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BABYLON 5™

The Centauri Republic Fact Book

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He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

Friedrich Nietzsche

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Introduction

'My god, man. We've become a tourist attraction. See the great Centauri Republic. Open 9 to 5, Earth time.'

-Ambassador Londo Mollari

There was a time in the galaxy, when humans looked up into the stars but did not know what lived among them, that heralded the height of a galactic empire. The largest ever held at one time by one race in untold millennia, this empire stretched from one edge of the stellar rim across untold stars and embraced the spinning worlds of a dozen other races. Many faces, each alien to one another, knew but one master and called but one crown their liege – The Emperor of the Centauri Republic.

With warships more powerful than those of any of their peers and legions of the finest trained warriors, they conquered those they could not convince to join them willingly. Within a few generations, the Centauri went from settling their own planets to seizing command of a hundred others. Their reach was great and in their silk-gloved hands rested the fate of billions. From the gilded throne on Centauri Prime, the Emperor decreed life and death for countless subjects in his grand kingdom. He stretched forth his hand, and the galaxy moved with it.

But like all tyrants, the Emperor's reach exceeded his grasp. The incomparable empire of the Republic grew too fast and too broad. Smaller worlds escaped the might of their armies, which were constantly seeking their next conquest. Larger territories were able to fight them off, seeking the independence they once had in light of the Centauri war machine. When an entire race of people, the enslaved Narns, finally drove the Centauri legions out of their star systems, it sounded the death knell for the once vast kingdom of Centauri Prime. The Golden Lion of the Galaxy returned to its cage, still mighty but with more mettle in its memories than in its spirit.

Even in defeat, the Centauri have not entirely lost their teeth. The Republic is still great and powerful with as many colonies as any other alien race, their warships are still years ahead of the technology of other races (with the exception of the Minbari, but the Centauri leave them alone on general principle). Their weapons and jump gates are the finest of any commonly available on the galactic market and when the Emperor speaks, other races still listen.

There are none, save the blindest of Imperial sycophants, who would claim that the Republic of the present is anything like the Great Empire of old. While the Lion still has its teeth, its claws have been blunted by surrender after forced withdrawal. The span of Centauri territory is half what it once was if not smaller. The trackless sea of purple that once covered a great part of the galaxy is now little more than a standard stellar nation with its halls of power echoing the glories of old.

It is said that in the echoes of the past, one can hear the birthing cries of the future. There are those who serve the Centauri Republic that can see a great day coming; a day when the thought of a Centauri battle force once again fills alien hearts with dread. They see a day when the many stars twinkling in the sky over the Royal Palace are all paying homage to the rightful masters of the galaxy. For those loyal to the old ways and the old dreams, the loss of power that makes the Centauri Republic an old dog whose hunt is gone, is merely a pause between storms.

Few in the governments of other races understand the fundamental truth of the Centauri Republic. They see the grand trappings and hear the endless talk of past greatness, but for them it is only the tarnish and hubris of a fading people. They fail to see that old men do not release their memories easily, for it is all they have left and could never comprehend that the young men of the Republic will fight, die, and struggle with every breath in their bodies for something better than they have. No other race in the galaxy knows the force of a legacy lost and that will drive the Centauri to their place of dominance once again.

The Centauri are a people born of kings and the inheritors of dreams. Such a people are motivated by many things. Some want to keep their wealth and power. Others want such things for themselves. Some want to stand proudly amid the stars and shout their names for all to hear. Others just want to feel pride one more time before they die. The Centauri will rise, once more, to the heavens, no matter the cost. In the words of Cesare Borgia, '*Aut Caesar, aut nihil*' – Caesar or nothing.

Despite this attitude – this ambition that burns in the hearts of every Centauri – they know quite well they are not the only giants in the playground. The Centauri have encountered other races that frighten them or convince them that some corners of the galaxy are not worth the trouble of trying to secure. They have watched the Minbari tear apart another sentient race over a single unfortunate incident. They have sent probes into Vorlon space and had none of them return. The Centauri are trueborn, unapologetic conquerors, but they understand the first rules of conquest – some people cannot be conquered and some battles cannot be won.

A decadent people with the balance of their better days behind them, the Centauri are forever optimistic about the future. Amid fire, war, and death, their spirits never stop yearning for a brighter tomorrow for themselves and for their Republic. The Vorlons believed the Centauri were a spent people whose time was done in the universe, but they have been mistaken before. No matter what the future holds for the Centauri, only one thing is certain. Whether they are to survive or burn into cinder and memory, it will be as it has always been – by their own hand.

Centauri in the Babylon 5 d20 Roleplaying Game

All Centauri characters share the following racial traits unless otherwise noted in the sub-races section of this sourcebook. These traits are explored in greater detail in the relevant sections of this text, but they are summarized below.

Centauri Racial Traits

- -2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma: As a race, Centauri tend to be self-destructive and rash, but are skilled at politicking and influencing others.
- All Centauri are of Medium-size.
- Centauri have a base speed of 30-ft.
- Centauri are raised to the play the political games of their families and so gain a +2 racial bonus to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks.
- For generations, complex politicking and court intrigue have left their mark on the Centauri. At first level, a Centauri may choose any two of the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (Noble Houses) or Sense Motive. The chosen skills are treated as class skills, regardless of the class(es) chosen by the Centauri.
- Centauri are noted for their personal excesses, especially when it comes to food, drink and questionable entertainments. This, in turn, has given them a great resistance against over-consumption. Centauri gain a +1 racial bonus to all Fortitude saving throws made to resist the effects of poison, disease, and exhaustion. There is little that can be done to a Centauri that they have not already done to themselves.
- Automatic languages: Centauri and English.
- Favoured Class: Agent. A multiclass Centauri's agent class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Is this recording? I can never tell. These things need a little light on them to tell me if they are on. How am I supposed to know?

Oh. Okay then, I guess it is. I'll just edit that first part out later... if I can figure out how. I have never done this before but my new friend Lennier tells me keeping a journal of my diplomatic service to the ambassador can be a valuable tool in the course of my employment. I can't really see how, since if I am not mistaken, words are only useful when they carry something worth hearing. I am not sure what to say in the first place, so valuable words from me are fairly unlikely. Still, it is either this or I get back to the ambassador's laundry, so I suppose I'll see if I can find something worthwhile to say.

My name is Virmiah Cotto, twenty-eighth ranking son of the third tier of House Cotto. My uncle provided my ascension into this position, but I suspect I am here as much to get me away from Centauri Prime as to give me a step up into the courts of power. I have not heard much about Babylon 5, but it does not seem to be a topic for much optimism back home. My cousin Centuro told me he hoped I did not disappear into the void or exeplode after getting here. What an odd thing to say, but then again, this is an odd place. Maybe it brings such things out in people.

My ambassador, Londo Mollari, seems to be very popular around the station. He is out in their Zocalo every night and always comes back in late or very early in the mornings, exhausted from affairs of state. He tells me that Zocalo in Earther speak means Hall of Power, so it must be a gathering place for ambassadors and officials of state.

I walked through it once and it did not really look like a debate chamber of any kind. It has some lovely shops though, and a lot of drinking establishments. The other ambassadors around here must gather at those places often because ambassador Mollari always looks like he has been socially drinking when he comes in. From the look of things on most nights, he has been very sociable.

That is an odd way to discuss governmental issues, now that I think about it. I have a map of the station and the place marked Council Chambers are nowhere near the Zocalo the ambassador spends so much time at. He hardly ever goes to this other place. Maybe I should look up the word Zocalo on my own when I get the chance, ambassador Mollari might be confused.

Oh, about Lennier. He is a Minbari, but other than that he is very nice. He does not talk much, but then I talk a lot, so my parents say, so perhaps I manage enough for both of us. We have never had much to do with his people other than a few negotiated trade routes in the past. Well, those and the diplomatic post on Minbar that Emperor Turhan had to close down because of something the ambassador there did. I wonder what that was. My great uncle Otura told me it has something to do with 'despicably honest dealings', but I am not sure what that means.

I am getting ahead of myself, which is a trick since I have no idea where I am going with any of this. The Minbari are very nice from what I can tell, though their ambassador keeps walking around like she has a secret she is not willing to tell to the rest of us. Oh well, I am used to that at home. Ambassador Delenn is light years more approachable than the other ambassador I have met- G'Kar.

Well, okay, met is a strong word. I saw him from a ldistance at the end of the boarding hallway when I came onto the station. He just stared at me for a long time, and I have never been so afraid in my life. If I did not know better, I would think all the stories my mother told me about the Narn were true. Except that I don't know better, do I? Oh dear.

I should probably go. The ambassador's laundry is not going to walk itself to Personal Services. They keep shrinking his doublets, the ambassador tells me, so I had better make sure they clean them right this time. I'll record more when I get the chance.

Centauri Biology

The Centauri appear at a casual glance to be more or less identical to humans in their anatomy, but such a cursory examination would be incorrect. The Centauri have more than a few surface differences from humanity and the deeper into their physiology one goes, the greater the disparity between the two races becomes. Centauri are visibly similar to humans, but appearances aside, the two races share very little in common.

Differences aside, there are a number of biological similarities as well. Facial features, arrangement of sensory organs, major limbs, and basic appearance are all the same as those of humans, as are biological drives and urges. The Centauri eat, sleep, excrete, and mate with much the same desire and biological imperative as human beings and most other sentient races of the galaxy. In certain respects, these drives are thrown into sharp relief with other creatures, as the Centauri are known for certain 'excesses'. In some cases, these extremes of behaviour have a primary motive root in their biology.

Physical structures and imperatives cannot explain all Centauri behaviour. The greater part of the Centauri animal is mental as opposed to organic. Much of the culture of the Centauri is based on their society and history, but the physical makeup of this alien race does have some impact on how they act towards themselves and others. An in-depth analysis of the Centauri can reveal a great deal about their bodies, but it also sheds some light on the subject of their minds.

One of the most notable structures in the Centauri is the complex nature of their sexual organs. The genital region of the Centauri male is an over-complicated affair with multiple appendages capable of separate or simultaneous use. The female of the species is much simpler, with a set of narrow openings on their backs arranged in a way that makes mating easier for both participants. With this numerically high number of sexual variations, it is understandable that the social implications and mores involving the Centauri are equally complex.

Centauri Anatomy

Excerpt from the recovered Medical files of the Imperial Office of Physicians, Centauri Prime.

It is my pleasure to provide the court with a comprehensive file on our race's biology and forensic details. The request that came in through my office was a pleasant surprise, as I did not believe the Emperor was interested in such things. His attention has always been turned to the stars, not in the

Doctor Franklin has asked me to come down to MedLab One and see him about a full examination and blood work. I do not really mind, and he has told me that it would be for the good of Centauri everywhere in Earth-controlled space. Apparently, Centauri Prime has been reticent in sending EarthGov biology files that would be useful to their medical staff in treating injuries and diseases in my people. That sounds just like the courts, to be honest. If it does not involve some old noble getting his feet rubbed on Ascension Day, nobody cares.

I just hope it won't hurt. I have this thing about needles, you see. Doctor Franklin assured me that there may some discomfort when they take this thing called a spinal tap, but that it will pass fairly quickly. He also says they no longer use needles for anything but administering drugs to the Drazi, it has something do with their scales, I understand.

To make his job easier for him, I have pulled up a number of medical files using the ambassador's account. I hope Londo won't mind. He told me I could do whatever I wanted as long as it did not involve his credit accounts, his purple filess or selling parts of homeworld. I am fairly sure he was kidding, but with Londos, it can be hard to tell some times. In any case, I have forwarded them to Doctor Franklin using the ambassador's personal BabCom link. That way, he can get the credit for clearing up the Royal Court's oversight.

crudities of flesh and bone or so I thought. I am pleased to learn that the Royal Court will finally be allowed the benefit of the years of hard work I have put into collecting this data. I thank the Grand Chancellor for this opportunity.

While I have appended data crystals along with this missive, it occurs to me that the Court might prefer a less technical presentation for their casual perusal. At great effort and long hours, I have put together this brief summary of the information contained in the much lengthier files you hold. While the crystals contain the meat of my work, if you will pardon the pun, this letter contains its flavour and should be a useful primer as it were.

I rarely get to leave my offices here, so it would be greatly appreciated if the envoy that brings this package to court would return with news of its reception. I would never presume to think that the Emperor himself would wish to visit a medical facility of this kind, and it is my fervent wish that when he does finally come to me as all Centauri do, the day is decades from now. Instead, I would just like to know that my work has been of some worth and enlightenment to those nobles of the Court wishing to know more about themselves.

To begin our exploration of Centauri anatomy, we should begin at the surface and work our way inward. If I might have the Court's indulgence, I would like to start the surface examination with one of our most identifiable traits among each other and when we compare ourselves with the lesser races of the galaxy. I am referring to the many majestic ways in which the male of our species can style and display his hair and the delightful clean pates of our females.

The Centauri scalp is a marvel of epidermal development. It is the thickest skin on our bodies, yet retains a softness on its outer three layers that keeps our heads from needing the unsightly scales of races like the Drazi or the inclusion of an awkward bony ridge like the Minbari. Instead, we simply have a section of long hair that grows across the crown of the skull and typically extends from about an inch above one ear to the other. The width of this section is from the *planum cerebrus* line of the skull to the uppermost cervical vertebrae.

Centauri Hair

The hair of the Centauri male is no less remarkable than the men of our race themselves. The crown ridge, a band of hair that runs from ear to ear over the front part of the hirsute section of the scalp, is generally an inch wide and grows considerably longer than the rest of a Centauri's hair. This strip is meticulously groomed by every class of our society allowed to grow it longer than four inches, and its remarkable tensile strength allows it to be easily set up into the kingly styles of our nobility.

In his dissertation of developmental anatomy during the reign of the previous Emperor, my predecessor Kodiro Antallia postulated that the hair ridge is the evolutionary remnant of our shared genetic heritage with the carnivorous kethka monkeys, hunted to extinction during the Great Hunts of Emperor Burago. While I share the Court's official position that such suppositions cast a dire aspersion on the ascendancy of all Centauri and do not for a moment wish to suggest that our great race evolved from such a brutal and base species, there are certain similarities that should not be immediately discounted.

I endorse the position of Chancellor Kenorum when he reported to Emperor Turhan and his first Court that the kethka monkey was the obvious result of the Great Maker taking his time while crafting the Centauri. After his tragic error with the Xon, it makes a great deal of sense to me that he would craft other creatures in an attempt to perfect his true work – our people.

Grand Emperor Cotto,
These files were recovered from the ruins of the Imperial Medical Plaza. As far as any of our archivists can determine, neither this file nor the data crystals the letter discusses were ever requested by your predecessor or seen by any of the members of the Royal Court. According to the time stamp on the primary file, this collection of medical data was created four days before the deaths of the Royal Physician and the Coroner General in 2258.

Efforts continue to find the data crystals in question, but they are not present in the facility or in any of the Palace vaults. It is unlikely that they remain on Centauri Prime, as their tracking cores cannot be found by any of our detection equipment. We recommend that recovery of this information be made a high priority for the proper authorities, as the archivists believe the biological information they contain would constitute the worst breach of medical security since the Babylon 5 fiasco through the offices of then Ambassador Londo Mollari – also in 2258.

Thus, we are certainly not ascended from kethka monkeys, but the Great Maker probably gave us these vicious beasts to both show us his wisdom and provide a model for the things we were superior to in the universe. Kethka can still be grown in the Clonarum Regis, albeit only with imperial permission. I have obtained a sample for dissection and would be pleased to offer the following insight from my detailed autopsy. I will provide more on this subject later in the presentation, but for now there is more to discuss on the matter of our hair.

The kethka also had a crown ridge that is present only in the male of their species. The females were not bald as are nearly all of our females, but their fur grew very short over their scalps and was nearly non-existent on their faces and chests. The male kethka used small muscular contractions to move and display their head fans to others, forming a kind of visual language that allowed them to warn away rivals for their mates and establish a level of dominance in their society.

According to historical records from the reign of Burago the Hunter, the male kethka even performed a crude sort of grooming with their head fans. They would find the narrowest sections of streams and use the water and silt there to make their hair strip stand up tall and stiff. Ironically, this behaviour led to the species' extinction, as wise Burago learned of this 'grooming trick' and set up blinds along the streams. This was likely the inspiration for Emperor Burago's most famous quotation, 'Vanity kills.' I am personally in agreement with his successor's rebuttal, 'Who wants to live humble?'

The tensile strength of the male kethka's crown hair compares slightly inferior with that of male Centauri – 45 kpsi to our 53-60 kpsi. Human hair, by comparison, has an ultimate tensile strength of only 33 kpsi. While the biological advantage to durable hair is somewhat dubious, it is another example of our race's superiority and steady improvement over lesser species. It is also proof in my eyes that we did not evolve from the kethka as the late Doctor Antallia suggested. If we had less need for a scalp ridge than the kethka, why would ours be stronger?

Our hair is also resistant to a remarkable degree to moisture and heat, losing only a few kpsi in either direction to changing conditions and only losing flexibility or softness of texture when subjected to cloying products like styling gels or other grooming techniques. Our hair follicles, even those behind the scalp ridge, are very resistant to penetration by moisture in general and we have a very efficient system of scalp oils and respiration, allowing us to retain hairstyles long after weaker hair on inferior scalps would succumb to unseemliness and need to be washed.

Let us now move on to the finest thing in the universe – the Centauri female. It is amusing that other races are entirely confused on the subject of their baldness in contrast with the fine head of hair we as men possess as a birthright. Many of the lesser races that possess hair have it equally distributed between their sexes, more or less. They assume that our females must spend their lives shaving as some form of slavery to our vanity.

This is not true, as our females simply do not have the genetic information or biological structures in their scalps to grow hair. Given their lack of true rank, it is not like they actually need hair after all, and since our scalps retain heat far better than the thin skin of other races, why would they have it in the first place. The attitudes of the lesser races of the galaxy are honestly beyond me, but I suspect that is why I am not in the foreign office of the Psycholinguistics Ministry.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the abnormality of Vax Toromo, but the less said about this deformity, the better. I know there are a few members of our culture who enjoy the concept of alien women and have grown used to those with hair, but to find a full head of it attractive in our own species is an aberration I doubt can be explained through medical science.

Facial and Body Hair

Body hair is the next logical step in the examination and should be simple to delineate. Both males and females have some facial hair, but only males have hair beyond the eye area (lashes and brows). Male eyebrows share many of the same traits as the hair of their scalp ridges and can grow quite prodigiously. Centauri men have a wide array of possible facial hair arrangements, from the typical clean face preferred by younger members of the current Royal Court to beards, moustaches, and even linking sideburns that share some of the tensile traits of the scalp ridge.

Females do not have this trait; their eyebrows and eyelashes are usually very soft. In the case of their eyelashes, Centauri women often have to add a chemical emollient and stiffening solution to make them resemble the resilient lashes of other races. This is not always done, though the last forty years has seen a resurgence of the practice for court and public appearances. I am not sure if this is a reaction to the slow infiltration of some Earth customs into our mainstream culture, but most Centauri females in the public eye use this mixture on a regular basis now.

While anatomical sciences have shown that many other species in the galaxy have body hair in several different places on their bodies, the Centauri only have it in a few key locations with any regularity. The underside of the arm at

the torso is a common location for men and women alike, with men growing it longer and thicker than women. This seems to be a hormonal function, and there is a detailed analysis of the medical data on this process on the appended crystal labelled 'Soft Structures and Biopics'. The short form of the biological link is that our body's generation of the male hormone testosterone is also responsible for some degree of hair growth. The actual process is far more complex, but that will suffice as a basic explanation.

Our species also shares the tendency of foot hair between the genders, but this is the only hair that we encourage our females to shave. The process for hair removal on a permanent basis is a difficult and costly one – typically reserved only for professional dancers and nobility. The hair on the dorsal side of the foot can be quite extensive for men and likely comes from the tendency for body heat to escape through that area. Most men leave the hair as it is, though a few of the younger members of the Royal Court have undergone removal treatments to bare their feet. I suspect this is because of the open-topped joras leather sandals that are in vogue right now.

Hair provides a useful transition to the next section of our exploration. Some races in the galaxy have hair around their genital area, but this is obviously not the case with our people. Several dissections have revealed that this hair serves a cursory role in heat retention around the genitals. These areas are apparently very sensitive to heat loss and can risk sterility if the heat balance is not maintained, particularly in the male of the species.

That explains why the Centauri do not have hair in these places; our bodies are more efficient than others and the heat balance we require for viable reproduction is handled internally. The fact that other races usually lack retractable genitalia in their males is another indication of their crudity of design. Why the Great Maker would form a sentient species whose males wear their most delicate biological structures out where any attacker can get to them is an example of His sense of humour.

Sexual Anatomy

On the matter of genitals, this part of the presentation will hardly be insightful but needs to be included. I sincerely doubt that I could instruct the members of the Royal Court on any function of their sexual appendages that they have not already mastered, but I must be complete in my task of summarising our people's biology for this Imperial record.

The male of our species possesses six appendages that can extend a range of lengths from two to four feet. The full range of extension is a matter of some pride amongst our kind and shorter lengths are incorrectly associated with a lack of sexual potency. It has been quantifiably proven that the overall length of a male's mating tendrils is in no way associated with the amount of stimulation he can either give or receive during intercourse, nor is there any connection to zygote production and chances of successful reproduction with a female of standard fertility.

Male sexual appendages are arranged along the chest, with the uppermost set placed just under the pectoral muscles. The middle pair is centrally located under the rib cage and shares muscular contraction functions with the diaphragm. This leads to the middle pair 'tingling' when a Centauri male coughs, as well as certain embarrassing incidents that occur during adolescence as the diaphragm undergoes involuntary spasms while it grows into its adult shape and size. The bottom set of a Centauri male's sexual appendages are located at the crux of the pelvis and are roughly sidereal to where the single organ of a human male is situated. All sexual appendages are roughly symmetrical with the central line of the body, though there is some degree of variation.

While typically the subject of childish myth and adult speculation, there is some truth to these tendrils occasionally being prehensile to a serious degree. While few Centauri males would bother to develop this talent to any useful degree, some wastrels and deviants have been known to strengthen their sexual appendages to the point of being able to manipulate small objects. This office cannot testify to the additional claim by those with this dubious 'skill' that they are also far better lovers because of this bizarre dexterity.

The strength of the male sexual tendril, also called a tentacle or pur'fa in the older tongue, comes from its permeable muscles and the lateral tendons that run through its length, binding the muscles and veins like an extended web. In much the same way as a woven kethka trap – the child's toy made out of a tube of waffled cloth – can be strong enough to bind the user's fingers when stretched out, a pur'fa becomes stronger and more rigid the farther it is extended. Blood flow and muscular control are also factors in this physical reaction.

All six of the Centauri male's sexual tentacles are retractable and can fully enter the main torso. They rest in separate cavities and collapse down to a remarkably small size when drained of blood and their muscles relax. An internal sheath of ringed organs generate heat 1.2 degrees warmer than the rest of the body, protecting and nurturing the biological fluids pooling in the single testicle resting at the base of the tendril. This reproductive nodule remains internal even when the tentacle it serves is fully erect, keeping its vital function shielded at all times.

It might amuse the Royal Court to note the fact that each Centauri tentacle has one testicle attached to it is the origin for an off-colour joke about humans. Apparently, their males have one sexual extension and a pair of testicles. When this fact came to the attention of the court of the then newly ascended Emperor Turhan, one of his courtiers remarked, 'I wonder what they did to make their women so angry?' After extensive examination, I can assure the Court that the human male did not originally have two tendrils.

Females of our species have six narrow openings on their backs, each one located along the spine in a cluster just above the base of the spinal column. A section of internal sheathes lead up into the torso of the female from these apertures to their reproductive centres, each one of which must be fertilised individually for a single embryo to be conceived. This occurs in a central chamber between the six ovaries and consists of the separate fertilised eggs atavistically combining until all have been consumed for their genetic mass and one remains. Because this process often results in all of the eggs being destroyed, reproduction rates can be very low in some women.

The six openings of the female Centauri are normally firmly closed through a muscular clamp that has a default condition of contraction. Only by relaxing the muscles of the apertures through stimulation and arousal can they be opened; this process usually takes ten to twenty minutes of contact and can be as enjoyable as the activity of mating itself. Sensitivity is sometimes a concern in this instance, especially in older Centauri females, as the nerves in this area begin to atrophy and require greater stimulation to open.

On the matter of sensitivity, the phenomenon of multiple couplings with tendrils and the amount of pleasure a greater number of insertions provides is a result of the unique nervous systems that run throughout the sexual organs of both male and female Centauri. While under normal circumstances, Centauri have the same limitations on pain/pleasure input that other races possess, our genitalia are an exception. Typically, a Centauri can only feel one physical sensation at a time, but redundant nerves and a special processing node at the base of the Centauri spine allows the interaction of each sexual appendage and aperture to have a cumulative effect. These sensations are added together and sent to the brain as a single experience that seems to come from multiple places at once.

This processing node shares several features in common with the brain, including a certain capacity for creating memory cells and generating synaptic activity. The node is typically very small and only serves as a boost for the nervous system during sexual intercourse, but it does occasionally develop a base level of cerebral activity. Most of us learn to control the intermittent impulses from the node, but some unfortunates among us have over-developed shorcalin nodes and have to cope with 'outbursts' from the physical areas they control.

The shorcalin defence involving the supposedly involuntary assault of another Centauri, typically female, by one or more of a male Centauri's pur'fa is seeing less usage in the Imperial court these days thanks to effective drug therapy. In my medical opinion, relying on it these days is usually the province of over-amorous lesser noblemen looking for an easy excuse.

Because of the Court's familiarity with sexual topics, I will resign the rest of this part of the presentation to the data crystals and move on to a less prurient topic. We are still exploring the surface anatomy of the Centauri and despite our momentary sidetrack to discuss reproduction, there is more topical area to discuss – namely, skin, nails, and teeth. These features are also distinct parts of the Centauri body and can be enlightening to discuss.

Complexion

Centauri skin is almost universally pale, regardless of climate or genetic lineage. While other races develop the melanin in their skin as a form of protection from the environmental factors of their homeworlds and geographical locations, the Centauri have an internal defence against such factors in the form of our krenlinar sheath. This is a sublimated layer of skin that has an almost silvery-white sheen if separated

from the layers of skin above it. Doing so is a very difficult procedure because of its unique bonding properties, but in the interests of biological science, I have submitted a new study of the krenlinal sheath in the accompanying documents.

In summary, the krenlinal sheath is a photo-reactive layer of skin that lies underneath our epidermal flesh and over the first array of outer muscles. The krenlinar sheath exists over our entire bodies except our eyes, though it exists in the eyelids themselves, and along the tentacles of the male. This may explain part of the reason why our pur'fa retract; they would not have sufficient protection from ultraviolet light if they remained extended on a permanent basis.

The krenlinar sheath replaces the need for more than a baseline level of melanin in our skin. It only permits enough radiation to penetrate its surface to provide the necessary amount needed for the processing of certain nutrients and the proper function of tertiary biological imperatives. The colour of the sheath is reflective enough to lend a certain level of pale complexion. This varies with the level of melanin in a given member of our race, but it is nearly impossible for one of our race to develop a tanned colour to their skin.

Many Centauri have a spotted complexion, with small dark areas along their epidermis in numerous places. These typically occur along the upper scalp and face, but older Centauri get them over the whole of their bodies in time. This is a function of the krenlinar sheath's imperfections; an imbalance in its reflective capabilities causes the melanin over the flawed area to darken from within and spread into a coloured spot on the skin. Fortunately, these are rarely dangerous as the balance of increased melanin protects the section of otherwise vulnerable krenlin.

It should be noted that this is far more common with males; females typically have a far more efficient krenlinar sheath. This is likely a matter of hormonal balance. Preliminary clinical tests have revealed a detrimental connection between testosterone and the chemical structure of krenlinal flesh. This balance shifts in the later part of the Centauri female's life cycle, as noted in the hormonal and chemical section of the presentation below.

Teeth

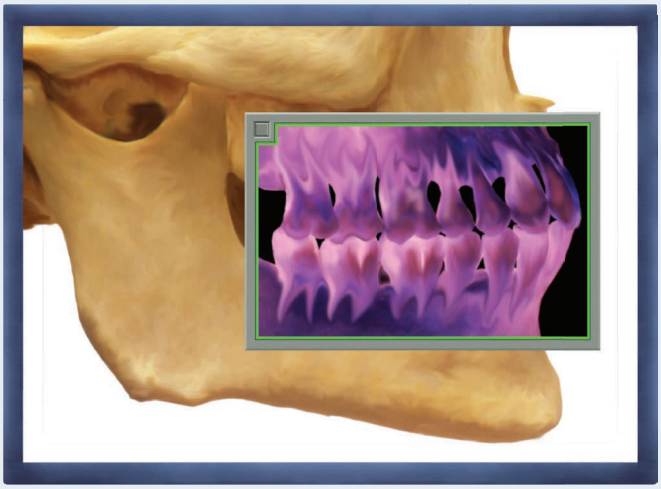
Further research into the anatomy of the kethka reveals other similarities between these base simians and our own anatomy. Namely, these parallels involve the dental structures and secondary chitinous layers of the Centauri body. We should begin this part of the discussion with a matter of great pride to our people and an enviable trait that few other sentient races in the galaxy can match to any degree; our fine, sharp teeth.

