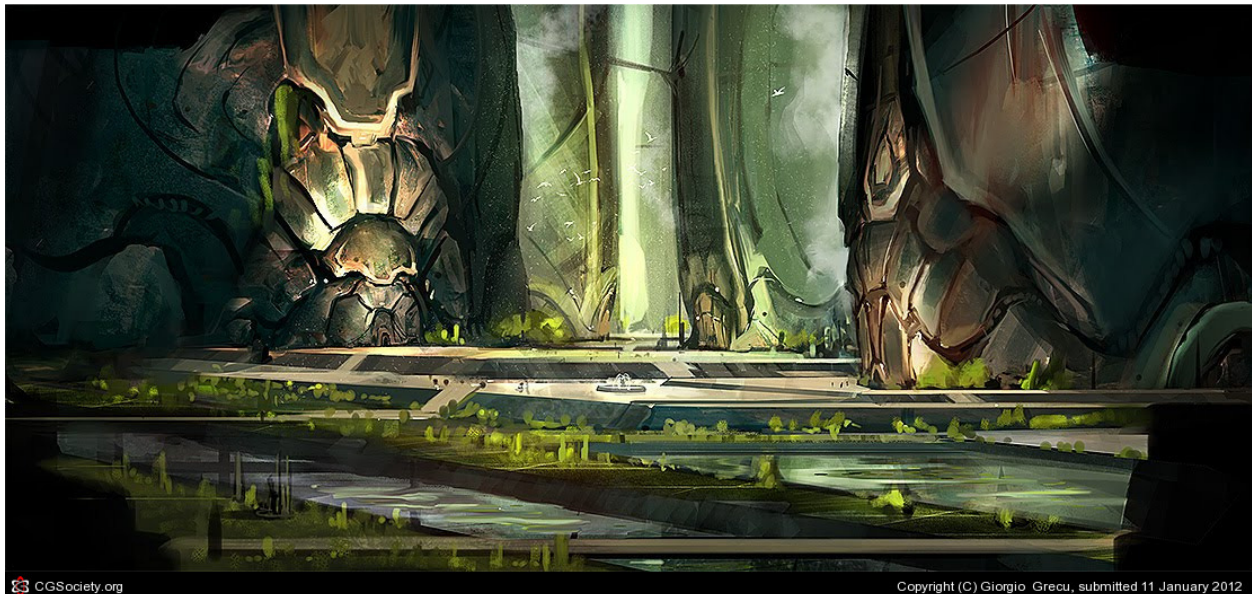
- 1) The right to create Imperial Knights on their own authority, a power they share with the Emperor,
- 2) The Assize of High Honour, where all the Archdukes meet with the Emperor every ten years, to report to the Throne their findings and concerns (typically followed by an Imperial Edict of some kind), and
- 3) their power as proxy voters: numerous nobles have entrusted to their Archduke the right to vote on their behalf, when it is time for the Imperial Moot elect a new Emperor.

"The Iridium Throne is far away; it only knows what the Counts and the bureaucrats allow it to learn; and it only does what the local military and nobility are interested in doing."

"Doesn't the Throne have spies?"

"Sure – and they report to their spymasters, who have their own games to play."

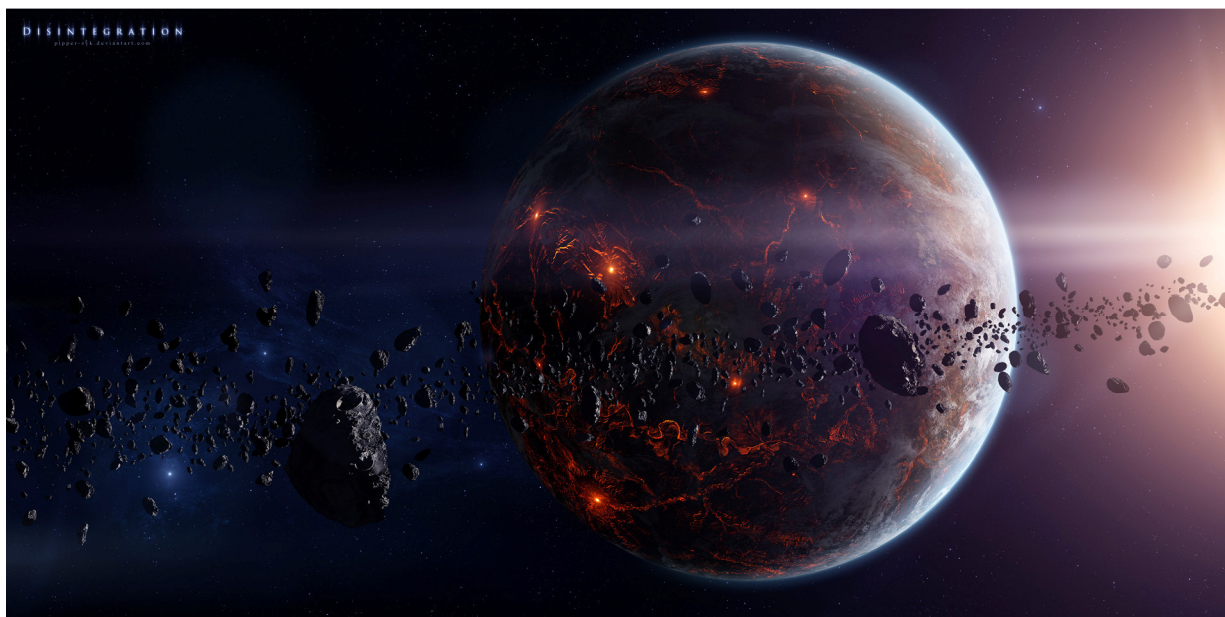
Count Murra, teaching
his bright 10-year-old son Lord Yerr
the realities of Imperial Power, AD 3257



The Assize of High Honour is held at the will of the Emperor, but needs at least two years of planning to get all the nobles, priests, notables and experts at one place at one time. The long-abandoned Ancient caverns of Imondec/Ciqua/Fornast, with its still-mysterious source of fresh water, are being prepared for the next Assize tentatively scheduled for 3327. The graphic is titled "Pearls"© Giorgio Grecu. Please visit his gallery at <http://shards.cgsociety.org/gallery/1028926/> & <http://shardbook.blogspot.ca/>

Inspiration: Long, long ago, I listened to the album Vision: The Music of Hildegard von Bingen, back during the brief popular fad for Gregorian chant. Both the cover of the CD and the songs, especially the title tune Vision - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctx5fo-8DTI> – are major inspirations for the Catholic flavour of this universe.

Counties and Churches: Sophonts



Despite the destruction of the Julian War – something the sector is still recovering from – the cracked crust of Mishiguggekhi I (and her long-imploded moon) is a mute testament of the real Final War of the Ancients. The graphic is titled “Disintegration” © Gabriel Gajdoš. Please visit his gallery at <http://pipper-svk.deviantart.com/art/Disintegration-330356209>

Theme: “Sea of Tranquility”, John Stanford, [Deep Space](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSemnGrHfzw)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSemnGrHfzw>

Despite their insistence of their ‘Major race’ status, the Six Races – **Aslans**, **Hivers**, **K’kree**, **Droyne**, **Vargr**, and **humans** – are not nearly as dominant as they think they are. There are a good deal more alien species within this timeline than in the Official Timeline. Some of them are very, very powerful, like the Kis, described below – but because they don’t have a major political or economic impact, they can be carefully ignored and downplayed in the official narratives of the Six Races.

The Vargr, Droyne, and other Major Races behave much as they do in the Official Imperium. Some additional discussion is warranted for the new species found within the alternate Empty Quarter.

The **Ancients** have no influence in the baseline Empty Quarter. This very lack of influence is of great interest to Imperial historians – unusual absences are as informative as unusual occurrences. In comparison, this alternate Empty Quarter is absolutely loaded with Ancient relics, from bizarre star systems to artefacts to a fairly well-spread number of Droyne and Chirper

settlements. There are an especially large number of dangerous artefacts in the Redring systems, where the asteroid belt was created during the Final War. A remarkable number of destructive munitions, splintered starship hulls, intact weaponry, and obscure devices remains scattered in the ruins of four dead worlds (and one mangled pocket universe.) The very fabric of space-time has been worn thin in many systems, as well: explorers, researchers and looters are advised to be highly cautious around these worlds, especially when engaging the jumpdrive....

The **Sei Kriss** are large, sentient, crab-like aquatic lifeforms. They average around two meters in length, including their 8 to 12 legs, their two large and razor-sharp claws, and two extendable manipulatory appendages. They can breathe on land and in the sea: the majority ‘naturalists’ among them prefer the sea, but the ‘technologists’, needing fire to even get to TL 1, prefer the land.

They have adapted slowly to technological civilization; currently, they organize their societies to work at a Renaissance level of complexity and wealth. In general, the technologists provide the equipment, while the naturalists provide the food, and raise the larvae and

juvenile Sei Kriss. As individuals, they are fairly friendly, if incurious and easily satisfied. The Sei Kriss have no psionic abilities whatsoever; a weak desire to expand, gain knowledge, and master their environment; and a great desire for communal stability and satisfaction (they are incapable of feeling 'happy': 'comfortable and safe' is as good as it gets).

The **Pitth** are tri-sexual beings, of various dimensions but massing between 50 and 300 kilograms as adults. They look much like jellyfish, and spend their initial century of life in the oceans. After their reproductive period is over, they undergo a metamorphosis, and spend the remaining four to five centuries of life floating in the air.

They are extremely powerful illusionists, are reasonably capable in telekinesis and electokinesis (control of electrons and electricity), and have some limited ability in pyrokinesis. The Pitth have no abilities in clairvoyance, precognition, mind control, or other ESP. A very small number of Pitth have the chronokinetic ability to manipulate the flow of space-time to a limited extent (a few meters/a few hours); this ability is kept secret even from official Imperial psionic researchers. The Pitth are extremely powerful telepaths, but their minds are far too deeply alien to communicate directly with the Six Races: written and pictorial forms of communications are more reliable in transmitting meaning that can be understood.

Both the Pitth and the Droyne are known to have psionic powers, something that inspires loathing among the Vilani. The Terrans – including the Terran-led Imperial Catholic Church – are less hostile to psionics. In a universe where humans don't have psionic powers, the Terrans see these species as "interesting, unusual, possibly friendly, certainly very mysterious." Perhaps they have a better connection to hidden parts of the universe, or hidden aspects of the Imperial Trinity, than humans do.

The **Uequeser** is a single worldwide organism, best described as a symbiosis of the intelligent plant-life and unintelligent/semi-intelligent mobile 'appendages'. The biomass of an Uequeser fills the oceans of a world, with additional large, multi-kilometre organs and networks grown deep under the earth. Four members of this species are known to exist within Imperial Space, with an additional 19 possible or proven individuals found elsewhere in Charted Space. They are not known to exhibit any psionic powers. Two individuals in the farthest reaches of Charted Space have grown appendages into space, and are expected to expel a

sub-light World Seed 'soon'. Communication with an Uequeser is difficult, requiring one to five years to communicate a single sentence, and an equal amount of time for a response.

A few **Machinist** systems can be found in some scattered sectors of Charted Space, all coreward/trailing of Core Sector. Typically, these are worlds of strife, covered by endlessly fighting robots and war machines. The robots themselves, which were amazing when first encountered thousands of years ago, are no longer seen as very sophisticated: their technology ranges between TL 11 and TL 14. The mobile, underground factories that manufacture these robots are of interest to military forces across Charted Space. Recent technological advances permit their detection by densitometers, but attempts to approach one have been universally met with disaster. There is widespread debate on whenever these robots are of Ancient manufacture, or originate from some other long-dead interstellar empire.³¹

The **Namgaleshim** is among the most dangerous phenomena known to the Imperium. First encountered by the Vilani Empire at Sigushkimar (now Sao Sapele), it is now thought that the Namgaleshim are the end result of bio-nanite experiments abandoned by the Ancients. For all intense and purposes, this 'green goo' spreads across interplanetary space, radically altering and reshaping these worlds into an incomprehensible Inner System biosphere. Fortunately, they are strongly tied to the energy provided by the local star, and are unable to spread outside of the 'life zone' of a star system.

There have been no observed instances of a Namgaleshim trying to spread itself to other stars. However, during the 2870s, several starships from a radical branch of the Sun Worshipers did attempt to 'seed' several uninhabited systems with the Namgaleshim. Most failed, for reasons which can only be speculated at – but one sub-light attempt did succeed, at Delta Three...

The **Kis** are a genus of 'sophont gas bags', which reside in the upper atmospheres of gas giants. It is believed that the number of sophonts of Sinpad, the only known Kis world, outnumber the entire human population of the Third Imperium, many times over. Fortunately for the Imperium, the various Kis species are simply

³¹ Designer's note: I used the kbots of the Total Annihilation game as my base model for the Machinists. However, in my mind's eye these robots come from underground mobile factories, not nanoprojectors borne by the Commander. You can change this as you wish.

uninterested in human societies, territories, economies, or beliefs. Extremely arcane mathematics, examinations on the nature of time, and the far, far reaches of the Observer Effect – see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Observer_effect_%28physics%29 – interests the Kis far more than anything humans can say or do.

They apparently lack any technology – at least anything physical, tangible, or measurable. However, if organized and in sufficient numbers, they are able to manipulate the mass of their giant world to create

wormholes from one gas giant to another, and even ‘shape’ the stars of their system via means neither electromechanical nor psionic. Individual members can shift the approach of a comet, squish a 100,000-dton starship anywhere in the star system, or alter the course of multiple lightning strikes on an orbiting moon of Sinpad (their inhabited gas giant within the Edenvale system), with apparently no effort.

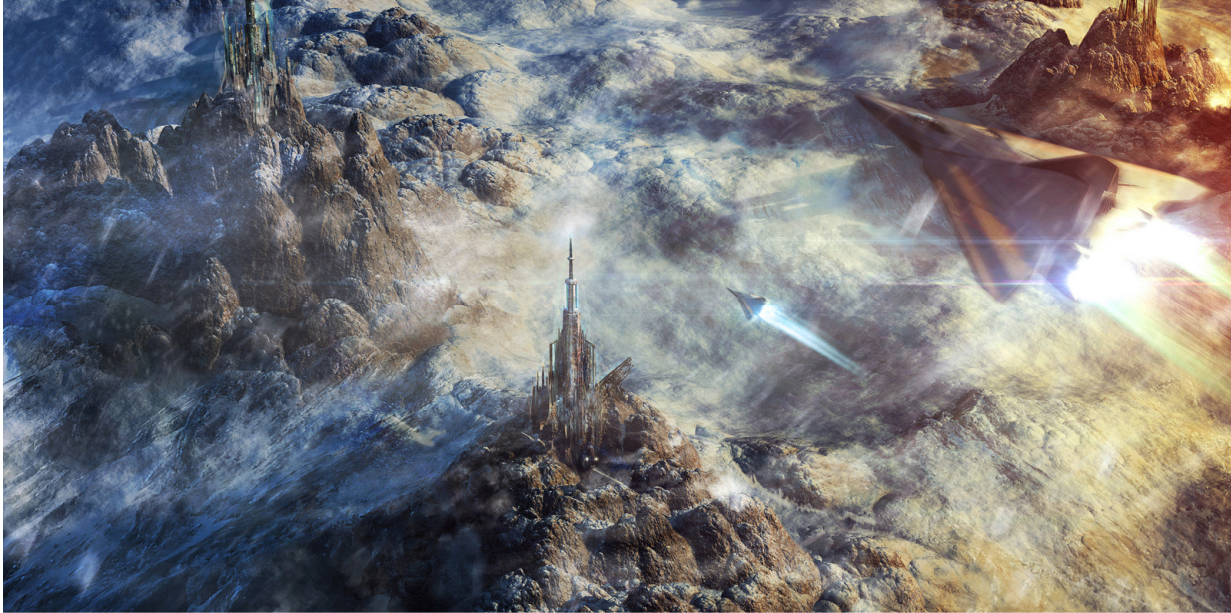
Such levels of power make a laughingstock of Imperial attempts to ‘force’ the Kis to do anything they don’t want to do.



The Kis. While they reside in the Edenvale system, they do NOT reside at the homeworld listed by the UWP, but in one of the system’s gas giants, Sinpad. They claim the other, smaller gas giant as well, but Ritalis is void of life. The graphic is titled “floaters”© Bill Carr. Please visit his gallery at

<http://bc1967.cgsociety.org/gallery/351765/>

Counties and Churches: History and Timeline



New Imperium scouts, updating planetary maps. Tsu, AD 2841. The graphic is titled "Snow Tempest in the Alien Sahara"© Sebastian Hue. Please visit his gallery at <http://shue13.deviantart.com/art/Snow-Tempest-In-The-Alien-Sahara-287456977>

Theme: "Time", Alan Parsons Project,
The Turn of a Friendly Card

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mJDqLatGLk>

Historical Overview - Prehuman

The Imperial Catholic Church is not actually Christian: that is, it does not believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the *only* way to heaven, nor does it see Him as the *only* begotten Son of God, nor the Holy Bible as the *only* inspired book. But, while it isn't Christian, it is *theistic* (broadly speaking).

Current 'deep time' of billions of years is mainly an artefact of the need for sufficient time for evolution to operate.³² However, evolutionary doctrine never took off in this universe due to a different flow of history. Proper atheistic materialistic evolution demanded so many 'lucky coincidences' as to be impossible to differentiate from miracles. Without a prior

³² Andit fails even in this: <http://dougwils.com/s21-atheism-and-apologetics/like-watching-a-hummingbird-fly.html>

philosophical commitment to atheism, proper Darwinism never really took off.³³

Most modern experts understand that the Ancients arrived before the first Vilani scouts did. After all, Ancient artifacts were discovered on Vland before starflight was even conceived of by human mind.³⁴ But as there is no solid, verified, *exceptionless* technique to date artifacts or material without the collaboration of historical records, dating past events is rather

³³ Local elites *did* desire the return of the Classical Order – "Nothing above the State! Nothing outside the State!" – but in this timeline such Total States were outcompeted by dual-order State/Church societies (instead of disintegrating because of technological stress, as in our timeline. Remember that it was the fax – and seeing in the 1980 Olympics that capitalist workers lived better than the Soviet elite – that doomed the USSR). Simply put, the Catholic cultures had more flex and better error detection and correction (dissent and debate), than the bureaucratic Rationalized and Unified cultures did.

³⁴ In this universe, practically all technology beyond TL 9 can be traced to an Ancient relic or discovery. On worlds like Vland, littered with both Ancient ruins, even the most primitive spears show some Ancient artistic influence. It is not unreasonable to make the Ancients as crucial to the Traveller universe as Western Europe/U.S. to modern technological civilization.

problematic without first-hand observers.³⁵ The inability to read Ancient writings is the greatest impediment to understanding the past: even though the Droyne are accepted as the closest surviving relatives to the Ancients, their current language has no relationship to that of their Ancients sires.

The Droyne themselves are known to have resided in the sector before the Vilani, but they have no true *history* before the rise of humaniti, and no native way to measure time: their current use and measurements of time are directly derived from Vilani 'cyclic time' and 'eternal return' ideas. Instead, they merely use their race memory to develop different tools and approaches to deal with different problems. The past is not loved for its own sake.

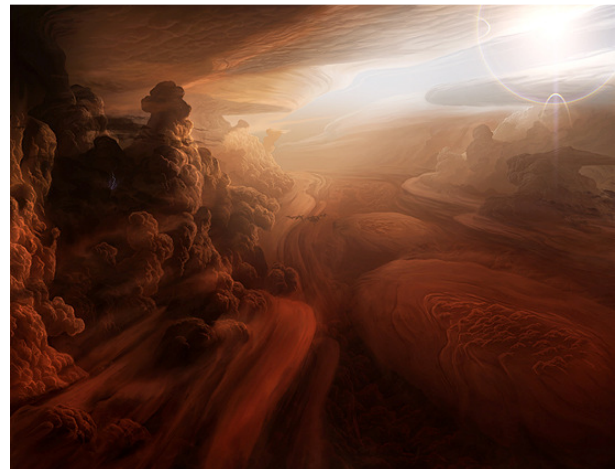
As communication with the Uequeser that covers Takeshima slowly builds, it has been discovered that this vast and ancient being has clear memories back to roughly AD 100, as determined by its memory of certain astrological events (supernovas, number of cycles around its home star, etc.) Fragmentary memories go back to about 3300 BC. Further scientific investigation is needed (measuring organ and circulatory growth rates, sedimentary layering of its contact area with the planet, etc.) to push back the boundaries of the past beyond 3300 BC. In contrast to the Uequeser, the Kis simply refuse to discuss their past or origin with humaniti, no more than they did with the Ancients before them.

The known universally recognized Ancient sites within the sector are located on **Gigdubarga, Gaashi Diidu, Kyushu, Gekko, Akkeshi, and Keirse**y: none of these systems are located within the Third Imperium. Gekko is very difficult to get to, due to (probably artificial) jumpspace distortions: only a few slower-than-light expeditions have set foot on that world. The strange green bio-nanitic infestation that dominates the inner systems of **Delta Three** and **Sao Sapele** are strongly suspected to be Ancient weapons of the Final War. The

³⁵ One of the many problems of evolution is that it can't be falsified, as <http://crev.info/2013/07/evolution-as-stretchy-glue/> shows. In contrast, Intelligent Design *can* be falsified <http://www.uncommondescent.com/intelligent-design/michael-behe-on-falsification/>. Even to get the fossils in the first place, you can't use gradual sedimentary layers to bury it: you're going to need a sudden catastrophe – like, for example, a flood – to bury it properly before the scavengers get to it. <http://www.uncommondescent.com/creationism/cocktail-falsifying-darwinism-via-falsifying-the-geological-column/>. As for what drives atheistic doctrine: it can usually be summed up in one word: Hell. <http://www.uncommondescent.com/intelligent-design/whose-side-are-you-on-professor-coyne-what-anatole-france-really-said-about-miracles/>

richest and most important Ancient site in the sector is Gaashi Diidu, but the Vargr pirates/archaeologists/tomb raiders that own this system have been alarmingly successful in repelling unwanted investigators.

There are several Machinist systems in the sector: the most famous of them, **Ruins**, has several large armies of TL14-15 robots locked in an eternal conflict. Regrettably, the robots have no interest in communication, and may be incapable of communicating outside of their own datanets.³⁶



The Martika Void of Sinpad. The Kis and most other lifeforms native to the world are known to avoid this roughly 3000 km by 2000 km oblong volume of their native gas giant. Imperial scientists speculate that the specific mix of local radiation and magnetism makes this region uncomfortable to their senses. The graphic is titled "Jupiter Image"© Matthew Attard.

Please visit his gallery at

<http://priteebboy.deviantart.com/art/Solar-Scapes-art-slideshow-144166327>

Research expeditions to the extensive alien ruins of the world suggest that the Machinist systems are tied to some form of failed invasion, with the Ruins systems a major population centre of these invaders. The relationship between the makers of the Machines and the Ancients is unknown. Experiments have not shown any special reaction between the Machines and the Droyne race, the sole surviving descendants of the Ancients. No samples of writing have been found, but mobile holographic pictorial glyphs, emotional communication devises based on pheromone

³⁶ Imperial technology now surpasses the encryption protocols of all of the Machinist communication nets. Even so, it will take time and money before the memories of the underground factories can be tapped, co-related, and dated: and there is no Imperial interest in this.

analogues, and ‘music hotspots’ with special acoustic properties have been found.

Ruins was the host of a major Imperial research base, focusing on the analysis and interpretation of Machinist programming. Despite the difficulties posed by the large hostile robot armies, several crucial breakthroughs here were instrumental in raising Imperial cybernetic, robotic, and programming capabilities to TL 15 – the same level as the most sophisticated of the Machinist warbots. As all the fundamental technological mysteries of Machinist programming and operation were cracked by 3289, the expensively defended base was dismantled and abandoned by 3293, despite pleas by researchers to refocus the base to better understand Machinist history and culture. Mathematics, algorithms, material technology, signal & telecommunication techniques, military science & organization, and highly surprising uses of algebraic concepts are the primary openings available to provide an insight to Machinist ‘thought’ – or, perhaps, the thoughts of their makers.

The Pitth claim to have never met the Ancients, and fix their arrival in this region of space at an exact point in time: March 26, 18 BC, at 04:44.2105 Imperial Time, during the era of Vilani rule. They consider themselves to be multidimensional explorers and small-scale settlers, uninterested in interstellar empire, but very interested in the development of sophont thought and interstellar societies over time. Very little additional information about themselves has been provided, but a dozen additional settlements of the Pitth are suspected to exist within Julian, Vargr, and K’kree space. Small squadrons of covert Imperial scout ships have been sent to all suspected locations.

Historical Overview - Vilani

The Vilani first arrived in what is now the Empty Quarter in 1008 BC, with the first agricultural and mining settlements following soon after. As usual, the Ancient ruins were carefully avoided and the high-tech Droyne shown a careful respect, while weaker races were swiftly subjugated and made to be useful and profitable to the Vilani Empire. Vilani military history suggests that three sophont species – one of them probably a Minor human race – were exterminated in the area during Vilani rule, but more detailed information, like these races homeworlds and genetic profile, has proven very difficult to piece together from the limited highly degraded physical and electronic records of that era.³⁷

³⁷ The Prehuman period is even more of an uncharted territory: but at least in the Vilani era, there are *some* records to work

Scientifically minded orders of the Imperial Catholic Church have launched over forty currently active initiatives to better fill out this very sketchy period of history. Partly, this is an act of worship, as a small but influential faction of the Church worships knowledge in and of itself. Other Church sects want to conduct proper funerary rites for the extinct species, but can’t do so if they can’t even locate their now-dead homeworlds and colonies. Still other groups want to get a proper genetic profile of the dead species, so they can recreate them and convert them to the Imperial faith. And finally, some groups just want to rescue what technology and art they can from the dead, while learning how they died so better help the living avoid ancient pitfalls.

As for the local sophont species that still exist today: the **Sei Kriss** were wise enough to stop rebelling before the Vilani *completely* wiped them out. The enormous cultural pain of adjusting to a human-dominated universe is *slowly* shifting to earning the rewards of a fairly successful cultural transformation.

The **Pitth** illusionists managed to avoid most contact with the psion-hating Vilani, assisted with the judicious use of direct mind-control, fear-sending, and dream-sculpting (including extractions and inceptions) at critical moments. The strong grasp the Vilani have on biology³⁸ insured that they quickly understood that the biosphere of Takeshima was actually a single unified organism, the **Uequeser**: wary of earning the enmity of such a massive sentient, but fascinated by its sheer bulk and profound complexity, they restricted visits to only twice-a-century affairs. The TL 14-15 Machinist systems were hostile free-fire zones for the TL 10-11 Vilani military, which quickly learned to get off and stay off of these planets. Vilani interactions with the exceedingly powerful **Kis** taught the Kis the elementals of dealing with men, including the importance of firm examples, harsh reprisals, and inflexible boundaries.

Historical Overview – First & Second Imperia

Settlement patterns after the fall of the Vilani Empire is best described in overlays. In the final decades of the Nth Interstellar Wars, this region of space was placed in the Antares Theatre of Operations: battles here were sprawling, disorganized affairs, but the crucial fact of the Nth Interstellar Wars – the Terrans were able to

with. Until the Ancient language is finally understood, a proper investigation of the Prehuman era will have to wait.

³⁸ In contrast to Official Traveller, where the Vilani had problems with proper germ theory before contact with the Terrans.

make up losses quickly, the Vilani only with increasing difficulty – held true here as elsewhere.



It has been known from the times of the Vilani Empire that the gas giant lifeforms of gas giant Irkadayob (a.k.a. Province Epsilon, following the [MegaTraveller Referee's Manual](#) pg 19 nomenclature) were related to the Kis sophonts of Sinpad ("Edenvale Beta"). But how and when did these lifeforms migrate? Which mind – Divine? Ancient? Other? – laid down their complex design? The Kis aren't saying. The graphic is titled "Journey Begins" © Andrzej Sykut. Please visit his gallery at <http://azazel.cgsociety.org/gallery/593766/>

Immediately after the 2746 conquest of Vland, the death of the Emperor, and the fall of the Vilani Empire,

this region of space was placed in Antares Province of the New Imperium. While Arabs made up the initial

wave of settlement – naming the sector after a blighted region of their native Arabia – the Nihonese made up the largest following wave, followed by smaller waves of Romans, Anglos, and Celts. These waves of settlers came to an end during the First Imperial Civil War (2846-2851) Smaller, more focused groups of Mesopotamians,³⁹ East Africans, Coptic Egyptians and Cantonese settlers had rounded out the ethnic demographics in the years before the Second Imperial Civil War (2901-2946), which led to the fragmentation of the Imperium.

Historical Overview – Early Third Imperium

Widespread rule was re-established by the founding of the Third Imperium, in 3078. However, the re-establishment of a stable military and trade network connecting the Empty Quarter with the rest of Vilani/Terran space did not lead to any additional waves of settlement. There are far too many better worlds and more prosperous counties closer to the would-be colonists to bother with the distant Quarter. On the other hand, warfare has led to the occasional sharp downturn in population trends. The Greater Pacification Wars were primarily fought far from the Quarter, and the four Lesser Pacification Wars fought within the Quarter to date led to no more than a few tens of millions dead in campaigns lasting no more than a few months. *Very small potatoes*, in the Imperial scheme of things. Even the Third Imperial Civil War only wiped out a few cities and minor settlements within the Quarter, as this sector was just a half-forgotten sideshow of the major sporadic fighting in the Imperial Core. And of course, the dynasties involved were more interested in killing each other than in destroying the livestock they intended to fleece.⁴⁰

Historical Overview – The Julian War

Of far greater destructiveness was the Julian War. This 17-year conflict saw the battlefronts tear through the Empty Quarter three times (twice on the rimward side of the Lesser Rift) across three of the four quadrants (Beta Quadrant was not involved in this war). By the end of the conflict, over 55% of the sector's population was dead, mainly due to direct vaporization during

³⁹ The Arab conquests were restricted to their peninsula in this timeline. Neither the Byzantines, nor the Persians, nor the (ahistorical) Kingdom of Aegypt fell to the Islamic* invaders in this timeline. Thus, the emphasis of gold over swords in the local version of Islam*.

⁴⁰ Why are monarchies better than socialist states? Because *fleeing* the masses is far more profitable than *slaughtering* them!

nuclear and meson bombardments.⁴¹ only a relatively small percentage was killed by the resulting waves of starvation, life support failure, and disease. The percentage actually killed by antipersonnel weapons, from knives to shells to fusion guns, was microscopically small. Indeed, it was almost as small as the ratio of soldiers & spacers dead to civilian dead.

After the war ended in 3271, Imperial holdings were reduced from the entire sector to the six subsectors that remain Imperial today, while the now-sovereign Julian territory included four subsectors (eventually expanded to eight). Sporadic efforts at resettlement, industrial and urban reconstruction, biosphere reconstruction, and mass nuclear damping were halted on the Imperial side by 3300, and are expected to conclude on the Julian side in the current decade.⁴² Population levels are now at about half of their original numbers at the start of the war, and are expected to regain their pre-war mark in about 100-150 years.

Historical Overview – from the Julian War to Now, AD 3324

In the 54 years since the Julian War, the sector has focused on repairing war damage. Current Imperial propaganda, tacking to the pacifistic slant of the Imperial population, stresses the heavy demands put on the Imperial Ministry of Colonization: especially in regard to terraforming equipment, nuclear dampers to remove widespread nuclear contamination from land and sea, and the practical armies of labourers to do the grunt work needed to repair the biospheric and atmospheric damage.⁴³ The general population is willing to pay to help rebuild their brother Imperial

⁴¹ Due to the nature of particle fire – similar to lighting, not an explosion – relatively few died of these weapons in bombardments. But on (typically lightly populated) airless worlds, particle accelerators are the main killer, both rupturing the integrity of habitat shells more effectively than a near-miss of an nuclear explosive (“No air? No overpressure!”), and – far more importantly – irradiating everything in sight, an effect that an atmosphere tends to mitigate.

⁴² In this timeline, human interstellar society has had a LOT of practice at rebuilding planets. However, within the Empty Quarter, the Imperials and the Republic rebuilding efforts suffer from limited resources. The Lorean Hegemony joined *after* the Second Julian War (3254-3271), and so wasn't victimized during the conflict. Her forces did contribute to the Julian Rebellion (3303-3309) on the side of the Protectorate. They made a good account of themselves, and are an important reason why the Protectorate didn't disintegrate: but more importantly, the fighting was far away in Mendan and Meshan sectors, so again no Lorean world was harmed.

⁴³ Of course, if you can actually chase down the real numbers – no easy task – you will find most of the money is actually being funnelled into rebuilding the Imperial Navy and the various payoffs needed to keep certain power-brokers quiet.

worlds, but the bills are high, and the discontent is fierce.

In the Empty Quarter, they haven't seen *any* of that 'reconstruction money' the Empress keeps banging on about. So, most of the actual recovery was funded and led by the Counts, and not the distant and largely uncaring Iridium Throne.⁴⁴ The Ismiika Akuim – the poor Vilani collectivist state that ruled Alpha quadrant – did a better job in repairing her worlds, by using raw muscle, unflinching determination and uncounted millions of lives as an ugly-but-serviceable substitute for the right technological tools. Fortunately for the resident Vilani, most of the work was done before the takeover by the current Vargr rulers, who have great interest in gathering wealth, and little interest in spending it on 'primitive, zero-charisma, eminently replaceable Vilani Cogs of the Machine.'⁴⁵

The Lorean Hegemony got the best part of the deal: as they were not involved in the war, they didn't have to work to repair the ruins. Only the world of Nisaga is a true stand-out success in planetary development, but a host of Lorean worlds made modest gains over the last five decades: gains that would have been blown in the wind, if they were subjected to the horrors of war and a long and expensive recovery.

The huge wars fought since 3250 – the Julian War, the Second Rim War, and the Denebi War – have worked to drain Imperial wealth, and thus the foundation of Imperial power. The **Julian War** was traded a small territorial gain – the conquest of the Republic of Antares, a member state of the Julian Protectorate – in return for major population losses, uncounted wealth destruction, and widespread environmental damage across Antares, the Empty Quarter, Ley Sector, and parts of Fornast. The **Second Rim War** was more successful – with the conquest of four notable Terran starnations, and the religious centre of Terra – but at the cost of an endless and costly occupation, and the military alliance of the other Terran States into the hostile Terran Confederation. Moreover, the Terran Lords who rule those conquered wealthy worlds have enough money to defy the Iridium Throne in a manner no other Count would dare to. If they didn't have to spend billions in population suppression – assisted by

the military orders of the Imperial Catholic Church – they could well try an outright rebellion.

Finally, the recently-ended **Denebi War** resulted in the death of tens of billions of young men throughout Corridor and The Windhorn sectors. While there is no longer a Vargr threat to Vland, the stellar region is a lot less habitable then it was at the start of the war. The original plan to conquer the Spinward States lies splintered across the stars, huge military expenditures resulting in nothing but a lot of wind and debt. Finally, the sheer number of automated mines has rendered the mainworlds of the region risky places for any thin-skinned trader to visit – assuming there was someone alive on the mainworld to trade with.

Make wars unprofitable and you make them impossible.

A. Philip Randolph

All of these wars, the ongoing occupation of the Terran Rim conquests, and the ramped-up efforts of the Ministry of Colonization to clean up after them has led to a huge increase of Imperial taxation. By and large, the minor worlds have been shielded from the brunt of the heavy taxation increases, with most of the financial burden lying on the Imperial Core sectors. These major worlds are growing more restive, and the nobles that lead them have no interest in either paying off the war debts (and slashing their income flow, and thus their power), or jacking up inflation (and destroying their savings). The size of their wealth and their closeness to the Imperial Capital makes it difficult for them to evade the Empress' tax collectors or her secret agents, so a quiet, widespread resentment builds and builds instead.⁴⁶

Outside of the closely supervised Imperial Core sectors – Gushemege, Dagudashaag, Sylea, Zarushagar, and Massilia – it is easier to escape the eyes of Her Majesty's Revenue Agents. The Lords of the Imperial Terran Rim are growing adept at hiding the money they gain by taxing the rich worlds under their power.⁴⁷ Similarly, the nobles of Vland make sure that most of their taxes stay in the sector, building up Vland's military 'to shield the Imperium against the chaotic Vargr hordes'.

⁴⁴ To her credit, the Imperial Catholic Church is involved in the reconstruction, even today – but her projects are by financial necessity small-scale, labour-intensive, and likely will be ongoing for centuries to come.

⁴⁵ The Vilani are not a *corporate* people in this timeline: but they are still a conformist and collectivist superculture. Individualism and uniformity is discouraged.

⁴⁶ And if you think the Nobles are angry, recall that they pass on as much of the tax burden as possible onto the backs of the planetary governments and the average commoner.

⁴⁷ Unofficial relationships with various groups within the Terran Confederation also come into play here.



A standard Scale 5 Imperial Ministry of Colonization minimodel. While useful in determining ecological effects in ways computer models can't duplicate, even the largest minimodels, covering a full cubic kilometer, is highly simplified compared to a self-maintaining, completely independent biome.

The graphic is titled "Life Lab" © Matthew Attard.

Please visit his gallery at

<http://priteeboy.deviantart.com/art/Life-Lab-309027202>

Even wealthy Hebrin has managed to negotiate a reprieve from most of the rate increases, but only on the condition of additional Hebrinite funding and activity in rebuilding the other Imperial counties of the Empty Quarter. Of course, with the spread of Hebrin money, technology and assistance comes heretical Hebrinite religious beliefs, in the form of Orthodox (read: old-fashioned and obsolete) Christianity, and unusual strands of Islam, which teaches that all humaniti should be unified into one community, lead by the Faithful, for the good of the Faithful.⁴⁸

Attempts have been made to reduce the anger of the petty nobility, especially the not-so-petty Counts. Following the example of the nobles of the Terran Rim,

⁴⁸ In this timeline, Islam* is not particularly expansionistic, instead being closely tied to clan and tribe, and preferring the art of the deal to the art of war.

all Counts have been given a freer hand in their counties and baronies, so long as the money and the troops flow. Executions of nobles for political insubordination and tax evasion have been replaced with exile to distant locales, like the Empty Quarter. "Disappearing people is so passé!"

However, to appease the increasingly pacifistic nature of the masses, more and more nobles are simply stripped of their wealth, left to idle in the Empty Quarter for a few decades, and then released after gaining a measure of wisdom and humility before the Iridium Throne.

Appendix: Ancient Power

The importance of Ancient relics is crucial in understanding the shape of Charted Space. Without strong Vargr skills in scrounging and altering Ancient technology for their own use, they would have never been able to drive out the Vilani from what is now the Vargr Extents. If the Vilani were willing to adapt to alien technology – instead of shunning the unknown and untrustworthy – they would have escape technological stagnation. If the Hivers had decided to preserve their Ancient relics instead of destroying them 'to protect the younger races', they wouldn't have been able to centralize political power in their hands, and would not have been driven to push their own technological development. The Terran view of Ancient weapons as magical devices to be used and then forgotten shaped their future development immensely. The K'kree naturally destroy things they don't understand, from technologies to ecologies. Finally, the Zhodani choice to work with the Droyne in understanding the tools of their ancestors has granted them an immense technological lead.

Appendix: Historical Timeline

At this point in Imperial History, very few believe in a purposeless universe of random chance: the number of 'coincidences' needed to create such a highly ordered universe is impossible to differentiate from a miracle, and the majority of Imperial researchers and intellectuals in this timeline have no ideological hostility to the miraculous or the supernatural.⁴⁹ However, who or what created the universe, the nature of said Creator, and the purpose of the universe itself remains in hot dispute.

While there are "chain of being" theistic evolutionists of many religions – largely now enveloped into the One

⁴⁹ Regarding the dogmatism of atheism, see <http://www.uncommondescent.com/intelligent-design/g-k-chesterton-on-why-materialists-not-theists-are-the-dogmatists/>

Imperial Faith – as well as “ex nihilo” creationists (of many flavours), leading scholars discount any history that has not been observed by a reputable source. These strict ‘Verifiable Time’ historicalists insist that it’s unscientific/illegitimate to make any claims about the past that hasn’t been documented by a reputable outsider, present at the scene.

As such, the majority of historians, following the lead of the Verifiable Time theorists, restrict history to the first decipherable writings, which are Vilani: using

astronomical data, these words have been dated to 3121 BC. There is no known way to correlate the indecipherable Ancient writings to modern calendars, but an intriguing set of starmaps found on XXXXXXXXXX/Spinward Marches *could* date the Ancient Empire to 4016 BC – *if* the mystery of the missing stars could be resolved... and if the Imperial researchers survive visiting a motley group of hostile starnations who a year ago were trying to capture or kill every Imperial they could find...



