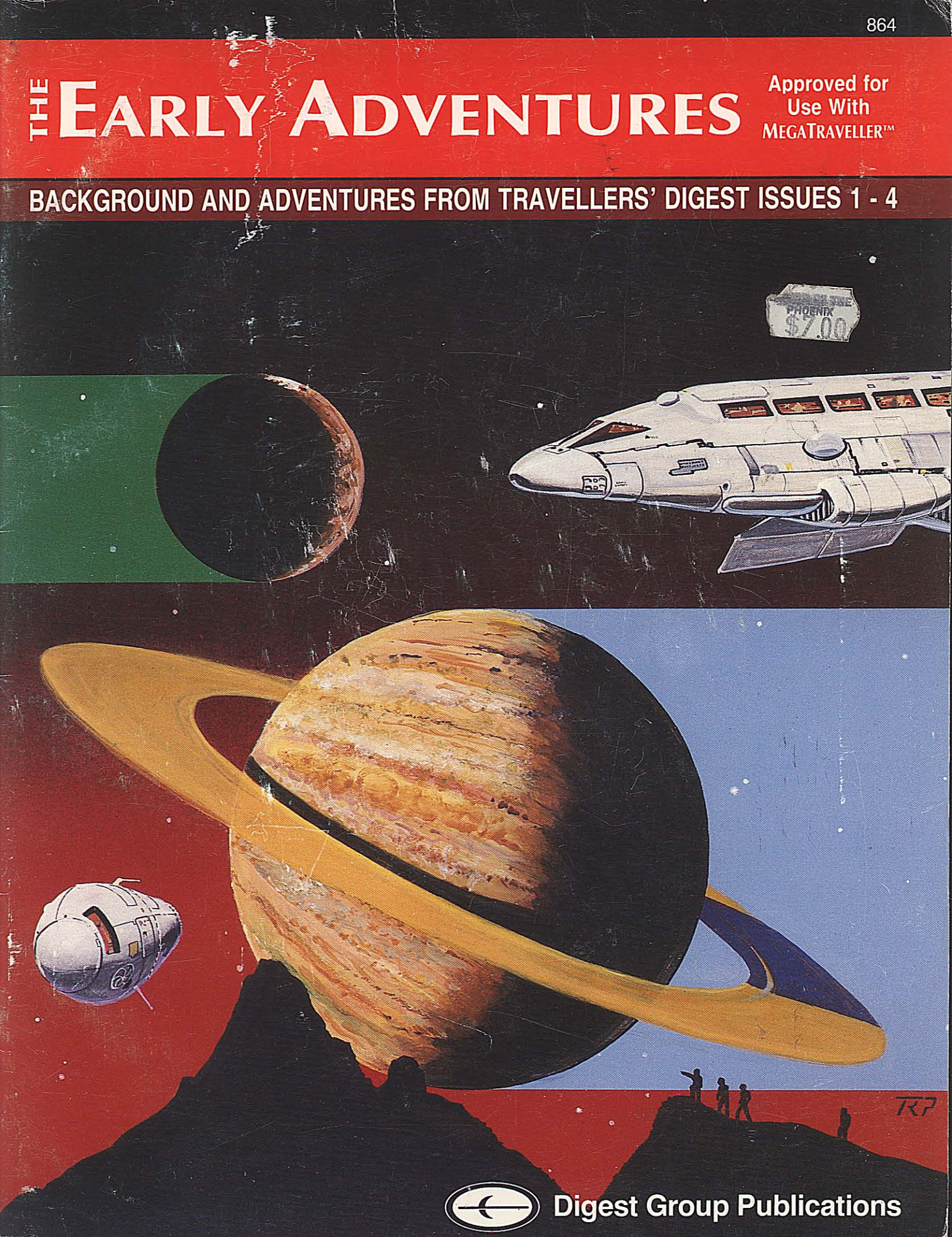


# THE EARLY ADVENTURES

Approved for  
Use With  
MEGATRAVELLER™

BACKGROUND AND ADVENTURES FROM TRAVELLERS' DIGEST ISSUES 1 - 4

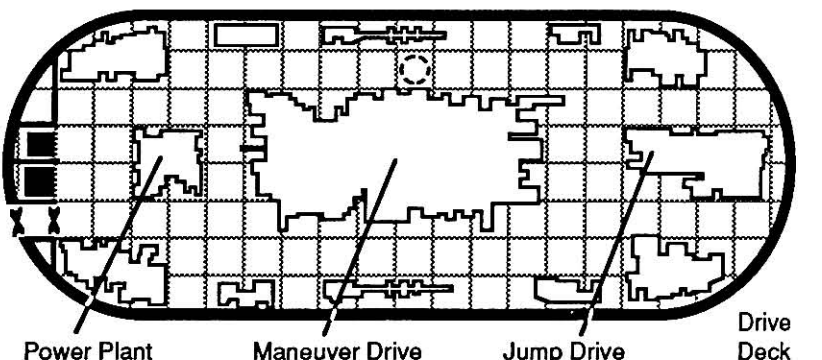
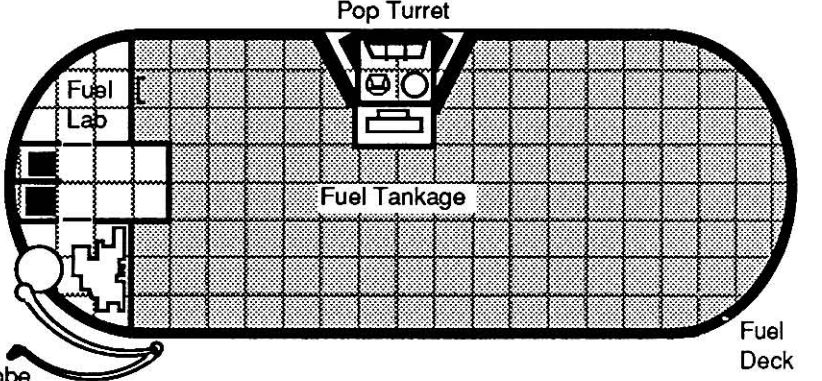
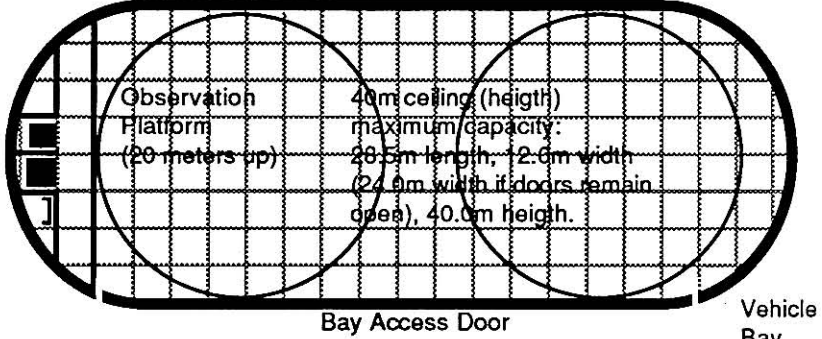
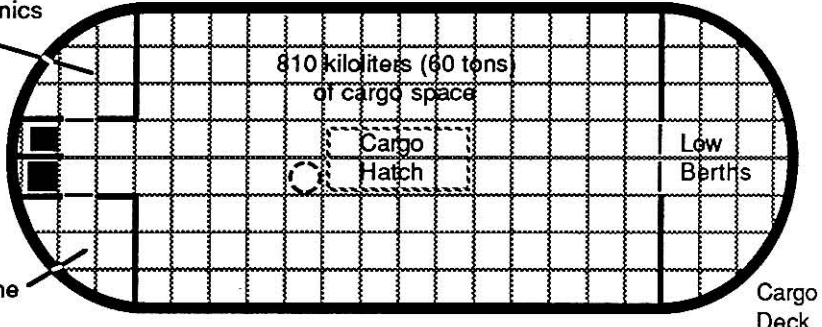
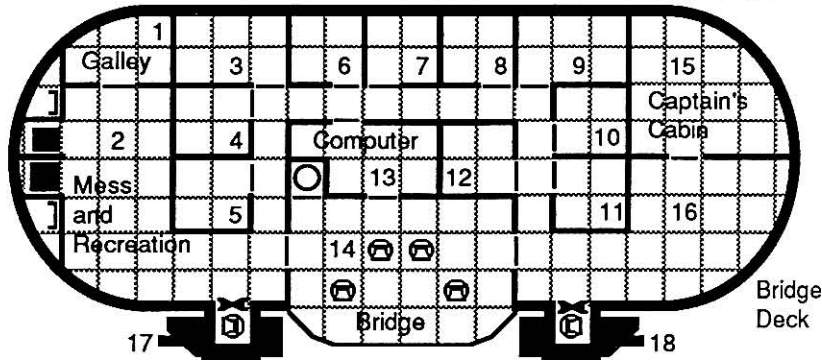
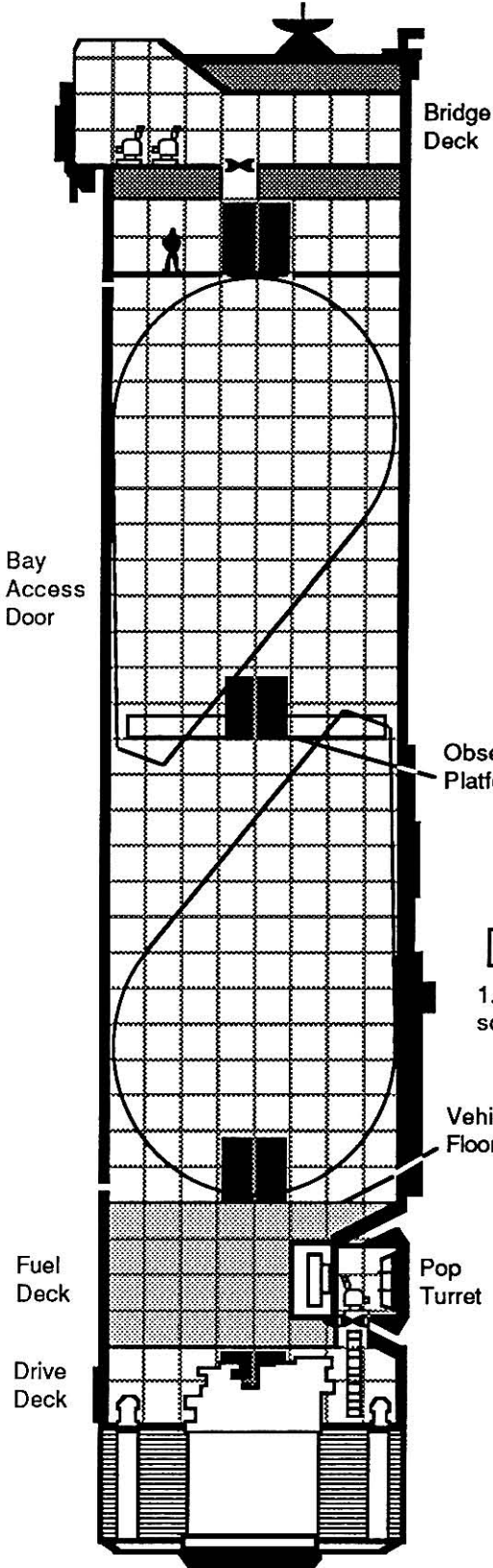


Digest Group Publications

TRP



# Express Boat Tender



- Deck Plan Symbols**
- Bulkhead
  - Interior Wall
  - Sliding Door
  - Maintenance Hatch
  - Lift Shaft
  - Iris Valve
  - Iris Valve, floor
  - Iris Valve, overhead

1.5 meter squares

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# The *EARLY ADVENTURES*

Here is a special reprint from issues 1 to 4 of the *Travellers' Digest* magazine. Nothing states the purpose of this product better than our original desires as expressed for our new magazine way back in issue 1:

"Welcome to the *Travellers' Digest*. Our goal in this issue (and every issue) is to make **Traveller** even more enjoyable for referees and players. To accomplish this end, the *Travellers' Digest* will endeavor to add color and flesh out details of the **Traveller** universe.

"Every issue will contain a feature adventure. Our itinerary? A 'Grand Tour' of the Imperium: starting in the Spinward Marches, you'll travel to Vland, Capitol, Terra, the Aslan Hierate, and across the Great Rift via the Jump-5 Route. Naturally, there will be plenty of stops along the way; you'll meet all the major races face to face, and many of the minor ones (including some you've never heard of).

"This quest introduces you to four fascinating characters: a scout, a journalist, a scientist, and an almost-perfected pseudo-biological robot.

"There are new worlds and cultures for you to explore. As we move from sector to sector, you'll find maps and detailed background data.

"Best of all, every issue is officially approved for use with **Traveller** by Game Designers' Workshop, so you are assured of consistency with the rest of the **Traveller** universe."

Those of you who have been with us since the early days know just how true the last statement about our official status is. A significant portion of the material printed in those early issues of the *Travellers' Digest* has found its way into GDW **Traveller** products, most notably Book 8, *Robots*, and of course, **MegaTraveller**. We're thrilled to have made the impact that we have—after all, we're just ardent **Traveller** fans made good.

In the *Early Adventures* we've reprinted only material that has not appeared in print elsewhere. And we have upgraded all the reprinted material to **MegaTraveller** standards. It's like it's brand new again—so we hope you enjoy the *Early Adventures* as much as we have enjoyed producing it.

## BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that these adventures will be administered by a referee who has read through them, and who is familiar with both the adventures and the rules for **MegaTraveller**. The **MegaTraveller** rules are all that is re-

quired. As usual, paper, pencils, six-sided dice, square-grid graph paper, and a hand calculator will prove helpful during an adventure session.

*Optional References:* Additional helpful information may be found in:

- The Atlas of the Imperium;
- Vargr, Alien Module 3;
- Zhodani, Alien Module 4.

The only background information required for this adventure is contained in this issue of *The Travellers' Digest*.

## GENERAL STANDARDS

These adventures take place in the universe published and described by a multitude of **Traveller** products. Further, it is important to note that these adventures are set in the "Classic Traveller" era (circa 1100 to 1105), which is about 15 years prior to the current **MegaTraveller** time period of circa 1120. Emperor Strephton has not yet been assassinated, and the political climate among the worlds of the Imperium is one of lackadaisical complacency.

The Imperium is a huge human-dominated stellar empire encompassing several hundred light-years of our segment of the Milky Way galaxy 30 centuries in the future.

A sector is a 32 by 40 parsec (1 parsec = 3.26 light-years) administrative area of the Imperium. A sector is subdivided into sixteen subordinate areas called subsectors. Each subsector is 8 by 10 parsecs in size.

Worlds are, by convention, listed with their name followed by a slash and the name of their subsector location. For example, Jode/Pretoria refers to the world Jode in the Pretoria subsector.

## CREDITS FOR THE *EARLY ADVENTURES*

Adventure 1..... Joe Fugate, Gary Thomas  
Adventure 2..... Nancy Parker, Robert Parker  
Adventure 3..... Gary Thomas, Joe Fugate  
Adventure 4..... Gary Thomas

Library Data..... Nancy Parker, Robert Parker

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**THE CHARACTERS**

These adventures are intended for the characters listed below. Even though the characters listed are all male, feel free to change any or all of the genders as desired. The character data is listed using the **MegaTraveller** format.

**Akidda Laagiir, Journalist**

858AA6 Age 41 6 terms Cr 31,000  
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav  
Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Ad-  
min-1, Brawling-1, Computer-0  
Holocrystal Recorder  
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet,  
High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar  
Born: 319-1058

**Dur Telemon, Scout**

B7A856 Age 34 3 terms Cr 65,000  
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1,  
Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1, Gam-  
bling-1, Brawling-1, Computer-0  
Auto Pistol  
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet,  
High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar  
Born: 038-1067

**Dr. Theodor Krenstein, Scientist**

495FC9 Age 57 10 terms Cr 300,000  
Robotics-5, Leader-3, JOT-2,  
Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1,  
Electronics-1, Medical-1, Me-  
chanical-1  
Hand Computer (TL15), Electronic  
Tool Kit, Robot AB-101  
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm,  
Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High  
Stellar  
Born: 173-1042

**Aybee Wan Owen, Valet**

*Apparent Stats:*  
8D9C78 Age 19 0 terms Cr 0  
Medic-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehi-  
cle-1, Laser Welder-1  
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm,  
Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar  
Born: 049-1081

*Actual Robot Profile:*

**AB-101, Pseudobiological Robot**  
Constructed in 1091 by Dr. Theodor Krenstein  
561x2-A2-PM327-FDC7(J) Cr11,970,600 319kg  
Fuel=78.1 Duration=21.7 TL=15  
7/17 (Jack)  
Head (10%), 2 Lt arms  
2 Eyes (+1 light intens), 2 ears, voder, touch sensors  
Pwr int, brain int, TL 15 holo recorder, Lt laser welder  
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Valet-1, Laser  
Welder-1, Rescue-1, Emotion Simulation

**PLAYING THE CHARACTERS**

Some of an adventure's most memorable moments are those that occur as the players play out their character's

roles in a believable manner. To aid in this, we provide the following background details and role-playing pointers for the player characters.

**AKIDDA LAAGIIR**

*Position:* Senior Assistant Editor, Mora World Review.

Akidda Laagiir started at age 18 as a copy boy with the *Mora World Review*; his friendly face and ability to gain the trust of others contributed to his steady career progress.

Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against "the system", preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things. This boldness (especially in interview situations) has also contributed favorably to his career.

His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to a strange locale or culture—a skill that has saved his neck on more than one occasion.

Like most writers, he is consumed with curiosity, and when the *Travellers' Digest* journalism contest was held again in 1098, he was among the first to apply. His piece was entitled 'The Imperial Frontier: The Next Millenium.' In it he discussed the spinward frontier sectors of Deneb, Spinward Marches, Trojan Reach, and Reft and their role in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1,000 years. On 258-1099, he received the announcement that he had won the coveted *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

After a week to put things in order, he left Mora for the central offices of the *Travellers' Digest* on Deneb. His route took him through Aramis/Aramis, so he could visit his nephew Dur Telemon, stationed on the Scout base there.

*Role-Playing Notes:* Akidda's strong interview skill indicates he has a real nose for a good story: to play him otherwise would be untrue to his character. His natural curiosity makes him likely to pursue "trouble", rather than run from it.

The counter-balance to Akidda's tendency to seek out such trouble is his streetwise skill, which enables him to lessen the harmful results of an otherwise awkward situation. His streetwise skill may enable him to "stumble" onto a valuable source of information the others would overlook.

Keeping this in mind, the referee should use the NPCs encountered by Akidda as those with the most valuable information to the group, as a result of Akidda's abilities. Akidda's phenomenal Interview-5 skill gives him tremendous insight when dealing with people. It was this skill that enabled him to quickly sense something odd about Aybee's behavior (see the adventure *Of Xboats and Friends*).

**DUR TELEMON**

*Position:* Fleet Support in the Scout Office on Aramis.

Dur Telemon was *born* into the Scout service. His father was in the Scout service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers had served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure.

The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager—his father's service in the war was a source of pride for



the entire family and deepened Dur's love for the scouts.

Dur's individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a 'routine' mapping expedition on Pannet/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Krenstein's life. Neither of them is overly emotional about it, but it was that initial chance encounter that grew into a respect and friendship between the two men over the years.

Dur's second and third terms were spent in District 268 and the Five Sisters subsectors doing various planetary surface and orbital surveys. During these surveys, Dur learned much about staying alive and living off the land in unusual environments. Halfway through his fourth term, he was transferred from his field post in the Exploration Branch to a bureaucratic position in Fleet Support. Dur is contemplating not re-enlisting at the end of his fourth term.

*Role-Playing Notes:* Dur is the brash adventurer of the group and as such he is the least likely to fear physical confrontations or physical discomfort. He is also the most likely of the group to act without giving due consideration to the consequences. He has genuine concern for others and is the most likely to risk his life to save someone.

#### DR. THEODOR KRENSTEIN

*Position:* Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics at Rhylanor Institute of Technology (on sabbatical leave).

Dr. Theodor Krenstein is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the 'ologies' in between.

Born on the planet Rhylanor, he entered the Rhylanor Institute of Technology at the age of eighteen, eventually receiving advanced degrees in computer science and robotics. He went on to serve three terms as Dean of the School of Robotic Science at RIT, after which he was appointed to the Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position. He is the author of 12 holocrystal publications and over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, in addition to holding more than 250 Imperial military patents for his inventions and robotics work. Despite his academic success, he has become bored with what he has been doing, and realizing his age, he has taken an extended sabbatical from teaching in order to make forays through the Deneb Sector.

Among his many pursuits, Dr. Krenstein has aided the Scouts in developing robots for planetary surface surveys. During a test in 1090 on Pannet/Rhylanor, members of a disgruntled anti-technist group kidnapped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout service didn't meet their demands. A young scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer raiding team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the Doctor.

After this incident, the Doctor constructed his servant, bodyguard, and experiment in synaptic learning, 'Aybee'.

*Role-Playing Notes:* Dr. Krenstein, the "Mr. Fix-it" of the group, contributes valuable analytical skills. Together with Aybee, the doctor may contribute unusual insights Dur or even Akidda might otherwise overlook.

The doctor is slightly mischievous in the manner in which he conceals Aybee's true robotic nature—a source of much fun if role-played completely. The doctor seeks new experi-

ences and knowledge for both he and his robot, so he will pursue adventure suggestions readily. For example, his real weakness on Jode is archaeological pursuits.

Keep the doctor's age in mind—he is the least able of the group physically, although Aybee helps to make up for this.

#### AYBEE WAN OWEN

*Position:* Personal servant and protégé of Dr. Krenstein.

AB-101, or "Aybee", is a pseudobiological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. Aybee's apparent UPP is what Dr. Krenstein wishes Aybee to project to others based upon his programming (he is actually capable of much greater values); his intelligence and education are estimated from his computer hardware and software; and his social class is based upon his position with Dr. Krenstein.

Although Aybee's programming gives him certain basic abilities, he lacks true artificial intelligence and thus can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level. Aybee's 'weapon' is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. Many Imperial worlds specify standards for robot-installed weapons, and Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee so that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are generally not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use Aybee as a weapon at short range.

*Role-Playing Notes:* Without a doubt, Aybee is the most unusual of the quartet. He is also the most difficult to role-play effectively.

Aybee is the most valuable piece of equipment the group has. He can record situations in 3-D holograph form (10 minutes' worth, after which it is relegated to 2-D storage), then play them back for future study at the group's leisure. He will quietly observe a situation and report his findings to the doctor, keeping the doctor's safety as his priority.

Aybee is a good source of logical analysis, although his conclusions are devoid of any creativity or revelations beyond the obvious (although sometimes the obvious can seem like a revelation.) Play him as a naïve, knowledge-hungry character. He should make errors in judgment when a situation relies heavily on intuition. He is likely to miss subtle innuendos that humans are so prone to use.

Strangers who find out that Aybee is a robot may react negatively (increase the difficulty of any interpersonal task one level). Most will never suspect from casual observation that Aybee is nothing but a machine.

To determine Aybee is a robot at close (1.5m) range:

Difficult, Robotics, Interview, 2 min

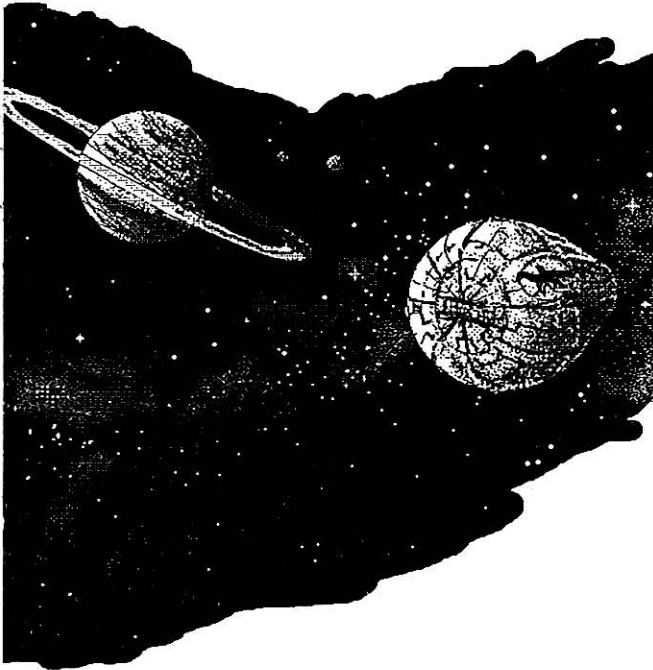
*Referee:* Roll once during the first encounter. Thereafter roll daily if the character constantly spends extended periods near Aybee. Otherwise, ignore this task.

Aybee's power plant is a closed hydrogen/open oxygen fuel cell. Aybee carries his own hydrogen supply, but the hydrogen is oxidized by oxygen from the air. Aybee is thus much like a true human in this respect—if he loses his oxygen supply, his power plant will not function. Air is "pulled" into his power plant by a respirator that moves his "rib cage" in a manner similar to human breathing action. Aybee's fuel cell operation produces a harmless waste by-product which must be eliminated from time to time: pure water.



# Of Xboats and Friends

ADVENTURE NUMBER 1



"...the word "boomworld" brings to mind the excitement and adventure of a frontier, but for Jode, the word used should be 'tameworld'..."

— Akidda Laagir, 1100 from 'On Jode/Pretoria' in the *Travellers' Digest*

## INTRODUCTION

Of Xboats and Friends deals with a *Travellers' Digest* journalist and his companions as they travel to Jode/Pretoria in search of a story when some strange events occur involving an old friend.

**Chapters:** This adventure is in several chapters, most of which are material to be read only by the referee.

The chapters "It's a Small Galaxy!" and "Dinner in the Lounge" introduces the players and the situation. This section may be used one of two ways: either read it to the players, or have them each read their characters' parts. The idea in either case is to acquaint them with the characters and their personalities.

**Dates:** All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 063-1100.

**Place:** This adventure starts on Aramis/Aramis in the Aramis subsector of the Spinward Marches, briefly moving to Pretoria/Pretoria in the Deneb Sector before the main events occur on Jode/Pretoria.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following non-player characters are a part of this adventure.

### Neric Andor, Scout

92389A Age 46 7 terms Cr n/a

Computer-3, Electronic-3, Commo-2, Pilot-1, Mechanical-1  
Starport A, Asteroid, Vacuum Atm, High Pop, Mod Law,

High Stellar

Born:106-1055

**Position:** Communications specialist on board the xboat tender Albany in Jode/Pretoria system.

Neric Andor, the orphaned son of an interstellar merchant from the world Glisten in the Spinward Marches, was assigned to his current position two months ago. His duties in the scout service have taken him all over the Deneb and Spinward Marches sectors; his friendship with Dur Telemon dates from Dur's second term of service, when they worked together in District 268 in the Spinward Marches.

Neric is a good friend of Dur's—the "older brother" Dur never had (although Akidda fills this role, too). Dur and Neric risked their lives together in the scouts, and each has saved the other's life more than once. Like Dur, Neric is adventurous and has a genuine concern for others.



Included here is a picture of Neric that Dur took when they served together in District 268 several years ago.

## IT'S A SMALL GALAXY!

Akidda Laagir had to keep reminding himself that it was true—he had won the *Digest* Touring Award. After 23 weeks, his homeworld of Mora was far away, its blazing sun nothing more than a distant point of light in the heavens. Deneb and the offices of the *Travellers' Digest* were still dozens of parsecs and many, many weeks away.

The Tukera liner *Joy of Glisten* had just dropped out of jump space in the Aramis system; fortunately, the *Digest's* deadline for Akidda's arrival in Deneb was generous enough that he had time for the reunion he planned at this stopover.

Akidda sat in Glisten's passenger lounge enjoying a drink as he watched the world of Aramis grow into a large yellowish globe. Another few hours and he would greet his nephew Dur Telemon, whom he hadn't seen in 13 years—Akidda was 29 and Dur was 22 when Dur joined the Scouts. Dur had returned to Mora once, when his father died in 1090, but Akidda had been on assignment offworld at the time and had missed him. Akidda would make up for that missed meeting now...

Akidda hurried to the Starport Hotel at Aramis Down Starport in Leedor, Aramis's only city.

"Hey, Kidd! Over here!" The source of the voice was easy to spot—Dur stood tall and muscular in his scout uniform. Akidda rushed over, and the two shook hands vigorously.

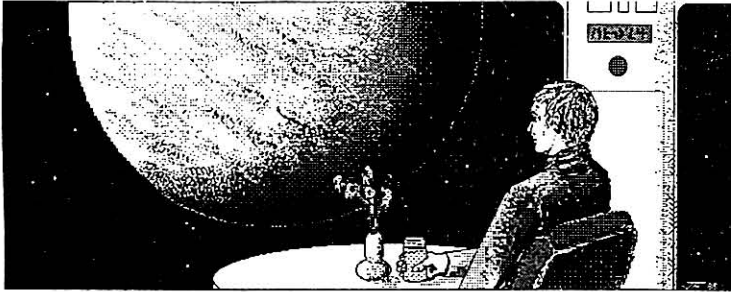
"You look older than I remember you, Dur."

"I was going to say the same thing about you, Kidd, but I was taught to be polite to my elders."

"Thanks a lot. So how've you been, anyway..."

The two talked on and on into the night, Dur with tales of his past adventures and Akidda with his hopes for new exotic experiences to come. Akidda had won the prestigious *Digest* Touring Award, and was now going to work for the *Travellers' Digest*, based in Deneb. Travelling about the Imperium and reporting to the *Digest* on his travels, his articles would "promote understanding of the cultural diversity within the Imperium", according to the *Digest*.





cles would "promote understanding of the cultural diversity within the Imperium", according to the *Digest*.

Dur had enjoyed the challenge and adventure of his previous terms in the Scout Service, but he had just been "promoted" from the field into fleet operations stationed here on Leedor, this dismal underground city tunneled out of the rock.

"If you don't like your new post, why don't you quit the Scouts and travel with me?" Akidda finally suggested.

Dur thought for a moment.

"I'd love to, Kidd, but the problem is finances. I only have enough saved to take me 6 jumps high passage, or 7 mid passage. You know there's no retirement pay for Scouts. I bought an annuity that pays me 4000 credits a year as income, but that's hardly enough to pay my way—I would simply be a burden to you."

The two fell silent again.

"Say, Kidd, did I ever write you about my friend, Neric Andor?"

"No, I don't think so."

"He was an orphan—no real relatives—but the two of us were like brothers. I met him at training camp on Resten. Anyway, I haven't seen him in a couple of years, but I just heard at the base that he's been transferred to Jode/Pretoria, doing xboat duty. So I'll tell you what I'll do, Kidd. I've got quite a bit of leave accumulated, and you know I'm not looking forward to my new assignment. So I'll travel with you as far as Jode. It'll be fun seeing Neric again, and then I'll travel back here after my vacation."

"Sounds okay to me," Akidda said. "Maybe I'll get a story out of the deal."

"You're always the newshound, Kidd. But I wouldn't count on it. From what I've heard, Jode is a pretty dull place."

"But I've never been on an xboat before, Dur."

The scout's face broke into a smile. "I get the idea," he said. "Xboat security is pretty tight, but Neric might be able to twist a few arms for us."

So after a week in Leedor on Aramis, the pair boarded the Tukera Lines passenger vessel *Segan's Pride*, bound for Pretoria. The highlight of the uneventful trip was the skimming of the gas giant in the Teh system for fuel before proceeding to Pretoria.

Pretoria (Deneb 0406 B656967-C) felt more like home to Dur and Akidda, because of its high population. Akidda noticed the heavy Naval presence everywhere and the Law Enforcers with the Imperial Sunburst on their uniforms: a constant reminder of the Rachelean Revolts here 90 years ago. The layover on Pretoria was just a few days.

From there, the pair boarded the Tukera Liner *Spirit of Rhylanor* enroute to Jode. After a few hours onboard the

liner, Dur bumped into an old acquaintance in the Mid Passage deck corridor.

"Cutting classes again, Professor?" Dur asked.

"My, but it's a small galaxy!" Dr. Krenstein exclaimed, obviously glad to see the scout after all these years.

Dur introduced his uncle, Akidda Laagiir, to the Doctor. Dur also told the Doctor about his uncle Akidda and the *Digest* Touring Award.

"I am honored to be in such distinguished company," the Doctor said to Akidda.

"Likewise, Doctor Krenstein", Akidda quickly returned. He was well aware of the doctor's standing in the scientific community.

The doctor told the pair he was on his way back to his room and asked them to join him later in the starlight lounge for dinner. As he turned to leave, he mentioned that he would bring a friend along.

### DINNER IN THE LOUNGE

The doctor met Akidda and Dur in the lounge for dinner and introduced them to his "friend and protégé, Aybee". Dur was puzzled by the doctor's apparent delight with the introduction.

"So, Aybee, you're a student at RIT?" commented Akidda. Aybee glanced over at Doctor Krenstein, who nodded slightly and winked.