The Centauri have a number of pointed teeth in their jaw structure, namely the canines, incisors, and occasionally the periphery teeth around them. These match the same developed tearing teeth in the kethka, revealing that we are indeed intended to be predators. Our digestion, which will be discussed below, seconds this conclusion as does the lack of development on some of our back chewing teeth. Lacking an efficient surface for the mastication of softer matter makes it apparent that we should feast on the meat of others and not rely on tame plants and weaker foods.

The following chart should not be taken as an absolute for all Centauri. Females do not always have a full set of these predator's teeth, but this makes medical and developmental sense given their servile role. Some males also lack a few of these more pronounced pointed teeth, but this is likely the result of the temporal distance between our hunter ancestors and the greater, less physically strenuous life we have earned for ourselves in the intervening millennia.

The back ridge of the incisors are notched and run into channels in the gum line under the tongue for the sublimation of nutritive fluids taken from food. This ability to absorb nutrients sublingually is much more enhanced in the Centauri than in other examined species and comes from a series of specialised blood vessels and capillaries in the base of the mouth and underside of the tongue. The tongue itself is also filled with this network of digestive veins and aids in the process greatly. Digestion is covered in more detail later in the presentation, but the teeth play a vital role by themselves.

The back eight teeth, four on each side, are completely blunt, though a few Centauri have sharp ridges even on these teeth. This abnormal tooth development is generally a sign of an inefficient digestive system and forces the Centauri with



them to take supplements along with their meat-heavy diet. Little of consequence comes of this trait and some Centauri men take pride in having a 'liati smile', named for the vicious hunting creature of the southern jungles of Centauri Prime.

Blunt teeth are presumably there for the mastication of vegetable and animal matter for easier digestion, but the biology of the Centauri makes the latter unnecessary. Because the Centauri can digest meat and other tough organic strains extremely well, the need for vegetable and plant matter in their diet is lessened enough to make it an uncommon item during most meals. This in turn leaves the teeth relatively unused and underdeveloped in most adult Centauri.

Females use their back teeth more often than Centauri males out of necessity. Because they often lack the strong tearing teeth of the other gender, they have to be more careful with breaking down their sustenance before swallowing it. This is not as inefficient as it might sound; the digestion of the female Centauri differs enough from the male to balance out the disparity.

Centauri teeth are well protected by a layered series of hard enamels and micro-anchored roots that resist slippage and loss. An adult Centauri can expect to keep his adult teeth for the extent of his lifespan with proper care and even poor oral hygiene is not usually enough to cause severe tooth decay or fracture. The strength of the Centauri oral digestive system leaves little food in the mouth to cause dental abrasion or loss. Sugars do not react destructively with Centauri saliva the way they do in other races, so the phenomenon of cavities is unusual. Healing and recovery rates in the mouth are considerably quickened over those of other bodily areas, making gum loss and significant plaque build up practically non-existent.

Nails

While there is less of importance to note about the nails of the Centauri, it should be mentioned that these structures are very similar to the ones found on the kethka. While most Centauri keep their fingers and toes properly groomed, both have the tendency to grow pointed nails with a slight edge along the bias if left unattended. These are rarely given to such extremes of growth, but it has been a vogue of the past to let the nails of both index fingers become quite long as a sign of authority. Historical reports of this nail being sharpened by some courtiers as a way of introducing poisons to anyone scratched by it remain unproven, but are not biologically impossible.

The material of the Centauri nail is remarkably similar to the surface layers of the skeletal system. Too thin to become truly opaque in most cases, Centauri nails are prone to a slight recursion of growth that leaves them curved as they become longer. The extreme sharpness that they can be filed to with careful work is a result of their tendency to remain more crystalline than other bones. The cleavage lines of Centauri nails are at a far more acute angle than other calcium structures in the body, providing the physical basis for this keen edge.

In the wild, kethka were reportedly observed sharpening their nails (more correctly 'claws', given the feral nature of these beasts) on a particular stratum of rock found in their native environment. This same stone was used in the bygone eras, when court nobles would grow their index fingernail as mentioned above, and has seen a more recent resurgence in use as the whetstone of choice by devotees of the Coutari as a duelling weapon.

As an interesting footnote to the rumour of past nobles using their nails as a delivery system for poison, this concept may have also been taken from the kethka. There was an indigenous plant in their traditional environment that held a paralytic venom in its bark. Some historical records suggest that the kethka would claw these trees for several minutes before hunting; this would envenom their claws and enable them to bring down larger prey than their hunting prowess could allow for unaided. If this is true, the parallel between that behaviour and the use of poison by nobles unable to take on their enemies in a fair fight is certainly ironic.

Height and Weight

The variations in height and weight within the Centauri are considerable, as there are many different basic body styles. Most Centauri have a tendency toward weight gain, especially in later years, but a strong metabolism and a diet high in protein retards this tendency in earlier years. Few Centauri have the broad muscle mass of some other races, but tendon strength can make up for this deficiency and allows for much cleaner body lines. While the Centauri do not tower to the same heights as some other sentient races, they also have a taller low-height range as well.

This has led lesser races to conclude that most Centauri look much alike – a misconception that is understandable among weaker intellects but obviously untrue to the discerning eye. There is a certain range around which all but the most aberrant of Centauri exist, marking that central convergence of form as a 'perfect measure', so to speak. This Imperial Rule of Form was founded during the reign of the exalted Emperor Kiro himself, with his and his Prime Consort's measurements as its basis.

From this Rule all Centauri are judged in turn. Those men taller than the Imperial Rule of 70 inches are considered

Centauri Characters – Height and Weight

Centauri characters can have any chosen height or weight within the guidelines of this chart, though exceptions may exist. Regardless of the height and weight of a given character, all Centauri are considered Medium-size characters. If a random height and weight are desired for a given character, roll the indicated dice and add the resulting height modifier directly to the listed base height value. The weight modifier is multiplied by the height modifier and the resulting number added to the base weight for the character's final mass.

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Centauri, male	5', 4"	+2d6	140 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Centauri, female	4', 10"	+2d6	110 lb.	x (2d4) lb.

somewhat overburdened by height. Women taller than the First Consort's perfect height of 65 inches are often assumed to be either 'boyish' or should consider bone shortening if they wish to appropriate a suitable prospect for marriage. Conversely, heights below these margins are a sign of good manners, as Centauri should always approach the mark of our betters but be wary of overcoming them without good merit.

Weight is considerably less restricting in the Imperial Rule. This is mostly due to the fluctuating weight of Emperor Kiro during his lifetime and conflicting reports of those measurements. As the Emperor had several Royal Physicians in rapid succession during the winter years of his health, this is hardly surprising. As such, there is little point in debating the true measure of the Imperial Rule in regard to the perfect weight for a man or woman. Most Royal Consultants accept the Lodura Accord values of 180 pounds for men and 120 pounds for women until age 30, with a 2-pound increase per year thereafter.

Etiquette conscious Centauri should keep in mind that this weight is fixed at the Imperial Rule for height, so a variation must be taken into account for any change from that value. Unfortunately, even Grand Chancellor Lodura could not come up with an acceptable gauge for weight changes due to height before the end of his tenure (and life) in the position. I recommend using the value he postulated in his final treatise on the matter; add or subtract three pounds per inch of variation from the Imperial Rule.

Observant readers will likely note that these measurements are absolute values that try, and fail, to capture the variety of body mass types that fill out the array of fine Noble and Common Houses of the Centauri. To some degree, this is because weight can have a varied meaning in regard to body mass. Muscle is heavier and denser than fat of the same mass, making a large person of girth lighter than a smaller person with an athletic build. As with most 'laws' of the Centauri, the room for error with the Imperial Rule is as great as the authority and status of the person making the exception.

Internal Anatomy

Now that we have covered the surface layer of the Centauri, let us move deeper into the body and discover the many ways in which our noble bodies differ and resemble the other races of the galaxy. We compare favourably to every other sentient species known, and surpass them in many respects, though like all living beings, we are not without our frailties. What separates us from other races is our will not just to succeed, but exceed whenever possible.

Muscles

We begin the exploration just under the krenlinar layer, where the outer arrangement of muscles forms the basis for our physical shape below the skin. This formation of musculature and the larger ones that control gross motor movements make up nearly half the weight of our bodies when added to the volume of tendons, ligaments and other soft binding tissues related to their function. This viscera is a marvellous structure when viewed as a whole and provides the Centauri body with the power of graceful motion and strong exertion by which we are universally known.

The muscle fibres in the legs are of particular note, medically speaking. In a typical biped, the muscle formations of the arms and legs are very similar in function if not in size, but the Centauri have an additional set of muscles that run the length of the leg from the hip to the upper reaches of the ankle tendons. These lie along the back of the major leg bones and have a powerful ability to contract when properly developed. Having had the regrettable opportunity to dissect a few proponents of the ancient Tronno martial art, I can attest to the strength and tensile resiliency of these muscles when trained to their potential.

Centauri also possess a number of maxillary facial muscles that attach and anchor the mandible bone of the jaw. These provide for a powerful bite and duplicate the same crushing power that allowed the kethka to threaten even those members of the Royal hunting expeditions wearing full stalking plate. Again, few Centauri ever develop these

muscles to their fullest extent, but the potential for a powerful bite is there. Emperor Burago is said to have been one of those Centauri who possessed this ability, though he benefited far more from the strong, masculine jaw line it gave him than the power of his bite.

Organs

While the crude muscle groups of the Centauri are certainly impressive, it is the smooth arrays of muscle that make up the digestive tracts and organs that truly deserve special mention. Whether from a gift of the Great Maker during our design or the legacy of generations of Centauri before us with legendary capacities for excess, our ability to indulge in wine, extreme amounts of food and exhaustive activities comes primarily from the biological masterpieces that are our internal organs.

The Centauri stomach is a thing of genetic wonder, immortalised in many romantic and even comedic lays for its near-limitless capacity and firm constitution. Medically speaking, the stomach of a Centauri has a number of benefits over the same organ found in other races. Multiple subsystems surround the stomach and are considered part of it in an auxiliary fashion. These small sub-organs excrete acids and neutralising agents in a constant, intricate dance that makes short work of anything we consume.

These acids are perpetually negated by counteragents before they can harm the lining of the stomach itself – a necessary balance since they function best at dissolving meat. While Centauri are grossly inefficient at obtaining nutrition from plant matter and absorb only a third of the possible nutritive value of such fare, we break down and benefit from almost 95% of any meat we take in. To date, this is the most efficient meat digestion Centauri medical science has ever encountered, though some radical biological theories postulate that Minbari digestion is more effective. I consider these claims spurious at best.

The Centauri stomach is also very fast, processing an average meal in roughly eight minutes. This is an extremely rapid course of time for such matter and while such broken down foods then pass into the other digestive organs, the stomach itself empties in approximately ten minutes from the time of first consumption. This means that a Centauri can literally fill his stomach with food, wait ten minutes, and do so again. This should never be attempted more than twice due to the backlog that can then occur in the less efficient areas of digestion such as the large intestine.

Of special note in the organ system are the Centauri hearts and livers. Surprisingly similar in nature and function, both paired organs deal with the bloodstream and take up roles in both digestion and circulation. The Centauri hearts act as a dual system of cardiac circulation (the majority role of the right heart) and blood filtration (the role of the left heart). The left heart is smaller than the right, mostly because of the continuous and forceful contractions of the latter organ. The livers are exactly opposite and serve crossed roles as a way of looping blood flow and maintaining equilibrium in the system.

Unfortunately, neither liver is capable of generating enough cardiac pressure or filtering enough toxins on their own without the aid of both hearts. While fragile in the sense that all four must remain functional for a Centauri to survive for long, the four organs provide a remarkable amount of toxic resistance when working in healthy unison.

Senses

The senses are controlled by internal organs as well, though most are located primarily in surface structures. Each of a Centauri's six senses are well-developed compared to most other races, but this is not always a given. That is especially true in the case of Centauri telepathy, though our race boasts a better integration of telepaths into our culture and a wider array of accepted talents and talent based roles than any other civilisation, with the possible exception of the Minbari.

By walking through the senses and discussing those traits that make each one uniquely Centauri, we can adequately cover their development level in passing. Specific ranges for each sense and the soft structure make-up of every Centauri sensory organ and related controlling centre of the brain can be found on the data crystals, including all current information on the physical cerebral receptors and cellular sections related to telepathic ability. This information is tightly controlled by the Regis Mentallum, but given the high profile of this examination, I deemed it necessary to provide even classified information to the Emperor and his trusted Royal Court.

The senses, in order of ranking as given by accepted medical doctrine as laid down by the Ministry of Physicians under the watchful eye of Emperor Kanus, are:

- **Sight:** While Centauri colour and visual acuity ranges are not significantly beyond the typical norm of most sighted sentient races, the eyes of the Centauri do share the same sensitivity to motion found in the kethka monkey and other hunting predators of homeworld. This baseline ability to follow and appreciate motion is likely the basis for our culture's love of dance. While the talent is not widely noted in the majority of Centauri, some rare few have a regressive trait that likens their sight

Centauri Lore – Senses

As hedonists of the first order, a Centauri revels in his senses and experiences a world of rich smells, tastes, and tactile feelings that remain invisible to most other races. While this has little effect on their day-to-day lives and interactions, Centauri have worked their sensory acuity into every facet of their culture. There is virtually no aspect of their existence that does not at some level revolve around the indulgence of one or more of their senses, even if only in a passing way.

Outsiders visiting Centauri Prime or one of their outposts may be in for quite a shock as they first witness the glamour and spectacle of their visual lives and then experience a startling dichotomy between appearances and the other facets of Centauri life. Centauri senses (excluding sight) are particularly acute and specialised, more so than those of many other races, as such their food is likely to taste bland, their music sound dull and seemingly simplistic, and their ambient smells too faint to be appreciated. One Earth observer to the Royal Court reported to his home office that Centauri Prime was 'like a wax museum where everything looks right but has no real substance'.

Centauri for their part cannot really understand this deficiency in others and typically believe that cultures that do not appreciate the same things they do are without any real civilised development. They make some excuses among themselves for humans, since their senses are the most human-like of any galactic race, but they still privately view the people of Earth as cultural simpletons.

Optional Rule: The altered ranges of Centauri senses can affect their vulnerability or resistance to certain forms of attack. Any effect that relies upon vision to disorient or blind is harder for a Centauri to resist and applies a -1 inherent penalty to the player's saving throw and an additional round of effect. Conversely, their ability to process several layers of sound coupled with their inability to hear past a certain range on either end of the audible spectrum provides a +1 inherent bonus to any saving throw made against sonic attacks.

even more to that of predators and allows them to anticipate continued motion in moving objects.

- **Hearing:** Centauri have an excellent depth of hearing, but a slightly truncated range compared to other races. This is not a detriment, as the ranges we do hear with clarity have a richness and complexity of tone not often found in other beings. We can therefore enjoy subtle nuances of opera and oration that are lost on lesser creatures and pay no need to their fatuous claims that our auditory arts are 'grating' or 'monotonous'.

- **Touch:** The sensitivity of our touch needs no greater testament than the massive array of cloths available at any fine tailor's shop chosen on the basis of texture alone. While some cultures find our preference for fine, sheer cloth in our daily wardrobes decadent, we know that clothes are primarily chosen for how they feel and that any undergarment that is too abrasive becomes unbearable by midday. The fact that other races do not have an acute sense of touch is a loss they likely cannot even appreciate.

- **Smell:** The proper Centauri nose is long and narrow, containing a length of sensitive olfactory receptors and a sizeable nasal cavity in which to properly air them. The Centauri can usually detect an odour of less than 200 parts per million if it is acrid or florid enough and even 'weak' scents can be determined around 750 to 1000 parts per million in open air. This sense is linked inexorably to taste, which is discussed in greater detail below.

- **Taste:** The Centauri do not taste as other races taste. The unique nature of our tongues in the digestive cycle allows us to sample each taste as it is dissolving and being absorbed in our mouths rather than just making a brief acquaintance with it before swallowing and moving on to the next meal. Because our olfactory capabilities are also so pronounced, this breadth of sensory experience is nearly impossible to explain to others and needs no greater explanation to other Centauri.

Telepathy

The Royal Court will please forgive the fact that I classified telepathic phenomena as a sense in the earlier section and then placed it in its own category for discussion afterwards. The reason for this is the in-depth nature of the topic which, once explained, will hopefully justify the segregation from the sub-chapter on senses already provided. Telepathy is one topic that everyone on Centauri Prime has an opinion about

and yet so few people in our culture understand it enough to carry on an intelligent dissertation on the subject.

With fortune, attention, and time, I hope to change that for you, Lord Emperor. I would like to direct the Royal Court's attention to the sections of telepathic knowledge that I have been able to quantify during my researches and through the helpful guidance of the Minister of the Regis Mentallum. The scientific particulars are included in the data crystals and I urge their safe keeping once they come into the court's possession as they contain valuable and dangerous information.

In summary of that data, I offer the following. The gift of telepathy is very strong in our people, perhaps stronger than in any other race. The incidence of borderline precognitive ability in no less than 1/10th of our standard population is astounding, even if this trait rarely manifests itself as anything other than the rather morbid practice of death dreaming, something I have been mercifully spared from by the Great Maker. I can see no benefit from knowing the particulars of my own demise and am quite content in the personal belief that it is still a good many years into my future.

While the incidence of measurable telepathic capability in our people beyond the basic precognition that sometimes haunts the dreams of our nobility is admittedly rare, we have approximately twice as many telepaths of significant strength at our disposal than the number reported by Earth's Psi Corps. As humanity is our nearest rival for telepathic

J,
I know this section of the transmission will give our associates pause, but I urge you to advise them against dismissing the Centauri as candidates for our plans. While we are both aware of the problems that telepaths can pose to the coming conflict, the situation with Centauri telepaths is not as severe as this information would lead you to believe.

First, keep in mind that we have Psi Corps well in hand already and we both know that their published telepathic population numbers are a farce. The actual number of telepaths employed or subsumed into the Corps is nearly twice what they project, so the Centauri are not anywhere near as superior in their telepathic population as they would like to believe. If you factor in the estimates for Terran blips as reported by Syria Planum, human telepaths remain more of a worry than those from the Centauri.

The second thing to consider is the information coming up in this report. Centauri telepaths are typically very specialised and more than half of them are more precognitive than truly projective. All the prescience in the universe will not save these people when the time comes and if you remove their clairvoyants from the telepathic census, you are left with too small a number to be of any real consequence. I agree that they need to be watched, but the Centauri are easy enough to buy or seduce as it is. I doubt their telepaths will be difficult to bring over to our way of thinking.
M

superiority, that value is a heartening one. We integrate telepaths extremely well into our society and do not isolate them as other races do, providing a strong working pool of mentalists motivated to serve our culture because they are allowed to remain a part of it.

The other thing that makes our telepaths unique in the galaxy is the separation of major power types along a gender bias. Our telepaths have two major forms of talent – clairvoyance and true telepathy. These are generally found in female and male Centauri respectively. This is, according to the Regis Mentallum, a case of selective breeding over generations transforming a non-sex linked trait into a sex-linked one by process of gender specialisation.

It is certainly true that male and female telepaths fill very different niches in our culture. Most female telepaths are Housebound, attached by way of marriage or slavery to a single House, and provides their gifts freely to the authorities of the House on command. The silent war of precognitive information is a vital link in the chain of House politics; very few of the Great Houses have been without a precognitive female telepath in their highest halls of power for very long. The risk of another House being able to foresee a time or incident of weakness for them without having their own warning to counter it is too great to warrant being without their services.

Male telepaths on the other hand are typically free agents and handsomely paid ones at that. While the Centaurum do keep a small group of well-trained soldier-telepaths on hand to deal with direct threats to the Emperor during times of war, most other male telepaths are either liaisons to noble families or of noble birth themselves. While male telepaths do exist among the sullied bloodlines of commoners and even the odd, rare birth between slaves, they do not do so in any great quantity. Male telepaths generally master the arts of telepathic invasion, information retrieval and mental projections.

The societal division between classes of telepaths goes even beyond this level of segregation. Female telepaths usually serve in a set number of smaller circles, edifying those they are bound to and providing much needed information and/or forewarning as their talents dictate. From the seers that often find themselves wives to those in power, to the Imperial Telepaths raised from birth to serve the Emperor himself, these special women are given to act as women should but do so with their telepathic talents in addition to their other skills.

Male telepaths do not have such rigidly defined roles, but they do often follow in certain patterns as a way of marketing their special abilities. The special Zado Unit of the Imperial Forces are one such group, as are the Mindhawks and the path of the freelance telepath that every Noble House uses with regularity and denies employing just as often. Only male telepaths can operate in such a manner, as female telepaths cannot be trusted not to have a familial obligation to other men in the Royal Court or to the Noble Houses.

While all male telepaths have to register with the Regis Mentallum (and all female telepaths are expected to have their masters or husbands register them in a timely manner after placement has been established), this is not usually a concern. Telepaths are afforded special treatment and some measure of political power, so the rewards of registering far outweigh the minor drawbacks of regular testing and monitoring for abuse of their gifts.

General Biology

While I know the topics of environmental tolerance and ecological information can be dreadfully dull, I beg the Court's indulgence again to bear with me through the summary. I can assure those who are interested in such matters that more detailed information can be found on the data crystals in the General Centauri Specifications folder. I can also assure those who are not interested that this section will at least be quite brief.

I will provide the basic information on general Centauri biology in outline format so that members of the Royal Court looking for specific information can skim for what they wish to find in a timely manner and without pouring over repetitive data.

- **Environmental Preferences:** The Centauri are inured to the conditions of our homeworld and can withstand considerable extremes of heat and cold, moisture and aridness, and various levels of dehydration and malnutrition. We require near constant exposure to temperatures above the freezing point of water and cannot withstand continued heat beyond 110 degrees for any time period longer than five to ten minutes before damage is sustained to the epidermis.
    - **Gravity Tolerance:** Our planet has a gravitic mass roughly equivalent to that of most settled, sentient homeworlds, leading me to support the general theory that a certain gravity level is crucial to the development of significant life forms. Taken as the apparent galactic constant of Gs or g-force, a Centauri male can withstand a force of nearly six Gs without suffering any real risk of blackout or other trauma. Females of

the species can handle considerably less due to their lighter bone and muscle mass.

- **Pressure Range:** Centauri lose a certain level of nerve function (typically 10m/second or more) after 50mm Hg of pressure is sustained over time, and can suffer complete nervous response loss after 100mm Hg is applied. While these extremes are not generally found on the Centauri homeworld outside of deep ocean environments, they are important figures to note for compression purposes.

- **Respiration Medium:** Centauri breathe a nitrogen-oxygen mixture much like that inhaled by most sentient races in the galaxy. There are exceptions, but it is interesting to note that the races who breathe gas mixtures similar to our own tend to resemble us in many other ways. Humans are a prime example; aside from their unsightly hair and reproductive inadequacies, they have an uncannily similar appearance to us and their atmospheric requirements are exactly the same as our own.

Diet and Nutrition: Despite our race's prevalence for meat over softer fare, there are a number of dietary items that we require for efficient digestion and proper growth that cannot be acquired from meat alone. Fortunately, most of the soft foodstuffs we need can be sublimated in the mouth before digestion continues in the stomach and beyond. Numerous vitamins and minerals can be consumed this way; the particulars of our dietary needs make for boring reading, so such information has been resigned to the data crystals in the Diet and Nutrition folder.

Food: What is certainly of more interest to you all is the subject of food itself. The Royal Court and the Emperor are known for their rarefied tastes and I would be presumptuous to suggest that I could offer any menu suggestions they have not already partaken of, but in the interest of being a completist, I should mention a few of our more famous (and, it turns out, necessary for proper health) dishes.

- **Spoo:** I must of course open any discussion of comestibles with spoo. It is in its base form a common dietary staple of the wealthy and forms the basis for so many other delightful meals. I myself have only had properly aged spoo a few times, given its cost and sometimes limited availability, but those meals have been memorable ones.

  - Spoo, it turns out, satisfies both our extreme requirements for protein and provides a remarkable number of other minerals and vitamins. Spoo is high in selenium, potassium, sodium, and niacin. Astute observers will notice that I am using the common Earth trade parlance to describe these vitamins. Sadly, this is because few of our elite have the time to acquaint themselves with nutritional science and our own terminology, but there is every possibility that they have heard these human terms in passing.

- **Tapote:** It may be unseemly to list a dessert here, but the fruits used to make the filling mix of a tapote tart carry a number of vital nutrients, including four essential vitamins and at least two enzymes our digestive systems need in greater quantities than they tend to produce. Tapote tarts are a staple of any festival or celebration, which results in most Centauri of means eating dozens of them each year. Traditionally, every tapote baked must be shared between at least three different Centauri, but this is likely a custom born out of paranoia over potential poisoning.

- **'Old Salted':** The other dessert listed in this section, I include it because of its remarkable nutritive value. 'Old Salted', named for its remarkably salty taste and the hint of aged Brevari that forms the liquor base of its formulation, has all the sodium, potassium, thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin a Centauri needs per day in a single small slice. It is technically possible to achieve toxic levels in some of these by eating too many pieces of 'Old Salted', but this level of overindulgence is uncommon.

- **Dessatri:** What can be said about a hot bowl of dessatri that has not already been expounded upon in the Dukaro, one of Dorva's early masterpieces? This slightly spiced soup contains more than a dozen minerals needed for the proper maintenance of the eyes, ears, and brain and virtually every vitamin the Centauri body requires because of its varied and prodigious ingredient list.
    - While I know the Royal Court finds talking about the lower classes distasteful, I should note that it is likely to the benefit of those of lesser station that dessatri was deregulated by the Ministry of Privilege and allowed into their common diet. Its nutritive value has gone a long way towards providing us a strong, healthy workforce and generations of effective slaves for household and governmental use.

5 **Drink:** While we Centauri can certainly put a prodigious amount of food away at a sitting, we are even more likely to consume mass quantities of liquor while doing so. We have a very effective hydration system, which is a blessing considering how little pure water we actually drink during a given day. We are not as prone to dehydration due to salt intake or exertion as many other races and the fact that this means we can drink longer and harder than anyone else in the galaxy can only be one of the Great Maker's grandest blessings to our people.

- **Brevari:** How could I possibly begin any list of drinks and not mention Brevari as first among them? The drink of nobility itself, Brevari when it is properly aged and kept in crystal to preserve its taste, is one of the finest thing in the universe next to good women and the glory of the Emperor. This red-bronze liquor is the result of more than a thousand years of distilling genius and while the formula is now perfected, the delightful number of variations our libationists come up with every generation only adds to its allure.
    - Brevari is strictly controlled by the Ministry of Privilege, but the practice of House Lords making it available to every member of their staff and servant corps during the two Yearly Festivals has brought its wonderful taste to even the lips of commoners. A medical analysis of Brevari has shown a possible link to its intake and beneficial effects in the health of our hearts and livers.

- **Hot Jhalla:** The fact that this beverage comes to us from the Narn is better forgotten, but it does prove that one can squeeze gold from even the coarsest of rocks with enough time and force. This drink is the reason some Centauri get up every morning and given its vitalising effects on the mind and body due to certain suspended chemicals, that is hardly surprising. While jhalla is consumed by some Centauri as a cold drink mixed with drho milk and sugar, I cannot abide the taste of it myself and prefer the way it is served in the Royal Court.
- **Miamo Presca:** Drinking a tall glass of miamo, presca style preferred, is a rejuvenation of spirit that is only partially related to the mood affective found in its formula. Miamo was a drink first discovered by the Centauri in the hands of the Xon when they first arrived on our primary continent in the fifth century of our current history. According to the Centauri Historical Guild, barrels of miamo were first looted from Xon pirate vessels and distributed to the crews of those brave Centauri sea captains charged with defending our people from Xon savagery.
    - I have examined miamo styles and concluded that the presca style of consumption popular in the Royal Court is the more healthy and enjoyable way to imbibe this milky, full-bodied brew. By pouring raw miamo over a cube of sugar and then lighting it before mixing the burning confection directly into the drink, a taste shift occurs that is simply delightful.