A segment of the Arishkhedampii Expedition, briefly contacting and surveying a TL 7 world before moving on to the next interesting spot in the sky. “Somewhere in the Norma Arm of the galaxy, about 6,000 parsecs coreward/trailing away from Vland.” AD 3200. The graphic is titled “Escaping” © Sebastien Hue. Please visit his gallery at <http://shue13.deviantart.com/art/Escaping-202656010>

The Imperial Catholic Church is descended from Christianity: however, by AD 2000, the Bible has been relegated to just ‘one of the Written Words of God’, with other works being of equal stature in the eyes of the Magisterium. The majority of these texts point to a recent evolutionary origin of life, with the universe being a pure Chaos before Order spontaneously arose. A few religious texts are grounded in the notion of ‘deep time’ of longer than a hundred thousand years. Only the Abrahamic religions insist on a Creator outside of space and time, something the majority of Imperial Catholic priests find risible.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ People have always preferred to worship the creation rather than the Creator. For one thing, a created god can always be tricked or defied somehow; is essentially finite, and so lacks omnipotence and omniscience; and has no ability to create something outside of your understanding, no unchallengeable righteousness, and no untouchable holiness. (And no ability to play you like a well-tuned piano, a la Pharoah...) The difference between a created god and man is just a changeable difference in degree, not an unchangeable difference in kind. A matter of power and knowledge, not of holiness and transcendence. Naturally then, the Imperial Catholic Church – as well as

The Church is quite willing to render all of these texts abstract metaphors, to be filled with whatever meaning the individual believer chooses – so long as it refrains from treason against the Imperial Throne or the True Pope, of course. An increasing percentage of senior priests and prelates consider all questions on history, debates on ‘good’ and ‘evil’, and questions on what happens after death, to be basically meaningless. “Only love and obedience to family, homeland, Empress, and Church is of value.”⁵¹

Empress Changpu, and the vast majority of her priests – insist that no deity could exist outside of space and time: that only Matter, Energy, and Mind are truly eternal and everlasting.

⁵¹ The Imperial hierarchy, the Imperial Catholic Church, and most of the Imperial population consider those who place the demands of righteousness and justice above the needs of Family, People and Throne to be both insane and evil. For a good model of their attitudes, see Matthew 12; John 11:45-53.

Black – Vilani events, Imperial events

Blue – Terran events

Crimson – Zhodani events

Brown – Vargr events

Red – Hiver events

Light Green – K’kree events

Orange – Darrian events

Dark Green – Julian events

Purple – Aslan events

Dawn

3121 BC – Earliest Vilani writing

2829 BC – Eneri Ipgarshumuga, the Vilani analogue of Moses the Lawgiver, is born.

2411 BC – Mazun Khigamgushliian, the Vilani analogue of Isaac Newton, is born.

c. 2500 BC – Industrialization begins on Vland.

2360 BC – The Vilani jump drive is reverse-engineered from partly understood Ancient relics uncovered on Vland. They began to expand across the stars.

2168 BC – Ganidiirsi Shiimkushliirkhier,

the Vilani analogue combining both Adam Smith and Ludwig von Mises, is born.⁵²

2078 BC – The Vilani encounters Terra. The Ashlinni Trading Clan is granted lawful authority over the system. The clan elders decide against contacting the unruly inhabitants, and eventually place both Terra and the jungle planet Venus under observation, while authorizing a small settlement on dying Mars.

2239 BC – Earliest Terran writing (Egyptian)

c. 1600 BC – The total population of the Vilani pass the trillion mark, spread across a myriad of systems. Interstellar TL 9 trading clans interlink all of the inhabited worlds.

1582 BC – Earliest Hebrew writings

Empire

1147 BC – The traditional founding date of the Vilani Empire. Seventeen major and 221 minor interstellar trading clans (each controlling access to at least fifty and five high-population systems, respectively) organize the Empire among themselves. Unlike the Official Third Imperium, these clans were never organized into State corporations or bureaucratic bureaux: and the castes are not as important politically as the clans.

1010 BC – The greatest human expedition in history – actually, a Vilani/Droyne expedition – is launched from Vland. The Arishkhedampii Expedition uses high-level Ancient artefacts to permit interstellar journeys based on artificial wormholes. Amazingly, the expedition continues to the current year, AD 3324.

1008 BC – Vilani scouts arrive in the region now known as the Empty Quarter: various small settlements follow.

917 BC – Vilani genetic research lead to their enhanced lifespan, the creation of numerous minor human races, and the origin of many (not all) non-human sophonts, including the Vargr (created by the Vilani in 970 BC)

760 BC – The Vilani Empire reaches its greatest extent, enclosing a sphere with a 2000-parsec radius, centred on Vland.

c. 750 BC – The Vilani Empire (a.k.a. the Ziru Sirka) reaches TL 10.

Vargr Wars & Hiver Expansion

647 BC – The Vargr population on Lair⁵³ successfully revolts against their Vilani masters. A slow but unceasing and ever-expanding train of wars, hostilities, raids, rebellions, and invasions over the next two thousand years eventually cost the Vilani half their star empire as a direct result of the Old Vargr Wars – and the financial & manpower strain of these wars is a substantial factor in losing the rest of the Vilani Empire, as well.

316 BC – The Zhodani worlds, a local human culture, successfully revolt against their Vilani masters.

AD 160 – Manichaeistic controversies make it impossible for any single church – Rome, Alexandria, Jerusalem, or Cretan – to gain authority over the entire body of believers.

AD 174 – To funnel resources to fight the Vargr, development of much of the largely unsettled spinward regions of the Vilani Empire is abandoned. Contact with these isolated worlds is eventually dropped, and the settlements lost to obscurity.

⁵² Well, I needed *someone* who could handle the money as well as the law and physics men could in their fields, so who else could I turn to? Anyways, for help with Vilani names, don't forget the Vilani name list on the [GURPS Traveller](#) Core book, page 77.

⁵³ Lair is located a good 800 parsecs coreward of Vland. It is *not* the same planet or system as Lair/Provence 2402, the Vargr homeworld in official Traveller.

AD 325 – The Roman Empire disintegrated in civil war.

AD 461 – The Hivers, having learned to reverse engineer abandoned Vilani artifacts, regain jump drive technology this year. They begin to expand across the stars, transporting humans to worlds held by the Vilani Empire while reshaping other sophonts into specialized, dependent organs of a Hiver-headed Federation.

AD 514 – Internal dynastic disputes divide the Vilani Empire into five parts.

He reminds us that India and Africa did not lack in ingenious minds; but how they were deployed matters greatly. "The Egyptians living along the Nile built the pyramids while barbarians inhabited Western Europe. The problem was that the engineers who made pyramids to honor the bones of kings and queens did not bother making wheelbarrows for their slaves."

<http://www.amazon.com/Book-that-Made-Your-World/dp/1595555455>

As time goes on, one of the more annoying things about writing transpositions of 19th century European Empires into old-school interstellar space opera is the increasingly dated nature of the exercise. Sure, Asimov, Clark, Heinlein & company could casually assume that their understanding of historical destiny was true for all peoples, at all times. But that just isn't true: as books such as The Book that Made Your World (Vishal Mangalwadi), What if the Bible Had Never Been Written? or What If Jesus Had Never Been Born? (D. James Kennedy, Jerry Newcombe), there is a lot of contingency in history, lots of ways for societies to get it wrong, and very few ways to get it right. Take the Enlightenment revival of the State as the Source of Law, and therefore the True Master of the People. Or the modern denial of the very *existence* of a universal and unchanging scale of 'right/wrong' or 'truth/falsehood'.

It is aggravating to have the Vilani, for example, develop concepts that realistically speaking they just have no right to have, given their lack of the needed intellectual prerequisites of a capitalistic economy, individual property rights, an orderly single God designing a orderly universe under a single predictable, knowable and universal set of laws, the preference for progress over eternal stability, etc. The tools I have just aren't good enough to do the kind of worldbuilding I want – probably because I'm making unreasonable demands of them. *Grumble*

AD 789 – A horseback empire from Central Asia explodes across Asia, conquering all of China and India by 827, Persia and the Near East by 843, and Arabia, Egypt, the Horn of Africa, and the Saharan region by 928.

AD 800 – A large, post-Roman empire in Western Europe – an analogue of the Charlemagne Empire – was shattered this year. Viking invasions over the next several centuries kept things chaotic. No large, unified kingdom in Europe was possible for over a thousand years.

AD 948 – Only the central part of the Vilani Empire still existed, stretching from what are now Far Frontiers and Vanguard Reaches to Ingukra Arzul and Star's End in width, and from Gashikan and Trenchans to Malom and Hadji lengthwise.

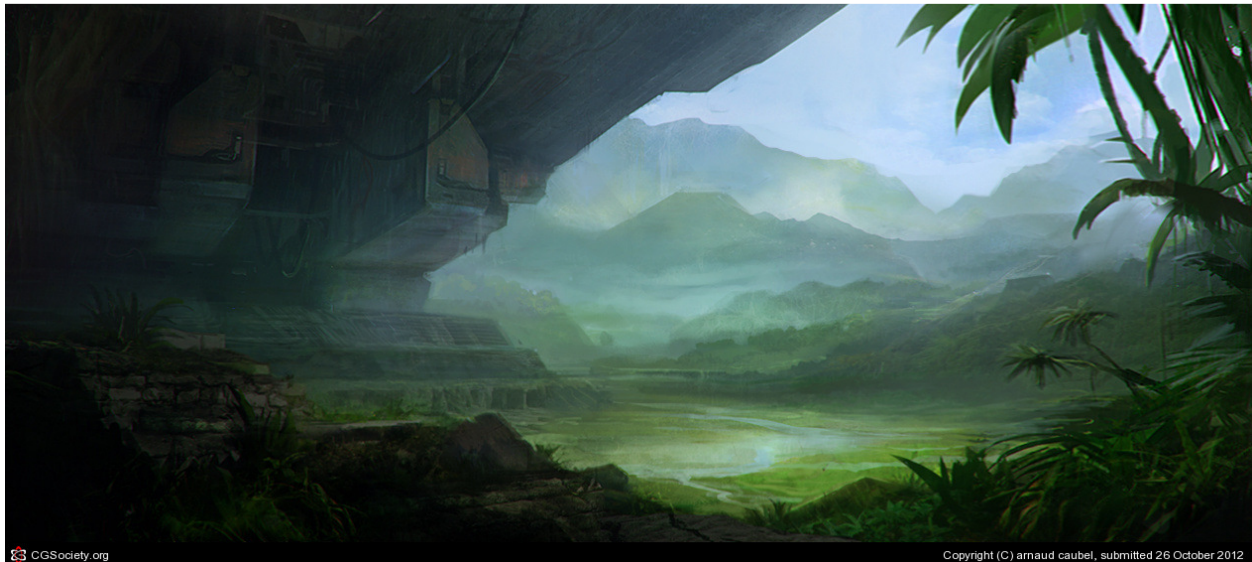
c. AD 950 - Due to a series of horrific incidents in their early starfaring experience, Hiver policy is to destroy uncovered Ancient artifacts, rather than investigate them. Despite (or perhaps because) of this policy, Hiver technology consistently remains somewhat superior to Imperial technology, usually by one or two technology levels. At around the same time, Hiver policy takes on an anti-psionic cast, as Hivers, like humaniti, has no psionic potential. "Why permit the childlike lesser races to gain powers that we cannot share? Better for their sake and ours that they forget that anti-scientific foolishness."

AD 952 – The ruler of the massive Irgui Empire – the successor of the horseback empire of over 170 years ago – invites Clement, Bishop of Rome to send 150 missionaries to his court. The Roman Bishop sends 350, led by the Pope himself. Bishop Clement's alliance with the Lord of the Irgui not only ensures Catholicism's success, but catapults his authority above his fellow leaders of the 'Nicene Creed' branch of the Church – the Bishopricks of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Damascus – as the senior leader of the Church.

1089 – The Vilani withdraw their settlements in Sol System, abandoning Terra, Venus, and Mars. The low-tech nobodies on Terra never noticed that their world was a sheltered reservation of the Vilani Empire for 2000 years.

1107 – A successful Arab merchant writes a series of commentaries on the Bible challenging the Nestorian Christian point of view, insisting that Jesus was not the Son of God. Instead, salvation is to be gained through strict monotheism, obedience to a set of moral laws and religious ceremonies centered on Mecca, a notable merchant city. While the Blessed Guide is nameless, his work and teaching eventually developed into a local version of 'Islam' that focused its expansion beyond Arabia using trading links and business deals, rather than conquest and political domination of unbelievers.

1381 – A major Vargr fleet successfully break past Vilani lines in Gashikan sector, trashing the major Vilani /Yilean stronghold of Gashikan herself. The wanton destruction of the system adds an unpleasant, pitiless edge to the endless exchange of raids, strikes, bombardments, and clashes across the coreward frontier of the Vilani Empire.



A vast Ancient complex, on the distant and isolated world of Keirse. Across the vastness of Charted Space, for several thousand years now, location like this have been picked over by hundreds of adventurers and expeditions – looters looking for power, purifiers destroying unclean technology, researchers searching for secrets. Most of these sites have been long stripped of their wealth and artifacts, but the small possibility of finding a new insight, uncovering a superweapon, or perhaps getting a glimpse of the Ancients themselves, continues to act like a magnet. The graphic is titled “The Shadows”© Arnaud Caubel
Please visit his gallery at <http://arnocob.cgsociety.org/gallery/1076218/>

1450 – Approximate height of Vilani technology reached at about TL 11. Vilani genetic science, however, are relatively advanced at TL 14, while computation technology is fairly retarded at TL 10. (The TL 11 ‘Vilani Empire’ Jump2 computers are far larger than the TL 11 Vilani equivalent of ‘today’, ~1500 years later.)

1500s – The majority of governments across what is later called ‘The Populated Zone of Terra’ – stretching from Egypt, to India, to China – follow some localized version of Catholic Christianity.

1655 – A Chinese dynasty, the Ding, manages to successfully conquer not only China and Southeast Asia, but even manages to conquer several Indian states as well.

1698 – A Ding China attempt to conquer Yamato ends in failure. However, an attempt to expand into Java that same year is successful, eventually leading to placing all of the <East Indies> under Chinese rule by 1754.

The K’kree, Zhodani, and Darrians

1699 – The K’kree begin colonization of an inhabited moon, recently cleared of a sophont carnivore race.

1700 – K’kree explorers meet Hiver explorers. The Hivers begin manipulation operations, to integrate the K’kree as another useful subject species of their Federation, mainly as sturdy, violent, and unthinking warriors.

1754 – The Zhodani are contacted by a fairly large band of wandering, extremely high-tech (for the time: TL 15) Droyne. This is the only known oytrip (extended family) that can prove direct obedience to a now-lost Ancient. The Droyne are permitted to settle among the then TL 10 Zhodani, systems in exchange for technical know-how.

1818 – The Viking nation of Norland – encompassing <the British Isles, Iceland, and Scandinavia, and Denmark> – becomes the dominant unified power in still-fractured Europe. Viking traders improve the seaworthiness of their ships, gaining knowledge by trade and by theft. The first group to circumnavigate Africa arrived at the Islamic kingdoms of Arabia in 1822; the first group to visit North America set foot in <Newfoundland> in 1842.

1845 – Settlers fleeing the massive civil wars of the dying Ding Empire settle in <Australia> and <New Zealand>

1858 – The K’kree successfully rebel against their carnivorous Hiver masters. The resulting 126-year war is the largest widespread war – with innumerable incidents of genocide, wrought by both sides – in recorded history.⁵⁴

1899 – The Europeans, led by Norland, begin to displace the native population of <North America>. At about the same time, the mix of Old Nordic beliefs and Catholic Christianity begins to shift to something far more universalist and polytheistic: this is felt to be a result of contacting the other variants of Catholic Christianity in Africa, India, and China.

1946 – The Darrians begin to expand across the Spinward Marches and Foreven sectors, easily replacing the vestiges of the Vilani Empire found. No Darrian scout probes into Corridor sector, where a far stronger Vilani administration would have been found.

1984 – The K’kree/Hiver wars finally end, with the Hivers losing half of their Federation, and the K’kree at the point of military and economic exhaustion.

2026 – Islam becomes the first major religion to abolish limits on usury & charging interest (except on the poor). This shift in religious doctrine gives Moslems a strong head start in financial success, eventually equaling the Jews, Armenians and Chinese in the economic sphere. Over the next three centuries, Moslem intellectuals will continue to revolutionize the financial world.

2033 – The Vilani Empire – with ample assistance from the Yilean subject race – successfully exterminate the Vargr from Gashikan sector, in the most comprehensive episode of Vilani genocide in history. The multiple complex of plagues and diseases used in this purge hobble the Vargr for centuries, and horrific (but localized, as they wipe out the host population too quickly to spread far) outbreaks of the multiple strains of the Wolvesbane disease complex continue to the present day.

2054 – In a truly stirring monument to genius, Sheik Hafsa of Jedda publishes “The Truth of Numbers”, which introduced both the calculus and mathematically-sound statistical risk management to Terran civilization.

2062 – The Vikings finally discover the <Caribbean> and <South America>. While diseases from the Old World do decimate the local Native American kingdoms, the Vikings lack sufficient numbers and technology (i.e.: no firearms) to colonize or take control of the local civilizations themselves.

The Vilani on Terra

2170 – A refugee fleet of 80,000 Vilani refugees, fleeing sporadic strife within the Vilani Empire, arrives on Terra. After surveying the local cultures, they decide to colonize the largely unpopulated island of Hokkaido, in northern Nihon. Sightings of their starships, scouts, and robots are recorded across Nihon, and this knowledge slowly seeps the globe.

2205-2207: The Greater Darrian Star Empire – encompassing roughly 1500 starsystems – collapses in a furious civil war, where more than 15 Star Triggers are used. Roughly 1/3rd of Foreven and the Spinward Marches sectors are irradiated, and rendered essentially uninhabitable. The 15 supernovae detonated in a span of three years are felt to have signaled “Insanely self-destructive intelligent life here!” to every alien in the galaxy. Both the Vilani and Zhodani governments ban entrance into ex-Darrian space.

2226 – There will never be an indigenous scientific or industrial revolution on Terra: native Terran development is short-circuited by the hunger for – and spread of – ‘Vilani magic’. The various fiefdoms of Nihon are the first to enjoy the fruits of Vilani trade in technological know-how, adapting firearm, metallurgic, industrial, and agricultural technology from the mysterious Vilani island at alarming speed. On 2226, the first workable Nihonese steam engine is built. In the meantime, the Vilani use the Nihonese traders as middlemen, gobbling up a remarkable range of resources in a desperate (and, astonishingly, successful) attempt to retain a technological level of 10 no matter what.

2243 – A Vilani/Nihonese project – setting up a massive array of radio telescopes – easily uncovers evidence of interstellar communication. As if further proof were needed.

2250s – 2270s – the Damascus Schoolmen, a group of Islamic scholars, together create the idea of the corporation, an idea that would revolutionize the business world. (While our timeline’s idea of the corporation is fundamentally impersonal, the Arab understanding treats the corporation as a form of independent tribe, based on money rather than blood.) While the Golden Age of Islamic financial science would soon draw to a close with the death of the last Schoolman, the consequences would continue to the current time.

⁵⁴ The hypothetical Ancient Final War is thought to have been more devastating, but it is unclear when it occurred – or even if ‘war’ is an accurate description of what actually happened...

2300s – Various Catholic religious orders in Italy begin to promote the older teaching of the Catholic Church, stressing salvation in Christ alone, through the Church alone. Orthodox Christian faith makes a strong comeback among the human population on and near Terra, led by the Garamantes of the Sahara.

Imperial Terra

2385 – The Nihonese Empire – a TL 8 entity, controlling the Home Islands, and establishing colonies across Siberia, the entire western region of the Americas, and the La Plata region of <South America> – manages to persuade the other major world powers (the Chinese Empire, three Hindi Kingdoms, the Java Union, The Persian Empire, the Russian Empire, the <Anatolian Empire>, the League of the North, and the <Eastern North American Empire>, all at TL 5/6) – to unite under the banner of Imperial Terra. The Imperial Terra government is more of a conflict resolution group, designed to resolve differences peacefully and allow Nihon – and her Vilani backers – to focus on colonizing the Solar System.

2419 – The Blight strikes across Zhodani Space, almost exterminating the Droyne population and crippling the numerous Zhodani interstellar governments (while killing no small number of Zhodani as well). It takes over a century for the Zhodani – reorganized into the Zhodani Consulate – to regain her footing.... and her TL 19 capabilities.

2525 – The Vilani of Hokkaido, bringing together researchers from across the world, finally breach the TL 11 barrier, laying down the fundamental science needed to reach TL 12.

26th century – The Golden Age of Terran Exploration. The long-abandoned Vilani settlements on Venus and Mars are uncovered at the start of this century, and the first Imperial Terran starship, the Honjo Masamune, makes the jump to Alpha Centauri in 2599.

2537 – What was a politically convenient convention became formal law, as the Imperial Terran government claimed ownership of all spaceships, starships and interplanetary (later including interstellar) military forces. The majority of Terran military units are at TL 12.



Among the many strange and wondrous sights the Terran/Vilani crew of the Honio Masamune encountered, the most impressive remains the native Kiokyojin, found on the both members of the double-planet Ryūō system of 61 Cygni. The graphic is titled “Megahorn Mesa”© Matthew Attard.

Please visit his gallery at <http://prteeboy.deviantart.com/art/Megahorn-Mesa-177330226>

2602 – A few Vilani traders contact a wandering stranger, the Imperial Terra starship Honio Masamune. Practically no one cares: the military clans are focused on the clear and present danger of the Vargr threat, the trading clans are trying to make money (so to speak) in a slowly declining Imperial economy, and the religious clans are trying to enforce One Culture on the remaining 15,000 worlds of the Vilani Empire.

2612 – The Aslans of Kyusu invent the jumpdrive independently, without access to either Ancient or Vilani technology. They are the only known species to do so. The birth of the interstellar Aslan Hierate began within 20 years of this discovery.

2639 – The Interstellar Wars begin, with Imperial Terra enjoying a technological edge and a willingness to learn from mistakes... and the Vilani Empire lacking in both. Moreover – and contrary to stereotype – the Vilani fleets and doctrine are fundamentally geared to fighting and endless chaotic mess of light Vargr raiders, corsairs, and infiltrators who may or may not have barely-understood Ancient weaponry that may or may not work as advertised. Not only were they not prepared to handle disciplined and drilled Terran fleets consisting of major ships of the line, but for all practical purposes they could not regear their fleet to meet both types of threats at the same time.⁵⁵

2744 – The Catholic hierarchy of Terra, under pressure from a major religious revival of the ancient Catholic Christian forms of doctrine and worship. Reviving the long-forgotten name of the Roman Catholic Church, it declares its first Pope, Pope Peter II, in this year. The vast majority of Catholics initially oppose this doctrinal shift, but are unorganized and not as determined as the Roman revivalists.

2746 – The Interstellar Wars end with the fall of Vland. The majority of the Vilani military remain locked in combat vis-à-vis the Vargr, and decide that serving a Terran Emperor is far better than fighting him – and giving the despised, chaotic Vargr the opening they hunger for.

29th – 31th centuries: the Darrians, the Zhodani, and the Vargr finally decide to support each other – or at least avoid conflict as a rule – as they slowly remove the radiation and rebuild the broken worlds of Foreven and the Spinward Marches.

c. 2800 – At around this date, the Old Vargr Wars had largely ended, with a broad Vargr victory. Wherever the Vargr was a majority of the population, they ruled the world and the humans were decimated: the converse was not true, as there were many worlds, especially in what would later be the Julian Protectorate, the Gashikan Empire, and the Lorean Hegemony, where a human majority were under the yoke of chaotic and violent Vargr overlords.

The New Imperium

2828 – The official birth of the New Imperium, with the capital of the Imperium shifted to Hub/Ershur. The simultaneous birth of the Terran Federation occurs as well, as most Terran forces within 50 parsecs of Terra retained their allegiance to their national kings and emperors, refusing to recognize the new dynasty at Hub/Ershur. The New Imperium does not have any formal religion, but their unofficial but strong anti-Roman Catholic bias leads the majority of the anti-Roman believers – especially the more wealthy, educated, and politically connected families – to emigrate to the Imperial stars.

2846 – First Civil War Begins, as numerous subject starnations on the coreward frontier, resentful of Terran rule and nostalgic for Vilani culture, rebels against the Imperium.

2849 – First Rim War Begins: the Terran Federation fights to expand its Terran Sphere to a 60 to 70 parsec radius from Terra

c. 2850 – The Vargr, attracted by Imperial weakness, begin the Vargr Pillaging. Unlike the Old Vargr Wars, the goal was not the extermination or enslavement of the human population. Instead, this war was simply an extended exercise in theft, plunder, and murder.

2851 – First Civil War Ends: the coreward realms forcibly reunited with the Imperium. The Vargr are only a minor factor in the Civil War. Why they did not make a unified assault at a time of Imperial weakness is unknown, but what is known is that the Vargr never again were as united or as organized in anti-Imperial operations as they were before the Civil War.

2854 – First Rim War Ends: the very success of the Terran Federation leads to its fragmentation, as various military and political figures feud over who gets what. As the disintegration of the Federation leads to increased poverty and strife, a greater wave of Catholic believers who loathe the Roman revival emigrate to the New Imperium.

2901 – The Second Civil War begins, with mass uprising from *exceedingly* angry Vilani citizens across the Imperium. While it is well known that Terran incompetence in governance, suppression of Vilani cultural mores, and bumbling economic policies were the root cause, the actual trigger of THE Civil War – A Terran gang rape of Vilani women? A

⁵⁵ Yes, the Terrans had their own set of unreliable Ancient weapons looted from the ruins; but they were never as dependent on them as the Vilani and the Vargr were. This had all sorts of logistical, technological, and cultural benefits, some of which were inherited by today's Third Imperium, and even more so by today's Terran Confederation. The recent rise of the Ovaghoun Vargr is tied in part to that race/culture's understanding ahead of the other Vargr that reliance on loot – even high-tech Ancient loot – is a weakness, not a strength.

sneering insult to a Vilani elder? An arrogant Imperial officer who contemptuously ignored one revered tradition too many? – might never be known. What *is* known is that the murderous and ugly nature of the conflict has been surpassed in history only by the Old Vargr Wars.

2937 – *The Aslan Border Wars begin, as Aslan and human settler populations clash.*

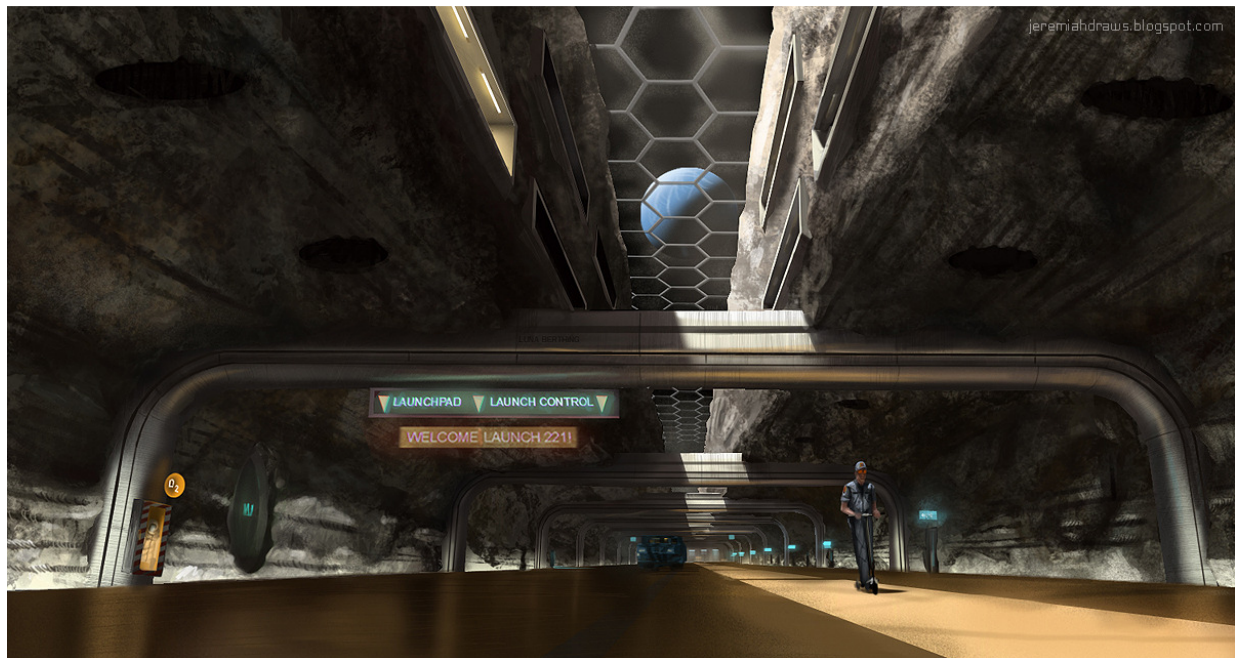
2946 – The Second Civil War ends: after a huge sprawling series of exceedingly violent, chaotic, and just plain *nasty* series of mutually-reinforcing conflicts, the Imperium is hopelessly fragmented. Enmity between the Terrans and the Vilani reaches its very peak in recorded history.⁵⁶

2964 – The Sylean Alliance is created on Sylea: it is grounded in a series of political marriages and some surprisingly durable power-sharing agreements between the two major Terran Imperial Navy families and five local Sylean political dynasties.

c. 3000 – *The Vargr Pillaging peters out, as there isn't much else to steal. Traditional hostility to humaniti shifts to violent infighting among the Vargr, as the various cultures/races strain under the tightened grip of the Orarg Vargr.*

3011 – The Sylean Wars of Absorption begins: the small, 15-world Sylean Alliance begins her remarkable climb to galactic power, with a display of nearly-perfect military strikes, political muscle, diplomatic deal-making, and planned coups. Most important, the Syleans first demonstrated their valuable ability to gain the confidence of *both* the Terrans and the Vilani.

3037 – The Sylean Wars of Absorption ends successfully, with the Sylean Alliance greatly enlarged. Even more importantly, the end of the war leaves no lasting grudges, with the losers of these conflicts being rather well treated in defeat. The Catholic limits on war are actually respected by the Sylean military: this astonishes *everyone* within 150 parsecs of Sylea, and gives the Sylean Alliance a *lot* of respect and admiration, even from her enemies.



For most world-bound sophonts in Classic Traveller, the starport IS the Imperium. In the “Counties and Churches” universe, the Imperial Idea is tied to the Count, the Church and the Military; but the Starport is still a respected Imperial institution. The graphic is titled “Moon Base Interior”© Jeremiah Humphries.

Please visit his gallery at <http://j-humphries.deviantart.com/art/Moon-Base-Interior-338780491>

The Third Imperium

3087 – Birth of the Third Imperium: The Domain of Vland joins the Sylean Alliance to create the Third Imperium, under the leadership of Emperor Cleon (Later, Cleon the Great, or the Demigod Cleon.)

3090 – The Imperial Catholic Church is born, with Pope Alexander being the first to head this church. In the same year of his coronation, the Vilani Traditional Councils and the leadership of the Shugilii were formally inducted into

⁵⁶ The raw racial hatred between these two populations was FAR higher at this time than during the Interstellar War era. From the Imperial Throne to the lowly parish priest, a lot of effort is put to insure that such viciousness between the Vilani and the Terrans never arises again. A case can be made that both the Third Imperium and the Imperial Catholic Church is psychologically rooted in this goal.

the Imperial Catholic Church, with the Church changing her doctrines to accommodate the Vilani, and not vice-versa. The Roman Catholics within the Third Imperium are compelled to switch to the Imperial Catholic Church, and are termed Orthodox Catholics in reference to their primitive religious beliefs – beliefs that they are generally permitted to retain, so long as they acknowledge the Pope Alexander as the highest leader of all the faithful. The Apostle's and Nicene Creeds are explicitly dropped, in favour of broad and vague statements on the Glory of the Gods and the Nobility of Man.

3111 – The Third Imperium finally brings the sporadic Aslan Border Wars to an end. Minor clans continue hostilities, but even these minor incursions peter out during the early 3200s.

3128 – The Greater Pacification Wars begins, as a large assortment of governments outside of the Imperium was brought under Imperial authority one by one, willingly or not.

3138 – Imperial envoys to the various Spinward States – the successor starnations of the Great Darrian Star Empire – are run out of the region on a rail. The Imperium holds back on the anger, for now.

3140 - The Greater Pacification Wars ends: the Domains of Vland and Sylea conquer the majority of the independent systems, pocket empires, and minor starnations of the Illeish Pocket (Gushemege, Dagudashaag, Illeish, and parts of Reft and Verge). Consolidation of the conquest and the methodical stomping out of large-scale rebellions continues over the next 60 years. Separate from the Greater Pacification Wars⁵⁷, all of Fornast, most of Delphi, much of Masilia, and parts of Antares Sector, the Empty Quarter, and Ley Sector were brought into the Imperium peacefully as a rule.

3160 – The New Vargr Wars begin. This was an Imperial war of extermination, rather than a war of conquest. Throughout its conduct, it faced the strong support of the long-suffering Vilani Imperial population to coreward, and the principled opposition of the Terran Imperial population to rimward.

3163 – A returning admiral from the New Vargr Wars assassinates Emperor Obites, kicking off the on-again, off-again Time of Troubles, a.k.a. the Third Imperial Civil War

3200-3207 – Sector Admiral Count Unio led the height of the New Vargr Wars, referred to as the Wars of the Claw, which featured deep strikes against numerous Vargr worlds across the Extents, and the slaughter of the Vargr within the coreward Imperium. The planned genocide of Vargr within Imperial Space was largely successful, despite vigorous Church opposition.

3207 – The New Vargr Wars end - Vargr rule broken, Vargr settlements exterminated within Imperial borders. The majority of major Vargr worlds within seventy parsecs of Vland are either damaged or sterilized by the wide-ranging strikes. The Vargr systems within Corridor are utterly wiped out and replaced by human settlers.

As a direct consequence of the very heavy Vargr losses during this lengthy and costly campaign, human worlds within what are now the Gashikan Empire, the Lorean Hegemony and the Julian Protectorate revolt. The Orarg Vargr, who lead the other Vargr in the field, were diminished to the point of no return. In Gashikan and Lorean territory, the Vargr were successfully trapped on a small number of worlds and wiped out: the Vargr who were trapped within Protectorate lines were enslaved instead of annihilated. Most notably, their genetics were further altered, to insure innately submissive Irilitok servants. While these alterations proved initially successful, the power of the effect has tended to weaken over time: natural selection will have its say.

Vargr slaves who knew when to doubt their master lived longer than those who only trust: and the Vargr who knew how to manage the master had the best lives of all, were survived by the most pups, and gave their pups the biggest head start in life as they shared their painfully gained knowledge with them.

Now that most Irilitok Vargr are free, they have broadly chosen to follow the Vilani-imitating Ovaghoun. The Vilani in this timeline are not very corporate-minded, but still love prosperity, are communal & consensus-minded, and remain very traditional. Unlike the Official Vilani, these Vilani are very skilled in technological warfare, and do not rely on mere firepower to win.

3212 – The Time of Troubles finally come to an end with the Emionic Accords. In return for universal support from all the major nobles and the renouncing of all other important claims to the Iridium Throne, Emperor Unio grants the Imperial Counts substantial authority and sovereign powers in local affairs. The Emperor's authority over the

⁵⁷ Numerous Lesser Pacification Wars began immediately after the founding of the Imperium, and have continued intermittently to the present time. Typically involving a handful of systems and a few tens of billions of sophonts, they are of no concern to most Imperials, most of the time.

Peerage is also extensively reduced, with the College of Arms becoming an independent institution. Some Vilani territories to coreward, in the Windhorn and Meshan Sectors, are deemed irretrievable: the Third Imperium officially recognizes their independence, and unofficially labours to retake them by means other than direct conquest.

3221 – The Julian Protectorate, a group of human systems recently freed from Vargr domination, is proclaimed with the encouragement of the Menderes Corporation. Rather than exterminating the surviving Vargr like the Gashikan, the Regent and the member state leadership decided to alter Vargr genetics, to create an increasingly pacific and pro-social Vargr known as the Julian Vargr (a.k.a. Irilitok Vargr). By 3300, The Protectorate has grown to control most of Mendan and Amdukan sectors, and the Lorean Hegemony joins as a recognized Associate State that same year.

3230s – The Imperial military establishment is raised from TL 12 to TL 13 over this decade.

3251 – The Ancient Droyne Hypothesis is presented on Capital. Over the next five decades, most scientists and researchers in the field agree that the Droyne, the Chirpers, and the Ancients are all related.

Never move when your enemy is destroying himself.
— Napoleon Bonaparte

3253 – The Second Rim War starts, as pro-Imperial Terran starnations got into serious trouble with anti-Imperial Terran starnations. Over time, the Imperium got more and more involved in the war, which took on messianic/religious overtones as the Terran Union, master of Terra herself and home of the heretical Roman Catholic Church, became the main opponent.

3254 – The Julian War begins as the Republic of Antares, suspecting that the Imperium was growing unstable, moved to annex a few weak but annoying Imperial Client States. Imperial moves to protect her allies led to the Republic calling for the military assistance of the rest of the Julian Protectorate.

3261 – Second Rim War ends - Four Terran starnations annexed, including the wealthy Terran Union. The move of the remaining Terran interstellar states into the Terran Confederation soon follows.

3264 – Antares is conquered in the name of the Imperium, and some Imperial elements move to inflict widespread devastation on Protectorate territories, including the Empty Quarter.

3266 – Protectorate raiding fleets break through Imperial lines lead to widespread devastation in Antares, the Empty Quarter, and Ley Sector, and parts of Fornast. Despite this, Antares herself is successfully held.

3271 – The Julian War ends: only the Republic of Antares is transferred from Julian to Imperial rule, and annexed, with all Vargr residents promptly expelled. The rest of the Julian Protectorate remains intact.

3280s – The Imperial military establishment is raised to TL 14 through this decade.

3281-present – The submissive Vargr of the Julian Protectorate – called Irilitok or Julian Vargr – regain their liberty. Those who remain within Protectorate space alter the genetics of their offspring to once again re-integrate them into the Vargr genetic mainstream, usually the Ovaghoun: these re-integrated Vargr generally choose to leave Julian space entirely, in favour of living as free Vargr in the Vargr Extents.

3299 – Empress Changpu ascends the throne, the second of her house to do so.

3300s – The Imperium raises only the Imperial Navy to TL 15 in this decade: ground forces are left at TL 14.

3303-3309: the Julian Rebellion is fought. At the conclusion of the conflict, roughly one quarter of Mendan sector was lost to the Protectorate.

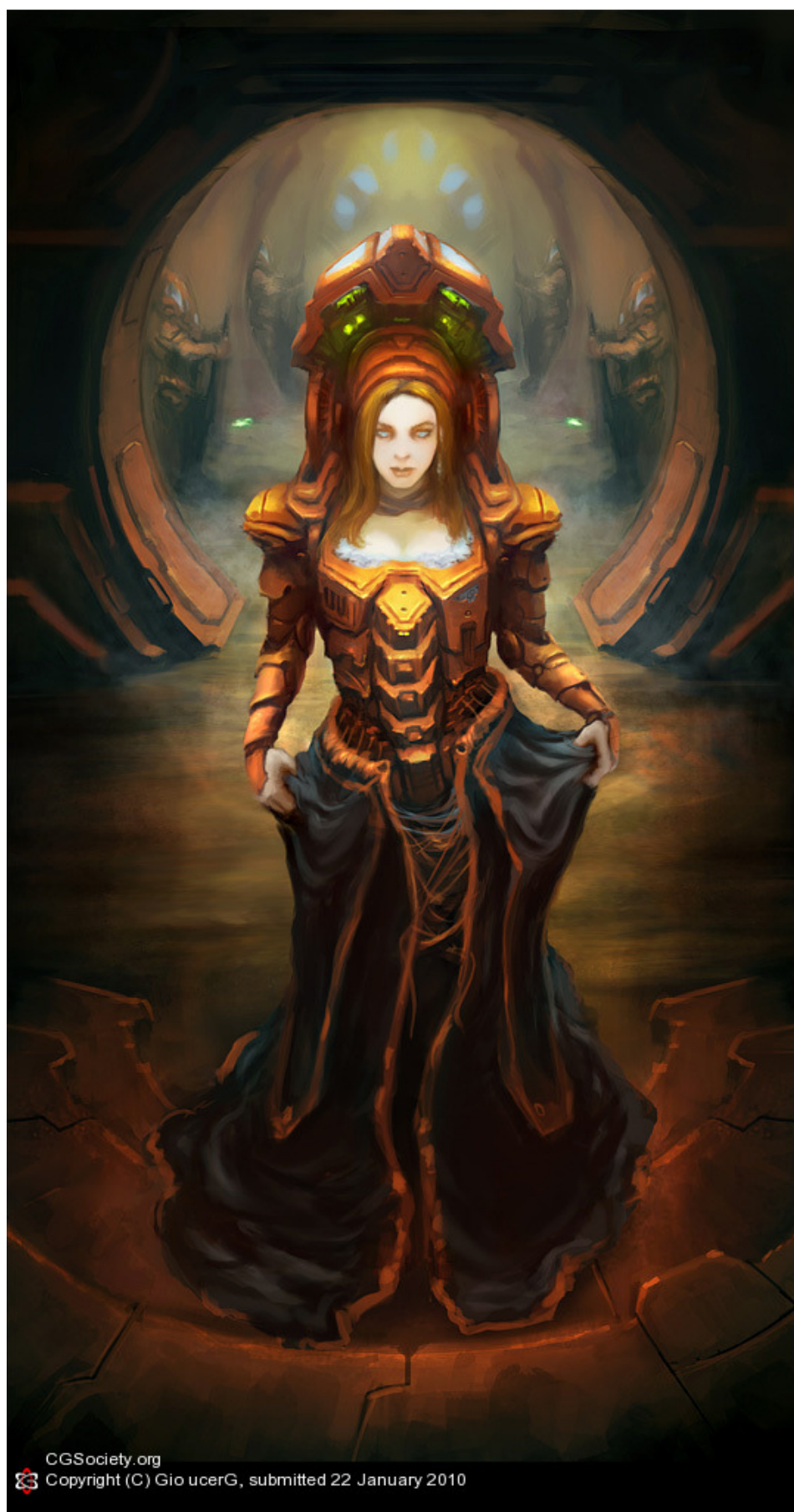
3314 – The Denebi War begins.