"Not exactly, Mr. Laagiir. My full name is actually AB-101, which stands for—".

"My God, you're—a robot!" stuttered Akidda.

"But of course." Aybee flatly remarked, apparently amazed that anyone would think otherwise.

"I should of known," mumbled Dur. The dim light of the lounge added to the deception; as Aybee spoke, Dur could detect no hint of unnaturalness from him.

The doctor was obviously enjoying the whole episode.

"Advanced pseudo-Biological robot, model 101," the doctor added softly. "His basic design was actually produced by one of my colleagues, as model AB-100. I added many refinements and enhancements to the design, and dubbed him AB-101. He's the only one of his kind. I'm careful not to make a scene with him, since some people are uncomfortable around robots, particularly pseudobiological ones.

"Incidentally, I'd appreciate it if you two would keep this our little secret—it would not be to my advantage if Aybee's true nature were common knowledge.

"To tell you the truth, I'm surprised you caught on so quickly, Akidda," the doctor continued. "You have tremendous powers of observation. Most people could spend days, or even weeks around Aybee without noticing he wasn't human."

The rest of the evening's conversation was far from boring.



**JODE/PRETORIA**

**Primary:** Dan-el, spectral class F3 IV. Mass: 2.2 standard. Stellar diameter: 5.28 standard. Luminosity: 14.8 standard.

**Planetary System:** Six major bodies. One inhabited world (Jode, VI). One planetoid belt in system, no empty orbits.

**VI Jode:** Mean orbital radius: 304 million kilometers (2.0 AU). Period: 696.53 days. No satellites. Diameter: 14,470 kilometers. Density: .86. Mass: 1.22 standard. Mean surface gravity: 0.96 G. Rotation period: 21 hours, 20 minutes, 58 seconds. Axial inclination: 2°9'52.8". Albedo: 0.59. Surface atmospheric pressure: 1.6 atm; composition—oxygen-argon-nitrogen mix with .012% chlorine taint, rated EXOTIC IRRITANT: complete head-to-toe protection suggested for periods of extended exposure. Hydrographic percentage: 64%; composition liquid water. Mean surface temperature: 23° C.

Jode (Deneb 0805 A9A6683-B) is a large world on the main Imperial xboat route in the Pretoria subsector. When the Imperium's Second Survey was published in 1065, Jode's UPP was A9A6220-B. Six years later Leavitt Labs, an oceanographic research firm based on Carthage/Pretoria, developed a new combat drug derived from the Jodian salalar. Jode's population has mushroomed since that time, and now numbers over four million.

When one is indoors, breathing purified air and unable to see the sky, it is easy to forget that Jode's atmosphere is tainted. Although the concentration of chlorine (about 120 parts per million) is not high enough for the atmosphere to be corrosive, even short exposures without a mask will cause extreme irritation and permanent lung damage.

Most of the current population of 4 million live in the orbital complex or in sealed surface environments that protect their inhabitants from the irritating effects of the chlorine.

Local plants and animals are inedible to humaniti (not always poisonous but certainly non-nutritive and horrible tasting). Major export items include pharmaceuticals and perfumes refined from sea creatures, and minerals mined in the island archipelagos.

Jode's only major island group, the Festral Archipelago, is all that remains of a sunken continent and the sentient land-dwelling race which inhabited it. No living member of this race survived the geological cataclysm estimated to have taken place 1 million years ago, but archaeologists working underwater have discovered a large number of primitive artifacts. None of Jode's sea dwellers are sentient, although one has behavior and communication patterns reminiscent of the dolphin of Terra or the lasat of Zurr, and some others have well-developed manipulative members. Many of the Festrals also support sea "birds" and a limited land ecology.

Jode has a law level of three, reflecting it's 'boom town' status, and it is not uncommon to see people wearing side-arms. Some harmless offworld compounds are highly toxic to Jode's indigenous animals and are also used defensively by the locals.

The starport in the system is totally orbital. Starship landings on Jode are hazardous because of the constant cloud cover; gusting banks of yellowish clouds can reduce visibility to zero in minutes. Regular shuttle runs are made by pilots who are familiar with the atmospheric conditions and trained in instrument-only landings.

**JODE ORBITAL**

Jode Orbital, high above the inhospitable atmosphere on Jode, is a shining example of what tech level 11 orbital complex design has to offer. The 170 million ton complex has been under construction for the last 18 years and should be completed within the next 2 years.

When completed, the complex will hold over 2.2 million inhabitants. The current population is around 2 million, which is near capacity. Additional statistics of the complex include:

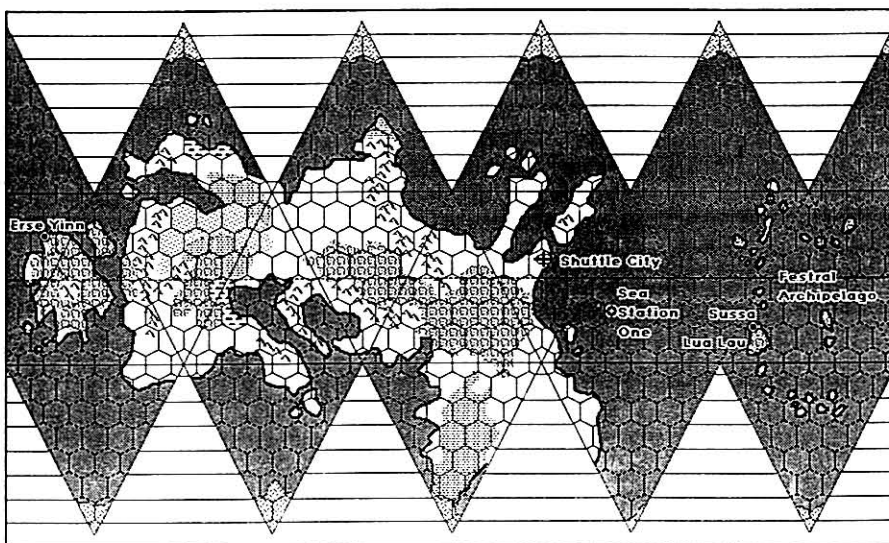
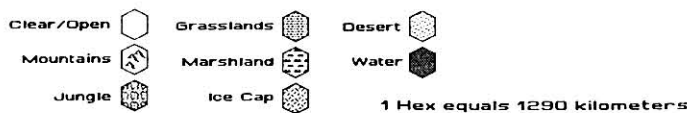
- 5.1 million ton power plant;
- .85 million ton maneuver drive, used to counter orbital decay;
- 11.05 million tons of fuel, enough to last 1 standard year.

Jode Orbital also contains the class A starport facilities, the starship construction yard, Travellers' Aid Society facilities, the bulk of the pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities, and a Vargr trading station. Because of Jode's proximity to Vargr space, 10% of Jode's population is Vargr.

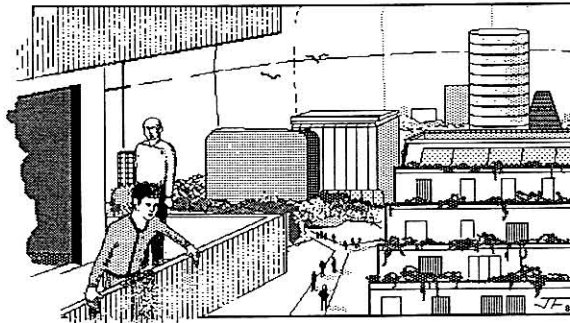
Orbital One, Jode's original space station, has been gutted and is now used as a 500,000 ton fuel depot.

**ARRIVAL INSYSTEM**

When the Spirit of Rhylanor arrives in the Jode system, it will dock at the orbital complex.



The first order of business for the group will probably be to find Dur's friend Neric, and to get a chance to visit express boat facilities in operation. The obvious way to arrange this is to visit the local Scout office.



**AT THE SCOUT OFFICE**

There is no scout base in the Jode system, but there is a small command and recruiting office on Jode Orbital. The office has a central reception area and several adjoining offices, and of course the usual records section.

Inquiring about Neric gives the group his specific station: the express boat tender *Albany*; however, he is currently taking leave on Jode Orbital. The office has no information concerning his present whereabouts, so the group will have to seek him out. Akidda's skills should help with the search.

**RUMORS**

The following rumors are listed according to location and source. A few rumors are special to the feature adventure; others can be used by the referee as the basis for other adventures on Jode. Rumors not essential to the feature adventure can be treated as true or false by the referee.

**In the Scout Office**

A clerk is overheard complaining that orders for supplies from Marz have been filled incorrectly four times recently.

If the group asks, one of the scout office officials can point out several casinos, bars, and restaurants that scouts typically frequent. He can also indicate which hotels Neric might be at. Here is the list:

Name	Class	Notes
Café Lashum	R	good food
Spacer's Inn	SHR	chain, caters to ship crews
Jodeport Hotel	HR	top-of-the-line TAS hostel
Tehn's Casino	SC	popular casino—referee: see below
Blue Jug Bar	S	not recommended
The Meteorite	S	specializes in hardkicking 'hooch'
Station's End	SV	near construction area
Kaga's Place	SC	honest casino, for a change
Sky-High Bar	S	good place to pick a fight
Gvegh Gvrr	V	tavern; name is Vargr dialect for "I'm ready!"
The Pretorian	HR	top quality
Shilaan Hotel	SHRC	nice casino in rundown hotel

**Key:**

- S popular with scouts, merchants, army, navy, marines
- V popular with Vargr
- H hotel
- R restaurant
- C casino

All of the above establishments serve drinks.

*Note:* Aybee should not go inside any casinos, and Dr. Krenstein will not permit this. Casinos of tech level 10 and above typically have extensive hidden sensors to detect

cheating. Aybee would probably set off several alarms.

**LOCATING NERIC**

As the group goes from bar to bar and hotel to hotel, they will remain one step behind Neric. Weave the following rumors into the players' search.

**Vidnet Rumors**

The local Vidnet news reports that Samson Virani, a high official of the Commerce Ministry, has proposed strict marine harvesting quotas to protect certain species. A representative of the Jode Mariners Association has stated "...the fishers are prepared to resist government meddling in our livelihoods. Things have been fine for the last decade—if they stick their noses where they don't belong, we'll all likely be reduced to poverty."

A news bulletin tells of an accident in a surface processing plant. Sabotage is suspected, from a motive of business rivalry or political friction.

The news reports, "It appears a Vargr ship that jumped in-system experienced nav-computer problems and wandered into the planetoid belt. A few hours later, its transponder signal was lost. A full scale search is in progress."

A shuttle advertisement announces that several new ships will go into service soon.

The Provincial Hunt Boat Company announces three new openings for crewmembers. Harpoon experience is desirable, but not necessary.

A new housing area is soon to be completed in Jode Orbital; this should alleviate the overcrowding problem.

**Library Data Available on Archaeology**

A local archaeological journal contains an article in which a local archaeologist claims to have deciphered the language of the extinct Jode sentients.

Taking Jode's archaeological treasures offworld is legal, but the Ministry of Culture's red tape makes it prohibitive.

**Overheard**

There have been reports of rich gemstone finds on an island near Lau Lua.

A local citizen complains, "Outsystem mail is so slow, they must be sending it by solar wind!"

Many surface miners say that small artifacts in good condition will bring enormous prices on Caladib.

A local citizen expresses her hope that her son can get into the Imperial Scout Service when they upgrade Jode's scout office to a full Scout Base. Her companion is greatly surprised to hear that any base is planned.

**Specific People**

A Vidnet technician who deals with xboat personnel says



he finds the new communications specialist touchy and close-mouthed, and irritating to work with.

A panhandler (referee: don't reveal that this NPC is a crook—let the players discover this on their own) offers to sell them some artifacts, supposedly from Jode.

A dealer at Tehn's Casino says Neric Andor is a regular at the card table. Depending on a reaction roll, the players may be warned not to play against two of the regular gamblers when the gamblers are on one of their 'hot streaks'. They never play for long at any one time, and they evidently have enough money that they do not seem to care whether they win or lose, so the dealer recommends that the party play with them at their own risk.

Whocco Tehn himself is tall and dark, and one can occasionally see him watching the casino operations. The dealer knows little about him, other than the fact that he is an 'entrepreneur' from Efate/Regina. Whocco Tehn chooses his employees carefully, and prefers to let them handle the day-to-day operations.

*Referee:* Whocco Tehn is a high-ranking Zhodani noble in charge of the Jode spy operation. The casino is a cover serving several purposes. Most obviously, it is a source of funds and an easy place to launder money from the Zhodani Consulate. It also provides the psionic masters with the ideal opportunity to probe the minds of scouts, and since the games are controlled, the Zhodani decide which scout will win and which scout will lose. When a scout gets in over his head, a loan shark in the employ of the Zhodani will lend the scout money at usurious rates. This provides further opportunities for blackmail and 'favors' of the scouts.

Let the players see Whocco Tehn in the casino, but he will not speak to them. The 'scouts' who visit the players (below) are the two lucky gamblers, but the players will not be aware of this unless they deduce it from circumstantial evidence. The dealer himself is a young Jodian unaware of any of this. If the players return to Whocco Tehn's Casino after the fake scouts' visit, the referee may handle the situation as he desires.

A street poet sings a ballad about the shining of the sun, a rare occurrence on Jode (averages once or twice a year).

### JUST A LITTLE FRIENDLY PERSUASION...

After at least one day of searching for Neric, the group will receive visitors one morning while still in their room. The visitors are two scouts. They ask to see Dur Telemon.

The scouts inform Dur that Neric is involved in classified activities, and they request that Dur not attempt to seek him out. Neric regrets not getting to see his old friend, but Dur should understand the needs of the service. Neric unfortunately expects this assignment to take many months.

*Referee:* Have Aybee's player make a task roll, but don't tell him the difficulty level or what the task roll is for:

To detect that the visitors have a Zhodani accent:  
Routine, Linguistics, Edu, 5 sec.

*Referee:* If Aybee's player is successful, hand him a 3x5 card with the following message: "You detect that the two scouts in the parlor exhibit Zhodani speech patterns. The scouts are probably from Zhodani worlds captured in the last frontier war 16 years ago."

### REFEREE NOTES

The two scouts are not even scouts at all; they are Zhodani imposters (see the section entitled The Plot). An additional optional reference (for the referee only) is Alien Module 4, Zhodani.

At this point the players may choose to confront the scouts immediately with their suspicions. This could lead to combat in which one of the Zhodani will attempt psionic assault. The stats for the two "scouts" are:

#### Jen Rogandi

AC889A Age 42

Psi-10, Telepathy-10, Brawling-2

#### Enerl Katana

66867A Age 38

Psi-10, Telekinesis-10, Brawling-2

Neither is carrying any weapons.

If combat occurs, Aybee will be immune to psionic assaults on the mind. Because of his weight (over 300 kilograms), any attempt to move him by telekinesis will cause the Zhodani to overtax himself and collapse. If necessary, Dr. Krenstein may order the use of Aybee's laser welder.

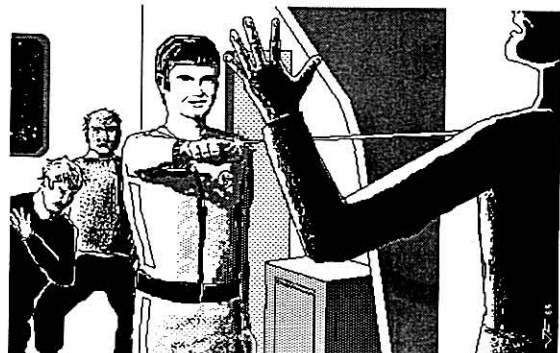
If the Zhodani escape, the players may try to follow them but will lose them in the corridors of the hotel.

If the Zhodani are captured alive, they could be turned in to authorities, or questioned by the players. The Zhodani will attempt suicide rather than reveal their mission.

If the Zhodani are killed, the players have a legal problem. They may dispose of the bodies and conceal the matter or report immediately to the authorities and plead self-defense. They may or may not mention Zhodani. If they do mention Zhodani involvement, they will not be believed. In either case, they will not be detained.

The players may allow the scouts to leave unchallenged. (Jen Rogandi will read Dur's mind to see if Dur believes them, but he will not read the thoughts of the others.) If the players tail the scouts, they will lose them. If they report the incident to the scout office and show holo-prints of the scouts (prepared in private by Aybee), they will learn that the scouts were imposters. They will thereafter have cooperation from the scout office in further investigations.

As to Neric, he has cut his leave short and returned to the express boat tender.



## THE PLOT

The coordinated defense of the 11,000 worlds of the Imperium depends on the long, tenuous communication routes of the xboats. The Zhodani Consulate is well aware of this, and in anticipation of another Frontier War, the Consulate would like to disrupt this lifeline in its route toward their border. Patient pursuit of this policy has yielded to the Zhodani a most valuable prize: effective control of the Jode xboat station.

Access to military communications between Capitol and the Jewell subsector in the Spinward Marches is only the first result of this mission. By sending false messages and altering genuine transmissions, the Zhodani hope to make significant inroads into the personnel and policy decisions for the military units stationed along the Imperial-Zhodani border.

Jode, a "boom" planet in the Pretoria subsector, is the home of a typical xboat station, much like any other xboat station in the Imperium. Every few hours, an express boat drops out of jump space on the edge of the Jode system, and within minutes of its arrival, it transmits its bundle of messages to the xboat tender. Sophisticated onboard computers cull out incoming messages for the Jode system, add outgoing messages, and beam this new bundle back to another fully-fueled xboat standing by for a jump outsystem.

How has the Zhodani Consulate infiltrated this system of operations? After carefully studying Imperial xboat operations, the Zhodani decided upon their course of action: substitute a Zhodani agent for the communications officer aboard an xboat tender. By acting as communications officer, the Zhodani would have privileged access to the Imperial security codes necessary for reading xboat messages. Further, by secretly delaying messages, he could allow his comrades to alter messages before they are retransmitted from the tender on their way outsystem.

After a painstaking search, the Consulate found just the man for this difficult job: a young Zhodani noble who could alter internal computer memories at will. The Consulate spent years training him, until he mastered this Special ability. The Consulate saw that with it he could successfully pass the tech level 15 metabolic scanning examination required of Imperial personnel reporting for xboat duty assignments.

Then they saw their chance. Zhodani spies in the Aramis subsector learned of a communications officer with no immediate relatives to be transferred to the xboat station servicing Jode/Pretoria. The rest of the operation moved quickly, in contrast to the years of patient study, practice, and waiting: the Imperial officer is eliminated en route to Jode, and the Zhodani agent arrives instead. The metabolic scan verifies his (stolen) identification papers, and the Zhodani takes his place on the bridge of a Jode system xboat tender.

This Zhodani agent thus poses as Neric Andor. The agent has Psi-12, Awareness-12, and Special-12 (as just described), in addition to the skills listed in Neric Andor's stats in the introduction. Here's his picture.



## ENDING THE ADVENTURE

When confronted by the players and recognized as an imposter, the Zhodani must attempt to salvage as much of his mission as possible. His options include: bluffing it out, since computer metabolic scans will continue to back him up; counter charges against the players; or suicide, taking as many Imperials with him as possible. Sabotage of the tender's fusion power plant would accomplish this, causing a thermonuclear explosion to destroy all evidence and witnesses.

If the Zhodani is brought to trial, the delay until a capital ship can be brought will allow evidence to surface proving that tampering of xboat messages has occurred. The Zhodani will be found guilty and sentenced to death. The rest of the spy ring may or may not be caught; in any case Whocco Tehn will escape. The mission will be scrapped.

The referee should attempt to bring the adventure to a positive conclusion so that the players live and are rewarded for exposing the plot. The referee can make good use of NPCs to help the characters arrive at and implement routes of escape.

## THE REWARD

Since it would be detrimental to Imperial security if it were known publicly that a Zhodani spy ring successfully tampered with xboat messages, the players will be rewarded with non-specific citations. More practically, they will be granted knighthood in the Order of the Emperor's Guard; this award will be published in the next nobility list, on Emperor Strephon's birthday (202).

As a result of knighthood, each player's social status will change to B automatically; in addition, those not members of TAS will be served with 'Imperial space required vouchers', effectively giving them free high passage as far as Capital. In particular, note that since Krenstein has not revealed Aybee's true nature, Aybee will also be awarded knighthood: polite correspondence will now address him as Sir Aybee Wan Owen, O.E.G.

The players' knowledge of this incident is declared CLASSIFIED, with appeals to their patriotism to ensure their silence. If the Zhodani learned of their personal involvement, their lives would be in serious jeopardy. The classification explains Akidda's description of Jode as a 'tameworld'—he has agreed to this prior censorship of his true report only on condition that he be given first rights when the incident is declassified in the future.

One final note for the referee: it would be premature to worry the players now, but you may be interested to know that Whocco Tehn (and his feelings for the players) will be dealt with again in a future adventure.



## THE EXPRESS BOAT TENDER

After the players learn that Neric has returned to the express boat tender Albany, they will need to figure out a way to get onboard the tender. The possible options include:

The direct approach: paying a courtesy call. In this case, it must not be known that Aybee is a robot. Any of the three humans has enough 'political pull' to get them on board this way.

Indirect approach 1: via the weekly supply ship.

Indirect approach 2: starship in distress.

Exact details depend on the plan the players develop.

## THE EXPRESS BOAT TENDER ALBANY

The *Albany* is typical of express boat tenders in the Imperium. Its UCP is given below.

### Xboat Tender UCP

*CraftID:* Xboat Tender, Type XT, TL 15, MCr157.20

*Hull:* 990/2475, Disp=1,100, Config=4SL,  
Armor=40G,

Unloaded=5,090tons, Loaded=14,180tons

*Power:* 12/24, Fusion=1,090Mw, Duration=30/90

*Loco:* 18/36, Maneuver=1, 18/36, Jump=1,  
Cruise=900kph (vacuum only),  
Top=1,200kph (vacuum only),  
Agility=0

*Commo:* Radio=Systemx2

*Sensors:* PassiveEMS=Interstellar,  
ActiveEMS=FarOrbit,  
Densitometer=HighPen/1km, Neutrino=10kw  
ActObjScan=Rout, ActObjPin=Rout,  
PasObjScan=Rout, PasObjPin=Rout,  
PasEngScan=Simp, PasEngPin=Rout

*Off:* BeamLaser=x04

Batt 1

Bear 1

*Def:* DefDM=+3

*Control:* Computer=3x3, Panel=holodyn linkx500,  
Special=headsUpx5,  
Environ=basic env, basic ls, extend ls,  
grav plates, inertial comp

*Accomm:* Crew=10 (Bridge=2, Engineer=2, Gunnery=3,  
Maintenance=1, Command=1, Medical=1),  
Staterooms=10, LowBerths=20

*Other:* Cargo=2,365kliters,  
Fuel=2,530kliters, PurifyPlant, Scoops,  
ObjSize=Average, EMLevel=Moderate

**Interior Details:** The Cargo Deck holds repair parts and replacement equipment. The major portion of the ship is taken up by the huge vehicle bay, able to hold up to four 100 ton express boats at once. The vehicle bay measures 40 meters by 28.5 meters by 12 meters—the twelve meters can be extended to 24 meters if the bay doors are left open.

It is usually more convenient to close the bay doors, since the vehicle bay can then be pressurized, thus avoiding the constricting bulk of vacc suits for maintenance personnel.

The *Albany* is armed as protection against the occasional Vargr corsair raiders from across the Imperial border 1 parsec away.

On the inside front cover are plans for the express boat tender *Albany*. The bridge deck has some specific marked areas.

**1. Galley:** The galley for preparing meals, which are self-prepared with the aid of sophisticated computerized cooking appliances. There is automated pantry storage from the cargo deck below.

**2. Mess and Recreation:** This area is used for eating and for off-duty relaxation and recreation.

**3. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Navigator/Medic. It has its own fresher facilities and includes an extra bed and some sick bay equipment.

**4. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Pop Turret Gunner.

**5. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Starboard Gunner.

**6. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Junior Engineer.

**7. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is empty; it is used when necessary by express boat pilots or other temporary passengers.

**8. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is empty; it is used when necessary by express boat pilots or other temporary passengers.

**9. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Communications Specialist. It has its own fresher facilities and includes an extra bed for use by express boat pilots or other temporary passengers.

**10. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Chief Engineer.

**11. Crew Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Port Gunner.

**12. Communal Fresher:** Central sanitary facilities, including a multi-function shower, a toilet, a sink, and a small washer/dryer. Providing a common fresher used by all allows more room in each stateroom.

**13. Model/3 Computer:** This room contains the ship's computer and the sizable data banks used to store incoming and outgoing express boat communications.

**14. Bridge:** The bridge area includes an extensive bay window to provide visual scanning of the ship's bay doors as well as an overhead view. While the tender is stationary, all ship functions can be monitored by a single officer stationed here, but both a pilot and navigator are required while maneuvering. The bridge also contains the extensive data communications control station, a central fire control station and an engineering panel.

**15. Captain's Cabin:** This cabin is used by the Captain/Pilot. It is quite roomy with its own fresher facilities and includes two extra beds for use by express boat pilots or other temporary passengers.

**16. Common Area/Meeting Room:** This area is multi-purpose and can be used as a quiet lounge or meeting area.

**17. Starboard Turret:** This turret can be moved along a track on the starboard half of the ship in order to allow positioning the gunnery for the best possible shot. This allows the tender to continue its xboat recovery operations without being interrupted by the need to maneuver.

**18. Port Turret:** This turret can be moved along a track on the port half of the ship in order to allow positioning, like the starboard turret above.

## THE DENEK SECTOR

### Library Data of the Sector

The following items of information may be found in any ship's library program or through most computer library terminals.

Pretoria	Lamas	Antra	Million
Sabine	Inar	Dunmag	Atsah
Star Lane	Vincennes	Usani	Geniishir
Gulf	Zeng	Kamlar	Vast Heavens

**Behind the Claw:** A slang term used by inhabitants of the Spinward Marches, Deneb, and Trojan Reach sectors to refer to these areas. The term derives from a supposed resemblance between a claw and the Great Rift, as seen on maps of the Imperium. Inhabitants of this region feel a certain pride in this designation, and it is used to imply that they share a camaraderie and common interest. The name was once used as the title of a popular

### Deneb: Subsector Key

newsmagazine with a circulation area encompassing the three sectors named above. The term is rarely used by inhabitants of other areas of the Imperium.

**Deneb/Usani (1925 B796955-B):** Deneb, the capital world of the sector, has a dense atmosphere tainted with the by-products of its extensive worldwide industrialization. Of the 6 billion inhabitants in the system, nearly 1 billion live elsewhere in the system, on various planetary or moon-based cities.

Technicians are the ruling class on the world. They are distinct from the Duke of Deneb, an Imperial official and head of the Sector Government. The local government of Deneb must answer to the Duke on Imperial matters.

**Deneb Sector:** Imperial sector containing 385 systems lying beyond the Great Rift; named for the sector's brightest star, Deneb (1925).

The Deneb sector was fragmentarily settled by both Vilani and Vargr during the latter years of the First Imperium, but major development of the sector only took place after Third Imperium Scout Service explorations located major resource worlds in quantity. Industrial worlds to exploit those resources soon created trade routes and commercial ties that still link the Imperial core with the Spinward Marches.

The Deneb sector is primarily Imperial. The Imperial border runs just within the coreward edge of the sector, and scattered Vargr systems (as well as non-aligned systems and client states) lie beyond the border.

**Digest Touring Award:** Outstanding journalism award offered by The Travellers' Digest every seven years. The recipient, who must be a professional journalist living and working "behind the claw", is given honorary membership in the Travellers' Aid Society (worth 1 million credits); he is then expected to travel through the region during the tenure of his award, and to submit a feature article about his latest journey once every thirteen weeks. The intent of the Digest with this award is to "promote understanding of the cultural diversity within the Imperium". The most recent

winner of the award, in 1100, is Akidda Laagjir of Mora/Mora.

**Exile/Usani (1928 X567361-0):** Red Zone. The worst criminals of the sector are dumped on this planet with the clothes on their backs and nothing else. The planet is hospitable to humaniti, but few of the malefactors have the strength, skill, and nerve needed to survive in this artificial stone age.

A stable population of two or three thousand has emerged through ruthless culling; newcomers are well advised to cooperate with whatever leader they fall in with. The system is heavily patrolled by the Navy to prevent would-be rescuers from freeing the dangerous criminals sentenced to live out their lives here.

**Express Boat:** Interstellar message or data carrier. Express boats attempt to reduce the information lag time between systems by relaying messages to succeeding boats with a minimal delay between jumps, much like the Pony Express on old Terra.

The use of express boats becomes important as the interstellar community becomes larger and the delay between jumps further delays transmission of messages. The Imperial express boat system is typical of the approach to the problem. Selected locations along major trade routes are established as express stations: their orbital facilities service and refuel the boats on their communications runs.

When an express boat arrives insystem, it beams its recorded messages to the express station, which then retransmits them to a boat waiting to make its jump. Time between arrival of one boat and departure of the next ranges from a few minutes to a few hours, and is considerably less than the days most ships would spend refuelling and preparing to leave again.

Messages received by express boat are processed and messages intended for the current system are forwarded to local addressees on the world. Messages addressed to worlds which are not directly served by express boats are accumulated and forwarded by the next available ship.

The express boat system is available for use by government, business, and private individuals.

Express boats are also commonly called xboats.

**Rachele Society:** Secret Vilani supremacist group founded on Pretoria/Pretoria by Zid Rachele in 992. Genocidal policies favored by the group culminated in the attempted takeover of the Pretorian government in 1010. An attempt at nuclear blackmail backfired when 26,000 people (including 1,900 Rachelean commandos) were killed by a nuclear explosion after the Society seized Imperial scout facilities on Saki/Pretoria (0306).

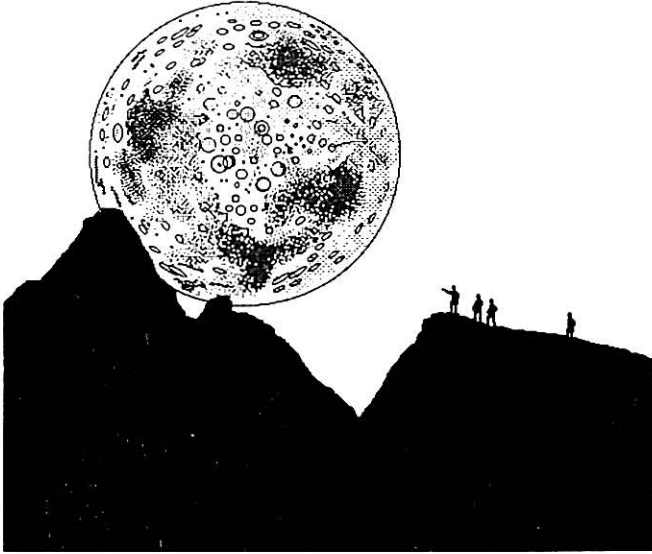
The Imperium plans to relax martial law over the next 10 years, although some military intelligence analysts insist that the Rachele Society still exists; Zid Rachele himself disappeared in 1015 after escaping from the prison world Exile in the Usani subsector (Deneb 1928).

**Rachelean Revolts (1010-1011):** Major uprising on Pretoria/Pretoria, fomented by the Rachele Society, resulting in martial law under the Imperial Navy since that time. The Imperium as a rule does not interfere with local politics, but their intervention was forced when a scout base on Saki/Pretoria (0306) was destroyed by nuclear weapons. (See Rachele Society).•



# Journey of the Sojourn Moon

## FEATURE ADVENTURE



*"When a high tech society falls, it can breed a low tech culture so different as to be unrecognizable..."*

— Akidda Laagiir, 1101, from 'On Wal-ta-ka' in the *Travellers' Digest*

### INTRODUCTION

Journey of the Sojourn Moon deals with a *Travellers' Digest* journalist and his companions as they travel to Wal-ta-ka/Atsah and discover an intriguing culture surprisingly different from its high-tech beginnings.

**Chapters:** The chapter "In Search of a Story" introduces the characters and the situation. Either read it to the players, or have them each read their own parts.

The data in "Wal-ta-ka/Atsah" can be given to the players directly. The rest of the adventure is for the referee only; players may discover its secrets only by playing it out.

**Dates:** All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 339-1100.

**Place:** This adventure starts on the asteroid world Sherad/Atsah in the Deneb Sector, and then moves on to Wal-ta-ka/Atsah, where the main adventure occurs.

### IN SEARCH OF A STORY

Akidda Laagir, Dur Telemon, Dr. Theodor Krenstein, and Aybee Owen were now fast friends. After their adventure on Jode/Pretoria, they had been rewarded with knighthood and Imperial space-required vouchers, giving them free high passage as far as Capital.

All four sought adventure. Akidda had to find it, or his feature articles for the *Digest* would miss their deadlines. Krenstein was interested in anything that moved—or didn't move. Dur, who just mustered out of a forced desk job in the Scouts, was eager to see everything that continuing in

the service would have kept from him. And Aybee, Dr. Krenstein's robot valet, was programmed to learn as much as he could by himself.