Disease and Illness

The Centauri are a resilient people and very few of us get ill for any length of time. This is a trait of constitution that seems universal throughout our class system and even our lowest citizens and slaves are inordinately healthy compared to the relatively frail members of other races. While we are not necessarily more resistant to injury, we are certainly more enduring and capable of withstanding the rigours of a proper lifestyle more than the other races of the galaxy.

That stated, there are ailments of the body that can afflict us. Some of these are quite mild and while they would incapacitate a human or Narn, we manage to go on with our daily routine only slightly impeded by them. Others are quite severe and can result in hospitalisation, indigent status or even death if not properly treated. We have very few immediately fatal ailments – certainly fewer than other races are plagued with. There is no single strain of illness that could wipe out our entire people that I am aware of, despite notations by the Centauri Historical Guild to the contrary being true in the eighth and ninth centuries.

I will not drone on to the Royal Court about the daily ailments like the vuro and Bathlan's Pox that they are most certainly familiar with from their own lives. We all catch these minor illnesses from time to time, and the average Centauri suffers from a touch of vuro at least four times a year. These are simple illnesses and while no true cure for vuro exists, it can be mitigated with medication and a single day of bed rest. As for Bathlan's, it does not cause anything that cannot be overcome with careful cosmetics and an antibiotic injection.

This section would be better dedicated to the more serious, unusual or socially awkward diseases and infestations that can occur to the Centauri. A few of these will likely be new to you, as they tend to plague our lower classes because they do not have access to the same fine facilities we enjoy. Others may be quite familiar and if any member of the Royal Court needs to seek education about any of these ailments, I humbly offer the services of my own facility if the Royal Clinic would be indiscrete.

Parasites

Our strong bodies are resistant to most parasitic infestations, but there are a few types of mites and insects that have the tenacity of Narn and continue to exist only to annoy and inconvenience us. Some of these little inconveniences are of little consequence, such as crest lice, and are easily cured by medicated shampoos and careful grooming. The parasites mentioned in this section of the presentation are more serious or more difficult to control and deserve special mention.

- *Sechiki:* Sechiki are to normal hair lice what a Primus battlecruiser is to a child's toy sail boat. These damnable creatures have developed along with our noble race and seem to get more virulent and more populous with each passing generation. Just when our personal chemists believe they have designed a new poison to wipe the sechiki out, their bodies mutate between mating cycles to become resistant to it. These creatures are a menace to all Centauri and in truly extreme cases, they require the complete shaving of all body hair to remove.

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Pay attention to this section, as it may provide some effective means of controlling the Centauri should they get out of hand. You should have the data crystals that are mentioned in the text. Once cleaned, they will be of great use to us. I would have washed the blood off them myself, but I was not present when they were placed in transit to you and only heard about the untidy incident of their appropriation second-hand. My apologies.

I suggest that the entire file on Centauri disease be transferred to our associates' ally race. They are as distasteful to me as they are to you, but given their superior knowledge of viral and biological warfare, we may as well use them for what little they are good for. I would prefer not to use them at all, but a little insurance to keep the Centauri in line might not be a bad idea if we decide to approach them.
M

- As such, Emperor Golorus was moved to declare them a social menace of the first order. After the incident that left him with the unflattering epithet 'Golorus the Uncoifed', sechiki became the only parasites in Centauri (or galactic, as far as the Historical Guild can determine) history to have war declared on them.

- ***Vethi Mites:*** These creatures can actually be a health menace, though they are usually dealt with through medication or simply die out before their damage is complete. Vethi mites enter the skin through sweat glands and attack the krenlinal layers of skin. They consume this protective flesh and leave the affected area covered with unsightly blotches and subject to potentially severe damage from ultraviolet radiation. The first sign of Vethi infestation is an itching with no apparent source that cannot be relieved by any topical means. For decades after the first outbreaks of Vethi mites, the reason why commoners were more likely to suffer outbreaks was thought to be bathing habits. Instead, some of the chemicals in spoo seem to act as a natural deterrent to them. Isolating this chemical and making it available to all classes of people in the Centauri Republic has severely decreased Vethi infestations empire-wide.

- ***Li's Revenge:*** There is a rumour that persists from generation to generation in the Noble Houses that those who do not properly appease the gods and goddesses of joy will be rendered unable to partake in the good things of life. This folktale arises from a microbe called *jenerathus*, and it is generally contracted in those who do not receive the right balance of digestive enzymes to supplement their diet. *Jenerathus*, also called Li's Revenge, blocks the efficiency of the stomach and makes it impossible for a Centauri to digest food at the typical rate. While Li's Revenge also causes some unfortunate egestion incidents, it is not physically harmful and typically disappears along with all its symptoms in two or three days with proper care and rest.

Communicable Diseases

Diseases and ailments that concern us Centauri the most are the ones we transmit to each other. This makes sense even in the light of our remarkable resilience to illness when one considers that only something that could survive in our systems could possibly affect someone else's. The wide array of diseases we communicate to each other on a daily basis is quite staggering, but our stamina and constitution are generally too great for the weaker strains to do more than transmit and be crushed. Our immune systems deal with all but the greatest of these threats quite handily.

There are a few strains of bacterial and viral agents that can give us a difficult time and a few that are even fatal. There is very little that our superior medical technology cannot combat given time, treatment and forewarning, but the rigours of a noble lifestyle can lead one to ignore a nagging cough until it becomes full-blown tordoma or Kaligore flu. Rather than dwell on these well-known and troubling ailments, I will use this summary time to mention diseases of direct interest or possible concern to the Royal Court.

- ***Sexually Transmitted Diseases:*** I do hope the Emperor and present nobles will forgive my choice of initial targets, but as sexually transmitted diseases are our race's leading form of wide-spread illness and the second leading cause of death by disease, I thought it best to err on the side of importance rather than etiquette. The most common sexually transmitted disease is of course KODI, but there are other ailments to consider. Kanera's Overt Digestive Inversion Syndrome is a deadly disease to be sure and anyone with the telltale signs of infection (dry mouth, stomach cramps and abdominal lesions) should report for treatment as soon as possible to avoid an untimely and embarrassing demise.

  - ***Totho:*** I know that a case of totho is not taken very seriously among the nobility and in some Houses is considered a rite of passage for young males, but totho can cause sterility in extreme cases and if left unchecked can lead to pur'fa erectile dysfunction in advanced years. While totho's initial symptoms of a red, mild rash and painful levels of sensitivity around the base of the genital areas are not severe, they can become so without treatment.

  - ***Guerro'a:*** No talk of sexually transmitted diseases would be complete without mentioning guerro'a. The foremost female sexual ailment, guerro'a is contracted through incomplete or mishandled hygiene and can lead to complete lack of sensation in the exterior genital area. While many male Centauri still believe that guerro'a is merely an excuse for women to rebuff their advances, the condition does exist and can persist for up to four weeks before it runs its course. Medical treatment can reduce this to two weeks with topical antibiotics.

- *Air and Waterborne Diseases:* Centauri air and water have long been purified through filtration plants in most of our large cities and outposts, but there are still rural areas where such equipment is either too expensive to implement or unwanted by those who would prefer to take their chances with nature. As a man of medicine, I am grateful to the Clear Air Initiatives passed into law by Emperor Turhan and hope to see a Processorum station in every city by decade's end.

    - *The Loroth Flu (water):* Not truly a flu in the typical sense of the word, the Loroth strain is an unfortunate side-effect of the brutality inflicted upon our people by the Xon near the end of our war with them. Not content to become extinct as they should, the Xon tried to inflict some of their own diseases on our population centres through tainted water supplies. This terrible ailment is the only strain to survive to the present, but its occasional outbreaks can still be quite life-threatening.

    - *Dry Mouth (air):* The *collochyuss* bacterium is responsible for this affliction, regardless of old tales about Dry Mouth being a curse from the God Yindo for poor oration skills. When breathed in, *collochyuss* attacks the throat and mouth lining, drying them out and prohibiting saliva production. This can lead to continuous, dry coughing and poor digestion as a result. While Dry Mouth is not life-threatening, it can weaken the Centauri immune system if allowed to persist more than a few days.

- *Epidemics:* As mentioned earlier, our grand Republic has not suffered a true plague in hundreds of years and all reports of them in the past are without solid medical evidence to support them. As such, there should be no cause for alarm that such a thing could exist today, despite reports that other races have them with distressing frequency. If our people were subjected to anything worthy of the title 'plague', we would surely persevere through it and stand tall where lesser races would succumb and perish.

    - *Puanno Night:* In the seventh century, there was supposedly a fast moving pathogen that spread through the Noble Houses serving the court of Emperor Luro. This disease, if the documents of the time are to be believed, cut short the lives of more than a thousand noble-blooded Centauri in a single night of chills, muscle spasms, and uncontrolled internal bleeding. Dubbed 'Puanno Night' after the stalking canine hunter that steals into the warrens of its prey and slaughters everything present before stealing away with only the best kills, this evening of death was far more likely the work of assassins using poison to stage a mass noble's coup.

    - *Rutil's Pox:* Nearly one hundred years after Puanno Night, another terrible 'disease' struck Centauri Prime. This time, the Common Houses suffered dreadfully from its effects. Over the course of a month, nearly 20% of the northern home country was wiped out and the epidemic began to spread to the south through rodents carrying the disease. This incident may actually have been the closest thing our world has had to an actual plague, though its limited death toll is still a testament to Centauri stamina.

Congenital Conditions

Apparently, the genetics of other races have a severe tendency to mutate and twist over time. This leads to aberrations of birth that can be quite startling. Their medical science has a varied ability to cope with this problem, but some of the galactic races are still plagued with such troubles as low birth weight, malformations and physical defects. While I would be remiss in saying that we Centauri have never encountered this problem, our incidence of congenital conditions is very low in comparison.

This may well be another blessing of the Great Maker, but it takes its form from the six fertilised eggs competing for existence in the womb before birth. Any abnormalities must be present in all six proto-embryos for them to manifest in the infant under normal conditions. This keeps all but the most fundamental of defects from surfacing and since Centauri with severe congenital illness are typically sterile, this cycle of passing severe abnormality from parent to child is broken before it can begin. An elegant solution, it would seem, to a potentially crippling problem.

This is not to say that malformations cannot and do not exist in the Centauri. They are however more of an embarrassment than anything truly life threatening. It is my hope that this section does not upset any member of the Royal Court, all of whom come from the finest of Centauri parentage and have no need to concern themselves with such

trivial matters. Consider this passage a brief education on some of the minor deformities that can occur in lower class citizens of the Republic.

- *Suroisitic Discolouration:* One of the most serious congenital defects to still plague our people, this is both a regional and genetically linked trait. This deformity alters the function of the krenlinar layer and prohibits its efficient resistance to ultraviolet radiation. The layers of skin over it are forced to increase their production of pigmentation and the result is a serious darkening of the skin. While this coloration is not in itself serious (and is generally overlooked in deference to Emperor Vanos, who suffered from the same condition), the change in pigment is not usually enough to prevent serious radiation-related illnesses.

- *Rutil Shadow:* Named for the pox, this skin disorder can be very unsightly but is fortunately rare and unlikely to threaten health past a certain comfort level. The bright purple spots and occasional lesions match the reported physical symptoms of Rutil's Pox so closely, most epidemiologists believe the latter somehow acted on the genetic trait that causes this abnormality to surface. Rutil Shadow can affect any Centauri, generally appearing during sexual maturity, and can be screened for as early as infancy.

- *Trenorah Scolia:* One of the deadliest deformities still remaining in our people, this one has a tendency to strike the nobility without warning more often than it does commoners. Trenorah scolia is an often slight malformation of the spine that is detected by a shift in the normally straight growth of the spinal vertebrae. This can cause partial paralysis, an awkward gait or impaired nervous system response, but it not typically deadly by itself. The baffling part of this abnormality is its tendency to suddenly accelerate, literally tearing the spine apart from a series of muscle spasms that occur without warning or detectable medical preamble. This is a very rare condition to begin with and the lethal stage of Trenorah Scolia fortunately occurs with great infrequency.

Babylon 5 Rules Supplement – Centauri Diseases

Centauri can contract Sechiki lice if they come into contact with any other Centauri already suffering from them or if they share grooming products with someone of this sort. Sechiki cannot be initially resisted, but they only linger if the Centauri does not take steps to remove them within 24 hours after getting them. Such measures include a cream rinse for the hair and a special scalp powder; these are automatically successful. After 24 hours without treatment, a Centauri suffers a -1 penalty to Initiative rolls and skill checks based on Intelligence or Dexterity due to the constant distraction of their painful bites. This penalty persists until the Centauri deals with the lice – a process that takes one full day after this late treatment begins.

Vethi mites are not terribly dangerous and do not cause any serious in-game penalties to a Centauri who contracts them. Their outbreak causes enough discoloration to apply a -1 to all Charisma related attribute and skill checks if the rash and spots are not covered with cosmetics. All noble Centauri can do this automatically with the proper make up, but commoners and slaves must make a DC10 Disguise skill check to conceal the signs of Vethi mites. A simple inoculation kills the mites, but the discoloration they cause lingers for 1d4 days afterward.

Li's Revenge is a serious problem for Centauri who have an improper diet and can be contracted anytime they go for more than a week without using specialised Centauri food supplements or eating their culture's typical cuisine. Resisting Li's Revenge is a DC 13 Fortitude save and a Centauri who catches it has to make another save at the same difficulty each day to try and purge it. Getting rid of Li's Revenge can be done medically, but otherwise it runs its course until the Centauri makes three successful daily saves. These do not need to be consecutive, but while a Centauri suffers from Li's Revenge, he loses a Constitution point each day to a minimum of 3. Li's Revenge cannot kill by itself, and lost Constitution is regains 1 point per day after the disease is purged (which happens automatically if the Centauri is reduced to a Constitution of 3 from its effects).

Most Centauri do not take totho seriously. It can be contracted by any Centauri male having intimate relations with a female of any species suffering from any kind of infection brought on by improper hygiene. Totho is initially resisted with a DC 12 Fortitude save and if not treated within three days, begins to attack the surface of the affected area. This causes mild to severe pain and costs the Centauri 2 points of temporary Dexterity. The attribute loss remains until the condition is treated medically or overcome by a DC 18 Fortitude save, allowed each full week after the initial infection.

Guerro'a is contracted just like totho, but affects females who have intercourse with infected males. All of the saving throws and physical effects are the same, though guerro'a automatically fades after four weeks if not treated sooner. While a Centauri female has guerro'a, sexual activity is extremely difficult and quite unfulfilling due to decreased sensitivity.

Loroth flu is very serious and any outbreak is extremely contagious. If a Centauri comes within ten feet of a sufferer without wearing some kind of respiratory filter or mask, he or she will catch it unless they succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save for each minute of prolonged contact. Loroth can be treated medically, but it costs a Centauri 1d2 Constitution points each day he or she fails a DC 20 Fortitude save. A natural 20 will throw off the illness, as will three consecutive saves. Otherwise, only medical care can cure it.

Any Centauri can catch Dry Mouth if they are in an unfiltered atmosphere, but it is a fairly rare condition off of Centauri Prime. While a Centauri has Dry Mouth, it is difficult to eat and any Charisma skill check based on speaking suffers a -2 circumstance penalty. Dry Mouth is easily cured by a medicinal gargle, but it always lasts at least 24 hours after being contracted. There is a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw allowed when a Centauri first catches Dry Mouth to overcome its effect. Otherwise, it persists until cured.

Centauri Characters – Ageing Effects

Use the following tables to determine the age and ageing effects of Centauri characters. Roll the variable values listed in each table and add it to either the base character age of an adult Centauri to determine the age of a Player Character Centauri. The maximum age dice are rolled and added to the venerable age listed (140) to determine the character's maximum lifespan. Games Masters may wish to make this second roll privately, keeping the final result secret.

Centauri Character Age

Race and Gender	Base Age	Nobility	Commoner	Slave
Centauri Female	20	+2d10	+1d10	+1d4
Centauri Male	20	+2d10	+1d12	+1d8

Centauri Age Categories

Race	Adulthood	Middle Age*	Old**	Venerable#	Maximum Age
Centauri	22	60	90	140	+2d10

* -1 to Strength, Constitution and Dexterity; +1 to Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma.
** -1 to Strength, Constitution and Dexterity; +1 to Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma.
# -1 to Strength, Constitution and Dexterity; +1 to Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma.

All of these effects are cumulative, though no ability score can be reduced below 3. If a loss from these adjustments would reduce Strength or Dexterity to 2 or less, the character becomes immobile and must receive external assistance to move. If an ageing modification would reduce Constitution to 2 or less, the character dies of natural causes 1d12 months into the current year.

Life Cycle

The Centauri are a proud people with a long history and a prodigious life span. While other races may live longer, none live better. While simple information like the average life span of a Centauri is common knowledge, no dissertation on our biology would be complete without such information. I have included a useful chart here to show the approximate medical breakdown of Centauri age and its typical effects on the body and mind. A more detailed correspondence chart and information can be found on the data crystals in the Centauri Lifespan file.

I will not bore the Royal Court with details about the various cycles of age that we progress through, but a few milestones are probably in order. Centauri males are rarely born bald, but this does not indicate any lack of hair in later life. The crown ridge of hair begins to grow longer than the rest of the scalp by the fifth to seventh year of age and achieves its full adult length by a male's sixteenth to twentieth year.

Most Centauri are born with a full set of infant teeth, but our hunting teeth do not grow in until the third year. These replace blunt teeth already in the jaw and can be a very painful time for young children. By the time a Centauri reaches the age of ten, most if not all of their original teeth have been replaced by adult ones, but this is not an absolute. In some cases, a full dental exchange of teeth is not complete until a Centauri's late teens. The last teeth to grow are the noble teeth, a set of chewing teeth in the back jaw that rarely come in completely straight. This process is often painful and can occur any time after sexual maturity.

Other age related information, such as gender traits, puberty issues, and the effects of aging on the Centauri can be found on the data crystals along with a complete computer progression of a model Centauri male and female through the stages of age from infant to elderly. I have altered these from their base data to reflect the differences that occur between the social classes and a side-by-side comparison is available for those interested in seeing the longevity we nobles enjoy as contrasted against the shorter lives of commoners and slaves.

The Unmentioned

I was asked for a complete report and I cannot deliver on that mandate if I do not include the following section. I will do the Royal Court the courtesy of warning them of the subject matter beforehand. Many of our people dislike even thinking about the Shenaro and the Vendura Kado, but they are a part of our history, both literally and genetically, and to not include them here would be a failure in what I hope to present to the Emperor as my master work on the matter of our racial biology.

I am certainly not trying to stir up memories like the failed purge of the Shenaro after their uprising against Emperor Ludo, but the number of these specialised slaves still in existence in the depths of so many of our Noble Houses makes their inclusion a must. I would prefer for the Royal Court to see this section of the dissertation as an attempt to dispel the rumours surrounding our servitor breed and enlighten them as to the docility bred into them that renders another terrible insurrection extremely unlikely.

I have also included a passage on the Xon, though I would never presume to suggest that we have anything in common on a biological level with these savages. Their own similarities with the kethka were purely coincidental and I fully support the current continuance on the ban levied against the Clonarum Regis allowing any generation of Xon clones for further study in that regard. The risks involved in letting even a mind-cleared example of their breed back into the land of the living make the possible benefits of examining a Xon in person unworthy by comparison. The Emperor's wisdom in having these samples locked away is unquestionable.

The Shenaro

In our earliest days of selective breeding, before the process was perfected in our noble families, there was a call for a better slave group. Our people are strong and enduring, but slaves needed to be even more so. In addition, the difficulty of conquering the Centauri spirit and making our lowest working class submit to the needs of industry and personal service became nearly insurmountable. After the fourth Slave War in 1162 C.E., an Imperial Order for a more docile working corps resulted in the initial works that would eventually emerge as the Shenaro.

Relegated to the status of a sub-race by the hand of Emperor Telaga, the Shenaro were bred from the strongest, least intelligent stock available in the slave pens of every House and nation on Centauri Prime. These workers were pure muscle and possessed very little intellect. While the docile part of the equation was questionable and led to unfortunate incidents in the early stages of the program, such imperfections were thought bred out of them by the turn of the fourteenth century.

This proved to be incorrect in 1450 when a force of Shenaro, led by Overseer Karro, forced their way past the Centaurum on guard outside the old Imperial Palace in Gelini and razed the building to its last stone. None survived that insurrection; the Shenaro slew every member of the Royal Family present with the exception of Emperor Telaga III's youngest heir, Ludo. The youngest Emperor in the history of the Republic, Ludo's treatment at the hands of Karro and his brutal thugs left their mark on the boy's sanity. When he ordered the planet wide extermination of the Shenaro, it spurred the Brushfire War, a terrible conflict that has left marks on our homeworld still visible today.

All of that unpleasantness aside, the Shenaro still exist and have long since bent to the whips of their masters and no longer exhibit any of the antisocial behaviour that marred past generations. Shenaro in modern times are easily distinguished by their muscular development and dim expressions. Unable to grasp advanced concepts and thus unlikely to aspire to any station higher than they have, Shenaro are perfectly suited to their roles.

Many nobles have no worries about giving Shenaro a place in their homes and many report the brutes are gentle enough to trust with child-care duties. Most Noble Houses have at least a small group of Shenaro serving them and the slave trade involving Shenaro is a brisk one. In fact, breeding orders for the Shenaro are at an all-time high. While there have been discussions in recent decades about further genetic augmentation of the breed now that advanced techniques are available, limited interest has kept such concepts perpetually in the planning stages.

Appearance

The Shenaro look like very muscular Centauri with extremely small head crests. The latter is a grooming affectation, though generations of breeding have retarded the hair growth somewhat. No Shenaro is allowed to have a head crest longer than two inches in height, nor are they permitted to wear red or purple, as these colours are banned from the slave classes by Imperial Law. Shenaro tend to have an unfocused look in their eyes, but this is not universal. Many Shenaro are slightly paler in complexion than other Centauri. This is a result of their krenlinar layer being thicker and discolouring the skin above it.

Shenaro often move slower and seem less agile than other Centauri; this is an affected trait and not a true condition of their physiques. Given reason, they can move as quickly and adeptly as any noble born Centauri, though centuries of conditioning keep them from doing so. The reduced intelligence of the Shenaro is not as pronounced as most Centauri believe, but they are uneducated as a general rule and so lack the finer points of knowledge and schooling.

Centauri (Shenaro) Racial Traits

- -2 Intelligence, +2 Strength: As a slave race built for general labour, the Shenaro have overdeveloped bodies and are bred for a certain lack of intellect. This is not to say that Shenaro cannot be quite intelligent, but it is a rare trait in their kind.
- All Shenaro are of Medium-size.
- Shenaro have a base speed of 30-ft., but only move at 20-ft. base speed and never run within line of sight of other Centauri except in case of emergency.
- Shenaro are raised to serve other Centauri their entire lives and so gain a +2 racial bonus to all Profession checks that involve menial labour or personal service.
- For generations, the Shenaro have been denied a strong sense of self-identity and bred to be docile. This has taken its toll on their ability to take personal initiative and act in any way contrary to their masters. Shenaro suffer a -2 to all Initiative checks and can only act against another Centauri in combat if they make a DC 18 Will saving throw. Once this Will save is successful against a given Centauri, the Shenaro in question never needs to make it again.
- Shenaro also benefit from their generations of training. Shenaro provide a bonus of +3 instead

of +2 when taking the Aid Another action for other Shenaro or Centauri. Shenaro characters can take the Cooperative feat (detailed in the Characters chapter) to improve this bonus and extend it to members of other races.

- Shenaro are not used to the same level of excess that other Centauri enjoy, but they have been bred for even greater stamina in other regards and rarely become fatigued. While they do not get the conditional bonus to Fortitude saves that the Centauri possess, they do get the Endurance feat for free at 1st level.

- Automatic languages: Centauri. Shenaro are not taught English, but can learn it through the expenditure of skill points as normal. Learning English is always considered an in-class purchase of the Speak Language skill due to their exposure to the tongue during childhood.

- Favoured Class: Worker. A multiclass Shenaro's worker class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

The Vendura Kado

The other servitor sub-race we Centauri employ deserves the classification far more and has had considerably less controversy in its history than the Shenaro. The only successful result of the bi-millennial push to create genetically engineered slaves for the growing needs of our then burgeoning population base. The increase of outpost resettlement and the disastrous result of most of the 'bi-baby' experiments cancelled the planned expansions of the project, but not before the Vendura Kado strain was discovered and cultivated.

Named for the scientist-noble in charge of the project that developed them, every member of this limited run genetic experiment is named Kado as a first name and given a sub-name in lieu of a family name (which they obviously lack). The Vendura Kado is a sub-race of Centauri with a greatly enhanced intellect and capability for information processing and invention. Many of our technological insights in the last two hundred years can be attributed to the brain trusts staffed by these artificial geniuses and their project leaders.

The Vendura Kado are physically similar to normal Centauri, though their cranial capacity is slightly larger with a resulting alteration to their skull. The Kado are interspersed into most of our applied science divisions and while they are technically slaves, they are afforded a high status in that social class due to their remarkable abilities. In 2240, the Royal Court decreed the Vendura Kado a cultural treasure, affording them increased legal protection and an increased number of personal rights.

Most Centauri starships have at least one Vendura Kado assigned to its engineering corps, where their talents and gifts place them outside the politicking that occurs in the command staff of those vessels. The Vendura Kado are not generally apt at such social interaction, given their limited exposure to our lifestyle and their own inability to cope with emotional stress.

This highlights the only part of the Vendura Kado project that might be considered a failure in design. The emotional centres of their brains are under-developed and yet capable of remarkable output as is the rest of their cerebrum. Their isolation during the formative years of their mental and physical development certainly exacerbates their inability to handle the level of emotional trauma that we as Centauri nobles take for granted.

Even so, if the Vendura Kado are kept to their roles and not exposed to situations that might tax their ability to deal with social situations, they can be incredibly valuable members of any ship's crew, technical staff or scientific group. Vendura Kado should never be allowed off homeworld or their assigned ship for this reason. When they must travel abroad under extraordinary circumstances, they are typically given a minder who watches for signs of emotional dysfunction and deals with the potential outbursts accordingly.

Appearance

The Vendura Kado are a slightly smaller, slightly frailer looking breed of Centauri. They are predominantly male, but there are a few females among them. They are not sterile, but they have very low birth rates and only breed between themselves. Children of a Vendura Kado and a standard Centauri are nearly always Centauri, though they have a slight tendency towards cerebral pursuits. Half-breeds of this nature do not truly inherit any of the Vendura Kado strengths or weaknesses and can aspire to any social status he or she qualifies for through their Centauri parentage.

The most noticeable trait of the Vendura Kado is a complete lack of body hair. This mutation is inherent in the breed and is a universal feature. This affects both genders equally and while it can be concealed with wigs and cosmetics, very few have any reason to do so.

Centauri (Vendura Kado) Racial Traits

- -2 Strength, -2 Charisma, +4 Intelligence: The Vendura Kado are underdeveloped physically and unfamiliar with most social customs, but their genetically increased intellect and genius are beyond question.
- All Vendura Kado are of Medium-size.
- Vendura Kado have a base speed of 30-ft.
- Vendura Kado are never telepathic to the degree of qualifying for the Telepath class. All of their extrasensory talents are slaved to their savant-like technical and scientific skills.
- Social interaction is very difficult for the Vendura Kado. Any time a Vendura Kado rolls a natural 1 on any Charisma-based skill or attribute check, they suffer a full minute of overwhelmed mental trauma and can do nothing but stammer incoherently. Vendura Kado are completely blindsided by this when it occurs and are considered *stunned* for the duration of the effect.
- All Ventura Kado have the basics of all known scientific disciplines mastered during their childhood, demonstrating a prodigy level understanding of such topics even without formal education. Computer Use, Knowledge (astrophysics, structural engineering, and star systems), Medical, and Technical (all) are treated as class skills, regardless of the class(es) chosen by the Vendura Kado. Vendura Kado also receive a +1 inherent bonus to all skill checks made in these skills.
- Vendura Kado are Centauri, but they do not have the exposure to the typical Centauri lifestyle and so do not receive their condition bonus to Fortitude saves. They do receive a +1 racial bonus to Will saves to reflect their rigid discipline, but this bonus becomes a -1 penalty if the saving throw is the result of emotional trauma or stress.
- All Vendura Kado receive the Data Access feat for free at 1st level and need not meet the feat's typical prerequisites of Skill Focus (Computer Use), minimum Wisdom score or access to the Computer Use skill (which they already have).
- Automatic languages: Centauri, English, and any one other Language (chosen to reflect the Vendura Kado's technical studies.
- Favoured Class: Scientist. A multiclass Centauri's scientist class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

The Xon

These degenerate brutes were a case of coexistent development on Centauri Prime. The planet has two primary continental landmasses, one of which formed the cradle of life for the Centauri. The other was the homeland of the Xon, a barbaric race far less civilised by the time the two races came into contact with one another.