3320 – The last major centre of resistance within Corridor and the rimward regions of Province, the powerful, high-tech Vargr/Vilani state of Gadaakhukuu (centred on the worlds of Shushaka and Kaasu in Khukish subsector) is finally reduced, at a stiff price for the Imperium and the effective depopulation of the worlds in question.

3321 – The last major action of the war is fought, with the Imperial assault on Atadl/Atsah repulsed with heavy losses. There would be no further major offenses.

3323 – The Denebi War is formally ended. Corridor sector is left a torn and abandoned wreck, with lawless Vargr packs again seeping in to retake numerous long-lost systems. The Imperial fleet in Vland sector is tripled in strength. As a consequence, 80% of the Imperial Navy is tied to three sectors: Vland, Core Sylea, and Solomonian Terran Rim. Empress Changpu chose to maintain or increase tax rates, increasing discontent across the Imperium.

3324 – Current year. As part of the refurbishing and re-equipping of the Imperial Marines, preparations to raise their equipment of selected units to TL 15 begin this year. A full roll-out is scheduled for 3330-3340.



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Empress Emma of the Third Imperium, AD 3178. Contrasting this with the image of the current monarch, Empress Changpu (page 41) gives an indication of changes in aristocratic fashion over the last 140 years. The graphic is titled "Rubia" © Giorgio Grecu. Please visit his gallery at <http://shards.cgsociety.org/gallery/845992> & <http://shardbook.blogspot.ca/>

Appendix: The Emperor's List

Due to tedium, only a partial list of the forty-three legitimate Vilani Shadow-Emperors (Ishimkarun) is provided. With each emperor ruling for an average of 80 years, the rule of the 3500-year-old Vilani Empire remains the gold standard of human government, especially at its height, when in this timeline it covered the entirety of Charted Space.

Notable First Imperium (Vilani Empire) Emperors:

All Emperors of the Ziru Sirka were male pureblood Vilani.

1147 BC – Ammirnilir, the first Vilani Shadow-Emperor, begins his rule.

1010 BC – Shadow-Emperor Kikeshdumi oversees the launch of the Arishkhedampii Expedition, the greatest Vilani/Droyne venture in history. Soon after, Vilani opinion turns against psionically-gifted species, and Vilani/Droyne ventures ceases. Further human/Droyne cooperation will have to wait over two millennia, until the Zhodani make contact with the Droyne in AD 1754.

803 BC – Shadow-Emperor Kharsaashdaaur mandates the genetic improvement of all the Vilani, enhancing their baseline health and their longevity.

760 BC – The Vilani Empire (a.k.a. the First Imperium) reaches its greatest extent under the reign of Lukuushkhashkhar. During his reign, the Vilani reach TL 10.

647 BC – The revolt of the Vilani-uplifted Vargr marks the first significant setback to the Vilani Empire, late in the reign of Lukuushkhashkhar. Thousands of years later, the Vargr Mistake continues to plague Vland, and the Imperium in general.

257 BC – Shadow-Emperor Imurkhadmid authorizes a single, standardized Vilani culture as a pro-active measure, to eliminate all internal threats to Vilani unity.

AD 174 – Entire sectors trailing of Vland are abandoned under Shadow-Emperor Ilasakhe: the eventual destiny of the numerous small Vilani colonies that successfully evaded/resisted capture and resettlement remains almost completely unknown.

AD 514 – The unprecedented public humiliation of Shadow-Emperor Ilaai – and the failure to find any universally acceptable successor, thanks to dynastic disputes – leads to the breaking of the Vilani Empire into five large pieces. Warfare is averted by informal agreement⁵⁸, and long and tedious negotiations to regain unity are started... but are ultimately overtaken by events.

AD 948 – Bushgungidiis leads the only portion of the Vilani Empire to remain intact. All the other portions of the Vilani Empire either fell apart due to Vargr attacks, or suffered an economic disintegration. By carefully conserving his resources and by keeping conflicts with the Vargr as short and as cheap as possible, the central part of the old Vilani Empire, led by Bushgungidiis, manages to survive: this permits him to be recognized as Shadow-Emperor by the entire Igsiirdi (senior megacorporate leadership) of the surviving Vilani Empire.

⁵⁸ Unlike Terrans, the Vilani are actually pretty good at gauging the cost of warfare *before* the fighting starts. And even more importantly: if the costs are too high, they just won't fight. "Pride beneath Profits; Profits beneath Survival."

AD 1283 – Shadow-Emperor Imkamuki loosens the restrictions on technological innovation, even as cultural restrictions are tightened. This permits a certain late flowering of Vilani research, especially in the development of consistently high product standards.

AD 1450 – Vilani finally reach Jump2 (TL 11) in space technology, during the reign of Shadow-Emperor Diimkhimkin. Vilani technological advancement grinds to a complete halt. “Everything that can be discovered has been discovered.”

AD 2538-2746 – Shadow-Emperor Lukiigiii was the 43rd and last Shadow-Emperor of the Vilani Empire. Most of his attention was focused on fighting the Vargr, and only when the Terran forces had already conquered 2/3rds of the rimward Imperium did he turn his attention to face them. While a successful military strategist against the Vargr, neither his training nor his experience enabled him to fight an enemy with a substantial technological and innovative lead, with a far better level of organization and discipline than the Vargr could show in the field. Even as the enemy neared Vland herself, only about 7% of the Imperial fleet could be taken from fighting the Vargr to support the war against the Terrans. Shadow-Emperor Lukiigiii was never a field military officer: when the Vilani fleet was defeated over Vland, he offered a general surrender of his forces, so long as Terran forces would support the Vilani in their fight against the Vargr. These terms were acceptable, and the aged Shadow-Emperor abdicated his throne without any drama and the simplest of ceremonies. In his few remaining years, he was an important liaison within the new Terran Imperial Administration (soon renamed The New Imperium, now referred to as the Second Imperium).

The Second Imperium (New Imperium) Emperors:

Both Emperors of the New Imperium were male pureblood Terrans.

2828 – The first of the New Imperium Emperors, Emperor Carlos – formerly Admiral Villanueva – spent his entire reign in political horse-trading: by the end of his reign in 2840, he had gained the recognition of most of the major military leaders of the Imperial Terran military, save those within 50 parsecs of Terra (who had organized themselves into the Terran Federation).

2840 – Emperor Carlos halts diplomatic efforts to persuade the Terran Federation to join the New Imperium, instead focusing his attention on Imperial/Vargr hostilities. Vilani discontent with increasing Terran pressure to abandon their religion, philosophy, language, and culture was suppressed with increasing force.

2846 – With his health in decline, Emperor Carlos handed more and more of his powers to his most promising senior officer, Admiral Earl Mikkell Holk. While it is likely that Emperor Pedro would have eventually adopted Admiral Earl as his son and heir, Emperor Pedro died before doing so. After hearing of the Emperor’s death, the Admiral took his fleet to Hub/Ershur and declared himself Emperor without consulting the other Noble Admirals. The Noble Admirals rimward of Hub/Ershur, lacking the military might that the Mikkell had, eventually recognized him as Emperor: but the heavily armed coreward admirals, who like Mikkell honed their craft fighting the Vargr, refused. These admirals were strongly supported by their subject populations, who saw in Mikkell the main symbol of Terran arrogance. The First Imperial Civil War begun.

2851 – The Imperial Civil War ends, with a mixture of military action, intense diplomatic negotiations, and the widespread betrayal of Vilani hopes for liberty. The New Imperium shifted to a permanent war footing, fighting the Vargr without and openly at war with the Vilani culture within.

2899 – Emperor Mikkell is caught in a nasty environmental accident: while he survives, and his chlorine-seared lungs successfully repaired (with the help of Vilani medical science), Emperor Mikkell is convinced that Vilani insurgents were behind the attack, despite the absence of proof. Additional laws and restrictions are proclaimed, with additional taxes created to fund the extensive array of new internal security agencies and forces.

2901 – the Second Imperial Civil War is set off. The accidental trigger is lost to history, but it is known that it quickly enveloped the entire Imperium. By 2946, the War had finally burned itself off. What was the fate of

Emperor Mikkell – flight? death? – is unknown: what is known is that all references to him after 2901 are in the past tense, and that all records of his activities cease in that year.

All Third Imperium Emperors:

The ten⁵⁹ Emperors of the Third Imperium were humans: race and sex varies.

Demigod Cleon, House Zhunastu

Born 3043, reigned 3087-3158, died 3158 (stroke). Male Pureblood Sylean. As Master of the Sylean Circle, the executive noble council of the Sylean Alliance, Cleon's father Eryx led the successful Wars of Absorption (3011-3037), reaching all of the major political and economic goals while also building a strong reputation for rigorously upholding the Laws of War, in both his many victories and his few defeats. The noble behaviour of his father attracted the support of both religious and intellectual leaders, a factor that Cleon used to his advantage as he built up support to convert the Alliance into the Imperium. His greatest religious coup, of course, was in gaining the political support of the largest religious groups in Sylea sector.

Master Cleon continued to win the support of many small starnations for the rebirth of the Imperium, but he waited until gaining the support of the Laa Biiarki, the wealthy 51-system government based on Vland, before proclaiming the Third Imperium in 3087. Soon afterwards Cleon organized the First Imperial Synod, where the unification of the largest Sylean, Vilani and Terran religious groups into the Imperial Catholic Church was formalized, as well as the anointing of the first Imperial Catholic Pope, who took the name of Alexander in 3090.

As Emperor, he brought a negotiated end to the Aslan Border Wars in 3111, and waged the successful Greater Pacification Wars (3128-3140). Unlike the Warrior Emperors of earlier Imperia, Cleon focused on building political support among both the nobility and the middle classes of the high-pop/high-tech systems. Despite pressure from his Vilani allies, Emperor Cleon refused to engage in extensive military campaigns against the Vargr, even enshrining their status as sophonts equal to humaniti in 3128.

The *apotheosis* of Emperor Cleon was proclaimed by the Imperial Catholic Church in AD 3166.

Emperor Obites, House Zhunastu

Born 3075, reigned 3158-3163, died 3163 (assassination). Male Pureblood Sylean. The first of five children of Cleon, Obites spent most of his life as a political liaison for his father. As Emperor, Obites was pressured by Vland to wage a war of extermination against the Vargr, starting the New Vargr Wars directly against Church teachings and the majority sentiment of the rimward Imperial population. (Coreward Imperials, tied to Vilani culture and living in fear of Vargr raids, strongly supported it.) Three years after this war started, Admiral Cheng Ho, called to Sylea to accept honours for his victories in the field, assassinated the old Emperor for "Treason against the Imperial Ideal" and took the Iridium Throne for himself.⁶⁰ This act sparked the Time of Troubles, also known as the Third Imperial Civil War.

Emperor Ho, House Cheng

Born 3115, reigned 3163-3168, died 3168 (in battle). Male Pureblood Terran. Emperor Ho began his reign with widespread support from the rimward population, and directly commanded the end of the New Vargr Wars. However, he was simply ignored by coreward commanders in the field, who had the strong backing of their (broadly Vilani) populations for the extermination of the Vargr threat. Knowing that he would lose his *imperium* if he could not get his officers to obey, Emperor Ho took the Central Fleet to the coreward frontiers, tearing down the senior Imperial officer corps and replacing them with officers loyal directly to himself. Resistance to his rule only became more aggressive, though, and after losing two battles against the Emperor's fleet, his massed opponents finally defeated Emperor Ho's forces and killed the Emperor in a naval battle.

No recognized Emperor – 3168-3172

The death of Emperor Ho and the shattering of the Central Fleet led to a broad degree of chaos in the coreward Imperium. In the rimward Imperium, things were not as chaotic, but were still rather divisive, as the major Great

⁵⁹ There is one Emperor who is missing from the list: more below.

⁶⁰ It should be noted that, after gaining power, Emperor Cheng made only symbolic gestures to halt the genocidal nature of the Vargr War.

Noble Houses manoeuvred against each other politically, positing themselves closer to the Iridium Throne while not making a direct claim (and so avoid a direct war against their competitors). However, this infighting allowed the Vargr to aggressively push back against the weakened genocidal campaigns against them, providing some relief for their populations. Within the Empty Quarter, Fornast, Ley, and Delphi Sectors, the Imperial Catholic Church took up some aspects of interstellar governance, as the local noble houses had managed to completely exhaust themselves in war.

Empress Emma, House Zhunastu

Born 3157, reigned 3172-3180, in hiding 3180-3188, died 3188 (assassination). Female Mixed Vilani. Empress Emma was a compromise candidate, backed by the major noble factions while they rebuilt their militaries and financial networks. When they were again ready to war against each other, the most powerful faction drove Empress Emma into hiding with direct and unrelenting attacks against Cleon, the capital of the Imperium. She managed to escape the initial assault and her extensive family network kept her hidden – but this network was systematically destroyed, with one of the many ambitious Noble houses finally isolating and killing her in 3188.

Within today's Imperium, the life and death of Empress Emma is considered a major political tragedy. Many branches, sects, and rites within the Imperial Catholic Church consider her to be a saint, but the Popes have refrained from canonizing her for political reasons. However, pressure for her beatification continues to build, with even major nobles attributing powerful miracles to her intervention.

No recognized Emperor – 3180-3185

When Empress Emma was driven into hiding, six Great Houses made a direct claim to the Iridium Throne. Fighting was widespread across the Imperium, as the majority of the Great Houses vigorously clobbered each other. As the most destructive phase of the Time of Troubles, the largest population losses – about 70 billion lives, all told – were inflicted in this five-year period. This destruction, while brief and limited compared to the Second Imperial Civil War, remains scarring enough to reinforce both a deep Imperial sentiment against military action against civilians, and a strong emphasis on the Imperial Rules of War among non-Vilani military officers.

Emperor Sami, House Baloyi

Born 3131, reigned 3185-3187, died in 3187 (in battle). Male Pureblood Terran. House Baloyi bided its time in Gushemege Sector, husbanding its resources and playing the neutral until 3184. At that year, it managed to gather the support of most of the surviving Great Houses of the Imperial Bulge (Gushemege, Dagudashaag, Ilelish, and Zarushagar Sectors), and made a powerful drive to Sylea, taking the city and the Imperial capital in 3185. While the 'Bulging Coalition' (the name given by its enemies: members preferred the 'Great Houses of Peace' themselves) was able to smash the rather threadbare rimward forces that weakly contested their authority⁶¹, the Coalition itself was unable to hold together for long. The struggle for dynastic primacy, mutual jealousies, public honours, and the choice political prized grew more intense and more unrestrained. In the end, House Baloyi's authority was challenged from an unexpected quarter, and Emperor Sami was killed in an air/raft battle above the ruins of Cleon.

Emperor Madhummay, House Mehta

Born 3128, reigned 3187, died in 3187 (assassinated). Male Mixed Vilani. Emperor Madhummay was able to consolidate his authority quickly, gathering the surviving members of the Imperial Moot on Sylea to declare him Emperor and gaining control of the Coalition's naval assets within Sylea Sector. However, House Mehta's seizure of power led to the disintegration of the Bulging Coalition, as the Great Houses that powered it began to again struggle for supreme authority over the Coalition, and thus the Imperium. The political gamesmanship to keep the Coalition membership grew more extreme and more difficult to execute in a timespan of months. But it was not the Coalition that ended Emperor Madhummay's life, though, but a sniper in the employ of his exceedingly ambitious nephew, Majah.

⁶¹ The coreward forces avoided intervening in the Civil War as much as possible: who became Emperor was nothing but unimportant political trivia, compared to the importance of breaking the Vargr.

*Emperor Majah, House Mehta (Damnatio memoriae)*⁶²

Born 3153, reigned 3187, disappeared 3187. Male Mixed Vilani. Emperor Majah's brief reign was shaped by his revolutionary drive to build a truly centralized and unitary Imperium, with himself as the Godhead, and the replacement of the governing Nobility with a governing Bureaucracy accountable only to Himself.⁶³ Beset by enraged family members (angered by his blatant murder of his highly respected uncle), furious erstwhile partners of the fast-shrinking Bulging Coalition, and a hostile Imperial Catholic Church fuming at both his (public) disregard for Proper Morality and his unlawful self-deification outside of the Proper Rites and Ceremonies, nobody was surprised when Emperor Majah simply couldn't be found within the 'New Imperial Palace' one day.⁶⁴ It was only a little more surprising that they never found the body...

No recognized Emperor – 3187-3212

During this period, the Great Houses of the Imperium became only shadows of their former selves, unable to field the vast armies and potent fleets of earlier years. The Counts became independent fiefdoms, able to act to defend their interest and their county without any support from Sylea (Capital of the Imperium), or from the senior Dukes, Admirals, and Great Houses. These forces were far too interested in gutting each other in the name of their boundless ambition – further weakening themselves and the Imperium in the process – to bother with the lesser concerns of actual interstellar governance.⁶⁵

From 3196, Sector Admiral Count Unio gained military supremacy in the coreward Imperium, but instead of taking his fleet to Sylea and claiming the throne, he chose to reside on Vland and deepen his connections with the Vilani aristocracy, while prosecuting the Vilani-backed war against the “inhuman, chaotic, destructive Vargr menace.” Quite a lot of the (diminished) upper classes of the Imperium took favourable note of this decision.

Even as the rimward nobles and admirals fought over the Iridium Throne, Sector Admiral Count Unio systemized and completed the genocide/expulsion of the Vargr within the coreward sectors of the Imperium over the vigorous objections of the Terran-dominated Imperial Catholic Church, while wide-ranging strikes – The Wars of the Claw (3200-3207) – crippled or annihilated the remaining notable Vargr systems within 70 parsecs of Vland.⁶⁶ Political enemies of the Sector Admiral were permitted to resettle in the now Vargr-free Corridor sector free of Imperial rule; numerous human populations that resisted Vilani culture were exiled there as well.

These European dynastic conflicts were soon to be extended overseas as British and French power was firmly established, and their rivalry spread, to Africa, India, and the Caribbean. But by the 1690s there was only one serious overseas theater, in North America. Here already small groups of men were overcoming incredible natural obstacles in their eagerness to kill each other. The prototypes of such men were a New Englander, Sir William Phips, and a Frenchman, Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville.

—James L. Stokesbury, *Navy and Empire*, page 96.

As a direct result of the major damage Imperial fleets inflicted on Vargr-dominated systems, numerous “human worlds within what are now the Gashikan Empire, the Lorean Hegemony and the Julian Protectorate revolt. In Gashikan and Lorean territory, the Vargr are successfully trapped on a small number of worlds and exterminated:

⁶² *Damnatio memoriae: Damned in memory.* For official and ceremonial purposes within the Imperium, Emperor Majah does not exist, all laws and edicts he issued were annulled, and he is not formally counted in the Emperor's List. The shrunken remnant of House Mehta does not officially acknowledge his existence either, considering him disowned and disinherited. This is not the same as being Vanished: for example, some of his statues can still be found in the city of Cleon – it's just that his face, his name, and his words have been obliterated. Same deal for video recordings, etc.

⁶³ Give the man credit: at least he was acting strictly in the name of Himself, without any blather about God, The People, The Race, Equality, Democracy, Freedom, Reason, or any other hilarious hand-waving theatrics!

⁶⁴ By this time, the original Imperial Palace was a smoking ruin; the Imperial Palace of Emperor Majah's time was simply the commandeered Old City Hall of the capital city of Cleon.

⁶⁵ Excepting tax collection, of course. It's ALWAYS time for tax collection... closing tax loopholes... expanding the tax net... devising more severe punishment for tax evasion, defined in ever more expansive terms... generating new ideologies, religious or secular, to justify increasing the haul...

⁶⁶ As a direct result of these deep strikes, numerous majority-human systems in the Vargr Extents were able to free themselves, and form extensive interstellar governments. The Imperial Catholic Church may exalt Emperor Unio as a demigod, but within the Gashikan Empire and the Julian Protectorate, there are extensive human religions that worship Unio as their central deity, Unio the Liberator, or as the supreme god of the Imperial Catholic hierarchy, the Star Maker Himself.

the Vargr who are trapped within Protectorate lines have their genetics altered further, to insure innately submissive servants.” All these cultures and starnations revere the Imperial Admiral: many consider the man to be the Star Maker Himself, and offer idolatrous worship and adoration to mighty statues carved in his image.

On 3211, a delegation from the Emionic, a group of Counts from the high-pop/high-tech systems of the rimward Imperium, secretly negotiated the conditions for their political support, primarily a major transfer of local power to the county and an independent Peerage. In 3212, these Counts were able to gain control of the rimward Imperium, outmanoeuvring the Terran States who were preparing to invade the region.

Demigod Unio, House Lee

Born 3141, reigned 3212-3252, died 3252 (heart attack). Male Pureblood Terran. Count Unio was raised to Emperor on August 2, 3212, with his first act being the acceptance of the oaths of fealty of the rimward Counts, and his second being the proclamation of the Emionic Accords. The armistice with the remaining rebellious nobles to coreward was solidified to a formal peace in 3255. A patron of scientific research, Emperor Unio encouraged Pope Stephen X to create several scientifically-minded religious orders. Much of the Imperial establishment, military and civilian, received expensive equipment upgrades, bringing the Armed Forces to TL 13 during the 3230s. This burst of research was crowned in 3251, when the Droyne were identified as the long-lost Ancients on Capital before the Iridium Throne.

While environmental damage was limited during the Time of Troubles (enemy noble families were the target, not hostile populations), the expansion of the Ministry of Colonization to include environmental repair and restoration duties was broadly approved across the Imperial population. Finally, the Imperial Laws of War were codified during this period, with the Imperial military expected to both obey these laws, and punish all violations. Whether these laws only covered humans (the Imperial Government position) or all sophonts (the Imperial Catholic Church position) would continue to be debated to the present day. For now, the legal consensus is that all Imperial sophonts are protected by the Imperial Laws of War... with the exception of the Vargr. Whether any given population of Vargr are protected depends on the field commander on site.

The Arishkhedampii Expedition last made contact with Vland in 3250, during the reign of Emperor Unio. A segment of TL 29 Vilani/Droyne Expedition Ships provided the usual package of five Exabytes of information, sketching out current discoveries made in the Norma Arm of the galaxy, about 6 kpc coreward/trailing away from Vland. As usual, the information was merely duplicated and warehoused on various media across the Imperium. Very few Imperials are interested in information that can't be turned into money or power: but even today, there is some prestige to be had in storing it for safekeeping.⁶⁷

The *apotheosis* of Emperor Unio was proclaimed by the Imperial Catholic Church in AD 3254.

Emperor Martin, House Ivanenko

Born 3200, reigned 3253-3285, dethroned 3285 (dementia), executed 3299. Male Mixed Vilani. After the then-Emperor Unio died, the Imperial Moot decided that no member of House Lee was fit to inherit the throne, so they selected to raise Duke Martin of Zarushagar to the Iridium Throne instead. During the unusually long debates preceding the decision, the Duke of the Old Expanses and the Duchess of Diaspora got drawn into major fighting against assorted Terran starnations in 3253.

Soon after the newly crowned Emperor Martin sent substantial reinforcements to the Terran front, the powerful Republic of Antares annexed several nearby Imperial Client States in 3254. In order to insure that others would respect the Imperial name, war was declared against the Republic – which set off a domino effect, as the Republic of Antares called upon her other Julian brothers to support him in the war against the Imperium.

⁶⁷ The suspicious Player can rightly guess that one of these super-massive, ridiculously “It’s bigger on the inside!” high-tech vessels can utterly destroy everything in Charted Space. The Expedition is uninterested in political power – why would they waste their time ruling primitive, ignorant aboriginies? – but by dispersing what they learned to the Honoured Ancestors of Vland, Proper Filial Piety is shown, and the Ancient Contract is honoured. “You respect your ancestors because it is commanded by Heaven, *not* because you happen to find them worthy of respect!” If anyone could sort through all that data, and grasp its meaning, things would change quickly in the Imperium: but the sad fact is, nobody except the Imperial Church is interested, and the Scientific Orders tasked with this duty are woefully underfunded and underequipped for such a gargantuan mountain of data.

Surpassing expectations, Emperor Martin handled warfare on two fronts fairly well. Both wars took about a decade to bring to an end, both ending with Imperial victories. However, on the coreward Julian front much of the nearby Imperial sectors were devastated by an irresistible tide of Vargr raiders, Irilitok & Ovaghoun allies and servants of the Menderes family. By the present day, a fair number of these raiders still survive; more importantly, the old Julian raiders formed the hard foundation of numerous modern interstellar mafias, triads, pirate bands, syndicates, and cartels that now plague the entire coreward Imperium. The rimward conquest of Terra formed the catalyst of today's hostile Terran Confederation; and the destruction of the Roman Curia (in favour of the Imperial Curia) earned the Imperium the undying enmity of hundreds of billions of Terran Roman Catholics.

After the wars, Emperor Martin worked hard to integrate the newly conquered populations into the Imperium — except the Vargr, who were expelled. His policies were fairly successful for Antares, but the pro-Vilani Emperor was rather tone-deaf to Terran culture, and his actions tended to only worsen the situation.

Angered by the waste of Imperial wealth and manpower on warfare, as well as the destruction of numerous Imperial worlds during the Julian war, a substantial minority of nobles sought to overthrow Emperor Martin, by legal withdrawal of his *imperium* (right to rule) by the Imperial Moot or by a direct coup. They were supported by a large number of senior Imperial Catholic clergy, who saw Emperor Martin as a genuine monster, a mass-murderer, and a war-monger. Several assassination attempts failed, and the Vilani nobility, assisted by many old-line Sylean nobles who hated the idea of a new Imperial Civil War, squashed an incipient revolt within the Imperial Core. In the 3070s, large numbers of rebellious nobles, priests, and military officers were either executed or exiled, mainly to the Julian Protectorate.

The encroaching senility of Emperor Martin during the early 3080s became too obvious and too dangerous for even his hard-core supporters to ignore, and the Imperial Moot lifted his *imperium* in 3085, leaving the former Emperor in the care of his House.

Empress Virxinia, House Ivanenko

Born 3264, reigned 3285-3299, abdicated. Styled Grand Empress, age 39, Female Mixed Vilani. As Lady Virxinia Arsen, she caught the eye of Emperor Martin in his eight year of bachelorhood following the death of his fourth wife Mariana. At the age of 17, she married the then-81 year old Emperor on 3281, bearing him a son, Thiago, in 3282. She was willing to go into seclusion to care for the Emperor after he was deemed unfit to rule, but the numerous supporters of House Ivanenko — especially the Vilani — managed to sway the Imperial Moot to grant the *imperium* to his wife, despite her complete inexperience in political and military affairs.

Overall, she didn't do too badly, thanks to her family advisors within House Ivanenko. She insisted on spending most of her time tending to the declining Martin, and basically abandoned governing responsibilities to the family elders. Despite the reasonably effective rule of the politically savvy household elders — all nobles themselves — this complete shirking of Imperial responsibility grew into a huge scandal. Eventually, the nobility grew completely ungovernable, as they simply did not recognize Empress Virxinia's authority to rule over them. When Countess Changpu of House Lee presented clear evidence that then-Duke Martin ordered the instigation of Demigod Unio's heart attack decades ago, Empress Virxinia's *imperium* was lifted, and granted to Countess Changpu instead.

Empress Changpu moved quickly to convene a formal trial of Grand Emperor Martin (read: "Retired Emperor Martin"). When the jury of nobles found the Grand Emperor Martin guilty of murder and high treason, Empress Changpu personally ran him through with her sword. Despite his execution, and despite the desires of many of his vocal enemies in both the church and in the street, the Grand Emperor was given a full Imperial funeral.

As an act of mercy, Virxinia's life was spared, and the Grand Empress was exiled to an unknown location to live out the rest of her life in comfort and complete isolation. Beyond the loss of their family Archon and Archoness, House Ivanenko was not further punished.

Empress Changpu, House Lee

Born 3247, reigned 3299, current holder of the *imperium*. Styled Empress of the Third Imperium, age 77, Female Mixed Vilani. As a means of placating the Vilani for driving their favoured family, House Ivanenko, from the Imperial Palace, Empress Changpu organized and prosecuted a major war in Corridor sector. The Vilani settlers of

that region was partially overrun again by the Vargr, and the Vilani desired to not only rescue them from Inhuman rule, but to expand the Imperium into Deneb and the Spinward Marches. Such a conquest was felt to be easy, as the various Darrian, Zhodani, Vilani, Droyne, Aslan, and Vargr starnations there were as heavily divided against each other as in the rest of the Vargr Extents.

This was a serious miscalculation: as the ex-Imperial population of Corridor sector also had no desire to again submit to Imperial Authority, the entire war swiftly turned rather ugly. At times, the nine-year war was a four-front affair, with Imperial, Spinward State, Corridor-based, and Vargr fleets tearing into each other with vigour. (At least three battles were actually eight-front affairs, thanks to the Aekhu propensity to divide against themselves without forewarning (or to unite without warning, either.)) The Imperium did manage to reach right across Corridor, but were finally halted at Atadl/Atsha. With costly Vargr attacks across their entire supply line, Empress Changpu (who had relocated to Vland to manage the war) ordered the retreat back to defensible positions in 3323. All that remains of the Empress' ambitions is a lot of debt, a lot of splattered blood, and a lot of wrecked worlds.

The loss of the war, coupled with the heavy Imperial taxes that remain imposed to pay for it, has lost Empress Changpu a lot of support in the Imperial Moot and her disgruntled citizenry. Her support among the Vilani remained fairly high though, and the more independently minded Counts have toned down their near-treasonous grumbings with their additional legal powers and immunities granted to them. Empress Changpu's public apology to the demigods Cleon and Unio in a religious ceremony transmitted across the Imperium has turned the attitudes of the religious Imperial Catholics in her favour. Her veneration of the ancestors sparked a certain admiration among the Vilani, as well, especially as she made no mention of the unVilani Imperial Catholic Trinity of Star Maker, Universal Messiah, or Queen of Heaven.

Paris is well worth a Mass. —Henry IV, King of France, 1593
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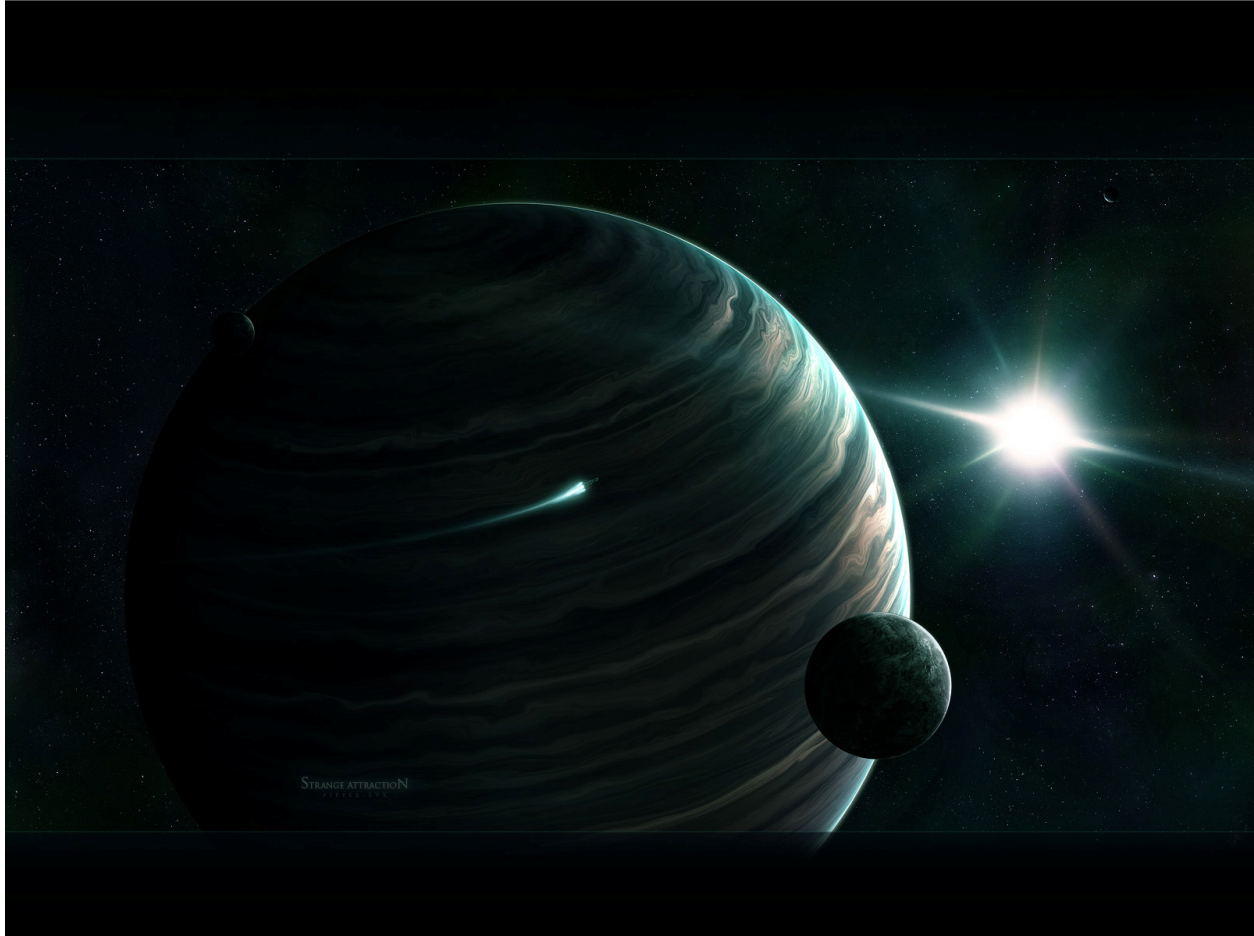
Most Imperial Catholics, with their cheerful unconcern of the particular doctrines of any religion (including their own) so long as there is good food and good entertainment at church, simply don't care about the details of any given religious rite. A small minority are infuriated by the Empress' snub of the Imperial Trinity, but without the support of Pope Vieilo III, the Imperial Curia, or the Magisterium, they remain powerless.⁶⁸ An even smaller minority insists that a fully secular empire would bring forth the greatest freedom for all. However, when the writings of the Benee Scholars revealed that secular states *invariably* become grinding bureaucracies with an ever-expanding set of increasingly expensive, increasingly arbitrary laws, support for the 'New Empire of Man' failed.⁶⁹

As the Imperial Catholic Church had only a few Christian trappings by this time, there has been no substantial worsening of relations between the Imperial Catholic Church and Orthodox Christian rites and sects within her fold. The substantial remnants of the Roman Catholic Church (and the hard-core Calvinists Ultra-Orthodox...) remain as hostile to the Throne of St. Peter as ever – and, outside of Terran-dominated space, as irrelevant as ever. It can be safely predicted that, with the support of both Throne and Altar, Vilani-style ancestral veneration will continue to strengthen across the (Mixed) Vilani Imperium.

⁶⁸ Actually, these religious people *could* take the hard road of schism, but that would mean a serious loss of income and social position. In any case, church negotiations are well underway to grant these worshippers their own rite: there, they can and will be sidelined quite nicely by the Pope. Pope Vieilo III, as a truly rational, well educated, and *profoundly* sophisticated man, simply will not permit the yapping of religious doctrine to stand against the political needs of Imperial Unity. "Truth depends on your point of view. Bullets don't."

⁶⁹ This is the hidden hook of the secular dream, most recently spelled out in the most Established of all Establishment magazines, *The Economist* ("One Nation Under Nothing", <http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2013/07/god-and-democracy>) As the great European gods of the early 20th century – The Nation, The Race, and The People – are finished, it will be left for the Muslim and African Christian immigrants to determine what Europe will be like in AD 2300, not the self-eliminating natives and their comfortable tyrannies. (Well, increasingly uncomfortable for the young...) As for the author's exaltation of Scandinavia, I recommend that you do your own research, and find out the truth yourself. Or just assume that the State *isn't* Our Saviour, the True Source of Healing and Our Daily Bread, which the *Economist* author so feverently believes. Instead, use the sweat of your brow to prepare for that day, in 20 years or (a lot) less, when all the wonderful promises of the politicians who swore to always shelter, feed, and heal you are revealed to be a collapsing pack of lies. Dismiss ALL of the politicians, find and keep paying work no matter how lowly (or, better yet, start your own business), marry your woman and raise your sons, build up the community you live in... and trust in the Lord, not the Establishment.

Counties and Churches: Sector & Subsector Maps



A patrol ship in the Ssilnthis Gap. The graphic is titled "Strange Attraction"© Gabriel Gajdoš. Please visit his gallery at <http://pipper-svk.deviantart.com/art/Strange-Attraction-98788030>

Theme: "Flame", Taku Iwasaki, Witch Hunter Robin
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxdXhZbrdp8>

As of AD 3324, the Empty Quarter is divided into sixteen subsectors, named below:

Engarmi	Daskomo	Link	Kosh
Requiem	Flandry	Cotan	Nisaga
Lentuli	Tsuchida	Hebrin	Beta Niobe
Nulinad	Tairtsu	Irash	Nosso Nosso

Borders and territory within this sector is the same as in Official Traveller. However, the larger Third Imperium is rather different than in the canon, as shown in the chapter "Counties and Churches: Large Scale Imperial Maps."

By far, the most important world in the sector today is Hebrin. Completely untouched during the Julian War, this world has continued to prosper in the aftermath, dominating the nearby Imperial systems. The Julian Protectorate

has turbulent internal politics, but despite this its territory has actually grown since the war, with the addition of the Lorean Hegemony to the Protectorate as an associated state.

This sector is a modified version of the Empty Quarter, created by Alvin Plummer in 1998. Stellar Data follows Malenfant's Stellar Generation System. Older copies of this map can be found in

Galactic 2.4 - <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/swlist/winprogs.html>

Trade Map - <http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/maps.html>⁷⁰-

For multiple stars in a system:

G1 V G8 VI* The asterisk indicates the primary star for the mainworld

(K2 II M9 V) Parentheses are for stars that closely orbit each other

[B5 II] K5 V* Brackets are for stars that are very distant from the primary, but are still within the same parsec.

Subsectors:

A - Engarmi
B - Daskomo
C - Link
D - Kosh
E - Requiem
F - Flandry
G - Cotan
H - Nisaga
I - Lentuli
J - Tsuchida
K - Hebrin
L - Beta Niobe
M - Nulinad
N - Tairitsu
O - Irash
P - Nosso Nosso

Allegiances:

Ci - Imperial Client State
Cl - Lorean Client State
Cj - Julian Client State
I1 - Third Imperium, County of Marhaban
I2 - Third Imperium, County of Gudina
I3 - Third Imperium, County of Nulinad
I4 - Third Imperium, County of Cleon
I5 - Third Imperium, County of Pacifica
I6 - Third Imperium, County of Kurayoshi
I7 - Third Imperium, County of Iswaladan (based in Ley)
I8 - Third Imperium, County of Newsphere
I9 - Third Imperium, County of Hebrin
Jr - Julian Protectorate (Rukadukaz Republic)
LH - Lorean Hegemony
Na - Non-aligned

Bases:

N = Imperial Naval Base
A = Imperial Naval & Scout Base
B = Imperial Naval Base & Scout Way Station
S = Imperial Scout Base
F = non-Imperial Navy Base
M = non-Imperial Military Base
J = Independent Naval Outpost
G = Vargr Naval Base
C = Vargr Corsair Base
K = K'kree Naval Base
O = K'kree Outpost
P = Droyne Naval Base
Q = Droyne Garrison
= None

A non-Imperial Military Base (Outpost) has poor starship resupply abilities, but a reasonably strong defensive network with a good weapon array, a group of SDB's, and fighter squadrons.

⁷⁰Note that Trojan Reach and Reft sectors are incorrect: not that this mistake is of significance to anyone but a small minority of detail-obsessed Travellers. As GURPS Traveller is an alternate universe, the mistake can easily be waved aside.

Remarks and Trade Codes

An - Ancient site
Ex - Exile World
Mr - Military Rule
RsA, RsB, RsG - Imperial Research Stations Alpha, Beta, Gamma
Cp - County Capital (within the Imperium)
 - Regional Capital (outside of the Imperium)
Cc - Imperial Command Centre (one per subsector)
Cx - Interstellar Polity Capital (outside of the Imperium)
 - Imperial Sector Capital
V:# - Vargr population, percentage
Vw - Vargr world
B:# - Bwap population, percentage
Bw - Bwap world
C:# - Chirper world, percentage
D:# - Droyne population, percentage
Dw - Droyne World
S:# - Sei Kriss population, percentage
Sw - Sei Kriss world
P:# - Pitth population, percentage
Pw - Pitth world
Uw - Uequeser world
Ma - Machinist world
Ks - Kis system, special
Ns - Namgaleshim system, special

Owned systems:

There is insufficient space to insert both owned systems and the additional population data. The colonial systems (gov 6) are listed here, along with the system that owns them.