### IN THE STARPORT

Akidda sat at a wallscreen in the starport library. He had the computer's voder switched off, so the only sounds from his side of the room were tappings of his fingers on the panel, punctuated by Moran curses muttered under his breath. Dur looked up from his holomovie, and as he pulled himself out of his chair the images paused automatically, awaiting his return.

"What's the matter, Kidd?" he asked.

"It's this blasted Touring Award. Some days, I wonder if it's worth it. Write articles that 'promote cultural diversity within the Imperium'."

"So?"

"So I've looked at every xboat world in this subsector, and I can't find *any* 'cultural diversity'. And they expect my next article to be on its way to Deneb in 9 weeks."

"Why not look at worlds that are off the xboat routes?"

"I'm trying to save time," Akidda said. "I didn't figure we'd have to go back to Pretoria for the investigation, and that knighting ceremony was a real waste of time for me. You can ship all your nobles to the Hivers, for what I care."

Dur reached across to the panel. "The trouble with you, Kidd, is that you never learned how to read a map properly. What's wrong with this world right here?" he pointed. "It's only a couple of jumps away from our next stop."

"Wal-ta-ka? What's it supposed to mean, I wonder?"

"How should I know?" Dur said. "I don't explain 'em, I just pick 'em." He strolled back over to his seat, and was again engrossed in the holo's battle scenes, recorded during the Fourth Frontier War.

Akidda punched up the planetary data and glanced dejectedly over it. "Another culturally diverse desert world...settled by culturally diverse miners and their culturally diverse families, eking out their everyday life in their culturally diverse...hey, wait a minute. Listen to this, Doc!"

Theodor Krenstein and his robot looked up from what they were doing as Akidda's hand brushed the voder switch.

The computer read aloud. "Outside the spaceport city, the desert world Wal-ta-ka is settled by a sparse nomadic population. Although descended from the same colonists as the city dwellers, the nomads are vehemently opposed to all technology and the two groups have little contact."

"Opposed to technology?" the doctor asked. "On a desert world? What's the point?"

"The point is, we're going to Wal-ta-ka to write a story on cultural diversity," Akidda said. "Any objections?"

"I suppose not, Akidda. Aybee, do you feel like travelling?"

"I'm at your service, Doctor. I suppose that means we'll finish the translation later?"

Akidda looked over to their wallscreen. "Translation? What secret project are you two working on now?"

"Aybee was just porting a Vargr engineering journal into Galanglic for me. He needs the practice in the Vargr languages, and I want him to pick up some engineering knowledge, anyway," Krenstein answered.

"I'll make our travel arrangements right away," Akidda

said, rubbing his hands eagerly back and forth.

"What about Dur?" Aybee asked. "He looks oblivious to anything but that hole he's watching. Are you sure he'll want to go?"

Akidda's face broke into a grin, and he looked at the doctor from the corners of his eyes. "Don't worry about Dur, Aybee. Travelling to Wal-ta-ka was his idea in the first place." He winked slightly. "He has lots of friends there, I think."

Aybee hesitated for a split second, then smiled. "I'm sure I'll enjoy meeting anyone that Dur is fond of." The doctor and Akidda stifled their chuckles.

**WAL-TA-KA/ATSAH**

**Primary:** Ember, spectral class M5 V. Mass: .331 standard. Stellar diameter: .716 standard. Luminosity: .007 standard.

**Planetary System:** Four major bodies. One inhabited world (Wal-ta-ka, I). No planetoid belts, no empty orbits, one gas giant (orbit #3).

**I Wal-ta-ka:** Mean orbital radius: 18.7 million kilometers (.125 AU.). Period: 28.06 days standard. Satellites: 1. Diameter 4,290 kilometers. Density: 2.2. Mass .12 standard. Mean surface gravity: 0.83 G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with primary). Axial inclination: 1° 5' 1.0" (average). Albedo: 0.11. Surface atmospheric pressure: 0.93 atm standard; composition – standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage: 2%; composition – liquid water. Mean surface temperature: 26.6°C.

Wal-ta-ka (Deneb 2713 C360431-A) was originally settled in the early 100s by Wellington Interstellar Miners, a now-



defunct corporation. Wal-ta-ka's high density clearly indicated a high metal content, in this case a large molten core. Unfortunately surface deposits turned out to be smaller than expected and hazardous to work.

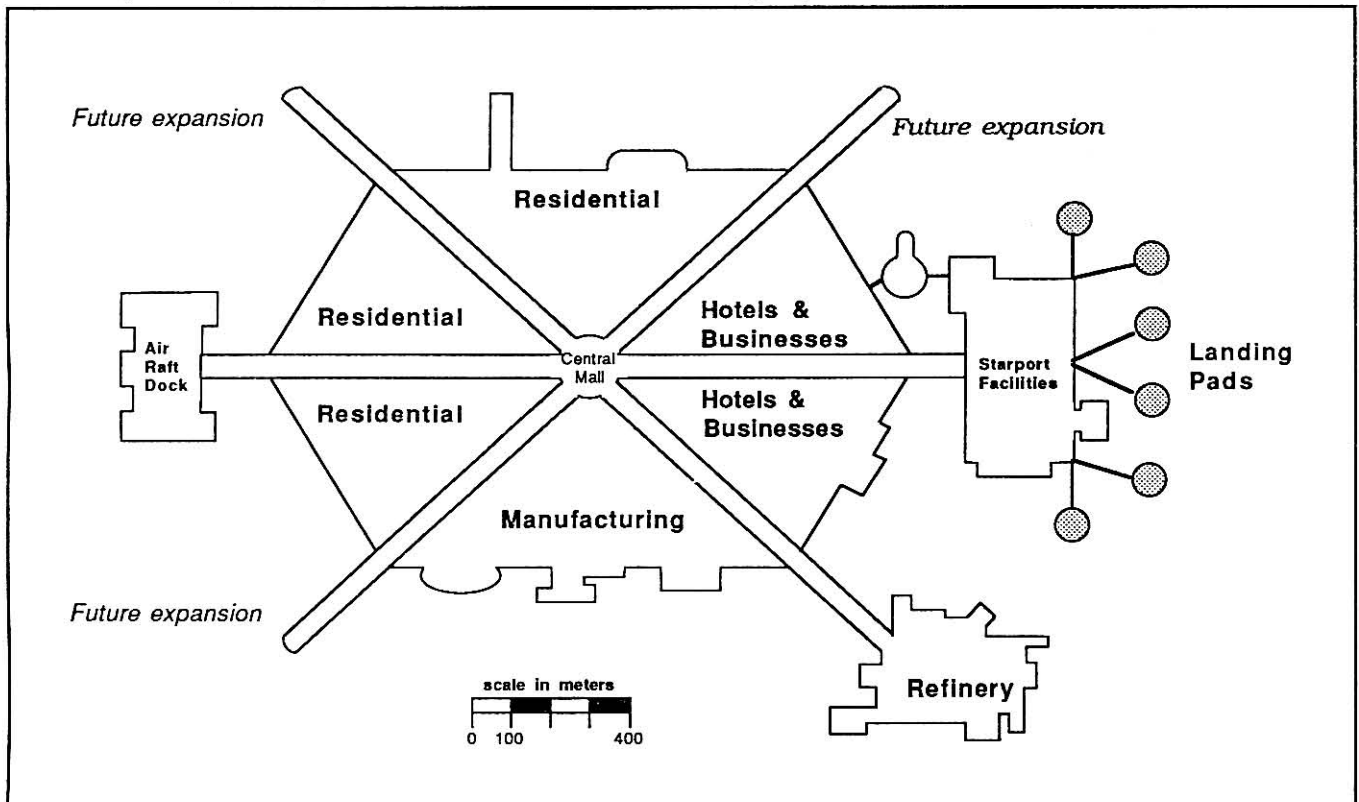
Another factor limiting exploitation of deposits was the fact that Wal-ta-ka is a twilight zone world; it is tidally locked with its dim red primary, Ember. The central bright side temperature is nearly 70° C; the central dark side temperature drops to -18° C. Much of the bright side near the twilight zone is habitable, most prefer to avoid it because its oases are rare. The bitterly cold central dark side is not habitable without enclosed shelter.

Legat-la, Wal-ta-ka's only moon, has a period of 28 standard days. It is 197,265 km from the planet. Its slow orbit and large size causes frequent eclipses of several hours duration in some areas along the twilight zone.

Legat-la also causes a minor libration effect on the planet: the sun, Ember, appears to slowly oscillate in a small figure eight pattern. If not for this libration, the sun would hang perfectly motionless in the sky.

A seismic quake in 234 destroyed the Wellington mining colony. The colony was reestablished 130 years later; its only city is the starport Estin Down.

Outside the spaceport city, the desert world Wal-ta-ka is settled by a sparse nomadic population. Although descended from the same colonists as the city dwellers, the nomads are vehemently opposed to all technology and the two groups have little contact.





Wal-ta-ka is a desert planet, but evolutionary adaptation supports a small number of native plant and animal species outside the dark side of the planet.

### IN ESTIN DOWN

Estin Down, Wal-ta-ka's only starport, lies on the planet's dark side near a rich underground mineral deposit on the edge of an extensive alkali plain. After finding accommodations in Estin Down, the players can pursue their interests individually or as a group. Arctic-style clothing is needed to walk outside; most buildings are connected by heated walkways.

Make use of NPC's in the following locations to convey information requested by the players.

**At the library:** The disaster of 234 all but wiped out the young mining colony. The fusion power plant was destroyed by a seismic quake, leaving the colony without light and heat, and water—which had been pumped from underground aquifers. Many miners died of exposure trying to reach the warmer twilight band from their mines deep on the dark side. No ships were available at the time to send for help. When a free trader finally called at the class D starport, the crew found the colony "abandoned" with all colonists either dead or gone to the bright side.

A cursory search by the crew of the free trader found that those miners who had reached warmer regions had subsequently died of thirst. All missing colonists were reported dead, but a few were still alive, eking out a meager existence in caves in the bright side of the twilight zone. Their descendants were discovered when the mining colony was re-established 130 years later. Attempts to bring them back to civilization were to no avail—the survivors had lost all former ties with their past and had evolved into a new nomadic sub-culture.

The language of the nomads has diverged considerably from Galanglic, but most Galanglic speakers will be comfortable with the dialect after 2D days of contact. Translator memclips, prepared during the Scout survey, are available for 150 credits: but of course the characters cannot take along a high-tech translator.

The characters may use a translator at Estin Down Starport for practice, to lessen the time needed to learn the dialect after contact with the nomads is made. Another possibility is to "acquaint" Aybee with the language.

To load this new linguistic information into Aybee's memory:

Difficult, Computer, Int, 25 min

**At any public place, interviewing at random:** City people avoid the nomads. The nomads will not permit high tech vehicles or equipment to approach their camps. Most consider the nomads to be primitive, ignorant, stubborn, and sometimes dangerous.

**At a transport company office:** Occasional trade of spices for semi-precious stones is conducted with the nomads, so certain transport points are arranged. An air/raft pilot (see Suvi, below) will take the party to a prominent landmark in the twilight zone, within walking distance of one of the nomad oases.

**Suvi (Tu Suvityatlaaka)**  
498989 Age 30 3 terms Cr n/a  
Air/Raft-3, Gravitics-1, Vacc-1



A transmitter installed at the rendezvous point can be used to summon return transport when the characters are ready to return. The air/raft service costs Cr200 each, one way. The characters will be warned not to take anything with them above tech level 2, since the sight of such equipment arouses the hostility of the nomads.

**Referee:** This may give the players second thoughts about taking Aybee along. In this case, the players should be encouraged to believe that the likelihood of uneducated nomads being able to identify Aybee as a robot would be quite low, and the only alternative would be to leave him on his own in the starport city. Given his naïveté and high cost, this is impractical. In addition, Aybee's programming as a valet/bodyguard would make him reluctant to let Dr. Krenstein go unaccompanied. To abandon Aybee is out of character for both Krenstein and Aybee, and the referee should not allow this.

**Looking for survival techniques:** The group will have little success with the city people when asking about survival techniques on the bright side. Most consider the question of living in the brightside desert to be a meaningless exercise; they scarcely know rudimentary techniques for coping with the harsh environment outside their conditioned complex.

### The Nomads of the Light Side

From the landing beacon, it is a 2 km walk to an oasis where a group of nomads is packing up to move on.

### AT THE OASIS

The majority of Wal-ta-ka's plant and animal life is found in the scattered oases of the twilight zone. Near the center of most oases are one or more pools of fresh surface water.

Certain bushes yield a fruit with an edible pit, which is dried by the nomads for storage. Other plants yield a fruit which is stored in brine and can be pressed for oil. Grass for animals is more abundant. Grain is cultivated along with edible gourds, and edible greens grow wild.

Domestic birds are raised for eggs, meat, and insect control. Nomads at each oasis keep certain birds from other oases in cages; the birds' homing instincts allow the nomads to send messages to each other.

### THE NOMADS

The tribe of nomads at the oasis consists of 30 individuals:

- 6 couples (12 total)
- 10 children
- 3 unmarried men
- 4 unmarried women
- 1 elderly man

An explanation to the Nomads (preferably from Akidda) of the group's purpose in learning about the Nomads will be seen as flattering and they will agree to take the players

along as their guests. Some of the more important Nomad NPCs include:

#### Tribal chief (married)

37688A Age 62 12 terms

Leader-3, Bow Cbt-2, Survival-2, Brawling-1, Tactics-1, Blade Cbt-1

Torbal Ta-Ged (Torbal the Good) has been chief of this tribe for over 30 years. He will tell the characters about the nomad's lifestyle when asked, and he will arrange for their comfort. Otherwise he will remain aloof and dignified, and will not seek them out.



#### Hunter(unmarried)

76C437 Age 22 2 terms

Hunting-2, Survival-1

Navet Ta-Lood (Navet the Loud) is a bully, easily threatened by the unfamiliar, and relentlessly hostile to strangers. He will seek opportunities to convince the chief to throw the characters out.



#### Unmarried girl

473646 Age 18 1 term

Survival-1, Blade Cbt-1

Triva Sanel-Katla (Triva daughter of Katla) is an attractive young woman; she will be friendly to the entire group, but especially to Dur Telemon. She and the herdsman (below) are the most likely to volunteer information, advice, and help to the players without prompting.



#### Married woman

682758 Age 48 8 terms

Carousing-2, Survival-2, Blade Cbt-1

Rila Maras-Laku (Rila wife of Laku) will be asked by the chief to provide for the characters' meals and beds, because her youngest children have recently vacated her tent. She is a pleasant hostess.



#### Herdsman

B88836 Age 26 3 terms

Herding-3, Bow Cbt-1, Survival-1

Iroya San-Fesol (Iroya son of Fesol) talks freely about the nomad's lifestyle, and is a good source for desert survival information.

He loves to spin nomadic tales while tending his animals.



#### Wise woman

4A8B89 Age 52 9 terms

Survival-2, Medic-2, Leader-1, JOT-1, Blade Cbt-1

Itsnan Te-Shamel (Itsnan the wise woman) is a capable tech level 2 medic and midwife. She is also a talented healer with herbal medicines. If questioned politely,



she will demonstrate or explain her techniques, and give many health tips for desert life.

#### Young boy

547934 Age 10 0 terms

Bow Cbt-0, Survival-0

Tabor San-Segidd (Tabor son of Segidd), the son of the tribal shaman, is inquisitive, and may ask about the forbidden topic of the players' lives beyond the sky when elders are not listening. He may attempt to teach players to hunt (at least as well as he does) in order to have them alone.



Talking about high tech life with this boy is risky: the adults may eventually get wind of the conversations. This is certain to incur the wrath of the tribe on the characters for discussing 'forbidden things' with the boy.

#### Shaman

84AA9A Age 66 13 terms

Survival-3, Leader-3, Recon-2, Tactics-2, Bow Cbt-1, Blade Cbt-1

Segidd Ta-Shaman (Segidd the wise man), is full of legends, particularly about the testing time, which includes some distorted history of technology on the planet (see "The Time of Testing"). When asked how the nomads came to live this way, he will hold up his hands for attention and all the youth will crowd around to listen to the story. He is renowned for his storytelling ability. He is a useful source of desert information, especially the nomadic taboos.



#### LIFE IN THE DESERT

The nomads move from oasis to oasis every few weeks and harvest whatever is available at the time, tending the plants at each stop.

The nomads are preparing for a ten-day trip to an oasis 200 kilometers deeper into the desert. The pack animals they travel with have the survival characteristics of a Terran camel. The nomads plan to return after one week at the other oasis.

From this point, begin plant and animal encounter rolls twice per day. It is up to the players to elicit information from the nomads about the native life.

#### THE CULTURE OF THE "SAN-DE WAL-TA-KA"

The San-de Wal-ta-ka (Children of Wal-ta-ka) live at tech level 2, and everything is done by hand or by animal power. They have no permanent buildings or machinery. They believe technology makes men weak and dependent, and in large doses causes insanity.

The Children of Wal-ta-ka live on what nature provides through their hunting, gathering, and primitive horticulture. The individual tribes, numbering twenty to fifty persons, are independent of each other, meeting only occasionally for recreation, competitions, and the arranging of marriages. Women are encouraged to bear many children; fertility is valued by the tribe.

Men and women are roughly equal in status, but an



expectant mother is highly revered. Women have considerable say in the arrangement of their marriages. At 14, a girl moves from her parent's tent into one of her own and begins collecting and making her dower property. Her father (or mother, if father is dead) must agree to any proposed match and be paid a bride-price.

The work of men and women is differentiated, and if the male adventurers express interest in helping a woman with her work, they will be laughed at.

Water, of course, is a very precious substance on Wal-ta-ka. It is to be shared with any who need it and preserved carefully. The occasional rainstorm is a mystical event. The Children will stand in the rain with their faces to the sky, singing.

The Children do not have a concept of real estate. The oases and their fruits belong to all Wal-ta-ka's Children and are cared for and harvested as necessary by any present. Hospitality is important to the desert dwellers. By his presence, a guest honors his host's tent, and a gift made to a guest raises the status of the giver according to the gift's value.

### THE SOJOURN

Both boys and girls must make a sojourn when they reach 14 years of age, in order to become full adults in the tribe. One must go into the desert alone at the rise of the "sojourn moon", and live off the land until the moon sets 14 days later, when one is allowed to return to the tribe. Youths have been known to disappear in this rite of passage, but most are so well educated in the ways of their environment by that age that the trial is not too severe.

There are many reasons why the Children of Wal-ta-ka might force the four characters to take the Journey of the Sojourn Moon. If a character is caught with impure technological ideas, or in some other way breaks one of the taboos of Wal-ta-ka, the characters would be required to travel the sojourn as atonement. Aybee's true nature would be a primary cause for such an eventuality, and this fact could be accidentally discovered by the Children in many ways.

You should plan carefully for the characters' sojourn, the actual situation being dependent upon the maturity and interests of the players in his group. If the players are careful, the Children of Wal-ta-ka could invite them to become members of the tribe by passing the test of the Sojourn. If the players enjoy ethical dilemmas, force a duel to the death between Aybee and Navet Ta-Lood, brought about by the latter's challenge. Krenstein must not allow Aybee to kill the nomad; in this situation, the revelation of Aybee's true nature is inevitable and would force the Sojourn.

Plan to start the Sojourn 5 to 7 days after the adventurers first meet the nomads. Adjust this to take into account the things the four must learn in order to survive the ordeal.

The mechanics of the Sojourn are simple: a colored square of cloth with a particular design sewn into it is taken by two mounted men along with a "Sojourn Tower" (a box about 1 meter high), to a prominent landmark. The cloth is put into a chamber in the "tower" and the men return. The person on the Sojourn travels to the tower (about 7 days distant), retrieves the cloth, and returns to the tribe, where he is greeted with a jubilant celebration. The patch of cloth is becomes the personal banner of one who successfully

returned from the sojourn, and mark him as a full-fledged member of the tribe.

Since the characters are 'ready' to take the Sojourn at the same time, four (or three if Aybee has been discovered) cloths will be placed at the same time, and the four may take the Sojourn together.

### AYBEE'S DUEL

If you decide to use the duel between Aybee and Navet Ta-Lood, several things must be borne in mind. Aybee is not trained specifically as a fighter, but his natural abilities make him a formidable opponent.

Aybee's true strength is F; although his UPP shows his apparent strength to be 8, this is only an apparent characteristic, judging from his external appearance and emotion simulation software. His apparent endurance works in a similar manner: his true endurance depends only upon his internal power plant, which can run for several weeks. Because Aybee's blows are more like a club than hands, each hit does 2 points of damage. Remember that Aybee has *no* brawling skill.

The ritual battles of the nomads use no weapons, so Navet's task would be to kill Aybee with his bare hands. If Navet manages to land a blow to Aybee, it will likely have little effect: use the robot damage rules from GDW's *Book 8: Robots*. If Aybee lands a godd blow, Navet could be seriously injured. One possibility is that Aybee, by feigning death, could 'throw the fight' to appease the nomads. This approach has problems, because Aybee's 'lifeless' body weighs over 300 kg, revealing his artificial nature.

### PREPARING FOR THE SOJOURN

For whatever reason you choose, the characters will be told to make a sojourn, "to earn the blessings of Father Wal-ta-ka", beginning when the Sojourn Moon rises in twenty-four hours. In the intervening twenty-four hours they may ask questions of any member of the tribe to get advice on how to survive.

They may take nothing along but what the nomads provide for the journey. They must reach the tower and return before the moon sets.

If Aybee is the cause of the trouble, they will be told that he can never re-enter a nomad camp; he must be left in the desert forever. He will also be isolated from the group until the journey begins. This means that his perfect memory cannot be used for things the others learn during this time. If his true nature has remained a secret, no distinction will be made in his preparations or the others' preparations.

Messages will be sent by the homing birds to other nomad groups so that the adventurers will not be taken in if they go to another oasis before the time is up.

Each adventurer will be provided with appropriate clothing, knife, digging tool, 2-meter walking stick (for poling sand on dunes), 2-liter waterskin (full), a pack, a blanket, and 50 meters of rope. This equipment weighs 4 kg total. If Aybee's true nature has been discovered, he will receive no equipment, since he is not human.

Available advice (gotten from cooperative NPC's) may include information on animals and plants in the lists; suggestions to rest in shade or in caves (some caves may contain water); to drink available water, not carry it; to hide from

sandstorms; to avoid the slipfaces of dunes; and to hunt for water before hunting for food. This information should be divided among NPC's questioned, with the most friendly NPC's providing the most information.

Once in the desert, the characters' options depend on how they got into this. They may decide to abandon their opportunity to pacify Wal-ta-ka, and instead to try to return to the beacon and signal their ride from the spaceport transport company. This is a journey of about 300 kilometers, in a direction away from the Sojourn Tower.

**HOW TO USE THE SOJOURN MAP**

When the players start the Sojourn, place them arbitrarily at either end (your choice) of the Sojourn map. Travelling to the middle of the map (the large alkali flats) and back should take the characters no more than 14 days, particularly if they minimize their travel through winding canyons.

The characters may find that travelling to the Sojourn Tower takes more than 7 days, but the return trip is faster, because they will already know of locations of food and water. The players should be allowed to follow the same route back to the tribe, with the assistance of Dur's skill in survival and Aybee's memory.

Place the Sojourn Tower in the large alkali flat in the "center" of the sojourn map (where section A and B join). The table top flatness of the alkali flats makes it very easy to spot the meter high tower from a distance of many kilometers.

Mark the players' position on the Sojourn map as they travel, but do not show the players the map.

The travel rates on foot are:

Open Desert.....	2 hours per hex
Loose Sand .....	3 hours per hex
Dune Sea .....	3 hours per hex
Boulder Field .....	3 hours per hex
Badlands .....	3 hours per hex
Alkali Salt Flats .....	1 hour per hex

Because of Wal-ta-ka's small diameter (UPP size 3), the characters can only see into the 6 hexes surrounding the hex they are currently in. Certain terrain is visible from farther than 1 hex distance:

Badlands (hills) .....	visible from 2 hex distance
Tower in Alkali Flats.....	visible from 2 hex distance
Mesa .....	visible from 3 hex distance
Pinnacle .....	visible from 4 hex distance

**Surviving in the Desert**

*Food:* Each character needs 70 units of food per full week. For every 10 units less than 70 consumed per week, apply -1 to Str, Dex, or End. Characters may not recover lost points unless they eat the full requirement. They recover 1 point per day.

Unit value of food items:

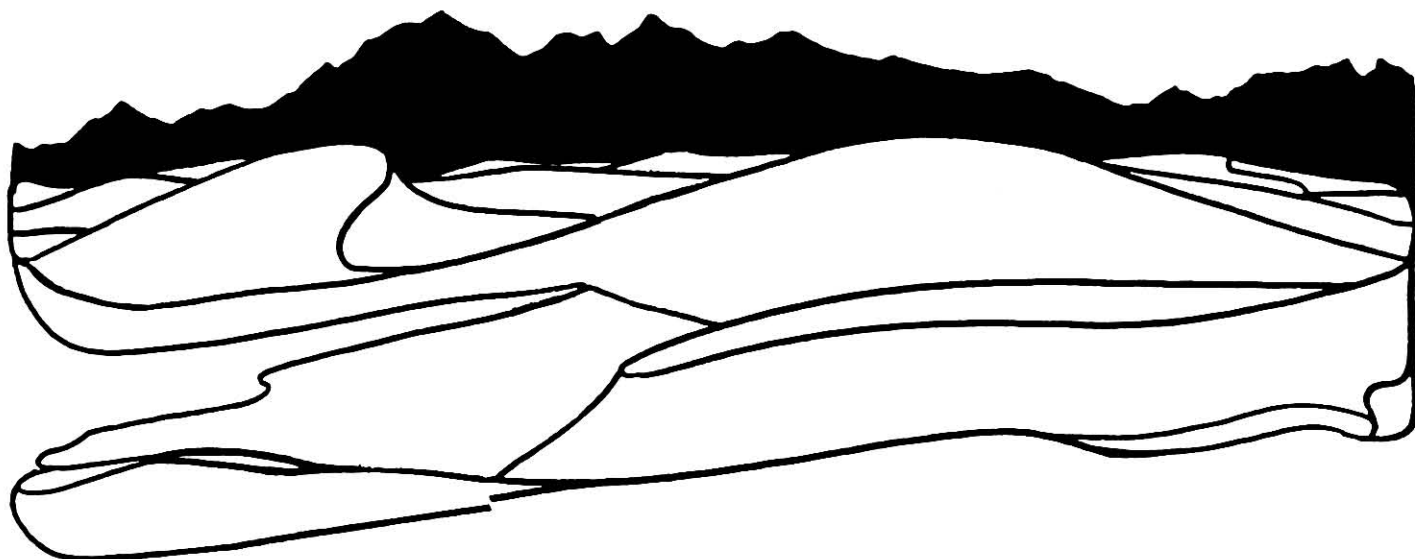
- 1 kg of edible meat or eggs      20 units
- 1 kg of edible plants              10 units

*Water:* Each character needs 1 liter of water per full day. For every 0.25 liters less than the required amount consumed, -1 to Str, Dex, or End. Lost point recovery is the same as for food.

- Some plants will provide water (see plant descriptions).
- Aybee's fuel cell power plant produces 1.5 liters of pure water per day.

*Forced Marching:* If the characters want to reduce the time needed to traverse a certain hex, they may "force march" at the cost of -1 End per hex. The time needed to cross the hex is then reduced by half.

*Sleep:* The character's Endurance (at the beginning of the day) multiplied by three represents the maximum number of hours a character may travel before he absolutely must sleep. He must sleep at least 8 hours before continuing. For more details regarding Endurance and sleep, see the *MegaTravellerPlayer's Manual*.





**Plant and Animal Descriptions**

This is the information for the illustrated plants and animals which may be encountered on Wal-ta-ka. Keep this information separate from the illustrations page; players may learn this information only from the nomads or from their own hard experience. Whenever an item is rolled on the encounter table, show the players the corresponding picture.

**PLANTS**

- 2** These scrubby trees always indicate water at or near the surface. They may also harbor birds and nests. 1D liters of muddy water available.
- 3** After breaking off the thorns, the stalks of this cactus can be pulled apart at the joints and carried for water. Cut the stem and pure, slightly sweet water will drip out. About 60% of the plant's weight is water stored in this way. *Water value:* 1 liter per hour of gathering (per character), weight 1.5 kg.  
NOTE: On a roll of 6 on 1D, the cactus may harbor worms in its flesh, which reduces the water available by half.
- 4** The spines of this cactus secrete a toxin useful for hunting. One spine causes a 1 point hit\* (1D wounds). An unhelpful nomad will simply refer to the plant as taboo and prevent players from touching it.
- 5** The small stems and pink, ball-like flowers of this plant belie its vast root system, which spreads over many square feet. A few of these plants dispersed on the face of a dune can stabilize the entire slope. An edible tuber grows at the ends of some of these roots, about a meter from the stalk in any direction. On those rare occasions when it rains, the flower blooms brilliantly; the nomads then place a few of its petals in their waterskins to produce a mildly euphoric drink, considered a blessed gift of Father Wal-ta-ka. *Food value:* 1 kg per day of gathering (per character).
- 6** If one can avoid this bush's sharp needles, its blue fruit is edible though bland. *Food value:* 0.5 kg per hour of gathering (per character).
- 7** This grass is the staple diet of Wal-ta-ka's grazing animals; a large patch of it means good hunting. Roll an extra animal encounter.
- 8** This lichen mitigates the poison of plant number 10 below, if eaten within an hour of the appearance of the first symptoms. The player's physical characteristics will return to normal at a rate of 2 wound points per day following treatment. Nomads may refer to the lichen as a healing plant without elaboration, unless pressed by characters for information. It may be carried dry without loss of potency. The wise woman keeps a small supply.

To find this lichen  
Difficult, Survival, Int, 5 min

- 9** This prickly ground cover is useless to humans, but supports colonies of rodents (see animals number 5 and 7 below).
- 10** The sweet-smelling, yellow fruit of this cactus is poisonous, and the nomads will always give the plant a wide berth. If the fruit is eaten, dizziness and loss of coordination will result after 1 hour (subtract 1D+1 from dexterity). In the second hour, reduce Str, Dex, and End to 1. If not treated in another two hours, the poison is fatal.
- 11** This cactus's blossom opens only during windy conditions. The pollen of the blossom causes a form of "hibernation" in humans; respiration and heartbeat slow drastically, and water needs are reduced to 0.1 liter per day. The influence of this pollen lasts 3D hours. *Referee:* Perceptive players will discover the cause of this hibernation, and perhaps will realize its medical value offworld.
- 12** The so-called torch bush has resinous stalks that will burn for about an hour. Highly suitable for exploring caves.

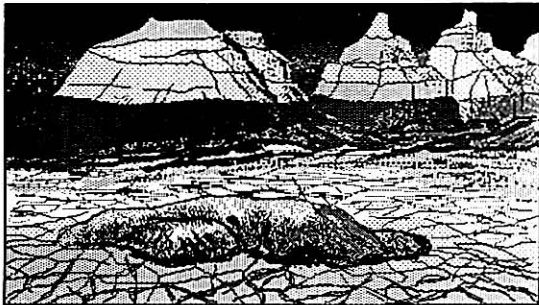
**ANIMALS**

- 2** Sand crabs, found in and near any body of open water, are edible and considered a delicacy. Any nomad child will cheerfully demonstrate the technique for finding and catching them.
- 3** The sand swimmer is the most dangerous native inhabitant of Wal-ta-ka. It hunts alone, moving through sand slightly below the surface, seeking the pressure which tells it that an animal is standing on the sand above. It can surface and strike very rapidly. The sand swimmer's approach makes a low, crunching sound, detectable by an alert sentry if no other noise interferes. The sand swimmer cannot move or strike except through loose sand, for which reason the characters will be strongly enjoined by the nomads *never* to sleep on such ground. If this cannot be avoided, a watch must be set. If not in loose sand when this encounter is rolled, roll again.
- 4** These carrion birds stink, but will not harm anyone still moving.
- 5** These long-tailed, spotted rodents are taboo. Their flesh frequently transmits disease; if eaten, on a roll of 8+ lower End by 2 for 1D days.
- 6** These lizard-like creatures are edible but fast! There are tricks for catching them which the nomads know. Specifically, the creatures usually dodge first to the right because of the way their vision works, so having a net or trap placed that way when goading them to run is often effective.
- 7** These short-tailed, gray rodents are edible. They like to live in the prickly ground cover prevalent in the desert hills.

- 8 This jackal-like scavenger is dangerous to children but can easily be frightened away from its prey.
- 9 Songbirds nest in trees and bushes. They mate and lay eggs year-round, paying little attention to weather except to hide from storms in rock outcroppings. Their eggs (0.1 kg, 1D+1 eggs in nest) are edible. It is considered offensive to Wal-ta-ka to take all the eggs from any one nest.
- 10 These grazers are the primary prey of nomad hunters.
- 11 The eggs (0.2 kg, 1D eggs in nest) of these raptors will be found in cliff-side nests, and are edible. See animal number 9.
- 12 All snakes encountered in the desert must be presumed dangerous. Snakebites are not always fatal, but one causes a 2 point hit\* (2D wounds). Turnabout is fair play: the snakes (0.5 kg) on Wal-ta-ka are edible.