The Centauri Historical Guild noted the first contact between the Xon and the Centauri as an incident in which a fleet of Centauri exploratory vessels came upon a Xon city on the cost of their continent. This primary meeting did not go well and when the ships returned to Centauri waters, they carried with them a hidden Xon force of savages who proceeded to attack and burn everything in their path. While they were dealt with in short order by overwhelming Centauri soldiers, that first assault heralded a continuous attack by Xon forces from their own shores.

This state of affairs continued until the damage from the intermittent but always terrible raids by the Xon became too damaging to ignore. Steeling their martial forces against the Xon, they first drove all the invaders from their shores and then took the fight to the Xon on their own continent. There, the armies of the Centauri met with much greater numbers and force of arms than the lightly equipped raiders had led them to believe.

Once the Centauri struck the Xon on their home continent, there was no possibility of peace between them. The battle that began as a reprisal for raids became a full fledged series of territorial wars with one goal coming swiftly into the minds of both people – the total eradication of the opposing race. This period of the Centauri's history is its bloodiest and most violent, but from the ashes of these terrible wars rose the greatest of their warlords into the role of the First Emperor and united their many countries and families into a single, mighty nation.

The Xon were wiped out during Emperor Kiro's grand Centauri-Xon War and after another decade of ceaseless hunting, the last one was slain in captivity by the hand of Kiro himself. The Coutari used to end the life of the last Xon is still on display in the Imperial Summer Palace on Selini, encased in a block of stasis glass gifted to the Emperor by

his three Technomage advisors. The brutish race that came closer to destroying the Centauri than any other creature past or since was wiped from existence.

Appearance

The Xon were a physically powerful race with very little civility or social development past the barbaric tribal stage. Even after their encounter with the Centauri, they accomplished very little advancement in anything but weaponry during the hundred years of their conflict. Their bodies resembled the Centauri superficially, but without the scalp crest and far more muscular. Their nails and teeth were even sharper and more pronounced, and their ability with language was somewhat impeded by their prodigiously feral overbite.

Xon Racial Traits

- -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma, +2 Strength, +2 Constitution: The Xon were a predominantly physical people and while they are certainly civilised, the finer points of society and civilisation were unimportant enough to these warrior/hunters to leave undeveloped.
- All Xon were of Medium-size.
- Xon had a base speed of 30-ft.
- Xon were a warrior people born and bred and had the instincts of a predator. They received a +1 in melee combat when fighting unarmed with their teeth and claws. They counted as having teeth and claws as natural weapons, inflicting 1d6 and 1d4 respectively with them.
- The Xon were a hardy folk and gained Great Fortitude as a racial feat. This bonus feat could be further stacked with the feat of the same name if a Xon later chose to select Great Fortitude as one of his standard feat choices. This stacking was an exception to the feat's normal limitation and reflected the Xon's incredible stamina.
- Xon were remarkably adaptable and while their minds were usually left underdeveloped in favour of their bodies and physical traits, they could easily assimilate new lessons when they had a need to do so. The Xon gained one additional skill point per level in the same way as human characters.
- Xon could always choose to spend skill points in Balance, Climb, Jump, Swim, Survival or Tumble as if they were class skills, regardless of the Xon's choice of character class levels during advancement.
- Automatic languages: Xonach. Very few Xon ever learned to speak the language of the Centauri and when they were annihilated so few Centauri bothered to maintain their knowledge of Xonach that it became a dead language after a single Centauri generation.
- Favoured Class: Soldier. A multiclass Xon's soldier class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

In Conclusion

I hope this dissertation, while understandably basic in terms of information and structure, has been enlightening for the Royal Court and our great Emperor in particular. I could of course go into much greater detail about any subject mentioned in this document. I have done so in the data crystals, but I fear their much drier approach to the information may be burdensome for those who do not already have a background in the medical sciences. I again extend my humble invitation to anyone who wishes to come to my offices for additional information.

Psychology and Sociology

To the casual observer the Centauri mind has much the same thought processes of human beings. To some extent, this analogy is a fair one. Centauri are concerned with appearances, etiquette, personal ambition and power. Though humans certainly fit this profile in many respects, those motivations are hardly the province of only these two races. Ambition is seemingly a universal trait. Even the nearly hive-minded Gaim understand all too well the lure of power and the lengths that their own people will go to in its pursuit.

Where the Centauri and humanity seem to diverge from the rest of the 'younger' races of the galaxy is in their approach to ambition and the means by which they will go about achieving their desires. While many races have a strong sense of group identity and have a line they generally do not cross in their personal machinations, neither the Centauri nor humans seem to be strongly delimited in this way. Instead, there is no apparent end to the lengths to which some of them will go for their own ambition.

This is certainly not a unique condition to either of the two races. There are conniving Brakiri, megalomaniacal Minbari and greedy Drazi, but these are typically aberrants of their respective races or always keep their personal motivations in the context of the good of their own kind. While it did not take humanity to make a President Clark, it is a sad fact of galactic life that most alien races see President Clark as a more common representative of humanity than someone like Captain John Sheridan of EarthForce.

The Centauri know this all too well. While Emperor Cartagia was certainly the worst case of madness on the Imperial Throne in centuries, his insanity and tyrannical behaviour is not at all out of character with Emperors of the past. Centauri Prime will likely never render any official recriminations for the actions of President Clark during the time of their treaty with Earth; they have done the same or worse too many times in their own history.

Where humanity and the Centauri differ the most is in the prevalence of their ambition and the sheer force of personality that the latter derives from it. When a human goes to extreme lengths to fulfil his personal desires, he is seen as an extraordinary but not unique member of his race. When a Centauri does the same thing, he is seen as a typical Centauri and a proud member of society.

Days like today are the reason I was happy to leave Centauri Prime. I was hoping the things I hated in my childhood would stay behind when I came here, but it seems that as long as there are Centauri, there will be pointless power plays and a lot of wasted effort. I don't know when this needless war with the Narn will end, but I am worried that when the guns stop, neither of us will be standing.

The Locale is like a no man's land. Any time a Centauri, usually me, shows his face, a Narn seems to appear out of thin air to throw something at it. I have collected more than a few bruises and cuts in the last few days. I don't dare say anything to Londo about them. He would want to make the attacks a Republic incident or something and that would just cause more death. Besides, his ally Mr. Morden likes it too much when Londo gets angry. I do not know what that man really wants, but I know that whatever it is, it will cost too much in the end.

I have a lot more to talk about, like the strike orders against Drazi outposts on the Centauri border that Londo turned down yesterday. I was very proud of him for that, but I wish he could see that attacking the Narn so brutally is no better. Still, he is a good man at hearts and I know he will do what is right in the end. I just hope he doesn't get killed doing it.

I'll come back and talk more after I find an ice press for my head.

Centauri Lore – Social Classes

The Centauri are a very stratified people, but their culture has been this way for so long it is second nature to them and not immediately visible to outside observers. The social orders keep mostly to their own strata, but each of the three major groups has several levels that are also somewhat restrictive. While there are few Republic Laws dictating behaviour between the sub-ranks, most Centauri are acutely aware of their place within the social order and act appropriately when dealing with superiors or subordinates.

Social Order of the Centauri

Social Class	Social Tier	Examples
Emperor	n/a	The Emperor is above the normal social order, though he is still beholden to the ebb and flow of social politics.
Royal Court	High Nobility	The Emperor's chosen advisors and political officers, members of the Royal Court outrank all other nobles.
Nobility	High Tiers	Family Elders, Nobles that have reached Ascension and high ranking military leadership.
	Middle Tiers	Most members of a noble family, nobles in good standing with the republic, military officers.
	Low Tiers	Elevated commoners, noble academy students, all commissioned military personnel.
Commoners	High Tiers	Trained professionals considered the top of their field, scientists without title, sponsored commoner families.
	Middle Tiers	Most commoners with gainful employment, technical workers and military conscripts.
	Low Tiers	Elevated or freed slaves, indigent commoners, physical labourers not relegated to slave status
Slaves	High Tiers	House slaves, actors and performers, female dancing or pleasure slaves, all Vendura Kado.
	Low Tiers	Labour slaves, disenfranchised nobility (very rare), almost all Shenaro, any slave from an alien race.

Ambition, pride and guile are respected character traits to be admired on Centauri Prime.

The Centauri might consider a truly manipulative human clever, but they would not likely be impressed. Manipulation and games of control are literally child's play for the Centauri by the time they reach their age of majority. Most have been both the slave and master of their peers dozens of times over. The Centauri see this as a weeding out process and only those with the will and fortitude to rise to the top of the ambitious pile are deemed worthy of the three rights of adulthood – wealth, status and power.

Social Customs

The Centauri are a deeply social people. Even if they might not be called the warmest and friendliest of sorts, they are still based around family units and social strata far more complex than most other races. The word family has more than four dozen definitions in the Centauri language, each one describing a different level or type of familial relationship depending on the person or people being talked about and the social status of the speaker. This complexity is seen in every Centauri social interaction, even relatively informal ones.

This is another difference between the Centauri and most other races – there is no such thing as an informal social gathering for the Centauri. There are of course friendships and less formal meetings between them or when immediate family are involved, but the idea of two or more Centauri being in the same place without some level of status and etiquette being observed is nearly unheard of. This complex social order is not found in any other known galactic race as it stands with the Centauri.

To be certain, other races have differing levels of social complication and some might even rival or surpass the Centauri in terms of number of social customs (Minbari, Markab) or in the rigidity of traditions and observances between social strata (Gaim, Drazi), but none of these races approach their societal traditions in the way a Centauri does.

When a Centauri follows a given custom or purposefully acts within his or her station, he is doing so not because it is the recognised way to act or because that is the tradition

taught since birth but because not doing so would be immediately demeaning both to the person acting, the person or people involved in the action and the families of those involved. Every action taken by a Centauri in public (with a few notable exceptions, more on these below) is part of an intricate dance – a web of behaviour that both binds and lends structure to all Centauri.

In this way, life for the Centauri is a balancing act from the first days of self-awareness in children to the last days of life as elders of their Houses. From slaves to commoners to nobles, there are rules governing clothes, grooming, speech, actions and even inaction that must be observed or the Centauri in question loses status in the eyes of his peers, his subordinates and his superiors. Even the Emperor, ostensibly at the top of the chain, must maintain appearances or have the respect of his people dwindle because of his 'breaches'.

This pattern of social behaviour might seem incredibly limiting to other races, but it comes from centuries of civilised cultural evolution and is the end result of a people who are savages and predators at heart trying to behave better than their ancestors. Honour is a concept for most galactic races, but it is an unshakeable way of life for the Centauri and those who break with its tenets are afforded little respect in their peers and even less mercy.

Observers from other races should not make the all-too-easy mistake of placing their culture's idea of honour into the actions of the Centauri. Such a projection would be doomed to fail catastrophically at some point, generally where violent or ruthless behaviour is concerned. The Centauri are not a people bound by the laws of kindness, though they do understand hospitality and they are not above enslaving those weaker than themselves, though they staunchly support personal rights within their own clearly defined social classes.

Another mistake some cultural analysts make when trying to understand the Centauri is to assume that the typical forms of royal behaviour apply to these monarchist people. The Centauri have a very complicated government and diverse social strata. It is quite possible for a single family to produce nobles, commoners and slaves without any confusion among its own members who fits in where by these categories. Houses, and by houses the Centauri are referring to a lineage dating back to historical heroes or nobility of the previous millennia, are not solely any one social class but can and typically do fall across every societal line depending on the branch of the families involved.

From Infant to Indigent – The Long March of Centauri Custom

To understand how intricate the web of Centauri customs can be, it is easiest to follow the lives of its people. This example will follow the lives of Centauri children, each born into a one of the three major social orders of the Centauri, from birth to death in their twilight years. Every major social custom and taboo can be discovered in this way and different standards of behaviour can be seen. While life is undeniably better for nobles over slaves, the level of societal stress and pressure to behave properly is no different.

Centauri Birth

Birth is a sacred and rare opportunity for the Centauri to celebrate the arrival of a new life that, at least until a few decades have passed, will not be a rival to them in their own social endeavours. Because children have very few rights and privileges regardless of the social class, they are not a threat to anyone and can therefore be honoured by the Centauri as a whole without any possible conflict of interest getting in the way.

Centauri also appreciate that childhood is the gateway age between birth and adult responsibility and envy infants for their freedom from the 'grand game' of Centauri custom. While this freedom is fleeting and Centauri children begin establishing their place in the pecking order of their society at a very young age, the first few years are still a time of innocence and discovery that all Centauri remember fondly and foster for as long as they can in their children. It may be surprising to outsiders used to the vicious conniving that goes on between adult Centauri, but virtually every member of the race adores and reveres children for this reason.

Crimes against children are dealt with very harshly and most Centauri cannot even conceive of anyone harming or abusing one in any way. Centauri are brutal enough to each other once the tender years of childhood are done, but the first decade of a Centauri's life is generally considered a grace period from this societal turmoil and is never taken lightly.

Noble Births

Noble children are born with a great deal of pomp and circumstance. It is typical for a noble couple to hold a series of grand parties for their children before they are

born. The first is the Carta Infantum, an announcement celebration for the unborn child that is traditionally scheduled for one month after conception and no later than three months afterwards. The unspoken reason behind this delay is that the father of the mother-to-be is responsible for the arrangements of this party and the one to three months allows him to arrange a husband for his pregnant daughter if she does not already have one.

At the Carta Infantum, the parentage and sex of the infant (if it can be determined) is revealed as a formal social announcement. This forms a legal societal contract and while the information given at the Carta Infantum may be intentionally or accidentally incorrect, it is a binding statement that carries with it all the rights and responsibilities of parentage. While it is considered very bad form for the announced mother and father to not be wed, Centauri custom is far more forgiving of an engagement or 'previously unknown marriage' announced simultaneously than it is about a single mother with no paternal admission or acknowledgement.

Once the Carta Infantum is passed, the mother enters a form of grace period of her own. The hormones that a Centauri female must endure while carrying a child are very harsh at times and can cause incredibly unpredictable behaviour. These are overlooked during pregnancy with all but the most terrible social gaffes completely discounted as the *mater malorum* – the Mother's Curse.

During the last month of pregnancy, a Centauri female exhibits a drastic decline in blood pressure, general energy and mental activity. This causes a long decline that traditionally (but not always medically) lasts 29 days. This time period is called the Dark Watch and is a dangerous time for the mother in which death by natural causes is a real possibility. Modern medical techniques mitigate this risk, but it is still a real possibility and always a cause for serious concern.

Traditionally, the father's friends and family hold the Dark Watch with him in the parent's family home, typically in shifts. Someone is always with the father at all times, ready to take him to his wife's side should complications arise. The mother is kept isolated except for necessary medical personnel to lessen any strain on her system. Technically, this cloistering is unnecessary and has been proven as such in modern times, but the tradition stands and is not generally broken without good cause. Every fifth day of the Dark Watch, the father is expected to visit the mother of his child and spend an hour in prayer with her, but this usually depends more on schedules and availability than pure adherence to tradition. Some politically active fathers manage only one or two such meetings with their wives, though it is scandalous for them to have no contact at all during the Dark Watch.

On the thirtieth day, the female Centauri noble gives birth and all those who attended the Carta Infantum are expected to attend the procedure if they can. This can lead to some awkward moments if guests of the previous event have fallen out of favour with the expecting family in the meantime, but law and tradition allows them to attend. This event, the Tono Pidoro, is a sombre one and little ceremony is observed, though it is customary for an honour guard of at least one member of the Royal Guard to attend to 'escort the new noble into the light of day'. This is not as common in current times as it was in days past, but important births involving major Noble Houses still adhere to it.

After the Tono Pidoro, the Centauri mother is given one full week alone with the child and any visitors she and her husband wish to admit. This week is an eagerly anticipated relief from the pressures of state and society, as only the most urgent of matters can reach them and therefore bring them back into social circles. The week is usually far too brief, but it does provide a fleeting few days for the family to become acquainted and make their immediate plans involving the child.

After this time, a grand celebration is held with an open guest list for the noble members of both extended families (which becomes quite grand and numerous if the marriage is between Houses) and twenty-one male guests chosen by the father. This is a tradition that dates

back to the days of Emperor Kiro, whose first child was attended by twenty-one of his bravest warriors during his first public appearance. An assassination attempt by the houses opposed to the rule of Kiro took the lives of every man, but they successfully bore the infant to safety before they died. As such, the 'Twenty-One Men' are seen as an assurance of a long, successful life for the infant so honoured.

After this celebration, which highlights the most admirable and opulent traits and resources of both houses, concludes, the infant is fully entered into the roles of the Republic and given his name during a time-honoured ceremony involving a gold plaque and a drop of blood from both parents. This is called the Allargoth and signifies the willingness of both parents to shed blood for their progeny. One of the worst social insults imaginable to the Centauri is for a parent to refuse the Allargoth for their child. It is a slap in the face to both the child and the family of the other parent and is not easily survived by anyone foolish or furious enough to do it in open company.

Once the Allargoth is signed and given the Imperial Seal of Gold, the noble child is official and has the first tier of legal rights set aside for nobility. Until this point, he or she was a potential noble, but anything from crib death to the machinations of other houses could cut that potential short and the only reprisals possible would be private ones. Once the Allargoth is complete, the weight of Republic Law is behind the child and he or she is considered a full noble child in the eyes of the Emperor and the Great Maker.

Commoner Birth

Common Centauri have a set of customs all their own that govern the many nuances of their lives, but many of these are echoes of those that shape noble culture. While they are seen as commoners by the nobility above them, they are truly just a lower level of nobility since the Centauri see their entire race as the elite of the galaxy. As such, they are accorded a level of status that elevates them above the base working class (slaves) but still keeps them from truly living as nobles.

In the case of childbirth, the basic traditions are much the same as the nobility observe them. There is still a Carta Infantum, but it tends to be a less formal affair with fewer social strictures. Nobles are sometimes invited to a notable commoner's Carta Infantum, lending an air of respectability and officiousness to the event. This does not make the party a noble's gathering, but it does make it something noteworthy in society.

Prominent commoners can even use the Carta Infantum as a way of gaining noble 'sponsorship' for their infant. This can, if the House approached agrees, allow the infant to take on a basic rank within the House and potentially earn nobility for himself and his parents. Only male children of commoners have this potential; female children are never elevated in this way.

Commoner pregnancies are much like noble ones socially save for one key difference – common mothers do not get extended the full courtesy of the *mater malorum*. They are expected to maintain their behaviour to a certain level where nobles are concerned despite their condition. This is a measure of respect that the common class must afford the nobility and even the shifting hormones of pregnancy do not mitigate it. In practice, most nobles do cut a great deal of slack towards expecting common mothers, but there is no legal enforcement ensuing such.

Typically, Centauri commoners are less affected by the same physical malaise that hits noble women during the last days of pregnancy, making the Dark Watch less necessary for them. This partially comes from their slightly harder lives making them more enduring, but it also comes from the constant support network of other commoners with nothing to gain by interfering with the birth. A wealthy or well-connected Centauri commoner male who wishes to hold the Dark Watch may do so, but it tends to be uncommon for this social class.

Commoners may even have a member of the Royal Guard in attendance for their Tono Pidoro, but only if the guardian is related to either the mother or the father by blood. They may not call for an unrelated Royal Guard of the Centaurum to stand at this place of honour, nor can they petition for one to be assigned by any other merit. Blood carries a great deal of weight, but commoners and nobles have some serious divisions between them.

One tradition that commoners do still have access to regardless of wealth or connection is the 21 Man guard at the grand birth ceremony, a custom that most commoners still indulge in. These festivals are not often very grandiose, but they do still occur and can be attended by any noble who desires to attend, regardless of the wishes of the parents or families in question. The 21 Man tradition is often unofficially observed regardless of law, but they are never openly called such during the festival.

Commoner children are also named during this ceremony (or separately once a week has passed from the time of birth if no party is held), but it is not referred to as an Allargoth and no blood is spilled. An Imperial Seal is assigned to the new infant, but only males receive an

official stamp. This is done in bronze or, in the case of females, is assigned a facsimile signature in bronze ink.

Slave Birth

The same truth about all Centauri being nobles of some order in their own eyes means that a slave's birth is not completely without ceremony, but the particulars and the glamour of the occasion greatly differ. The primary factor in determining how many traditions are observed for a slave's birth is the wishes of his or her owner. Typically, there are five female slaves to every one male slave in any given work group, but neither gender is treated as more valuable or less necessary. The Centauri are very pragmatic about their slaves and it is not uncommon for female slaves to be treated with a good deal of respect, especially if she has proven herself capable of breeding effective slaves of her own.

A single individual rarely owns slaves himself but rather the family or House will take ownership of them as part of a lorai (the Centauri word for gather). Lorais are usually five to ten in number and have similar duties divided up among them by capability and by the needs of their owners. When a member of a lorai becomes pregnant, she is often removed from the gather and placed in a separate area within the house dedicated for such things.

This is not the end of her service to the House or to her master, but it is the beginning of light duty and medical observation. Slaves are never worked harder than they can tolerate (unless they are not Centauri; the Centauri are notoriously hard on slaves of other races) and pregnant slaves are given very light duties to ensure that the slave infant is born healthy and the slave herself can return to her normal duties as quickly as possible.

While some noteworthy slaves are celebrated when they have children, this is most definitely the exception to the rule. Most slaves are given very little ceremony other than a single day of rest when the pregnancy is discovered and the light duty she provides during her term. At the birthing, there is no observance and while some masters allow the rest of the slave's lorai to be with her during the procedure, this is very much on a House by House basis and should not be considered common. Rarely are slave pregnancies even given enough attention to be deemed a social event of any kind, especially if there is any doubt as to the infant's parentage.

The naming ceremony for a slave infant is significantly different than for the child of commoners or nobles. First, there is no one-week waiting period. A name is selected by the slave's master (with or without input from the mother as the master desires) and the slave infant is legally recognised by that name as soon as it is born. The reasoning behind this is that slaves are property and the mother's owner has to claim the infant as soon as it becomes a viable asset. This is usually to the master's benefit, as the total number of slaves owned each year is a measure of status in itself.

Once a slave mother gives birth, she is afforded a variable amount of time with the infant even if she is not going to be permitted to raise the child herself. The amount of time is mandated by Imperial law and is never less than three months time and rarely longer than one year if the child is to be moved or sold elsewhere. This tradition has to do with Centauri infants needing some time with their birth mother to psychologically adjust to their new lives. Most Centauri accept this as a part of their race's psychically active heritage.

Gender of the child makes a great deal of difference to its disposition after this amount of time. Males are usually taken into the master's family as workers and given an elevation of status to commoners of the lowest order. This acknowledges the baby boy's rights as a Centauri male born in a Centauri house, even if he is of slave descent. Generally only undesirable males due to ill health or master's whim are left as slaves. This accounts for the low percentage of male to female slaves.

Female slave infants are an expensive commodity and where they go after the acclimation period with their mothers is solely dependent on the master in question. They may be sold to other houses or slave organisations if the master has no need or wish to raise a new slave of his own. If the infant girl is kept, it is traditional for the mother to raise her personally, but this is not a given. In any case, infant girls born as slaves will only stay with their mothers for five to seven years before being transferred to an academy for servitor education (see Childhood below).

Centauri Childhood

Centauri are considered children until their tenth birthdays, no matter what their social status. This opinion protects them, making them legally the responsibility of their parents (or owners) and absolving them of any societal repercussions from their actions. While capital crimes are still punishable, very little else is considered the child's fault and blame for their actions falls either on their responsible caretakers or is considered the folly of youth and ignored.

Slave children are not differentiated in this regard, though they are given a measure of responsibility at a slightly younger age because of their enforced attendance of a training academy and the expectations placed upon them to learn their lessons well. Even so, a Centauri slave child under the age of 10 is still not held accountable for their actions and any transgression short of murder or theft from a Noble House is completely absolved due to their lowly station and tender age. This leniency can be strained and itinerant slave children have been severely punished by their keepers without the latter receiving as much as a reprimand in severe cases.

Noble Children

While slave children have to enter an official academy between the ages of five and seven, noble children also receive an early education. Theirs is of a more informal nature, but is no less in-depth or vital to their later development. How Centauri spend these first few years can mean more to their development into members of the Republic than all the rest of their years as an adult. Many noble parents and their hired keepers watch these children very carefully for this initial decade of life. While there can be no legal ramifications from actions taken during these years, aptitudes and weaknesses exhibit themselves and need to be considered.

Because of the important role that children play in Centauri society, it is not surprising that there are a number of customs and traditions that surround them and their young lives. These differ greatly through the social classes, teaching Centauri youths at an early age that there is a fundamental difference between them and their lower or higher born peers.

One of the first events that a child is likely to remember in their lives is their third year birthday celebration. This occurs as a gala event for nobles and is usually a time when as many of the noble (and occasionally common, depending on wealth and position) members of the House gather to celebrate the child's survival for three years and wish him or her a long, productive life. Children rarely understand that the significance of this party is that the Centauri have had some turbulent times in their history and the death of noble children before they reach the age of three has not been as uncommon in the past as it is in the modern era. Even the name of this birthday festival ordamo, echoes the quiet achievement of this time. *Ordamas* means survival in Centauri.

Noble children are provided with the best of everything by their parents both out of affection and because every other noble family with children is in a sort of silent competition. Families that balk at expensive gifts are seen as miserly. Families with children that do not dress in the finest clothes are treated as having no desire to maintain appearances. The Houses with the best kept, happiest, healthiest children are afforded a measure of greater respect by their neighbours. The status game that all Centauri play makes this avenue too important for most to ignore.

Noble children are also moulded for their later roles in life by the games they are allowed to play and the friends they are allowed to have. By the time a noble male child turns 10 and is considered suitable for their first academy, the choice of what to groom him for and which school to send him to have long been decided both by his parents and by the aptitudes he has shown during long years of play. The games that often determine the most about where a noble male child spends his educational years are detailed in the Commoner Children section as they do not truly differ between the classes.

Female children are not as carefully screened. Their fate is effectively determined from birth by their gender. It is possible but highly unlikely for a female Centauri to show so much aptitude for a task or discipline that they are given dispensation by the Emperor to attend a men's academy. In truth, this happens very infrequently and is typically the cause of great, if very quiet, scandal. Few families will tolerate this kind of status loss and never seek the dispensation to begin with.

The other social custom that should not be overlooked where noble children of the Centauri are concerned is the Rite of Koros. This festival occurs any time between the child's eighth to tenth birthday and is usually scheduled when it is convenient for the Royal Court. The Rite of Koros is also called Presentation and it is when the young noble is brought before the Emperor during high court and receives his first blessing of the Throne. It is the first (and for most Centauri, only) time a Centauri is allowed to approach and touch the Emperor, as they are instructed to take his hand and accept any pronouncement the Emperor wishes to make regarding their place in society and their future.

The Rite of Koros is typically a formality and millions of young Centauri have entered the Imperial Palace and left again without incident, flanked by their parents who are simply pleased to have the incident behind them and reap the prestige that an orderly Presentation will give them. Since the Emperor is free to pronounce any decree he wishes at the Rite of Koros, there have been some occasions where the child in question has had the entire course of his life altered by benevolent or a malicious whim.

When the Rite of Koros does go awry, it is usually the urging of others in the Royal Court that guides the Imperial Hand to decree what it does. A great deal of status jockeying can occur around the Rite as the child's family tries to achieve one end and allies or enemies of their house struggle to either support or subvert the result. Occasionally, the Emperor comes out with a decree that surprises all parties concerned. The young Emperor Turhan's decision to grant a nine year old Malachi the lifelong title of Prime Minister simply because he liked the defiant look in the boy's eyes stands out as one example of how the history of Centauri Prime can centre on formalities and manoeuvring.

Commoner Children

The children of commoners are not afforded the luxuries of nobility but they are gifted with anything their parents can provide. Typically, this includes games, toys and all the amenities that noble children receive scaled down to match the commoner family's station. Because commoners range in status and power from low nobility to nearly slaves, this can also vary widely. In general, commoner children are given everything their families can afford and anything that their parents' patron (if any) deigns to arrange for them.

The status game is just as important for commoners as it is for nobles, though not played as openly. Other commoner families watch the treatment of children around them as indicators of how much power their parents must have in society. Some families have made their fortunes and even earned a place in the lowest ranks of true nobility by how well they care for their children and how carefully they make sure other commoners and nobles see their efforts.

There is no official Ordamo celebration for commoner families, but most mark the occasion with a larger than average birthday party. Other commoner families are invited to these affairs and they can get quite large and grandiose, though tact and societal mores dictate that they never get past a certain acceptable size. Very few unofficial commoner Ordamo festivals have more than forty attendants and, as that number is approached, some guests will leave rather than be present at a social incident. This cycling keeps the parties from ever becoming anything the nobility has to act against, so once more the Centauri regulate their own social orders.