Those worlds that have a gov 6, but don't have a listed owner, are directly administered by their interstellar government, or are under military rule (Mr in the trade codes section)

Longshot (0140) - owned by Zukhisa (0139)
Dungii (0308) - owned by Ikon (0208)
Kashima (0339), Nyambii Dal (0439)- owned by Nulinad (0338)
Ryt Thoudhutz (0501)- owned by Maistoelat (0601)
Isii Shiikuus (0836)- owned by Cleon (0638)
Kyogasaki (0840) - owned by Econdora (Ley 0201)
Ryt Fgugaiks (1003) - owned by Yellowworld (1004)
Chalcis (1013) - owned by Kaa Eshiisagii (0912)
Tarascon (1228), Tuscany (1331), Goto Retto (1430) - owned by Aswan (1328)
Mu (1533) - owned by Saint Ashley (0153)
Timark City (1633), Baleartics (1734) - owned by Hateruma (1733)
Omerta (1826) - owned by Hebrin (1930)
Pargo (1937) - owned by Irash (2036)
Nagercoil (2511) - owned by Cabal (2412)
Amakusa Shoto (2528) - owned by Udaka (2529)
Stopover (2635) - owned by Muskoka (2434)
Omerinese (2803) - owned by Parolles (2804)
Hakata (3117) - owned by Nisaga (3116)

Special Notes:

0127: Teutoburger Wald - This world frequently appears on charts as "Teutoburger" or "T'b'g'r
0227: St. David's Abbey - "St. David's" or "S. Dav. Ab."
0305: Edash Masaaganak - "Edash" or "Edash Mas"
0813: Igura Shiimines - "Igura" or "Igura Shiim"
1308: Karam Imukeshiiza - "Karam" or "Karam Imuk"
1833: Yonaguni's Star - "Yonaguni", "Yonaguni's", or "Yoni's Star"
1932: The Golden Ring - "The Golden" or "Golden Ring"
0706: Hyuga is an inhabited small world, of less than 200 mils in diameter.
 There are no larger planets in the system.
1932: The Golden Ring has no mainworld per se: instead, the unusual ring system of a gas giant is where the majority of the inhabitants are located.
2825: Beta Niobe, a pre-supernova star, is located here. It has gone nova previously: a nebula cloud from the previous explosion surrounds the star. There are no planets or planetoids orbiting the star, so it is not listed in the standard UWP listings.

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
Amagasaki 0110 C656623-6 Ag Ni C:3 910 Jr M1 V
Nightraven 0111 D581402-5 Lo Ni V:6 800 Jr M1 V M8 V*
Shockwave 0116 C7A0637-8 De Ni V:4 101 Jr G2 V
Teutoburger 0127 B574546-9 Ag Ni C:0 902 I1 K0 V

Waskuei	0128	A130334-C	Lo Ni Po De		323	I1	G2	V	
Asaklon V	0132	B400377-8	Lo Ni Va		614	I2	F9	V	
El Quahira	0134	B26138C-B	Lo Ni Cp		914	I2	M9	V	
Rundeau	0138	A787777-6	Ag Ri		821	I3	F1	V	
ZUKHISA	0139	B556998-A	Hi		713	I3	F9	V	G5V*
Longshot	0140	D435364-3	S		614	I3	F1	V	
Orzabal	0201	C673102-8	Lo Ni		223	Jr	G1	V	
Arrikeshmundin	0204	B372352-7	Lo Ni V:1	R	501	Jr	M5	V*	M5 V
Pax Deorum	0205	B8B058A-8	De Ni V:5		122	Jr	K4	V*	M6 V
Iipkhudi	0206	A472511-B	Ni V:6		812	Jr	K2	V	
IKON	0208	C668986-8	Hi Ni D:1		514	Jr	K5	V	
Vrafavag Tak	0213	B777643-4	Ag Ni Vw	A	614	Jr	G0	V	
T'Pring	0216	E584679-0	Ag Ni Ri V:1		201	Jr	F9	V	
St. David's...	0227	B510435-7	Lo Ni		602	I1	K0	V	
MIKIK	0228	X450998-6	Hi Po In Ma	R	402	Na	M6	V	
Thessalia	0229	A415244-D	Lo Ni		903	I1	F5	V	
Toyama	0231	C557550-6	Ag Ni		603	I2	G9	V	
Ci Xian	0232	D664003-4	Lo Ni Ex		113	I2	K8	V	
Iternum	0234	D328578-6	Ni		201	I2	K3	V*	[M6 III]
Iigaashigiri	0238	B200244-8	Lo Ni Va		200	I3	K7	V	
Hildegard	0302	A330756-B	De Na Po D:6		111	Jr	G0	V	
Edash	0305	B338478-C	Lo Ni V:0		932	Jr	K5	V	
Dungii	0308	C201264-9	Ic Lo Ni V:0		103	Jr	M1	V	
Kamakura	0311	C9A049C-9	Lo Ni De V:0	A	102	Jr	G2	V*	M0 V
Heian-Kyo	0314	B200548-7	Ni Va V:5	A	212	Jr	M4	V	
Teikoku	0325	A8C7475-B	Lo De		504	Na	G2	V	
Hipper	0327	D656771-5	Ag Ni		120	I1	M6	III	M1 V*
Bonotsu	0328	A8B0433-B	Lo De Ni		502	I1	K3	V	M7 V*
Akec Tedidim	0329	E475231-6	Lo Ni Ma		903	I1	G1	V*	[M0 V]
GUDINA	0334	C53499B-5	Hi In		513	I2	G6	V*	[M4 V]
Carthage	0337	B654724-7	Ag		213	I3	G7	V*	[M4 V]
NULINAD	0338	A455966-B	B Hi Cp Cx		504	I3	M0	V*	[K6 V]
Kashima	0339	C96A864-9	Wa Ri P:4		602	I3	G4	V	
Ossa Dal	0340	B344573-8	Ag Ni	A	304	I3	F7	V*	M6 V
Gagiiiranur	0406	B320203-8	De Lo Ni Po Na A		901	Jr	M1	V*	M8 V
Shodoshima	0410	C55A879-5	Wa D:1		511	Jr	K5	V	
Nushiimga	0414	C525235-7	Lo Ni V:1	A	400	Jr	K4	V	
Marhaban	0426	A4697DG-E	N Cp B:1		801	I1	G4	V*	M0 V [M2 V M6 V]
Miser	0435	A213611-A	Na Ni Ic		302	I4	M3	II*	G8 V
Nyambii Dal	0439	C75A462-A	Lo Ni Wa P:5		902	I3	G0	V	
Ryt Thoudhutz	0501	C232464-9	Ni Po Lo C:2V:5		822	Jr	K9	V*	M1 V
Asummirap	0510	B663779-7	Ri V:1		914	Jr	K2	V	
Shirakawa	0511	A9B0695-9	De Ni V:4	A	512	Jr	(G6	V	M2 V)
Kaadlushuur	0514	A535111-B	C Lo Ni	A	704	Jr	M7	III	F1 V*
Lirumriish	0515	A45075A-A	De D:3		501	Jr	M7	V	
ENINSISH	0535	C000ABB-9	As Hi In Na		113	I4	G5	V	
Sashar	0536	D59799C-6	Hi In		204	I4	M0	III	G1 V*
Huifa	0537	C120322-8	De Lo Ni Po		424	I4	A9	V	G7 V*
Maistoelat	0601	A500243-8	De Lo Ni Va		704	Jr	F7	V	
Solstice	0605	C99A466-9	Ni Wa Lo Mr		300	Jr	M7	V	
Tsu	0613	C55289B-5	Po D:0		602	Jr	G8	V	
Turas Mor	0616	C231350-7	Lo Ni Na Po V:0		911	Jr	K9	V	
Janowski	0617	C549412-8	Lo Ni V:5		104	Jr	G7	V*	M4 V
Azetbur	0620	A211534-C	C Ni V:2		803	Na	K0	V	M5 V*
Dimashq	0627	E230521-5	Ni Po De		701	I6	F2	V	
Nihon Station	0630	C899654-8	S Ni		203	I5	K4	II	
Pacifica	0632	A367788-B	Ri Ag B:1 Cp		813	I5	G5	V	
Gigdubarga	0633	B5688BB-4	An Ma		134	I5	G5	V	
Blackglobe	0636	D7C0353-8	Lo De Ni		122	I4	K9	V*	M1 V
RASU	0637	C760997-6	De Hi		304	I4	K8	V	
Cleon	0638	A98879B-A	Ag Ri Cp	A	305	I4	K9	V	
Shiikuus	0640	D539849-6			813	I4	M1	V*	M7 V
Mirukuseki	0704	C437697-8	Ni		403	Jr	F9	V*	M3 V [K1 V]
Okayama	0705	A634422-8	Lo Ni S:1 V:3		903	Jr	M0	V	
Hyuga	0706	DS00000-7	Lo Va		402	Jr	M4	V	M8 V*
Engarmi	0709	A330444-E	De Ni Lo	A	812	Jr	G5	V	
Isumo	0711	A888878-7	Ri	A	204	Jr	G3	V	
Afer Ventus	0715	E643786-1	Po V:1	R	513	Jr	G2	IV	K1 V*
Osumi Shoto	0728	C221353-7	Lo Na Po		130	I6	G1	V	G5 V*
Resurrection	0729	D300244-7	S Lo Na Va		402	I6	F4	V	
Ayachuco	0732	C890515-8	S De Ni		914	I5	M1	V	M9 V*
Simon's Ball	0738	C66468A-5	S Ni Ag Ri		913	I4	K8	V*	[F9 V]
Siidkirgumar	0805	E542453-6	Lo Ni Po V:0		403	Jr	M1	V	
Urshem	0809	DAC05DE-A	De Po		420	Jr	F9	V*	M7 V [M9 II]



The Ancient-withered world of Urshem. The graphic is titled "The Very Wonders of Space" © CommanderEVE. Please visit her gallery at <http://commandereve.deviantart.com/art/The-Very-Wonders-of-Space-202387256>

Gashige	0811	A3384BJ-C	C	Lo	Ni				912	Jr	K9	V	M7	V*
Itsukushim	0812	D453320-6		Lo	Ni	Po	V:3		101	Jr	(K0	V	M4	V)
Igura Shiim...	0813	C413111-5		Ic	Lo	Ni			304	Jr	G7	V		
Li Changhun	0828	C88A112-9		Lo	Ni	Wa			403	I6	M1	V		
Li Yingkou	0829	E300300-6		Lo	Ni	Va			700	I6	M0	V		
Li Chifeng	0830	B98A677-A		Lo	Ni	Wa			802	I6	G9	V		
ARAKAAD	0833	E4659BC-7		Hi					502	I5	M5	V		
Province	0834	B6157B7-9	J	Ic				A	104	I5	F6	V		
Isii Shiikuus	0836	D512367-A		Lo	Ni	Ic			613	I4	K2	V	K3	V*
Tungokl	0837	A253432-9		Lo	Ni	Po	Ma		404	I4	M5	II	M8	V*
Chubu	0839	C7A0646-8		De	Ni				405	I4	M9	V		
Kyogasaki	0840	C775467-3	S	Lo	Ni				303	I4	F7	V		
Mekhighk	0903	C8A0303-A		De	Lo	Ni	V:4	A	703	Jr	M3	V		
Graithairekt	0905	C65479B-5		Ag	C:2	V:0			202	Jr	M1	V		
Donegal	0906	B528578-7		Ni	S:0	V:0			200	Jr	M2	V		
Ori Sau'	0907	C6328DD-3		Na	Po	Sw			600	Jr	K9	V		
Kaa Eshiisagii	0912	A333331-B		Lo	Ni	Po	V:5	A	711	Jr	K4	V*	M6	V
Li Yichang	0931	A889435-A	N	Lo	Ni				103	I6	M1	V		
Sarbaz's Tomb	0932	C773000-0		Ba					011	I6	G5	V		
Delta Three	0936	D401598-8	A	Ic	Ni	Va	Ns	RsDR	311	I4	K9	V*	M7	V
Bakimidiim	0940	E4537A9-5		Po	C:1			A	330	I4	M9	V		
Ryt Fgugaiks	1003	C62A563-9		Ni	Wa	V:9		A	305	Jr	M9	V		
Yellowworld	1004	B301430-A		Ni	Va	Lo	V:2		701	Jr	A7	V		
Chalcis	1013	D353569-4		Ni	Po	V:2			103	Jr	M9	III	F9	V*
Kurayoshi	1030	C8607A9-F		De	RsA	Cp		A	304	I6	K5	III	K5	V*
Kushiro	1031	C86A578-9	S	Ni	Wa	Pw			604	I6	F6	V*	G8	V
Sao Sapele	1035	AAC0458-B		Lo	De	Ni	Ns	RsBR	413	I4	K1	V		
Ming Po Toi	1036	C462226-7		Lo	Ni				224	I4	K3	V*	M7	V
Urpirur	1037	B7B0349-7		De	Lo	Ni			400	I4	F8	V		
Emblem	1038	CAA0441-8		Lo	De	Ni			114	I4	M8	V		
Micomicon	1039	E645442-5		Lo	Ni				704	I4	M7	V		
Old Shire	1040	C140201-6		De	Lo	Ni	Po		900	I4	K7	III		
Ori Bjo'tim	1103	C5358CA-3		Sw					614	Jr	F6	IV		
Shori	1105	B655765-5		Ag	Mr	V:6			512	Jr	M5	V		
Gakishinnu	1106	A87A323-9		Lo	Ni	Wa	V:5		303	Na	G8	V		
Koromogawa	1107	D44738A-A		Ag	V:5				603	Jr	M7	V		
Banka Banka	1109	D735245-7		Lo	Ni	V:2			203	Na	K7	V		
Old Base	1110	E7A0752-8		De	V:2				702	Jr	K6	V		
Diefenbaker	1129	A210522-C		Ni					404	I6	M0	V*	M8	V
Arabia	1130	D648443-5	S	Lo	Ni				310	I6	G8	V		
Davenport	1133	A868878-A		Ri				A	520	Lz	A4	IV	K4	V*
Fair Haven	1137	C459756-6		Ni	P:0				602	I4	M9	III*	M5	V
Oboda	1139	A6A5655-9		Fl	Ni				401	I4	G6	V*	G7	V
Gaashi Diidu	1205	B78A101-D		Lo	Ni	Wa	An	V:5R	720	Jr	M3	V*	M3	V
Gaashi Mukipu	1206	A486799-A	Q	Ag	Ri	D:4V:1Cp			703	Jr	M8	V		
Sagumanka	1208	X787896-0		Ri				R	213	Jr	A9	V*	K5	V
Urusi	1211	B697154-8		Lo	Ni	V:3			911	Jr	F3	V*	M7	V
Nidakha	1213	C7B0575-9		De	Ni	V:7		A	511	Na	A7	V		
Nalaki	1214	B69988A-7		D:1				A	801	Cj	G3	V		
Tarascon	1228	B774567-B		Ag	Ni				523	I6	G1	V		
Sio'mawasi	1229	C7C0874-6	S	De					805	I6	M0	V	M4	V*
Narada	1230	A757744-7		Ag					702	I6	K1	V		
LAZISAR	1233	B887974-9	F	Hi	Cp				512	Lz	F6	V*	G8	V
Asia	1235	A337441-A		Lo	Ni			A	204	I4	M1	V	M6	V*
Decius	1236	C774000-0		Ba					000	I4	K4	V*	M9	V
Gusshi E	1237	C1136BG-8		Na	Ni	Ic		A	604	I4	G9	V		
Nahur	1238	C86778B-7		Ag	Ri				913	I4	G9	V*	[M5	V]
Higashiosaka	1239	B140113-7		Lo	Ni	De	Po		402	I4	G6	V		
Takada	1301	B97A475-C		Lo	Ni	Wa		A	412	Jr	K3	III		
Mattweed	1303	C210122-7		Lo	Ni				325	Jr	K5	V		
Kurikara	1306	D573776-5		V:3					603	Cj	M5	V	M6	V*
Numigimar	1307	A7C7200-C	C	Lo	Ni	Fl		A	405	Cj	K4	V	M8	V*
Karam Imuk...	1308	D797436-5		Lo	Ni	V:3		A	413	Jr	M4	V		
Ksedhing	1309	C574574-7		Ag	Ni	V:9			504	Cj	F5	V		
Mishiguggekhi	1311	CAB0899-8		De	D:1				611	Na	K2	III	M7	V*
OUTPOST	1315	E869987-8		Hi					905	Jr	G0	V		
Yamaguchi	1326	B433214-A		Lo	Ni	Po			510	Ci	M3	V*	M3	V
Aswan	1328	A420432-B	N	Lo	Ni	Po	De		803	I6	G4	IV		
Listualro	1329	C443320-6		Lo	Ni	Po			823	I6	G7	V*	M0	V
Tuscany	1331	A9C0364-A		De	Lo	Ni			403	I6	G7	V*	M6	V
Capercaillie	1332	D413754-7		Na	Ic			A	624	I6	K1	V		
Delmar	1337	C140310-8		Lo	Ni	De	Po		100	I4	M1	V*	M8	V
Capasitator	1408	C51007A-6		De	Na	Ni			301	Jr	A9	V	F5	V*
TOKITRE	1411	B780953-8	N	De	Hi	D:2			203	Ci	K3	V		

St. Dimurra	1413	E242110-3	Lo Ni Po V:5	A	800	Cj	M7	V*	[M9 V]
Enaniirshad	1415	B8B0430-D	Lo Ni De		513	Ci	G9	V	
Chisholm	1427	B84A212-8	Lo Ni Wa		603	I6	K3	V*	M3 V
Kitayushu	1429	C501203-7	Lo Ni Va Ic		603	I6	G6	V*	M7 V
Goto Retto	1430	E8A6563-6	Ni Fl		804	I6	F4	V	
GIMUSHI	1431	D54AAA9-8	Hi In Wa		124	I6	M9	V	
O'Donnell	1436	B500385-6	Lo Na Ni Va		615	I4	M2	V	
Pekryaay	1501	B100558-D	P Ni Va Dw		403	Na	K2	V	K9 V*
Dyrys	1510	C77A457-8	Lo Ni Wa V:5		904	Cj	M8	II	
Dipkusulimir	1515	E626334-8	Lo Ni V:4		901	Cl	M8	V*	M9 V
Pons Aelius	1520	C748355-8	Lo Ni V:1		322	Cl	G8	V*	M6 V
Cobweb Station	1527	A774334-8	Lo Ni		914	I6	K7	V	
Dotilla	1529	B140644-8	Ni Po De		905	I6	K7	V	
Starsky	1530	E338686-8	Ni		214	I6	M7	V	
Fur Elise	1531	C221032-7	Lo Ni Po		604	I6	G6	V*	M6 V
Mu	1533	B677666-6	Ag Ni C:5		804	I8	M2	V	
PAMUSHGAR	1537	C680986-6	M De Hi		202	I4	G0	V	
Khal I	1539	E57468C-5	Ag Ni C:2		603	I7	G7	V*	M3 V
Ryukyu	1540	B7A0478-9	Lo De Ni		522	I7	M2	V	
Nuusususush	1601	EAC0536-2	De Ni V:0		814	Cj	F1	V*	[K2 V]
Gakalar	1602	A5637AB-6	D:2 V:1		215	Cl	G4	V*	G6 V
Cimated	1608	B300325-9	Lo Ni Va V:3	A	510	Cj	G8	V	
Lodi Cykidasas	1609	C7A0454-9	Lo De Ni		404	Ci	(M5	V	M9 V)
Guarda	1611	D530122-7	De Lo Ni Po V:3		403	Ci	A1	V	K5 V*
Smaointe	1616	D99A586-6	C Ni Wa		502	Na	G1	V	
Togo	1619	A000898-B	C As Na		610	Cl	M7	V	
Schulz	1631	B545422-7	Lo Ni Ex	A	312	I9	(M0	II	G3 V)
Timark City	1633	C472564-6	Ni		703	I8	G5	V	M2 V*
Saint Ashley	1635	B230666-7	De Na Ni Po		302	I8	G4	V*	M3 V
SSILNTHIS	1704	A7689B9-C	G Hi	R	413	Na	K7	V*	[F3 IV]
Muso	1726	A232023-9	J De Lo Ni Po		203	I9	M1	V	
MUGAMA	1728	E8699AA-AA	Hi	A	203	I9	G1	V	
Makarou	1729	B596444-A	Lo Ni		802	I9	M0	V*	M6 V [M3 V M7 V]
Survivors	1730	D8A6103-7	Lo Ni Fl		813	I9	M5	V	
Akrotiri	1731	B424521-9	Ni		404	I9	A8	V	M8 V*
Hateruma	1733	C24458C-8	Ag Ni	A	603	I8	K5	V	
Baleartics	1734	E412365-7	Ic Lo Ni Pr		415	I8	M0	V	
The Hundred	1737	C644697-2	Ag Ni		303	I8	M9	III	K7 V*
Newsphere	1738	A454877-B	N Ri Cp	A	405	I8	M0	V	
Vision	1803	C8D8574-4	Ni V:3	A	413	Cl	G8	V	
Motaselad	1804	B574572-6	Ag Ni D:5		502	Cl	G7	V	
Yaku Jima	1809	C9A0000-0	Ba De	A	025	Na	F5	IV	
Wabiskaw	1810	C535145-5	Lo Ni		905	Cj	G5	V	
Hanna	1811	C7A5459-7	Lo Ni V:1		601	Ci	G5	V	
Florianopolis	1816	B100511-C	Ni Va V:3		204	Cl	D	M9	V*
Omerta	1826	E9B066A-6	De Ni Ex		404	I9	M6	V	
Nieuwoud	1830	E585598-2	Ag Ni		900	I9	G9	V	
Pegasus	1831	E529555-6	Ni		905	I9	K8	V*	[M1 III]
Yonaguni's....	1833	D445421-4	Lo Ni		803	I8	G9	V	
Senkaku	1836	B51368B-9	Na Ni Ic	A	901	I8	G0	V*	M6 V
BELUMAR	1838	E693942-8	Hi In		201	I8	K3	V	
Delibes	1901	A3308A7-A	C De Na Po	A	400	Cj	M5	V	
Jamnagar Thal	1905	D411556-7	Ni		604	LH	M3	V*	M8 V
Port Wsi	1911	C84859B-8	Ni		210	LH	A6	V	
Talcanuano	1913	C573330-4	Lo Ni Ma V:2		401	Na	K7	V*	M3 V [M2 V]
Miyazaki	1923	C6A7242-5	Lo Ni Fl		320	Na	G4	V	
HEBRIN	1930	B250975-E	N Hi Cp		513	I9	K3	V	
Golden Ring	1932	ER00320-B	Lo Ni Va		224	I9	M1	V	
Silvermoon	1934	D420100-4	De Lo Ni Po		232	I8	G8	IV	K2 V* [G3 V]
Pargo	1937	D68A664-2	Ni Wa Ri Ma		504	I8	G9	V*	M5 V
Gangetic	2001	A20049C-A	Ni Va		404	LH	G8	V	
Siiye	2005	C9A9550-8	Fl Ni		200	LH	M2	III	F9 V*
Flange	2009	B443933-7	Lo Ni Po		114	LH	G0	V	
Lullaby	2010	C584773-6	Ag Ri C:2		902	Cl	M9	V*	[M3 V]
Reptile	2016	A648679-6	C Ag Ni V:1		204	Na	M2	II*	M8 V
Pynchan	2030	A257640-8	Ag Ni		312	I9	F5	V	
Tsarina	2032	B000405-C	J Lo Ni As		613	I9	M0	V	
IRASH	2036	C579A98-7	Hi In	A	201	I8	F6	V*	M5 V
Poisoned Earth	2037	E783335-5	Lo Ni Ex Ma		703	I8	G4	V	
Dimitri	2038	B211101-8	Lo Ni		300	I8	F2	V*	M3 V
Edenvale	2039	D4697B9-6	S Ks B:3 P:1	A	702	I8	K0	V	
Mikaichi	2103	A53836A-B	Lo Ni Pr Mr	R	304	LH	F2	V	
Hijoji	2109	C515388-6	Lo Ni Ic		611	LH	M7	V	
Dalnegovo	2111	E679633-6	Ni V:3		804	Ci	M3	II	G0 V*

Dannoura	2113	A1014CE-7	Lo Va Ic		900	Ci A9 V	M5 V*
Hokkaido	2128	C610556-8	Na		112	I9 G6 V	
Tshane Eiseb	2129	BAA9533-B	Ni Fl		800	I9 K2 V	
Venda	2130	C330510-6	Ni Po De		113	I9 G2 V*	G9 V
Borden's Star	2134	B434421-6	Lo		800	I8 G0 V	
Amamioshima	2138	C642486-7	Lo Po		115	I8 M8 V	
Whirligig	2201	C230455-7	Lo De Ni Po		204	LH M7 V*	M7 V
Aynoiye	2202	B301126-9	Lo Ni Po Va Ic		504	LH G6 V	
V'nen	2203	A322625-8	Na Ni Po		423	LH M2 III	
Imagine	2204	D624331-7	Lo Ni		102	LH M3 V	
COTAN	2212	C4289AG-A	Hi In		313	LH G5 V	
Cometela	2227	B78A48A-9	Lo Ni Wa		514	I9 M5 V*	M8 V
Painted Orb	2230	C434675-9	Ni		404	I9 F6 V	G2 V*
Signet	2237	A7836BE-7	Ni		413	I8 M8 V	
d'Anticosti	2313	C98A8A9-5	Wa	R	621	LH K6 V*	M1 V [M5 II]
Lothlorien	2314	D87369E-7	Ni		324	LH K9 V*	M4 V
Gekko	2316	X413000-0	Ba Ic An	R	024	LH K4 V	
Rethmnon	2331	A234210-A	Lo Ni		100	I9 G8 V	
Disarid	2402	C798278-6	Lo Ni		102	LH M9 V	
JUSTINCE	2405	D546AEG-9	Hi In	A	504	LH K2 V*	[M3 V]
Binnoth	2406	E717000-0	Ba Ic Ma	A	023	LH M9 V	
Endicott	2407	E536334-6	Lo Ni		122	LH M5 V	M6 V*
Abey Toms	2410	C527411-7	Lo Ni C:0		914	LH K6 III	F5 V
Suchan	2411	D5698DG-6	Bw		905	LH F3 V	
Cabal	2412	C3118AE-8	Na	A	701	LH K5 V*	M4 V
Valentin	2413	B5265AF-7	Ni	A	505	LH M0 III	
Chugoku	2423	X000430-4	Lo Ni As	R	600	Ci M0 V	
Silence	2428	A225345-C	Lo Ni		701	I9 K3 V	
Okinoerabu	2431	C000757-8	Na As Ex		722	I9 M4 III	
Muskoka	2434	A200110-B	Lo Ni Va		201	I8 G7 V*	[M8 III]
Titanic	2503	E85A336-6	Lo Ni Wa		600	LH K5 V	
Isatetiri	2504	A7368BF-A		A	803	LH F3 V*	M3 V
Nagaoka	2508	C567521-7	Ag Ni B:0	A	700	LH G2 V	
Nagercoil	2511	C440562-8	De Ni Po		104	LH K0 V	
Stokebury	2516	C2356A7-7	Ni Ex		514	LH K1 V	
Qonos	2523	A246232-C	Lo Ni		120	Na F8 V	
Amakusa Shoto	2528	D45A667-1	Ni Po Wa		623	Na G2 V	
Udaka	2529	BA9A530-A	Ni Wa		411	Na G9 V*	K5 V
Manado	2536	E537000-0	Ba Ex Ma	A	002	I8 G3 V	
Capel Celyn	2605	D523352-7	Lo Ni Po		312	LH M2 V	
Ysidote	2606	D310677-5	De Na Ni	A	602	LH M2 V	
Tsangpo	2612	B7B0547-6	De Ni		502	LH K0 V	
Catagno	2615	D7A016A-7	De Lo Ni Ma		805	LH G4 V	
Ruins	2618	X415000-0	Ba Ic Lo Ni Ma		004	Na K4 V	
Stopover	2635	A669669-9	Ni Ri		420	Na K2 V*	[M2 II]
Odalacec	2701	C444874-7			101	LH M6 V	
Nimmety	2703	B444013-8	Lo		404	LH K9 V*	M1 V
Perseus	2704	B418444-B	Lo Ni Ic		625	LH K8 V	
Deciyana	2707	C94A427-8	Lo Ni Wa		111	LH F6 V	
Monolith	2708	B565587-9	Ag Ni		410	LH M0 V*	M3 V
Coincident	2710	D5327BA-9	Na Po	R	803	LH M4 V	
Omerinese	2803	BA7A663-6	Ni Wa		700	LH G7 V	
Parolles	2804	A8688D7-A	Cp		104	LH M1 V*	M2 V
Negev	2810	B7A05AB-A	De Ni		813	LH M0 II	
Redring	2816	E000248-8	As Lo Ni	A	510	LH M7 V	
Nura Dhapuri	2817	D3135A7-8	Ni		214	LH K0 V	
O	2839	C4656BC-A		A	200	Na K8 V	
Cocktail	2903	C401101-9	Lo Ni Ic Va	A	600	LH A1 V	
Ab Sinecal	2904	B547674-9	Ag Ni		303	LH F0 V	
Kyushu	2906	A2306BD-A	De Na Ni Po An		203	LH M2 V	
Takeshima	2909	B131337-8	Lo Ni Po Uw	A	702	LH M2 III	M2 V*
Andria	2911	E000000-0	Ba As	A	924	LH G6 V	
Lily	2913	C3418AB-5	Po	A	112	LH G9 V	
Cannae	2914	D89A79C-6	Wa		903	LH F9 V	
Al Ubayyid	2919	B7796BG-8	Ni		403	LH G2 V	
Occusi	2933	A32459B-B	Ni		203	Na F0 V*	M9 V
Mirabilia	3001	E3318CC-6	Na Po		120	LH K0 V*	[D]
Akkeshi	3005	B9996BD-6	Ni An		614	LH M2 II	M9 V*
Koyasan	3007	B8788B9-7		A	823	LH M3 V*	M5 V
Aegypt	3008	B877897-5		R	200	LH K3 V	
Shimonoseki	3012	B663400-B	Lo Ni D:3 V:5		805	Na G0 V	
Usa	3020	CAB0110-8	De Lo Ni		304	LH F5 V	
Flutewind	3101	C150432-A	De Ni Po Lo		200	LH F7 V*	M5 V
Acesymak Caya	3104	B201423-C	Ic Ni Va Lo	A	103	LH K4 V	

Manaung Kyun	3112	B33389A-B	Na Po		605	LH G5 V
NISAGA	3116	A6699CH-B	F Hi	A	703	LH K8 V
Hakata	3117	BA00568-A	Ni Va		410	LH M2 V
Salayar	3136	B434876-B	Ri		502	Na K9 V* M5 V
Shepherd Moons	3201	C679154-7	Lo Ni		604	LH K7 III
Toyeloci	3202	B78A8BA-A	Wa		630	LH K7 V* M9 V
Waterstone	3206	B79A8AB-6	Wa		202	LH G2 V* M0 V
Marugame	3208	C100210-9	Na Ni Va		203	LH K1 V* M8 V
Crag	3211	C6686BB-6	Ag Ni		314	LH F4 V
Mae Hung Son	3212	C9A0203-9	De Lo Ni		820	LH A3 V* G6 V
Dazaifu	3216	C9A0612-6	De Ni		701	LH M7 II* M2 V
Coreward	3219	C33157B-9	Lo Ni Po	R	614	LH M0 V* M3 V
Keirse	3224	B564011-8	Lo Ni An	A	700	Na G9 V

Legend

You will find that several of the maps don't have the usual blue and white (dry) worlds; instead, they have a range of colours. By using Joshua Bell's "World Colors β " selection on <http://www.travellermmap.com/> – 17471 in the option box, at <http://www.travellermmap.com/post.htm> – these worlds are coloured to display their habitability, as follows:

- Rich and Agricultural: gold ●
- Agricultural: green ●
- Rich: purple ●
- Industrial: gray ●
- Corrosive/insidious/etc: rust ●
- Vacuum: black ●
- Liquid water: blue ●
- Otherwise: white ○



A quiet world and her moon on the edge of the Empty Quarter.

The graphic is titled "Touch of Despair" © Gabriel Gajdoš.

Please visit his gallery at <http://pipper-svk.deviantart.com/art/Touch-of-Despair-106958005>





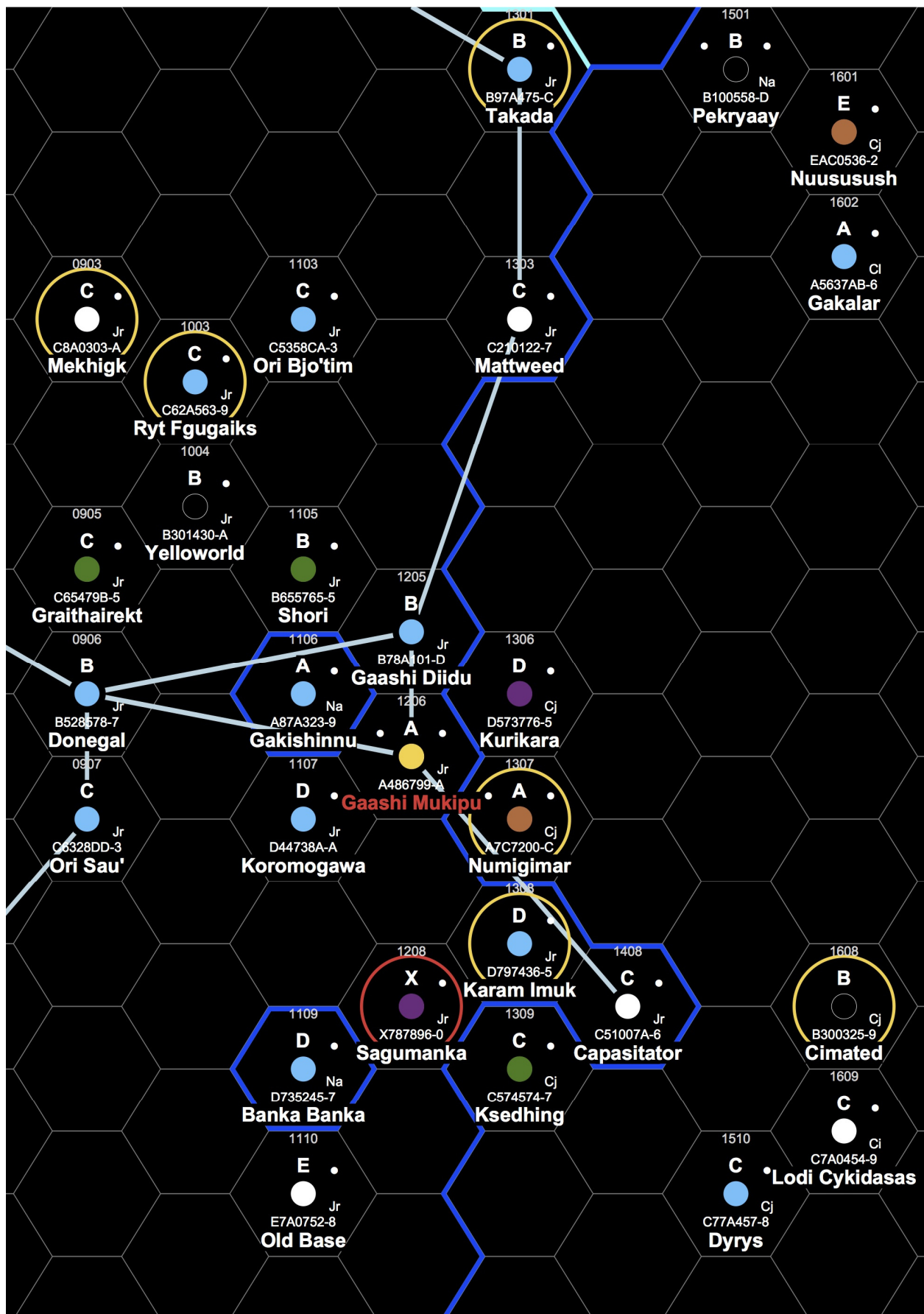
The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Engarmi Subsector

Amagasaki	0110	C656623-6	Ag Ni C:3		910	Jr	M1	V	
Orzabal	0201	C673102-8	Lo Ni		223	Jr	G1	V	
Arrikeshmundin	0204	B372352-7	Lo Ni V:1	R	501	Jr	M5	V* M5	V
Pax Deorum	0205	B8B058A-8	De Ni V:5		122	Jr	K4	V* M6	V
Iipkhudi	0206	A472511-B	Ni V:6		812	Jr	K2	V	
IKON	0208	C668986-8	Hi Ni D:1		514	Jr	K5	V	
Hildegard	0302	A330756-B	De Na Po D:6		111	Jr	G0	V	
Edash	0305	B338478-C	Lo Ni V:0		932	Jr	K5	V	
Dungii	0308	C201264-9	Ic Lo Ni V:0		103	Jr	M1	V	
Gagiiranur	0406	B320203-8	De Lo Ni Po Na	A	901	Jr	M1	V* M8	V
Shodoshima	0410	C55A879-5	Wa D:1		511	Jr	K5	V	
Ryt Thoudhutz	0501	C232464-9	Ni Po Lo C:2 V:5		822	Jr	K9	V* M1	V
Asummirap	0510	B663779-7	Ri V:1		914	Jr	K2	V	
Maistoelat	0601	A500243-8	De Lo Ni Va		704	Jr	F7	V	
Solstice	0605	C99A466-9	Ni Wa Lo Mr		300	Jr	M7	V	
Mirukuseki	0704	C437697-8	Ni		403	Jr	F9	V* M3	V [K1 V]
Okayama	0705	A634422-8	Lo Ni S:1 V:3		903	Jr	M0	V	
Hyuga	0706	DS00000-7	Lo Va		402	Jr	M4	V M8	V*
Engarmi	0709	A330444-E	De Ni Lo	A	812	Jr	G5	V	
Siidkirgumar	0805	E542453-6	Lo Ni Po V:0		403	Jr	M1	V	
Urshem	0809	DAC05DE-A	De Po		420	Jr	F9	V* M7	V [M9 II]

While Ikon is the most populous world here, it's relatively low tech level and perennial unrest under Vargr rule keeps it from attaining an important position in the subsector economy or the trade routes. Instead, it is the world of Hildegard that is the most important system in the subsector. Its' Droyne population was supplied with cheap Vilani labour by the Ismiika Akuim, the old Vilani starnation, to pay for Droyne technology that the starnation couldn't create on its own. After the Rukadukaz Republic overthrew the Ismiika Akuim, the Vilani population was marooned on the Droyne world. Nowadays, most of the Vilani labour in Droyne factories by day, and retreat to their tidy ghettos at night: only one out of four have agreed to relocate to distant Vilani-only reservations.

Iipkhudi serves as a regional centre for the Vargr government – to the extent that there is one. Most of the population are Ovaghoun Vargr, members of the assorted pirates that rule the subsector. The original Vilani population now makes up a minority of the residents, and are kept far from the desert mountains and rivers that the Vargr have claimed for their own. Ovaghoun missionaries, eager to persuade the local Irilitok to alter their children to fit the Ovaghoun genetic profile, are easy to find in the Irilitok Vargr towns and the starport.