\*All damage is expressed as **MegaTraveller** combat hit values. For wound damage against character's Str, Dex, or End, roll 1D for each damage point in a hit. Thus if something is a 2 point hit, roll 2D to get the actual wound damage against Str, Dex, or End. See the **MegaTraveller Player's Manual** for more details.

### THE TIME OF TESTING



The Shauman of the nomads will from time to time pause, raise his hands high for several moments, and recite the following story about the time of testing.

"There once were men who lived beyond the wall of darkness, evil men who hated mighty Wal-ta-ka and in their arrogance plotted to suck the very life from his inner depths.

"Wal-ta-ka's wrath was kindled against these men. In his great fury, Wal-ta-ka drove the men from their contrivances; away from an existence of weakness and insanity, to a true understanding of Wal-ta-ka and his ways.

"Many men in their foolish pride fought Wal-ta-ka and his blessed wisdom; for this they died.

"Those who listened to mighty Wal-ta-ka and embraced his ways were in mercy.

"Those who listened to mighty Wal-ta-ka and embraced his ways were given the "great light of the journey".

"Those who listened to mighty Wal-ta-ka and embraced his ways were shown the way from the terrible darkness into

light and life.

"Those who were tested by Wal-ta-ka and proven by his wisdom were shown the truth and fullness of his ways: harmony with Wal-ta-ka is life; emnity with Wal-ta-ka is certain to bring his wrath."

### THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM "WAL-TA-KA"

Linguists are divided over the etymology of the term Wal-ta-ka. Some claim that Wal-ta-ka literally means "Wall [of] the catastrophe" or "Separated from the catastrophe [by the wall]", because the twilight zone/dark side boundary forms an "impenetrable" wall of sorts separating the nomads from the bitterly cold dark side area where the catastrophe occurred. Another theory derives the term Wal-ta-ka from the name of the original mining company, Wellington.

### AYBEE AMONG THE NOMADS

The inhabitants of Wal-Ta-Ka have heard legends of evil machines which look to be human (robots): such devices are utterly evil in their minds. Because of this, Aybee presents a special problem, because one or more of the nomads may decide that unnatural circumstances or actions involving Aybee indicate that he is not truly a living human—which could spell all kinds of unpleasant circumstances for the group. Areas which may present some difficulty include:

- Aybee's abdominal contents are less compressible than a human's; he cannot easily crouch or curl up.
- While Aybee does have a "pulse" in all the right spots, he has no heartbeat. His skin is warmed by a circulating fluid which radiates the heat of his internal mechanisms. This fluid is milky blue in color; the color in Aybee's skin is pigment.
- Aybee's skin cannot flush, blanch, or sunburn. He does not "turn blue" or get goose bumps in the cold. He never sweats or tans.
- Aybee's skin is not easily abraded (treat as jack). If his skin is abraded (a 1 damage point hit), it will not bleed or bruise. If his skin is deeply cut (a 2 damage point hit) he will leak milky blue coolant for 2 combat rounds, after which the wound will automatically self-seal.
- Aybee's bones are super-dense ceramic material (similar to battle dress), almost impossible to break. Anyone who punches Aybee will regret it—and so will anyone he punches.
- Aybee only has a very limited ability to repair himself from within. Any significant amount of damage requires Dr. Krenstein's attention for complete repair.
- Aybee is exceptionally strong, bordering on superhuman (he has a strength of 15); one would never guess this from his physique. Dr. Krenstein designed Aybee this way intentionally: would-be assailants should expect Aybee to be an "easy mark" in hand-to-hand combat.
- Aybee has a problem with being "too helpful." Dr. Krenstein has been trying to perfect Aybee's programming so that Aybee will use more discretion in his helpfulness, but the doctor has not entirely succeeded yet. The necessity of saving a human life will override all other programming restraints, and the doctor's well-being outweighs the welfare of any other human being.
- Aybee never needs a haircut, shave, or nail trim.



- Aybee weighs more than 300 kg (700 pounds). This poses a problem in some situations, but Aybee's programming tries to compensate for this where possible.

Countering the above are the following:

- The doctor's careful programming makes Aybee a splendid actor. He can feign illness, rage, amusement, even enthusiasm.
- Aybee's emotion simulation program does not control Aybee. His general programming is able at any time to override it, so Aybee need not react emotionally to all stimuli. He laughs at things that are funny, and expresses sorrow and concern over other things. When "frightened", he can show fear, but he is *not* afraid; his emotions are only apparent, and he is not constrained by them. He does not take offense at comments for which a human would be angry.
- Aybee's pseudomuscles bulge normally when he "exerts". Krenstein paid close attention to this area in Aybee's design, so his muscle contours seem quite natural.
- Aybee's chest moves realistically, as his hydrogen-oxygen fuel cell takes in its required oxygen from the air. Thus Aybee will not function in a vacuum—he must be in a vacc suit just as any human. He uses a bathroom to eliminate the pure waste-water produced by his fuel cells.
- Aybee has touch sensors throughout his skin and is programmed to grimace and say "ouch!" at the time of injury, but thereafter will show no apparent pain.
- Aybee knows how to bandage a surface wound to avoid being seen as "blue-blooded".
- Aybee can "eat" and "drink" a limited amount, which is stored temporarily in a receptacle holding 1 liter. Aybee will seek privacy (typically a bathroom) to empty this sac.

#### REFEREE'S NOTES

It is important to note that while the tech level 2 nomads denounce technology as evil, they are not ignorant that it exists. In fact, if anything unexplainable or "magical" happens involving outsiders, they immediately point the finger and declare "evo tek-na jee!" (evil technology!).

The nomads are very enlightened for "backward barbarians", and it is important for you as the referee to play them as such. This makes them an intriguing switch from the more stereotyped low tech cultures which blame everything unexplainable by resorting to superstition. In fact, this "twist" is part of what interests Akidda so much about them.

Since the high point of this adventure is the Sojourn, it is important for you to remember the goal is not to kill off the characters in the desert, but for the players to have a good time. If they prepare well, and are careful, it should be easy for them to keep the characters alive and to enjoy the adventure. If not, you may have to nudge them along with some judicious "your character thinks of something" tasks.

If at all possible, make the characters go on the Sojourn. Some players will be understandably hesitant to commit themselves to a dangerous desert excursion without the high tech assistance their characters are used to. In this case, you can appeal to the pride of the characters. In

Dur's case, Navet could sneeringly ask if Dur is afraid "to do what any of our young children can do." The players could also be convinced that Aybee's built in water supply minimizes any danger.

In the worst cases (or if your players enjoy confrontations), the characters could be forced by the nomads to take the Sojourn because the characters have offended Wal-ta-ka. This is a delicate situation for you to referee, because it is totally out of character for the party to attack their nomad hosts. You must make sure that the players do not feel that the nomads are their enemies, even if they are physically forced to make the Sojourn.

Remember, too, that Akidda's motivation for the visit is to find material for a story. The Sojourn could be just what he needs, particularly since induction into the tribe could open up additional sources of information for him.

You should also use the "hibernation plant" (plant number 11) as a high tech enigma for the players. The first or second time they encounter windy conditions, let the three humans experience the effects of the pollen. They may or may not make useful hypotheses when they recover; in any case, after returning to the nomads they will learn of the cause of the hibernation. The nomads are careful to cover their noses and mouths against the effects whenever it is windy enough. The source of this pollen, and its physiological effects, are known only by the nomads of Wal-ta-ka.

**Plants**



No. 2



No. 3



No. 4



No. 5



No. 6



No. 7



No. 8



No. 9



No. 10



No. 11



No. 12

**Animals**



No. 2



No. 3



No. 4



No. 5



No. 6



No. 7



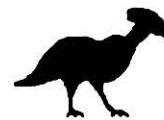
No. 8



No. 9



No. 10

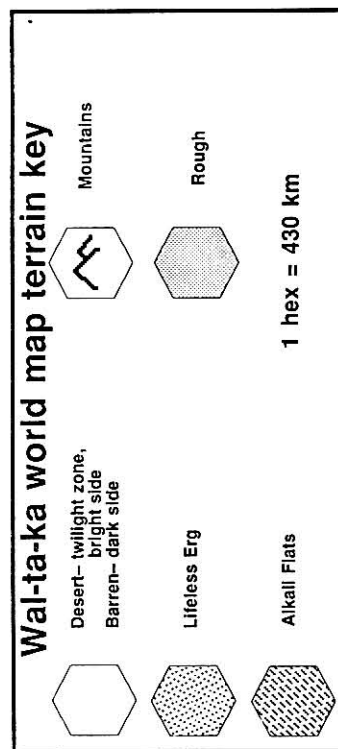
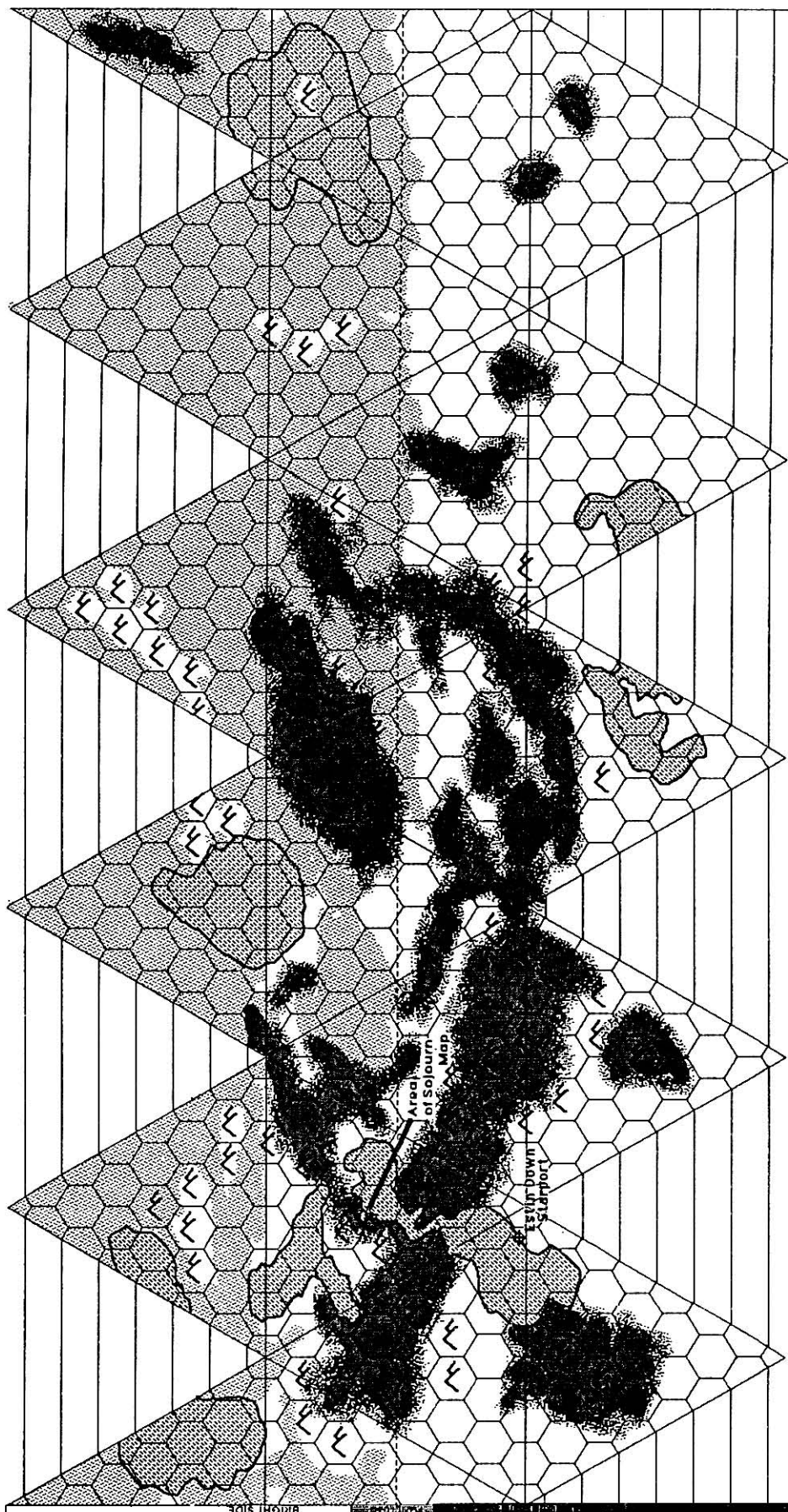


No. 11



No. 12

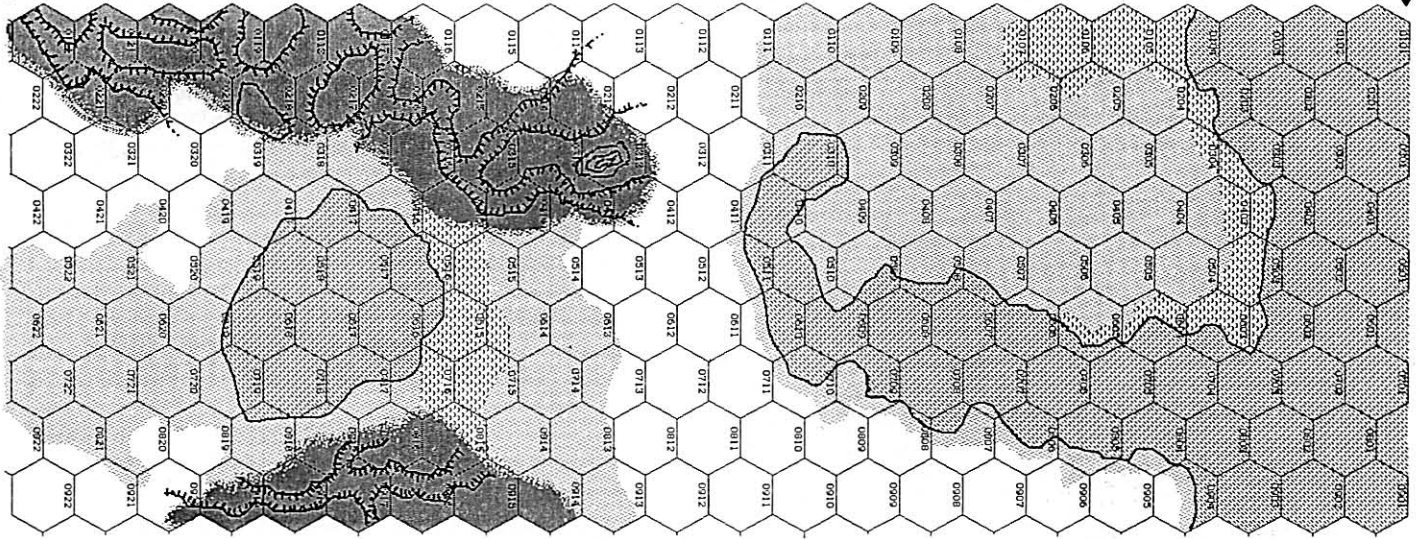




# The Early Adventures

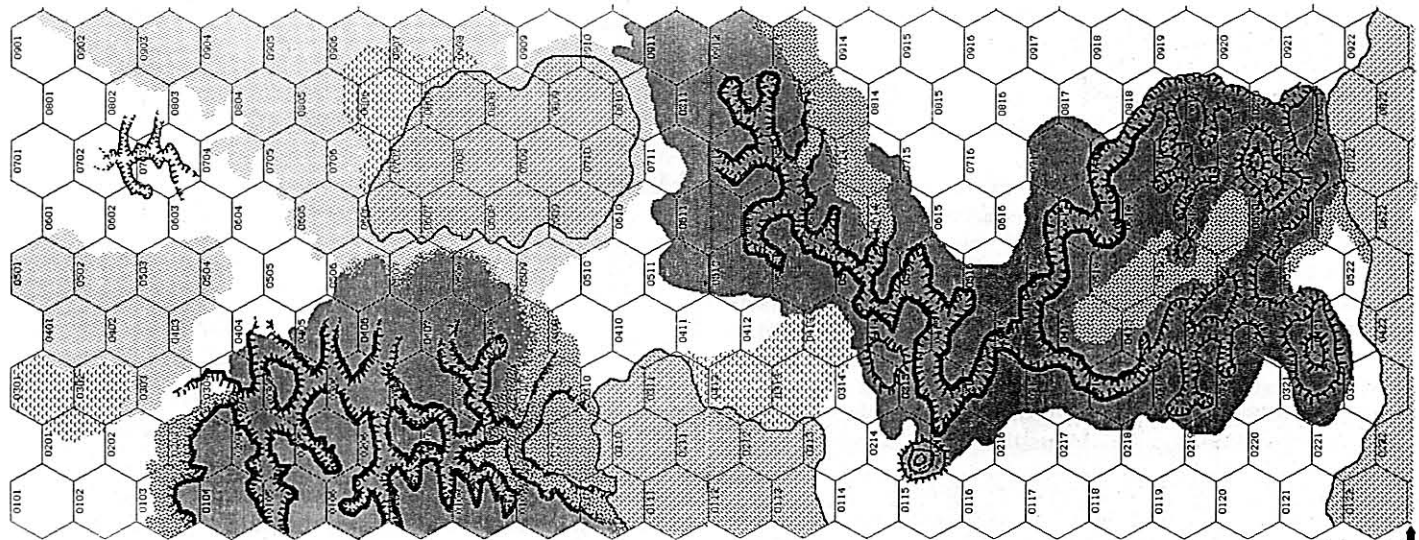
## MAP A

connects to Map B



## MAP B

## SOJOURN MAP



connects to Map A

Terrain Event Tables (roll 2 dimes for each hex entered)

- Open Desert (2D):** Fairly flat, open ground. Occasional plants or small animals.
- 2 Rain
  - 3 Coarse soil
  - 4 Animal encounter
  - 5 Mirage
  - 6 Windiness
  - 7 No event
  - 8 Blowing sand
  - 9 Plant encounter
  - 10 Plant encounter
  - 11 Violent duststorm
  - 12 Seismic tremor

- Loose Sand (2D):** Fairly flat, open ground, with loose sand soil. Few plants or animals.
- 2 Rain
  - 3 Animal encounter
  - 4 Deep sand
  - 5 Mirage
  - 6 Windiness
  - 7 No event
  - 8 Blowing sand
  - 9 Mirage
  - 10 Plant encounter
  - 11 Violent sandstorm
  - 12 Seismic tremor

- Dune Sea (2D):** Rolling expanse of sand dunes. Few plants or animals.
- 2 Rain
  - 3 Sand swimmer
  - 4 Blowing sand
  - 5 Mirage
  - 6 Windiness
  - 7 Lose bearings
  - 8 Blowing sand
  - 9 Lose bearings
  - 10 Plant encounter
  - 11 Violent sandstorm
  - 12 Seismic tremor

- Boulder Field (2D):** Fairly flat, strewn with rocks of various sizes. Few plants or animals.
- 2 Rain
  - 3 Animal encounter
  - 4 Lose bearings
  - 5 Mirage
  - 6 Windiness
  - 7 No event
  - 8 Lose bearings
  - 9 Gullies
  - 10 Plant encounter
  - 11 Violent duststorm
  - 12 Seismic tremor

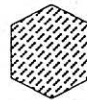
- Badlands (2D):** Mixture of flats, hills, and gullies. Somewhat rocky at times. Few plants or animals.
- 2 Rain
  - 3 Animal encounter
  - 4 Gullies
  - 5 Mirage
  - 6 Windiness
  - 7 Coarse soil
  - 8 Cave
  - 9 Lose bearings
  - 10 Plant encounter
  - 11 Violent duststorm
  - 12 Seismic tremor

- Alkali Salt Flats (2D):** Extensive barren flatland with high mineral salts content in soil. No plants or animals.
- 2 Rain
  - 3 Blowing sand
  - 4 Lose bearings
  - 5 Mirage
  - 6 Windiness
  - 7 Mirage
  - 8 Blowing sand
  - 9 Hot spring
  - 10 Lose bearings
  - 11 Violent duststorm
  - 12 Seismic tremor

## Sojourn map terrain key



Open Desert



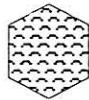
Alkali Salt Flats



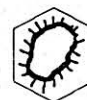
Loose Sand



Canyon



Dune Sea



Mesa



Boulder Field



Pinnacle



Badlands

1 hex = 5 km  
Roll for encounters 2 times in each hex.

# JOURNALIST CHARACTER GENERATION

## PRIOR SERVICE TABLE

### Journalist

Enlistment **7+**  
DM +1 if Int 9+  
DM +2 if Edu 10+

Survival **5+**  
DM +2 if Int 9+

Position **8+**  
DM +1 if Soc 8+

Promotion **8+**  
DM +1 if Edu 8+

Special Duty **5+**

Reenlist **6+**

Characters cycle through this table during each term of service. The reenlistment roll is required even if the character does not intend to reenlist: a roll of 12 exactly means mandatory reenlistment.

DMs on enlistment are cumulative if the character has the necessary attributes.

### RANK AND SERVICE SKILLS

Reporter..... Interview-1  
Editor..... Admin-1

### ENLISTMENT RESTRICTIONS

Journalist..... Industrial+

## ACQUIRED SKILLS TABLES

### 1. Personal Development

- 1 **Mental**
- 2 +1 Edu
- 3 **Physical**
- 4 **Hand Cbt**
- 5 **Inborn**
- 6 **Vice**

### 2. Service Skills

- 1 Streetwise
- 2 **Vehicle**
- 3 **Gun Cbt**
- 4 **Hand Cbt**
- 5 **Interpersonal**
- 6 **Vice**

### 3. Advanced Education

- 1 **Technical**
- 2 Persuasion
- 3 Interview
- 4 **Interpersonal**
- 5 **Interpersonal**
- 6 **Inborn**

### 4. Adv. Education (if Edu 8+)

- 1 History
- 2 Persuasion
- 3 **Academic**
- 4 **Technical**
- 5 **Economic**
- 6 **Inborn**

**Note:** Cascade skills are indicated in bold.

## TABLE OF RANKS

Rank	Level
1	Reporter
2	Senior Reporter
3	Columnist
4	Assistant Editor
5	Editor
6	Publisher

## MUSTERING OUT TABLES

Die	Benefits
Roll	
1	Low Passage
2	Mid Passage
3	High Passage
4	+1 Soc
5	Weapon
6	Recorder
7	Travellers' Aid

Die	Cash (Cr)
Roll	
1	1,000
2	1,000
3	2,000
4	2,000
5	5,000
6	10,000
7	20,000

**Recorder:** From the homeworld tech code, select one of the devices listed in the Traveller Tech Briefs on "Recording Devices."

## JOURNALIST CHARACTERS

In a group of individuals as diverse and widespread as those of the Imperium, journalists are important to the progress of commerce, government, society, and science.

The journalist career described in this article flourishes at a tech code of industrial+. At different tech levels, the journalist uses different equipment, and the resulting productions vary as higher technology makes new media possible. Toward the lower end of the scale, the emphasis is on permanent written materials and flat (photographic) images. At higher tech levels, powerful, easy-to-use equipment gives a journalist more leeway in what he produces, and materials may be stored electronically. Writing still exists, of course, but it is freely supplemented by still and moving holographic three-dimensional images.

Audiences are more sophisticated at higher tech levels, too, and this puts demands on the journalist to produce material which can be viewed differently by different people. Computers assist the journalist in research and production of material at the higher tech levels as well.

What are the results of journalism in the Imperium? Wherever a character can find a computer terminal, whether

on a starship, in a space station, deep inside a hollowed-out asteroid, in a public building, or at home, the character can instantly gain access to the vast array of information popularly called 'library data'. It is the journalist who is responsible for keeping this information current and complete.

The journalist character generated by this article works for a periodical production, such as a daily news publication, a magazine, a broadcast service, or a library data information service. Some journalists will be in the public eye because of their work; others work 'behind the scenes' in varied undertakings.

In their day to day activities, journalists acquire many skills useful to a party of adventurers. Journalists are adept at gathering information: not only do they write the library data, but they read it, and the best journalists can find the specific information they need in the shortest possible time. Journalists also acquire many skills in dealing with people of all social classes, individually and in larger groups.

This article contains all you need to generate a journalist. Initial character generation, acquiring skills and expertise, mustering out, aging, and retirement pay are all handled as described in **MegaTraveller**, using the tables from this article where appropriate.



## RECORDING DEVICES

More than five thousand years ago, the Terran philosopher Aristotle said that literacy destroys memory: when human society develops writing, its individuals tend to lose some of their natural ability to remember details. But this is not an argument against such tools as writing; rather, it is a continuing impetus to create more powerful and more available machines to record the events important to us.

Although many of these items are tools of specialists, especially when first developed, they come into widespread and common use as they become more portable and less expensive. Prices and capabilities of the devices described here reflect their professional nature and use.

### TEXT RECORDERS

At tech level 0, text recorders are little more than a slab of clay and a blunt stick. At higher tech levels, specific writing devices such as pencils, pens, typewriters, and computer-assisted word processors arrive. At tech level 10, text recorders can transcribe: they can produce written text directly from spoken words.

Text is recorded on small tape cassettes costing Cr3. At TL 13, data is recorded on holographic crystals instead. Tapes hold approximately 20 million words; crystals can hold ten times that. At tech level 10, text recorders can transcribe spoken voice to written text automatically. Memclips for specific languages are also available: each allows transcribing from a specific spoken language.

Description	TL	Vol	Wt	Price
Text Recorder	10	2 liters	1 kg	Cr 1200
Tape (20 m. words)	10	—	—	Cr3
Crystal (200 m. words)	13	—	—	Cr3
Linguistics Memclip	10	—	—	Cr150

### SOUND RECORDERS

At tech level 5, sound recorders appear as crude vibration devices for storing information in soft substances. By TL 13, holographic crystals become the recording media.

This small, pencil-sized recorder, available at TL 10, can record anything detectable by the human ear. Dedicated computer software within the recorder allows the user to instantly locate and playback any part of a recording.

Description	TL	Vol	Wt	Price
Sound Recorder	10	—	—	Cr 300
Cartridge (10 hr cap.)	10	—	—	Cr 5
Crystal (100 hr cap.)	13	—	—	Cr 5

### IMAGE RECORDERS

The old Vilani proverb says an instant of seeing surpasses a day of hearing; no one disputes the value of an image over sound or text. Since the invention of crude still image recorders at tech level 4, two-dimensional images remain the most common method of image recording, with the speed and ease of use improving dramatically at higher tech levels. Although holography is generally invented around tech level 7, inexpensive and practical methods to produce and view full color still holographic images are not perfected until tech level 11. Inexpensive 2 dimensional im-

age recordings (snapshots) are still a popular alternative to 3 dimensional images, even beyond tech level 11.

**Two-dimensional Still Camera:** The tech level 10 still camera is inexpensive, easy to use, and produces detailed images that can be viewed instantly. The 'recording card' used to record images is re-useable.

Description	TL	Vol	Wt	Price
2D Still Camera	10	0.1liter	0.1kg	Cr 150
Card (200 images)	10	-	-	Cr 3
Crystal (2000 images)	13	-	-	Cr 3

**Three-dimensional Still Camera:** In spite of the awkwardness of using the first marginally portable 3 dimensional still cameras (which require a separate power pack) at tech level 11, 3 dimensional image recorders are in public demand, because of their advantages 3D images over 2D images. At tech level 13, with the advent of compact batteries providing the necessary sustained power level, 3 dimensional still cameras reach handheld size.

Description	TL	Vol	Wt	Price
3D Still Camera	11	14liters	8 kg	Cr 1,500
Power Pack	11	2 liters	2 kg	Cr 600
Card (40 images)	11	-	-	Cr 10
3D Still Camera	13	1 liter	0.5kg	Cr 5000
Crystal (400 images)	13	-	-	Cr 10

### VIDEO RECORDERS

Even though holovision typically becomes available at tech level 10, producing full color holovideos still requires expensive, bulky equipment and high power at that tech level. Often, not until tech level 13 are effective techniques devised for producing inexpensive full color holovideos with simple, lightweight equipment.

**Two-dimensional Video Recorder:** Recorder of visual images, either as single frames or sequential motion pictures using integral camera and lens system. Information is recorded on tape cassettes for later viewing. At tech level 13, recording is on holographic crystals. Each tape can hold 60,000 distinct images or one hour of motion pictures; crystals can hold ten times that amount.

Description	TL	Vol	Wt	Price
2D Video Recorder	8	3liters	1.2kg	Cr 900
Tape (1 hr cap.)	8	-	-	Cr 2
Crystal (10 hr cap.)	13	-	-	Cr 2

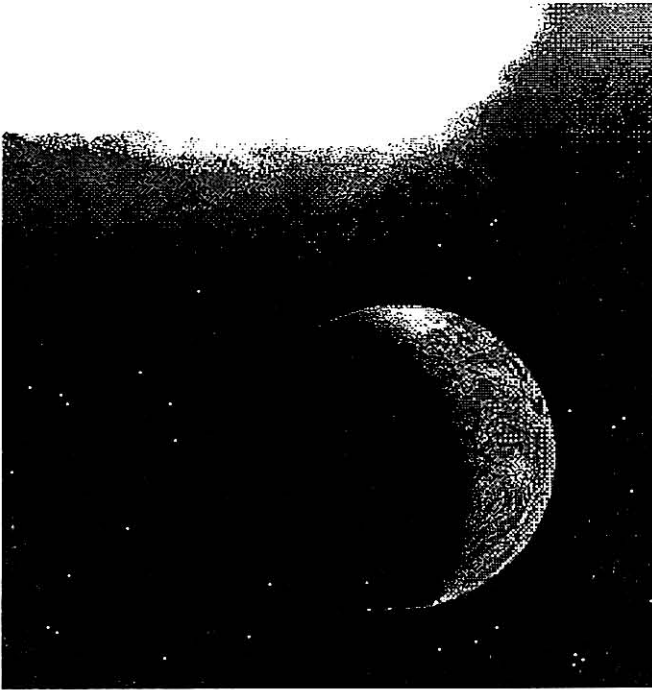
**Three-dimensional Video Recorder:** The 3 dimensional video recorder is barely portable at tech level 13. More portable units are commonly available by tech level 14, with tech level 15 bringing forth the handheld 3 dimensional recorder. All of these recorders use holocrystals for image storage. Separate powerpacks are not needed.\*

Description	TL	Vol	Wt	Price
3D Video Recorder	13	20liters	15kg	Cr 15,000
	14	8 liters	6 kg	Cr 20,000
	15	2 liters	2 kg	Cr 30,000
Crystal (1 hr cap.)	13	-	-	Cr 15
Crystal (5 hr cap.)	15	-	-	Cr 50

(note: works only with TL15 recorder)

# Visit to Antiquity

## FEATURE ADVENTURE



...the world Antiquity abounds with wonders of the past age; the great age when the mysterious super-race known as the Ancients roamed the galaxy...

—Akidda Laagjir, 1101, from 'On Antiquity' in the *Travellers' Digest*

### INTRODUCTION

*Visit to Antiquity* tells of a *Travellers' Digest* journalist and his companions as they travel to Antiquity/lan and encounter alien scientists who have discovered an amazing Ancient artifact.

**Chapters:** This adventure is in several chapters, most of which are material to be read only by the referee.

The chapter "Tourist Trap" introduces the characters and the situation. This section is designed to acquaint the players with the characters and their personalities.

The data in *Antiquity/lan* can be given to the players directly.

The rest of the adventure is for the referee only; players may discover its secrets only by playing the adventure.

**Dates:** All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 086-1101.

**Place:** This adventure takes place on the world Antiquity/lan (subsector E of the Corridor Sector).

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following non-player characters are a part of this adventure.

#### Aengagh, Vargr Scientist

653BBF Age 50 8 terms Cr 27,000  
JOT-2, Computer-2, Carousing-2, Infighting-2, Tracked Vehicle-1, Navigation-1

Tech Level 13 Vargr Lab Ship, loaded with scientific gear. Starport A, Small, Standard Atm, Dry World, High Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar

Aengagh supervises the Ancient archaeological dig under special license from Strephon, emperor of the Imperium. A cursory look at Aengagh's skills would lead a human to believe him unqualified, but among Vargr in the Corridor Sector, Aengagh is a highly respected scientist. Aengagh's word is law to the Vargr at the site, and they obey him unquestionably and without hesitation.



Aengagh has made a name for himself by travelling through Vargr space lecturing on various subjects. In none of these subjects is Aengagh an expert, but his skill in motivating other Vargr is legendary and often feared.

It is up to the characters to learn how to successfully handle Aengagh. If they can convince him of the importance of a task it can surely be accomplished with all the Vargrs' cooperation. They can succeed only if they gain his cooperation. Without his help, the characters will find the Vargr uncooperative and working at cross purposes.