Commoner children are also watched carefully during play and their strengths and deficiencies noted with great concern. Few commoner families have the number of options available to them for their children's education that nobles take for granted, but there are still opportunities that commoners can earn for themselves with the right level of aptitude. As such, certain games that test for these are very common and should be noted.

- **Drho Ball:** This sport is popular among children of six to ten years of age and involves one Centauri kicking a ball over a line of defenders to another child who must catch it or have to return it the same way. The defending line cannot move outside of a certain zone and tries to resist any attempt by the catcher to smash his way through and throw the ball at the kicker. Points are scored by the ball making contact with the kicker and most games are played to five points. Girls are rarely permitted to play drho ball. This game is also played as a recreational sport by the Centaurum Royal Guard, many of whom got their start in that role by exceptional aptitude on the defending line.

- **Shimath:** A dancing game, Shimath consists of one child creating moves and others trying to copy them. Every dancing move in Shimath begins and ends with the children on one foot and each one alternates that stance. Shimath continues play until only one child is left standing. If that is the Shimarus (the leader of the game), he or she wins. If the Shimarus falls during play, a new Shimarus is chosen and play begins again. This game builds co-ordination and is usually watched closely by parents to see if their children will more physically or mentally inclined. Female Centauri completely dominate this agility game and many males avoid it accordingly.

- **Rounds:** A game of Rounds, especially in a group of skilled players, is remarkable to witness and some of the best turns of play are recorded for future enjoyment. Rounds is a word game in which one child picks a historical figure in their own family or in the family of the current Emperor. The playgroup then takes turns creating rhyming couplets about that person until the group has gone around and everyone has continued the poetry. Balking or being unable to come up with a rhyme takes a person out of the game and play continues until there is only one speaker left. Rounds poems are usually respectful, but children often take advantage of their socially untouchable status to create some truly scathing rhymes. It is an interesting social commentary that most Centauri adults prefer to record the latter for posterity.

- **Butterfly Court:** This game derives its name from the tradition handed down by Emperor Kiro of allowing his nephew to pretend to be Emperor over all his young playmates and hold court in the butterfly

filled garden of the first Imperial Palace. Since then, noble children have typically been allowed to use the gardens of the four great Palaces on Centauri Prime as their Butterfly Courts and hand down edicts to other children. While none of the court's 'rulings' are considered official, many noble children obey them rather than be seen as anarchist in their refusal. This game is made more complicated by the fact that there are usually courts going in all four Palaces at once and the four pretend Emperors rarely agree on anything. Commoner children are sometimes allowed into these games if their families have noble patronage.

- *Insurrection:* A child's game that is not nearly as brutal and vicious as the reality it is based on. Groups of Centauri children playing Insurrection divide themselves into either Centauri soldiers or Narn terrorists. Game play can vary from a lot of pretend shots with fingers and arguments over who is dead to weeks of extended play whereby the 'Narns' stalk their chosen targets and try to 'kill' them when they least expect it. This game is rarely very sophisticated, but those who excel at it (on either side) are often given preferential entry to the Centauri Armed Forces if their talent bears itself out during a ten year stretch in a military academy.

Commoner children are otherwise much like noble children in that they enjoy ten years of relative peace and then have a school chosen for them to begin their true education in life. They are never presented to the Emperor in a Rite of Koros, but many do informally meet the Emperor if their parents have the status to arrange it. During these quiet, informal affairs, the Emperor is free to make a decree about the child and garnering a positive one is usually the reason behind the family arranging the meeting in the first place.

Slave Children

As one might imagine, there are few amenities beyond basic needs spared for slave children, but they are still youths in Centauri society and so some dispensation is given to them. They are generally kept content and satisfied in all the basic requirements of life and benefit greatly from their master's need to maintain appearances. Centauri slaves rarely wear poor quality clothing or seem malnourished, as this would be seen as a sign of poverty in their master, and this extends to their children.

Slave children are rarely allowed to play with commoner children and only have exposure to the children of nobles if their parents serve as childcare slaves to a Noble House. Despite the segregation that this suggests, many commoner and noble families make sure that their children see slave children from time to time and do not hide them away from such exposure. The knowledge that there are children of lower social status forms an early lesson for their progeny. While a few children of each social class do intermingle without the knowledge of their parents, it is a very uncommon occurrence.

Slave children do not have many parties and there are no official events during their young lives. Despite this (or perhaps because of it), there are several informal but important observances that slaves keep within their own social class. Nobles and commoners are generally unaware of these, but it is doubtful they would move to dissuade them even if they knew. After all, all Centauri are nobles to some degree and a few traditions are considered part of their heritage.

Slave children are given games to test for their aptitudes, but they also undergo direct testing in the form of simple questions, physical exercises and examinations. Slaves are property after all, and quality assurance is the primary concern of those who trade in them. Even slave children who are going to be kept by the master or House of their parents are tested before they are submitted to an academy for further education. These schools are not free and most owners are unlikely to waste money on lessons the slave child in question is not well suited to learn.

The only true celebration that a slave child can look forward to is the Kinargo, a party held for all the slave children about to enter a given academy. Some Kinargos are grander than others, depending on how prestigious or specialised the academy might be. Oddly, commoner and noble children do not have a Kinargo – only slaves celebrate this event. This may originate from the fact that for slaves, joining an academy is an assurance that they have value and are worth training. For commoner and noble children, entering an academy is effectively the end of their privileged youth and thus not seen in the same festive light.

The Academies

While slave children enter their first academy at a younger age than the children of other social orders, all Centauri youths are in an academy by the end of their tenth year. These academies are usually institutions with long histories and prestigious alumni lists, but some of the academies dedicated to newer disciplines or sciences have less to offer in prestige. There is a specific order that all children must follow when going through the academies and most Centauri attend at least three before taking their first employment as an adult.

these academies, but their travails make them smarter and more capable if they can rise to the challenge.

This first academy usually lasts four years and is rarely a shortcut for more intelligent or gifted children. Noble families prefer to keep their children in this first school for a full term and then place them higher up in finishing or vocational schools where their gifts can secure them a school rank (explained below) sooner than other children.

Noble Academies

The first academy any noble child joins is a preliminary school that teaches the basics of Centauri history, language and social traditions. These are specialised starting schools that are used to catering to the often astronomical egos of the noble children that enter their hallowed halls. These schools have special dispensation from the Royal Court to ignore the status of their student's families and treat all children as equals during their time in class.

At least this is the theory, but it is rarely a reality. Because the families who send their children to them fund these schools, the academies tend to be social clubs in a sense and those children who come from larger, wealthier families have a much easier time of things. Faculty members are almost ritualistically bribed to provide better and more comprehensive lessons for certain children than the law mandates; this makes privileged children better able to excel at the yearly aptitude tests that each academy must administer.

Perhaps surprisingly, Centauri parents of wealth and means rarely use their academy influence to make things easier for their children by means of false grades or simpler testing. Centauri are dedicated to their own perfection and the perfection of the next generation and long years have taught them that a soft beginning makes for a weak life. Children of privilege often have a harder time in

A grand celebration involving the graduating fourth year students of each of these elite academies is held when the last of the four tests are taken and the results have been calculated. This last test is very important and scores are reported to the entire class and attending parents during a ceremony at the conclusion of the graduation ceremony. Since these scores determine the placement of students in the school's final records and also provides the baseline score for later academy entrance requirements, a good parting score is essential to a student's academic career and his placement in society thereafter.

Later academies are more specialised and last anywhere from two to ten years each. It is uncommon for a Centauri to accept a professional or court role until they complete at least one interim academy and a finishing school. These academies tend to be of greater and more widely known prestige, bringing honour to the family of the attendee and an increased chance of placement in a good vocation after graduation.

An important consideration for every academy after preliminary education is that of class rank. Every academy has a comprehensive system that differs from school to school for calculating the most successful student in each grade. A grade is a single year of admissions and does not change its membership until graduation and 'success' tends to be a factor of class participation, social connections and

academic performance. Class rank is taken into account for all school activities and students quickly learn that any privilege in their academy is based on how high their rank is in relation to others.

The other advantage to a high class rank is that at the highest levels, it offers a certain amount of freedom in activity while in school. High class ranking entitles students to better dormitories, quality meals and treats and more interesting diversions when not in lessons. The greatest honour of being the leader in class rank at graduation is the almost unheard of Ularato – The Right of Choice. The highest ranking graduating student of each academy can choose the next school he or she wants to attend.

If the Centauri graduate is ready for the work force or political service, he is allowed to apply for any position he wants, though acceptance is never a guarantee. Females are not given this choice, but being the highest ranking member of her finishing school is worth a major increase in marriage value and social status.

Commoner Academies

Commoners have a wide array of academies available to choose for their children, though finances and social contacts might make this selection larger or smaller accordingly. There is an Imperial Academy that is sponsored and financed by noble taxation for commoners who cannot afford a school of their own choice, but this is little more than a training school for future civil servants and a portal through which millions disappear into the armed services or colony placement. Most parents avoid the Imperial Academy if they can, wishing more for their children's future.

Some noble preliminary academies are also an option, though these require sponsorship and usually involve the child becoming a ward of the patron's House and a low ranking noble in the process. This is not a common occurrence but when it does happen, it is usually a time for celebration for the commoner's family because it gives them a much-valued link to a higher station for them all. This rarely happens outside of a given family, occurring as an upward status change rather than a lateral one.

Commoner academies do things very much like noble ones and even maintain a role for class rank, though it is not as important in determining the rights and privileges of their students as in higher institutions. Most commoner academies cannot afford to make things quite so stratified as to maintain better conditions for some students than others; this keeps most realities of academy education fairly equal for most commoners.

One thing that does differ widely by class ranking is the educational opportunities available to those who maintain a high level. Commoner academies rarely have the resources to waste higher education on those who will not benefit or value it, so only upper ranks of students can get into honour classes or special opportunity groups. The elite of commoner society get their start in these, learning at an early age that application and desire will get them special treatment. Ambition forms young in the Centauri, and much of it happens right here.

A special tradition worth noting involves the hair of male Centauri who graduate from their last academy and enter the work force. If they are in the uppermost 10% of their class, they are allowed a preferential placement in their job and typically get management training if not a supervisory position to start with. This also entitles them to wear their hair past the two-inch mark and with a special curl at the top that runs back for an inch along the curve of their scalp. This is an important mark in commoner society and is given the respect it deserves.

Slave Academies

Most slaves only go to two academies, the first occurring when they are very young and lasting five years. During this time, all of the basic lessons of language, history and behaviour are taught to them by instructors that range from caring and nurturing to harsh and tyrannical. Often, such teachers are mixed into the same school by design of the academy administration to inure their students to the realities of life as a slave.

This can also vary by academy and some of the finest slave academies are very gentle places dedicated to educating, well skilled slaves that can fit easily into any family as personal servants. These places are firm but fair and the slaves who go through them come out on the other end as well-cared for Centauri ready to either be placed with a family immediately or enter a second academy for specialised training such as dancing, personal care and grooming or child care and nursing.

Other academies are much harder, dealing with slaves that for one reason or another have been difficult to train or were too wilful for easier treatment. While it is not unheard of for slaves to die from the abuse they endure in the worst of these 'schools', it is very uncommon if only because a dead slave is costly to replace.

It should be noted again that slave academies such as the ones described here are only for Centauri youths born into the slave social class. There are other kinds of slaves that serve the Centauri, but these are usually commoners or nobles stripped of their societal rights or aliens pressed into service such as the Narn (this is a time-conditional occurrence, as there are only certain times in Centauri history in which they had alien slaves). Also, male slave children typically attend specialised schools that have a higher average of quality due to the perceived value of males or females in Centauri society.

At the end of a slave's academy experiences, graduation is not as celebrated as it is with nobles and commoners. Instead, there is a sombre ceremony involving the slaves of the graduation class and their masters that culminates in the slaves' first posting to whatever task awaits them in their adult lives. This is the end of their childhood and the beginning of the rest of what, for most, will be a long life of unrelenting servitude.

Careers and Adult Life

The press of an adult life begins when a Centauri leaves his or her last academy and receives the first of what will likely be many positions in their society. For nobles, this is often a prestigious job or court appointment to some diplomatic role in the Republic. For commoners, there are millions of jobs that must be attended to by the Centauri and cannot be trusted to slaves because of their sensitive or technical nature. Slaves are sold to a new master, retained by their original ones or given to a Noble House for the supplemental training that is inevitably needed for any new assignment.

Noble Adults

There is an expression in the Royal Court, 'Life for a Centauri begins as childhood ends.' There is another expression, considerably more cynical, that says just the opposite; 'Life ends with childhood.' To understand the meaning behind these quotations, one must understand the complex nature of adulthood for noble Centauri. Though they enjoy all of the finer things in the Republic, they pay for these benefits with a life dedicated to maintaining appearances, observing occasionally conflicting traditions and providing loyal service to a monarchy that rarely returns their dedication.

In an environment such as this, ambition is not just a result – it is a necessity of life. Many Centauri constantly strive for something better than what they have not just to obtain a higher station but because it is often the only way to at least maintain the status and prestige they currently possessed. A Centauri who does not take advantages when he sees them regardless of the cost is usually thought of as a short-sighted fool by his more grasping peers.

This single perception, right or wrong, drives most of Centauri society through the ages. The idea of what others think and how it can affect them keeps noble Centauri constantly striving to do more, look better and *appear* more successful than they really are. This can make it very difficult to see through the illusion of noble life among the Centauri, but the race is particularly suited to play the constant deception games of their society. They are victims of their own devices and when the wheels of royalty turn, noble Centauri are all too eager to roll with them.

For young Centauri, these games begin fairly slowly. They usually have a simple job waiting for them after their last academy – some menial supervisor's post in a remote colony or advisory position to a third tier observer in the Royal Court. It is rare for a young Centauri to wield any real power; this is the result of power being in the hands of much older Centauri unlikely to share what they have worked and fought for with unproven newcomers to the political scene.

That is the other facet of Centauri life at the noble level (and to a limited degree, at all social levels), that outsiders have a hard time understanding fully. Everything in a Centauri's life is at some level political. Because all the real power in Centauri society rests with the elders of the Noble Houses and the Royal Court, nothing happens that a Minister of Affairs or Chancellor of one committee or another has not approved at some level. This means that something as simple as a promotion in a low level textile factory has likely been at least a line item in a court consultation. By playing politics, a Centauri can make or break careers – not least of these will be his own.

A Centauri's family is also an asset and a liability at every stage of his or her life. A female Centauri's value for marriage is always in flux with the fortunes and fame of her house. If her house is in Ascendance with the Royal Court and receiving favourable attention, her options for betrothal are much greater than if the Emperor disapproves of her family. While the basic status of a Centauri House rarely changes without momentous events occurring to its members, current fame and notoriety can be just as damaging or valuable to its members.

This also affects males, but they are typically assumed to be able to master some level of their own fate and given a measure of respect independent of their houses. In truth,

this occurs for women as well, but they are always seen more in the shadow of their heritage than the men of their family. Male Centauri can aspire to do virtually anything within their talents or their ability to fool others into believing about their talents.

This latter factor explains a great deal about the decline of quality in the many roles and posts of the Centauri Republic in later years. Because the higher positions in the Republic are the ones that offer the most prestige, there are many pretenders to them that find it easier to appear to be qualified than actually have the credentials needed to perform well once they get their commission. Families also benefit from a highly placed child, so they bend their resources to getting their progeny into high positions without any concern about their suitability.

Once a Centauri joins the Court or some other high level employment as his first noble position, there are a number of important occasions and traditions he must observe, but only one is of any true concern. A noble Centauri can ignore virtually every social tradition in his life and while there may be some effect on his career, he will not truly be vilified, but even a callous member of Centauri society cannot discount the vital importance of their Ascension.

Commoner Adults

Adult life for a Centauri commoner is not quite as grandiose as it is for the nobility, but it is also considerably less stressful. That is not to say there are not pressures from every corner of society around a commoner or that ambition is not just as encouraged, but the distance to fall is a lot shorter and the risks smaller for a Centauri commoner who stakes his family and reputation on a gambit that fails. This in turn creates the illusion that he has less to lose and so less is expected of him to begin with. Some of the most interesting historical tales of the Centauri revolve around commoners throwing off the assumptions of those around them and achieving greatness by their own hand.

After the academies, a commoner is almost always placed into a factory or technical position of some kind. Very few gain supervisory roles immediately out of their classes, but Centauri society does reward merit and this can happen. In fact, merit and worth are more often recognised in the common class of the Centauri than they are in nobility because the latter have more avenues of deception they can use to disguise their inadequacies.

This truth is not lost on the common classes. Many commoners are quite bitter about their superiors in the work place, most of whom are lower placed nobles with fewer job skills than they possess. This can lead to some very complicated manoeuvring by ambitious commoners looking to replace them in their supervisor roles. Nobles are difficult to terminate from their assigned positions, but enough political and family pressure can 'move them to better suited employment'. Generally, this is accomplished by convincing the right people in the right social order that relocation would be advantageous to everyone involved.

Herein lies the true strength of the Centauri people; their commoners are trained, vocationally motivated people whose only hope for advancement lies in becoming both politically active and highly skilled in their employment. One without the other leaves them passed over for the

Centauri Lore

The social rules of Ascension are murky and complicated, mostly because they are entirely subjective and depend greatly on the ebb and flow of court politics, reputation and personal connections. Many nobles go their entire lives and never achieve Ascension, the true pinnacle of social status, but very few Centauri do not at least spare some serious effort in trying.

Every noble Centauri is considered part of the Republic and their value to that august body is weighed each time their name comes up in political conversation or idle chatter in the court. Eventually, a name comes up so often and with such promise that the Emperor begins to consider them for the honour of Ascension. This possibility grows with each achievement, real or 'arranged', until the Royal Court and the Emperor are in agreement that the Centauri in question is an asset to the Republic and should be recognised as such. This traditionally results in an appearance in Court to receive a medallion of outstanding service, the personal commendation of the Emperor and a gift of some sort.

These gifts can be quite generous and have in the past included vessels, real estate, priceless antiques, noble status and titles beyond the normal reach of the recipient or other truly worthy awards. Ascension only happens once in a Centauri's life and is the truest achievement of a life of loyalty (or great pretence of loyalty). Once a Centauri is given true Ascension, his fame is assured and he may build an even greater legacy for himself and his House on its foundation.

There is also an Imperial tradition that each year, on the anniversary of a Centauri's Ascension, the Emperor may offer another gift in memory of the great works and deeds that prompted that elevation. This is never a guarantee and some Centauri go their entire lives after Ascension without ever hearing from the Emperor again.

promotion they worked for or unable to turn over the position in the first place. This adversity makes the average Centauri a capable, socially astute character with the stamina and strength of character to strive for what they desire.

Most commoners work in the same vocation for life, though they may take on many different sets of job duties during that time. Status and social climbing make a big difference for commoners in their workplace and dictates what opportunities are available to him during his rare but culturally mandated holidays. For this reason, even commoners who are comfortable where they are have to keep up appearances; their recreational preferences are also limited by status.

The above information covers the life of an adult Centauri male. Females are quite different and rarely have these opportunities. They are like noble women in the fact that their primary responsibility is the raising of children and the maintenance of the home. Centauri males are rarely homemakers in any respect; the tasks and chores of the home are the responsibility of Centauri woman who are left almost solely to those pursuits.

For their part, Centauri women do not usually resent this attitude. Culturally, the province of homemaking as a woman's obligation is also seen as a woman's right. Centauri males may deride women as being less important or of lower station, but they are also quite respectful of their women's place in society and rarely challenge them in matters of the home. It is a very foolish man on Centauri Prime who tries to argue with his wife or mother about household business. Most men who are not trained as aides or attaches do not even know how to properly shop for groceries or cook for themselves.

Slave Adults

The life of a Centauri slave is a difficult one; even well kept slaves are simply property and likely to be reminded of that fact many times during their lives. A trained slave is a valuable commodity and a Centauri slave can expect to change owners at least three times before they die. This is not always the case with those slaves who are bound for life to a Noble House, but all slaves have the possibly of being sold at any time and there are no guarantees where their ownership is concerned.

Indeed, one of the first signs of a Noble House in trouble is the sudden sale of their slaves to other parties. This usually suggests that the house is in need of funds and is reducing their overhead in the form of selling off servants for their monetary worth. Other houses watch for this kind of behaviour, which in turn makes houses that are desperate but do not wish to lose face turn to less public venues of sale – the disreputable but discrete slaving rings that operate in the lowest levels of every Centauri city and outpost in the galaxy.

This turn of events is a very unfortunate one for slaves because they go from a life of semi-safety to one of uncertain futures and completely unknown ownership. Most of the time, trained house slaves are sold to other houses because their skills are ill-suited for anything else, but this is not always the case. Some buyers simply need bulk labour and do not care where they get it from. House slaves do not fare well in this kind of environment and rarely last very long.

Other slaves are well suited to brute force labour and thrive in work of this sort. These slaves typically spend their whole lives going from one menial job to the next, picking up a smattering of basic skills from each posting before moving on to the next. While these slaves are not as refined or well mannered as house slaves, they are extremely hardy and can be expected to fetch a good price whenever they go to market. Their value can be so high that some slave traders have been known to ensure that their purchasers have 'accidents' after a certain period of time so that their slaves can return to be resold time and again. Perversely, these criminal traders call the process 'recycling'.

It is possible for a slave to be given his or her freedom back, though the procedure is as rare as it is simple. Commoners can use slaves to fill out their families by purchasing them from market and then petitioning the Royal Court through a patron to grant the slave family status with their House. This makes them a lowest-tier commoner, but such a lowly status is far better that the lack of legal rights that come with life as a slave.

Nobles have an even easier time of things. They can simply purchase a slave (or obtain ownership in some other way, such as ensuring that the slave's former master is no longer in a position to contest the status change) and declare them a freed Centauri. This can provide any status the noble wishes to provide up to and including ward of the noble's own house. This decision can be overturned by the Emperor or by any House elder above the rank of the noble granting the status, but it is otherwise completely legally binding and applies from the moment of decree until such time as it is denied or the former slave changes status again for any other reason.

Many slaves keep a romantic ideal in mind of meeting a noble and falling in love. In their eyes, this is the perfect

way to rise out of their slave status because marriage to a noble makes their freedom permanent and even divorce or widowhood cannot return them to the life of a slave thereafter. This is rarely a hope for male slaves; while female nobles can declare a slave freed if they wish, they are seldom in a position to marry them afterward. It has occurred before, but it is a very uncommon occurrence and usually the cause of great scandal when it does happen.

Death and the Elderly

Centauri live a long time. Their average lifespan is 150 years, with some living far past that age. In that amount of time, a Centauri can accomplish a great deal, but once old age begins to take its toll on the normally virile Centauri body, the decrepitude of long years saps both will and energy. Most Centauri past a century of birthdays do not choose to leave their homes unless they must and rarely take any physical risks or engage in any politically dangerous manoeuvring.

This is far from an absolute and some of the most active Centauri are those approaching the end of their days. The Centauri are a conflicted people and some older members of their society take the coming of their mortality as a wake up call to take all the risks they were never brave enough to try in their youth.

This phenomenon is called *callus colari* in Centauri, roughly translating to 'aged colari'. The phrase comes from the animal of the same name, a massive feline beast native to Centauri Prime's southern regions. As the colari become older, they hunt harder and fight more fiercely to maintain their place in the herd. Eventually, these old colari attempt something they are no longer strong or fast enough to accomplish and get themselves killed, but their deaths are always glorious ones. Younger Centauri treat the *callus colari* among them with a mixture of bewilderment and respect.

Noble Elders

The Noble Houses greatly admire their elderly. Even those of lower station tend to receive more than their fair share of deference and respect from younger members, especially as they begin to show their age past the one hundred-year mark. Elders of any Noble House have a greater say in the dealings of their family and can make more decisions for themselves. The basic thinking of their peers is that if they have managed to live so long, they must be doing something right.

This is truer than it might first seem. Most Centauri nobles do not live to see old age. Stress and pressure take their toll on a Centauri and many die of physical health complications long before their 110th birthday. Less than half of all Centauri nobles reach a hundred years of age, and less than half of those survive every decade thereafter. To reach 150 years as a nobleman or noblewoman on Centauri Prime is a grand achievement and is the cause of a huge celebration called the Golcara in the Noble House in question.

Golcara celebrations are an oddity among the Centauri. Because the guest of honour at most Golcara is extremely indigent and unable to enjoy raucous festivities, these affairs are quiet, dignified and devoid of all the typical frivolity that marks other celebratory events. Golcara events are always visited by the Emperor or a representative and if the noble celebrating his 150th birthday has never achieved Ascension before, he is given that honour during the party. The gift normally associated with a noble's Ascension is granted to any family member of the aged nobleman's choice.

Once a noble Centauri passes away, there is a period of mandatory mourning for his immediate family that lasts a set number of days equal to his perceived status in society. This calculated mourning time is typically the responsibility of the noble's widow to determine, but there are social advisors capable of handling the affair if necessary. Most of their calculations are based on title and any awards or commendations the noble received, but other considerations are taken into account.

A noble funeral is a spectacle that few in his or her family can miss without a serious loss of personal status. Even family members not on good terms with the deceased are expected to attend the funeral and honour the noble's passing. A funeral is yet another social event that nobles have to deal with on several occasions during their lives. The level of ritual and appearances that nobles have to contend with at funerals led Emperor Burago to declare after his forty third attendance in the same year, 'I begin to yearn for my own funeral. At least when I come to that one, I won't have to deliver a speech.'

Most nobles are buried on their family lands or, in the case of nobles with connections to the Emperor, in one of the Palace Mortuariums. Centauri noble mortuaries are generally of very grandiose architecture and can store hundreds of bodies in small, individually engraved crypts. The bodies of every generation stretching back to the founding of each Noble House can be found interred on a special plot of land set aside for the purpose of honouring the dead in each family's lands.

Commoner Elders

The life of a commoner is not an easy one and as they age, things do not get much easier. Commoner Centauri who reach their elder years are still expected to fend for themselves in their area of employment and do not receive the same dispensations that nobles receive. This is not typically a problem as most elderly commoners have a couple of generations behind them for support when they can no longer effectively earn a living.

Commoners rarely reach the age of 120, and 150 years of age is rare enough to be truly newsworthy. The Emperor has been known to grant provisional noble status on a commoner managing to live to this prodigious age. This status sometimes transfers to the aged commoner's immediate family, but it is more typically an honour that passes when he does. Females who reach 150 are usually heralded as 'true mothers of the Republic' and almost always receive nobility as a gift from the Royal Court for their long service to generations of Centauri.

When a commoner dies, it is a tragic time for their families but there is no assigned period of mourning and widows are free to remarry as soon as they wish to do so. This is not a matter of disrespect but a practical way of dealing with families that, without a strong male figure to provide financially for them, would go hungry. Widowed females are expected to remarry as soon as possible, but their older family members typically take care of this consideration.

Commoners are occasionally given a burial plot in a noble mortuary if their status or family connections warrant one. More often, they are placed in one of their community's graveyards in a section set aside for their family's use. These family plots are usually nicely tailored affairs with headstones for older, more influential members and name plates for younger or less noteworthy commoners. While few would ever be disrespectful at a Centauri's funeral, the event itself is rarely a large affair and only concerns the deceased's parents, children and loved ones.

If a commoner's family had a noble sponsor, the noble in question usually attends the funeral. This makes the event a societal footnote and brings with it many of the trials and tribulations of court intrigue that make life so unpleasant at upper levels of Centauri society. For this reason, the tradition of nobles attending their sponsored family's funerals in disguise has become a popular one. While most nobles are well-known enough by their sponsored family to be recognisable on sight, it is considered good manners to 'pretend' that the disguise has been effective and not draw attention to their honoured sponsors.

Slave Elders

If commoners believe their old age is difficult to deal with, they have nothing on geriatric slaves. While many occupations are accommodating to their older commoner employees, a slave who begins to succumb to old age is often treated as little better than defective goods. Older slaves have a hard time maintaining their duties and as they age further, they eventually falter and fail. Most slaves are worked right up until this point and then put in the slave's equivalent of a nursing home to live out the rest of their lives.

This fate is not an absolute and it is for that reason that most slaves aspire to eventually get on as a house slave to a noble family and become part of their lives to the degree that only trusted slaves can achieve. Noble Houses tend to keep their older slaves on even after they can no longer serve in their normal fashion. Older house slaves are given light duties suited to their diminishing capacities; once a house slave can no longer serve in even these lighter ways, there is usually a special indigent home for slaves of the Noble House to retire to in peace. These nursing homes are of much higher quality that other options available to slaves.