Solstice is a local centre of Vargr military strength. About one-quarter of the Vargr-only Republican army battalions of the quadrant based here, as well as several make-do troop transports. Several Droyne nations have been invited to join the Republic, and they have their own training centre on this world. It is rumoured that a small cache of Ancient weapons of various effectiveness are kept here as well.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Daskomo Subsector

Mekhighk	0903	C8A0303-A	De Lo Ni V:4	A	703	Jr	M3	V
Graithairekt	0905	C65479B-5	Ag C:2 V:0		202	Jr	M1	V
Donegal	0906	B528578-7	Ni S:0 V:0		200	Jr	M2	V
Ori Sau'	0907	C6328DD-3	Na Po Sw		600	Jr	K9	V
Ryt Fgugaiks	1003	C62A563-9	Ni Wa V:9	A	305	Jr	M9	V
Yellowworld	1004	B301430-A	Ni Va Lo V:2		701	Jr	A7	V
Ori Bjo'tim	1103	C5358CA-3	Sw		614	Jr	F6	IV
Shori	1105	B655765-5	Ag Mr V:6		512	Jr	M5	V
Gakishinnu	1106	A87A323-9	Lo Ni Wa V:5		303	Na	G8	V
Koromogawa	1107	D44738A-A	Ag V:5		603	Jr	M7	V
Banka Banka	1109	D735245-7	Lo Ni V:2		203	Na	K7	V
Old Base	1110	E7A0752-8	De V:2		702	Jr	K6	V
Gaashi Diidu	1205	B78A101-D	Lo Ni Wa An V:5	R	720	Jr	M3	V* M3 V
Gaashi Mukipu	1206	A486799-A	Q Ag Ri D:4 V:1	Cp	703	Jr	M8	V
Sagumanka	1208	X787896-0	Ri	R	213	Jr	A9	V* K5 V
Takada	1301	B97A475-C	Lo Ni Wa	A	412	Jr	K3	III
Mattweed	1303	C210122-7	Lo Ni		325	Jr	K5	V
Kurikara	1306	D573776-5	V:3		603	Cj	M5	V M6 V*
Numigimar	1307	A7C7200-C	C Lo Ni Fl	A	405	Cj	K4	V M8 V*
Karam Imuk...	1308	D797436-5	Lo Ni V:3	A	413	Jr	M4	V
Ksedhing	1309	C574574-7	Ag Ni V:9		504	Cj	F5	V
Capasitator	1408	C51007A-6	De Na Ni		301	Jr	A9	V F5 V*
Pekryaay	1501	B100558-D	P Ni Va Dw		403	Na	K2	V K9 V*
Dyrys	1510	C77A457-8	Lo Ni Wa V:5		904	Cj	M8	II
Nuusususush	1601	EAC0536-2	De Ni V:0		814	Cj	F1	V* [K2 V]
Gakalar	1602	A5637AB-6	D:2 V:1		215	Cl	G4	V* G6 V
Cimated	1608	B300325-9	Lo Ni Va V:3	A	510	Cj	G8	V
Lodi Cykidasas	1609	C7A0454-9	Lo De Ni		404	Ci	(M5	V M9 V)

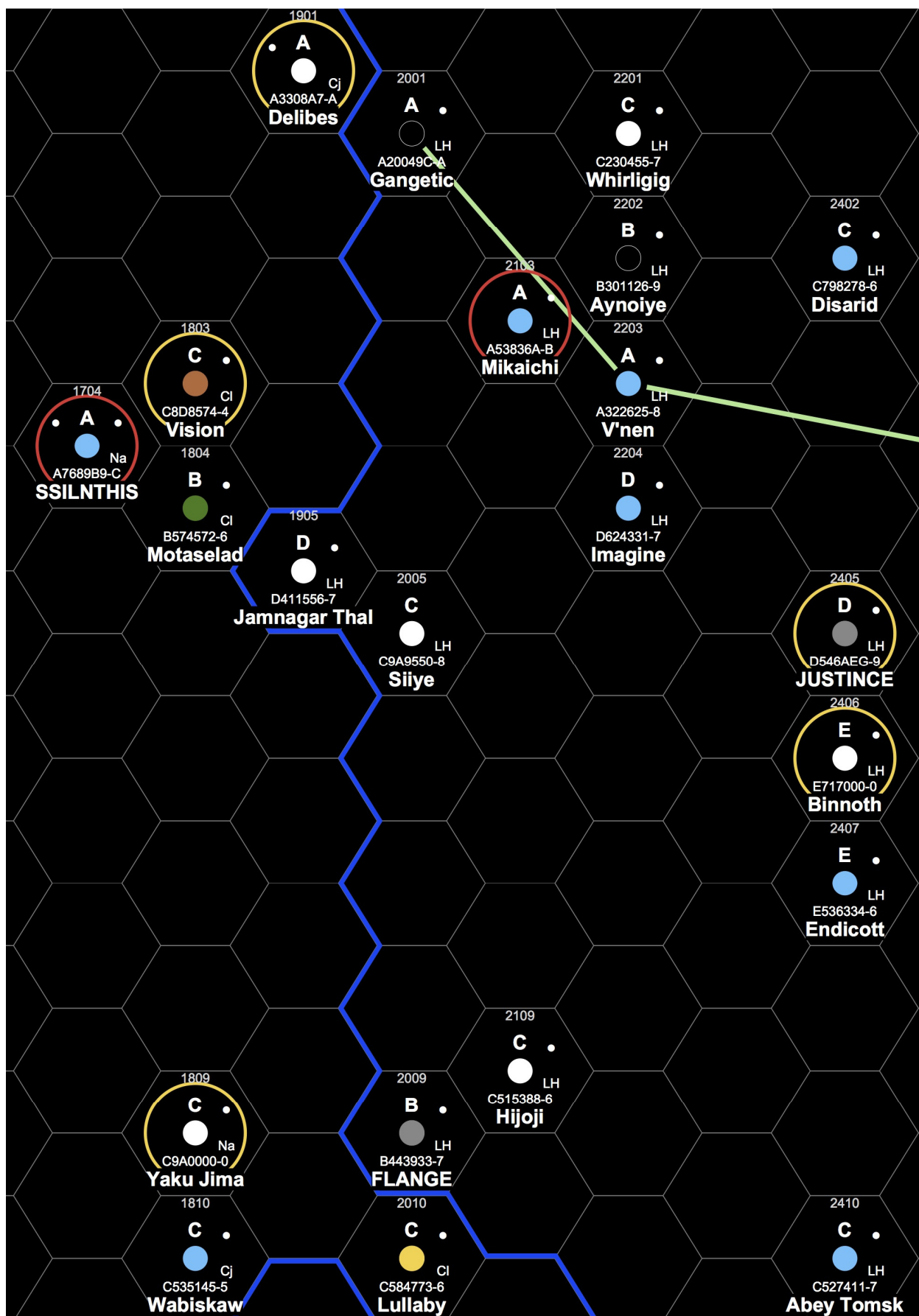
The most heavily populated worlds in the subsector are actually Sei Kriss worlds, but the large sentient crabs that dominate these worlds are quite happy to enjoy the low-tech lifestyle without bothering about the greater universe. Sagumanka is a difficult world to get to: and frankly, the no-tech population doesn't even make it worth your while to try. By relentless cultivation, domestication, and selective breeding of the local lifeforms – on land, sea, and air – the inhabitants are able to maintain an industrial level of food production. But the agricultural wealth of the world is for the residents alone.

Pekryaay is the centre of Droyne power in the sector. An unaligned Droyne world with a TL D Droyne naval base, the struggles of the subsector have been careful to pass Pekryaay by. It is suspected that the greatest stocks of Ancient weaponry and technology in the sector are located here. Almost all of the warships spotted here can be carefully classified as TL D, but the one or two exceptions are capable of tearing through a full Imperial sector fleet like so much tissue paper – assuming that they are in perfect repair and manned with competent officers and crew.

Gaashi Mukipu is home to a notable Pekryaay Droyne garrison, with both Droyne-made TL A and Ancient-made TL ?? weapons. Their willingness to serve the Vargr Rukadukaz Republic has made the Droyne regiments based here quite useful. However, the heavy use of these troopers has worn out/worn down their stock of irreplaceable Ancient arms considerably, to the disgruntlement of the Pekryaay leadership.

Three-fourths of the Republican army in the quadrant is based on Shori. The world itself is a major population centre of the Irilitok Vargr, who still bears some ill will to their former human masters. The message of the Ovaghoun racial missionaries is quite potent here, and over half of the Vargr cubs here are actually Ovaghoun Vargr genetically, and are likely to emigrate to Ovaghoun starnations when they reach their majority.

The lengthy name of Karam Imukeshiiza is tied to an old Vilani Empire Admiral who fought in the Old Vargr Wars of centuries ago. He is best known for his expertise with Ancient technology, which – combined with a good understanding of his captains and the Vargr enemy – allowed his squadron to push the Vargr out of two subsectors, all by itself. His doctrines on the use of Ancient technology remain required reading by Imperial Navy officers.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Link Subsector

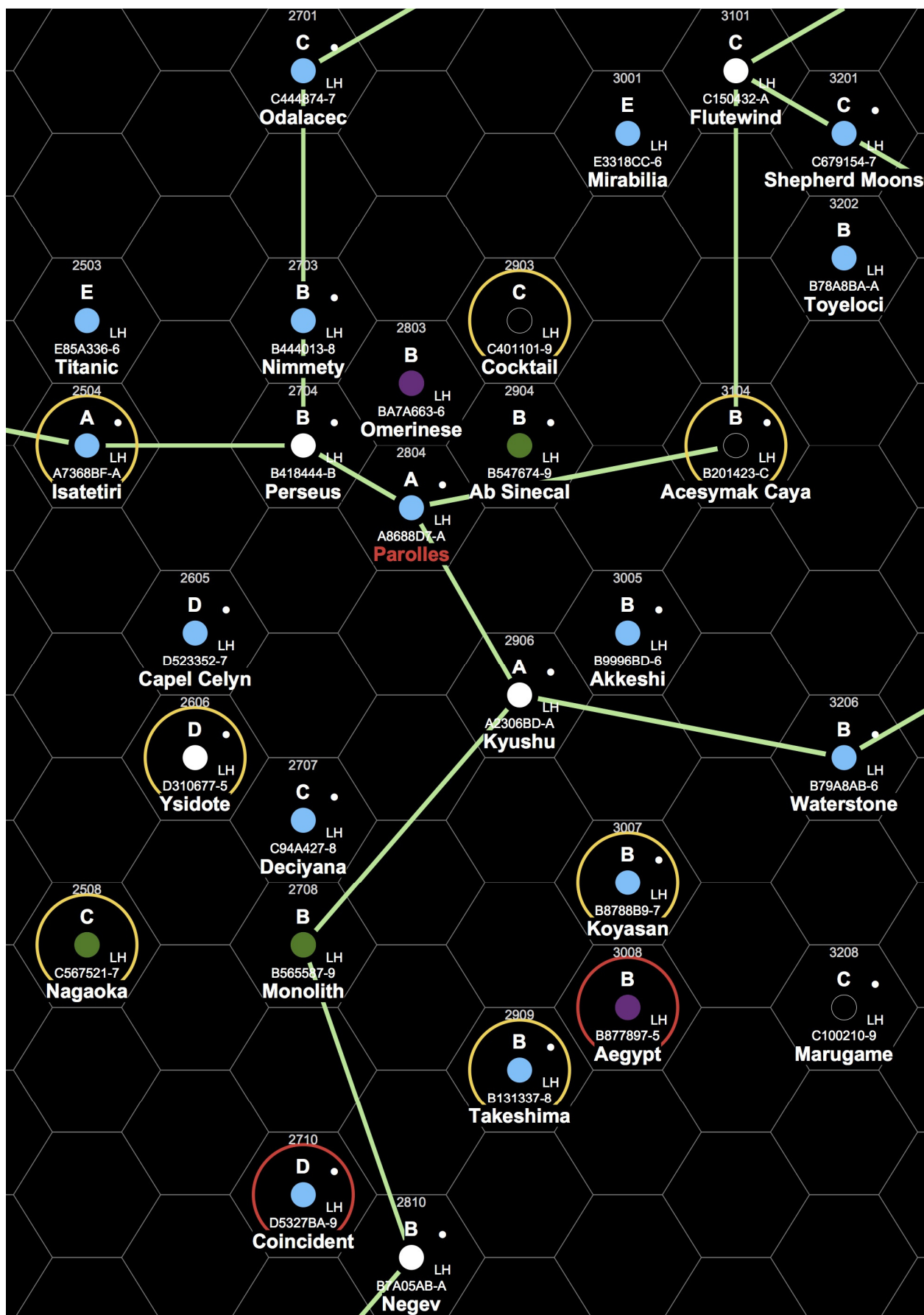
SSILNTHIS	1704	A7689B9-C	G	Hi	R	413	Na	K7	V*	[F3 IV]
Vision	1803	C8D8574-4		Ni V:3	A	413	C1	G8	V	
Motaselad	1804	B574572-6		Ag Ni D:5		502	C1	G7	V	
Yaku Jima	1809	C9A0000-0		Ba De	A	025	Na	F5	IV	
Wabiskaw	1810	C535145-5		Lo Ni		905	Cj	G5	V	
Delibes	1901	A3308A7-A	C	De Na Po	A	400	Cj	M5	V	
Jamnagar Thal	1905	D411556-7		Ni		604	LH	M3	V*	M8 V
Gangetic	2001	A20049C-A		Ni Va		404	LH	G8	V	
Siiye	2005	C9A9550-8		Fl Ni		200	LH	M2	III	F9 V*
FLANGE	2009	B443933-7		Lo Ni Po		114	LH	G0	V	
Lullaby	2010	C584773-6		Ag Ri C:2		902	C1	M9	V*	[M3 V]
Mikaichi	2103	A53836A-B		Lo Ni Pr Mr	R	304	LH	F2	V	
Hijoji	2109	C515388-6		Lo Ni Ic		611	LH	M7	V	
Whirligig	2201	C230455-7		Lo De Ni Po		204	LH	M7	V*	M7 V
Aynoiye	2202	B301126-9		Lo Ni Po Va Ic		504	LH	G6	V	
V'nen	2203	A322625-8		Na Ni Po		423	LH	M2	III	
Imagine	2204	D624331-7		Lo Ni		102	LH	M3	V	
Disarid	2402	C798278-6		Lo Ni		102	LH	M9	V	
JUSTINCE	2405	D546AEG-9		Hi In	A	504	LH	K2	V*	[M3 V]
Binnoth	2406	E717000-0		Ba Ic Ma	A	023	LH	M9	V	
Endicott	2407	E536334-6		Lo Ni		122	LH	M5	V	M6 V*
Abey Tomsk	2410	C527411-7		Lo Ni C:0		914	LH	K6	III	F5 V

Far and away, the most important world on the coreward side of the Empty Quarter's Lesser Rift is Ssilnthiis. This world, alone, is more than able to fight off the indigenous forces of all of Alpha and Beta Quadrant, excluding Ancient superweapons⁷¹; her merchantmen and traders can be found throughout this region of space, as the primary source of civilized high-tech goods of reliable quality. Culturally, though, her reach is contained in the Ssilnthiis Gap: the Lorean Hegemony has a unique and potent culture of her own, while both the Irilitok Vargr and the Vilani of the Rukadukaz Republic are uninterested in Ssilnthiis' entertainment, arts, and science. The rather staid and corporate-conservative culture that dominates Ssilnthiis does not help much in this department.

Justince is a far greater cultural centre than Ssilnthiis, at least within the Lorean Hegemony. The relentlessly power-seeking, self-exalting, and endlessly boastful Hegemon – who openly proclaims himself a Walking God – is the ideal the Hegemons of other systems strive for, but fail to reach – typically because of the inability to get the right Ancient equipment, cut down or outmanoeuvre enough of their enemies, or manipulate public opinion effectively enough. But what is often forgotten over the debate of the Justince Model is how the wealth of this industrial powerhouse supports and benefits from the autocratic grip of the ruling Hegemons of that world.

For a world with close ties with a Vargr pirate pack, Delibes is a rather comfortable place to live. If a local never enters the starport or the pirate-allied factory complexes, he will probably never realize that it is the Vargr who dominate local system space, not the navy of the local Hegemon (whose father broke his ties with the Lorean Hegemony decades ago – and had the pirate's support in making his decision stick). There are several complex political games going on at the same time, all related to Lorean attempts to regain the system.

⁷¹ Ssilnthiis secretly keeps a stock of these weapons for her own use, received as payment for her goods over the years.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Kosh Subsector

Titanic	2503	E85A336-6	Lo Ni Wa		600	LH	K5	V	
Isatetiri	2504	A7368BF-A		A	803	LH	F3	V* M3	V
Nagaoka	2508	C567521-7	Ag Ni B:0	A	700	LH	G2	V	
Capel Celyn	2605	D523352-7	Lo Ni Po		312	LH	M2	V	
Ysidote	2606	D310677-5	De Na Ni	A	602	LH	M2	V	
Odalacec	2701	C444874-7			101	LH	M6	V	
Nimmety	2703	B444013-8	Lo		404	LH	K9	V* M1	V
Perseus	2704	B418444-B	Lo Ni Ic		625	LH	K8	V	
Deciyana	2707	C94A427-8	Lo Ni Wa		111	LH	F6	V	
Monolith	2708	B565587-9	Ag Ni		410	LH	M0	V* M3	V
Coincident	2710	D5327BA-9	Na Po	R	803	LH	M4	V	
Omerinese	2803	BA7A663-6	Ni Wa		700	LH	G7	V	
Parolles	2804	A8688D7-A	Cp		104	LH	M1	V* M2	V
Negev	2810	B7A05AB-A	De Ni		813	LH	M0	II	
Cocktail	2903	C401101-9	Lo Ni Ic Va	A	600	LH	A1	V	
Ab Sinecal	2904	B547674-9	Ag Ni		303	LH	F0	V	
Kyushu	2906	A2306BD-A	De Na Ni Po An		203	LH	M2	V	
Takeshima	2909	B131337-8	Lo Ni Po Uw	A	702	LH	M2	III M2	V*
Mirabilia	3001	E3318CC-6	Na Po		120	LH	K0	V* [D]	
Akkeshi	3005	B9996BD-6	Ni An		614	LH	M2	II M9	V*
Koyasan	3007	B8788B9-7		A	823	LH	M3	V* M5	V
Aegypt	3008	B877897-5		R	200	LH	K3	V	
Flutewind	3101	C150432-A	De Ni Po Lo		200	LH	F7	V* M5	V
Acesymak Caya	3104	B201423-C	Ic Ni Va Lo	A	103	LH	K4	V	
Shepherd Moons	3201	C679154-7	Lo Ni		604	LH	K7	III	
Toyeloci	3202	B78A8BA-A	Wa		630	LH	K7	V* M9	V
Waterstone	3206	B79A8AB-6	Wa		202	LH	G2	V* M0	V
Marugame	3208	C100210-9	Na Ni Va		203	LH	K1	V* M8	V

It is Isatetiri that is the economic centre of the subsector, but – despite her wealth and her numerous traders – she remains overshadowed by Parolles. Even though the Hegemons of Isatetiri does not insist on being worshipped as gods – and the Hegemons of Parolles do – the Isatetiri government does not rule as lightly as the Parolles Hegemon do. Moreover, the Hegemons of Parolles are somewhat hostile to the deeply self-centred style of Justince, which they see as a cultural competitor. So, the rulers of Parolles spend a lot of time developing a charming aura, granting numerous favours to their followers, and avoiding a blatantly self-centred attitude.

The ‘Justince model’ still retains the most popularity among the mass of Lorean Hegemons, but to retain the favour of the commoners (and due to the substandard technology available on Justince), it is Parolles that is the formal capital of the quadrant, not Justince. The aides, cronies, and lackeys of the Justince Hegemon complain and gripe that He is still wealthier than the Lesser Gods that lead Parolles, but they have proven unable to raise their planet’s technology level to match. This failure is slowly turning into a public humiliation. The Prophets that rule Parolles have little concern for the general population, but these Hegemons still rule far more lightly than the single Hegemon of Justince, who has a compulsive need to direct every act and word of all of his subjects...

Kyushu is one of the major Ancient sites in the sector, and has a permanent TL A flotilla to defend it against interlopers and thieves. All of the Ancient weapons of the world have been lifted off-world for a long time now: it is now a centre of research into Ancient culture and technology. Many of the more powerful Hegemons keep a small consignment of followers on this world, in case some great breakthrough is made regarding Ancient technology.

Takeshima is home to the sole example of a world-covering Uequeser within the sector. A small number of researchers actually live on this living world, slowly communicating with it over the years and decades. Other scientists continue to examine the biological and ecological aspects of the Uequeser.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Requiem Subsector

Nightraven	0111	D581402-5	Lo Ni V:6		800	Jr	M1	V	M8	V*
Shockwave	0116	C7A0637-8	De Ni V:4		101	Jr	G2	V		
Vrafavgag Tak	0213	B777643-4	Ag Ni Vw	A	614	Jr	G0	V		
T'Pring	0216	E584679-0	Ag Ni Ri V:1		201	Jr	F9	V		
Kamakura	0311	C9A049C-9	Lo Ni De V:0	A	102	Jr	G2	V*	M0	V
Heian-Kyo	0314	B200548-7	Ni Va V:5	A	212	Jr	M4	V		
Nushiimga	0414	C525235-7	Lo Ni V:1	A	400	Jr	K4	V		
Shirakawa	0511	A9B0695-9	De Ni V:4	A	512	Jr	(G6	V	M2	V)
Kaadlushuur	0514	A535111-B	C Lo Ni	A	704	Jr	M7	III	F1	V*
Lirumriish	0515	A45075A-A	De D:3		501	Jr	M7	V		
Tsu	0613	C55289B-5	Po D:0		602	Jr	G8	V		
Turas Mor	0616	C231350-7	Lo Ni Na Po V:0		911	Jr	K9	V		
Janowski	0617	C549412-8	Lo Ni V:5		104	Jr	G7	V*	M4	V
Azetbur	0620	A211534-C	C Ni V:2		803	Na	K0	V	M5	V*
Isumo	0711	A888878-7	Ri	A	204	Jr	G3	V		
Afer Ventus	0715	E643786-1	Po V:1	R	513	Jr	G2	IV	K1	V*
Gashige	0811	A3384BJ-C	C Lo Ni		912	Jr	K9	V	M7	V*
Itsukushim	0812	D453320-6	Lo Ni Po V:3		101	Jr	(K0	V	M4	V)
Igura Shiim...	0813	C413111-5	Ic Lo Ni		304	Jr	G7	V		

Lirumriish is the most important world in the subsector, with a strong bi-racial Vilani/Droyne culture successfully sharing the desert between them. The 50 million sophonts that populate the system were able to defeat the Vargr pirate pack sent to conquer it, with the assistance of a few Ismiika Akuim elements, which chose the world to make their last stand – and a surprisingly successful stand, too. In the end, they were able to negotiate a sweet package guaranteeing practical autonomy in return for tribute so small as to be symbolic, and – more importantly, in Ovaghoun Vargr eyes – an agreement to not stir up trouble on other human-dominated worlds.

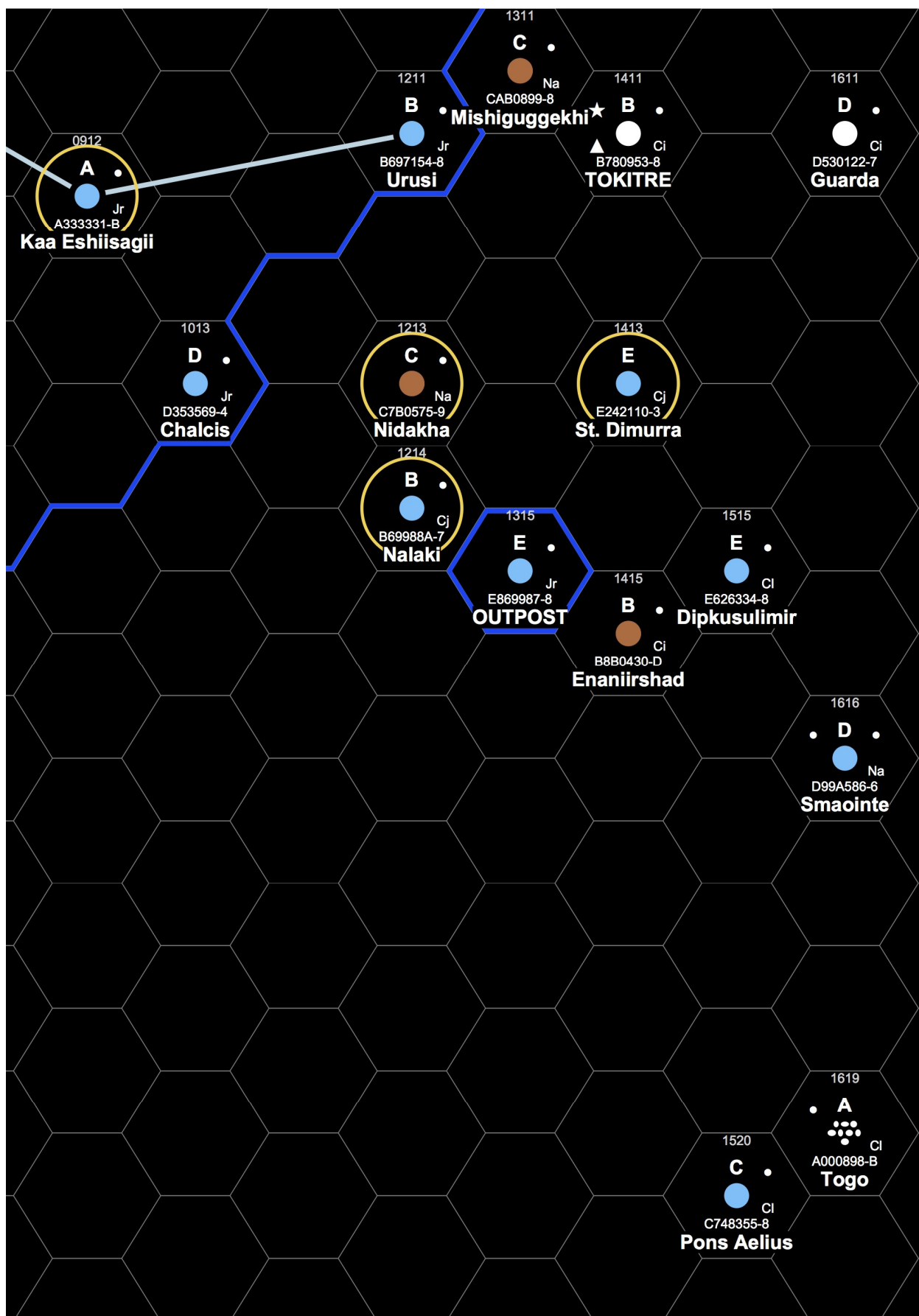
T'Pring is notable as a rich world, where the Irilitok were agricultural labourers under the old Ismiika Akuim interstellar government. Granted freedom, the local Irilitok wandered into the wilds, but several packs remain as sharecroppers (rather than as slaves, like in the old days.) Extensive ruins of a strange minor human race are curious enough to attract several Vargr archaeological ~~footing~~ research expeditions, especially after tales of superscience discoveries and psionic artefacts began to surface...

Vrafavgag Tak is the adopted home of the most aggressive Irilitok packs in the Republic. This is not a particularly impressive accomplishment, and their aggression is more charismatic and social than violent and physical, but their ability to push social gamesmanship harder than the usual Irilitok grants them a higher leadership profile than other packs of their size. They are also less conciliatory to humans than most of their mates, excluding them from stepping foot in their own world. They have even driven away Ovaghoun genetic missionaries: even though the Ovaghoun would love to bring the Vrafavgag packs into their own bloodlines, the locals are too nationalistic and proud to erase their genetic heritage from their own pups.

Azetbur is the home of an odd human culture, at once rather brutal and warlike, but also quite competent with stellar technology. This system proved able to defeat Vargr piracy and an attempted invasion, unlike the far larger Ismiika Akuim. Despite – or maybe because – they defeated the Vargr in the field of battle, they actually work better with the Vargr than most of the conquered & highly resentful humans do. The Azetburns are often used by the Republic in small-unit operations, especially against other Vargr: humans are less likely to switch allegiance in the name of Charisma than Vargr soldiers would be.

Gashige is a high-tech centre of Islamic*-directed, Vilani-built trade and prosperity, where numerous business deals are conducted under the watchful eye of the Prince of the system. The system's reputation for discretion, keeping secrets from prying eyes, and ALWAYS sticking to the terms of the contract is known throughout the Julian Protectorate.

It also has the highest law level of the sector, and of the entire Julian Protectorate. Don't step out of line.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Flandry Subsector

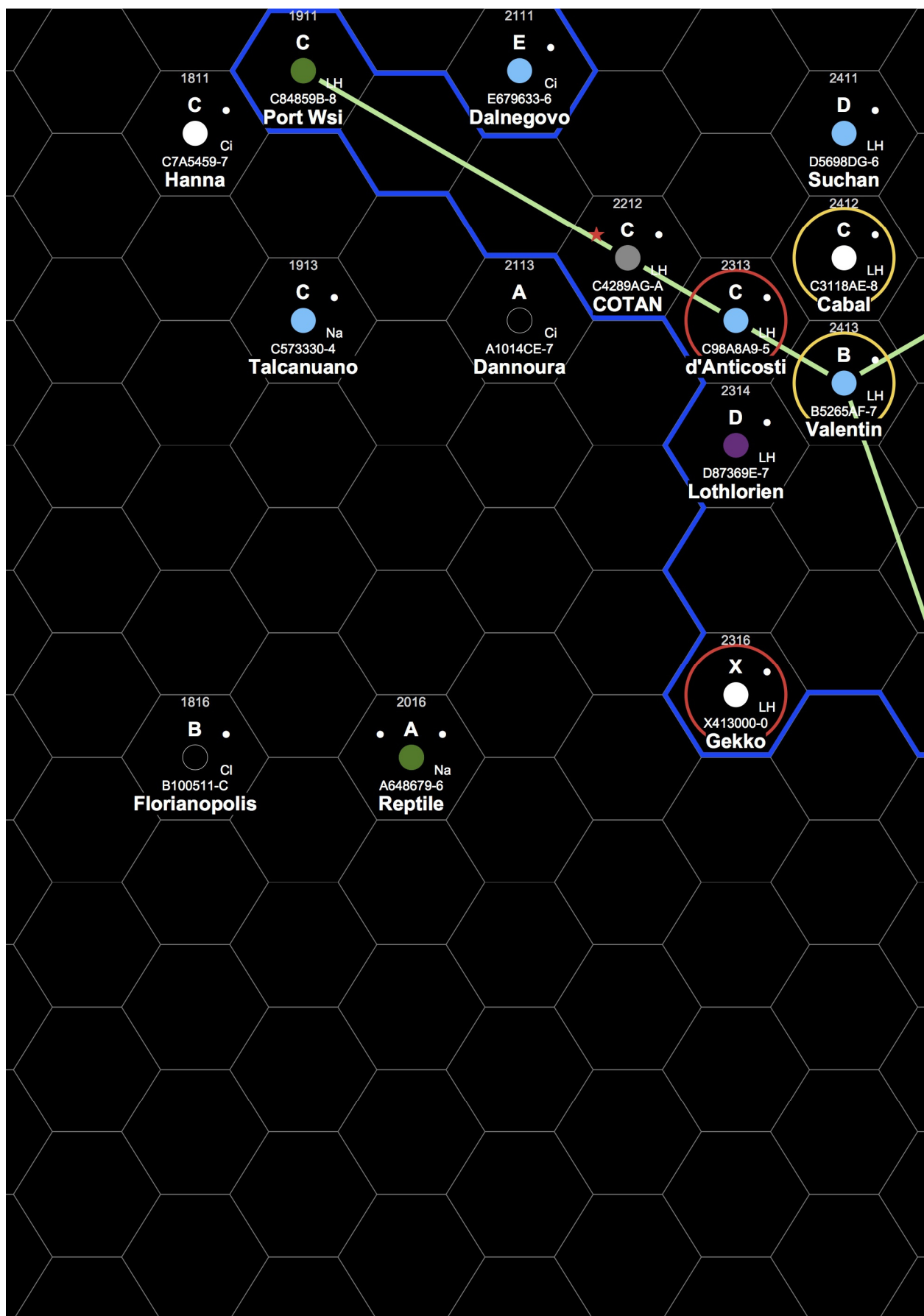
Kaa Eshiisagii	10912	A333331-B	Lo Ni Po V:5	A	711	Jr	K4	V*	M6	V
Chalcis	1013	D353569-4	Ni Po V:2		103	Jr	M9	III	F9	V*
Urusi	1211	B697154-8	Lo Ni V:3		911	Jr	F3	V*	M7	V
Nidakha	1213	C7B0575-9	De Ni V:7	A	511	Na	A7	V		
Nalaki	1214	B69988A-7	D:1	A	801	Cj	G3	V		
Mishiguggekhi	1311	CAB0899-8	De D:1		611	Na	K2	III	M7	V*
OUTPOST	1315	E869987-8	Hi		905	Jr	G0	V		
TOKITRE	1411	B780953-8	N De Hi D:2		203	Cl	K3	V		
St. Dimurra	1413	E242110-3	Lo Ni Po V:5	A	800	Cj	M7	V*	[M9	V]
Enaniirshad	1415	B8B0430-D	Lo Ni De		513	Cl	G9	V		
Dipkusulimir	1515	E626334-8	Lo Ni V:4		901	Cl	M8	V*	M9	V
Pons Aelius	1520	C748355-8	Lo Ni V:1		322	Cl	G8	V*	M6	V
Guarda	1611	D530122-7	De Lo Ni Po V:3		403	Cl	A1	V	K5	V*
Smaointe	1616	D99A586-6	C Ni Wa		502	Na	G1	V		
Togo	1619	A000898-B	C As Na		610	Cl	M7	V		

Here, the key world isn't a world at all, but a collection of worldlets, asteroids, inhabited gas giant rings, and occupied comets: Togo. With the system only recently unified after a long cycle of wars and federations, the Togota are more interested in internal development than in external expansion. Right now, the focus is trying to bring all 39 of the major cultures under one umbrella, linguistically, religiously, and economically. (The barriers to racial unification among the humans proved to be insurmountable: attempts to force mass marriages across racial lines threatened to fragment the new system government yet again, before the attempt was finally dropped.)

The two high-pop systems in the subsector are both on the edge of space: Tokitre had built her first naval base (with ample Imperial technological assistance), while Outpost now has three different bases across her inner solar system. They are somewhat aware of each other's existence, and see each other as competitors for the first high-pop system to dominate local trade. Tokitre's ruling dynasty is an ex-Imperial Noble House that has considerably reconciled to the rule of the Lee Dynasty; Outpost was the last stronghold of the fallen Ismiika Akuim government that used to rule Alpha Quarter. The Ismiika Akuim government-in-exile finally acceded to the inevitable only ten years ago; in return for acknowledging the rule of the Rukadukaz Republic, the former Vilani leadership were permitted to retain control of the Terran system of Outpost. Long after it was too late to save their interstellar government, the Vilani have created a more flexible way to rule their holdings; less hidebound and traditionalistic, more flexible and consensus-grounded, with a greater tolerance for local idiosyncrasies.

Nidakha is the local centre of the Vargr population, a mix of local Irilitok ex-slaves and the new Ovaghoun pirate overlords. The human population, formerly the master, has been harshly persecuted and driven to the badlands outside of the domed cities. But with the humans gone as a focus of hatred, the two groups of Vargr turned on each other, and in the fighting the government further balkanized, and partially disintegrated. The fighting is dying down now, but it is unlikely that the mutual hatred will ever die down, with so many broken domed cities mutely demanding vengeance. The Vilani, on the other hand, have made something of a comeback, taking two dead cities as their own: they are now being repaired, restored, and brought back to life, step by halting step.

St. Dimurra was an old centre of pilgrimage for the local Vilani Imperial Catholics: the Vargr has permitted it to be rebuilt, so long as the pilgrims provide a 'protection fee' to the Ovaghoun pirates who control access to the system. The fee falls in the off season, but when St. Dimurra's feast day draws close, the fees climb as well.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Cotan Subsector

Hanna	1811	C7A5459-7	Lo Ni V:1	601	Ci G5 V	
Florianopolis	1816	B100511-C	Ni Va V:3	204	C1 D	M9 V*
Port Wsi	1911	C84859B-8	Ni	210	LH A6 V	
Talcanuano	1913	C573330-4	Lo Ni Ma V:2	401	Na K7 V* M3 V	[M2 V]
Reptile	2016	A648679-6	C Ag Ni V:1	204	Na M2 II* M8 V	
Dalnégovo	2111	E679633-6	Ni V:3	804	Ci M3 II G0 V*	
Dannoura	2113	A1014CE-7	Lo Va Ic	900	Ci A9 V M5 V*	
COTAN	2212	C4289AG-A	J Hi In	313	LH G5 V	
d'Anticosti	2313	C98A8A9-5	Wa	R 621	LH K6 V* M1 V	[M5 II]
Lothlorien	2314	D87369E-7	Ni	324	LH K9 V* M4 V	
Gekko	2316	X413000-0	Ba Ic An	R 024	LH K4 V	
Suchan	2411	D5698DG-6	Bw	905	LH F3 V	
Cabal	2412	C3118AE-8	Na	A 701	LH K5 V* M4 V	
Valentin	2413	B5265AF-7	Ni	A 505	LH M0 III	

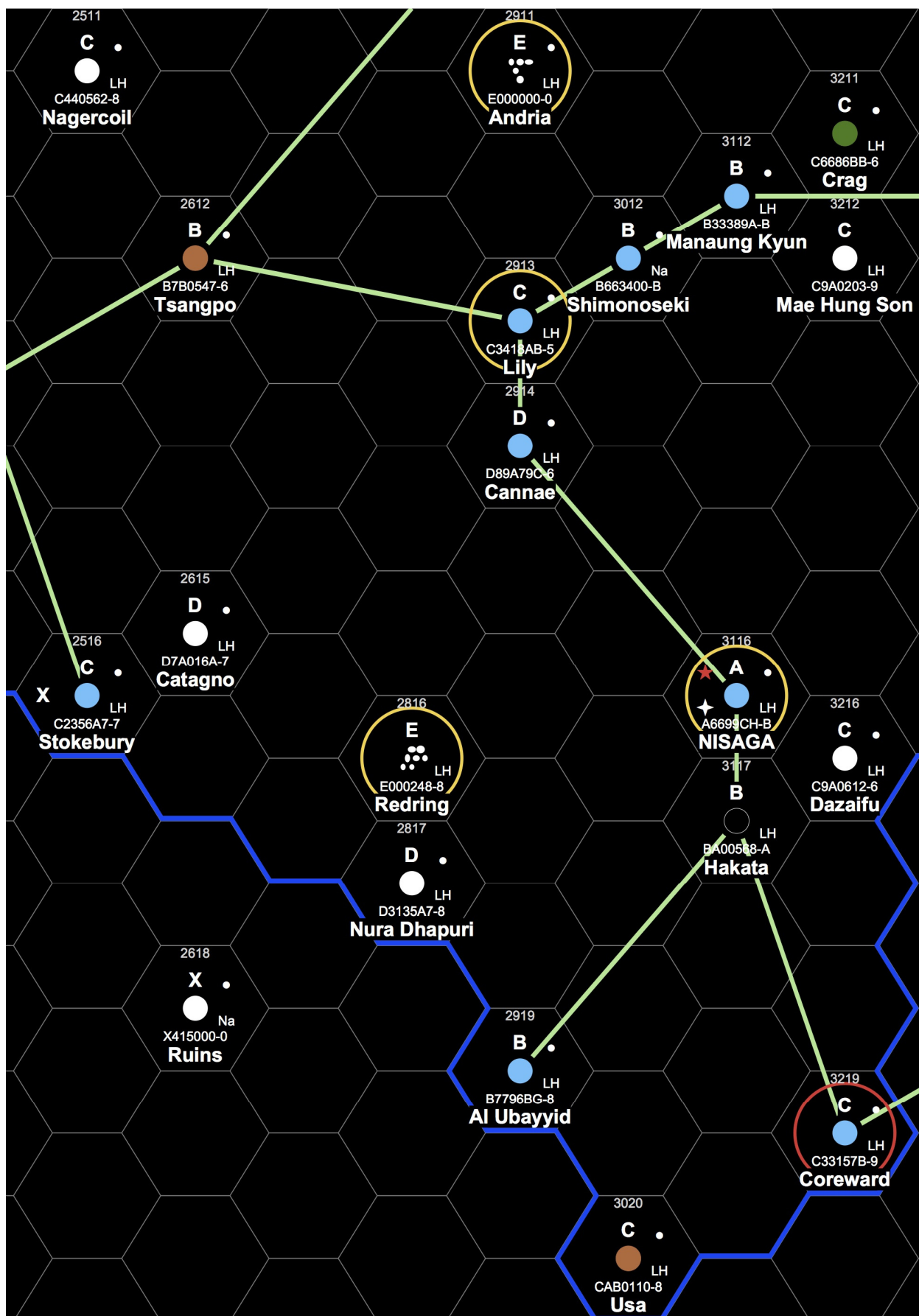
Within the borders of the Lorean Hegemony, there are three high-pop systems that set the tone for the culture: the Walking God of Justince, The Splendid One of Cotan, and the Deathwelders of Nisaga.⁷² While the general planet-ruling Hegemon dream of following Justince's route, and desire to be as dreaded as the Deathwelders, it is the ostentatious showmanship of Cotan's Hegemon that is the most fun to imitate, without being *too* destructive of the factory serfs or the fearful-yet-officious office workers that manage the economy, (such that it is). The thing is, the Hegemon of Cotan insists that his population, his living property, his Work of Art, be as stylish, sophisticated, and smooth as he is – and he tolerates no flaw, no clumsiness, no misstep, on his Perfect World.

Florianopolis is unusual, being a very successful system owned directly by Menderes Corporation, set in the pirate-haunted Ssilnthi Gap. Indeed, there is a corsair base not two parsecs from Florianopolis, but thanks to the protection money paid out – and the prestige of being an affiliate of Menderes – the pirates actually provide an invisible layer of security for the system, on top of the corporate military spaceforce. The world is something of a client state of the Lorean Hegemony, but the pirates they pay off on Reptile are as likely to attack Lorean systems as Ssilnthi shipping. The Loreans complain, but when the corporate men invite the Hegemons to attack Reptile if it upsets them so, the complaints fade away... only to surge again after the next flamboyant spaceborne robbery launched by the Vargr.

Gekko is a world travellers avoid. The Ancient site is still hostile to visitors after all these millennia, and more scoundrels and hustlers get rich recycling the broken hulls of daring adventurers than trying their luck against the planet itself. One of the major problems is the nature of local jumpspace, which has a distressing tendency to crack a starships hull wide open moments before the jump is made. Thanks to painful trial and error, local spacers have uncovered the best ways to make an outbound jump, but the jump must be made from specific locations, and hours of preparation is needed. Not a good thing, when TL 23 'one shot, one kill' Ancient fighter drones are streaking to your location...