The players will not, of course, know Aengagh's charisma value. But Aybee, who can speak Gvegh, will immediately realize that it is higher than usual, because of the difficulty Aybee will have in understanding Aengagh (see Vargr languages article).

Aengagh's full name is: Rangkneugzoullgvozokhsrre Lorrkgaerzgzugznug Aengagh. Aengagh, his family name, means "smooth tongue." Over the years he has added to his first and middle names, syllable by syllable.

#### Aensorr, Vargr Technician

864784 Age 24 1 term Cr 6,100  
Computer-1, Electronic-1  
TL13 Hand Computer  
Starport A, Small, Standard Atm, Dry World, High Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar



Aensorr, a distant relative of Aengagh, is not qualified for the work he is doing on the dig. He does not know any Galanglic. He is a follower of the "low kaenguer-radz" school (see Vargr Philosophy). He will attack violently in order to prevent others outside from learning of the neo-Vargr discovered in Room 25.

#### Irsaell, Vargr Scientist

6C4EA3 Age 47 7 terms Cr 15,000  
JOT-4, Computer-3, Mechanical-3, Gravitics-2, Electronic-1, Grav Vehicle-1  
Starport A, Large, Exotic Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar



Irsaell is the most technically capable of the Vargr in the group, but the other Vargr ignore him because of his low charisma. He is fluent in written and spoken Galanglic, and has viewed many of Dr. Krenstein's books and articles on holographic media.

#### Kfolgzoekhto, Vargr Technician

937874 Age 23 1 term Cr 1,000  
Computer-2, Electronic-1  
Starport E, Medium, Thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law,

**Pre-Stellar**

Folgzokhto is young and eager to learn. He is from the high-population, low tech world of Irasumshu/Ian, so he knows Galanglic and gets along well with humans.

**Llugvinogh, Vargr Loner**

949761 Age 28 2 terms Cr 500  
JOT-1, Prospecting-1, Electronic-1, Forgery-1  
Gun, Mid Psg  
Starport B, Small, Standard Atm, Desert World, High Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar



Llugvinogh is also unqualified for his work here. In fact, Llugvinogh sneaked into the dig using forged identity papers. He is hoping that he will come across something worth stealing, at which time he will sneak away with it. He carries a concealed body pistol under his vest. He knows a few words of Galanglic slang and criminal jargon.

**Naesoughu, Vargr Ex-Navy**

4C7794 Age 30 3 terms Cr 2,500  
Medic-3, Ship's Boat-2, Vacc Suit-2, Computer-1, Electronic-1  
Starport B, Small, Vacuum World, Low Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar



Naesoughu is the physician and ship's boat pilot for Aengagh. He knows no Galanglic.

**Onkunu, Vargr Scientist**

648BA7 Age 46 7 terms Cr 30,000  
Computer-3, JOT-2, Medical-2, Mechanical-1, Electronic-1, Gravitics-1  
Starport B, Medium, Standard Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Early Stellar



Onkunu is a hard-working, jovial, practical joker. He is the most qualified scientist among the Vargr, after Irsaell. His high charisma makes him second in command (after Aengagh) over the other scientists and technicians. He can read Galanglic articles in his areas of technical expertise, but he knows no spoken Galanglic.

**Tikhdzae, Vargr Ex-Army**

388855 Age 24 1 term Cr 3,000  
Infighting-1, SMG-1, Rifle-1  
Starport A, Large, Exotic Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar



Tikhdzae is Aengagh's trigger-happy bodyguard, and does not know any Galanglic. He carries an SMG with him at all times, and likes to shoot it at various targets for fun. Anyone careless enough to stand near Tikhdzae when he fires at monadium objects must roll the following task:

To avoid ricochet damage from Tikhdzae's SMG fire:  
Routine, Int, Dex (fateful)

**Tonon, Vargr Ex-Merchant 3rd Officer, Ex-Army Lieutenant**

84B637 Age 26 2 terms Cr 5,700

SMG-2, Tactics-2, Vacc suit-1, Rifle-1, Bayonet-1  
Starport B, Small, Vacuum World, High Pop, Ext Law, Avg Stellar

Tonon oversees the general security of the dig. He speaks some Galanglic, but does not know any scientific terminology. He is neutral to humans, unless they get in his way.

**Vidorsngigoung, Vargr Scientist**

564E65 Age 32 3 terms Cr 3,500  
Electronic-2, Computer-1, Mechanical-1, Gravitics-1  
Starport A, Small, Standard Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Avg Stellar



Vidorsngigoung is a younger scientist with the group. He knows no Galanglic, and dislikes humans. He believes in some of the principles of the Church of the Chosen Ones.

**TOURIST TRAP**

"Where have you been, Doc? We waited as long as we could, but then we went ahead and ordered dinner without you. Aybee ordered for you, but it must be cold by now."

"Never mind about that, Dur. Just be thankful that Emperor Strephon gave us the free tickets to come to Capital."

"Sure, but what's up?" Dur asked.

"It took a little pull, but I was able to change our jump reservations. We can spend two whole weeks at the Ancient site on Antiquity."

"Antiquity! In the Ian subsector? Two weeks?" Akidda Laagii, the journalist, nervously dropped his fork onto the tablecloth. "Is there still time to change our tickets back? We can't spend two whole weeks on Antiquity."

"Why not, Akidda? Have you been there before?"

"No," Akidda answered. "No one has ever been to Antiquity, except for a pack of tourists with more money than brains. That whole planet is just a waste of time."

Dr. Krenstein scowled. "With all due respect, Akidda, perhaps you forget that Antiquity is the best preserved of all Ancient sites, and one of the first discovered. The fact that some of its facilities are open to view by ordinary citizens is of tremendous benefit. Nowhere else in the Imperium can one see the wonders freely visible at Antiquity."

"Freely visible? That's a laugh. It costs forty credits to go inside that Museum. The *World Review* on Mora did a series of articles about Antiquity about five years ago. Full holos and everything. You can see as much on the vidnet for six credits a month, and see it as often as you like."

"The exhibits on Antiquity are priceless," Krenstein offered.

"The guides are so paranoid that someone will swipe one of their priceless exhibits that they carry body pistols." Akidda looked more and more disgusted.

"But the excitement! To walk where the Ancients walked, more than 300,000 years ago."

"The planet doesn't even have an atmosphere. You have to wear a mask any time you leave your overpriced hotel. Not even the Museum is pressurized. That takes a lot of excitement out of walking around."



The scientist was unmoved. "Akidda, at the time of the Ancients, there was a city on Antiquity that would rival anything you could imagine. Do you realize what's left now? A crater, four kilometers across, and one building, untouched by time."

Dur Telemon, the ex-scout, had by now finished his meal and began to show some interest in the conversation. "Why don't we hold a vote? I'd like to see this place. What about you, Aybee?"

"Hold on just a minute, Dur," Akidda interrupted. "We can't vote like this. You know Aybee will just vote for whatever Krenstein wants."

"Not necessarily, Akidda. You seem to forget that I'm programmed to insure Dr. Krenstein's safety," the robot said. "If this planet presents unavoidable dangers, I vote no."

The doctor spoke again. "I don't mean to be unreasonable, Akidda, but I'm set in my purpose. I'll compromise with you—one week on Antiquity instead of two."

Akidda looked unimpressed. "Sure, I'll give you the week. It will be worth it, to see that look of unsurpassed boredom on your face after the first day."

### ANTIQUITY/IAN

**Primary:** Gurant, spectral class F6V. Mass: 1.622 standard. Stellar diameter: 1.64 standard. Luminosity: 7.19 standard.

**Planetary System:** Five major bodies. Four gas giants, one inhabited gas giant satellite (Antiquity, Vf), one planetoid belt.

**Vf Antiquity:** Mean orbital radius of primary: 419.7 million kilometers (2.8 AU). Period: 1343.69 days standard. Primary is small gas giant, designated Eshtakhish. Primary diameter: 32,010 kilometers.

Density: 0.21. Mass: 3.28 standard. Ring (orbit #2) and five satellites...Antiquity, fifth moon (Vf); mean orbital radius: 2,750,700 kilometers. Period: 279.66 days. Diameter: 2920 kilometers. Density: 1.22 standard. Mass: .019 standard. Mean surface gravity: 0.30 g. Rotational period: 17 hours, 10 minutes, 6 seconds. Axial inclination: 4°18'18.9". Albedo: .188. Surface atmospheric pressure: 0.24 atm; composition—nitrogen-oxygen mix with sulfur and sulfur compound taints. Filter/respirator combination required to breathe the atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage: 34%, composition—liquid water. Mean surface temperature: 24.1°C.

Antiquity (Corridor 0816 A223420-C) was discovered by Vilani explorers of the First Imperium. Descriptions from that era call Dinarnug (Antiquity) a "marginally habitable desolate gas giant moon", and as such it was largely ignored.

Shortly after Cleon established the Third Imperium, the system was superficially re-explored, but after that it was only occasionally visited.

During the Third Imperium's First Survey, an Imperial Scout vessel conducting a detailed scan of Dinarnug picked up a large, massive object buried 30 meters underground near the edge of a multiple crater formation. An archaeological team was dispatched to the site to excavate the object.

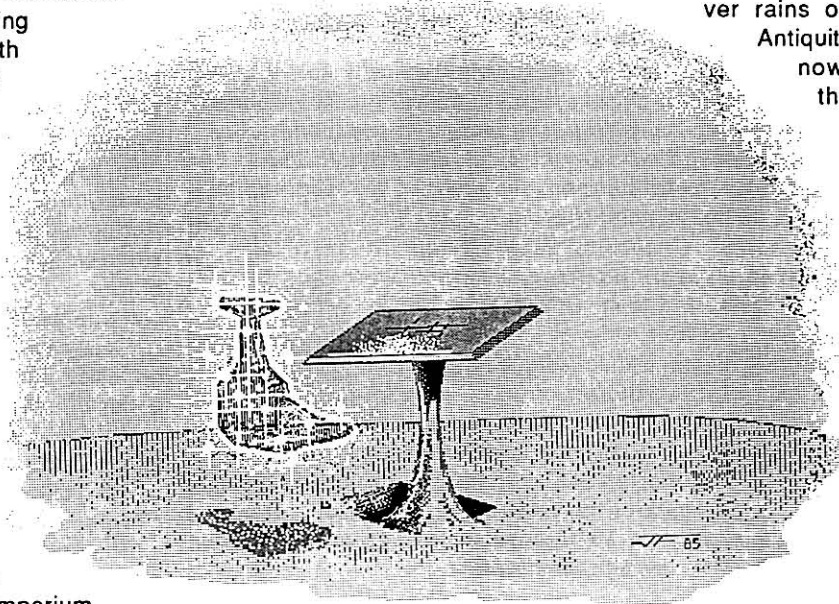
## The biggest problem the researchers faced was figuring out what things did and how they worked.

The "object" turned out to be a domed building, largely intact and containing many magical wonders indicating a fantastically high technology. Research confirmed that the site was built by the mysterious extinct race known as the Ancients. Unique among the Ancient sites discovered up to this point (and those found since, as well), this site was operational. The biggest problem the researchers faced was figuring out what things did and how they worked. Many items are still a mystery.

The findings of the "Antiquity Excavations" sparked interest in the media. About three centuries ago, the site was finally opened up to the general public. Antiquity is on the express boat route between Vland and Deneb, and the Ancients Museum at the excavation site is a popular tourist attraction.

Antiquity is a satellite of the system's outermost gas giant. The moon has a very thin atmosphere, tainted by sulfur compounds. The world shows evidence that it once had a denser atmosphere: erosion typically caused by wind and

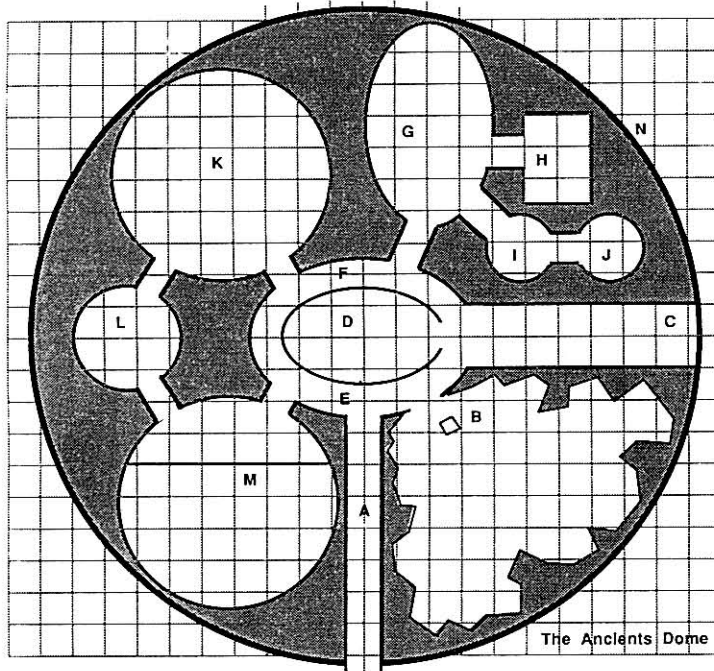
rain abounds. It never rains on Antiquity now; the



little water vapor still in the air precipitates out as dew at twilight each evening. The blast crater at the Museum site shows no erosion, indicating it was made during or after the time that the atmosphere was lost.

## THE MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITY

Antiquity offers a variety of amusements to the tourist. Foremost among these is the Museum of Antiquity, housed in a monadium building built by the Ancients 300,000 years ago. The Museum site lies about 15 km from the starport. The Ancients Dome is near the edge of the large blast craters where a city is supposed to have stood.



More adventurous tourists may be interested in an air-raft tour of the craters. Tours of this type last about two hours and are "specially priced" at 280 credits. Tourists on these tours are given an opportunity to walk about the floor of the craters. Respirator/filter masks are provided at no additional charge. Special permits are required to explore on one's own, and artifacts may not be legally removed from Antiquity.

The Museum of Antiquity is privately operated, although the Ancients Dome and its exhibits belong to the Imperial government. Admission to the Museum costs 60 credits for the standard 30-minute tour. The entire tour is conducted by guides carrying body pistols, and security at the Museum is tight.

The separate buildings at the site of the Museum of the Ancients, including the Ancients Dome, are connected by airtight passages. A compressor system provides purified air, so masks are not needed to breathe.

The order of the standard tour takes visitors successively through Rooms A, B, C, D, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, and back out through A. Questions are not allowed during the tour, but interested visitors are encouraged to visit the Museum Gift Shop, located in a small building a short walk from the Museum entrance. The tour itself is conducted through earphones worn by each visitor. The guide does nothing but lead the group to the proper room at the proper time.

The Museum itself is of monadium, an impenetrable substance which defies all attempts at learning its exact composition. The entrance to Room A is a low archway

extending a few feet out from the building. The monadium of this arch is shattered and cracked at its outer edges, but is still as solid as ever.

Considering that everything in the Museum is at least 300,000 years old, it is astonishing that some artifacts still work, and all of them look brand-new.

In the following room descriptions, the sentences in quotation marks represent what the characters hear over the tour headphones. Other sentences describe the actions of the tour guide.

**Room A:** "This corridor is the entryway to the center of the complex."

**Room B:** "The 'Light and Noise Room' is the first room on your tour, and the most unusual in shape. Its walls are randomly sized and shaped, protruding at odd angles from the floor, ceiling, and walls. A few meters from the door, you can see a single chair protruding from the floor. The chair is immovable and appears to be of one piece with the floor.

"As you can observe, strange, random sounds emanate from the room, and the walls change in color and reflectivity at random intervals. Now watch what happens in the room."

On the wall outside the room is an irregularly-shaped, flat yellow area. When the guide touches this shape, it turns blue, and the activity inside the room changes. Beams of pale green light, about 8 cm wide, stream out from different walls every few seconds. In addition, an object thrown into the room leaves a holographic trail, showing its path for a few seconds before it fades out.

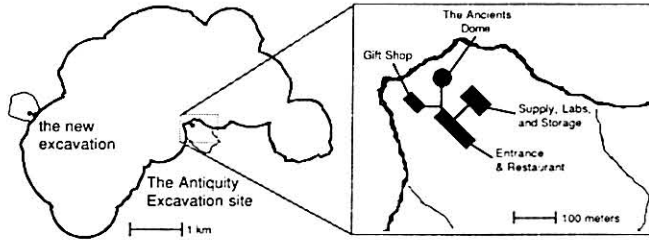
"The mechanism for these effects is unknown, as the entire room is apparently made from solid featureless monadium. When your guide touches the blue area outside, it changes back to yellow, and the holographic effects stop, but the sounds are continual. No purpose for this room is known."

**Referee:** This room was used for recreation by the Ancients. The "light ball" demonstrated in Room A was manipulated by using a rod which emitted a low-level laser beam. Bouncing the ball against the different wall colors gave the player different scores. The sounds in the room report the present total score and the scoring opportunities of the different surfaces.

The room had different settings for level of play and number of players. The room is set at the highest level, causing the walls to change as often as they do, and to emit their own beams to interfere with the player. The "trace" feature of the room allows observers to watch the play as it occurs.

**Room C:** "The 'Mysterious Corridor' leads to a flat, solid wall. Its original purpose is unknown, as are many of the rooms of the Museum, but it is now used to demonstrate the 'Sliding Cube' and the 'Light Ball'. The cube is apparently solid monadium, about 20 cm on a side, and is too heavy for any human to lift. It sits on the floor at one end of the corridor. Notice that when your guide lightly taps one edge, it starts to slide down the corridor, speeding up slightly before coasting to a stop. Nothing whatsoever is known of the contents of this cube.

"The ball has a diameter of about 40 cm. It is brightly colored in smooth, random patterns, and it hovers above the



ground about one meter. It can be moved by touching it, but there is a more interesting way: watch as your guide shines a weak flashlight at the ball, and you will see the ball move away from the light. When the ball reaches the end of the corridor, it bounces off the wall and returns almost to its starting point."

**Room D:** "The 'Console Room' is a favorite with tourists. It is surrounded by a corridor, separated from them by an impenetrable monadium wall only 2 mm thick. In the center of this room stands a lone console, still glowing with blue and yellow indicator lights. Please stand along the walls, as directed by your guide. Notice that as he lightly touches the left edge of the console, a holographic image of a small legless chair appears, floating directly in front of the console. Now watch your guide."

The guide slowly walks through the holograph, when suddenly he sits in the chair, which supports him.

"The chair is obviously too small for a full-grown human. By touching the console, scientists can change the pattern of the blue and yellow lights, but the function of the console is unknown. As the guide touches the right edge of the console, the image of the chair disappears."

*Referee:* The console is still operational, but the devices that it monitored were destroyed 300,000 years ago.

**Rooms E and F:** "These rooms are corridors, giving access to most of the other rooms in the complex."

**Room G:** "This room contains several display cases of various monadium scraps discovered on Antiquity. The highlight of the room is an artifact that still operates, although its purpose is unknown. As you can see, the device consists of one flat, round 3D display screen about 30 cm across, and a detachable control panel about 5 cm wide and 45 cm long. Scientists have not been able to detect any means of communication between the control panel and the screen. The screen itself displays a number of small, colorful shapes, moving about in a random pattern. The settings on the control panel can be changed, as your guide is doing now, and the speed and color of the shapes will change."

*Referee:* The device is an Ancient educational toy. It displays the activity and motion of sub-atomic particles at a greatly reduced speed.

**Room H:** "This room contains a display of over 600 coyns, like those now used by the Droyne race in its casting ceremony. The coyns are all of solid monadium."

**Room I:** "This small, round room demonstrates monadium 'Spinners'. Each spinner is a flat disk, about 10 cm across and 1 cm thick. A cut along one radius allows a small section of each spinner to be bent out of line from the disk at an angle of about ten degrees. Some spinners spin about their centers; others are motionless. What is intriguing is that those that are spinning were spinning when

originally found. No way has been found to stop them except by holding them fixed, as the guide is now doing. Notice that when he releases the spinner, it comes to rest about 0.5 cm above the surface below it, and then starts to spin again. No way has been found to make the others start to spin."

*Referee:* The spinners were used as automatic stirrers in the laboratories.

**Room J:** "This room, identical in shape and size to Room I, contains several display cases full of 'Madimge Eggs', named for an extinct Vilani reptile. As you can see, each egg is about 7 cm long and 1.5 cm across its girth. The eggs are made of solid monadium, but a few are open, and reveal a variety of translucent colored crystals. Some of these crystals gleam, but others appear faded. Scientists studying the eggs believe that the crystals are another form of monadium. No way has been discovered to open those still sealed, or to reseal the open ones. Madimge eggs can still be found on Antiquity; some are thousands of kilometers from the Museum."

**Room K:** "The 'Massage Room', together with the next two rooms we will visit, forms what scientists believe was once an exercise area for the Ancients. This room has 18 holes in its floor, each about one meter wide and two meters deep. When our volunteer steps over the hole, he is gently lowered to the bottom by an invisible gravitational force. Additional forces then give a precise, gentle massage for 58 seconds, and then gravity pushes him up from the bottom to floor level. Different holes give massages of different lengths and intensities."

*Referee:* The hole used for the tour takes the least time. The "volunteer" paid an extra fee of six credits for the massage.

**Room L:** "The 'Steam Room' is unique among all the rooms in the Museum: it has operating doors. Airlocks at each side of the room are tightly fitted with two doors. If you look at the section of wall where your guide is pointing, you will find that the seams are invisible, and it is impossible to tell that that section of wall contains a door. Similarly, when a door stands open, it recesses into the wall in such a way that the entryway appears to have no door at all. It is not known how the doors are triggered, but they automatically open as we approach, and close after we have passed through them. The inner room that we are now passing through is filled with steam at a constant temperature and humidity."

**Room M:** "Please be careful! The floor of the 'Ledge Room' drops away suddenly a few meters inside, giving access to a large underground chasm. The chasm is well lighted, and the atmospheric pressure in it is higher than the rest of the room. Scientists hypothesize that the room was used for exercise, by jumping from the ledge and flying in the chasm's thicker air."

**Area N:** The outside wall of the building is of solid featureless monadium. Excavations searching for other entrances have dug entirely beneath the Ancients Dome. At this particular location, the wall has been dented by some unknown means.



**THE VARGR ARTIFACT**

After the characters have finished their tour of the Museum of Antiquity, Dr. Krenstein will be accosted from behind by a gruff but polite voice. "Are you not Dr. Theodore Krenstein, the scientist from the Rhylander Institute of Technology?" When Dr. Krenstein turns around, he should be surprised to discover that the owner of the voice is a Vargr, speaking flawless Galanglic without any hint of alien accent.

The Vargr is Irsaell, a scientist working with an excavation team on the other side of the crater. He recognizes Krenstein from holographic lectures on computer science. Aengagh, the Vargr scientist in charge of the excavation, has come to the Museum site to show local officials that the dig is making progress. A new artifact has been discovered, and Irsaell has deduced how it works, so Aengagh has grudgingly brought him along. Aengagh is also accompanied by his bodyguard, Tikhdzae, and Tikhdzae's ever-present submachine gun.

The artifact that the Vargr have discovered can be used to open or close madimge eggs. A darker spot on one side of the device controls its operation. Holding one's finger against the dark spot and passing a closed madimge egg through the marked end will open the egg when it comes out the other end. Similarly, an open madimge egg can be resealed by putting it into the unmarked end while pressing the dark spot. The device does nothing to eggs if the spot is not held.

If Krenstein seems interested in this, Irsaell will invite him to the excavation, and if Krenstein accepts, Irsaell will arrange permission with Aengagh. Aybee will notice, if he overhears any of these conversations, that Irsaell has a charisma much lower than Aengagh's.

Irsaell is happy to give Krenstein and the others a brief history of the excavation during the air/raft trip across the crater. Aengagh will ignore the characters during the trip, and Tikhdzae speaks no Galanglic.

**THE DIG**

In playing this part of the adventure, the referee should be familiar with the Vargr NPCs and the section on Vargr culture.

The second Ancient complex was discovered on Antiquity four and one-half years ago, by a Scout expedition resurveying the area with the latest technological equipment. The building lay 290 meters below ground.

Aengagh, a Vargr scientist known for his writings about the Ancient site on Redi/Pretoria, found out about this discovery and petitioned Emperor Strephon for permission to excavate the site. Aengagh has great politi-

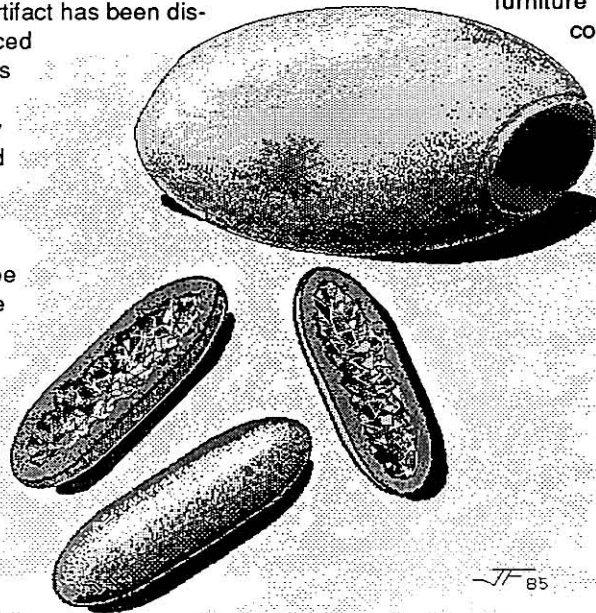
cal influence in the Coreward sectors of the Imperium, so Strephon granted the license as part of an exchange program. Imperial scientists are currently excavating another site in Vargr space, with Aengagh's permission.

A painstaking excavation of the site proceeded under Aengagh's direction, and the building was finally uncovered about a month ago. The section of the building closer to the crater is open, with no doors in the doorways. The section of the building away from the crater is still sealed, despite an obvious area for a door and many attempts at entry.

Discoveries in the dig are promising. Not only has the device to open and close madimge eggs been found, but the Vargr have discovered hundreds of sealed eggs. Another interesting find has been "cushioned" monadium. Built-in furniture in some of the rooms is soft and comfortable despite being constructed of solid seamless monadium.

Aengagh has a Tech Level-13 lab ship orbiting Antiquity. He has brought much of its scientific equipment to the dig. There are a few Imperial observers at the site (making sure the Vargr don't sneak off with anything), but the Vargr ignore them.

The open building has three entryways; none of them show any signs of doors, but this is not unusual. The passageways extending from these entrances are chipped and cracked at their outer edges. The rooms in this building also have doorways without doors. Except as noted, the rooms are empty or contain only nondescript monadium



furniture.

**Room 2:** A portable fresher has been installed in this room.

**Room 3:** This room contains the food supply for the excavation team.

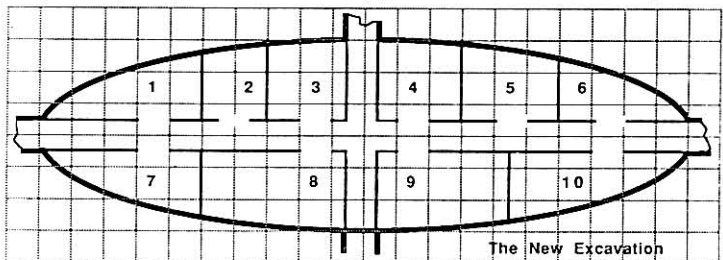
**Room 5:** Tonon, the Vargr security officer, has stored a variety of slugthrowers and ammunition in this room.

**Room 6:** This room contains the scientific gear for the expedition.

**Room 8:** This room is used for Aengagh's living quarters.

**Room 9:** This room is used for Aengagh's office.

The hallway between Rooms 8 and 9 ends suddenly at a wall, despite the outside appearance that the hallway con-



tinues into the other area. The Vargr have tried many methods to breach this wall, including high explosives and use of a PGMP-13. The wall looks cleaner, but otherwise the energy weapon has had no effect, and Aengagh has returned it to his lab ship.

Aengagh will show all of this to the characters, intending to impress them with his direction of the excavation, and the technical difficulties he is encountering. His plan is then to send the characters on their way.

But near the end of his tour, when the characters approach the door at the end of the hallway, the three doorways leading out of the complex will seal suddenly. A few seconds later, the door leading into the other building opens. The characters and the Vargr NPCs are trapped in the Ancient complex, with nothing but a few guns, some scientific gear, and their wits.

### **TRAPPED!**

Aengagh is still "top dog", and the characters must learn to cooperate with the egotistical Vargr if they are to survive. Aengagh has brought several tech 13 devices from his lab ship, and they are available for use. There is plentiful food and water, stored in Room 3, to supply Aengagh and his assistants. Several dozen slug throwers are stockpiled in Room 5; these may come in handy against certain dangers.

The characters' may ultimately become concerned about their supply of oxygen, since it appears that they are sealed off from the outside. Experimentation will reveal that some unknown source is providing an internal atmosphere that is comfortably breathable by both the humans and the Vargr, without the use of compressor/filter masks.

The atmospheric equipment (wherever it is located) will slow down over time, and will eventually shut off. Use this to pace the adventure: if the characters are dawdling, the threat of a lack of oxygen may goad them into activity.

Aengagh follows a standard procedure once the new building is breached. Automatic sensors, floating above the floor on grav plates, enter a room first and record environmental data. Initial dangers to living beings are also avoided in this way. If you would rather your characters not use this equipment, send it into Room 14, or give it to an all-Vargr party.

One effect of the breach will be that the apparent charisma of the humans will drop in the eyes of the Vargr. It is of the utmost importance that the humans reestablish their charismas, or their lives may be in danger from the Vargr. Krenstein and Aybee have the best chance of succeeding in this. One possible scenario: Aybee uses higher charisma speech patterns, while remaining obviously subservient to Krenstein. This would push Krenstein's apparent charisma up, and if Krenstein can make a few lucky guesses using some of his scientific expertise, this would also help.

Another possibility is that Aybee could get into a fight. Tikhdzae is an ideal candidate, as are other Vargr of higher charismas who resent the way Aybee speaks. By defeating a Vargr in combat, Aybee's charisma would go up.

As the characters and the Vargr explore the new building, they will perhaps discover its purpose: it is a genetic laboratory, used by the Ancients to develop experimental forms of life. Among the new forms of life being developed were a modified Vargr, some new flying mammals, and several medicinal bacteria. The site was preserved during the Final

War because it was desired for use as a germ warfare production facility. The war ended before it could be used.

This site was not where the Vargr race was originally created. That site is as yet undiscovered: this site was a purely experimental station, where entirely new forms of life were being developed, using several life forms (including the Vargr) for genetic material.

In coordinating this adventure, be sure to pace it so that your players are faced with challenges, but are not overwhelmed by danger. Several areas of the new building are inherently dangerous. In other areas, use the personality of the Vargr to add spice to the adventure. Keep in mind some of the "lunatic fringe" beliefs that some of the Vargr have regarding their racial origins, as denoted in the NPC descriptions and the section on Vargr culture.

Here are the descriptions of the rooms:

**Room 11:** A corridor, completely ringing the building.

*Referee:* The rooms adjoining this corridor have individual doors (all closed). The doors can be opened, and the rooms can be locked from the inside. From the outside, a door is not apparent, except for an irregular yellow shape on the wall of the corridor. Touching this shape turns it blue and opens up the door. Touching the shape again returns it to its yellow color and recloses the door.

A similar patch appears next to the door on the inside of the room. Pressing it opens and closes the door, as already described. A patch in the center of the door area can be used to lock the door from the inside.

**Room 12:** Entering this large, round room immediately causes a variety of noises and lights to emanate from the room. Some of the lights, shining in different colors from the smooth monadium walls, are aimed directly at anyone or anything in the room.

*Referee:* The effects may be frightening, but they are harmless. The room was used as an initial decontamination area. The device is fortunately set at a low level, so few effects would be noticeable.

**Room 13:** This room was used by the Ancients for storage. It contains a number of monadium boxes of various sizes and shapes. Some boxes are empty; the ones that are sealed can not be opened by the characters.

**Room 14:** This room is empty.

*Referee:* The room presents a danger to the party's equipment. Pressing the yellow shape outside the doorway opens the door, as usual. But after the door is closed, the blue shape remains blue for about 20 seconds, flashing before changing again to yellow. Upon opening the door again, the characters will find the room empty. The room was used by the Ancients for mass disposal, and anything that was in the room has been disintegrated, once and for all.

A safety feature built into the room protects the humans and Vargr. If they should be closed inside it, the room will not operate. Aybee will also be protected in this way, but dead individuals and other equipment will disintegrate.

**Room 15:** This room looks identical to Room D in the Museum of Antiquity, empty except for a single console extending from the center of the room. The room is oval in shape, except for a squared-off section at one end. There are unusual designs on the room's walls; closer examination reveals these to be short hallways extending into small, round rooms.

*Referee:* Touching the left edge of the console at various places will cause holographic, rectangular surfaces to appear at various places in the room. Touching the right edge of the console causes these surfaces to disappear one by one. Each surface is one meter by two meters, hovering about one meter above the floor. Edge on, the surfaces offer no resistance, but from above each will support any amount of weight. Other controls on the console brighten and dim the lights above the surfaces.