While most slaves approaching one hundred years of age begin to plan for their coming frailty, there is not usually much they can do aside from try to jockey for a better position with more to look forward to by way of retirement. The Centauri have respect for their elders and even older slaves qualify for this at a basis level. Most Centauri will do what they can to tend to an ailing slave, even if it is not precisely 'cost effective'. When an older slave begins to weaken too severely to provide good service, they do not have to worry about being 'terminated with prejudice'.

Again, this applies only to Centauri slaves. The Centauri have notoriously little patience for members of other races and when those slaves become too old to fulfil their duties, it is not unlikely that they will be liquidated as soon as their usefulness is concluded. If their masters are feeling particularly generous, they will be returned to their homeworlds to live out their last few years, but there is no guarantee of this beneficence.

Slave funerals rarely have any ceremony attached to them, though Centauri slaves are generally allowed to have their families (if any can be located) in attendance. Noble families usually have a crematorium on site for slaves who have served them well and their ashes are stored in the family vault in special urn collections that the slave's family members can visit during their off hours to pay respects. Slaves serving in other respects are typically just

Centauri Lore – Language

The Centauri have only one language, a single tongue that has been in use for the entire history of the Republic. The Centauri Homeworld has several regional languages, but these were all abolished during the wave of nationalistic fervour that took the Centauri by storm after the defeat of the Xon and the crowning of Emperor Kiro.

Called simply enough Centauri or Centaurn, this language is an elegant blend of linguistic traits pulled from several of the culture's previous dialects. The resulting language can seem difficult for non-native speakers, but once the alphabet is learned and proper pronunciation is developed, most races can learn to speak Centaurn without an accent. Fluency in Centaurn for an outsider is difficult because so much of the language is culture or status based, but perseverance can overcome this difficulty.

Optional Rule: When a Babylon 5 Player chooses the Centauri language, he or she must pick which social class's specialised form has been learned – noble, commoner or slave. Each additional form costs a single Speak Language rank (one or two skill points, depending on class or cross class purchasing), as there are significant differences but nothing as complicated as a whole new language. Any time a player tries to speak with a Centauri using a language variant that does not match the Centauri's social class, the speaker suffers a -1 circumstance penalty to any Charisma-based skill or attribute check.

cremated and their ashes scattered into the wind with a brief, perfunctory ceremony by either their master or a crematorium official.

Centauri Language and the Arts

Emperor Ludo, when asked about the Minbari, said, 'To understand a people, look at what entertains them.' Of course, he was being derogatory since to the best of the Centauri's knowledge at the time, the only things Minbari did in their free time were meditate and cloister themselves. He also derided Minbari language; 'How many languages could they possibly need? It's not like they ever bother to say anything?'

In that instance, he was referring to the standing Minbari order to avoid Centauri ships and not return their hails. The Vorlons and Minbari had no desire to interact with the Centauri and the few encounters they did have before current diplomatic times usually ended with a brief space encounter and a silent withdrawal into hyperspace by the older race. In the case of the Vorlons, any Centauri ship foolish enough to follow never returned. When the Minbari were involved, Centauri vessels were sometimes led for days into the deepest corners of the galaxy before finally losing their quarry and having to return home empty handed. Eventually, the Centauri stopped trying.

However, Emperor Ludo was not an insightful man by nature but he did have a point. Entertainment does shape a culture. Understanding a given race is never a simple matter, but examining their arts can provide an excellent cross-section of their beliefs, hopes, aspirations and base philosophies. The best and worst of a society can be seen in what they amuse themselves with – entertainment defines a culture.

The same can be said – though it is not what was meant by Ludo – about language. It is very telling that one of the first things the Centauri did upon uniting as a race was to slowly purge of all its regional languages and adopt a single tongue as the sole language of the Republic. This is an uncommon linguistic trend in the galaxy; most races that present a unified society to other races is in fact a collective of hundreds or thousands of smaller nations, with its own language. The Centauri have only one language, spoken and written by every member of the race.

Centauri Entertainment

It may be a cultural footnote for the Centauri regarding the decadence and past glory of their race that the same things that entertained their first Emperor are still in vogue in modern times. For a race more technologically advanced than any other star-faring race (save for the Minbari and the Vorlons, neither of which are typically included in a galactic comparison), their entertainments are fairly simple.

Conspicuously absent from the pleasures of the Centauri are things like virtual reality game playing, high tech sports or cinema or even synthesised music. The Centauri possess all of these things and to be certain there are elements of their society that enjoy them, but they can hardly be considered indicative of their culture's preferred entertainment. More often than not, these technical arts and diversions are imports from other worlds and do not have any regional flavour to them at all. While some younger Centauri may enjoy a game of virtual soccer, it is still an Earth game and not played outside the digital area.

Centauri arts and entertainment are generally very straight forward, harkening back to the days when their empire was at its peak and everything they surveyed had long been conquered. Centauri culture in general has not changed much since the days when they first discovered a crashed alien space craft and began dreaming of the stars. In most cases, their culture has not changed much since the days when the only ships they piloted had sails.

This lack of cultural development underscores a key deficiency in the Centauri; they rarely strive for anything more than what they have unless they can conceive of it without too much effort. It was easy to define a stellar empire, so the Centauri sought to carve one out for themselves. They could define the need to be the dominant race on their world, and so the Xon were hunted to extinction. They could easily define the best things in life were wine, women and song; that has not changed in more than a thousand years of Centauri 'advancement'.

No culture that makes it to the stars is without its sophistication. While the basic outline of Centauri entertainment may be simple, they have filled those simple brushstrokes with such vibrancy of colour and design that few Centauri ever feel like their culture is lacking in anything. Foods are a myriad of tastes and textures. Music is as rich and vibrant as it is varied in style. Physical performances make up more of Centauri entertainment than any other, but within that broad category are such cultural icons as dance, stage plays and the uniquely Centauri *ugarmo* (a combination of several performance styles used to impart historical lessons).

Centauri Food

It tells an observer all they really need to know that the Centauri consider food a valid form of entertainment. One of the reasons the Centauri appreciate humans is that the latter race seems to understand that any important festival or celebration is not complete without a lavish feast. The idea of food as something more than nourishment is one of the things the Centauri considers essential in a civilised society (and the main reason they tend to despise the Minbari, along with jealousy at the latter's technological development).

The most important thing to keep in mind about Centauri is the sheer number of variations they have on each of their staple dishes. Even something as simple as 'Old Salted', a

You think you understand humans and then they go and do something so confusing, you realize how alien they really are. Last year, we showed them one of our greatest holidays, the Festival of Life. We were careful to explain the significance of the event and Londo even graced them all by drinking to the point of communion with our gods, but I do not think our alien guests appreciated the high compliment his passing out in front of them implied.

As if that was not bewildering enough, I was invited to a 'yuletide' feast by some of my friends in the command staff. I was happy to attend, though Londo had to wave off his participation. I think he is working too hard these days and I do not like the bent of his efforts. I doubt the Narn will even be having a holiday season this year. It is hard to celebrate on a planet in ruins.

Anyway, back to the 'yuletide' thing. I was led to believe it was exactly like our Festival of Life, with food, good cheer and even small gifts to commemorate the occasion. I got Commander Ivanova a long massager I found in the Zocalo and even remembered that it required batteries, those little power cells humans use that get thrown away when they are depleted. I thought it would help her relax- she is so tense all the time- but the gift seemed to deeply embarrass her and drew gales of laughter from the other humans at the party. I just do not understand.

As if that was not bad enough, none of them could answer my question when I asked how many humans were still alive. Our Festival of Life comes from the tradition of counting the survivors of the past year and celebrating our continued existence. It appears humans do not do this. No wonder they flung themselves suicidally against the Minbari when they first met them. People on Earth must not value their lives much.

salty liquored cake, has dozens of alternate recipes, each of which is considered a valid way to make the dish. Many of these are family recipes and are identified by house name. Until their dissolution by order of the Emperor, the Refa noble family has some small amount of fame for the Refa variation on basic spoo that incorporated beach salt from the isle of Selini.

It is also interesting to see that food recipes are considered valid targets for information bartering and consideration as cultural treasures. When House Refa was dissolved and its members driven to the status of lowest tier commoners and slaves, their famous Refa Spoo preparation was awarded to House Mollari for the house's part in uncovering Refa's treachery against the Emperor. This is not only considered a fair reward, it is indicative of the level of dedication the Centauri have to their cuisine.

Centauri food also includes the even wider topic of Centauri drink. A professional establishment for drinking in much different on Centauri Prime than it is in other cultures. Most establishments dedicated to the nobility include a number of exits and closed booths for the safety of their inebriated clientele and tend to resemble multi-roomed parlours rather than the open bars of other worlds. Entertainments are always available at these places, but are not as necessary as other races might assume. When a Centauri goes drinking, drinking is all he really requires.

This is not to say that the Centauri do not appreciate other drinking establishments. A facet of humanity that impressed the Centauri greatly was the concept of a bar with live dancers in the same room. This was not a cultural development they had thought of for themselves (likely due to paranoia of dancers in league with political rivals) and something the Centauri diplomats took back to the Republic as soon as they could.

The Centauri have raised the art of food and drink preparation to a fine art. Chefs in the Republic are afforded a great deal of respect in Centauri society and more commoner cooks have been elevated to bottom-tier nobility than members of any other profession. Consequently, there is a great deal of competition among Centauri chefs and some of the most vicious infighting to be found in the Republic can be found in its kitchens. The aforementioned Emperor Ludo was well aware of this truth, stating it succinctly when he told his Court, 'I do not need another damned advisor! Just bring me a cook with sharp hearing and an eye for your jobs!'

Drink is just as serious and just as appreciated in the Centauri Republic. While there are thousands of brewers and wine makers on Centauri Prime alone, there is a level of drink maker that all in the business aspire to attain; Imperial Libationist. Libationists are the official liquor crafters of the Noble Houses, each one the head of a family label that covers beer, ale, wine and harder spirits. Each House takes great pride in their libationists and all strive to earn the favour of the Emperor by impressing him with the quality of their goods.

The libationist responsible for the drinks the Emperor favours the most receives the title of Imperial Libationist and is given noble status as an attachment to the Royal family. This is a massive gain in status both for the libationist himself and the House that sponsored him. Historically, this honour has occasionally been dodged on purpose by a Noble House unwilling to lose their treasured libationist to the Emperor's appetite for liquor, but the reputation gain is usually worth the loss.

The Centauri serve food at every gathering, even if only in an appetiser format. Even funerals have a feast attached to them, though etiquette demands that the food be out of sight of the casket so as not to tease the deceased with a meal they cannot enjoy. Liquor is a staple of life as well and no Centauri in history has been allowed to abstain if their family had any say in the matter. The embarrassment of having a family member dislike alcohol would be too great a loss of face to be allowed. Even Centauri who are allergic to alcohol (considered one of the cruellest tricks the Great Maker can play on someone) are given to slight consumption just to save the family's honour.

Centauri food is a varied and complicated affair; presentation is just as important as food quality at any given sitting. For example, Spoo is never served in a gold bowl. The reason for this tradition is lost to history, but it is a law every social commentator and homemaker knows and obeys without question. Likewise, skewers of drho meat must be interspersed with coloured vegetables, no two hues of which must be present on the same spit. In general, these laws are for appearances, but they are still adhered to closely to avoid social incident.

The most important thing for outsiders to understand about food and drink where the Centauri are concerned is that no meal is just a meal. Centauri eat a certain way and drink a certain way because they have been taught that such is the way of their people. Table manners are not optional for the Centauri; they are ingrained traits as basic for them as their speech patterns or facial expressions. A Centauri who refuses a meal is assumed to be ill and a Centauri who turns away a drink is considered insane or worried about poison.

Oddly, no one outside of Centauri society needs to worry about being poisoned by a Centauri. They consider such methods of murder to be unique to their own kind. Poisoning someone's food or drink is, in a strange way, a compliment to the victim because it uses a medium that all Centauri appreciate. In the mind of a Centauri assassin, death by poison allows the victim to 'die as a Centauri'.

Centauri Art

The Centauri love beautiful things as much as they love fine food and drink. Their colour and texture vision are exceptional, making what might seem like a bland or monotonous arrangement of objects much more pleasing to their sight. The Centauri appreciate architecture and fashion above other arts, though paintings and literature are also highly valued. Jewellery craft is a high art for the Centauri, but it tends to get subsumed into the greater category of fashion. In a society based on appearances, it makes sense that the majority of arts appreciated by the Centauri are based on visual stimulus.

Architecture

The architecture of the Centauri is based in the revered past of the culture and the majority of appreciated styles come from the first Imperial era and the time of Emperor Kiro. The most influential figure in Centauri history, Kiro was a gregarious man who appreciated everything larger than life. That included buildings and the grandiose nature of most Centauri architecture echoes his preferences in every graceful line and vaulted ceiling.

Popular Centauri architecture is divided into three main genres; each one is further subdivided into a pair of 'acceptances'. These are categories of allowed styles based on the social status of the dwelling in question. Slave quarters are not considered as a separate style; they are allowed the same genres and acceptances as their masters, though they rarely have the opulence of a noble home unless their positions as slaves place them in the same household as a noble family. Commoners are afforded many of the fine points of high architecture, but some extravagances are left to the nobility. In many ways these touches are purely arbitrary, but that fits with the rest of Centauri society as a whole.

- *Kironic:* Kironic architecture traces its roots to the summer homes and palaces built during the time of Emperor Kiro. Considered the premiere form of architecture in the Centauri Republic, most governmental buildings and older historical structures have at least strong elements of kironic styling. Distinctive for its massive pillars, flat roofs and minimalist use of glass, kironic architecture dominates most of Centauri Prime's capital city and extends its reach out to the stars in every city and terrestrial outpost.

  - *Noble Acceptance:* Noble acceptance kironic architecture is filled with arching rafters and lines of bold colour over pale white. Only noble acceptance kironic buildings can use aoric marble, a special stone with a white façade and rutilated lines of gold. Aoric marble forms the base of all official government buildings made in the kironic fashion and is the primary material of the Summer Palace on Selini.

  - *Common Acceptance:* Kironic architecture is not often used in modern times for common dwellings or normal businesses. It was often the pattern of choice for apartment complexes and tenements in Imperial cities in the centuries following its development as an architectural style, but it has since faded from popularity in favour of more pedestrian (and far less expensive) building types.

- *Ielean:* Sometimes considered the usurper style to kironic, ielean architecture comes from the preferences of Kiro's youngest son Ieles and the home he designed and built for himself on the northern isle of Gorodos. The distinctive white walls and red-brown tiled roof of an ielean building mark this style as unique and sets such constructions apart from the classical look and style of the kironic it is based around.

  - *Noble Acceptance:* There is a light rivalry that develops between Noble Houses who prefer kironic architecture and those who enjoy the distinction of ielean design. Many Noble Houses have official buildings in the heart of the nearest large city or capital to their family manors. These buildings are always built in the architecture style of their choice, making most cities a staggered skyline between kironic points and arches and the ruddy domes and curves of ielean construction.

  - *Common Acceptance:* While this style comes from the preferences of a noble, ielean architecture is appreciated by many commoner families. The key reason for its popularity among the lower social strata is its lower production cost. Commoner acceptance ielean designs cannot use the most expensive part of ielean construction – blood shale, a red stone well suited for tile work. As such, much cheaper clay brick tiles are used for commoner ielean buildings for the same visual effect.

- *Senal'Deth:* A building style that only entered the preference of the Centauri after it was discovered during their occupation of the Narn homeworld, this is the only architectural style the Centauri appreciate from another culture. Known for its low construction and prodigious use of window arches and natural landscaping, Senal'Deth buildings are very distinctive and tend to be built in modern times by families or organizations looking to make a statement about their political or social leanings. A Centauri family living in a Senal'Deth home is not likely to be very popular, but they greatly benefit from their house's superior design and enduring construction.

  - *Noble Acceptance:* Despite the fact that this design style is taken from the Narn and not much changed from its roots, Senal'Deth is not as shunned as some might think among the nobility. It is more common with lower social orders, but some nobles enjoy the idea that they can still unapologetically benefit from the things they took from the Narn so many years ago. Noble acceptances incorporate authentic Narn antiques in the architecture and decoration, something commoner Centauri may not legally possess.

  - *Commoner Acceptance:* Senal'Deth architecture is the least expensive of the major styles and as such makes a strong showing among the commoner classes. The use of available space, basements and natural materials is also very popular, especially in areas where nobles have first pick of all building supplies and lower ranks have to make due with what is left.

Centauri Fashion

The degree to which the Centauri take fashion is almost unheard of in other races. Humans come close in their pursuit of style and clothing, but even they cannot hope to compete with the Centauri on the depth and detail of their love for fine clothes and accoutrements. A Centauri that dresses poorly is not just social ostracised; he or she is assumed to be mentally deficient or a family outcast. Even the poorest class of the Centauri is afforded a small budget for clothing and donated fashions that seem like rags to these image-conscious people but would be fine tailoring to any other race.

The subtle by-play of clothes and clothing styles are typically lost on any outside observer of Centauri culture, but the status that comes from wearing just the right clothes at just the right event is one of the many games that nobles and commoners play within their own social circles. A commoner dressing too richly can be considered insulting if a noble wishes to take offence and a noble whose taste in clothes puts him in something the social elite have deemed as commoner material can find himself with less status than he had before he got dressed that day.

A detailed listing of clothing trends and fashion details would be as monumental as it would be lengthy. Such a work would also have to change on a constant basis and quickly be rendered out of date by the passing of as little as a month in the turbulent world of Centauri fashion. Even so, there are certain constants of Centauri clothing and accessories that can be counted on year after year. While these occasionally go out of vogue for a time, they are never really out of fashion and can be worn without any loss of status. Trendsetters tend to disdain these staples of Centauri fashion, but even the most daring of them cannot stray too far outside their lines without being considered disrespectful of their culture's traditions.

Centauri Lore – Fashion

Even among the usually disaffected Centauri of the common masses, fashion is a major topic of conversation and something that every member of their society keeps in mind with each clothing purchase and daily choice of garments. Men and women alike can name prominent designers and know the difference between cloth types, subtle colour shifts and fashion styles. Nobles, commoners and slaves are all aware of what their clothes mean in their culture and know how to dress appropriately for their station.

In game, a Centauri character is assumed to have 1 free skill rank in Knowledge (fashion) and may improve this skill with points as if it was a class skill regardless of their actual character classes. Knowledge (fashion) may not come up in game very often, but it can be a useful skill for getting synergistic bonuses for the following: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, and Gather Information. In each case, the bonus is +2 and applies if the Centauri has five or more ranks in Knowledge (fashion). The bonus comes from the Centauri knowing exactly how to dress for a given task and using his or her sense of style to select and wear appropriate garb.

At the Games Master's discretion, Knowledge (fashion) can be an allowable skill choice for any character, but only Centauri should receive a free rank in the skill due to their racial obsession with appearances and fine clothing. Other races can benefit from the synergy bonuses as well, but they must purchase their Knowledge (fashion) ranks as class or cross-class, depending on whether or not their current character class offers Knowledge (all) as a skill option.

When considering the detailed and involved subject of Centauri fashion, the following information should be kept in mind. These are not always universal, as some colonies and outposts have altered their fashions considerably to show their 'unique local flavour'. These details should be considered predominantly correct for Centauri Prime itself and taken as a guideline only when dealing with any other locale in the Republic.

- *Material:* The sensitive tactile nature of Centauri senses means that most clothing they wear is of the sheerest and softest cloth possible. Silk is a very common fabric for the Centauri and does not have the same status as a luxury as it does in some other cultures. Even slaves wear silk as a basic cloth, though it is not always as fine as that worn by nobles. There are a few specialty cloths invented by the Centauri for use in their high fashions.
  - *Shool:* A hybrid of silk and precious metals, shool is created by injecting expensive metallic solutions into the worms that spin silk strands. These altered worms leave a trace amount of the metal in their webbing, allowing silk weavers to blend these strands into faintly metallic silk with all the softness of the natural material and an interference hue of gold, silver, platinum, iridium and a host of other colours.
  - *Lencloth:* A special weave of wool and animal hair fibres, Lencloth is about the coarsest fabric any Centauri would willingly wear. Typical lencloth garments have a silk lining to mitigate their texture, but gloves and stockings of pure lencloth are not uncommon. Lencloth is used in colder climes of Centauri Prime because of its excellent heat retention and durability. Pearl white lencloth is used for the wide panels in Centaurum Royal Guard uniforms.
  - *Kandarko Leather:* A soft skinned breed of drho, the Centauri equivalent of cattle, the kandarko are raised for both leather and meat. Normal drho hide is usually too rough for garment use, but the kandarko have been genetically engineered with softer, more flexible hide specifically with clothing in mind. Belts, holsters, and other strappings are usually made from the drho, but all other garment leather comes from the many herds of kandarko that range on Centauri farmland.
- *Tailoring:* The cut of a Centauri's clothes is even more important than what they are made of. Most Centauri would rather wear a nicely tailored suit of paper bags and burlap than go outside in a comfortable suit of last year's fashion. Elegant styles remain in vogue the longest, with straight lines and intersecting patterns of brocade and lace still very popular. There are three classic styles that most Centauri fashion revolves around.
  - *Kallizi:* Kallizi fashion is the art of layers and most Kallizi designs are at least three layers of garments with an outer coat of two more. Kallizi enthusiasts are not as worried about decoration as they are about shape and silhouette. Kallizi designers usually have their models move in their clothes behind an opaque shadow backdrop to make certain that the outlines of the garments are just right.
  - *Pelora Kaza:* Names for the designer/clothier to Emperor Kiro and four generations after him, the Pelora Kaza style is still the accepted cut of fashion for nobles of the Royal Court. Pelora Kaza is not easily deviated from once a noble chooses to wear its fashions and most social commentators are quick to note nobles who dress in anything else. Pelora Kaza clothing has prominent buttons and accessories incorporating a great deal of gold and gems into its designs.
  - *Sheergal:* A diversion from the typical styles, Sheergal clothing has the odd distinction of being considered the classic revolution in fashion. This makes it a classic style for people who want to stay style-conscious yet get away from the old lines and cuts of more stolid society. Brought back into vogue by younger nobles every few generations, Sheergal saw its last resurgence during the reign of Emperor Cartagia.
- *Colours:* The Centauri are very particular about colour use in fashion and many specific shades are set aside for different social classes. Not all of these are noble restrictions, though many are. Some colours are reserved for slaves to better identify them, while others have been given to the commoner strata for use in various professional roles. Colour use in fashion also includes patterns, some of which are complicated codes for different social messages or denote heritage or political alignments.
  - *Purple:* There may be some truth to the common theory that at some time in the distant past of many alien cultures, a single group or race visited them and affected their development in some way. It is certainly an interesting coincidence that both

humans and the Centauri consider purple a royal colour. Only the Royal Court and the Emperor can wear three set hues of purple and any other shade of purple is considered poor taste while not strictly illegal.

- *Blues and Greens:* Few Centauri wear green; the colour rarely works well with their pale complexions and is considered a commoner's hue by most noble families. The opposite holds true for blue in all its many shades and tints. Blue is almost exclusively a noble colour; most fashions include some blue in them. Dark blue is a mark of distinguished nobility while lighter blues are a favourite among young socialites looking to make a name for themselves.

- *Red and Yellow:* These colours have been set aside in all but a few shades for commoners and slaves respectively. Red uniforms among commoners at most businesses and professional installations are quite prevalent, and even casual commoner clothing tends to incorporate red hues. Yellow is the assumed colour of the slave classes and has been set aside for them because of its connection to gold, another precious Centauri resource.

- *Black:* Black and grey are colours of special note among the Centauri. While any member of the Republic can wear black or grey, only older nobles and commoners tend to do so with any frequency. These are colours associated with weakness and death; two things the Centauri tend to avoid thinking about whenever possible. Nobles in black are often avoided for this reason, though some important public figures enjoy the fashion choice because it makes their peers nervous.

Jewellery: The fascination Centauri have for jewels and precious metals come from their oldest recorded history when such extravagances were too difficult to come by or hold in the times of the Xon raids. Once the Xon were exterminated and the current Imperial monarchy put into place, the role of jewellery was quantified by Republic law and certain facets of the decoration delineated to make its wearing both a status symbol and indicative of the bravery and glory of the Centauri. All jewellery is considered a luxury and while all Centauri have a right to at least a few pieces, more complicated or costly accessories are legally restricted to certain social classes.

- *Rings:* For a society that values jewellery on many levels, it may be surprising that the Centauri do not wear many rings. They can interfere with the fingers and the sensitive nature of a Centauri's sense of touch can make rings very irritating if worn over a long period of time. The Centauri do not commemorate achievements or social groups with rings the way some other races do; they usually leave rings for slaves and then only simple, narrow bands are common.

- *Earrings/Necklaces:* For the same reason Centauri do not wear many rings, they also avoid most jewellery that rests against the skin. Small ear studs or solitaires are common in some families, but dangle earrings of any kind are rare. What few necklaces are worn tend to be simple, symmetrical patterns that can be ignored easily; rough medallions or other charms are avoided.

- *Brooches:* The height of Centauri jewellery craft, brooches are more than half of all the accessories made in the Republic. Brooches can commemorate important events, mark the completion of a difficult social goal or membership in an armed service or political organisation. Brooches come in many different styles, each one of particular significance.

  - *Floral Designs:* These are almost exclusively worn by women and denote a level of freedom and autonomy. Only single women of commoner or noble status can wear a floral brooch openly. Floral brooches are often of abstract design; any brooch with a large central stone and leaves or petals around it counts as a floral brooch under Imperial law.

  - *Eye Designs:* The importance of an 'eye' in Centauri fashion cannot be overstated. During the last battles of the Centauri/Xon war, the warlord (and soon to be Emperor) Kiro lost his left eye to a Xon bolt. This gave rise to his unofficial title as the 'Eye of Centauri Prime' and prompted the creation of a marvellous feat of engineering, a large 'eye' of precious metals and jewels. All jewellery with a single, sizeable stone in a simple setting is considered an 'eye' design and limited to the nobility only.

  - *Plain Designs:* The province of accessories among commoners and slaves, plain designs are any brooches that have a base of precious metal but do not incorporate any stones or other inlays. Many plain designs are

triangular or lozenge is shape, but anything is acceptable as long as it is aesthetically pleasing and matches the wearer's clothing.

Literature and the Arts

The Centauri may be obsessed with appearances, but only a casual observer could conclude that they are a shallow people despite this trait. One only has to examine the centuries of fine literature, music and philosophy to realise the truth about the Centauri – they are a deeply spiritual, introspective people who consistently distract others and themselves from the fact that they are deeply spiritual and introspective.

This dichotomy comes from the Centauri cultural assumption that a person who spends too much time looking inward has little else to do and little to contribute to the Republic. This is of course an erroneous assumption and the many plays, poems, books and songs created by the Centauri – often by men and women 'with little else to do' – bear out the lie in these words.

The Centauri value their artists even if they decry the art from time to time. Discussions of art and literature are typically confined to immediately family members and friends, though the occasional professional disagreement can occur and some Centauri spend a good deal of time examining the arts for some inner meaning when their outer appearances become too wearying. This tendency is more common the higher one goes in Centauri society.

The truest value of fine art for most Centauri is that while they are enjoying it, little else is expected of them. Most Centauri nobles flock to their opera houses and theatres primarily to sit in a quiet room while everyone is looking at something other than them. The performances are of course appreciated and they must meet a certain level of quality or be denounced as a waste of time, but the brief respite from the rest of Centauri social culture is as valuable as any message or emotion that might be taken away from the attendance.

The Centauri recognise four elements of true art. They have a great love for the sound of their own voices, so it is not surprising that they love songs and opera, but they also enjoy poetry and writing, paintings and portraits and stage plays. While many Centauri have an appreciation for the works of other races, they predominantly prefer their own culture's contribution to the arts. Few Centauri would admit to having too great a fondness for the arts of other races and no Centauri interested in retaining his status or reputation would ever say that an alien work surpasses anything in the Republic.

- *Songs and Opera:* The greatest cultural achievement in the arts for most Centauri has to be the masterful operas of their past. These musical works are glorified in the Noble Houses, considered excellent entertainment for the common classes and even made available to Centauri slaves as a diversion from their dull lives. Many other forms of music exist in the Republic. Many of them are quite popular, but none quite match the splendour and fame of the honoured opera-poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E.

  - *Dorva and Centaro:* The two greatest composers in the Centauri Republic, their combined works have captivated and inspired countless generations since their time. Dorva is best known for his dignified and tremendously moving 'Forcumbales Toccata'. The joyful, vibrant 'Micriva Taro' remains Centaro's best-loved classic. Many nobles spend hours with family and friends discussing who is the better composer. To date, the Republic remains fully divided on the matter.