While Marhaban gets all the fame as the centre of a vigorous Newt civilization, Suchan is the only truly Bwap world in the Empty Quarter. Both Marhaban and Suchan were originally settled by Terrans, as suggested by their Arabic and Chinese names, but the Chinese population of Suchan never flourished, with the settlers abandoning the world during the collapse of the New Imperium. Bwap financiers travelling in the region purchased the settlement rights of this intensely hot, humid, and stormy world from a now-dead pocket empire: unlike the late Colotto Viziership, Suchan remains a going concern. In an interstellar culture that greatly values charisma over economic accuracy and bravery over bureaucracy, the local Newts have little to offer, and have only a tenuous connection with their more successful cousins on Marhaban. On the other hand, as one of the very few Lorean worlds with the predictability and humidity the amphibians need, there is a continuous flow of Bwap immigration from throughout the Lorean Hegemony.

⁷² There is one more Lorean high-pop system within Beta Quadant, but Flange is too ~~free~~ undisciplined and disrespectful, too unheroic, and too low-tech, to merit respect from serious interstellar Lorean society.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Nisaga Subsector

Nagercoil	2511	C440562-8	De Ni Po	104	LH	K0	V
Stokebury	2516	C2356A7-7	Ni Ex	514	LH	K1	V
Tsangpo	2612	B7B0547-6	De Ni	502	LH	K0	V
Catagno	2615	D7A016A-7	De Lo Ni Ma	805	LH	G4	V
Ruins	2618	X415000-0	Ba Ic Lo Ni Ma	004	Na	K4	V
Redring	2816	E000248-8	As Lo Ni	A 510	LH	M7	V
Nura Dhapuri	2817	D3135A7-8	Ni	214	LH	K0	V
Andria	2911	E000000-0	Ba As	A 924	LH	G6	V
Lily	2913	C3418AB-5	Po	A 112	LH	G9	V
Cannae	2914	D89A79C-6	Wa	903	LH	F9	V
Al Ubayyid	2919	B7796BG-8	Ni	403	LH	G2	V
Shimonoseki	3012	B663400-B	Lo Ni D:3 V:5	805	Na	G0	V
Usa	3020	CAB0110-8	De Lo Ni	304	LH	F5	V
Manaung Kyun	3112	B33389A-B	Na Po	605	LH	G5	V
NISAGA	3116	A6699CH-B	F Hi	A 703	LH	K8	V
Hakata	3117	BA00568-A	Ni Va	410	LH	M2	V
Crag	3211	C6686BB-6	Ag Ni	314	LH	F4	V
Mae Hung Son	3212	C9A0203-9	De Lo Ni	820	LH	A3	V* G6 V
Dazaifu	3216	C9A0612-6	De Ni	701	LH	M7	II* M2 V
Coreward	3219	C33157B-9	Lo Ni Po	R 614	LH	M0	V* M3 V

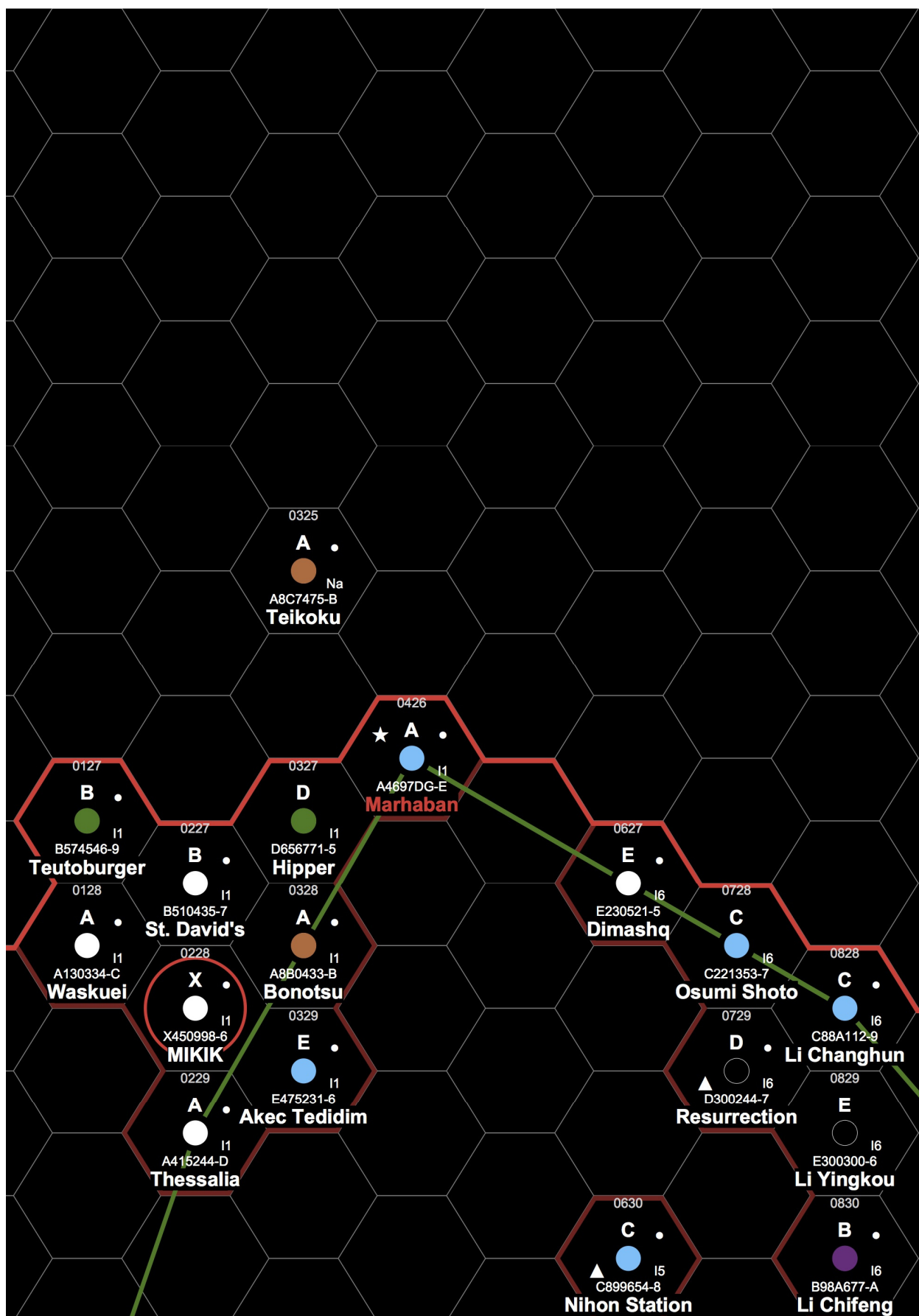
Nisaga is often not seen as really part of Beta Quadrant: economically and culturally, it's more closely tied to her sister worlds in neighbouring Star's End than to the other Lorean world of the Empty Quarter. However, within the Quadrant she can definitely throw her weight around if she wants to. Her economy is similar to Ssilnthi in raw size, though not in technological accomplishment; her taxes finance much of the Lorean Hegemony within the Quadrant, giving her a strong voice in interstellar governance; her laws are even more stringent than the laws of Cotan or Justince, giving her a certain level of respect in the highest Hegemon circles. But at the end of the day, Nisaga does not have the flair, or the reputation to really shine compared to her peers Cotan or Justince.

Part of the problem is the grim realism of her people, which is a political problem in an interstellar culture that values heroism, glory, and challenging the odds. Another problem is the sheer distance between Nisaga and the Lorean capital of Damlaer. Both Nisaga & Cotan are 19 parsecs from the capital, but Justince is a mere 11 parsecs. Justince's Hegemon can always get to the Assemblies of Hegemons before Cotan and Nisaga. Cotan and Nisaga arrive at roughly the same time, but Cotan's people have more flair, and bring more lively news and unusual gossip and rumours to the table, while the Hegemons that govern Nisaga only have prosaic production reports and dry census data to add to the discussion.

A big factor is the nature of the Hegemon's ruling culture on Nisaga. Instead of Greek Gods or Fashionable Celebrities, Nisaga is led by untouchable, death-dealing judges and executioners. Yes, these Deathwelders rule Nisaga with an iron grip, yes they are practically unkillable, and yes they are highly respected and profoundly feared: no one dares say no to them. But this style of rule as led to a blandness, a timidity in the people that contrasts poorly with the religious adoration and fever of Justince or the glittering, beautiful life on Cotan.

A quiet counterpoint to the terror of Nisaga is the world of Manaung Kyun. Inhabited by a unique mix of Cantonese, Hakka, and Min peoples of China, they have managed to turn their poor world to a not so poor world, compared to most other Lorean systems. The legal system is strict, but not inhumanely so; the regal Hegemons that govern the world are hedged and limited by the bureaucratic tools that they are tied to.

Ruins is named after the extensive networks of world-girding rubble and debris that stand on this nearly airless world. What makes this world special is the nature of these relics: the many artefacts found here, as well as the nature of the antique husks, strongly suggest an organic population – the original Machinists – engaged in some sort of armed invasion, with their infamous robots their only remaining legacy. What or who they were attacking, and why did they fail – with their robots left attacking each other mindlessly through the centuries – remains unknown.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Lentuli Subsector

Teutoburger	0127	B574546-9	Ag Ni C:0	902	I1	K0	V
Waskuei	0128	A130334-C	Lo Ni Po De	323	I1	G2	V
St. David's...	0227	B510435-7	Lo Ni	602	I1	K0	V
MIKIK	0228	X450998-6	Hi Po In Ma R	402	Na	M6	V
Thessalia	0229	A415244-D	Lo Ni	903	I1	F5	V
Teikoku	0325	A8C7475-B	Lo De	504	Na	G2	V
Hipper	0327	D656771-5	Ag Ni	120	I1	M6 III M1	V*
Bonotsu	0328	A8B0433-B	Lo De Ni	502	I1	K3	V M7 V*
Akec Tedidim	0329	E475231-6	Lo Ni Ma	903	I1	G1 V*	[M0 V]
Marhaban	0426	A4697DG-E	N Cp B:1	801	I1	G4 V*	M0 V [M2 V M6 V]
Dimashq	0627	E230521-5	Ni Po De	701	I6	F2	V
Nihon Station	0630	C899654-8	S Ni	203	I5	K4 II	
Osumi Shoto	0728	C221353-7	Lo Na Po	130	I6	G1	V G5 V*
Resurrection	0729	D300244-7	S Lo Na Va	402	I6	F4	V
Li Changhun	0828	C88A112-9	Lo Ni Wa	403	I6	M1	V
Li Yingkou	0829	E300300-6	Lo Ni Va	700	I6	M0	V
Li Chifeng	0830	B98A677-A	Lo Ni Wa	802	I6	G9	V

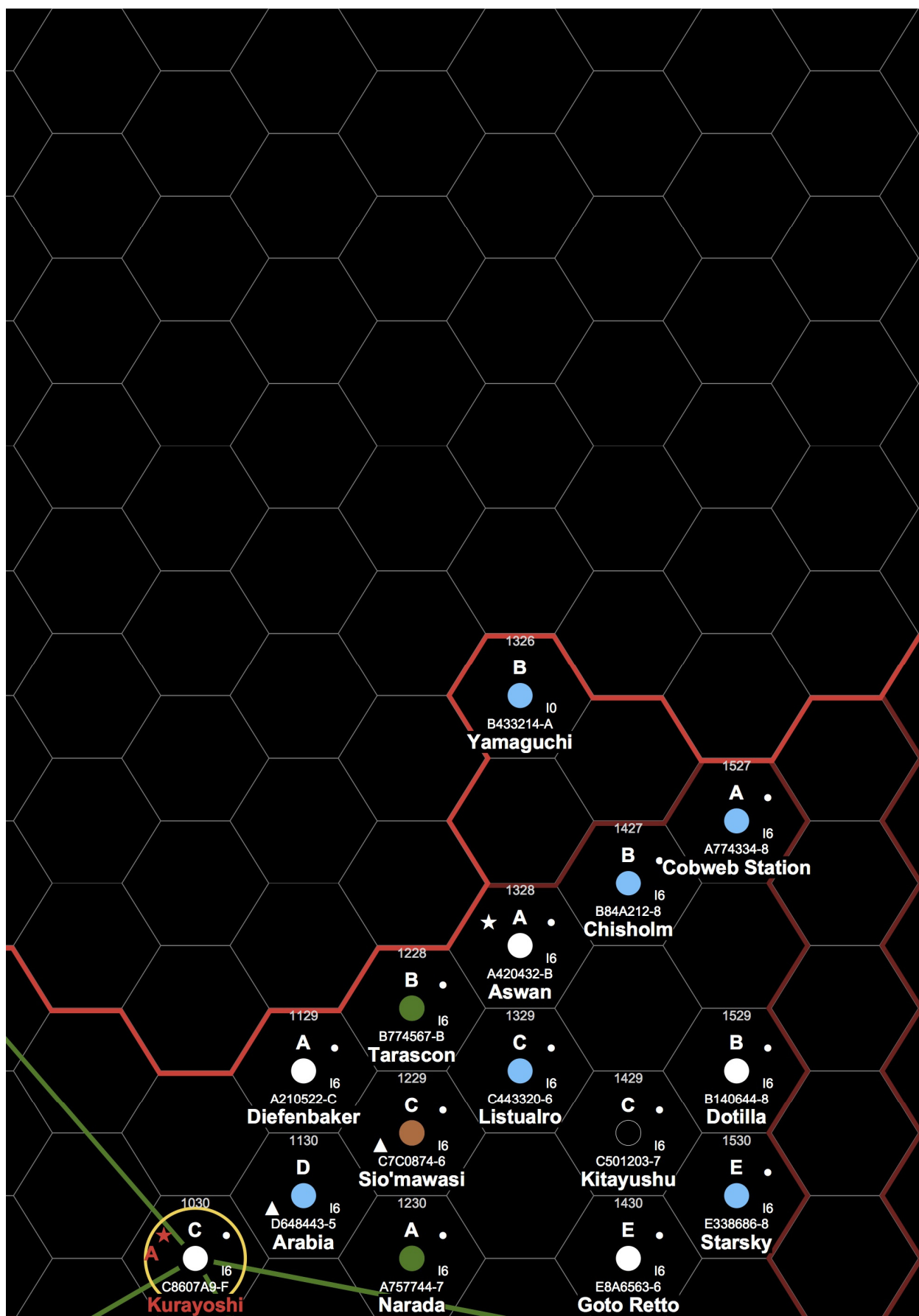
Mikik was at one time the only high-population exile world of the Imperium. From the early years of the rule of Emperor Cleon (later, Demigod Cleon) to recent times, large populations that could not be exterminated were exiled here instead. Such huge population movements, involving hundreds of millions or even billions at a time, helped to encourage starship building and interstellar trade and contact, all tied to the will of the Emperor. The fact that Mikik was for the longest time the most active of the Machinist worlds – where the two robot factions would simply crush human settlements as they stuck at each other – helped to further discourage major uprisings, especially in the early decades of Imperial Rule. Finally, the great difficulty to jump out of the system, due to the nature of local jumpspace and tight Imperial control of STL transports and ferries leaving the system, helped to underscore the finality of exile for dissident populations and cultures.

But over time, directing the further growth of the Interstellar economy ‘from the commanding heights’ grew less and less effective, as the low-hanging fruit (and there was a LOT of this fruit) eventually ran out. The benefits of central direction became cost, and the attitude of the authorities shifted from growth to survival. Despite the broadly effective measures to reduce collateral damage, the Time of Troubles – where nobles fought nobles, across the Imperium – placed a cap on Imperial greatness in the wake of the wealth and trust that it destroyed. Unable to exile millions, struggling against a slow but steady economic decline, and still forced to avoid exterminations and massacres or be condemned in the eyes of the populace and the Imperial Catholic Church (losing what political support the High Nobility enjoys), the Imperium eventually released Mikik. New exile worlds were chosen in the Empty Quarter, but only millions reside there now: and many of those are children of the exiles, who could leave but choose to stay.

Another side effect of the Imperial Civil War was the rise of Marhaban as a safehouse for Noble wealth. The financially-skilled Muslims who run this world have invited many Newts to reside on the world, and give assistance with all the number-shifting and tax-evading. Because of the number and importance of the financiers who come to visit, the world has become a cultural centre in its own right, as well as a financial centre.

St. David’s Abbey is the seat of the Imperial Catholic Church in the sector, and warrants an Archbishop who spends most of his time leading interfaith committees, corralling as many beliefs as he can under the Imperial Catholic umbrella. Despite the extensive and beautiful architecture and the number of Orders who maintain a house, an abbey, a monastery, or a church here, the number of ardent faithful continues to decline.

Teutoburger Wald was the site of the worst defeat of Imperial Arms during the Julian War. Even after this loss, the Imperium was still able to take the Republic of Antares from Julian rule, but it became far more difficult, and the possibility of completely reintegrating the Julian Protectorate into the Imperium was lost forever. There remain a large number of dead ships, Imperial and Julian: despite their classification as war graves by both governments, looters still occasionally comb a wreck, looking for valuables.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Tsuchida Subsector

Kurayoshi	1030	C8607A9-F	De	RsA	Cp	A	304	I6	K5	III	K5	V*
Diefenbaker	1129	A210522-C	Ni				404	I6	M0	V*	M8	V
Arabia	1130	D648443-5	S	Lo	Ni		310	I6	G8	V		
Tarascon	1228	B774567-B	Ag	Ni			523	I6	G1	V		
Sio'mawasi	1229	C7C0874-6	S	De			805	I6	M0	V	M4	V*
Narada	1230	A757744-7	Ag				702	I6	K1	V		
Yamaguchi	1326	B433214-A	Lo	Ni	Po		510	Ci	M3	V*	M3	V
Aswan	1328	A420432-B	N	Lo	Ni	Po	803	I6	G4	IV		
Listualro	1329	C443320-6	Lo	Ni	Po		823	I6	G7	V*	M0	V
Chisholm	1427	B84A212-8	Lo	Ni	Wa		603	I6	K3	V*	M3	V
Kitayushu	1429	C501203-7	Lo	Ni	Va	Ic	603	I6	G6	V*	M7	V
Goto Retto	1430	E8A6563-6	Ni	Fl			804	I6	F4	V		
Cobweb Station	1527	A774334-8	Lo	Ni			914	I6	K7	V		
Dotilla	1529	B140644-8	Ni	Po	De		905	I6	K7	V		
Starsky	1530	E338686-8	Ni				214	I6	M7	V		

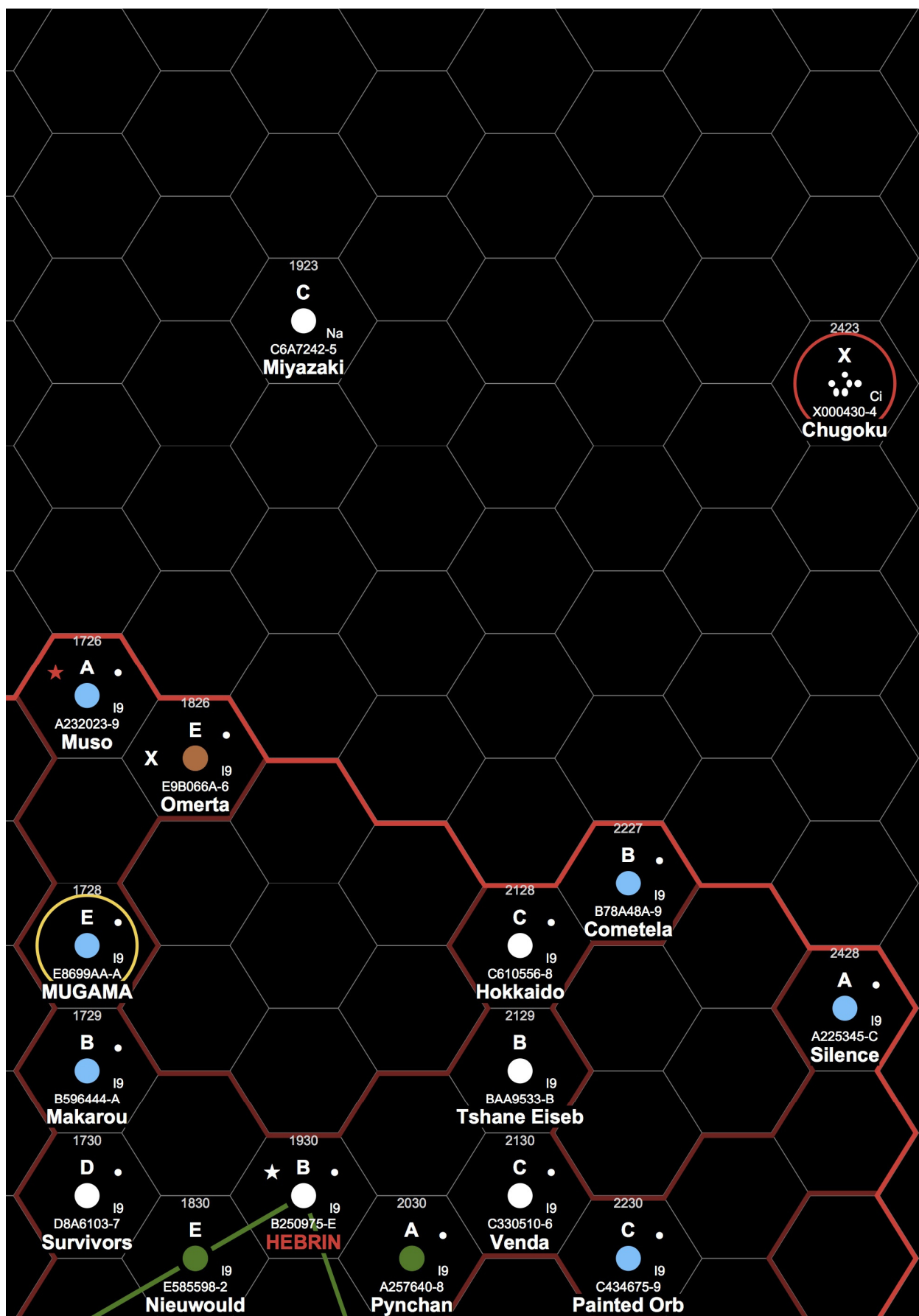
Tsuchida subsector has a low overall population, but it does have a singular charm: the Nihonese who dominate Kurayoshi manage the most technologically advanced system in the sector. Note that the system government is quite strict and controlling compared to the other local Imperial worlds, if still very lax compared to the hegemonic totalitarians in the Lorean Hegemony. Her militaristic heritage, combined with her high technology and tradition of strict Imperial and clan loyalty, insures a steady demand for her soldiers.

Diefenbaker Works is a respected system, with a labour force of three million (as compared to the permanent population of 400,000). Practically the sole employer in the Diefenbaker system, Diefenbaker Works is the sole supplier of standard TL 12 starships in the Imperial region of the Empty Quarter. Many ambitious young men dream of joining this business, if not as managers and designers, then as well-paid machinists and shipwrights. The corporate leadership is hoping to expand into Ley sector, but they need to negotiate the treacherous shoals of County politics and aristocratic power blocks before they can hope to really spread their wings.

The waters of Narada are unusually beneficial to the health and well-being of humaniti, something that the natives have taken full advantage of. Outside of areas meant for small children (the nurseries and playgrounds for tots) and for sleeping, practically all living areas are partially flooded with between 30 cm and a full meter of water. Because of the constant exposure to the local waters, the inhabitants live an average 20 to 30 years longer than they would otherwise, with fewer illnesses, faster recovery from injuries, and better general health.

Sio'mawasi is populated by a very unusual minor human race. Left abandoned in vast underground caverns, unable to surface due to the hostile atmosphere, these humans lost much of their sight and pigmentation, but developed sharp hearing and tactile senses. Fighting to survive in a lightless environment, their greatest achievement was in aquaculture, creating a major hydroponic network that saved their lives, and even permitted them to expand to other caverns and tunnel networks. Hidden underground in a lethal world, the first two Imperia missed their habitats, but the Third Imperium, with their development of densitometers, were finally able to uncover evidence of their culture about a generation ago.

This discovery of and by the outside world led to revolutionary changes for the inhabitants. Trade with the Imperials led to intercommunal jealousy, which led to war and the breakup of the formerly unified population. Technology rose up a full point in 30 years, to TL 6: the use of atomic energy is currently reshaping their entire way of life. The little sight they retained over the millennia is being aggressively re-developed, with visual aids abounding across Sio'mawasi. A few wealthy locals have been able to gain artificial eyes, but their brains need to be retrained to understand the strange and vivid new sense of full-fledged sight. The locals are quite unattractive, so there are very few children with offworld parentage, but the few that exist hold great influence. "In the world of the blind, the one-eyed are king."



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Hebrin Subsector

Muso	1726	A232023-9	J	De	Lo	Ni	Po		203	I9	M1	V
MUGAMA	1728	E8699AA-A		Hi				A	203	I9	G1	V
Makarou	1729	B596444-A		Lo	Ni				802	I9	M0	V* M6 V [M3 V M7 V]
Survivors	1730	D8A6103-7		Lo	Ni	Fl			813	I9	M5	V
Omerta	1826	E9B066A-6		De	Ni	Ex			404	I9	M6	V
Nieuwoud	1830	E585598-2		Ag	Ni				900	I9	G9	V
Miyazaki	1923	C6A7242-5		Lo	Ni	Fl			320	Na	G4	V
HEBRIN	1930	B250975-E	N	Hi	Cp				513	I9	K3	V
Pynchan	2030	A257640-8		Ag	Ni				312	I9	F5	V
Hokkaido	2128	C610556-8		Na					112	I9	G6	V
Tshane Eiseb	2129	BAA9533-B		Ni	Fl				800	I9	K2	V
Venda	2130	C330510-6		Ni	Po	De			113	I9	G2	V* G9 V
Cometela	2227	B78A48A-9		Lo	Ni	Wa			514	I9	M5	V* M8 V
Painted Orb	2230	C434675-9		Ni					404	I9	F6	V G2 V*
Chugoku	2423	X000430-4		Lo	Ni	As	Ma	R	600	Ci	M0	V
Silence	2428	A225345-C		Lo	Ni				701	I9	K3	V

Most of these systems are part of the County of Hebrin, and are famed for their strict monotheism – and their distaste for the Imperial Catholic Church. Assorted forms of Jewry and Islam* are commonly found here, but of greater political significance are the Roman Catholics and the Bible-only Ultra-Orthodox. Their direct opposition to the claim of the Imperial Church to be Christian was at one time a major political challenge, but as the Imperial Catholic Church is increasingly inclined to drop all claims to be Christian in any restrictive or particularistic sense (in favour of being “Imperial, Established, and Universal”), Imperial resolve to suppress the local sects has noticeably declined.

The wealthy desert world of Hebrin is the classic model for much of the sector. Divided among various Jewish, Moslem, and Christian nations, the financial deal-making and strongly business-minded population – where small shop owners can and do lecture corporate magnates – take their religions and their legal systems seriously. The common corruption of the Imperial legal system is less significant here than elsewhere, as local traders, leading citizens, commoners, and governments avoid Imperial justice as much as possible. Instead, numerous private court systems – sectarian, guild, nationalist, corporate, commercial, and corporate – have expanded their jurisdiction to cover interstellar trade and property disputes, and expanding into criminal disputes as well.

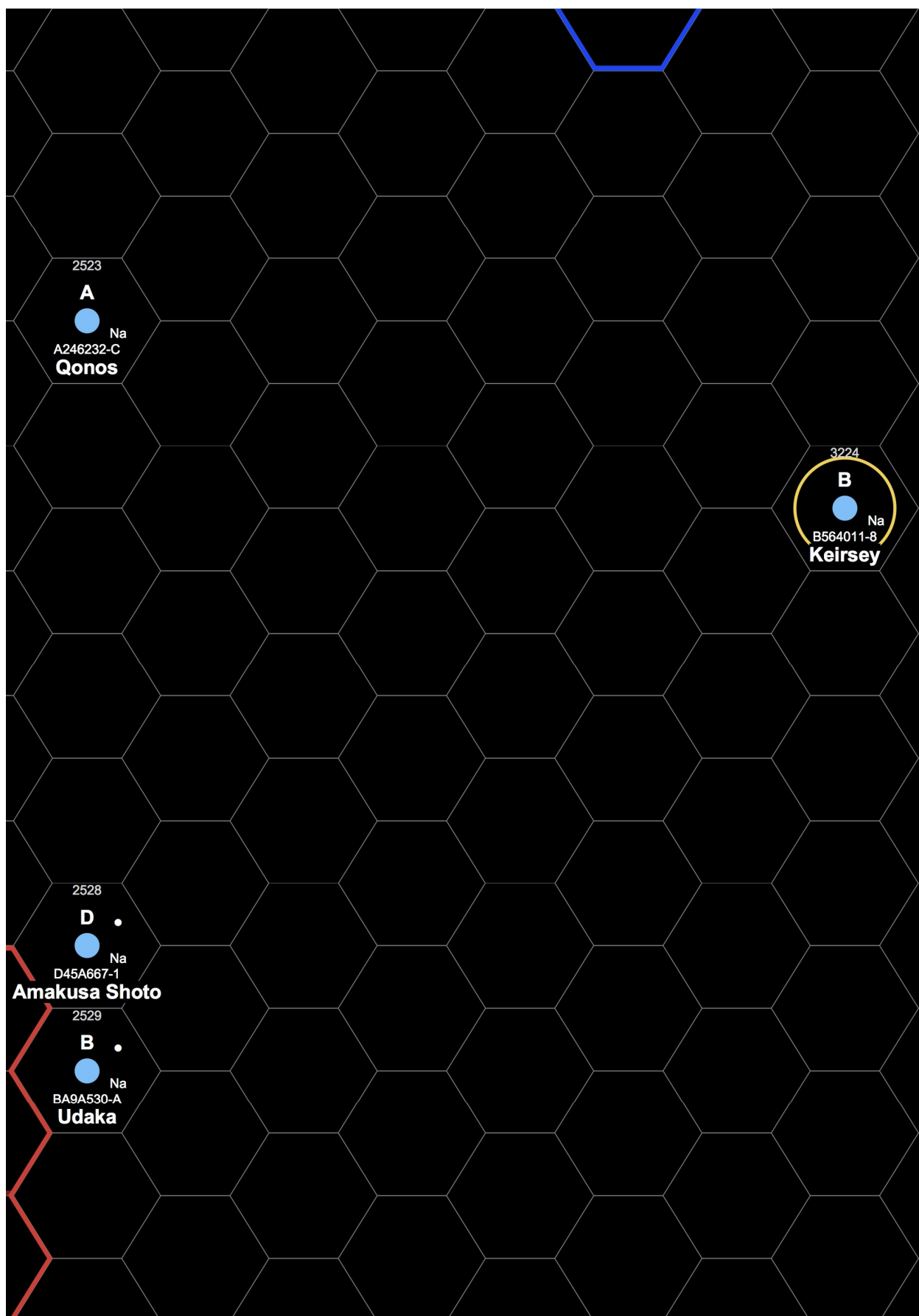
The Imperium insist that it must have sole jurisdiction in interstellar matters, but everyone avoids using her bought-and-paid-for courts:⁷³ and sufficient hands are greased to insure that no Imperial action is taken against the free courts. Various private courts, allowing for the resolution of disputes between parties without Imperial involvement, have sprung up and are spreading rapidly. Despite a substantial level of success, this remains a work in progress: several crucial treaties are still being hammered out by the interested parties, as different Lords means different Law Orders. In the meantime, some Imperials still seek to subvert these independent courts and bring them under the jurisdiction of the Empress, “...as the only truly objective party, above all tribalism, and thus the Only Authority able to bring True Justice for the Greater Benefit of ~~Herself~~ All.”

Hebrin is nearly overwhelming in its unofficial (but very real) influence and authority over the sector, but other systems do have their own distinctive characteristics. Mugama is a world strongly shaped by Central African cultures, but despite its controlling government and reclusive nature, they have already shifted to the Ultra-Orthodox branch of Christianity. Omerta was at one time an infamous centre of piracy, but eventually the demands of the small and mid-sized traders of Hebrin overwhelmed the bribes given to the nobles and naval captains. It is now an exile world, with her criminals grounded and cut off from the rest of the Imperium.

Chugoku is a system best avoided. With her asteroid belts heavily infested with TL12-13 warbots, this Machinist system is well-known as a deathtrap for small civilian starships, and a risky posting for Imperial warships tasked with sweeping the system, looking for any Machinist starports capable of building jumpships. Still, the Imperium can now build starships at higher tech levels than is available at Chugoku: perhaps the intensely-defended factory asteroids can be taken, and put to work to serve humaniti⁷⁴ instead...

⁷³ While bribery does occur, the law is rarely bought *directly*. Instead, the ‘revolving door’, token punishments, close ties between the prosecuting officials and the defendants, the refusal to lay any charge against the wealthy & powerful, and biased laws are all in play.

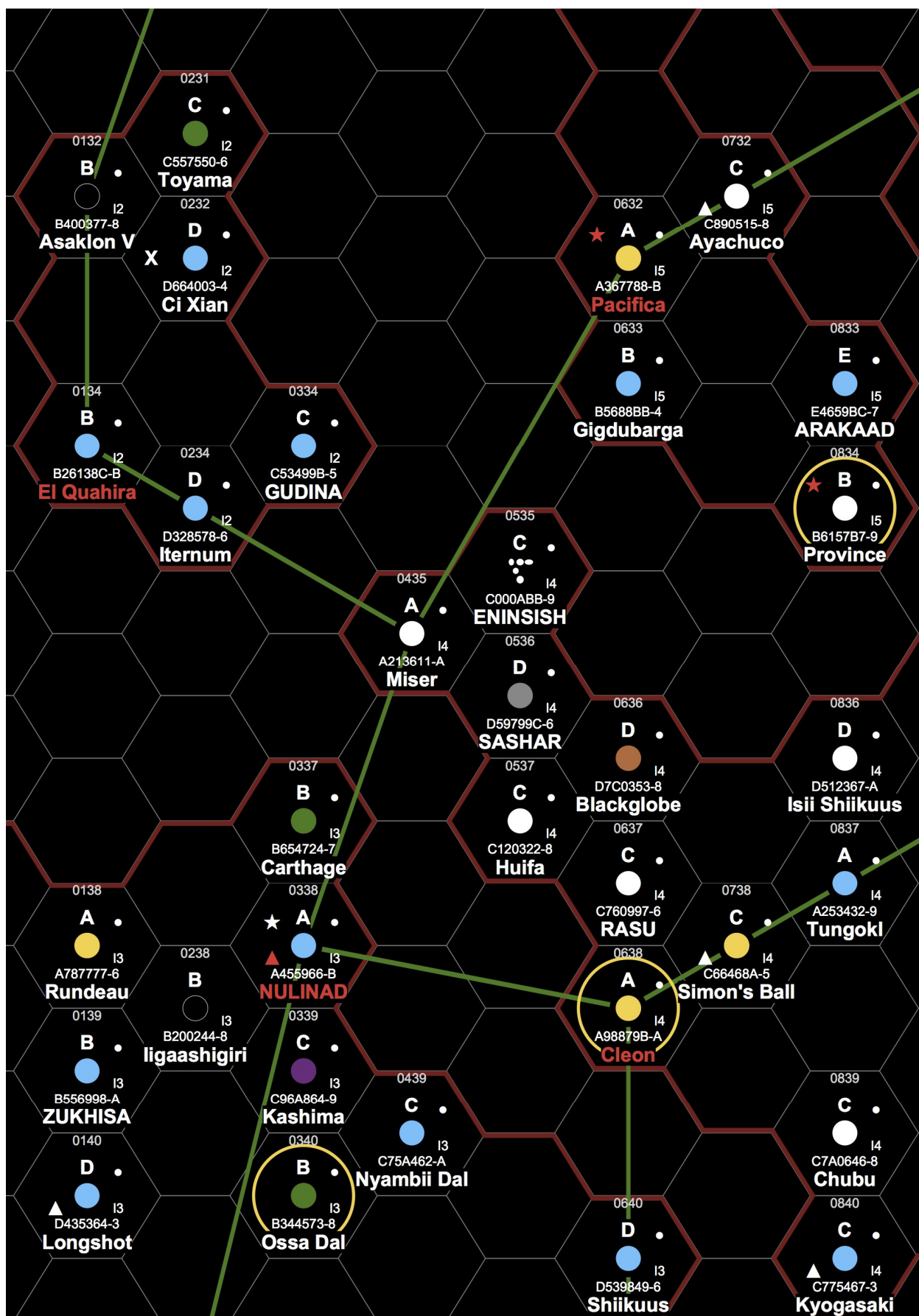
⁷⁴ “By ‘humaniti’, do you mean ‘all humans’ or do you mean ‘The Imperial Government, which speaks in the name of all humaniti’?”
“That’s for me to know, and for you to guess.”



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Beta Niobe Subsector

Qonos	2523	A246232-C	Lo Ni		120	Na	F8	V	
Amakusa Shoto	2528	D45A667-1	Ni Po Wa		623	Na	G2	V	
Udaka	2529	BA9A530-A	Ni Wa		411	Na	G9	V*	K5 V
Keirse	3224	B564011-8	Lo Ni An	A	700	Na	G9	V	

This is a sparsely-inhabited sector, occupied by people who prefer to stay out of the limelight. As there is nothing to see here – *especially* not at Keirse – we will move on without comment.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Nulinad Subsector

Asaklon V	0132	B400377-8	Lo Ni Va	614	I2	F9	V	
El Quahira	0134	B26138C-B	Lo Ni Cp	914	I2	M9	V	
Rundeau	0138	A787777-6	Ag Ri	821	I3	F1	V	
ZUKHISA	0139	B556998-A	Hi	713	I3	F9	V	G5 V*
Longshot	0140	D435364-3	S	614	I3	F1	V	
Toyama	0231	C557550-6	Ag Ni	603	I2	G9	V	
Ci Xian	0232	D664003-4	Lo Ni Ex	113	I2	K8	V	
Iternum	0234	D328578-6	Ni	201	I2	K3	V*	[M6 III]
Iigaashigiri	0238	B200244-8	Lo Ni Va	200	I3	K7	V	
GUDINA	0334	C53499B-5	Hi In	513	I2	G6	V*	[M4 V]
Carthage	0337	B654724-7	Ag	213	I3	G7	V*	[M4 V]
NULINAD	0338	A455966-B	B Hi Cp Cx	504	I3	M0	V*	[K6 V]
Kashima	0339	C96A864-9	Wa Ri P:4	602	I3	G4	V	
Ossa Dal	0340	B344573-8	Ag Ni	A 304	I3	F7	V*	M6 V
Miser	0435	A213611-A	Na Ni Ic	302	I4	M3	II*	G8 V
Nyambii Dal	0439	C75A462-A	Lo Ni Wa P:5	902	I3	G0	V	
ENINSISH	0535	C000ABB-9	As Hi In Na	113	I4	G5	V	
SASHAR	0536	D59799C-6	Hi In	204	I4	M0	III	G2 V*
Huifa	0537	C120322-8	De Lo Ni Po	424	I4	A9	V	G7 V*
Pacifica	0632	A367788-B	Ri Ag B:1 Cp	813	I5	G5	V	
Gigdubarga	0633	B5688BB-4	An Ma	134	I5	G5	V	
Blackglobe	0636	D7C0353-8	Lo De Ni	122	I4	K9	V*	M1 V
RASU	0637	C760997-6	De Hi	304	I4	K8	V	
Cleon	0638	A98879B-A	Ag Ri Cp	A 305	I4	K9	V	
Shiikuus	0640	D539849-6		813	I4	M1	V*	M7 V
Ayachuco	0732	C890515-8	S De Ni	914	I5	M1	V	M9 V*
Simon's Ball	0738	C66468A-5	S Ni Ag Ri	913	I4	K8	V*	[F9 V]
ARAKAAD	0833	E4659BC-7	Hi	502	I5	M5	V	
Province	0834	B6157B7-9	J Ic	A 104	I5	F6	V	
Isii Shiikuus	0836	D512367-A	Lo Ni Ic	613	I4	K2	V	K3 V*
Tungokl	0837	A253432-9	Lo Ni Po Ma	404	I4	M5	II	M8 V*
Chubu	0839	C7A0646-8	De Ni	405	I4	M9	V	
Kyogasaki	0840	C775467-3	S Lo Ni	303	I4	F7	V	

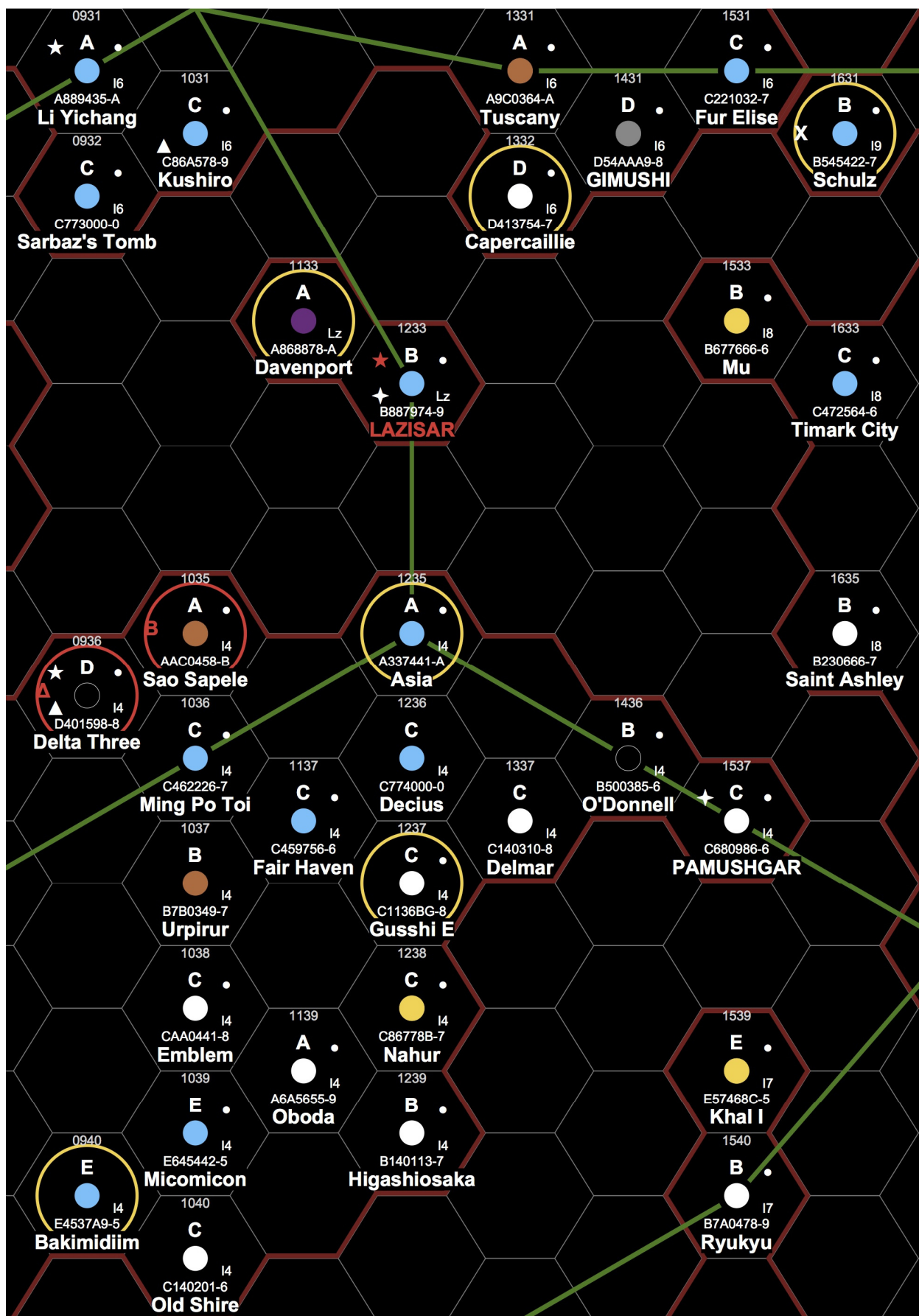
Four separate Counts – of Gudina, Nulinad, Pacifica, and Cleon – place their seats in this subsector. Throw in the fact that the Duke has set his throne on Nulinad as well, and this subsector becomes a buzzing hive of political jockeying and intrigue in normal times. Right now, with a noble-driven civil war in the County of Nulinad, there are more than a few gunshots and explosions mixed with the speeches, bribes, mudracking and mass rallies.