The console also controls the force field areas for the environment rooms, described below. Controls on the console also open and close the individual doors in Room 12 and 15.

Finally, the console controls the area labelled as Room 22. Do not let the adventurers discover this the first time through this room, but wait until they have explored more of the complex. Room 22 may be accidentally activated while the party is trying to get the outer doors open with the console.

**Rooms 16 - 21, 23:** *Referee:* These rooms appear initially as some type of design on the wall of Room 15. Each room is sealed off by two force fields with an airlock between them. The force fields may be crystal clear, translucent, or opaque, depending upon the console setting.

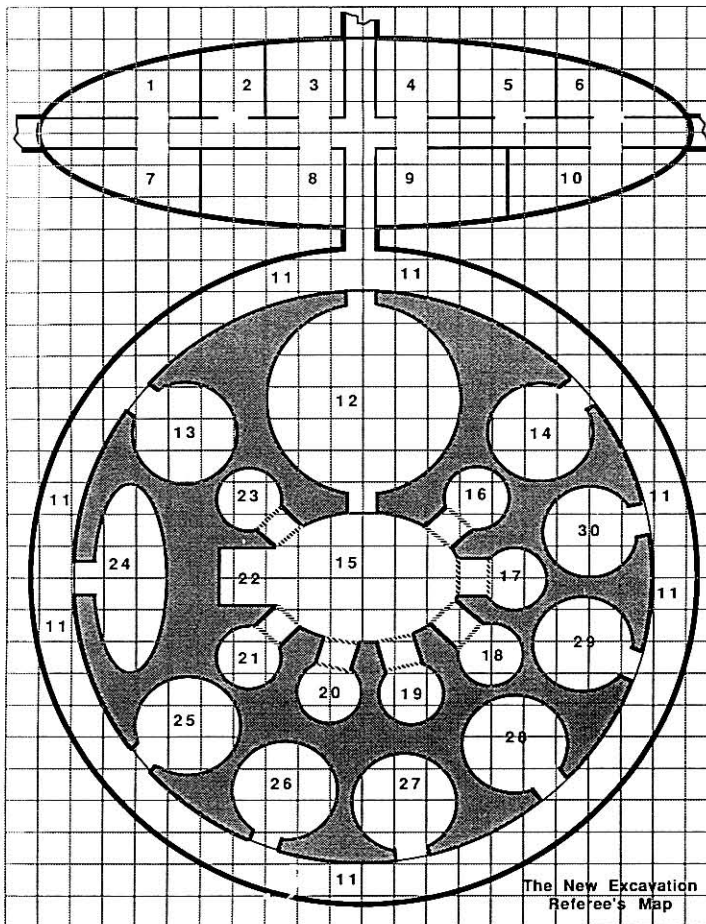
Each of these rooms contains a different environment, hot or cold, dry or wet, with a variety of atmospheres, but none of the rooms' gases are dangerous if the doors are opened. The rooms are otherwise empty.

**Room 22:** This is a rectangular area, with walls of featureless monadium.

*Referee:* At the appropriate time (see "Ending the Adventure"), once the characters have discovered how to activate this area from the console, it will be simple for them to turn it on and off. When it is on, the entire surface of the west wall glimmers white.

**Room 24:** This ovate room houses nothing but a pyramidal monadium shape projecting at an odd angle from the north wall. The upper surface of the pyramid contains a small depression about 7 cm long and 1.5 cm wide. The lower surface has a variety of blue and yellow lights on it.

*Referee:* This is the Ancient library. Placing a madinge egg in the depression and turning on the device will project various holographic displays in the center of the room. Manipulating the blue and yellow lights on the device can



speed up or slow down the projection, adjust the volume level of the sound, jump the projection forward or backward, or zoom in or out on the image. Viewing any image more than once with the device, because of the characters' ignorance of its workings, has a task:

To view a madinge egg recording again on the device:

Formidable, Computer + 2, int, 5 min

*Referee:* Each review requires this successful roll.

Certain madinge eggs will be more interesting to the characters than others. Eggs taken from the dispenser in Room 26 will display detailed biological data on the appropriate characters. This information will be highly encoded, and difficult to understand, but the party may become aware that the eggs contain genetic information.

None of the eggs contains any images of Ancients, but many of them will show maps of various places, and scenes depicting the capture of various alien life forms. One of the eggs will show the location of Terra/Sol, and will contain scenes of the capture of various Terran carnivores and aquatic mammals. None of the Vargr are apt to enjoy watching these episodes.

**Room 25:** The north wall of this room has 6 hexagonal shapes inscribed upon it in a cluster. Each hexagon is about one meter from point to point, and has a familiar yellow shape in the center of it. Pressing the yellow shape turns it blue, and the hexagon opens, revealing a drawer about two meters long.

*Referee:* These drawers contain the genetic material used by the Ancients in their experiments. Each specimen appears perfectly fresh, as if it were alive just moments ago. As the characters open the drawers, they will find the following: 6 small reptilian animals; a salt-water tank with a Terran dolphin; an empty drawer; a neo-Vargr with 6 fingers on each hand and no tail; 4 small flying mammals; 8 dishes of semi-microscopic flatworms.

The Vargr will be displeased with this room, especially those of the "low Kaenguerradz" school of thought. If your players enjoy gun battles, this is your opportunity.

**Room 26:** This room is empty except for a thin monadium cylinder extending from the ceiling, reaching almost to a 10-cm square pedestal projecting up from the floor.

*Referee:* Putting anything organic between the the pedestal and the cylinder causes a beam of light to shine down



from it. After a few seconds, a small niche will appear in the wall, and a madimge egg will occupy the space. As soon as the egg is removed from this niche, the opening closes up, leaving a seamless monadium wall.

The light is a harmless genetic scanner. The egg stores the genetic scan; it can be viewed in Room 24.

**Room 27:** This room contains a console similar to the one seen in Room D of the Museum of Antiquity.

*Referee:* The room can be used to view any area inside the Museum or the buildings at the dig. Operating the console involves the following task:

Difficult, Computer, Int, 10 min

*Referee:* The difficulty stems from the problem of focusing the holographic viewer, and from the fact that most of the viewing areas that this device once saw were destroyed 300,000 years ago. To view a room requires a successful task roll for each 10 minutes of viewing.

**Room 28:** This room has monadium shelves and counters built along its wall. A Droyne stands looking at the open doorway.

*Referee:* Tikhdzae, the trigger-happy Vargr bodyguard, immediately assaults this Droyne with his SMG. As the Droyne is a monadium pseudo-biological robot, the bullets will bounce harmlessly off its surface. Roll for ricochet damage as explained in Tikhdzae's character description.

The robot can not be activated or moved (it may even be fastened to the floor, but this is difficult to determine). The counters have "tools" that are fastened to them by 2-meter monadium cords which extend from their bases.

**Room 29:** Along the wall are 12 baskets woven from monadium; each contains a different kind of fruit or vegetable. The food is fresh, and looks and smells delicious.

*Referee:* The food is edible, but will spoil after a few days (opening the room has accidentally turned off the mechanism which kept its quality). Some of it will be familiar; some are plant species that were extant 300,000 years ago, but which are now extinct.

**Room 30:** This room has a counter, one meter wide, extending down the middle of it. Every 20 cm along the counter's length, there is a small hemispherical depression in the countertop, 10 depressions in all. Next to each depression is a yellow light. Most depressions are empty, but some are filled with various crystals, granules, or liquids.

*Referee:* This room was used by the Ancients to create elemental matter. Touching a yellow light turns it blue for a few seconds; when the light changes back to yellow, the small bowl next to it contains the substance. The substances that can be created are mercury (silvery-white liquid), carbon (dull black powder), uranium (silvery-white metal), iodine (lustrous, grayish-black powder), sulfur (pale-yellow powder), lead (bluish-white metal), gold (yellow metal), bismuth (white crystals), zinc (lustrous, bluish-white metal), and fluorine (pale yellow, corrosive, poisonous gas). The fluorine will escape into the room unless some means is found to capture it when it is created. The characters will not be able to discover any means to change the settings for this device in order to create other substances. The Vargr Llugvinogh will take a particular interest in this room because of the gold and uranium.

To determine what these substances are:  
Difficult, chemistry, edu, 10 sec (uncertain)

## ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The characters want out of the Ancient complex, but there seems no way of escape from its monadium walls. The area of Room 22 holds the key: when the wall of Room 22 glows, the wall at the end of Room C (in the Museum) also glows. The walls form a teleportation device: any item, animate or inanimate, can safely travel from Room 22 to Room C. Only pure monadium can make the reverse trip from Room C to Room 22.

In refereeing this part of the adventure, you should have the characters on the horns of a dilemma: do not let the players know that this is a safe exit. In particular, practice saying "into" the wall rather than "through" the wall, as in the following discussion.

When a monadium object is touched against the glowing wall of Room 22, it will pass *into* the wall without resistance; the object can easily be pulled out of the glowing area. If a non-monadium object passes *into* the glowing area, it cannot be pulled back, but can be pushed farther. After a few seconds, it will be gently pulled into the wall, until it disappears from sight.

If a living being touches the wall, he will also be pulled *into* it without resistance. The part of the body which is in the wall will have no feeling in it, as if it is gone. After a few seconds, the person (human or Vargr) will be gently pulled *into* the wall, until he disappears from sight.

The wall was once operated as a two-way teleport, but the controls that exist now can be set only for this one-way operation, to prevent contamination of the lab during certain experiments. The "pulling" of the wall is a safety device. When a person holds part of his body in the wall, fluids and brain impulses are travelling in only one direction; this could cause a dangerous backup in that area of the body. Thus the wall will automatically "pull" anything standing in the wall, to relieve the pressure.

How will the Vargr react? Tikhdzae will, of course, shoot at it with his SMG. This presents no danger to those at the other wall, because momentum of the bullets will be lost in the teleport device, as explained in *Secret of the Ancients* by Marc W. Miller.

Aengagh is likely to order Irsaell to test the wall, since Irsaell is the scientist with the lowest charisma. Aengagh may also decide to use the humans for these experiments.

Once on the other side, the only way to communicate with those still in the laboratory is to pass various monadium objects into the wall. By passing madimge eggs in a pattern, for example, rudimentary communication could be achieved. A more subtle way to do this would be to pass the madimge egg opener back and forth, and place messages within the hollow eggs themselves.

The most successful ending to this adventure, from the scientific community's point of view, would recognize that the area can never be entered again. Those still inside should therefore holograph everything, and then pass anything not tied down into the wall leading to the Museum and outside.

**THE CORRIDOR SECTOR**

**Library Data of the Sector**

**Gagh Veth/Khukish** (1603 X-556423-1): Red Zone. The 33,000 Vargr of this planet are evenly divided among

Khouth	Khukish	Lemish	The Narrows
Ian	Strand	Naadi	Uanti
Shush	The Empty Void	Atu'l	Kivu
Two Worlds	Ashishinipar	Sinta	Sashrakusha

three high-charisma leaders: Saegh Urr Fagnu, Vaefors Zeghz, and G-zonging Gzeth. The resulting civil war has reduced local technology to the bronze age, tech level 1. All travellers are advised to avoid this world.

**Ishirdu/Two Worlds** (0338 X-776301-0): Red Zone. The taint of radioactive gases in the atmosphere of Ishirdu led to the evolution of the psionically gifted Irdu, who live in widely scattered woodland homes and supply their needs by

**Corridor: Subsector Key**

telekinetic manipulations. The population of two thousand is optimum to them, and they maintain it carefully. Their psionic skills shocked the Scouts of the Rydel Expeditions, and the Navy interdicted the world, despite the non-aggressive character of the Irdu.

**Kanorb/Sashrakusha** (2733 C-473976-C): Kanorb has a long history of settlement and fractious politics. Kanorb was a stronghold of Vilani noble houses in the First Imperium; it withdrew from Interstellar commerce early in the Rule of Man period. When the Solomani attempted to reintegrate Kanorb by force, the population put up fierce resistance. The Solomani Navy was so overtaxed by the vastness of the Second Imperium that they were never able to muster enough force to fight a conclusive battle with Kanorb. After the Rule of Man fell, several of the Vilani Lords began quarelling with each other, no longer having a common cause to unite them. The world disintegrated into dozens of squabbling nations during the Long Night.

The Third Imperium first re-established trade relations with the nation Eshlepur, on the northern continent. Now, most of the major powers carry on interstellar trade, acting independently under sometimes contradictory agreements. Smaller nations group themselves into spheres of influence around superpowers possessing starports. Languages have diverged sharply from the original Vilani; some fifty dialects are now spoken on the planet.

**Kikasad/Sinta** (2334 C-76A003-6): This waterworld is a hunting preserve, boasting some of the most spectacular (and most deadly) game fish in the Imperium. The law level indicates the weapons allowable for hunting. Valiant hunters may attempt an underwater hunt: some never return.

**Kidagir/The Narrows** (2503 X-242324-5): Red Zone. This border planet changed hands recently; the Vargr corsairs who occupy the planet now hold the tiny human population in slavery. A recent expedition to aid the enslaved humans has disappeared. Many Vargr, peaceably inclined toward the Imperium, avoid the planet.

**Lasher/The Empty Void** (1430 B-8C2100-8): The star Lasher is a subsector all to itself. The Navy discovered extensive deposits of lanthanum (a vital element in the construction of jump drives) on an inner planet of the system; the planet's insidious atmosphere makes the mines difficult to work, forcing cumbersome protective gear and short work sessions. The entire population of 600 lives in an orbital rotating torus constructed by the Navy.

**Plunge/The Narrows** (2505 B-2409CC-E): Plunge stands at the head of the great Ushamla Main that spreads commerce coreward of the Great Rift. Many of the planet's eight billion people live in tunnels hollowed into the planet's crust. Trade has brought great wealth to Plunge, and the biggest businessmen are the leaders of the government. Their powers are dictatorial, but they have the respect of their underlings.

**Raiga/Ian** (0516 X-664532-3): Red Zone. When first colonized from Ian in the late 100's, Raiga had a thin tainted atmosphere. Volcanoes were broken open to raise the atmosphere density and bacteria were sown to remove the taint from the air. However, an unforeseen burst of radiation from Raiga's primary caused some of the bacteria to mutate into a deadly strain. While the original taint had largely been removed, the mutated bacteria proved fatal to most human inhabitants. A few managed to develop an immunity to the bacteria—these "immunes" have multiplied to become a sizable population, but the planet is quarantined to non-natives. Nor can the natives leave, since they are carriers of the deadly bacteria *Lucellia Raigae*.

**Riilam, Kirshamil:** In 1090, partially in reaction to the communication lag during the Fourth Frontier War, Senior Scout Kirshamii Riilam mounted a daring one-ship expedition to test the feasibility of a supply station route across the Great Reft.

Although nominally a Scout venture, substantial backing and a Seeker Class ship *Reftbreaker* were provided by General Products, LIC. By removing all non-essentials, the cargo space was expanded to provide a second full fuel tank, allowing *Reftbreaker* to make the largest jump distance of 8 parsecs in two successive jump-4 jumps. After refueling at a gas giant in the Yoma/Vast Heavens system (Deneb 0331), the expedition returned to Corridor by the same route.

Upon their return they were knighted by Strepthon, and Riilam received a baronial fiefdom on Jafla/Sinta (Corridor 1840). Because of the success of this expedition, Strepthon's popularity increased considerably. Serious consideration is being given to the idea of planting several ice asteroids mid-rift as a permanent refueling station.

**Rydel Expeditions:** In 153 and again in 160, expeditions led by Admiral Inesh Rydel tried to locate a usable jump route across the Great Reft from Corridor (rimward) to Deneb. The first expedition originated from Sinta (Corridor 2037) and eventually arrived by various routes to Ashishinipar (Corridor 0931). Nearly a year was spent trying to find a way to go further but to no avail. A second attempt, made by a different route, ended on Ishirdu (Corridor 0338). This proved to be closer, but not close enough to Yoma/Vast Heavens (Deneb 3031), the closest possible world in this area of the rift. (see also Riilam, Kirshamii.)

## PLAYING THE VARGR

Playing alien NPCs can be difficult, but with practice, can also be very rewarding. Vargr are the least alien of the major races, so they make a good alien race to practice with.

### DETERMINING VARGR REACTIONS

When dealing with Vargr reactions using **Mega-Traveller**, the confrontation nature of the interpersonal tasks is especially appropriate. Use the charisma characteristic (divided by 5, of course) of the participants as an additional DM, with the offender's charisma used as a plus, and the defender's charisma treated as a minus.

As a general rule, Vargr tend to have rash initial reactions; they are either "all for" or "all against." To reflect this, change the initial reaction result for Vargr to be:

#### INITIAL REACTION

Task Result	Individual's Reaction
Exceptional Success	Actively Cooperative
Success	Passively Cooperative
Failure	Actively Uncooperative
Exceptional Failure	Hostile

A hostile reaction is not always an all-out physical assault or gun fight—it may be a verbal attack, a snarl, a rough shove, even a quick bite that intentionally draws no blood. Feigning for a holstered weapon or drawing and pointing a weapon is also a common Vargr hostile reaction. One can see how the Vargr temperament could wear heavy on the nerves of most humans.

High-charisma Vargr are viewed as strong, brave, and deserving of respect. Low-charisma Vargr are viewed as being "in the debt" of others. While the Vargr are often rash, they are not stupid—even though to a human, a Vargr seems highly subject to "whims" or "fits of temper".

*Human Charisma Equivalent:* Use the human's social standing divided by 3 (round fractions down). To this add leadership skill, and liaison skill divided by 2.

### HANDLING THE VARGR IN THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure has almost a dozen Vargr NPCs in it. If handling that many NPCs is difficult for you to referee, just split up the Vargr and send as many of them as you wish off in a different direction to explore the Ancients Lab. Tikhdzae can be lots of fun if he just roams about, showing up to shoot his submachine gun whenever he feels like it.

The various schools of thought which exist concerning the Vargr's origins and destiny in the universe should affect how you play certain Vargr NPCs. An example that occurred in one of our playtesting sessions will help illustrate this.

When the group reached Room 25 and found the neo-Vargr in a pull-out drawer, Aensorr (of the "low kaenguer-radz" school of thought—see the Vargr culture article), Irsaell, and Kfolgzokhto had the following conversation:

*Aensorr:* "This does not exist."

*Irsaell:* "Excuse me, Aensorr, but it *is* here."

*Aensorr:* (agitated) "No matter, it is *not here*—"

*Kfolgzokhto:* (interrupting) "It exists!"

*Aensorr:* "No one is to learn of this!" (pulls his gun and fires at Kfolgzokhto)

At this point a gun battle broke out in the room, with everyone out to get Aensorr before he silenced them. Once Aensorr was put out of commission, the battle ended. Kfolgzokhto and Irsaell took Aensorr's body and put it in the empty drawer. Of the other Vargr who noticed Aensorr missing, only Aengagh was disturbed by it.

Low-charisma characters dealing with high-charisma characters should try not to waste the superior's time. In our playtesting, Tikhdzae (with his SMG, of course) often reminded the other Vargr not to waste Aengagh's time.

Kfolgzokhto has a relatively high charisma and was the highest among the Vargr in the characters' team during one playtest. Since Vargr are so conscious of charisma, as Kfolgzokhto approached a yellow spot, he would ask "Uethall?" (volunteer?), hesitate for a brief moment while he glanced around, and then press the yellow spot himself. Kfolgzokhto did this for two reasons. First, to press a yellow spot and enter the unknown does require courage, so asking for a volunteer is appropriate. Second, since Kfolgzokhto allowed very little time before pressing the spot himself, the chance of someone usurping him from his own display of bravery was slight.

Touches of personality like these add a lot of fun and depth to the Vargr NPCs.

### VARGR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The following article is excerpted from *Vargr Culture: An Introductory Survey*, published by Deneb University Press.

#### GVEGH

Although there is no one "Vargr language" any more than there is a single "human language", about 60 per cent of the Vargr encountered in the Spinward Marches, Deneb, and Corridor sectors speak some dialect of Gvegh. The word "gvegh" means "tawny" or "light brown". Many Vargr racial names are color terms. For example, a closely related race, Gvegh-Aek, literally means "tawny-black".

(In this work, we sometimes use the more familiar term "Vargr". Unless specifically noted, all such references are to the Gvegh race and its language.)

Every Gvegh conversation is a contest, with the charisma of the speakers at stake. The notion of charisma is central to the culture of all Vargr races. Charisma, called "kfaegzoukhin" in Gvegh, is a Vargr's prestige and force of personality. An individual's charisma may change many times in the course of a lifetime, depending on the individual's environment and success among fellow Vargr.

Vargr are always competing for attention and prominence, so it is common in Gvegh for speakers to interrupt each other. Gvegh speakers often challenge their listeners to interrupt by needlessly lengthening certain words and syllables.

As a common example, a Gvegh speaker with a charisma higher than that of his listener will often hold the sound of the second-to-the-last syllable in a sentence for as long as possible, and then clip the last syllable short as an added insult to the listener.

Naturally, a Gvegh speaker with higher charisma can hold this syllable longer than can a speaker with lower charisma, but all must be careful not to hold the syllable too long, or the interruption will occur.

In a sense, the speaker with the higher charisma is dem-



onstrating that he can waste the listener's time.

### A GVEGH EXAMPLE

Another important difference between Gvegh speakers with high and low charismas is the different grammar that they use. A Vargr with low charisma must include all the grammatical markers needed in his sentence. A speaker with high charisma may use the bare root forms of nouns and verbs, and use a different order of words in a sentence.

Gvegh grammar is too complicated to describe in detail here, but a brief example helps illustrate how this works. For our example, we will use the sentence, "The corsairs aimed their lasers at the merchant's ship."

A low-charisma Vargr, using all the grammatical forms required, would say, "Uhdarroetsogzae kaghzllugheng dzaghzargaekszoerath udh udh kaghzasagang kaghzufukhoekalasakseng kaghzufukhoekalasakseng." (Certain words here are repeated because of grammatical rules.)

A high-charisma Vargr need say only the following: "Asag ufukhoekalasaks kuel arrgaekszoere kullugh darroetso." Of course, the high charisma speaker will also likely drag out the sound of the second-to-the-last syllable in the sentence for as long as possible, and then clip the last syllable short. (e.g., darroetso becomes darr-o-o-o-o-o-o-e-t so!)

### INTERRUPTIONS

Naturally, this means that it takes a low-charisma Vargr longer to say something, because of the grammatical forms he must include. If the high-charisma listener gets bored, then he will interrupt the low charisma speaker.

In response to such an interruption, a low-charisma speaker may begin to "press his luck" by omitting some grammatical indicators. But, in no instance is he allowed to lengthen syllables the way a high-charisma speaker does.

If the low-charisma Vargr omits *too many* of the grammatical markers, the high-charisma listener will interrupt with an *extra lengthening* of syllables. This serves to remind the low-charisma speaker of his proper place.

In short, whenever a Vargr listener is dissatisfied with the charismatic features shown by the speaker, the listener will interrupt. The original speaker may respond by modifying his speech patterns, or he may reassert his charisma by exaggerating his earlier speech patterns.

Thus, the tendency of any speaker is always to speak in a manner reflecting a higher charisma than he actually has. Listeners must interrupt to keep the speaker in his place. An interruption is the Vargr way of telling the speaker, "You think your charisma is higher than it actually is."

In a public speech, the same rules apply. It is common practice for a Vargr audience to talk during a speech or even to heckle the speaker. For this reason, Vargr public speakers with low charisma are rare.

### GVEGH PROVERBS

Another way to get a glimpse of a culture is to look at some of the sayings handed down generation after generation. Gvegh is rich in the number of proverbs commonly used by its speakers. Most of these proverbs are used in a high-charisma form; by this, the speaker actually relies on the high charisma of the Gvegh race as a whole.

"Thursuth gha kvaekh?" "Where is death not allowed to go?" This proverb is typical of the Vargr response to too

many rules. Besides reminding that some events cannot be prevented by any rule, the proverb contains a thinly veiled threat against the listener.

"Ghakse faeng faeng faeng faengeg; dzedzdhougz faeng faeng kufaeng udheg." "A pup's ball is the pup's; a pup's teeth are the pack's." Vargr are highly individualistic, but society depends on loyalty to a group cooperating toward certain goals. Protection of the group against outside dangers is one of these goals.

"Khofaeghorz gvegh gvegh gnaedh faeng vargr rrrrg." "Vargr speech without Vargr teeth." This saying, used as an insult, addresses one who cannot back up what he says.

"Aekh kfaegzoukhin zersakha vargr; kfaegzoukhin zersakh kuvargr." "A Vargr without charisma is no better than a rock; a rock with charisma is better than an entire pack." This proverb points up the importance of charisma in Vargr society.

### VARGR PSYCHOLOGY IN BRIEF

It is by now an established scientific fact that the Vargr race is the result of genetic manipulation of Terran carnivores by the mysterious race known as the Ancients. Individual Vargr react to this fact in different ways.

A few Vargr—the minority—have feelings of inferiority because of their racial origins. For them, life is a continuing struggle to assert their own self-worth by dramatic actions. These individuals are brash and often dangerous.

Most Vargr believe their special origin makes them more important than other races. This belief is known among the Gvegh as "kaenguerradz" or "racial superiority". Kaenguerradz takes two forms.

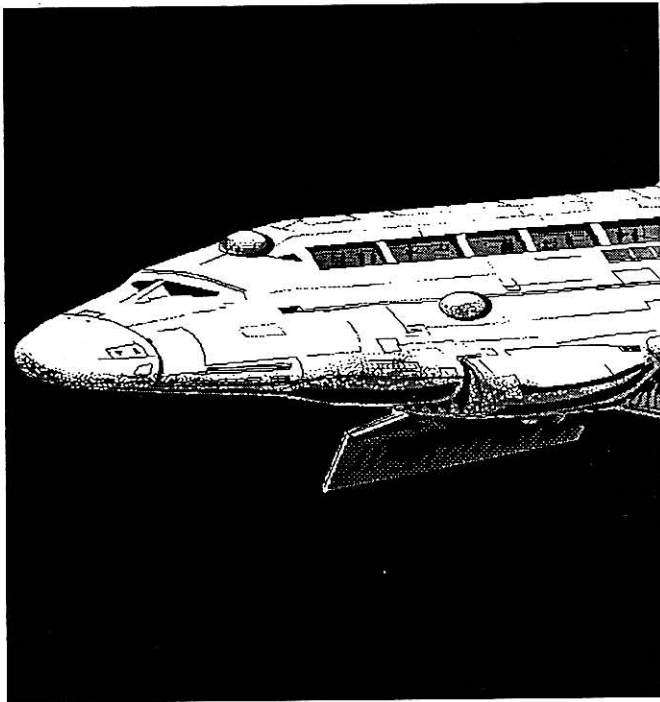
"High kaenguerradz" reasons that the Ancients had specimens of all the intelligent races of the time, and the Ancients would have been foolish not to produce one that was better than any other. A fanatical offshoot of the high kaenguerradz school is the Church of the Chosen Ones, which believes that the Ancients returned to the Vargr several times, improving the race to the point that it could take its rightful place as the leader of this part of the galaxy. Some even believe that the Ancients will return again to bring this about. The Church has waned in influence since its founding 200 years ago, but it still has followers on many worlds.

"Low kaenguerradz" discounts the available evidence, and gives a startling reason for a belief in Vargr racial superiority. Proponents of this school of thought believe that the Vargr were the original sapient race on Terra, and that humans were genetically manipulated to produce intelligence. The Ancients did not want the pre-existing Vargr race to interfere with the experiments on the humans, so the Ancients exterminated the Vargr on Terra after transplanting a small breeding stock to Lair/Grnouf. Vargr who believe in low kaenguerradz have a high dislike for humans.



# The Gold of Zurrian

## ADVENTURE NUMBER 4



*"...life in jumpspace must go on, just as it goes on in the real universe: there is happiness and sadness, pleasure and pain, life and death..."*

— Akidda Laagiir, 1102, from 'Jump Space' in the *Travellers' Digest*

### INTRODUCTION

The Gold of Zurrian tells of a group of four friends, and the unusual collection of individuals they meet onboard the starship. Events take a rather nasty turn and one of the four is accused of murdering a passenger.

**Chapters:** This adventure is presented in several chapters, most of which is material only for the referee.

The chapter "Pomp and Circumstance" introduces the characters and the situation. It also acquaints the players with the characters' personalities.

**Dates:** All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 324-1101.

**Place:** This adventure takes place aboard the Tukera lines ship, *Gold of Zurrian*, en route between Gishuli/Voskhod (Vland 0709) and Iren/Kagamira (Vland 1011).

### SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

At Tech Level 14+ a special purpose laser pistol becomes available: the Integral Laser Pistol (the pistol is used in this adventure, but is not available to the players). It contains a miniaturized, disposable power pack with enough energy for three shots. The power pack cannot be recharged. The entire device masses 2.5 kg and costs Cr 2,000. It is illegal at law level 1+.

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following NPCs are part of this adventure.

#### Onggzou, Vargr ex-emissary, ex-corsair

39598A Age 47 7 terms Cr 31,000  
Liaison-4, Leader-3, Ship's Boat-2,  
Streetwise-2, Auto Pistol-2, Bribery-1,  
Vacc Suit-1, Forward Observer-1,  
Infighting-1

Corsair Ship

Starport B, Small, Thin Atm, Wet, Mod  
Pop, Mod Law, Early Stellar

**Position:** Dhaer (Listener). Onggzou is suave, debonair, and well-dressed, as befits his position with the Church of the Chosen Ones.

Onggzou spent three terms as an emissary, and his ability to deal with humans is astounding. His Galanglic is fluent and without accent. He seems to be even-tempered and is easy to get along with in conversation.

Vargr corsairs under his direction took over Newcastle/Anarsi for the Church about six months ago. He is travelling in this area to spread this news among the faithful, consolidating his political power.

He dresses ornately, in a style appealing to other Vargr. His pants are bright blue; his shirt is yellow, with a green design of the Church's symbol. He wears a floor-length cloak.

Onggzou and his two assistant priests (travelling in mid-passage) are supposedly travelling to Vland; their actual mission is to kidnap the Marquis and Marchioness of Daama. Toward this end, the Vargr may try to take the ship.

Onggzou is experienced and serious (most of the time), cunning and not to be trusted. His assistants, who may remain unseen during the adventure, are not as charismatic or as nicely dressed as their leader.

Onggzou occupies room number 10.



#### Marquis of Gemid, noble

5A69AD Age 67 7 terms Cr 35,000  
SMG-3, Engineering-2, Jack of All Trades-1  
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High  
Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

**Position:** Marquis of Gemid in the Vland sector



The Marquis and his wife, the Marchioness, are the hereditary rulers of Daama (1904 Anarsi).

Historically, the Marquis of Gemid ruled all the worlds within jump-2 of Gemid (1903 Anarsi), but during the Long Night these worlds regained their independence, and Gemid's ruling power ended. The current title "Marquis of Gemid" is an anachronistic position with no ruling power.

The Marquis and his wife flaunt their noble status when travelling. Some of these exploits are included in Terra Porphyry's forthcoming book on nobles.

The Imperium puts up with the Marquis and Marchioness, because the Imperium would like to sign a treaty with Daama, setting it up as a client state, or even as a full member of the Imperium. With the report in Terra's book, the Marquis and Marchioness would no longer be accorded any special treatment within the Imperium.

The Marquis occupies room number 16.

**Marchioness of Gemid, noble**

7C1A8D Age 33 3 terms

Laser Pistol-3

Laser Pistol (TL 13)

Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet,  
High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Position: Marchioness of Gemid.



The Marchioness of Gemid is considerably younger than her husband, but looking at her it would be hard to tell this. She takes no interest in ruling Daama, but she does enjoy the special privileges her noble status brings her. She is the instigator of many of the demands that her husband occasionally makes within the Imperium.

She has one hobby which consumes much of her spare time: sport shooting. She is well known among amateur shooters as a crack shot with a laser pistol. She has a number of trophies from marksmanship contests.

The Marchioness occupies room number 15.

**Captain Gemashmim Udan, ex-scout**

494A44 Age 48 7 terms Cr 21,000

Pilot-3, Gunnery-2, Electronics-2, Laser  
Carbine-1, Air/Raft-1, Medical-1,  
Mechanical-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Jack of All  
Trades-1, Sword-1

Sword, Laser Carbine-13

Starport B, Medium, Standard Atm, Wet,  
Mod Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Position: Captain of the Gold of Zurrian.



Gemashmim Udan's prior tenure in the Scouts exposed him to a variety of experiences, and he has a basic understanding of all starship functions.

He expects things to be shipshape, but he is not over-demanding, and he gets along well with his crew. His ship is efficient, orderly, safe, and profitable to Tukera, and Captain Udan plans to keep it that way.