  - *Mikalasah:* A singer who performs in the style of Mikalasah does so on an empty stage completely devoid of decoration and glamour. These singers are always female, wear a tradition white and silver dress without ornament or accent, and sings of the Republic's past. This style of music was mildly popular during the time of the empire's expansion. It is far more admired in modern times by Centauri nobility that would much rather relive old glories than face the current reality of their shrinking dominion.

  - *Gazi:* The province of younger Centauri, gazi music is almost universally despised by the older elite for being too loud, too irreverent and utterly pointless. Heavily influenced by the music of other cultures, gazi music is only a few centuries old. Too new to be accepted by the nobility, it is a predominantly commoner and slave art form. Many gazi performers are slaves, tasked to play it for gatherings and in small, private clubs.

- *Poetry and Writing:* Not surprisingly, the most revered forms of writing in the Centauri Republic are historical texts dealing with the height of the empire before the days when the Narn broke away. These works receive Imperial grants for research and writing, making them the only literature officially sanctioned and supported by the Royal Court. Many other forms of writing exist – some are quite popular – but

a proper noble family fills its bookshelves with more historical works than anything else.

- *True Fiction:* A truly Centauri form of literature, this style takes the culture's love of historical work and builds on it by writing fictional pieces with either real characters in 'extrapolated' situations or authentic settings and fictional characters. These works are legitimatised in the eyes of the Centauri because they involve some factual information and simply expand on those truths to create a more enjoyable story than the specifics of history might allow.

- *Dursah:* A rhythmic form of poetry, dursah is a classic courtly poem that begins with a name and ends with a rhyming word or words for that name. Some licence is given in creating this rhyme and a clever turn of phrase when doing so is greatly appreciated by dursah aficionados. Poets trained to write them in academy usually create Dursah poems, but many of the more popular (or infamous) ones that get bandied around the Royal Court are impromptu compositions.

- *Common Verse:* A subtle insult in title, common verse is a form of poetic writing used in classic plays and stage performances that has a lyrical rhythm without attempting to rhyme. Considerably more difficult to write well than simple rhyming couplets, it is called common verse because of a misconception in its earliest development that only commoners would appreciate a poem that did not rhyme.

Painting and Visual Art: The subjects most Centauri prefer for their paintings are the Centauri themselves. Portraits are the most popular form of painting on Centauri Prime and in most of the Republic's colonies and outposts. Other appreciated art forms include landscapes (typically of Centauri Prime itself), battle scenes involving Centauri troops or spacecraft fighting victoriously and simple stills of flowers or other attractive objects artfully arranged.

- *Koamor Olaazi:* Descended from the most prominent Centauri painter in Republic history, the Olaazi line has been handling Imperial portraits for more than twenty generations. Koamor Olaazi was a slave to a minor noble line whose artistic talents impressed Emperor Torza enough that he was given the opportunity to paint his likeness as a Festival of Life gift to the Royal Court. His masterful work inspired the Court to elevate him to low-tier nobility and bestow upon him the newly created title of Minister of Art.

Physical Performances: The only valid form of physical entertainment recognized by the Royal Court is the stage play, but other, more pedestrian works do exist in the Republic. The nobility flock to new performances with regularity and notable actors (usually commoners but occasionally gifted slaves) can win great favour by entertaining this disaffected audience. When a new play opens the Royal Court and their families usually see it first. Only if it meets with Imperial approval is it allowed to open its doors to the nobility. Commoners rarely get to see a first-run play; they usually have to catch secondary performances given on special nights set aside for them.

- *Korvo:* The most celebrated playwright of the Centauri Republic, his career spanned over fifty full plays and 124 vignettes of five minutes or less. The master of what the Centauri call the 'pauper's play', his short works are masterworks of witty wordplay and dramatic timing. Korvo's creations are the hallmark of any Centauri's book collection and most of them are still in occasional circulation as productions that continue to entertain and inspire.
  - *The Korvo Company:* Centauri Prime's most famous acting troupe, the Korvo Company is a prestigious group that travels the length of the Republic performing Korvo's short plays and full productions. Most colonies and outposts welcome the Company with open arms, knowing that they are in for a wondrous night of entertainment when the troupe's brightly decorated spacecraft comes into orbit.

- *Ugarmo:* The Ugarmo is a mixed-media performance style that can incorporate song, dance, acting, mock combat and acrobatics as storytelling tools to bring a part of the Republic's history to life. Many nobles despise the Ugarmo for being too garish, but most at least secretly enjoy the lavish productions and they have proven very popular with commoners and slaves.

- *Al-Tronno:* A performance variant of the Tronno martial art style, practitioners use hands, feet and combat staves with long streamers of reflective silk to create intricate patterns of movement around each other. At its finest, al-Tronno is a graceful dance that dazzles the audience with the grace and

showmanship of its performers. At its worst, it is a series of multiple injuries waiting to happen.

A Game of Houses – Status and Politics in the Centauri Republic

The Centauri are a deeply social people who, despite their tendency to put their personal ambition ahead of all other concerns, are also connected to every other Centauri in the Republic through bonds of blood and duty that are both stifling and supportive. This interplay of one Centauri off another extends through the empire, joining the lowliest slave to the Emperor himself in a long, branching chain of circumstance and appearance.

What the Centauri do inside their private halls of power can affect the entire galaxy. Worlds have been bombed or saved solely on the whim of a single noble with the connections and social status to see it done. Other worlds have been spared or doomed when another noble with the same or better status blocks the decisions of his peers. Not to discount the political connects of Centauri women; a single word whispered across a pillow or during a slow dance has shaped the fate of millions more often than any male Centauri would like to admit.

In the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game, the Centauri Game of Houses, as many in the Republic refer to the social interactions of their people, can be a foot note or a powerful storytelling and dramatic tool. All Centauri have a certain amount of status, even if they never consciously do anything to earn or lose it. How Status comes into play is a matter for the Games Master to decide, but this section presents the basic rules for incorporating the Game of Houses into any Babylon 5 session.

The first thing to remember where Status is concerned is that it is not just important when dealing with other Centauri. Status can take place transparently in the background of a game, only coming up during play when something happens in the Republic to impact the life of a Centauri character. Even if a given session has no Centauri players, the effects of Status can be shown if they have Centauri or Narn enemies or allies or have any traffic in Centauri controlled or contested areas of space. As the Lion of the Galaxy, the echo of a Centauri roar can still be heard over vast distances.

The Game of Houses

All Centauri have a Status score. Its base value is determined by the social class of the Centauri in question and modified at character creation by a variable amount. This initial score determines that circumstance bonus a Centauri gains when dealing with other members of his or her society. It is also constantly in flux and can get higher or lower depending on the Centauri's actions and the actions of those around him or her.

I just got off the comm with my Uncle, and I am speechless. I mean, he was speechless. I mean we were both speechless. I have never seen him want so much to find a new insult for me and yet have to give me a compliment at the same time. If I did not know better, I would think the conflicting pressures were enough to make his head explode. That would of course give Aunt Shiira the opportunity to marry out of our family, which would mean she won't have to poison herself like she keeps threatening to do at all of our House parties.

Apparently, Londo's informing the Royal Court of my vital role here on Babylon5 has caused quite a stir. My mother has informed me that the accidental removal of my name from the family lineage in the hall has been corrected. Apparently, she managed to find my name tile. It had somehow made its way into the basement under a stack of Cousin Hurlo's baby clothes.

As far as I can tell, my name has been mentioned in the Royal Court now for the first time since my academy 'incident'. This time, I don't think anyone mentioned giving me to the Narn as a peace offering, so I suppose that's an improvement. Londo was just being Londo, especially when he said that if I still tried to leave, he would have to kill me as a point of honour, but he showed me something today. He still has some good in him and if it takes me the rest of my life, I'll make sure that nothing happens to it.

A Centauri's Status score can never go below the base value of his or her social class without a major event causing the change. When a Centauri's Status drops to the minimum level of his or her social class, any further reductions become Social

Status

Status Score	Minimum For:	Maximum For:
Emperor*	Emperor	Emperor
100-90	Upper Tier Nobility (90)	Upper Tier Nobility (100)
89-75	Middle Tier Nobility (75)	Middle Tier Nobility (89)
74-60	Lower Tier Nobility (60)	Lower Tier Common (74)
59-41	Upper Tier Common (41)	Upper Tier Common (59)
40-31	Middle Tier Common (31)	Middle Tier Common (40)
30-21	Lower Tier Common (21)	Lower Tier Common (30)
20-16	Upper Tier Slave (20)	Lower Tier Slave (20)
15-1	Lower Tier Slave (1)	Lower Tier Slave (15)
No Status	Alien Slaves	Alien Slaves

*The Emperor has the ultimate position in the Status system. He automatically makes Status checks, can make up to 150 points of Status expenditures each day and has no limit to the amount of Social Debt or Affluence he can possess after taking office. When an Emperor is newly crowned, he begins with minimum and maximum Status score of 0 and any use of status must come from his Affluence (except for the one free expenditure mentioned above)

Debt. A Social Debt is a negative value attached to the Social score that must be paid through social gain before the true score can rise again. Social Debt can never go lower than -25. This makes Centauri who let their notoriety slip too far work harder to get back a good reputation, but sets a limit on how bad a reputation can get. There comes a point where a Centauri's peers no longer consider errant actions newsworthy.

Status can likewise never go above the maximum value for a Centauri's social class. Additional gains can be banked (up to +25) as Affluence, but this value does not count towards the true Social score. Affluence represents a reputation that exceeds a Centauri's normal rank and is considered the mark of a true scion of the Republic. Only characters that have +20 Affluence can elevate past their normal social tier, but Affluence alone cannot raise a Centauri past his social class.

A Centauri's status is important when trying to gain any benefit from his or her society. Many opportunities are only open to a Centauri of a certain status. This does not just affect nobles; commoners and slaves can earn promotions, better accommodations, and even higher social classes by getting and maintaining a high Social score. Conversely, a low Social score can cause a Centauri character of any social class to slip into a lower tier or even fall all the way out of their current strata. This is not common, but it can happen.

Social Debt and Affluence

These two scores can be seen as negative and positive buffers at the ends of each social bracket in the Centauri Republic. They are where a Centauri's gains and losses are stored when he or she can no longer go any higher or lower within his social class. Both Social Debt and Affluence are where a Centauri's real reputation are made; until a Centauri has one or the other, he or she is usually seen as a 'typical' member of the current tier.

Social Debt has a maximum value of -25; any further losses are not recorded. A Centauri with a Social Debt of -25 is seen as a complete wastrel and not worth the ducats it cost to raise him. Only a Centauri with a -25 Social Debt needs to worry about losing his or her social class and slipping to the next lowest class (noble to commoner or commoner to slave). This is never done lightly, but it can occur if a Centauri's reputation is that low.

Affluence is the exact opposite, reaching its maximum value at +25. A Centauri with the maximum Affluence possible is seen as an honourable, successful child of the Republic (no matter what the truth might be). Maximum Affluence is a prerequisite to being elevated to a higher social class (slave to commoner or commoner to noble), but this happens very rarely.

Social debt has to be paid off before a Centauri's Status score can go up, and Affluence must be completely lost before Status can go down. Social debt points are bought off at 2 for 1; it is very hard to overcome a bad reputation. Affluence points are lost at the same rate; the Centauri love tarnishing heroes as much or more as they adore having them in the first place. A Centauri must work twice as hard to clear his bad name or maintain a good one. Most Centauri do not wish to go to that level of effort and so avoid either extreme.

The Benefits of Status

The first and most game-relevant benefit to Status is the circumstance bonus it provides to all Charisma-related skill and attribute checks. For every 10 points of Status a given Centauri has over another Centauri – not counting any Social Debt or Affluence – he gets a +1 circumstance bonus to such checks. This works in reverse as a penalty,

making it much harder for a low status Centauri to impress or sway the opinion of a highly placed one.

There are two exceptions to this bonus/penalty. It does not apply to Perform checks at all and the bonus is halved (and rounded down) with Gather Information. While status can certainly help a Centauri ask and get answers to questions, it can also stifle such efforts by making some contacts difficult or socially inexpedient to reach. A Centauri's reputation can certainly lend support to attracting an audience or informants, but actually making use of them is mostly up to the Player.

Status has other, less tangible, game benefits as well. It serves as a benchmark for certain social awards and privileges; for example, joining the Centaurum ruling body (the Royal Court) or achieving rank past a certain point in the Centauri military both require a certain base status. Status also defines a Centauri's social tier, which determines what he or she can purchase by spending status points.

Spending Status

In a culture where status jockeying is an art form, Centauri have become masters at using their influence and connections to get what they want when normal resources prove insufficient. The entire Republic operates for the most part on an 'It is not what you know, it is who you are' principle. Name-dropping, the exchange of favours and banking on pure reputation are all part of the appearances network that lies at the heart of the Lion of the Galaxy.

Centauri can spend their Status points (including Affluence) in the following ways. Any expenditure of Status is permanent, though new Status gains can return the lost points and if the result of a Status expenditure causes a cascade effect that results in one or more status gains, so much the better.

- Centauri can spend 10 Status points to temporarily boost the circumstance bonus they gain from a high status score. The expenditure is added to the character's total Status *before* the points spent are deducted to determine what bonus is gained to the next Charisma based skill or attribute check the Centauri makes – this effectively grants an additional +1 bonus. The bonus can also be applied to a specific roll named by the Centauri at the time of the expenditure, but all other Charisma based rolls made before the specific check comes up are made at the new lowered Status score. If this is done, there is no limit to the amount of points that can be spent or how long the named skill check can be pushed forward into the future.

  For example, Londo Mollari needs star laces in a hurry. He asks his favourite Centauri florist, but the shop is out of them. He knows the shop keeper is a busy man and has to be convinced to make special rush orders, so he spends 10 points of status to get the flowers Adira loves. This boosts his already prodigious Diplomacy checks by another +1. A week later, he finds out that a meeting of the Royal Court will be discussing a possible invasion of Drazi space. He thinks it is beyond foolish to fight another war right now, so he spends 40 status points in preparation for the debate. He will get a +4 bonus above and beyond what he would normally gain from his Status, but any Charisma checks between now and the Court meeting must use the lowered Status score.

- Centauri can spend Status as if it was a monetary resource by calling in favours and promising new ones to others in the Republic. This use is a dangerous one, as the Centauri must succeed in a Status check (a d100 roll with success being any roll equal to or lower than the Centauri's Status score before the expenditure was made). Success means the item or favour required is available and comes into the Centauri's possession. This costs a number of temporary Status points (which come back at 10 points per day and have no effect on true Status while they are gone) equal to the value of the favour or item. Failure costs a 1d10 loss of Status and the item or favour is unavailable. Additional attempts are allowable, but each check carries the same penalty for failure (and the Games Master may rule that a time delay is required between resource requests). The value of items or favours is listed on the chart below. Regardless of value or cost, Status can only be spent in this way three times each month.

- Status can be used to manoeuvre out of difficult political situations and legal difficulties. This is handled just like buying items or favours with Status and also requires a Status check. Failure costs 2d10 Status loss because trying and failing to get out of an unfortunate situation can be disastrously embarrassing. This expenditure is temporary (returning at 10 points per day) if successful, but a failed check's cost is permanent.

- Status can be used to block other Centauri's expenditures of Status. This costs half the value of the original expenditure and is a temporary loss if the other expenditure was temporary. Status spent in this

Status Values

Status Cost*	Examples
50	'Getting away with murder', a military strike on a planet currently protected by one or more Centauri treaties, sizeable real estate.
45	A high-profile assassination, a military strike on a neutral world far from the Centauri Republic's borders, a unit of infantry assigned to any sort of duty, a building in a major Centauri Prime city.
40	Framing a noble for a crime or getting out of a major felony conviction, a military strike on a neutral world bordering the Republic, four members of the Royal Guard assigned to any sort of duty, a small estate on a colony world.
35	Framing a noble with a minor crime, framing a commoner with a capital crime, getting out of a minor conviction without incident, a single Royal Guard or a six man squad of elite soldiers, a luxury apartment in a major Centauri Prime city.
30	Setting up a new business or trade venture without paying Imperial taxes or fees, a military strike on an enemy world of the Republic, hiring an assassin, any material item worth 30,000 credits or less (subject to Games Master's approval and availability).
25	Avoiding customs at any Centauri port of call, delaying the passage of an Imperial law for one week, use of a military unit of any type for a single mission within the Republic, any material item worth 25,000 credits or less (subject to Games Master's approval and availability).
20	Booking immediate passage for the Centauri and one guest anywhere in galactic space with regular traffic or for the Centauri alone anywhere that can be reached through jumpgates, getting a matter brought to the attention of the Royal Court, any material item worth 20,000 credits or less (subject to Games Master's approval and availability), high tier slave.
15	Getting an audience with the Emperor in Court, any restricted or illegal weapon (these cannot be purchased through Status expenditure in any other way regardless of value), any material item worth 15,000 credits or less (subject to Games Master's approval and availability), low tier slave.
10	Exceptionally fine clothing, any material item worth 10,000 credits or less (subject to Games Master's approval and availability).

way requires a Status check to be successful, but carries no cost for failure and could result in a gain of Status depending on circumstances.

Gaining and Losing Status

The Centauri, socially conscious creatures that they are, have thousands of different watermarks for acceptable and deplorable behaviour. Rather than try to define every single action that could cause a rise or loss of Status, it is easier and more comprehensive to show categories of behaviour that can affect a Centauri's Status score. By following the guidelines implicit in such a list, a given Centauri can work to mitigate any losses and maximize political gains.

It should be noted that the Centauri Status rules are a transparent system *in game*. The Centauri do not literally keep score and while there are a number of social commentators in the Republic, they do not keep little notebooks full of names and numerical scores by them. When Urza of House Jaddo made decisions that displeased the scions of House Refa, members of the Royal Court did not actually deduct a certain number of points from his Status score. These values and rules are only game mechanics meant to simulate the way favours and reputations are handled in the Republic.

Enemies and Alliances

The last complication in the Status system is that of enemies and alliances within Noble Houses and families. There are conflicting allegiances forged every day between the high born families of the Centauri Republic, with new ones forming and old ones disintegrating faster than a Narn eats fresh spoo. This labyrinthine course of family favour and disdain can make things difficult for Centauri who have to deal outside their own House, but it can also provide great benefits for those who take the time to maintain current social knowledge.

Every Centauri has a House or family that he is at least ostensibly a part of, whether he ever espouses his membership to it or not. Houses and families have

Status Gains and Losses

Gains	Examples
+1	Notable minor achievement within one's profession (successful treaty for a diplomat, successful fiscal year for a merchant, victorious battle during wartime for a soldier).
+2	Successfully comporting oneself at a minor social function (proper etiquette shown during a birthday celebration or simple holiday.
+3	Notable significant achievement within one's profession (reaching 3rd level as a Diplomat or Officer, negotiating or charting a new trade route, conquering an enemy stronghold or city).
+4	Special achievements or personal accomplishments (graduation from an academy in the top 10%, family member reaches Ascension, accepted into a duelling society or exclusive guild (such as a Trader's Cartel or the Korvo Company).
+5	System-wide notoriety (a newsworthy act such as arranging for a problematic Narn base to 'disappear', exposing a traitor to the Republic or an extremely favourable marriage or new House alliance).
+6	Notable major achievement within one's profession (reaching 6th level as a Diplomat or Officer, 9th level as a Scientist, Soldier or Telepath, negotiating an important new alliance or trailblazing the way to a new planetary market for Centauri goods).
+7	Long service to the Military, the Royal Court or an official part of the Republic, gained every twenty years. (This award is automatic, but only accrues once every 20 years, all of which must be spent working for the same organisation in one capacity or another).
+8	Imperial Commendations or other social coups (arranging the embarrassment or elevation of another member of one's social class, sponsoring a successful commoner, ownership of a noteworthy slave and any special awards of merit given by the Emperor).
+9	Republic-wide accomplishment that brings glory to the Emperor and all Centauri (planning an attack on the Centauri Homeworld, visibly saving the Emperor from an assassin).

Losses	Examples
-1	Minor social errors (using the wrong cutlery, mispronouncing a noble's name in his presence, speaking out of turn or unintentional rude behaviour).
-2	Social blunders (intentional rude behaviour, turning down an party invitation to a party without rendering a polite apology, using course language in public, blatant disregard for the rules of etiquette).
-3	Major embarrassments (publicised business losses, massive breaches of etiquette or any politically inexpedient decisions that are brought before the Royal Court for 'review').
-4	Minor crimes (minor assault against a Centauri citizen, destruction of private property belonging to a commoner, killing a slave without paying his or her appraised value).
-5	Suffering major slander or social attack (this penalty is an average and should be adjusted up or down depending on the skill and connections of the attacker. Half of this penalty is returned if the allegations are disputed or negated publicly, and only 10 points worth of penalties can be levied against a given Centauri each month).
-6	Major Crimes (theft, arson and any felonies under Imperial Law short of attempted murder of a noble Centauri).
-7	Circumventing the proper operation of the Republic (avoiding fees and tariffs at Republic ports of call, violent felonies against noble Centauri, murder of a commoner Centauri).
-8	Conspiring with known enemies of the Republic in a non-treasonous way (any trade or business interaction with a Narn, harbouring legal fugitives).
-9	Capital crimes that are not directly traitorous or destructive to the Republic that get discovered and linked to the Centauri in question (murder of a noble Centauri).

enemies and alliances to others and when Status is used with a member of an allied or antagonistic house, its cost is modified. An alliance cuts the cost of any expenditure in half, which an enemy house makes any cost doubled as the Centauri has to give up a lot in concessions and pride to get what he wants.

There are also True Alliances and True Enemies. Status expenditures involving a True Alliance automatically succeed (and still cost half), alleviating the need to make a Status check. True Enemy Houses and families cannot be influenced through Status at all and any attempt to do so fails (though no Status is lost for the attempt). Each House or family only has one True Alliance and One True Enemy at a time, though not all Houses or families have both or even one of these at any given moment.

Temporary Status Costs

Even though some Status costs are not permanent, a Centauri can only spend as many Status points in purchases as he currently possesses in Temporary Status and cannot regain spent points if the value of the object or favour is more than half his current status. This is treated as a 'permanent' loss of temporary points that cannot be regained until the Centauri's true Status score rises above double the value of the item or favour in question.

Thus, a commoner with 45 Status points wanted to arrange a luxury apartment in the Imperial city, he could do so, but he would be unable to make any other Status purchases of greater than 10 points in value until his true Status score rose to 70 (double the 35 point cost of the apartment). This prevents all but the highest ranking members of Centauri society from abusing their authority and power.

Status Gains and Losses

When deciding whether any given action causes a Status gain or loss, the key factor is visibility. Many nobles perform actions on a regular basis that, if they were known, would result in a massive loss of face or possibly even the revocation of their vaunted social status. The secret lies in deniability. Nobles engaged in less than honourable activities use blinds, cover identities and agents to exercise their will without exposing themselves directly. They manipulate, cajole, threaten and bribe, all in an attempt to act as they please without suffering any of the punishments that come along with their misbehaviour.

The Games Master should always use discretion when assigning these gains and losses to a Centauri character. This list is not a check sheet for people wanting to climb to the top of the social ladder; it is a suggestion for how certain acts should be reflected in a given Centauri's status and nothing more. If an action is particularly well publicised, it may be worth more of a loss or gain, and something only whispered about between a pair of gossiping nobles at a single meeting might be worth only a single point either way.

Changing social classes is a difficult affair and requires being at the maximum level of either Social Debt or Affluence. At that point, a Centauri character can spend all of his or her Affluence to purchase a 'social review'; this simulates working towards earning the Royal Court's favour and getting an elevation to the next social class up. Such an elevation is always to the lowest tier of the class in question. A 'social review' takes one full month (unless the Games Master deems that a longer or shorter period is more appropriate) and a successful Status check. Failure carries no penalty other than the loss of all the Centauri's Affluence and the need to start building it up again before another attempt can be made.

Falling in status is much faster. When a Centauri has a maximum level of Social Debt (-25), he is in risk of losing his social class and slipping to the next level down. This occurs whenever a Centauri with a Social Debt of -25 makes a Social Check (to purchase an item or use his influence in other ways) and rolls a 01 on the percentile check. Also called Social Death, this reduces the Character to the minimum Status required to maintain the high tier of the next lowest social class to his previous one. It is possible to be stripped of all status (down to 1) and become a low tier slave, but such an occurrence is best left to the Games Master as a plot device.

The Halls of Power – The Royal Court and Noble Families of the Centauri Republic

When the Centauri talk about 'the nobility', they are generally referring to their ruling body – The Centaurum. This governmental body was at one time a full suite of powerful nobles with an Emperor at their head and many branches of effective leadership tied to a central core of distinguished elders known as the Royal Court. Over the many years since the founding of the Centaurum, this model of rulership has changed many times in its exact form, but the basics constantly remain the same. There is still an Emperor and a group of nobles in the Royal Court, but the duties and powers of these leaders vary from generation to generation.

The basic format of the Royal Court is fairly straightforward. The Emperor is the leader of the Centauri Republic, but he does not make every executive decision. For that, he has a group of advising nobles with different fields of expertise and authority. These leaders are collectively called the Royal Court, though few of them are physically present in the Imperial Palace when the Emperor holds court or exercises his executive power.

- ***The Emperor:*** A semi-hereditary title that follows family lines with remarkable irregularity, the Emperor holds a supreme legislative and executive position in the Centauri Government. The Emperor's word is the final law in the Republic, but he typically delegates a great deal of responsibility to other members of the Royal Court and lesser administrators throughout the many worlds of the empire.

    - While the bloodline of the Emperor has never technically been broken during the entire reign of the Republic, tragedy and treachery have caused its line of succession to wander greatly. When Emperor Mollari ascended to the throne after the tragic death of Cartagia, it marked the widest deviancy from the original bloodline of Emperor Kiro ever to sit in the Imperial Palace. This remarkable, unbroken (but wavering) line is predominantly due to the inbreeding that occurred in the generations following Kiro that found most (but not all) of the Noble Houses intermarrying and producing mixed blood but still noble offspring.

    From the Emperor, the chain of command leads to the Royal Court. These nobles are always hand-picked by the Emperor, but many live past the reign of one Emperor to the ascension of the next. If an Emperor does not choose to replace a given member of the Royal Court, that noble remains in his position until he dies or is dismissed from office. Since doing this is usually a politically awkward situation for the new Emperor, such replacements are rare and almost never occur in the first few years of his reign.

- ***The Prime Minister:*** An executive second in command, the Prime Minister's first and foremost duty is to act as the chief advisor to the Emperor. Those wishing to court the favour of the Emperor would do well to speak to the Prime Minister first. As the Prime Minister is usually authorized to act as the Voice of the Emperor and fulfil his duties in times of illness or absence, he is quite rightly considered the second most powerful man in the Republic.

- ***The Grand Chancellor:*** An administrative aide with the power to make limited legal decisions under his own recognizance, the Grand Chancellor is the organiser and collator for all the information and legal documentation generated by the rest of the Royal Court. Considered a subordinate of the Prime Minister, he technically answers only to the Emperor and in modern times rarely checks with the Prime Minister before conferring with the Emperor directly. In the past, this has led to serious and deadly power struggles between the two members of the Royal Court, but this has not been the case since before the reign of Emperor Turhan.

- *Ministers:* The council of Ministers is an executive group of overseers and politicians with a vested interest in or authority over the breadth of Republic affairs. The exact number of Ministers assigned to the Royal Court varies and new posts have been created by Order of the Emperor in the past. The usual array of Ministers and the jobs they hold are listed here. All Ministers answer to the Grand Chancellor.

  - *Minister of the Arts:* This is a classic position and is kept filled at all times. The Minister of the Arts is responsible for all decorations, festival preparations and organising all Imperial entertainments. When the Royal Court holds a festival or the Emperor wishes to see a play, the Minister of the Arts handles all of the arrangements. The Minister of the Arts is also responsible for all executive artistic decisions in the Republic, making him the final authority on what constitutes 'art' for most Centauri.

  - *Minister of Commons:* Another crucial role, this ministry is responsible for the liaison between commoners and the Royal Court. The Minister of Commons holds an open debate forum every month in the grand foyer of the Imperial Palace to poll social leaders among the Republic's common class and determine which of their concerns, if any, need Imperial attention.

  - *Minister General:* The Minister General is a hybrid position and is traditionally occupied by the highest-ranking military officer in the Centauri's grand fleet. While an army officer could fill the role by law, the fleet is more prestigious and tends to win the appointment by weight of status. When the Centauri go to war, it is the Minister General who advises the Emperor on military matters.

  - *Minister of Galactic Affairs:* This is the ministry directly responsible for intercepting all diplomatic information originating from outside the Republic and determining what is passed on to the Grand Chancellor for Imperial approval. The Minister of Galactic Affairs is a relatively new position, but the noble holding this title has an incredible amount of authority and power.