While the inhabitants of Gudina follows most Roman Catholic doctrine and rituals, they have made a fundamental choice to break with the old Terran papacy, and submit to the Pontiff on Sylea, not Terra, especially in political matters and in refusing to endorse hell for nonbelievers, Jesus Christ as the sole way to salvation, or the Bible as the only inspired writing. The Muslims of the County of Gudina are notably more wealthy, industrious and financially astute, and have decided to found a world grounded on their own beliefs on El Quahira. Despite their beliefs, they strive to maintain good relations with the Imperial Catholic throne, but relations with the Imperial Catholic Church are less than placid.

Both Imperial and Orthodox (i.e. traditional Roman Catholic) beliefs can be found on Nulinad, which has a strong, unhurried Mediterranean vibe. Fortunately for the sector, the inhabitants and nobles of the sector capital have followed the Duke's encouragement for an armistice, and are well on the way to a proper peace treaty. Unfortunately, on many other worlds of the county peace has either arrived by violent imposition via the Duke's household troops, or there is simply no peace to be had, only war and destruction.

The County of Pacifica has remained true to her name, and remains a quiet and well-mannered oasis of high Imperial Noble culture – excluding restless Arakaad. The County of Cleon is actually calmer than usual, with a very active and energetic Count reshaping the county and providing some desperately needed unity and leadership for these worlds. The varied asteroid cultures of Eninsish have taken Vilani culture and developed it into a hundred different forms, in an incredible mix of traditionalism and innovation.

The world of Ci Xian is known to have exactly one current resident: Virxinia, former Empress of the Third Imperium, now in exile for an indefinite length of time.



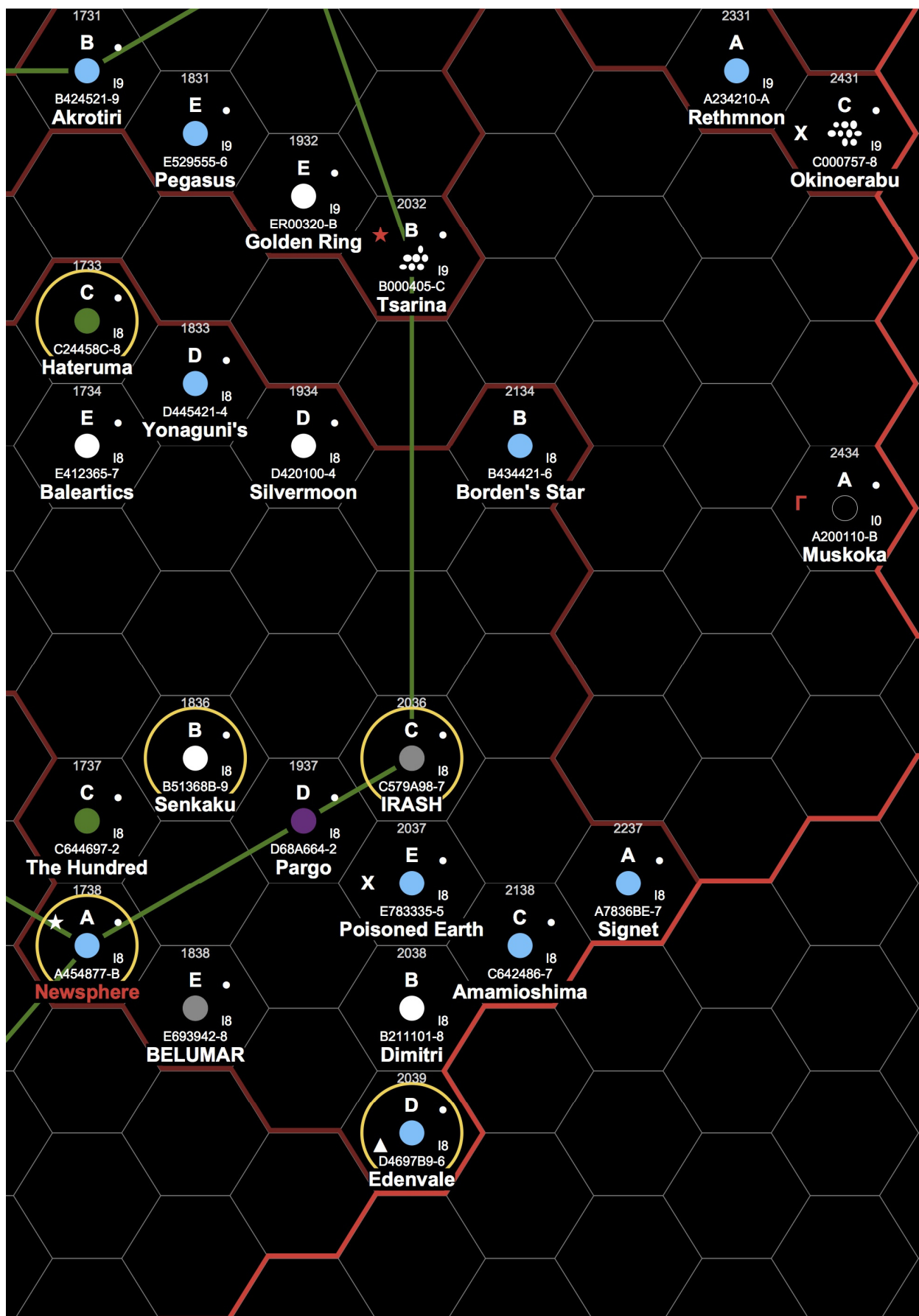
The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Tairtsu Subsector

Li Yichang	0931	A889435-A	N	Lo	Ni		103	I6	M1	V	
Sarbaz's Tomb	0932	C773000-0		Ba			011	I6	G5	V	
Delta Three	0936	D401598-8	A	Ic	Ni	Va Ns RsD R	311	I4	K9	V* M7 V	
Bakimidiim	0940	E4537A9-5		Po	C:1	A	330	I4	M9	V	
Kushiro	1031	C86A578-9	S	Ni	Wa	Pw	604	I6	F6	V* G8 V	
Sao Sapele	1035	AAC0458-B		Lo	De	Ni Ns RsB R	413	I4	K1	V	
Ming Po Toi	1036	C462226-7		Lo	Ni		224	I4	K3	V* M7 V	
Urpilur	1037	B7B0349-7		De	Lo	Ni	400	I4	F8	V	
Emblem	1038	CAA0441-8		Lo	De	Ni	114	I4	M8	V	
Micomicon	1039	E645442-5		Lo	Ni		704	I4	M7	V	
Old Shire	1040	C140201-6		De	Lo	Ni Po	900	I4	K7	III	
Davenport	1133	A868878-A		Ri		A	520	Lz	A4	IV K4 V*	
Fair Haven	1137	C459756-6		Ni	P:0		602	I4	M9	II* M5 V	
Oboda	1139	A6A5655-9		Fl	Ni		401	I4	G6	V* G7 V	
LAZISAR	1233	B887974-9	F	Hi	Cp		512	Lz	F6	V* G8 V	
Asia	1235	A337441-A		Lo	Ni	A	204	I4	M1	V M6 V*	
Decius	1236	C774000-0		Ba			000	I4	K4	V* M9 V	
Gusshi E	1237	C1136BG-8		Na	Ni	Ic	A	604	I4	G9	V
Nahur	1238	C86778B-7		Ag	Ri		913	I4	G9	V* [M5 V]	
Higashiosaka	1239	B140113-7		Lo	Ni	De Po	402	I4	G6	V	
Tuscany	1331	A9C0364-A		De	Lo	Ni	403	I6	G7	V* M6 V	
Capercaillie	1332	D413754-7		Na	Ic	A	624	I6	K1	V	
Delmar	1337	C140310-8		Lo	Ni	De Po	100	I4	M1	V* M8 V	
GIMUSHI	1431	D54AAA9-8		Hi	In	Wa	124	I6	M9	V	
O'Donnell	1436	B500385-6		Lo	Na	Ni Va	615	I4	M2	V	
Fur Elise	1531	C221032-7		Lo	Ni	Po	604	I6	G6	V* M6 V	
Mu	1533	B677666-6		Ag	Ni	C:5	804	I8	M2	V	
PAMUSHGAR	1537	C680986-6	M	De	Hi		202	I4	G0	V	
Khal I	1539	E57468C-5		Ag	Ni	C:2	603	I7	G7	V* M3 V	
Ryukyu	1540	B7A0478-9		Lo	De	Ni	522	I7	M2	V	
Schulz	1631	B545422-7		Lo	Ni	Ex	A	312	I9	(M0 II G3 V)	
Timark City	1633	C472564-6		Ni			703	I8	G5	V M2 V*	
Saint Ashley	1635	B230666-7		De	Na	Ni Po	302	I8	G4	V* M3 V	

The most notable worlds in this subsector are not even inhabited by sophonts – as far as spaceborne observers can tell. The inner systems of Delta Three and Sao Sapele have been thoroughly infested by the Namgaleshim lifeform, a complex, space-borne ‘green goo’ that transforms the inner system into wildly out-of-control protean lifeforms. Most of this life is more ‘plantlike’ than ‘animallike’, but by no means all. Typically, a massive network of ‘vines’ form the foundation of this new life: some of these odd structures reach out as it devours the worlds into bizarre, surreal, pulsating imitations of themselves. But the very core of the Namgaleshim is a strange weblike structure that reaches to the primary, *somehow* extracts material and energy from that blazing fusion inferno, and then distributes it across the cells and veins and nodes across the inner system.

Sarbaz’s Tomb is the final resting place for the greatest of the local Imperial heroes. Captain Sarbaz was an Imperial Navy officer who accomplished a long list of derring-do, from facing off nobles and pirates at the same time, to being the first one to break into - and more importantly, get our alive with his prize – various Ancient complexes. As an encore, he uncovered and endorsed a range of local foods, arts, and songs that help mark the Empty Quarter as a distinctive culture, instead of just a branch of Antares or Ley cultures. Loyal to his Emperor and his Church, he was long held as an example for local Imperial military officers to follow, and there are still tens thousands of migrants who go to his tomb to pay respects yearly, usually with Shinto-style forms of ancestor worship, recognized as valid by the Imperial Catholic Church. But this is ritual, not belief, and an increasing number of the best officers see no reason to do so, either because 1) they only revere power, and the dead have no power; or 2) they worship a God of the living, not a God of the dead.

The Lazisar Star Directorate is an on-again, off-again government, much like the Hebrin Caliphate (currently in the ‘off’ position). As an Imperial Member State, it accepts the rule of the Iridium Throne, but to a lesser extent than a proper Imperial County does. The Lazisari are not a single ethnos, but a large collection of artificial human races, generally of failed Master Race experiments. Few cultures here still retain delusions of grandeur, and are instead thankful for a sanctuary for their kind within the Imperium, far from those who created them, learned to hate them, and then strove to kill them.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Irash Subsector

Akrotiri	1731	B424521-9	Ni		404	I9	A8	V	M8	V*
Hateruma	1733	C24458C-8	Ag Ni	A	603	I8	K5	V		
Baleartics	1734	E412365-7	Ic Lo Ni Pr		415	I8	M0	V		
The Hundred	1737	C644697-2	Ag Ni		303	I8	M9	III	K7	V*
Newsphere	1738	A454877-B	N Ri Cp	A	405	I8	M0	V		
Pegasus	1831	E529555-6	Ni		905	I9	K8	V*	[M1 III]	
Yonaguni's....	1833	D445421-4	Lo Ni		803	I8	G9	V		
Senkaku	1836	B51368B-9	Na Ni Ic	A	901	I8	G0	V*	M6	V
BELUMAR	1838	E693942-8	Hi In		201	I8	K3	V		
Golden Ring	1932	ER00320-B	Lo Ni Va		224	I9	M1	V		
Silvermoon	1934	D420100-4	De Lo Ni Po		232	I8	G8	IV	K2	V* [G3 V]
Pargo	1937	D68A664-2	Ni Wa Ri Ma		504	I8	G9	V*	M5	V
Tsarina	2032	B000405-C	J Lo Ni As		613	I9	M0	V		
IRASH	2036	C579A98-7	Hi In	A	201	I8	F6	V*	M5	V
Poisoned Earth	2037	E783335-5	Lo Ni Ex Ma		703	I8	G4	V		
Dimitri	2038	B211101-8	Lo Ni		300	I8	F2	V*	M3	V
Edenvale	2039	D4697B9-6	S Ks B:3 P:1	A	702	I8	K0	V		
Borden's Star	2134	B434421-6	Lo		800	I8	G0	V		
Amamioshima	2138	C642486-7	Lo Po		115	I8	M8	V		
Signet	2237	A7836BE-7	Ni		413	I8	M8	V		
Rethmnon	2331	A234210-A	Lo Ni		100	I9	G8	V		
Okinoerabu	2431	C000757-8	Na As Ex		722	I9	M4	III		
Muskoka	2434	A200110-B	Lo Ni RsG Va		201	I8	G7	V*	[M8 III]	

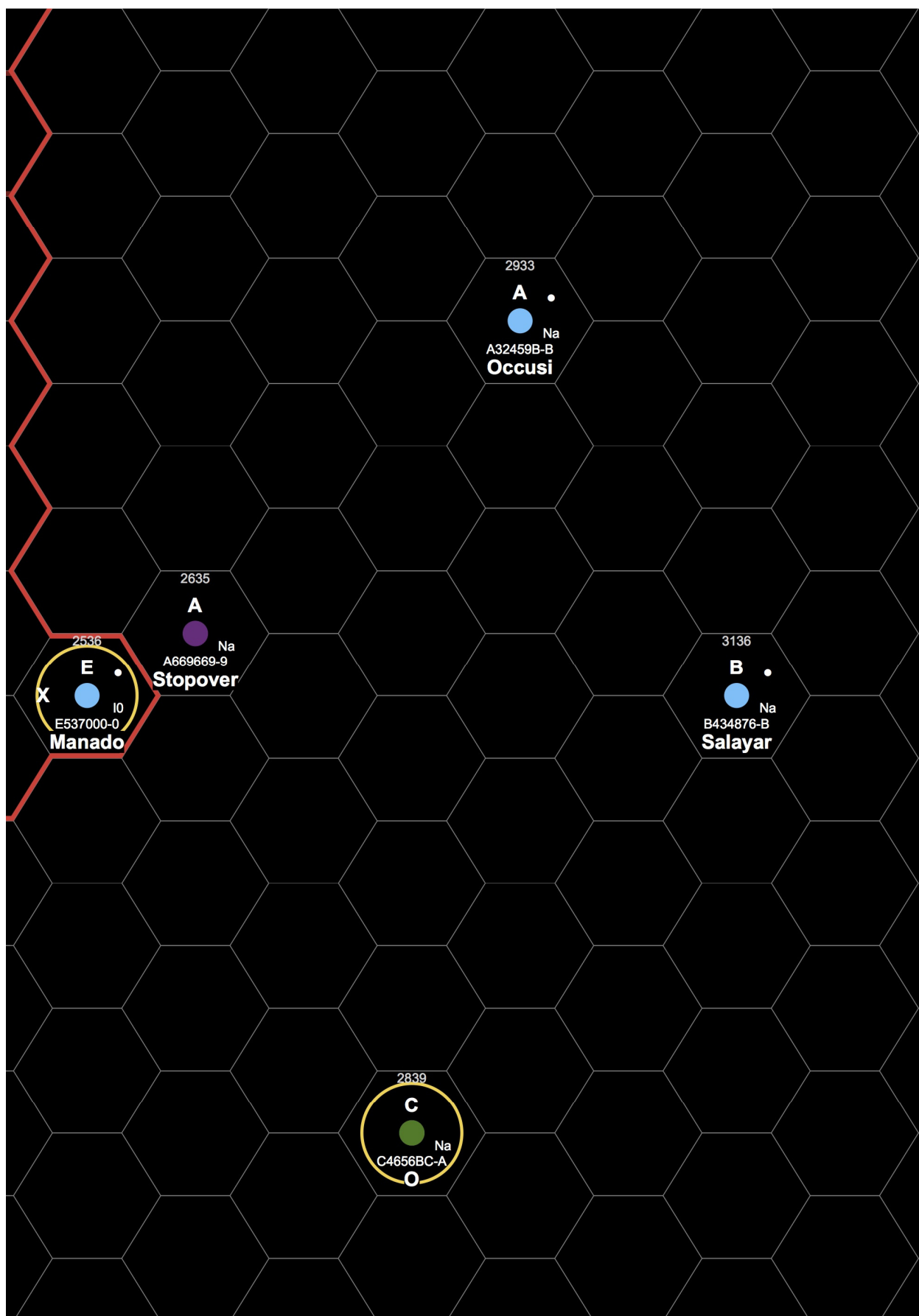
The site of a bitter subsector war between Irash and Belumar, the county is now undergoing a sort of rebirth with the rise of Newsphere. Newsphere rise under the patronage of the ruling Countess has excited a high level of jealousy from the other worlds, but so many bear the deep scars of the earlier envy-fueled conflict that few are willing to turn again to war, at least for this generation. Among the local barons, only the Baron of Signet still had enough money after the wasteful and unnecessary war to really break from County policy, and develop his own A-class starport – and even that requires high taxes and high law levels to partly subsidize, until profits can (hopefully) cover costs.

Humaniti rarely chooses to inhabit an ice ring system instead of a proper world, moon, or asteroid, but in The Golden Ring system they have decided to do so. The ring system is quite beautiful, and invited hordes of tourists during the height of the Imperium. Even now, there are enough visitors to keep the diminished population heated and fed, and the equipment in good repair, but there are sporadic attempts to create a new stream of income, perhaps in mining the gas giant below, perhaps as a social centre, or an exclusive Imperial Noble residence.

The vast majority of the psionic Pitth reside in Kashima (County of Nulinad); Nyambii Dal is a world where the Pitth are half of the rather small planetary population. They amount to a fair side minority – more than 1%, but less than 5% of the population – on Fair Haven, in the County of Cleon. But wealthy and powerful mystics, searchers, gurus, scientists, and dreamers from across the Imperium and beyond prefer to gather at the Pitth colony at Edenvale. Why?

Mainly, because the enormously powerful and very alien Kis gas giant inhabitants reside in this system at Sinpad (and not at the other local gas giant they claim, Ritalis). The Pitth somehow can ‘skim’ some of the more powerful and complex group thoughts of the Kis from the world of Edenvale, hundreds of millions of kilometers away. Among other things, it has made these Pitth more welcoming of inquiries than other Pitth, bringing in a steady flow of wealthy visitors – wealthy enough to support many Bwap crèches who reside on the planet to tend to their financial needs. And of course, there is the Imperial Scout base, which is actually busier with handling financial transfers than the ample research traffic from the system.

Muskoka is a world of Imperial experiments that don’t officially occur. It is unwise to enquire further about the matter.



The Empty Quarter, AD 3324, Nossos⁷⁵ Subsector

Manado	2536	E537000-0	Ba Ex Ma	A	002	I8	G3	V
Stopover	2635	A669669-9	Ni Ri		420	Na	K2	V* [M2 II]
O	2839	C4656BC-A		A	200	Na	K8	V
Occusi	2933	A32459B-B	Ni		203	Na	F0	V* M9 V
Salayar	3136	B434876-B	Ri		502	Na	K9	V* M5 V

Manado is a tough exile world, with several powerful armies of Machinist robots mindlessly tearing up each other in an endless war. It is possible for an exile to survive his 7, 14, or 20-year term on this world and gain lawful entrance to the heavily defended artigrav Class-E starport⁷⁶ – but it isn’t easy. One bit of providence in the mindless, inhuman conflict that has so scarred the world is that the armies of TL11-12 robots are geared to destroying each other, not the scared and dwindling bands of humans hiding among them. Not even the Imperium has found one of their factories – never mind the exiles – but there are various robotic field camps and replenishment sites that have been successfully robbed. Also, there are some useful materials that can be usefully scavenged after a robot battle. Food is a difficulty: the low-energy biosphere can allow survival amounts to be gathered, but this requires searching for algae, moss, and the like for the entire day – only to be hungry tomorrow, and do the same thing again. Creative exiles and those who received discreet assistance before being dropped off have smuggled in small plants and animals that – fed with human waste and corpses – can provide more nourishing crops than is available locally, if carefully tended to.

The other worlds of the subsector are actually rather advanced, seeing that – excluding Stopover – they are only visited by outsiders once every few months, if that. Stopover is owned by the same shadowy company that owns Muskoka. Unlike Muskoka and her Imperial Research Station, though, Stopover is a welcoming and fairly well populated world, known for a good starport and good resorts. While it would be very easy for the Imperium to again take ownership of the world, there always seems to be better ways to use Her Majesty’s Forces, and the local aristocracy seem to prefer to keep Stopover outside of Imperial control for their own reasons.

For unknown reasons, O seems to be a magnet for small bands of minor human races. Every few years, a few long-legged liners, bearing a few hundred families of some distant minor race – natural, Vilani-made, or recently created – makes the five-parsec jump to this isolated world. The migrants don’t seem to be particularly religious, or hostile to the Imperium: instead, they just talk vaguely about ‘a place of their own’ or ‘getting some privacy’ before heading out to their new world. The last reports from the world depict a strong-handed dictator, ruling the world firmly in his grasp: why would any group of families or clans want to go there is basically unknown. Especially as it takes some skill to properly enter and exit the local jumpspace: the Lesser Rift not a good spot for a misjump...

Occusi is similarly obscure. The Imperium used to rule this world – like all the other systems in what Silence subsector until about 60 years ago – but in this case, it was driven out by odd means. Records from fleeing Navy captains speak of horrid psionic attacks and unnatural sounds that drove men mad. Even today, you can see some dead Navy craft in-system, enclosed in the famous ‘yellow ice’ that signals the use of certain Ancient weapons. There are even rumours of men with psionic powers there – clearly impossible, but the rumours insist on this point⁷⁷.

The most successful world – in population and wealth – in the subsector is Salayar. It is not as great or as populous as it once was, as a nuclear war two centuries ago killed much of the population. But the world has survived the catastrophe, regained her technology, and harassed the Imperium to the extent that it was glad to quit the world.⁷⁸ Now, the major nations of Salayar gingerly work with each other on various great projects, while jealously protecting their territorial and sovereign rights.

⁷⁵ “To the Japanese, Nossos Nossos means the silence invoked within oneself.” – Liner notes, Nossos Nossos, by Alex Farhoud. Not a bad name, for a nearly empty subsector, set within the Empty Quarter, with plenty of Nihonese settlement.

⁷⁶ There are very, very few Class-E starports that are set on artigrav platforms. In this case, it’s to help insure that the exiles are kept out until called for.

⁷⁷ Remember: in this universe, humans are excluded from psionic powers. Even the Zhodani work closely with the Droyne and Ancient technology, but remain psionically unpowered in this universe.

⁷⁸ In this universe, the Imperium cannot casually glass a rebellious world. And in any case, why kill a world when you can let it be for a while, until it turns to you again for the benefits of Trade and the support of the Navy?

Counties and Churches: Large-Scale Imperial Maps

Theme: "Fire in a Brooklyn Theatre", Randy Edelman, [Come See the Paradise](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MejD4_9lUmM)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MejD4_9lUmM

The following set of maps provides a broad survey of the 'County & Church' Alternative Imperium.

The first map is a general map of the Third Imperium, as of 'now', AD 3324. The major visible differences are in the coreward Imperium: the entire area behind the claw is now divided between the Spinward States (populated by Darrian, Zhodani, Vilani, Droyne, Aslan, and Vargr inhabitants), and Corridor Sector is currently a thinly inhabited wasteland. The Imperium used to dominate The Windhorn and Meshan sector, but these regions were lost during the Third Imperial Civil War: they still remain primarily human Vilani regions of space, culturally influenced by Imperial mores.

The limitation of my cartographical skill hides the truth that the Third Imperium and the Terran Confederation is actually composed of numerous subunits. Most Imperial systems are members of counties, small (minimum of three systems) and large (the largest Imperial county, the County of Sylea, stretches across 42 systems). The Terran Confederation is composed of 19 Terran States, not including the four Terran States conquered by the Imperium. As the Confederation was formed *after* the Rim War, they don't have any claim to the Four Lost Sisters, but definitely want them back nevertheless. As a broadly Roman Catholic nation, they are also religious competitors to the Imperial Catholic Church, and are quite aggravated by Imperial Church indoctrination of the captive Terran population⁷⁹. Finally, the Julian Protectorate is a union of Vilani and Vargr nations: but the Irilitok Vargr are slowly diminishing in population, changing their genetics to remove the human taint⁸⁰ and relocate to Ovaghoun Vargr starnations.

The second map outlines the growth of the Third Imperium, from its core region in Sylea Sector (Core Sector in Official Traveller) to the gains made during the Greater Pacification War era. Note that much of the coreward Domain of Vland was lost in subsequent years, but the territory gained to rimward by the Third Imperium more than made up for it.

As an aid for aging eyes:

- Red refers to the territory of the Sylean Alliance, AD 3011;
- Yellow refers to the territory of the Domain of Vland, AD 3086;
- Green refers to the territory of the Third Imperium, AD 3087 (inclusive of the red and yellow regions);
- Blue refers to the additional territory annexed by the Third Imperium, AD 3140;

In general, the Greater Pacification Wars were fought in the blue region spinward of the red and yellow areas: the blue region to trailing was absorbed with far less fighting.

The third map provides the location of most of the Imperial population, as of AD 3324. The percentages in red refer to the *Imperial Core* sectors, and in black are the *Civilized*, or Near-Core, sectors. All the other sectors are *Colonial*, with their share of the Imperial population left for the Referee to determine (but no more than 2.4% per remaining sector).

⁷⁹ This indoctrination is relentlessly resisted by the occupied: the Church Militant units of the Imperial Church are looking into more subtle and indirect ways to gain the obedience they desire. "Keep the empty ceremonies: gut the historical core!"

⁸⁰ In this universe the Vargr are creations of the Vilani. Even so, they resent the additional breeding the Julians did to make them more docile, and work to remove it as quickly as they can. There are Vargr who believe in removing *all* the human modifications: but as this would include destroying their intelligence, few are truly willing to go that far, despite their rhetoric.

Yes, the various Imperial Civil Wars – especially the second one – and the Greater Pacification War were quite violent, despite the recent Imperial insistence on the Laws of War. Perhaps a more careful inspection of those Laws is in order, or the Laws back then are not the same as the Laws now...

The fourth map outlines the major monocultural regions of the Third Imperium. In these areas, all systems are 95%+ the dominant population (and often 100%). The borders broadly follow that set in MegaTraveller Referee's Manual, page 102. The major changes are:

- the Bwap: moved from the Empty Quarter, and given lots of space to organize;
- the Terrans: the Solomani name never came up in this universe, and monoracial Solomani dominate far more systems within the official Solomani Confederation than the Terrans do here;
- the non-human Vegans: who never developed an interstellar polity in this timeline and so are absent from the map; and
- the Genoe: who like the Bwap are given more space here.

Note that the Bwap are the only non-human race listed on the map: all the others are humans.

A complete list of Official Traveller races is here: <http://misc.thefullwiki.org/Races/summary> I recommend that you use them, and develop plenty of your own. Humaniti is still the majority species within this timeline, but Vilani genetic engineering (and a few Ancient-modified races) has made a lot more varied beings than in official Traveller. And that term 'majority' is rather flexible, if you dig deeply enough...

In this universe, the Vilani are good genetic engineers (as opposed to the Official Vilani, who had serious problems with biological science). These Vilani created far more races locally than the Ancients did; moreover, they altered themselves for long lifespans. These Vilani are more clannish than corporate – the impersonal corporation is an Islamic invention in this timeline. Finally, they are more militaristic here, fighting the Vargr ex-slave race they created for a good 2,500 years now. Their genocidal inclinations do not mesh well with the Imperial Catholic preference for leniency, mercy, and tolerance in all matters that don't challenge the fundamental unity of the Imperium.

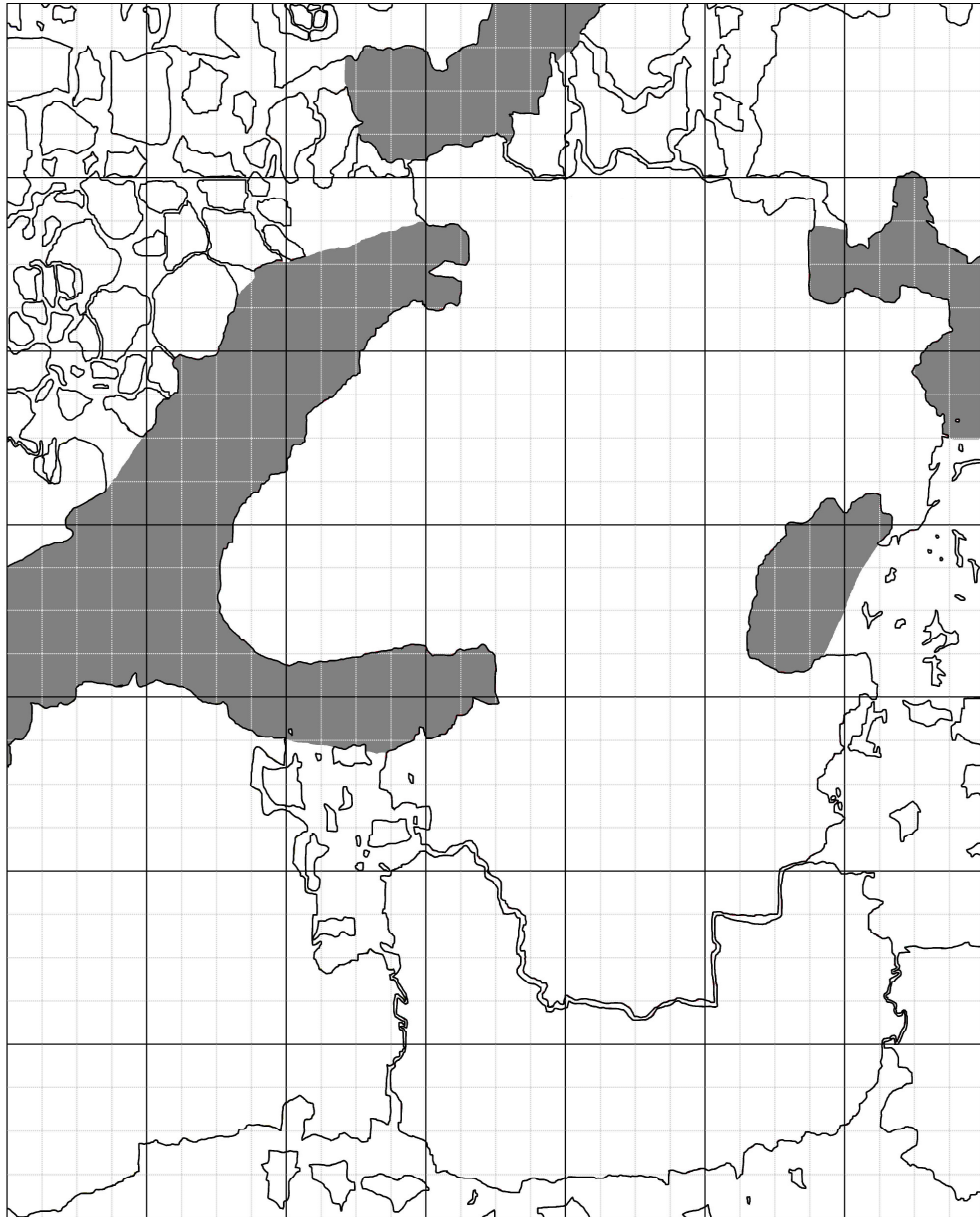
The fifth map outlines Imperial Fleet strength, in percentage terms. This is geared to threat levels, not population, and it isn't evenly distributed as in the traditional Third Imperium. The major Fleet concentrations are in Vland Sector (15.2%), Sylea Sector (12.1%) and Terran Rim (10.0%). Across all three Imperial, the main threat has been Vargr incursions from coreward. The Vilani Empire was conquered from the unexpected rimward direction, but the current Imperium maintains a substantial force in the region. The Terran Confederation is large, but sparsely populated, and – without its Terran Rim core – it is unable to mount a real challenge to Imperial supremacy in the region. Arms smuggling, on the other hand, is definitely doable.

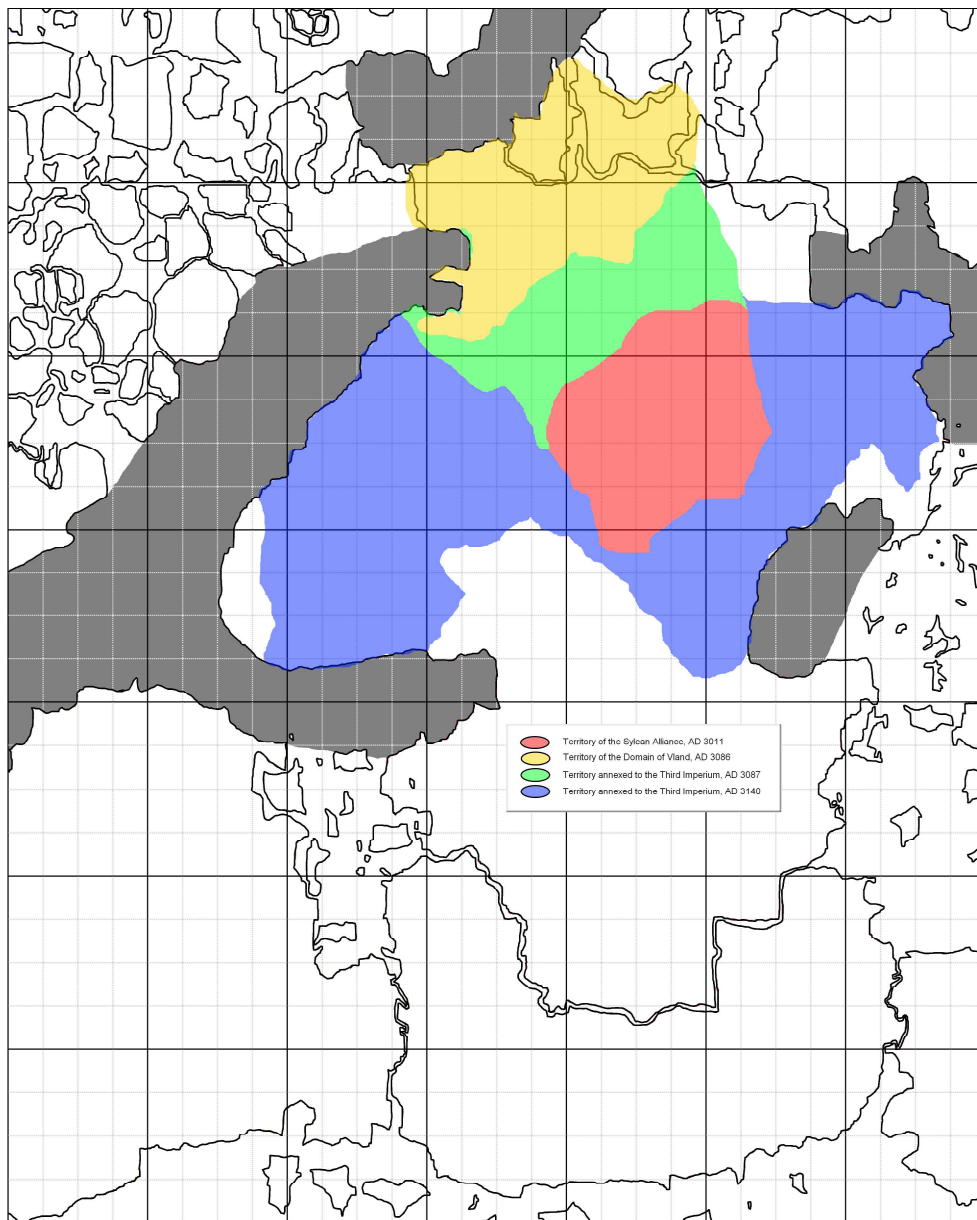
An additional note on Terran Rim: as there is no "Imperial Army" in this universe, ground forces are built on volunteer regiments from Imperial Catholic military religious orders under the authority of the True Pope. There *are* substantial Imperial Marine divisions available, but they are not to be deployed against the insurgencies, but *only* in the case of a direct invasion by the Terran Confederation or the Aslan Hierate.