Udan had a brief mention in Terra Porphyry's book about the Scout Service (see below), in connection with a kick-back scheme involving Scout Supply Officers in Parsi sub-sector of Vland; Udan was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Udan occupies room number 6.

**Terra Porphyry, journalist**

528987 Age 58 8 terms Cr 41,000

Persuasion-4, Interview-2, Jack of All  
Trades-2, Dagger-2, Leader-2, Forgery-2,  
Streetwise-1, Communications-1, Liaison-  
1, Admin-1TAS Membership, TL 15 Holocrystal Re-  
corder, Dagger.Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law,  
High Stellar

Terra Porphyry is an author whose books have been controversial, and she is expert at marshalling facts together to sway public opinion to her side.

Terra Porphyry was born and reared on Rhylanor/Rhylanor. She attended the Rhylanor Institute of Technology, and while there she became engaged to another student, Theodor Krenstein. The engagement was broken a few months later, when Terra left Rhylanor to see other parts of the Imperium.

Her first book, *New Dogs and Old Tricks*, claimed to expose the Vargr Church of the Chosen Ones as a fraud, lining its leaders' pockets while deceiving the Church faithful.

Following the success of her first book, she wrote *Hide and Seek: The Imperial Scouts*, detailing supposed lax administration of the Scout Service, and certain abuses that resulted from this.

One of the incidents described in *Hide and Seek* was the kidnapping of Krenstein on Pannet/Rhylanor. The view of the book was that the Scouts were interfering with the rights of the planet's inhabitants. Theodor Krenstein and Dur Telemon were both mentioned, and Akidda Laagii's account (from the *Mora World Review*) was quoted at length. Akidda has always felt that his words were taken out of context to prove Terra's point.

Terra's current work in progress is about Imperial nobles. None of the nobility who know of this is looking forward to the book's publication.

Terra Porphyry is in the process of getting a divorce from her estranged husband, Arda Le (see below).

Terra occupies room number 9.

**Arda Le, ex-bureaucrat**

158977 Age 58 6 terms Cr (-323,000)

Air/Raft-3, Admin-2, Dagger-2, Brawling-1,  
Interrogation-1Starport A, Medium, Standard Atm, Dry,  
Low Pop, No Law, Avg Stellar

Arda Le is a "retired" Tukera Lines executive, travelling with his companion, Melissa Diimish. They get a special discount on passage because of his former association with the company.

It is true that Arda was an important Tukera executive in Corridor sector, but he was fired (not retired) when officials discovered he was a compulsive gambler. He is now thousands of credits in debt, and he is travelling to put as much distance as possible between himself and his loan shark.

He met Melissa about six months ago, and she has been travelling with him since. She is not aware that he was fired, or that he is so heavily in debt. She does know that he is married, and that he is going through a messy divorce proceeding. He has told her that he is wealthy because of his Tukera duties, and that his wife, Terra Porphyry, is trying to cheat him out of this money.

Arda occupies room number 12.

**Melissa Diimish, other**

8A8C64 Age 39 5 terms Cr 25,000

Wheeled Veh-2, JOT-1, Medic-1,  
Streetwise-1, Dagger-1, Electronic-1Starport B, Medium, Thin Atm, Wet, Mod  
Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Melissa met Arda Le about six months ago, and has been travelling with him ever since. She has appeared in a few movies on her home world, but was never very successful as an actress.

Melissa occupies room number 14.



**POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE**

"Excuse me, Dr. Krenstein."

"Yes, Aybee?"

"I don't mean to interrupt you—"

"That's all right, Aybee. What do you think of the view?"

"It's beautiful, sir, but—"

"We've traveled more than seventy-six parsecs from Rhylanor, Aybee, and we still have a long way to go."

"Yes, sir, we're seventy-two parsecs from Capital—"

"We're more than half-way, then. I hope you're ready to meet the Emperor."

"Why, no, sir, I thought—"

"Don't worry, Aybee. You'll remain our little secret. I doubt we'll meet Strehon face to face. The knighthood ceremony on Capital is really a formality. It probably won't be as nice as the one we had on Deneb."

"That's fine, sir, I just—"

"Say, Aybee, where is everyone? The viewport won't face Gishuli forever. I'm surprised Dur isn't here enjoying it."

"He's in his stateroom, Doctor, changing his clothes."

"Changing? Whatever for?"

"I've been trying to tell you, Doctor, that—"

"Hey, Doc, why aren't you changed yet? Don't you care about impressing the visiting royalty?" Dur Telemon, ex-scout, strode up the stairs in his dress uniform.

"Royalty? What do you mean? Why didn't you tell me about this, Aybee?"

"Doctor, I've been trying, but you keep—"

"Dur, that's really some getup. Maybe I should have joined the service after all. This is the best I could manage on such short notice." Akidda Laagiir, noted journalist, strolled into the starship's lounge, dressed in a suit of dazzling white veshlar fabric.

Krenstein gaped at the finery of his two friends. "Will somebody please explain what's going on here?" he asked.

Dur looked back at him. "Didn't Aybee tell you?"

"Why, no," Krenstein replied. All three looked at the robot.

Aybee hesitated, looking from one face to another, and finally spoke. "Doctor, I tapped into the ship's library computer to see who else was on board"—he hesitated again—"and I discovered that we're not the only nobles here. Since there are two other nobles"—another pause—"I thought you might want to look your best. I've laid out your clothes in your stateroom."

**"I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET..."**

The adventure begins in the Starlight Lounge aboard the Gold of Zurrian, a Tukera Lines 1000-ton long-liner. Moments after the opening conversation, other passengers start filtering into the lounge. The plasteel windows of the lounge provide a magnificent view of Gishuli's solar system, and this gives everyone entering an initial topic for conversation. Most passengers try to get to know one another, as they will be spending an entire week together.

In refereeing this part of the adventure, make your players role-play. Don't just tell them things: the players (and their characters) should hold the conversations with you, just as the characters would if the conversations were actually taking place.

Arda Le and Melissa Diimish are the first two to come into the lounge. Arda introduces Melissa and himself to the

characters. He is a retired Tukera Lines executive, and Melissa, a movie actress, is his travelling companion. He has been all over this area, and he is genuinely interested in the others' travel plans.

Melissa listens more than she talks, but the party can draw her out if they try. She will explain that the party has probably never seen any of her movies; they were holographed and distributed in Corridor, but her parts were small, and none of the movies was popular offworld from their production site.

The Vargr, Onggzou, comes in next, and he immediately attracts attention because of his garish costume and dignified bearing. Remember that Onggzou has liaison-4. He is charming, cultured, sophisticated, and makes others feel at home in his company. He would rather talk about them than about himself.

As a referee, you will have succeeded if your players complain that Onggzou "couldn't possibly be a Vargr—he doesn't act like one". If he is asked questions about his outfit, he will answer them, but he will not go into as much detail as the players would probably like.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Gemid then enter the room. They do not naturally attract attention, but they will try nevertheless, pausing on the threshold for dramatic effect. Entering the room, the Marquis will show interest in what he calls "the four knights". He has the knack of being jovial and condescending at the same time.

The Marchioness is quiet, and speaks only when her husband asks her a question. Once she gets started, though, it can be hard to stop her. Both of them are more than happy to tell about Gemid and its high-tech delights, as well as the other worlds in the "Gemidian Marquisate".

Captain Gemashmim Udan then strides into the Lounge. As Captain of the ship, he wants to greet the high passengers and welcome them aboard. His duties on the bridge need almost constant monitoring at this stage of the flight, so after meeting the passengers, he turns to leave.

As he is leaving, Terra Porphyry enters the Lounge. The Captain pauses to greet her, and then continues down the stairs. This gives those in the lounge an opportunity to see her a moment before she sees them. Krenstein recognizes her immediately, although he has not seen her in person for more than 40 years. Akidda and Dur also both know by name, since Dur was mentioned in her book (along with Krenstein) and Akidda was quoted. Aybee's knowledge of popular literature (and Krenstein's early personal life) is not widespread enough to include Terra Porphyry.

Remember, when playing this part out, that Terra Porphyry takes particular pleasure in creating a scene. She is brash, and doesn't mind insulting someone directly in order to get a reaction. Nor does she feel a need to stick to one topic or one victim. As well as giving her more personality, it can make your refereeing simpler if you feel free to move her suddenly from one conversation to another.

As she glances around the room, she shows surprise when she sees Krenstein, but she then rushes over to him, greeting him warmly by his first name. She then apologizes, correcting her greeting to call him "Sir Theodor". Her research in Deneb has told her who Krenstein's travelling companions are, and she greets each of them by name also. She mentions to the group that they are all in her new

book on the nobles of the Imperium.

Her attention quickly turns to Arda and Melissa; Arda has been trying to escape her notice. She asks Arda where he found his girl friend. Of course, Terra doesn't know Melissa's name, but she can be insulting just the same. She tells Melissa that there is no point in chasing after Arda for his money, because he doesn't have any. Arda is upset by this, and both Arda and Melissa leave at Terra's provocation. As they are going out, Terra calls out, "You might ask him sometime exactly why Tukera Lines fired him!"

Not one to leave well enough alone, Terra shifts her conversation to include the Marquis and Marchioness of Gemid. The pair are initially polite to her, and introduce themselves in their typically grand manner. Terra is immediately amused. "So you're the Marquis and Marchioness! Why, I've been dying to meet you..." Pleasantries will not be exchanged for long before Terra tells the Marchioness, "Enjoy your privileges while you can—they won't last, once my book comes out." The Marchioness suddenly feels "tired", and the Marquis escorts her back to their rooms.

Terra hasn't cleared the room yet, so she continues to introduce herself. She recognizes Onggzou's importance with the Church of the Chosen Ones by his clothing, and she mentions that she wrote a book about the Church. Onggzou is gracious to her, despite knowing who she is. Her biting style is no match for his Liaison-4 skill. She tries to draw him out, but he remains polite, even saying that he looks forward to speaking to her about her book later on.

Disappointed that she cannot raise this Vargr's hackles, and satisfied that she has made three new enemies so far, she excuses herself and goes back to her stateroom.

The four adventurers and Onggzou are the only ones left in the Lounge at this time.

### A QUIET DINNER

When the characters are ready for dinner, they can eat in their rooms or in the Starlight Lounge. If they choose to eat in their rooms, the steward will bring them their selections. If they go to the lounge, the steward will have set up several tables. The first table holds Arda and Melissa, the second holds Onggzou, the Marquis, and the Marchioness, and the third table is empty. There is enough room at any of the tables to include the other four characters. If anyone asks, Terra Porphyry is eating dinner in her room.

During dinner, wherever the characters choose to eat, the steward brings a private message to Aybee. It says,

*Dear Sir Owen, I would appreciate it if you would please come to my room as soon as you could. I would like to talk with you for a few minutes about Theodor, just for old times' sake. I would also appreciate it if you would not mention this to him.—Terra Porphyry, Cabin 9.*

### THE VISIT

Presumably, Aybee will share this note with Dr. Krenstein, and the two of them will decide whether Aybee should go. We found in playtesting this adventure that the players were very hesitant to send Aybee in by himself. To counter this, call on the characters' curiosity and trusting natures. If necessary, Dr. Krenstein can accompany Aybee without spoiling the adventure.

When Aybee gets to Terra's room, she will let him in, then

pause for a few moments looking at him before speaking.

"I never thought that Theodor would go that far," she says. "To think of him, actually knighting a robot." She doesn't care how Aybee reacts, just as long as he does react somehow; she is just fishing for a good quotation for her book. She has kept up on Krenstein's academic career, of course, and his knighthood is mentioned in her forthcoming book. Research she did in the Spinward Marches revealed to her that Aybee's birth records were forged, and putting two and two together, she has deduced that he is a robot.

The discussion of Krenstein "for old times' sake" was a ruse she used to get Aybee to her stateroom. When Aybee leaves, she locks her door behind him and spends the evening alone in her room. She will not answer the door to callers.

### JUMPSPACE AND JUMP DIMMING

It takes the ship about eight hours to get far enough from Gishuli's gravity well for the ship to safely jump. If any of the characters go to the Lounge to wait for the jump, they will encounter Melissa there. If Akidda or Dur is there, she will flirt with them.

The transitions to and from jumpspace are momentous occasions during an interstellar trip. Following an old Vilani superstition, the pilot of a ship customarily dims the ship's interior and exterior lights before going into jump. Historically, this custom derived from the need for all of the ship's power to be diverted into the computer and electronic systems, so that the tremendous power produced by the jump drive could be guided into creating the jump field properly. Zhodani and Solomani pilots do not follow this tradition of "jump dimming".

The lights on the long-liner are dimmed for a period of about two minutes; the lights are brought back up to full as soon as the ship is in jumpspace. Holographic entertainment is provided on the plasteel windows of the Starlight Lounge; otherwise, the windows show only the dull gray of jumpspace.

### ACCUSED!

The next morning, Aybee answers his stateroom door to find Captain Udan, the Marquis, and the chief steward. They ask if they can come in, and then ask him what he and Terra Porphyry talked about yesterday at dinnertime.

Aybee will not be able to tell the truth about this, and in any case, the Captain will inform him that he is under house arrest for the murder of Terra Porphyry. She was found dead in her stateroom this morning. As the crime was committed in Imperial space, Imperial law applies, and the Marquis, as the ranking noble on board, has taken over the investigation. It is his decision that Aybee be confined to his stateroom for the duration of the voyage, until he can be turned over to the local authorities on Iren for prosecution.

If Krenstein accompanied Aybee to Terra's room, he will also be placed under arrest, and the following discussion applies equally to him.

Aybee can still communicate with the others room to room, or they can come to see him in his stateroom, but he is not allowed to leave. The first goal of the characters should be to find out as much as they can about the murder.

Terra Porphyry was killed by three laser blasts, all within two centimeters of each other, clustered around the heart. She was seated at her desk at the time. The steward estimates the time of death as within an hour of the time Aybee entered her stateroom.

It is known that no one went into her cabin after Aybee did, because security cameras (tied in with the ship's anti-hijacking computer program) discreetly record movement about the ship's passageways. Most passengers do not realize that this is done; it is unobtrusive and is meant only to insure their safety. The cameras are two-dimensional and fixed-focus. They do not record sound, nor do they record actions within staterooms, as this would infringe on the privacy of passengers.

Terra Porphyry's room is still as it was found; the steward intends to move her body to a low berth soon.

### HOW IMPERIAL LAW APPLIES TO THIS CASE

Imperial law is the law of exceptions. Each world in the Imperium has its own government and laws, which residents of that world obey. Imperial law governs the space between worlds; it also protects Imperial citizens to provide a basic minimum of law level in its area of the galaxy. Imperial law is invoked only as a last resort. Nobles in particular feel that the enforcement of Imperial law is their responsibility, although it is not necessarily their duty.

### PROVING AYBEE'S INNOCENCE

The goal of the characters is now to prove Aybee's innocence. The best way to do this is to find the real killer. It is particularly important that it not be discovered that Aybee is a robot, with a laser built into his right arm.

### MOTIVES

All of the player characters and all of the NPCs described in detail have motives for killing Terra Porphyry, and many of them had access to a laser weapon. A first step for the characters might be to discover who had motive and opportunity. This section contains a synopsis of this for each character, but don't just spoonfeed this to your players. This is information they will piece together by talking with fellow passengers and following other clues.

**Aybee** might have desired to kill Terra in order to protect Dr. Krenstein by concealing Aybee's true nature. Aybee had the perfect opportunity. He was in Terra's room with his built-in laser welder. Although this seems like an extreme act, it is possible that Aybee's programming malfunctioned, and he did kill her.

If Aybee actually played back his own holographic recording of his conversation for the other characters shortly after it occurred, they know his innocence. If he waits more than 10 minutes, he has only two-dimensional images of the scene in his permanent memory.

**Dur** might have killed Terra as revenge for her description of his part in the Pannet incident, written up in her book on the Scout Service. He does not normally have access to a laser, but he might have used Krenstein's.

**Krenstein** also appeared in Terra's first book. He is skilled with the laser rifle, and has his in his stateroom. Typically, baggage is not further inspected if it has cleared customs, and special allowances are made for nobles (par-

ticularly those with Imperial space-required vouchers).

**Akidda** has always felt that he was misquoted by Terra in her book on the Scouts. His career was not, however, directly touched by this, so he has a weaker motive than the others. He has no skill with any laser weapon.

**Onggzou** might have killed her to avenge what she wrote about the Church of the Chosen Ones. His preferred weapon is the auto pistol, and he had no access to a laser on board.

**Arda** might have killed Terra to collect her inheritance, which was sizable because of her best-selling books. There is a question, raised by Terra in the lounge, as to whether he has anything left from his retirement pension. He has no skill with a laser, nor did he have access to one on board.

**The Marquis and Marchioness** of Gemid might have felt sufficiently threatened by Terra's forthcoming book on nobles that they decided to kill Terra before it could be published. The Marchioness in particular is skilled with the laser pistol, and she has three sport weapons with her in her cabin. If they did kill her to stop her new book, it is puzzling why they did not destroy Terra's holocrystal recorder at the same time.

**Captain Udan's** career in the Scouts was hurt by the false accusations in Terra's book. He might have killed her for revenge. At the present time, however, he has a successful captaincy, and it would be foolish for him to risk his present good fortune for the sake of a grudge.

The captain became expert with the laser rifle while serving in the Scouts; he keeps his weapon in his cabin. He also would have access to security information: he could have gotten into Terra's room even though it was locked, and he alone could manipulate the security camera records to hide his involvement at any time. The crew knows he was on the bridge during the jump dimming.

**Melissa** might have killed Terra so that Arda would collect the inheritance, if it is true that Melissa was only after Arda's money. Since she was seen by some of the characters in the Starlight Lounge during the jump dimming, it would have been impossible for her to have murdered Terra at that time. She had no training in laser weapons in her career as an actress.

**Terra Porphyry** could not have committed suicide.



**CLUES FROM GENERAL SOURCES**

The only way that the characters will be able to save Aybee is if they take an active part in the investigation. The most obvious way to do this is by virtue of their own nobility.

The Marquis doesn't really want to get involved in the investigation, and if prevailed upon, he will "deputize" the others to assist him. He will then do his best to ignore them, letting them do all the work.

The players should also try to release Aybee from his house arrest. This prevents Aybee's player from being pushed into the background. As soon as any doubt has been cast upon Aybee's guilt, the characters should prevail upon the Marquis or Captain Udan to free him, at least until reaching Iren. The suggestion to free Aybee can also come from the Captain; in that case, make the other players argue with the Marquis before he relents.

The principal clue to the identity of the murderer, and the one that points most strongly at Aybee, is the recording of the security camera in the passageway outside Terra's stateroom. If the players wish to see it, the steward can arrange to display it on a terminal. When replaying the recording, the characters can fast forward, fast rewind, or move directly to any time. The time of the recording is superimposed on the lower left portion of the picture.

The recording shows that Aybee was the last one to see Terra alive. The characters' review shows that the recording goes dark during the jump dimming. If they ask about this, the steward will explain that the picture is not dark; it is just difficult to see because there is no movement.

To demonstrate this, he will show another passageway on the middle deck at the same time period. To his surprise, this image is much brighter. Checking other areas of the ship shows the same thing: only the hallway outside Terra's room does not appear on the recording during the two minutes of jump dimming.

The easiest way to investigate the cause of this is to recreate the scene. If the passageway lights are dimmed from controls on the bridge, the characters will find that the lights go completely out in the central passageway (between Room 10 and Room 16 on Deck B).

Further investigation by a ship engineer will reveal that the passageway wiring was tampered with to cause the blackout. Such sabotage would take only a minute or two with the proper tools (Krenstein could easily do it with his electronic tool kit). Since the sabotage does not appear on the security recording, it presumably took place in port sometime during the previous week. (Security cameras are not normally used while the ship is unfueled and without passengers in the spaceport dock.)

This discovery weakens the case against Aybee; anyone on Deck B had the opportunity to commit the murder while the lights were out. All NPCs were in their rooms at jump time except for Melissa, who was in the Starlight Lounge.

If the murder was committed during jump dimming, the killer needed to get into Terra's room. Investigation will reveal that Terra's door lock does not work properly. Staterooms are normally unlocked by a voice recognition circuit keyed to the occupant's voice. Alternatively, one can enter a six-digit code using a numeric pad on the door. This allows two or more people to "share" a stateroom, although Tukera Lines requires that each passenger has his own room. In

the case of Terra's door, pressing any single digit on the keypad unlocks the door. This was also caused by sabotage to ship's wiring.

The characters may decide to hunt for the murder weapon. A room-to-room inquiry will reveal that no weapons are missing. The actual murder weapon (see "Special Equipment") was thrown into the disposal.

The characters will be able to find the murder weapon in the trash compactor (behind the access panel across from Room 26 on Deck C) by using a task. The characters may also find a small disposable flashlight, small enough to hold in the palm of one's hand. There are no fingerprints on either item, even if the characters did have the necessary equipment to reveal such prints.

If a search is conducted, no weapons other than those described above will be found. In Terra's room, a jeweled dagger and equipment to forge identification papers, together with some forged ID will be found. It is probable that she used these materials while researching her book.

Onggzou will not appreciate having his room searched, and he will lodge a formal complaint with Captain Udan. The characters may also discover that Melissa has a peculiar fondness for clothes: she has two identical sets of most of her clothing. If the characters do not plan and conduct the search in secret, the murderer will have enough time to prepare, and will not be revealed.

To bring this adventure to a conclusive end, the players must succeed in diverting suspicion away from Aybee, and, of course, also away from themselves.

**THE PLOT**

To make a long story short, Arda is in way over his head in gambling debts. Criminal elements have decided that the only way to collect is for Arda to come into a lot of money. The best way for this to happen, they reason, is for his wife, Terra Porphyry, to die before the mismatched couple's divorce is finalized.

To insure that Terra dies, the criminals hired a professional killer. She has travelled with Arda for six months, and is on this long-liner by foreknowledge of Terra's travel plans. She also arranged that the ship be sabotaged in certain ways. She boarded with her custom-made laser pistol. An hour or two later, while the ship is still in port, her identical twin boards, wearing identical clothes.

The murderer can thus be two places at once and have the perfect alibi. She enters Terra's room as soon as it is dark, before Terra has a chance to react. The stowaway is not likely to be discovered, since anyone who sees her believes he knows her, and the twins are careful not to be seen together.

The murderer's actual stats are thus:

**Other**

8A8C64 Age 39 5 terms Cr 25,000

Laser Pistol-3, Forgery-2, Brawling-1, Bribery-1, Mechanical-1, Electronic-1

Starport B, Medium, Thin Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Born: 206-1062

Integral Laser Pistol

**DECK A**

Except for the StarLight lounge, Deck A is mostly fuel storage. Turrets B and C are unarmed hard points in most examples of this vessel.

**1. StarLight Lounge:** The StarLight lounge is one of the features of the ship; it is restricted to high passengers only. The walls are made of clear plasteel, and curve in a semi-circle to join the ceiling. Movable tables may be spotted around the room. A well-stocked autobar covers the forward bulkhead.

**DECK B**

Contains the bridge, command crew's quarters, and high passenger cabins. The cabins and appointments are better than on the other decks, and the proximity to the StarLight lounge is considered desirable.

**2. Bridge:** On the bridge are positions for the pilot; copilot; engineering monitor; security, defense, and damage control; computer main terminal; and navigator. The large round item is the course-plotting computer holographic display. This display is used to show 3-D navigation information. The arrangement of pilot and co-pilot with the pilot on the right follows Vilani tradition; Solomani tradition places the pilot on the left.

**3. Computer:** This cabin contains the main memory of the computer, several emergency backup circuits, and a supply of spare parts. The memory of about 1 trillion words (2.5 million volumes, which includes digitized holographic recordings, text, programs, and a comprehensive index) consists of ultra-high speed holocrystals, all online. The master computer console is located on the bridge.

**4. Navigator Cabin:** Each crew stateroom is essentially similar to a passenger stateroom (see room number 9).

**5. Chief Engineer Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**6. Captain Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**7. Chief Steward (Purser) Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**8. Annex Lounge:** This lounge is open to high and mid passengers. It is not as well appointed as the Starlight Lounge, but it does have an extra library data terminal for use by passengers. Because of traffic through this area, the Annex does not provide much quiet relaxation.

**9. Garnett Room (Passenger Stateroom):** This stateroom is named for the naval architect who designed the Pride of Vland class long liner for Tukera Lines. Standard passenger comfort demands a certain level of amenity in the stateroom.

In order to meet this standard, staterooms are self-contained living areas which need never be left during a voyage. The stateroom contains a bed, a fresher, entertainment consoles, and miscellaneous furniture.

All basic items in the stateroom collapse into the floor, wall, or ceiling when not in use.

Functions supported by the stateroom can be divided into five basic categories: sleeping, eating, sanitary necessities, leisure, and possession storage.

Sleeping is supported by the standard size bed which folds from the wall at command. Grav plates can be adjusted to provide a range from 0.0 to 1.5G for personal comfort.

Meals may be taken on a collapsible table and storable chair. The stateroom is large enough for four persons to eat

around the table comfortably. Meals themselves must be delivered from the passenger lounge; there is no automated delivery system. A small refrigerator stores snacks and small quantities of food for immediate availability.

Sanitary necessities are handled by a fresher, which includes a multi-function shower, a toilet, a sink, and a small washer/dryer (for middle passengers). All components fold unobtrusively out of the way when not in use.

Leisure activities are a necessary part of stateroom life. They relieve the boredom of the long jump voyage by providing entertainment, research facilities, and computer access. The wide range of entertainment activities includes holographic theatrical productions, video shows, interactive drama, and audio programming.

There are also games (played against the main computer, or against other passengers). The computer terminal allows access (on a restricted basis) to the main computer for data processing, word processing, and library data inquiries.

Storage of personal necessities is handled by several collapsible compartments and cabinets. Passengers can store up to 100 kilograms of baggage in their staterooms; high passengers may store an additional 500 kilograms in the cargo compartment (access to any needed items requires the assistance of the crew).

**10 through 24. Passenger Stateroom:** see room 9 for a detailed stateroom description.

**DECK C**

Middle passengers are berthed on this deck.

**25 and 26. Steward Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**27. Medic Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**28. Lower Lounge:** used as the dining area for this deck, and for social gatherings too large for the upper lounge or the annex.

**29 through 48. Passenger Stateroom:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**DECK D**

Engineering crew, drives and cargo deck. The critical engineering circuit junctions are arranged in a rough circle about the hatch in room 55, for easy access from the engineering panel on E deck.

**49. Forward Hold:**

**50. Food Service Area:**

**51. Aft Hold:**

**52 through 54. Engineer Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**55. Upper Drive Room:**

**DECK E**

The main engineering panel is on this deck, as is the bulk of the jump drive. Also note the cargo loading hatches connected to the cargo lifts. The space under the lifts (which are carried in the upper position) is loaded last.

**56. Port Cargo Lift:** (gravitic cargo lift).

**57. Starboard Cargo Lift:** (gravitic cargo lift).

**58. Low Berths:**

**59. Boat Pilot Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**60 and 61. Engineer Cabin:** (similar to stateroom 9).

**62. Gunner Cabin:**

**63. Lower Drive Room:**

# PRETORIA SUBSECTOR

The Pretoria Subsector is a vigorous, growing subsector near the spinward fringe of the Imperium. The subsector's major xboat route connects the coreward subsectors of the Spinward Marches with the heart of the Deneb Sector.

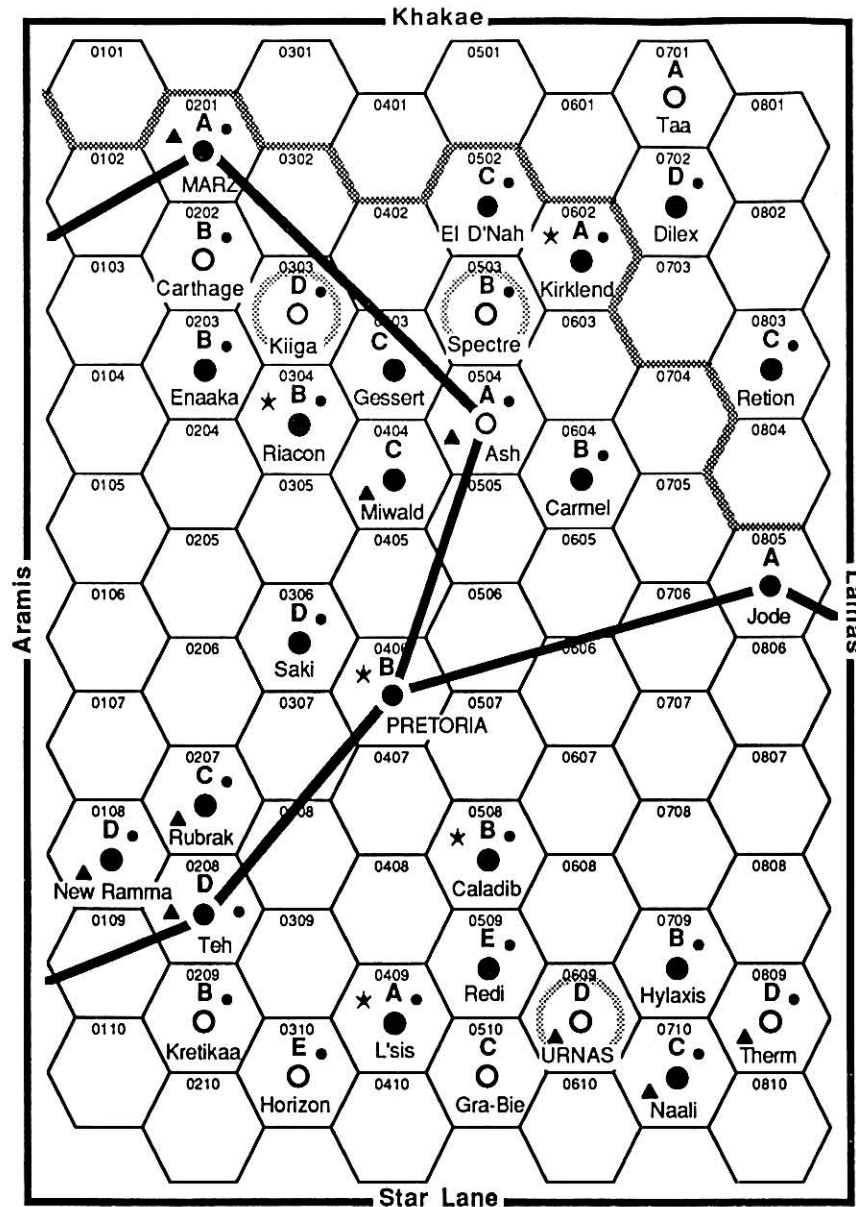
Pretoria is currently under Imperial Naval Rule as a result of the Rachelean Revolts of 1010 and 1011. Pretoria is also the only other world besides Pysadi/Aramis on which howood is known to grow—howood is renowned for its high mineral content and its natural aromatic smell.

The Ancients site on Redi is a favorite among Vargr tourists, because of the popularity of the writings of a Vargr scientist studying the ruins. Traffic is increasing at such a rate that the authorities are considering upgrading the E starport to class C.

The Scout Service is watching recent developments on Urnas quite closely. An aggressive, charismatic ruler has come to power in one of the countries that was beaten badly in the last global tradewar a decade ago. The Scout Service fears that renewed tradewar raids could escalate into another global war.

Name	Location	UPP	Bases	Classifications	Data	Align	Zone
New Ramma	0108	D465540-6	S	Ag Ni	703	Im	
Marz	0201	A584985-A	S	Hi Xb	101	Im	
Carthage	0202	B2107B9-C		Na	724	Im	
Enaaka	0203	B777786-6		Ag An Vt	922	Im	
Rubrak	0207	C554511-7	S	Ag Ni	701	Im	
Teh	0208	D263136-5	S	Lo Ni Xb	802	Im	
Kretikaa	0209	B20056B-C		Ni Va O:L'sis	623	Im	
Kiiga	0303	D530624-8		Po Na Ni De	201	Im	A
Riacon	0304	B666441-8	N	Ni	301	Im	
Saki	0306	D276642-8		Ag Ni	701	Im	
Horizon	0310	E110725-8		Na	324	Im	
Gessert	0403	C254315-A		Lo Ni Vt	320	Im	
Miwald	0404	C53349B-A	S	Ni Po	620	Im	
Pretoria	0406	B656967-C	N	Hi Cp Mr Xb	720	Im	
L'sis	0409	A764896-8	N	Ri	101	Im	
El D'Nah	0502	C549456-B		Ni Vt	502	Im	
Spectre	0503	B100654-A		Ni Na Va	802	Im	A
Ash	0504	A540887-8	S	Po De Xb	201	Im	
Caladib	0508	B697222-9	N	Lo Ni	301	Im	
Redi	0509	E575565-4		Ag Ni An O:Caladib	712	Im	
Gra-Bie	0510	C23027B-9		Lo Ni Po De	120	Im	
Kirkland	0602	A668443-A	N	Ni	423	Im	
Carmel	0604	B346441-9		Ni Vt	302	Im	
Urnas	0609	D120974-C	S	Hi Na In Po De	210	Im	A
Taa	0701	A650643-9		Po Ni De	330	Na	
Dilex	0702	D625385-7			902	Va	
Hylaxis	0709	B7B2354-A		Lo Ni	522	Im	
Naali	0710	C61657A-8	S	Ni Ic	324	Im	
Retion	0803	C558445-4		Ni	601	Va	
Jode	0805	A9A6220-B		Lo Ni Vt Xb	410	Im	
Therm	0809	D9B0489-5	S	Ni De	313	Im	

The Pretoria subsector contains 31 worlds with a total population of 11.827 billion. The highest population is 7.3 billion at Pretoria; the highest tech level is C at Carthage, Kretikaa, Pretoria, and Urnas. The data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: An=Ancient Site. Cp=Subsector Capital. Mr=Military Rule. Vt=Vargr Trading Station. Xb=Xboat Station. O=Owner.



# Pretoria Subsector Subsector A of Deneb



# ATSAH SUBSECTOR

During the First Imperium, the Atsah Subsector (Subsector H of Deneb Sector) was just beyond the spinward frontier. The early years of the Third Imperium were a time of rapid population growth and exploitation of this subsector as the frontier pushed on spinward.

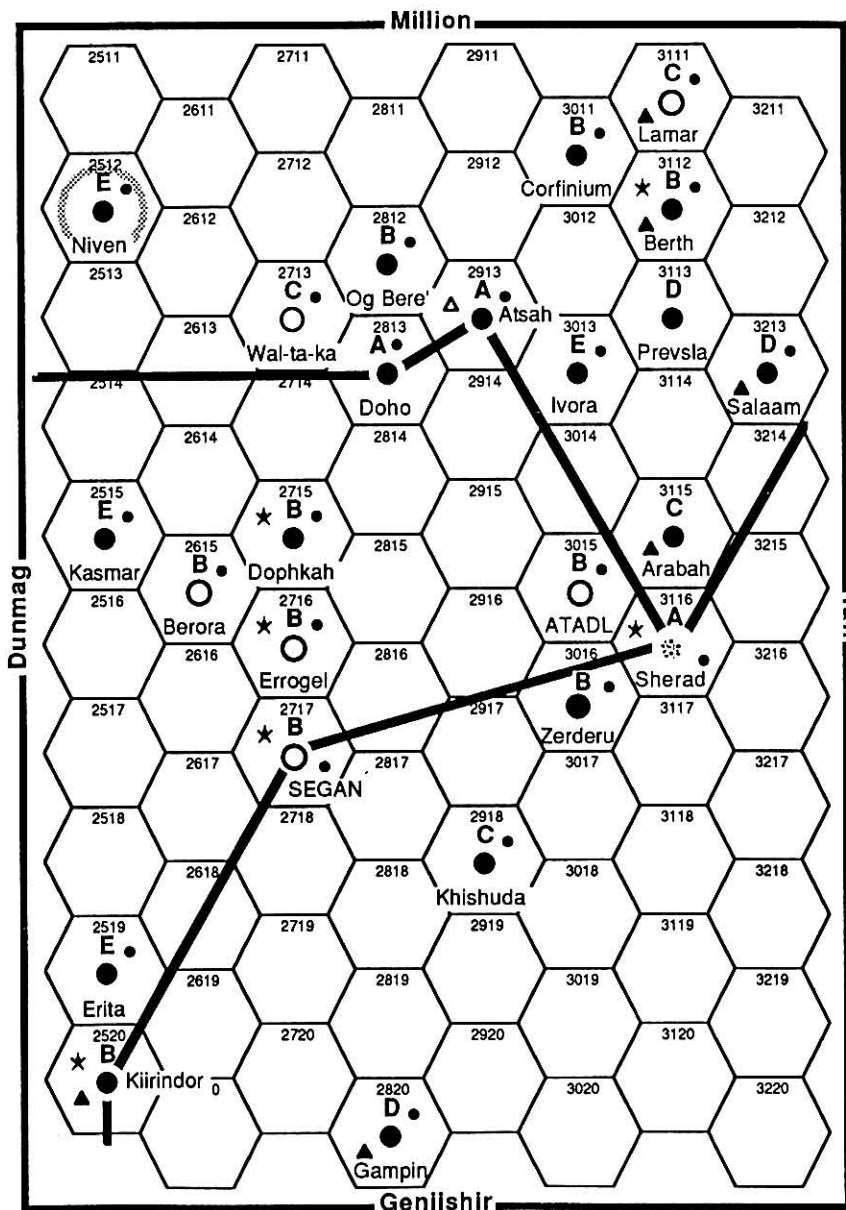
The worlds of Atadl and Sherad were well established by 100 as the heart of a major resource and industrial cluster. The extensive Sherad belt currently provides many resources to support the worldwide industrialization of Atadl. However, no major finds have occurred in the last 150 years and many beltlers fear that the vast belt may be playing out. The flow of resources to Atadl is slowing, unemployment is on the rise there, and the populace is growing uneasy.

Niven has a dangerously insidious atmosphere and is rated an Amber Zone—caution is advised if travel there is necessary.

The Scout Service has found no native intelligent life in this subsector.

Name	Location	UPP	Bases	Classifications	Data	Align	Zone
Niven	2512	E9C3237-6		Lo Ni	534	Im	A
Kasmar	2515	E631754-9		Na Po	101	Im	
Erita	2519	E99A575-8		Ni Wa	113	Im	
Kiirindor	2520	B446666-B	A	Ag Ni Xb O: Erita.	310	Im	
Berora	2615	B100672-D		Na Ni Va	822	Im	
Wal-ta-ka	2713	C360431-A		Ni De	601	Im	
Dophkah	2715	B647777-8	N	Ag	324	Im	
Errogel	2716	B150554-A	N	Ni Po De	724	Im	
Segan	2717	B3509AB-C	N	Hi Po De Xb	504	Im	
Og Bere'	2812	B464002-8		Lo Ni	223	Im	
Doho	2813	A696444-C		Ni Xb	621	Im	
Gampin	2820	D668644-7	S	Ag Ni Ri	533	Im	
Atsah	2913	A656750-D	W	Ag Xb Cp	723	Im	
Khishuda	2918	C856040-5		Ni	201	Im	
Corfinium	3011	B443664-8		Ni Po O: Atsah.	522	Im	
Ivora	3013	E999533-5		Ni	401	Im	
Atadl	3015	B2109C7-F		Hi Na In	201	Im	
Zerderu	3016	B441685-B		Ni Po	401	Im	
Lamar	3111	C410410-7	S	Ni	223	Im	
Berth	3112	B547345-B	A	Lo Ni	901	Im	
Prevsla	3113	D243300-8		Lo Ni Po	410	Im	
Arabah	3115	C877233-5	S	Lo Ni	820	Im	
Sherad	3116	A000447-F	N	Ni As Xb	913	Im	
Salaam	3213	D576300-4	S	Lo Ni	222	Im	

The Atsah subsector contains 24 worlds with a total population of 8.237 billion. The highest population is 5.2 billion at Segan; the highest tech level is F at Atadl and Sherad. All worlds are members of the Imperium. The Data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: Cp=Subsector Capital. Xb=Xboat Station. O:=Owner.



# Atsah Subsector Subsector H of Deneb

## IAN SUBSECTOR

The Ian Subsector (subsector E of the Corridor sector) was fragmentarily settled by the Vilani during the First Imperium. When the Third Imperium began expansion spinward through Corridor, they found the coreward edge of this subsector inhabited by Vargrs. Several minor battles against tenacious Vargr were fought in this subsector during the Vargr Campaigns (220 to 348); Imperial authority in this subsector was established by the mid 200's.

After the Campaigns were over, a derelict underground Vargr city was found on the fourth moon of a gas giant in the Jubal system—complete with several hundred thousand living Vargr. Repeated attempts to contact the Vargr population there have resulted in the murder of several Imperial Scouts and many outside Vargr emissaries by the ill-disposed local Vargr. It is estimated that less than a hundred thousand Vargr remain at the site, but the Jubal system is still classified as a Red Zone.

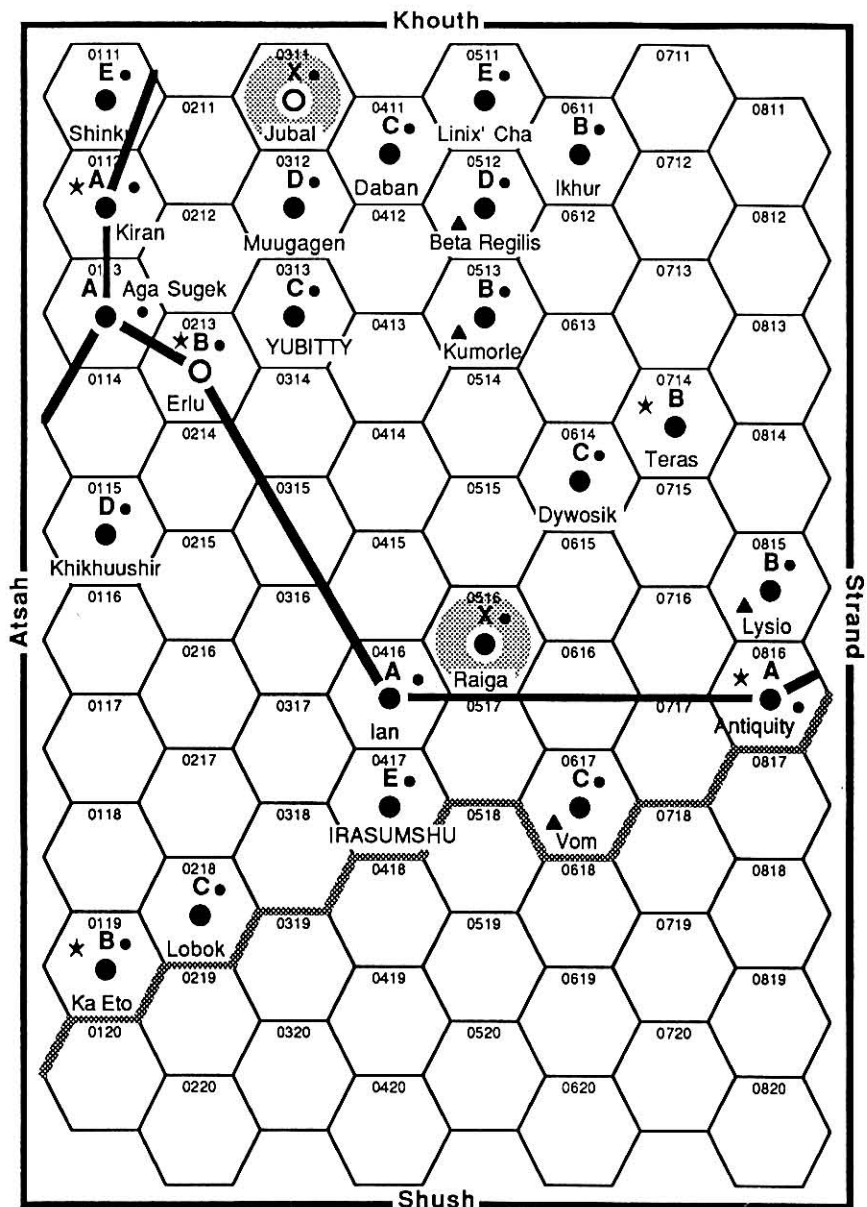
Some of the finest medical facilities within a radius of 20 parsecs exist at Kiran. Many go there seeking the best in medical treatment.

The Navy facilities at Erlu are used primarily for testing protective hull coatings for starships and grav vehicles against the insidious Erluian atmosphere.

One of the best preserved Ancient sites in the entire Imperium is found in this subsector on the world Antiquity. Antiquity has a fascinating museum displaying many wondrous and mystifying artifacts—many are still in working condition.

Name	Location	UPP	Bases	Classifications	Data	Align	Zone
Shinku	0111	E879102-8		Lo Ni Vt	422	Im	
Kiran	0112	A354856-F	N	Xb	901	Im	
Aga Sugek	0113	A9B8356-D		Lo Ni Fl Xb	401	Im	
Khikhuushir	0115	D676534-4		Ag Ni	624	Im	
Ka Eto	0119	B615345-D	N	Lo Ni Ic	502	Im	
Erlu	0213	B7C0626-8	N	Ni De Xb	404	Im	
Lobok	0218	C582876-9		Fi	335	Im	
Jubal	0311	X300497-2		Ni Va	823	Im	R
Muugagen	0312	D453465-9		Ni Po O:Kiran	601	Im	
Yubitty	0313	C96A987-7		Hi Wa	932	Im	
Daban	0411	C514858-8		Ic	802	Im	
Ian	0416	A5A88BE-C		Xb Cp	303	Im	
Irasumshu	0417	E554A74-6		Hi	801	Im	
Linix' Cha	0511	E322578-8		Ni Po	822	Im	
Beta Regilis	0512	D543567-3	S	Ni Po O:Kumorie	714	Im	
Kumorie	0513	B331758-C	S	NA Po	225	Im	
Raiga	0516	X664532-3		Ag Ni	714	Im	R
Ikbur	0611	B756532-B		Ag Ni Vt	301	Im	
Dyvosik	0614	C247547-A		Ag Ni	921	Im	
Vom	0617	C223578-9	S	Ni Po	302	Im	
Teras	0714	B438247-B	N	Lo Ni	410	Im	
Lysio	0815	B494546-9	S	Ag Ni	901	Im	
Antiquity	0816	A223420-C	N	Ni Po Xb An	214	Im	

The Ian subsector contains 23 worlds with a total population of 95.380 billion. The highest population is 80.2 billion at Irasumshu; the highest tech level is F at Kiran. All worlds are members of the Imperium. The Data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: An=Ancient Site. Cp=Subsector Capital. Vt=Vargr Trading Station. Xb=Xboat Station. O:=Owner.



# Ian Subsector

## Subsector E of Corridor

# KAGAMIRA SUBSECTOR

The Kagamira Subsector (subsector F of the Vland sector) is an old, well-established subsector, with a rich history spanning ten thousand years. Even though the earliest Vilani explorations went rimward and trailing, most of this subsector (which is spinward of Vland) was well settled by the time the First Imperium came on the scene.

Thousands of years of development have wrought vast changes; the Third Imperium worlds of today bear little resemblance to their original beginnings. Many worlds have ruins and relics of several past ages; the majority of these reflect the glory that once existed in this region before the Long Night.

The Uris Belt has a Naval Construction Yard specializing in large ships fashioned from the belt's planetoids.

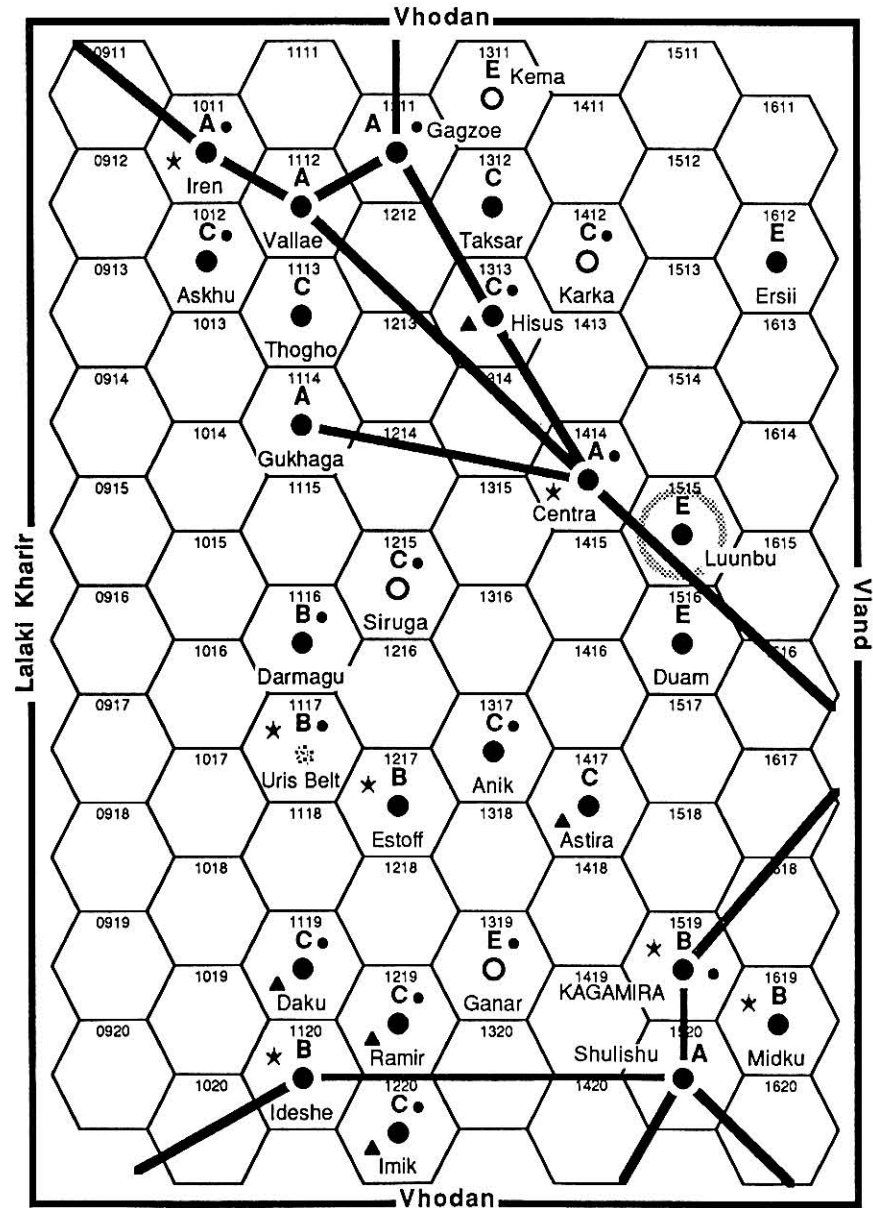
Kagamira, the subsector's capitol world, was industrialized centuries ago, and the prodigious output of its factories is known throughout the Vland Sector. Combustion of natural fuels for the world's industries has tainted the atmosphere with carbon dioxide. The population of the world is stable at 5.1 billion inhabitants.

Luunbu is rated as an Amber Zone: its exotic atmosphere occasionally rains nitric acid.

Kagamira subsector has no desert worlds.

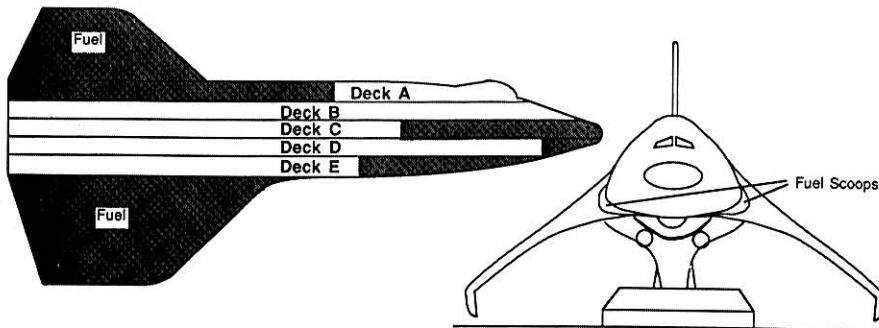
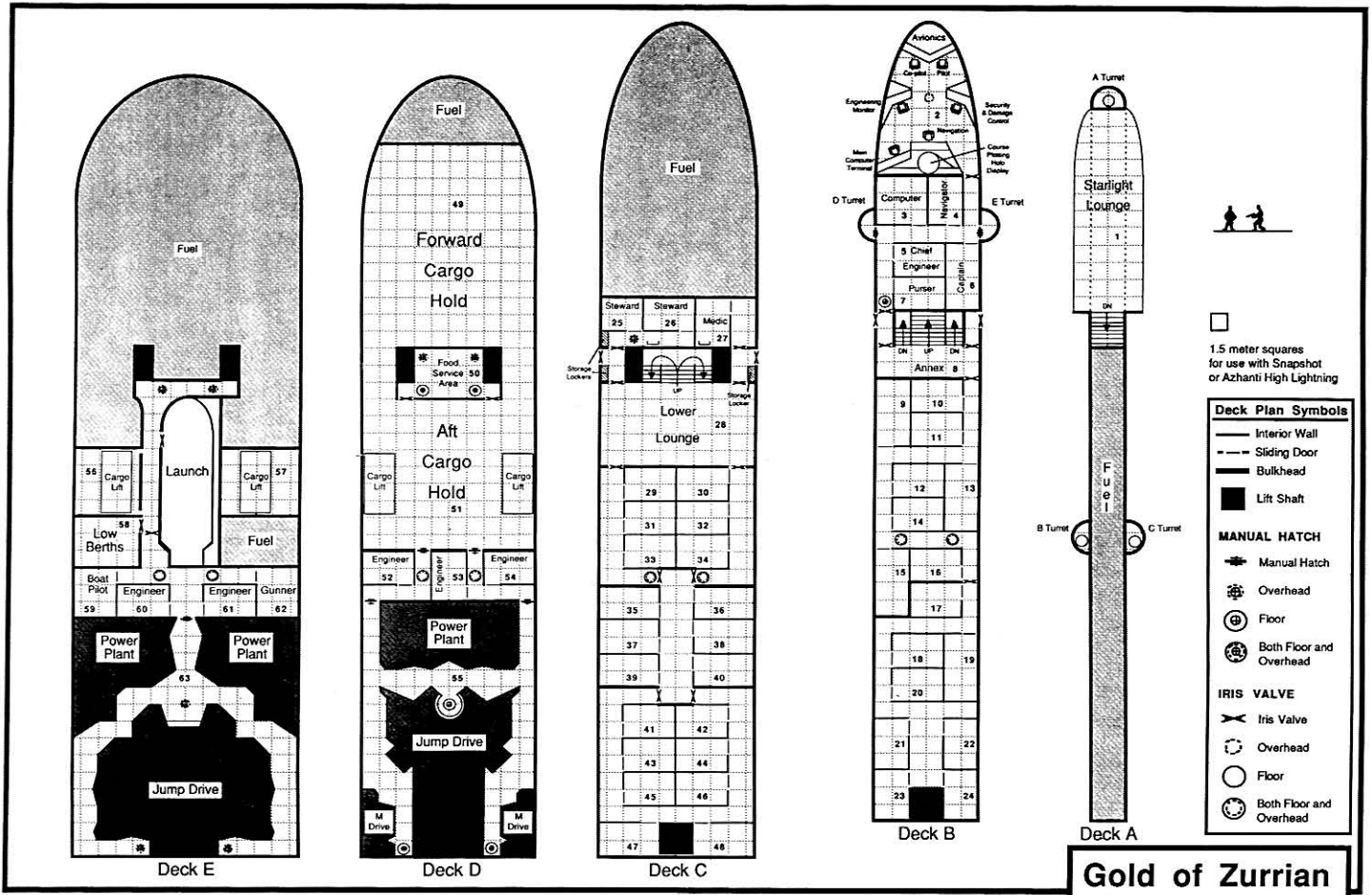
Name	Location	UPP	Bases	Classifications	Data	Align	Zone
Iren	1011	A8C189E-B	N	FI Xb	Im	814	
Askhu	1012	C554120-7		Lo Ni	Im	402	
Vallae	1112	A897788-9		Ag An Xb	Im	810	
Thogho	1113	C898669-7		Ag Ni O:Vallae	Im	920	
Gukhaga	1114	A877476-F		Ni Xb	Im	310	
Darmagu	1116	B412312-E		Lo Ni Ic	Im	901	
Uris Belt	1117	B000464-E	N	Ni As O:Estoff	Im	911	
Daku	1119	C332620-C	S	Na Ni Po	Im	804	
Ideshe	1120	B969557-A	N	Ni Xb	Im	920	
Gagzoe	1211	A585320-B		Lo Ni Xb Vt	Im	602	
Siruga	1215	C100559-E		Ni Va	Im	201	
Estoff	1217	B6B6330-E	N	Lo Ni FI	Im	620	
Ramir	1219	C66A222-C	S	Lo Ni Wa	Im	801	
Imik	1220	C263203-C	S	Lo Ni	Im	624	
Kema	1311	E100233-B		Lo Ni Va	Im	810	
Taksar	1312	C432345-9		Lo Ni Po	Im	110	
Hisus	1313	C7787BF-6	S	Ag Xb	Im	514	
Anik	1317	C441569-A		Ni Po O:Estoff	Im	211	
Ganar	1319	E200527-7		Ni Va	Im	821	
Karka	1412	C200876-7		Na Va	Im	801	
Centra	1414	A592541-E	N	Ni Xb	Im	124	
Astira	1417	C55238C-A	S	Lo Ni Po	Im	820	
Luunbu	1515	E8A6255-B		Lo Ni	Im	810	A
Duam	1516	E464769-7		Ag Ri O:Centra	Im	710	
Kagamira	1519	B477983-F	N	Hi In Xb Cp	Im	525	
Shulishu	1520	A35249B-D		Ni Po Xb	Im	410	
Ersii	1612	E361431-8		Ni	Im	210	
Midku	1619	B764485-8	N	Ni	Im	110	

The Kagamira subsector contains 28 worlds with a total population of 7.035 billion. The highest population is 5.1 billion at Kagamira; the highest tech level is F at Kagamira and Gukhaga. All worlds are members of the Imperium. The Data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: An=Ancient Site. Cp=Subsector Capital. Vt=Vargr Trading Station. Xb=Xboat Station. O=Owner.



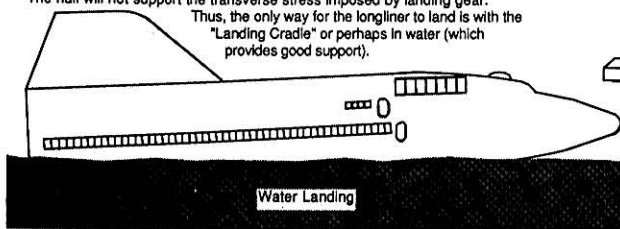
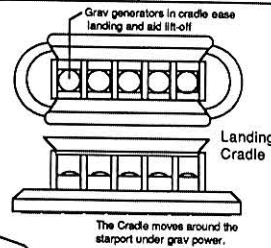
# Kagamira Subsector Subsector F of Vland





The greatest difficulty in landing a large ship on a world's surface is providing adequate support. Large ships designed for frequent surface landings have massive hull members to absorb the stress. The Tukera longliner design shown here was not designed for frequent surface landings, allowing more room for cargo and passenger comfort. The major structural member of this design is its outer hull, which is sufficient for normal orbit-to-orbit operations. The hull will not support the transverse stress imposed by landing gear.

Thus, the only way for the longliner to land is with the "Landing Cradle" or perhaps in water (which provides good support).



**Long Liner**

CraftID: Long Liner, Type RT, TL 15, MCr247.08  
Hull: 900/2250, Disp=1000, Config=3SL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=6,500tons, Loaded=8,560tons  
Power: 10/20, Fusion=895Mw, Duration=30/90  
Loco: 18/36, Maneuver=1, 45/90, Jump=4, Cruise=750kph, Top=1,000kph, Agility=0  
Commo: Radio=Systemx2  
Sensors: PassiveEMS=Interstellar, ActiveEMS=FarOrbit, ActObjScan=Rout, ActObjPin=Rout, PasEngScan=Rout  
Off: BeamLaser=x02  
Batt 1  
Bear 1  
Missiles=x02  
Batt 1  
Bear 1  
Def: DefDM=+4  
Sandcaster=x03  
Batt 1  
Bear 1  
Control: Computer=4x3, Panel=holographic linkx711, Special=headsUpx5, Environ=basic env, basic ls, extend ls, grav plates, inertial comp  
Accomm: Crew=12 (Bridge=2, Engineer=3, Gunnery=1, Maintenance=1, Command=1, Medical=1, Stewards=3), Staterooms=50 (HighPsg=24, MidPsg=12), EmergLowBerths=6  
Other: Cargo=1,755kiliters, Fuel=4340kiliters, PurificationPlant, Scoops, ObjSize=Average, EML=vel=Faint



# Here are the early adventures of Dur Telemon, Akidda Laagiir, Dr. Krenstein, and AB-101 — the famous characters from the pages of the Travellers' Digest.

Compiled by MEGATRAVELLER'S editors, this book is more than a simple reprint. The entire contents have been upgraded and embellished for use with MEGATRAVELLER.

## THE QUEST FOR ADVENTURE

The *Early Adventures* introduce you to four fascinating characters: a Scout, a journalist, a scientist, and an almost-perfected pseudo-biological robot. Learn about them as you play out these four exciting adventures:

**Of Xboats and Friends:** Dur Telemon, the ex-Scout, wants to stop off and visit a friend at an express boat station. Suddenly, events take a sinister turn when the party stumbles upon an amazing secret that may cost them their lives. Included are cut-away deck plans of the 1,000-ton xboat tender, complete with its MEGATRAVELLER Universal Craft Profile.

**The Journey of the Sojourn Moon:** A strange backward culture inhabits the bright side of the tidally locked world Wal-ta-ka. Who are the "Children of Wal-ta-ka?" Akidda Laagiir and his companions travel there to find the real story of these mysterious nomads descended from starfaring colonists. An extremely detailed treatment of the world and its lifeforms is included, as well as additional details on Dr. Krenstein's robot companion, AB-101.

**Visit to Antiquity:** Emotions run high when the four travellers encounter a group of Vargr researchers at a historically important Ancient site. The Vargr and our four characters make some startling new discoveries. Also featured is an article on Gvegh, the most common Vargr language, and how it reflects one widespread Vargr culture of the region.

**The Gold of Zurrian:** A mysterious murder on board an interstellar liner catches the passengers by surprise, and to make matters worse all evidence points to one of our four characters. Can the others clear their companion's good name in time — before the real murderer decides to take matters into his own hands? Included are detailed deck plans and the Universal Craft Profile of the 1,000-ton liner where the adventure takes place.

## AND LOTS OF BACKGROUND MATERIAL

These adventures introduce many new worlds and alien cultures for you to explore, with plenty of maps and detailed library data. Included are exciting new details about the Zhodani and Vargr, two of Traveller's alien races.

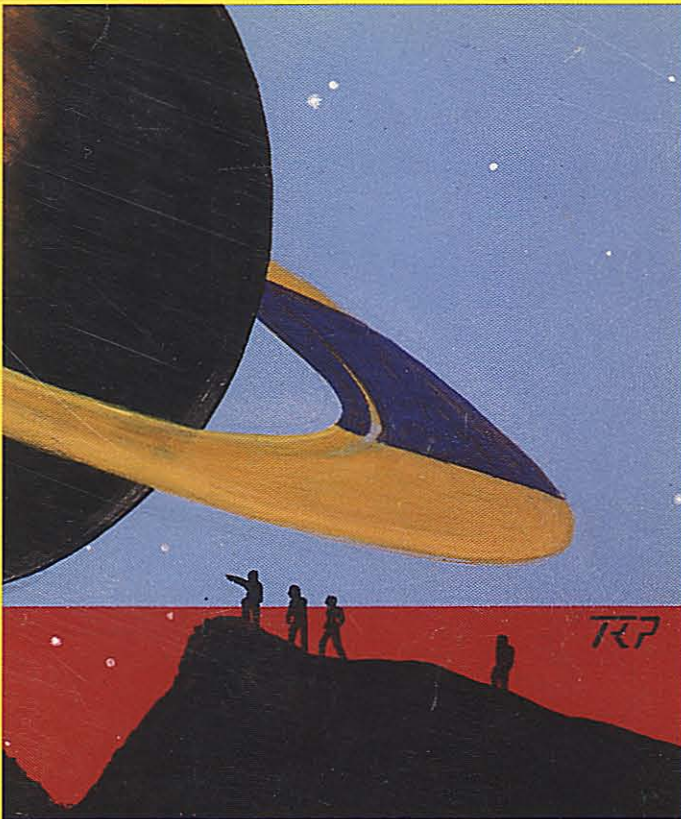
Are you looking for new technology? Within are excerpts from the first year's 'Tech Briefs', an ongoing feature highlighting new devices for Traveller. (There are even some fantastically high-tech Ancient artifacts.) Plenty of diagrams and charts are included.

Referees, would you like to add pizzazz to your adventures? And without extra work? The adventures in this special book are packed with ideas and tips for leading your players through each adventure. Watching the same group of characters develop adds excitement to your role-playing, while your players' ability to role-play expands with every game. And each adventure gives the referee plenty of detailed NPC's to play with.

The *Early Adventures* are officially approved for use with the new MEGATRAVELLER rules by Game Designers' Workshop.

Follow four unlikely travellers: a journalist, an ex-Scout, a scientist, and his robot sidekick. Starting "behind the claw" in Spinward Marches Sector, they travel hundreds of light years on a memorable quest to the Imperial Capital.

You will find these pages packed with exciting encounters, close-up dealings with alien races, details of exotic and far-off star systems, and even a chance to get knighted by the Grand Duke of Deneb!



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