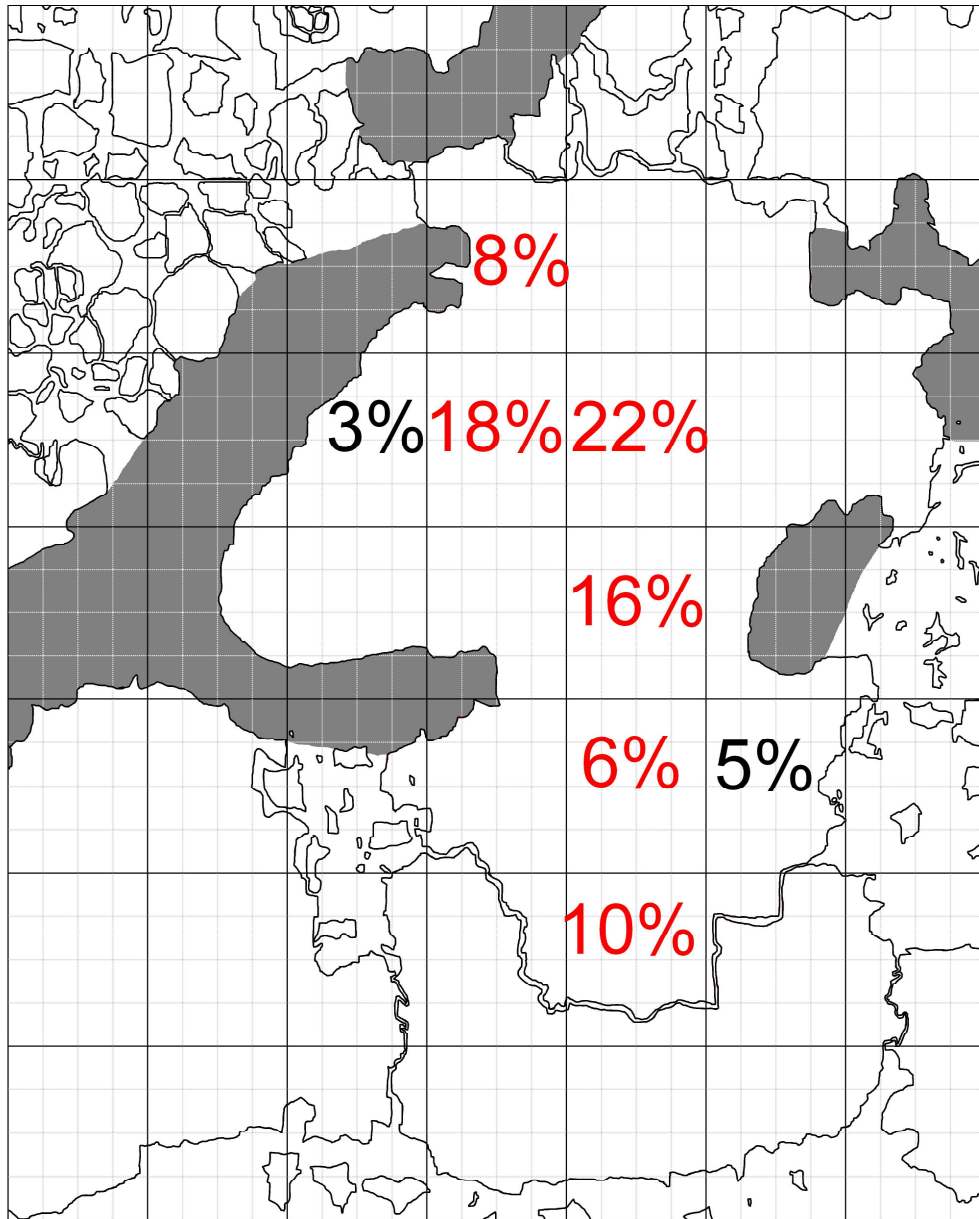
In Terran Rim Sector, the Church military must suffer fairly heavy casualties for a variety of reasons:

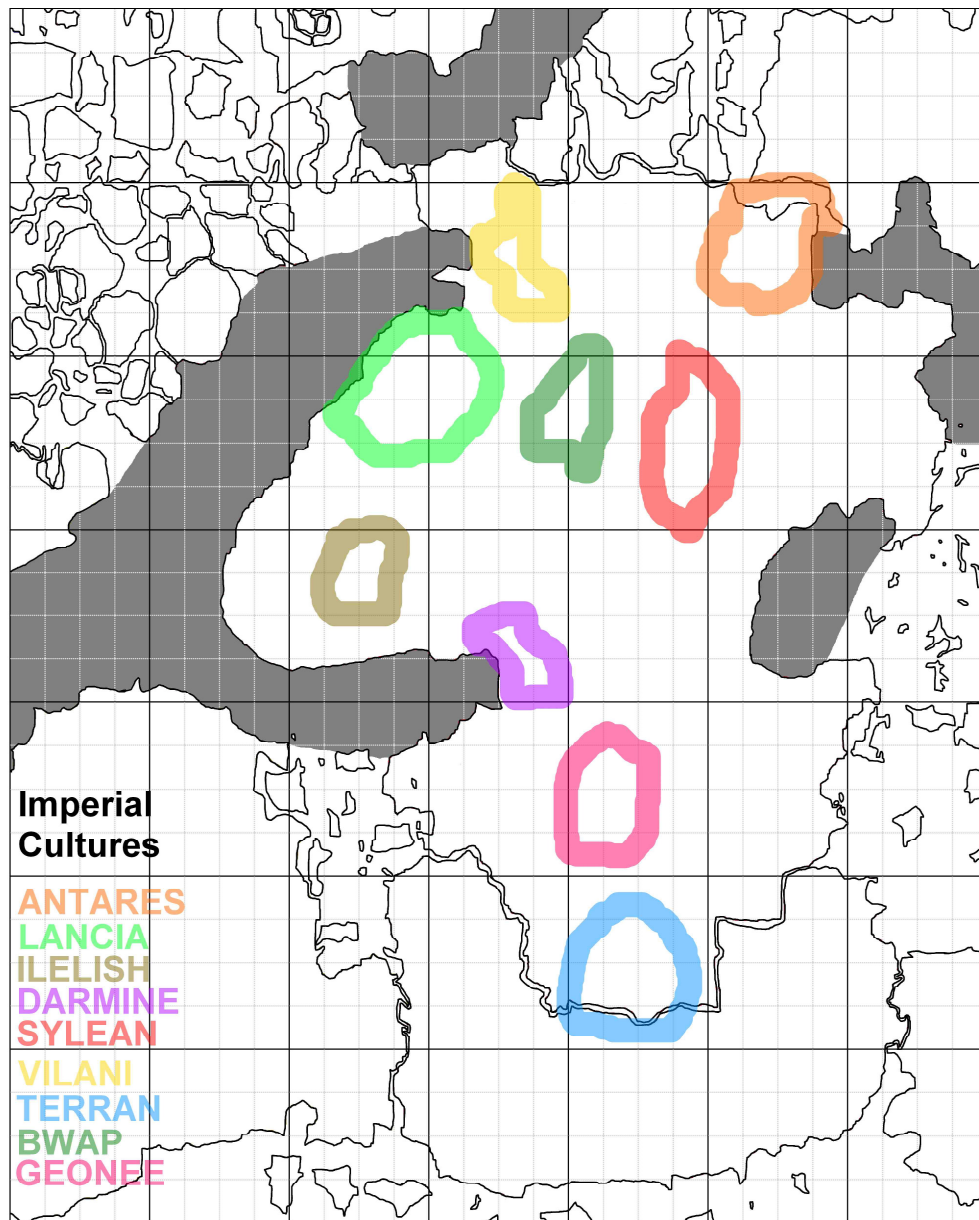
- lower-grade equipment (typically TL 10-11) and training
- insufficient armour, artillery, and air support
- very strict rules of engagement, backed by relentless media investigation
- poor comprehension of the hostile locals, and difficulty in halting arms smuggling

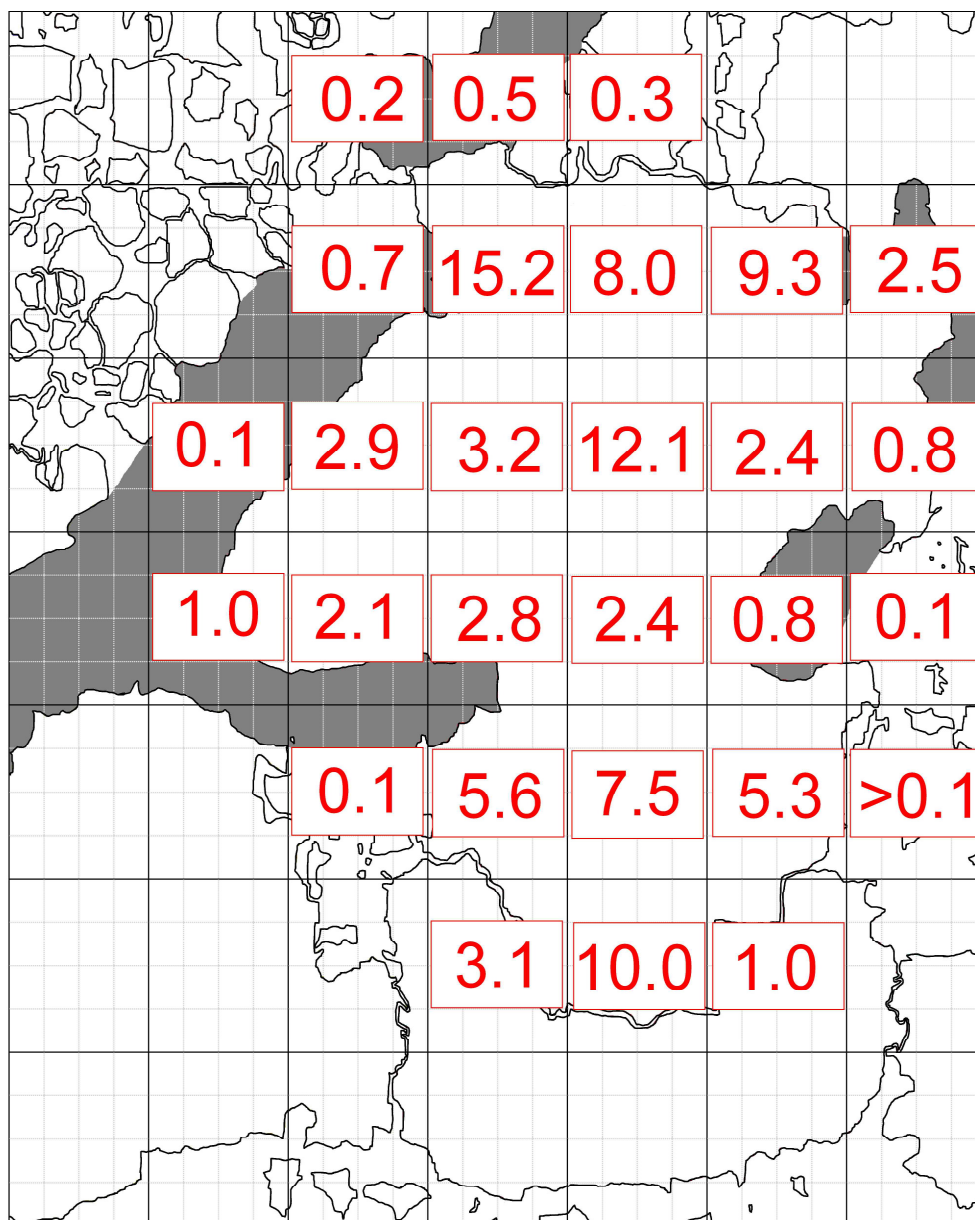
To the Church, mission failure, and even planetary defeat, is held to be preferable to violating even one of the Imperial Laws of War. The Imperial Marines are under the Imperial Laws of War, but are not nearly as fussy as the Church is. However, even the Imperial commanders are rather stricter than any 20th or 21st century military in our timeline. This is not due to the goodness of their heart, but because of the relentless suspicion and demands of the Imperial population, who hold no illusions on the reasons why the Imperial military exists.











Counties and Churches: The Annoyance Known as Hebrin County

Theme: “Kazetachi no Fuan (Anxious Wind)”, Kenji Kawai, [Windy Tales](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXNw34BcqXU)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXNw34BcqXU>

First, the long preamble describing the modern situation, and **then** the transposition to the Far Future, as a way to see things from new perspectives. The PCs are assumed to be Ultra-Orthodox Christians, one of the competing religions on the world, trying to Do The Right Thing.

How Things Are: The Reality

Too many contemporary Christians do not even want to consider speaking in this way. They do not even want to speak of exercising the legal freedoms they should exercise now, let alone civil disobedience which may invite real persecution. Christian leaders refuse to advance the ideas, even when they should be on the leading edge. If Christians will not take initiative now in areas where it is perfectly legal, but means only a mild lifestyle adjustment, what makes us think they will organize to withstand greater tyrannies, make greater sacrifices, in more difficult environments?

— Joel McDurmon, [“God’s Gift”: Liberty and Responsibility \(1 Sam. 14:1–23\)](#)

We all know the answer: they won’t. Why not? Cowardice, mainly. Toss in reverence for the powerful & the wealthy, add a huge helping of the herd mentality, and you know all you need to know.

“Never mind how every successful church was born in opposition to the local Establishment. Never mind how the Russian believers outlasted the Scientific Wave of the Future, or how pathetic the New Order of ultra-modern Germany turned out to be, with their stylish, university-trained SS troops.⁸¹ Never mind how many believers refused to despair, no matter the torture, the executions, or the endless wave of lies the Internet-free, centrally-controlled univocal State Media spewed. The Daily Show, Huffington Post, CNN, and MSNBC are saying mean things about us! We must wail, cringe, panic, and despair!”

I find this slave mentality *exceedingly* boring. To imagine something different, I turn to the County of Hebrin as a playground for some speculation, thought-experiments, and a toll to clarify my thinking. I plan to spell out how I laid out the environment, so *you* can do the same thing for *your* obsessive hobbyhorse, too!

If I do my job right, I hope to also illustrate the difference between ho-hum “I’m So Perfect, You’re So Evil” modern propaganda and proper Biblical storytelling. The thing is, the Bible had no particular problem highlighting the flaws of God’s people, from the drunkenness of Noah to the cowardice of Peter. I prefer this viewpoint to Establishment plaster saints, or the mere proclamation of abstract rules – without either examples of obedience, or spelling out the prices for obedience (which can sometimes be very, very high).

How Things Are: Minorities

I have little interest in majorities, who simply do whatever’s the easiest thing to do. Nor am I interested in Our Noble Leaders, who are simply the typical Joe with better political instincts and a stronger thirst for power.

⁸¹ This was back when a university education meant something, and German universities were debatably the best in the world.

What interests me are motivated minorities. Not victim minorities, who are pandered to by the powerful when politically expedient, and dumped like so much trash when it isn't.⁸² Not so much market minorities who can look out for themselves: while they have lessons worth learning – summarized as “Dad sweats the years in his shop, Mom makes the children study hard, Kids start their own business or go professional, and The Family takes care of their own” – they aren't my current focus.

While wailing victims wallowing in self-pity inspire nothing but contempt, driven minorities who change the world inspire respect. But power and influence to satisfy a masturbatory power-lust is as repulsive as clingy, lazy liars who point-blank refuse to pay the heavy price for a better future for their kids. The dream of endlessly expanding universal oppression forever in the name of an illusionary equality holds no attraction, so Socialism – both black and red variants – is necessarily dismissed. The Dharmic religions have no interest in changing the world, which is nothing but an illusion in their eyes: as I have no interest in escaping reality, I can expect nothing useful from them. Or, for that matter, from reality-fleeing Rapture Christians.

Islam is all about the power of the righteous over the infidel: but I have no interest in controlling unbelievers (as opposed to controlling myself, which God absolutely *demands*). I happen to have confidence that God will work His will in history, slowly perhaps but surely. “The bad guys will lose in the end, and the good guys will win over time. Never mind the ups and downs: keep your eyes on the ball, and stick to your knitting.” God is going to get what He wants, and vast armies and spy networks and prison complexes are simply a waste and a distraction, as the Soviet Union could tell you.⁸³ As God *already* controls the thoughts and actions of all unbelievers, I need not fear them, and so I am free to focus on other work, from running a business to teaching in Church, or even writing the kind of fictional allegories Tolkien despised.

As the secular state has no purpose than its own survival and the expansion of its own power, I can casually dismiss everything it says with a flick of the wrist. As power and guns do not save, Crusader Christianity must be rejected.⁸⁴ Liberal Christians are simple proxies for the secularist establishment, so no need to talk to inferior copies of the real thing. Neither Muslims, nor Atheists, nor Liberals Christians believe that there is a single unchanging Law that all equally subject to, on pain of Divine wrath, so naturally believing Christians must reject all three groups.

As for the Jews... it depends on the man, not his tribe. Sure, there are solid, irreplaceable pro-liberty thinkers among them (Mises, Rothbard), but there are drooling collectivist enslavers as well (Marx, Trotsky). Many Jews fought hard and long against the Nazis, but there were also Hollywood types in the 30s that sold out their kin in Germany in the name of the almighty Reichsmark.⁸⁵ Sure, lots of Jews signed up for Lenin's God-State (and suffered for it when it was Stalin's turn at the top), but lots of Jews stood for the doomed Old Order, as well.⁸⁶

In the end, not even Jewish erudition can be trusted without weighing it on the balances yourself, using your own mind, and coming to your own decision. Even those intellectual heroes of mine, Murray Rothbard and Ludwig von Mises, have certain cracks in their ideological foundation that renders their towering achievement less than divine.⁸⁷ Still, it is a salutary reminder that — when it comes to money & politics — those Atheistic Jews Rothbard

⁸² Black Americans are not the only, or even the primarily, welfare recipients: corporations, the elderly, higher-ranked civil service careerists, even farmers get more from the government trough. But when the welfare state starts to die, guess whose going to get the axe first? Race hustling and set-asides are no substitute for entrepreneurship, family, strong neighbourhoods, and teaching churches.

⁸³ Or, for that matter, the United States. Washington spends 50% of every military dime on this world: but the results in the field of all this money are simply pathetic. The basic problem? “Tanks get more expensive every year, while IEDs get cheaper – and more effective, too!”

⁸⁴ Why the modifier for Christianity, but not Islam? Because conquest is taught in the Quran, and subjugation emphasized in the Hadiths. The Crusades were simply poor medieval Christians imitating wealthy medieval Moslems: idiotic, of course, but many modern Christians do worse. The entire thrust of Scripture is the victory of Divine spirit – Divine logic – and not the materialist glory of physical guns, police, Dear Leaders, spies, torture chambers, the might of the masses, etc. “Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit.”

⁸⁵ See <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/134503/hollywood-nazi-urwand> Even more evidence why people claiming that some Jewish cabal rules everything are simply delusional.

⁸⁶ I recommend Dmitry Shlapentok's review of the new book *Russian Jews Between the Reds and the Whites, 1917-1920*, found here: http://atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/CEN-01-120713.html

⁸⁷ See Gary North's essay, “Is Capitalism a Value-Adding Economic System?” <https://www.garynorth.com/members/login.cfm?hpape=10738.cfm> for a solid response to Rothbard's derision of Calvinistic disdain for pleasure. Summary: the focus of the godly life is leaving a great legacy for the future, not enjoying the pleasures of today. Production, not consumption, is the focus of the righteous man, implicitly defying Adam Smith, Aristotle, and Catholic teachings.

and Mises are far better guides than the uncountable number of snivelling, tenured Christian apologists for power. Truth must be recognized as such, no matter where it is found.⁸⁸

Both force and money are impotent against ideas. — Ludwig von Mises

The tiny tribe of Theocrats are generally boring, just re-skinned Conservative types who want the Leaders to wave crosses when murdering Muslims in some unjust aggressive war or other.⁸⁹ But – and this should be obvious by now – the anti-State Christian Reconstructionists are quite interesting to me.

Nullify and delegitimize the Deified God-State? Boost local sovereignty, grounded in the county and the sheriff and the jury? Break the self-aggregating State monopoly of justice? Laws that don't change to suit the needs of the Establishment – stable and predictable laws, that businessmen and families and lone outcasts and cranks and beggars can rely on? A finite set of laws, few enough to actually know entire in a month or three of study – and so know *exactly* when Our Masters overstep their bounds? Multiple governments – Individual, Family, Church, State – that have restricted jurisdictions, instead of the Egyptian-style bureaucratic power pyramid we all live under today?

And you're going to merge this with a wide range of Libertarian thoughts and ideas? Widely dispersed authority? The end of fiat money – and so, at one stroke the end of the banking cartel and the State's ability to either buy off the populace or wage endless war forever? No more Above-the-Law NSA/CIA, with their unaccountable Black Budgets and Star Chamber courts and Secret Laws?⁹⁰

Not even if they start blathering on and on and *on* about Terrorists and Hidden Threats and Secret Sins and Evil Foreigners and The Muslim Threat – all to protect their *delicious* power and privileges, of course?

And these unaccountable authorities are not going to be replaced with some Above-the-Law Church, Above-the-Law Party, Above-the-Law Oligarchy, Above-the-Law Military Junta, or Above-the-Law Corporate Syndicate?

Now, THAT's a goal worth working for!

Now, when do we get serious about the peaceable yet relentless dismantlement of the State, as I Samuel advises? Especially as armies and navies exists solely to expand the Glory of the Empire – for the endless enrichment of the Right Sort, and paid for by the Patriotic Masses?

For earthly princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought, rather, to spit upon their heads than to obey them.

— John Calvin, Commentary on Daniel, Lecture XXX, Daniel 6:22⁹¹

⁸⁸ Quite a bit of truth can be found in a reading list for Rothbard: <http://www.lewrockwell.com/2013/07/lew-rockwell/read-rothbard/>. Go, Read, Learn!

⁸⁹ Trivia: it was the Third Reich that first stopped using the term "War Ministry", and started using the term "Defence Force" (Wehrmacht) jusst before launching a brutal aggressive war across Europe. After the war, the usefulness of the lie can be seen by the cant of "Defence Forces" and "Ministry of National Defence" across the world. Now, about the modern descendents of the Gestapo and the SS...

⁹⁰ For extra credit: <https://mises.org/daily/6475/The-Ethics-of-State-Secrecy>, <http://www.amazon.com/Classified-Woman-The-Sibel-Edmonds-Story/dp/0615602223> and her blog <http://www.boilingfrogspost.com/>

⁹¹ Only now do you realize why the Establishment **hates** Calvinism, and **adores** two-kingdom government-grovellers like the Lutherans. As an experiment, you should ask them exactly why the Authority of the State should always and forever expand, while the Authority of the Church, the Family, and the Individual must always and forever retreat. If you can find a dime's worth of difference between Lutheran justifications and the cant of the most hard-core university or legislative secularist, let the world know in your blog!

Modeling the Present in the Future: A Fragmented Reflection

So, how to reflect all this in the universe of Counties and Churches?

And exactly what do the PCs need to do – assuming that, as Ultra-Orthodox, they are merely one of the many competing voices in the local arguments?

In Hebrin County, we have an interesting situation. Not a direct analogy to today, but not too dissimilar either. A powerful world is increasingly able and willing to turn away from a failing Imperium: no longer bound by blood, heart, mind, or spirit, only materialistic bonds like Imperial trade and the Imperial Navy sector fleet still keep Hebrin anchored to the Iridium Throne.

As the Imperial economy fragments and declines, money is less and less effective in keeping Hebrin onboard. The Imperial Navy is more solid: but it's a Navy that could be ordered to ship out at any time; supported by an increasingly precarious tax base; and is *partially* matched by the Count's own forces. This match grows more equal as less Imperial taxation monies are sent to the sector, while the steady and increasing flows of Hebrin wealth allow for a slow but steady expansion of Hebrin County muscle.

"Why be ruled by your enemies, when you can rule yourself?"

— Motto, the Hebrin Freedom Federation,
a notable research/lobby group with offices in the major Hebrin educational firms and institutions

Even as Hebrin increasingly gained in local authority, technology, and power, her population remains divided. Neither the Jews, the Muslims*, the Roman Catholics, nor the Ultra-Orthodox Christians have any great fondness for the rapidly declining Imperial Catholic Church: but there remains a certain level of mutual distrust. All these groups have developed into great trading and mercantile cultures: the corporate and finance-minded Muslims* most of all, but the Jews close behind, with the Ultra-Orthodox outpacing the still partly-socialist Roman Catholics in the rear. The Ultra-Orthodox are bringing in the most converts, but it is the Muslims* who are the most highly respected religion on the planet: unlike real-life Islam, this universes' version of the religion is famous for its insistence on a single strict, equal, unbiased law for both the Believer and the Stranger, man or woman, human or alien. "Upright Justice, not mere Cringing Submission, is what the Lord of the Sands and the Stars demands!"⁹²

Despite all this, the Imperial Catholics still have a hold on a dwindling-but-substantial percentage of the upper classes, a rather smaller but still notable percentage of the lower classes, and have the greatest and most varied connections outside the county. But not far behind them are the Roman Catholics, who have turned the region to a safehouse for all sorts of covert Terran anti-Imperial groups and associations. As the Count doesn't want trouble in his demesne, there is a 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' unspoken understanding going on, but if there is ever an open rebellion against the Iridium Throne, there are enough experienced Roman insurgency types lying low in the region to cause all sorts of headaches for the Imperium – and not just the explosive kind of headaches, either.

The strong man with the dagger is followed by the weak man with the sponge.

— Lord Acton, quoted in Roger Shattuck's *Forbidden Knowledge*, page 236.

The Imperial Catholic leadership retains their hold on authority due to the classic Divide and Conquer policies. But, thanks to a train of highly embarrassing public revelations and defections – think of a perfect storm of the Pentagon Papers, Edward Snowden, and Vladimir Lenin's revelation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement – the three major religions are busy hammering out an agreement that will permanently sideline the Imperial Catholics and open the door to a strong, unified native Hebrin government. The Count of Hebrin is heavily if discreetly involved

⁹² Here, we are assuming that the Pact of Omar either never existed, or is widely seen as a forgery, as described in <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/03/the-protocols-of-the-elders-of-mecca-the-final-word-on-the-pact-of-umar/>, and not legitimate Islamic law, as claimed in <http://www.ipost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/How-dare-you-The-supremacist-nature-of-Muslim-grievances-319440>. It will be interesting to discover what Our Allies in Saudi Arabia think of the matter...

as well, eager to have his rule supported by a firm local foundation, and wary of the uncertain and distant favour of the Imperial Catholic Empress.

To model the local Imperial Christian establishment, you don't *have* to look to the gutted mainstream churches, or liberals who revel in the ceremonies and dispose of the nasty substance. Money-loving and power-adoring conservatives will do just as well.⁹³ After all, if you love wars and killing and conformity and Great Leaders as much as they do – in direct opposition to Christ, by the way – you have to be *choosy* about which parts of the Bible you care to support. A more skilled satirist than I would be able to combine these delusions effectively: as presented in Counties and Churches, we just have a spiritually whoring church in the style of Old Israel, who has long abandoned any concern for holiness or righteousness or devotion to just *one* God or just *one* Law, but – practically-minded as always – is utterly committed to the power, might, and wealth of the *one* Iridium Throne.⁹⁴

Modeling the Present in the Future: Getting to Work

Now, we shift our attention from the general situation to the specific situation of my sort of people, those Ultra-Orthodox types. Right now, they are becoming more aggressive and forthright in their faith, ignoring the hostility of the other religions – which loathe Ultra-Orthodox missionaries, and would much rather have everything stay safe and frozen and unchanging.

The Secret Sauce

The biggest reason why the PC's attention is directed to the County of Hebrin isn't just the wealth here: that's the part of the iceberg tipping above the waters. The real reason comes in two parts. First the locals believe that children – not guns or power or even money – are the ultimate resource.⁹⁵ That makes the planet a high-population system: worthy of note, but not enough of a reason alone to keep an eye on it. But it is a good enough reason for the steady decline, aging, and diminishment of the sex-positive (and child-negative) followers of the Imperial Catholic Church. "And over time, decency is more profitable than debauchery: sometimes immediately, often in the midterm, and always in the long run."⁹⁶

An impoverished high-pop system and a wealthy high-pop system are both to be much preferred to dead systems: but to get that wealth/high technology, you need the second, booster part: the drive to covenantal productivity. "Covenantal" is tied to a whole ethical system: keeping your promises; a predictable, timely, and fair legal system; the assumption of the value of Truth, which is determined by God rather than the will of powerful men; property rights; an optimistic view of the future; the desire for future generations to build on what you have done; valuing work over leisure, production over play; a high value of liberty; placing both the weak and the strong under an unchanging Law... all grounded in the Written Word of God (as opposed to, say, the State, the People, the Church, the Philosopher-King, the Tribe, the Professionals, the Priests, the Bureaucracy, the Party, yadda yadda yadda.)

All of this is opposed by consistent pagans and humanists, so naturally they grow sterile, grow impoverished, and fade over time.⁹⁷ The Imperial Catholic Church is a humanist organization with religious trappings, run for the benefit of the Imperial Nobility and their State, and is fading along with the Imperium. But – to greater or lesser degrees – the Jews, Muslims*, Roman Catholics, and Ultra-Orthodox are covenantal peoples, and will inherit the future.

⁹³ A nice little example: <http://www.jillstanek.com/2013/06/christian-university-retaliates-against-pro-life-student-for-showing-graphic-reality-of-abortion/> Yes, Christian colleges are careful to never take a stand against abortion: the controversy gets in the way of the money, you see. See <http://www.garynorth.com/members/11095.cfm> for details. The faster these colleges are abandoned, bankrupted, and forgotten, the better-off the Christian faith will be.

⁹⁴ Why do these churchmen religious prostitutes always think that their groveling before political power will save them, instead of being politically stripped of their wealth and prestige and left to rot in the dark (at best), I will never understand.

⁹⁵ From the book: see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ultimate_Resource for an overview, or just read the book yourself at http://www.juliansimon.org/writings/Ultimate_Resource/

⁹⁶ "In the long run we are all dead" said Keynes. This is false, of course: in the long run, we shall stand before God to give an account of our lives. Meanwhile, on Earth, the children of hopeful families are going to greatly outshine the (very few) children of the hopeless...

⁹⁷ With admittedly the occasional surge in mass murder, mass theft, and crowd-pleasing lies. See <http://mises.org/daily/6479/Hitleramprsqus-Hero> for an important step down into the modern rot.

If they don't kill each other first.

Fratricidal war is unlikely right now, as all are united against the fading Third Imperium and its sterile and fruitless Universal Church. But what happens after the Imperium fades from the scene – or is pushed out? Now, THAT'S the central question that drives this entire alternate universe!

Let's see if the PCs can become the peacemakers they need to be....

But despite this, the Roman Catholics, the Jews, and the Muslims* show them up in various ways. Just as it was a Mormon who refuse to step on the name of Christ in Florida – and was automatically failed in the class for doing so (while the mindless Christians in the room quickly jumped to Obey Authority)... just as it is the Shintoists in Japan who best live out care and concern for their neighbor (and not the Christians of America, quick to loot and kill whenever there's an earthquake)⁹⁸ ... so the other religions of Hebrin can put the followers of Christ to shame.

On Hebrin, Christian failings can be placed under different categories vis-à-vis the various religions:

Regarding Islam*: When someone wants a Hebrinite business partner who can be completely trusted to keep his word that man will turn to a local Muslim* long before he turns to an Ultra-Orthodox. The Ultra-Orthodox can be relied on to try to use weasel words and loopholes to try and break his promises, while the Muslim* will stick to his word through thick and thin. Which man would you rather do business with?

Regarding Jewry: If you want the very lowest prices with satisfactory levels of quality, the people of Hebrin prefer the Jews to the slacker/rip-off behaviour of the Ultra-Orthodox. The local Jews actually know the value of repeat business and a decent reputation, while the Ultra-Scammers just want to Make Money Fast. Sure, the fast talkers can flourish for a while, but the Laws of God eventually catch up with them, just as it does with everyone else.

Regarding Roman Catholics: When it comes to standing up against the Imperial Catholics, the Romans are famous for their courage and daring, while the Ultra-Orthodox are known for their boasting in the bar and their absence from the field. Cowardice and a fearful attitude invite contempt and disrespect, and sad to say, it is often well-earned and justified when it comes to the Ultra-Orthodox Christians.

The PCs, of course, get to be Ultra-Orthodox Christians. How they change the opinion of the other religious believers – and get their co-religionists to shape up and stop bringing shame to the name of Christ – is up to them.

The Referee is invited to tailor the consequences of failure to *perfectly* fit the laziness, arrogance, shortsightedness, and craven attitudes of the Ultra-Orthodox PCs. Even assuming genuine repentance, they will have to *prove* their change of heart for a long time before highly skeptical observers...

This repentance is only the 'necessary preliminaries' to the real test. If the PCs can't pull the off, then the Referee shall grind the PCs underneath his heel – as the direct, logical, and predictable result of their pig-headedness. "What was done in secret shall be proclaimed from the housetops."

Modeling the Present in the Future: Decision Time

The real test comes on deciding the correct time to separate from the Imperium.

Imperial Catholics insist that it is a grievous sin to even entertain the idea of secession from God's Chosen Rulers, the Empress and the Pope. While they are long past their heyday on Hebrin, they still have enough support from the aristocracy, the upper reaches of the bureaucracy, the remaining loyalist elements of the general population,

⁹⁸ Just another example that caught my eye recently:

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Pushy+passengers+Japan+help+free+woman+stuck+between+train/8691559/story.html> Let me suggest that this is more pleasing to God than 50 safe & trite sermons on Loving your Neighbour, or the latest plea for more State Assistance... a.k.a. taking money from people you don't like, and giving it to people you do like, while pocketing 50% for handling.

and the Travelling communities (non-Hebrinite interstellar merchants and military folk) in the major startowns to guarantee that a price will be paid for any attempt at secession – even if the Imperial Count and his military forces side with the secessionists, something that is far from certain.

The other groups of the world are far more open to the idea. Local Muslims*, led by their sheiks, imams, and clan heads, focus on the ‘not too early, and not too late’ aspect of the issue, while populist Romans Catholics with mass followings – typically priests working close to the people, small businessmen, city bosses and labour organizers – are already looking for ways to accumulate more money, manpower, and experienced leadership for the inevitable showdown. The Jewish leaders – generally rabbis, various merchant princes, and respected scholars and intellectuals – want to make sure that they are on the winning side, whatever that turns out to be: ‘survival first, ideology second.’⁹⁹ There is no real group hierarchy universally recognized among the Ultra-Orthodox, with every small group, congregation, and meeting-place making their own decision: but there are widely read pundits and philosophers who shape the tone of the debate.

We see how natural it is to almost all men to be the more courageous and confident the more they possess of riches, power and military forces. The people of God, therefore, here protest that they do not place their hope, as is the usual way with men, in their military forces and warlike apparatus, but only in the aid of God.

— John Calvin, Commentary on Psalm 20:7

This article assumes that the PCs are tied to the Ultra-Orthodox point of view, as it makes decision-making more interesting. All the other groups will follow the lead of a given hierarchy, but there is no set of masters over the Ultra-Orthodox. Without vetting by a given hierarchy (there is no formal ordination or seminary to insure ideological compliance), but only a congregation’s vote for a leader, the market choosing and dumping business, and women selecting men to be husbands and fathers (after said men pay a substantial dowry to the woman’s family), power is very diffuse and amorphous among the Ultra-Orthodox.

The Ultra-Orthodox population is effectively Calvinistic, with a divine and unchanging Law-World mediated by a variety of authorities; since there is a variety of governments (state, church, family) all of whom are outside the power of all the others – a.k.a. the State can’t tell any given Family what to do in their own affairs, and vice-versa – building a consensus is a long and difficult undertaking. Many men have attempted to transcend these divisions, but all have floundered on the relentless scepticism and suspicion of the average believer has towards both political promises and the supposed integrity of these power-seekers.

There are benefits to this: for example, as there is no Mighty Man who Guides the Nation, there is no possibility of some loon destroying the nation in the manner that multiple socialist dictators destroyed several nations in the 20th century. Laws and rulings that are seen as unjust or overstepping their bounds are simply ignored, or formally nullified. And as there is no single head (excluding Christ), there is no mortal shepherd who can be killed, bought, or corrupted.

On the other hand, dispersed leadership can cause co-ordination problems in a time of war, which a violent rebellion against the Imperium means. A peaceful secession is preferable, and could get support from the other religions: but men love the power and excitement of violence, and long to give up responsibility for their own lives to some mighty and handsome king who will save them. In the current situation, it is the Jews who are most open to a peaceful secession, or even just greater autonomy under the Imperial banner. The populist Roman Catholics have the deepest hatred for Imperial Catholics, and are most enthusiastic for a violent, vengeful resolution to those who killed their pope and many Terra believers. The Muslims* have a long-established preference for peaceful trade, and have a strong sense of correct timing, and so are in no rush for war and death.

Note that, even as the PC’s talk to various leaders and members of other religions, the bad reputation of Christians continues to trail them: “promise-breaking, boastful, cowardly, greedy – and aggressive proselytizers, too!” They will continually have to push their fellow believers to live up to what they should be, while at the same time

⁹⁹ Yes, the other factions mock the Jews as opportunistic. But, the Jews see themselves as the smallest of the Terran peoples, and refuse to risk their existence on a throw of a dice and the promises of a politician.

working to judge the right time to abandon the Imperium, to determine if violence is justified or not, or even reconsider secession and persuade the Imperial government to grant more autonomy instead.

Of course, as the PCs start keeping their promises, grow in both personal humility and courage in the face of evil, and take personal responsibility to do what's right (paying the price in blood, honour, money, and time), they will find that their proselytising efforts – and the respect and authority they are given – starts to grow and grow.

An additional factor: while the Roman Catholics, with their deep antipathy to the Imperial Catholics, are eager to get the rebellion going, the other local religions are not so eager for the violence to begin. 'Any relationship between how you think a war is going to end, and how it actually ends, is strictly coincidental.' And what was the worth of the war, if all you get is the replacement of a dying decadent empire which must rule her subjects lightly with some howling religious tyrants, fresh-faced, full of drive, and eager to spread the slaughter across the stars? Even the much-vaunted American Revolution ended up with a more controlling and taxing authority up-close and personal, instead of the barely-there government of the First British Empire, governed from some out-of-touch authority thousands of miles away...

"Why the rush? Just wait a generation, and you'll get everything you want on a silver platter – without the need of a single murder." "Oh, you Ultra-Orthodox coward, tell me another!" "Are you *that* eager to kill?"

There are several differences between the local form of Islam (called Islam*) and that created in 7th century Arabia in reality.

Among the differences:

- The Blessed Guide is deliberately left Unnamed: just as his face is hidden in all art, so his name is kept unrecorded, and is now lost to history.
- The concept of dhimmitude does not exist in Islam*: "One God, One Law"
- It is permissible to leave Islam*: a shameful act in the religion, but not a warrant for execution;
- There are no forced conversions in Islam*. Holy Wars are only possible to insure Islamic rule of the Arabian Peninsula: there is no warrant for external conquest of infidel lands.
- And most importantly, the Arab conquests were restricted to their peninsula in this timeline. Neither the Byzantines, nor the Persians, nor the (ahistorical) Kingdom of Ægypt fell to the Islamic* invaders in this timeline. To retain their independence from these empires, the Arabs turned to trade, strong balance-of-power politics (much like England using her wealth to keep the continent divided), and innovation military, religious, medical, etc.
- Thus, the emphasis of gold, strong contracts and good business sense in this Islam*, over swords, religious imperialism, and violently enforced conformity/submission in actual Islam. There is also a far stronger welcoming of learning: the very possibility of "Boko Haram" – "Against Western Learning", a violent, explicitly anti-Christian Islamic insurgency of ignorance in Nigeria – is as impossible in the "County and Churches" timeline as a Jewish book-burning, school-smashing insurgency led by rabbis would be in the real world. Indeed, the Jewish respect for knowledge has led to their strong dominance in the fields of science, law, business, and politics.¹⁰⁰

However, there is a small but growing group of jihadi who dream of The Rule of the Righteous among the stars. There is no concept of dhimmitude in this universe's version of Islam, so there would still be only one law for both believer and unbeliever in the local version of Shari'a: but it would be Islamic* Law that will rule all, and execution awaits those who leave Islam*, insult Islam*, it's unnamed Blessed Guide, or challenge the right of Muslims* to rule Infidels Strangers. How the PCs react to this environment is up to them.

¹⁰⁰ Guess which group serious Christians should imitate. Hint: Jesus gave far more parables on proper wealth-building techniques than He did on Heaven, and was obviously very well learned in the Law and the Prophets, while explicitly paying taxes to the pagan Roman Empire. And of course, His disciples – including the Apostle Paul (another learned man, who preferred to run his own portable business than depend on church donations) – followed the example of the Master they worshiped, as history shows. (Did you seriously expect them to do otherwise?) Lesson learned: leave the killer visionaries to their blood-soaked dreams: Christians must do what God commands.

“We Die With Gratitude”

An extract from Jesus Freaks: Martyrs, pages 109-110

Chiu-Chin-Hsiu and Ho-Hsiu-Tzu
Jiangxi, Mainland China
During the Red Guard Era, 1966-69

The two Christian girls waited in the Chinese prison yard for the announced execution. A fellow prisoner who watched the scene from his prison cell described their faces as pale but beautiful beyond belief: infinitely sad but sweet. Humanly speaking, they were fearful. But Chiu-Chin-Hsiu and Ho-Hsiu-Tzu had decided to submit to death without renouncing their faith.

Flanked by renegade guards, the executioner came with a revolver in his hand. It was their own pastor! He had been sentenced to die with the two girls. But, as on many other occasions in Church history, the persecutors worked on him, tempting him. They promised to release him if he would shoot the two girls. He accepted.

The girls whispered to each other, then bowed respectfully before their pastor. One of them said, “Before you shoot us, we wish to thank you heartily for what you have meant to us. You baptized us, you taught us the ways of eternal life, you gave us holy communion with the same hand in which you now hold the gun.

“You also taught us that Christians are sometimes weak and commit terrible sins, but they can be forgiven again. When you regret what you are about to do to us, do not despair like Judas, but repent like Peter. God bless you, and remember that our last thought was not one of indignation against your failure. Everyone passes through hours of darkness.

“May God reward you for all the good you have done to us. We die with gratitude.”

They bowed again.

The pastor’s heart was hardened. He shot the girls.

What do you think happened to the pastor?

Go ahead. Guess.

To find out, you’ll have to get the book. I recommend www.persecution.com as your source. What I want to point out here is not so much how bad things can *really* get, but the essentially alien – previous generations would have said otherworldly – reaction of the girls to their coming death.

Sure, Traveller is fundamentally a story-driven game played out on a massive canvass, but the intense Traveller Referee has to really grasp what it means to be an alien, how to truly *think different* – and the inevitable consequences of this strange viewpoint. The sci-fi example that comes to my mind is the Mediator in Larry Niven’s The Mote in God’s Eye, who kills her charge Midshipman Whitbread because he could not commit suicide.

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