  - *Minister of the Republic:* Another powerful ministry, this office holds sway over reports from the many colonies and outposts that fill out the grand sweep of the Centauri Republic. While this position was much more important before the Narn Uprising and the subsequent decline of the empire, the Minister of Republic Affairs is still a prestigious position.

  - *Minister Tempor:* This position acts as a direct liaison between the council of Ministers and the House elders of the nobility. While the Royal Court includes a circle of nobles as representatives of their houses, the Minister Tempor acts as the voice of the Houses themselves and often bypasses the authority of these representatives. This can make the Minister Tempor a very unpopular position, but one the Emperor maintains constantly.

- *The Circle of Houses:* This cabinet of representatives acts as the retinue of courtiers and informants from each Noble House of the Republic. While there are only eleven High Noble Houses recognised by the Court, there are more than a dozen minor Noble Houses and each one has the right to send a representative to serve in the Royal Court. At any given time, there are only twelve courtier members of the Circle of Houses – one from each of the High Noble Houses and a single representative serving the interests of all the minor nobility. It is generally agreed upon by every member of the Royal Court that this twelfth member of the Circle is the hardest working man in Republic politics.

The Noble Houses

The major Noble Houses are usually in a state of flux, but some particulars of these honoured families remain true from generation to generation. As of 2260, there were eleven High Noble Houses and fourteen minor Noble Houses that made up more than 90% of the noble born Centauri in the Republic. The remainder of the nobility were displaced nobles, elevated commoners, and small families too small to be considered among the major players of the Centauri Republic.

The minor Noble Houses are too temporal and internally changing to document effectively, but the eleven High Noble Houses are important enough and generally stable enough to make a detailed mention here. Note that nothing in Centauri politics is ever set in stone and even this information is more of a guide to the status of the eleven 'great' Houses of the Republic as of 2260 and the reign of Emperor Cartagia. Also note that each House spans tens of thousands of Centauri and no general listing of a House's traits can hope to be all inclusive.

The eleven High Noble Houses of the Centauri Republic are not listed here in any order of prominence. Their fortunes grow and fall as the fame and fortune of their family leaders change, making them roughly equal in the eyes of the Emperor and the Royal Court.

House Ardo

House Patriarch: Maladi Ardo (Status 94)
House Symbol: A Pair of Crescent Moons
Notable Assets: Mining operations, colony imports, starship technology
House Alliances: Durnado, Refa
House Enemies: None
True Alliance: Refa
True Enemy: None

House Ardo is one of the oldest of the current High Houses, coasting on the incredible profits of its key imports and exports. The first House to settle prominent claims on both of the Centauri moons and the final owner of four lucrative Quantium 40 mines in the Republic, Ardo has its fingers in most of the mining productions to take place under the Centauri flag. With new business coming every year from trading partners that seem to flock to the Republic thanks to the efforts of House Ardo's noble trade ambassadors, the wealth of the Ardo family seems assured for generations to come.

House Callo

House Patriarch: Danallis Callo (Status 90, Social Debt (-11))
House Symbol: A Ducat with the face of Emperor Kiro
Notable Assets: Banking interests, treasury interests, business administrations, trading cartels
House Alliances: None
House Enemies: Durnado
True Alliance: None
True Enemy: Varga

Not the most popular of Houses in the Circle of Eleven, Callo's business practices are brutally effective but very galling to the stolid and established older houses. The youngest of the High Houses, Callo's patriarch Danallis is only the fourth leader of the family since its elevation to high nobility. In that time, the House's contributions to the Republic's coffers and war chest have ensured that it retains the good will of the military (much to the irritation of the militant House Durnado). The fact that it has made its fortune by arranging key administrative positions in many businesses of the realm, including family run operations in several of the other Houses, keeps House Callo from being well respected.

House Durnado

House Patriarch: Kavin Durnado (Status 95)
House Symbol: A Vorchan Silhouette
Notable Assets: Military technology, starship construction, fleet contacts, weapon designers
House Alliances: Refa, Ardo
House Enemies: Callo
True Alliance: Varga
True Enemy: None

A strong House with a patriarch who is the truest epitome of his family's tradition, Durnado is known as the Lion's Pride in the Centauri Republic because of their powerful connections in both the fleet and army of the empire. Many military officers are Durnado and the current Minister General is Japhen Durnado, the patriarch's grandson and Grand Admiral of the Republic Fleet. While House Durnado does not have a great deal of wealth in the conventional sense, its appliances with wealthy houses and its military might keep its position in the Royal Court very secure.

House Hessius

House Patriarch: Setaena Hessius (Status 100, Affluence (+15))
House Symbol: A four pointed red star in front of Centauri Prime
Notable Assets: Jumpgate travel, exploration, alien technologies, scientific research, jewellery
House Alliances: Mollari
House Enemies: None
True Alliance: None
True Enemy: None

An oddity not just in the Royal Court but in the whole scheme of Centauri nobility, House Hessius is currently being administrated by a female 'patriarch'. Technically the house matriarch but not insisting on a title change, Setaena Hessius is a cool, calculating noblewoman who has survived her late husband for twelve years now and controls her house and family with poise and skill. Too well-seated in her status to be removed and too savvy for her in-family rivals to overthrow, she is still in charge of House Hessius because of three gifts. She has the grace of an Imperial decree from Emperor Turhan, there are no viable male members of her house to take her place and she is a known, powerful telepath.

House Jaddo (technically an adjunct house of Mollari)

House Patriarch: Nandra Jaddo (Status 90)
House Symbol: A pair of crossed Coutari (short swords)
Notable Assets: Fashion, military connections, textiles, trade cartels
House Alliances: n/a, formerly Mollari
House Enemies: n/a, formerly Refa, Durnado
True Alliance: n/a
True Enemy: n/a

No longer technically a High House, Jaddo was a family in decline long before its extremely young patriarch, Urza Jaddo, fell in a duel of honour with Londo Mollari, a high ranking diplomat and member of House Mollari. While House Jaddo's surviving members, including Urza's wife and children, are now officially House Mollari, Urza's brother Nandra 'rules' the family and is still allowed by Emperor Cartagia to represent the failed House in the Royal Court. This is not truly a kindness; Emperor Cartagia seems to enjoy reminding all of the other Houses how fragile their grip on the reins of power can become.

House Kodiro

House Patriarch: Pellimus Kodiro (Status 97)
House Symbol: A blooming rose with yellow and black petals
Notable Assets: Numerous contacts, professional services, commoner markets, slave trade
House Alliances: None
House Enemies: None
True Alliance: None
True Enemy: None

Every House does business with House Kodiro and none of them enjoy it. Kodiro representatives are typically courteous, well groomed and very dangerous. A number of Kodiro family members have been linked to crimes of a wide variety; no allegation of wrongdoing has ever come to Imperial trial. Enemies of the House just vanish and the Kodiro family does not entertain the concept of alliances. House Kodiro has no apparent connections in the Royal Court other than its representative to the Circle of Houses, but their few resolutions and requests always pass. Every patriarch of the House has achieved Ascension, a feat no other High House can claim.

House Lurshan

House Patriarch: Bruthus Lurshan (Status 91)
House Symbol: A pair of eyes in front of a red planet
Notable Assets: Colonies, food supplies, restaurants, hotels, personal services
House Alliances: Mollari, Refa
House Enemies: Varga
True Alliance: Orestres
True Enemy: None

The tale of House Lurshan is a sordid one and the sins of patriarchs past still haunt the surprisingly tolerant and even tempered man who currently sits on the family throne. House Lurshan is a young High House, only slightly older than House Callo, and got its position by ensuring that none of the other Houses had the ability to block their ascension seven generations ago. Some of the information found in the Purple Files stolen by Orestres spies for the Lurshan family is still potent enough to ruin careers and ostracise countless nobles. The other families know this and give Lurshan a wide berth and very little respect. Only House Mollari and House Refa offer them any alliance at all and this is solely for the fine food and drink their establishments provide.

House Mollari

House Patriarch: Caius Mollari (Status 98)
House Symbol: A red jewel surrounded by eight rays of gold
Notable Assets: Military connections, entertainments, political influence, banking
House Alliances: Refa (currently strained), Lurshan, Hessius
House Enemies: Varga
True Alliance: None
True Enemy: None

A remarkably well connected House with friends in virtually every Noble Household and on every world and outpost of the Republic, House Mollari makes up in contacts and resources what it lacks in solid financial backing. House Mollari has come back from the brink of extinction so many times in its history that most Centauri assume it will outlast the Republic itself. Members of House Mollari are considered by the Royal Court to be dreamers and traditionalists with an obsession for the past glories of the empire. This reputation is both a blessing and a curse, depending on which noble the House has to deal with.

House Orestres

House Patriarch: Zainus Orestres (Status 98)
House Symbol: Four white birds in a circle, touching wingtips with their beaks in the centre
Notable Assets: Trace contracts, legal adjudicators, political contacts, espionage, information brokerage
House Alliances: None
House Enemies: None
True Alliance: Lurshan
True Enemy: None

Aside from the alliance it holds with House Lurshan mostly out of obligation for some unnamed favour done by that family's first patriarch, House Orestres is an utterly neutral party that makes its money and gains its power on the strength of its spy and legal networks. Orestres has an iron-clad reputation for holding to the letter of any contract and has been used by every house – major and minor – to infiltrate and gain the secrets of every other house during its long history. The best agents in the Republic come from Orestres or can trace their training back to an Orestres master.

House Refa

House Patriarch: Yarin Refa (Status 90, Social Debt (-25))
House Symbol: A black pennant with lines of red and white on either side
Notable Assets: Political connections, weapon trading, textiles, trade cartels
House Alliances: Ardo, Durnado, Mollari (strained)
House Enemies: Callo
True Alliance: None
True Enemy: Jaddo (effectively defunct)

House Refa is an exercise in contrasts. It has stood the test of time as one of the oldest of the Noble Houses, but its last three generations have been bitter disappointments to the Royal Court. Marked by excessive greed and ambition, the scions of House Refa have little regard for the betterment of the empire unless it benefits them as well and their current patriarch does little to hide his avarice. As such, he is both admired by the equally grasping Emperor Cartagia and disliked by virtually every other member of the Royal Court. It would only take one more blunder to dissolve the House entirely, but the efforts of family members like Lord Yanosh Refa keep it stable for the moment.

House Varga

House Patriarch: Kolonor Varga (Status 94)
House Symbol: A clenched fist in a white glove
Notable Assets: Banking interests, treasury interests, various businesses, trading cartels
House Alliances: Ardo
House Enemies: None
True Alliance: None
True Enemy: Callo

If House Varga loses one more prominent business to House Callo, there will be blood in the Imperial Palace. Once the wealthiest of all the High Houses, Varga has watched its profits slip and its partnerships lost to the skilled manipulations of the Callo family for generations. Their coalition with House Ardo has slowed the drain of Callo ambition to a trickle, but any losses are now keenly felt and as the fortunes of the Varga family wane, their planned revenge becomes commensurately more expensive. There is little doubt as to Varga complicity in the recent spate of industrial sabotage occurring in Callo businesses, but the Royal Court will not act without proof.

Centauri Organisations

While the Royal Court is the single most important organisation in the Centauri Republic, it is not the only one in existence. The daily lives of all Centauri, from slaves to nobles alike, are ruled by the interplay between dozens of groups. Some official, others known only to a select few, these groups – for better or ill – influence politics, the military and trade. Most have the best interests of the Republic at heart, but the ambition in the hearts of all Centauri can subvert any organisation and turn it into a force for detrimental change.

The Royal Court is not even aware of all the different power blocks that occasionally move against it. The Emperor and the Royal Court believe they rule the Republic and to some extent they do. There are other shadow governments that take over where they leave off or attend to matters they would rather not handle. None of these organisations are very sizeable except the might and girth of the Centauri military.

The military is considered a governmental group by itself in the minds of most Centauri. Only beholden to the Minister General and the Emperor, the army and the fleet set their own policies when out in the field. In the cold reaches of space outside the borders of the empire, ship's captains and infantry commanders set their own policies. Men under their authority are expected to obey them as if they were the Royal Court themselves, which gives them unprecedented power in their own small spheres of influence. This arrangement has caused problems for the Republic in the past, but the necessities of giving commanders executive power keeps the cycle running.

There are many other groups that operate the same way, though without the powerful forces to back up their decisions. Some are very small, consisting only of a collective of block leaders in Centauri cities who guide the resources and manpower of the commoners and slaves in their areas. Others are a little larger; most Centauri corporations and trade cartels are run semi-autonomously. As long as the nobility that ostensibly 'owns' them get their profits each quarter year, no one in the Royal Court particularly cares how they run their businesses.

The bulk of this chapter deals with the three primary power blocks other than the Royal Court present in the Centauri Republic as of 2260 and beyond. This chapter contains detailed sections about the Centauri military, the Old Guard of military men and nobles dedicated to the old ideals of Republican glory and the forces of the deadly Shadows who have infiltrated the Centauri on almost every level.

These power groups are not the only movers and shakers among the Centauri, however. A number of smaller groups bear mentioning, if only so that observers of the Republic can see how things outwardly appear to get done and then see how things are actually accomplished. When the Centauri act in any obvious way, it is a safe assumption that the action has been prompted by the interaction between several groups. There is wisdom in the words of Emperor Burago, 'No Centauri acts alone. Every time I speak, you hear the voices of a hundred people who think they know what I should say.'

Minor Power Groups in the Centauri Republic

Few Centauri are ever aware of the machinations that occur around them. The power blocks that exist in the Centauri Republic operate as transparently as possible except in their own places of authority. All Centauri appreciate at some level the existence and appearance of monarchy that the Emperor and his Court project. Not only does it shift blame away from the other power structures when something goes wrong, but the existence of the Royal Court allows those who control temporal power in the Republic to do so without attracting attention.

The other thing about the minor power structures that exist throughout Centauri Prime and its many colonies and outposts that offers them so much authority over the populace, is that unlike the Royal Court, any Centauri can be a part of their network regardless of social class. Most of the minor power groups have no concern for status past a certain point; commoners and occasionally slaves can amass great prestige without the glass ceiling of the Centauri caste system.

- *Corporations:* All Centauri understand the power of the ducat, the basic unit of currency in the Republic. Nobles know that their personal worth is measured in how much wealth they control. Commoners are aware that the only luxuries they will be allowed to possess will come through their ability to earn and slaves are literally controlled by those with the money to buy and sell them. It should come as no surprise then that corporations are power blocks in themselves. They are financial generators and as such can write their own laws within certain limits. A business that oversteps itself can be crushed by the wrathful hand of an offended family patriarch, but a company that keeps to its own interests can gain limitless power.

  - *Centauri Arms:* An example of a company with a long history of writing its own laws, this Centauri Prime based corporation has been producing fine weaponry for the military and civilian use for more than five hundred years. In that time, it has been allowed to build and maintain a private military, found its own autonomous mining platforms on the Centauri moons and even submit its own candidates for inclusion in the Centaurum Royal Guard.

- *Utilities:* Like companies, Centauri utilities are resource-rich organisations with enough autonomy to maintain their own operations. Every Centauri colony is

J,
You were correct in your last communication. The real power in the Centauri Republic lies in the nobles that do not sit in the Royal Court. I have spoken with several of the nobility and while they do have a say in matters, most of them feel very disenfranchised by the slow decline of their empire. The nobles in the Royal Court are mostly fooling themselves when they say that the Centauri can take themselves back into the stars.

These people are ripe and I urge you to speak with our associates about bringing them in deeper. For once, I think we have found a group of aliens with the power to be of real aid to us and a spirit broken enough to be led by the nose through any hoop we show them. All they want is power and we can certainly give them that.
M

controlled by a different utility company as per Royal Court edict, which makes for a thriving amount of competition as each corporation tries to outdo the other's services and rates in an attempt to attract settlers (and thus new customers). Since the Court receives a set tax from every utility company, the system is a flawless one from their end.

- *Imperial Power:* One of the biggest utilities in the Republic, Imperial Power has its dominance of the market because of a loophole in the limiting edict that confines it to one colony. Imperial Power's legal department was the first of the utilities to realise that the edict did not limit them from supplying orbital stations and other non-terrestrial assets. They approached the military independently and secured a contract to handle all permanent fixed stations in the empire. The revenue from this power coup alone has bankrolled Imperial Power for more then three generations.

- *Residence Lords:* A facetious title given by the Royal Court to commoners who organise groups of others in their neighbourhoods and seek a noble sponsor to speak for them in matters of state, this moniker has stuck over time and is now used with pride. These unofficial political leaders are often hereditary, with their sons expected to follow in their footsteps and ensure that the concerns of their regions.

  - *The Ragesh Coalition:* While this group is no longer extant following the Narn purge of the Ragesh colony, it was one of the most powerful domains of nobles and commoners in the empire until that time. As aided by its isolation from courtly politics as it was by its scientific and mineral wealth, the residence lord of the Ragesh colony was a force in the Royal Court whenever he chose to act through his House Mollari solicitors.

- *Social Clubs:* Mostly the province of the nobility, a few societies of commoners are also very influential because of the networking and resource pooling they promote. Most noble social clubs centre on activities and do not appear to be politically active, but there is a surprising amount of power in these gatherings. Many laws and governmental decisions occur over a plate of spoo salad as opposed to a podium in the Centaurum. There is even a single social club available to House slaves that wields a remarkable amount of authority, albeit only on matters that relate to the slave class.

  - *Knights Emptoris:* This is a mixed social club with noble and commoner membership that transcends class boundaries through its espoused love – history and historical reproductions. What many do not realise is that its chapterhouses on most of the colony worlds of the Republic answer directly to the Knights Council on Centauri Prime. The Knights Emptoris also has full, albeit unofficial, approval by the Royal Court to act as a militant branch of the system police during times of emergency.

Service, Glory and Honour – The Grand Centauri Military

For generations, the sight of a column of decorated Centauri soldiers was the definitive herald of a world about to fall to the 'Lion of the Galaxy'. Many planetary garrisons surrendered at the sight of a Primus Battlecruiser and its Vorchan escorts without firing a shot. The distinctive crescent shape of Centauri heavy fighters was the last sight for thousands of fighter pilots doomed to die defending their homes from Republic invasions. The Centauri Republic's armada was an unstoppable force that swept most of the galaxy under the flag of conquest.

Then it all came to an end. The Narns, a forgotten slave race with little to offer but brute labour and a world rich in resources began to strike back. Their first attempts were crude and easily ignored, but the slaves learned quickly. Before the Centauri Republic, sluggish in its grandeur, could react, the Narn had built their own fleet using stolen technology and what little the other dominated races of the empire could secrete to them. One loss followed another and the Lion of the Galaxy was forced back to its den at the point of its own slave's weapons.

The galaxy has assumed that since that embarrassment, the will of the Republic is broken and to some degree they are correct. It is also assumed that the might of the Centauri fleet has been shattered as well. Alien races look to the mothballed fleets, the exiled commanders stripped of their commissions in shame and the drifting debris of the Republic's grand fleet in Narn space as signs of an annihilated armada no longer capable of greatness.

The Narn/Centauri War of 2258-59 proved them wrong. Slow to return to battle and somewhat untried by the lack of conflicts before the Narn's declaration of war, the Centauri military began to gain momentum as their spirits rekindled in the heat of battle. After a few losses, the tactics of the past began to work in unison with the ambitions of hungry young nobles placed in positions of military leadership. Old ships came out of retirement and new vessels began to fly from the

Centauri's deep space production yards. Mighty cruisers and destroyers flew into battle, once again blacking out the stars over a hundred worlds.

As of 2260, the Centauri military is very much active again. Swelling the ranks of the armed forces with enthusiastic nobles and commoners looking to carve their own names into the annals of war, the Grand Military has all the personnel it needs to man the tanks, fighters and starships in its massive fleets and ground forces. Armed with technology second only to the Minbari in all the younger races, the Centauri war machine is a dominant force in the galaxy once more.

Ranks in the Centauri Military

The Grand Centauri Military does not officially divide its rank structure between fleet and infantry service (which they collectively call Ground Assault). The same structure applies equally to any member of the military and an officer of one retains his rank, if not any time in service, if assigned as a liaison to the other. This means a Ground Assault captain could be given command of a starship if necessary without a conflict in rank.

This is made possible by the excellent training Centauri military officers are given. Centauri officers are rarely younger than 40 before receiving their first full commission. This represents at least two academy tours and enough training to both establish a specialisation and provide all the skills needed to serve in another officers role if needed. This flexibility has been the source of strength in a hastily assembled Centauri fleet, as any officer can be counted on to serve competently in any role typically assigned to his rank.

A note concerning nobles in the military; all nobles are offered a commission upon completing their first military academy tour, a term that lasts roughly ten years. This means that many noble officers are 'young', entering their first position at the age of 25 or so. Nobles have the same option commoners do of taking a second academy tour to become officers. This option raises the end rank the noble graduates with and is the source of many 'academy captains' commanding starships in the Centauri Fleet. These untried but well trained commanders are the primary reason for the Centauri's initially poor showing against the Narn in 2258 and their subsequent remarkable victories.

The Centauri Republic's Rank Structure

The military gains new recruits in one of three ways. The first is the most common; Centauri youths fresh out of their first academy are approached by military services with scholarships or enrolment offers for one of several academies that operate in the Republic. This is usually how commoners are enrolled into the fleet or ground assault divisions and most nobles get their low level officer commissions the same way.

The second is conscription. Technically speaking, all Centauri are members of the military, as it comes with being a citizen of the Republic. While only Centauri who have attended a military academy (which range from 5 to 10 years in length) have any formal training, any member of the Republic can be called upon to fill out the ranks during time of war or by Imperial decree. This has only happened four times during the Centauri Republic's history, with the most recent being the height of the Narn/Centauri War.

The third way the Grand Centauri Military gains recruits is through slave units. While this is rarer numerically than conscription, it is an option open at all times to any Centauri slave desiring to serve in the armed forces. Slave units traditionally have the highest attrition, most dangerous assignments and receive some of the shoddiest equipment and training the Centauri have to offer. Despite this, the Violet Sash brigades (as these slave units are called) have some of the most decorated officers in the entire military.

Once a Centauri is accepted or conscripted into the military, he is assigned a basic rank depending on his social class. This is never an officership, even for noble academy graduates, but it is also a very short term assignment. This 'initial rank' is used to fill units in times of emergencies, evaluate performance in the field and swell military formations until a new soldier can be properly assigned to a more permanent duty.

Centauri usually have to put in one month of good service in this initial rank before they can be promoted, and further assignments are based on job performance, time in service and the inevitable politics and bribery that occur behind the scenes in the military. This process is so ingrained into the Centauri psyche that it no longer raises any arguments or resentment. Unlike the strife that nepotism and politicking can cause in militaries like EarthForce, it is business as usual for the Centauri and never given another thought.

Centauri Lore – Military Service

A quick, if dangerous road to prestige and glory in the Centauri Republic, service in the Grand Military is a deeply ingrained honour and a natural course of action for most physically capable young nobles and commoners looking to start a career among the stars. Most Centauri soldiers have travel time between the systems of the Republic and are considered well-versed in the intricacies and techniques of proper space travel. Centauri soldiers have a high gravity tolerance and can withstand the rigors of deep space manoeuvres quite well; this allows for a much higher percentage of their troop base to be experienced space-goers.

Because of the cross-training policies of the Centauri military, all Centauri officers with an Intelligence score of 13 or higher can qualify for a special Military Feat – Crosstrained. This feat allows them a limited version of the benefits of the officer class feature Branch Specialisation in the two services he did not select during character creation. Soldiers do not receive this benefit, but they can select another Military Feat that simulates the same high degree of education.

Officer Ranks

- *Grand Admiral:* The Centauri have two Grand Admirals in service at any given time. The Fleet Grand Admiral serves double duty as the Minister General of the Royal Court, while the Grand Admiral of Ground Assault is given the dubious honour of doing both their jobs when the former has to appear at social occasions and political meetings. This has the advantage of forming a close tie between both halves of the Grand Military, as they are constantly being controlled by the same Centauri.
  - *Admiralty:* Both halves of the Centauri Military are monitored and controlled by a council of Admirals who serve the two Grand Admirals as an advisory board. Unlike other militaries, there is no set limit or degree of ranking within the Admiralty itself. This exists because the Noble Houses demanded a high rank structure that their sons could elevate themselves into and wield executive power within the armed forces. At any given time, as many as two hundred Admirals exist on each council, though less than half of them could truly be considered 'active'.
    - *Brigadier:* Each member of the Admiralty can promote a Brigadier as a personal assistant and troop liaison. In virtually every case, a given Brigadier works ten times as hard as the Admiral he serves. In many ways, this dedication and hard work are the bonds that keep the military together. Emperor Burago once dismissed a visiting Admiral

from Court ordering, 'Bring me this simpleton's Brigadier! I want to talk to a real leader!'

- ***Brigade Chiefs:*** Each Brigadier is permitted a cabinet of up to three Brigade Chiefs. These are elevated from the lower ranks and are not usually under the selection control of the Brigadier himself. The Admiralty technically select Brigade Chiefs, but some understand the utility and need for these assistants to be able to work with their Brigadiers and allow their subordinates to make their own choices.

- ***Captains:*** The lowest level of true military leadership, Captains are assigned to fleets or battalions, depending on their branch of the service. A Captain in the Grand Centauri Military is either a spoiled noble whose men have to work around him to prevail in combat or a hardened, capable officer with years of training and acute leadership qualities. Fortunately for the current status of the Republic, the latter outnumber the former for the first time in several generations. Captains are also called Exaltus.

  - ***First Commanders:*** Keeping with the leaders and cabinets model of the military that the politically minded Centauri prefer, Captains have a staff of liaisons and advisors collectively titled Commanders. First Commanders are directly assigned to Captains on a one-to-one ratio and serve as an executive assistants and second in command. First Commanders are also given the honoured rank title of Culdari Primus.

  - ***Second Commanders:*** Second commanders fulfil a very important part of the military structure as they are the link between the leadership and the men under a Captain's direct command. Many Second Commanders are chosen for their social skills over their fighting capabilities, as they spend a great deal of time acting as skilled negotiators and intra-military diplomats. Second Commanders are also called Maxinari.

  - ***Third Commanders:*** The military leaders most soldiers and fleet personnel call 'Commander', each Third Commander is assigned to a given division or crew under a Captain's authority. On a starship, each section of the vessel has a Third Commander for direct leadership. In an army, each unit of troops has a Third Commander in charge. Third Commanders are also called Centauriata.

- ***Astus Centari:*** This is a unique rank held by members of both branches and denotes the special division of personnel that pilot the great vehicles and fighters of the Republic. The specialised training and indoctrination that occurs in the secondary academy that all Astus Centari must complete to join this rank entitle the military to recognize their worth and dedication with an exclusive rank. Astus Centari officers are technically below Commanders but answer only to Captains and above.

  - ***Auturo Marcasus:*** Elite troops of the Astus Centari, these pilots have undergone gruelling tests and additional training enough to break the will and body of lesser men. Pushed beyond the limits of even Centauri endurance, the Auturo Marcasus are always flight leaders when assigned to a vehicle or fighter unit.

Troop Ranks

- ***Sergeants:*** Also called the Scurata, these ranks are the highest a non-officer can progress in the military without officer academy training or direct noble sponsorship. No noble ever spends time in this rank, bypassing it immediately after processing and three or less months in service to the minimum rank of Centauriata. Scurata lead other troops into battle, serving their Third Commanders directly and providing combat leadership alongside similarly trained soldiers in his unit. (*Scurata do not have to take character levels in Officer to serve in this rank, though most are multiclassed with one level of Officer to simulate their promotion.)*

  - ***Centurians:*** Elite troops, these units are the best and brightest of the troop ranks and often do not have or need a Scurata for leadership. Under the Imperial Charter of the Centurians, each member of a Centurian unit has the approximate rank and pay grade of a Scurata and is expected to be an autonomous soldier capable of handling tasks on his own if needed. Other militaries would consider the Centurians a form of 'special forces'.

- ***Priama:*** Centauri rank and file soldiers, there are several divisions of Priama roughly separated by time in service. All soldiers entering the Grand Centauri Military serve as Priama for a short time, but nobles and other promising recruits do not remain in these ranks for long. Military actions are made or broken by the actions of the Priama Legions and they are afforded the

respect by other Centauri that their power and training deserves.

- *Komo Tares:* The noble's Priama rank, all Komo Tares are considered the elite of the Priama, but this is an unfounded opinion based on their social rank. In truth, Komo Tares are afforded some leniency because of their temporary nature, but they are no better or worse as soldiers than any other Centauri.

- *Juros:* A Juros is the Centauri equivalent of a high ranking Private in EarthForce. These soldiers usually have three or more years in service but because of solider aptitudes or lack of political connections cannot advance to a higher rank. Juros *are* elite soldiers and form the strength of the troop corps. Whenever a Juros legion is assigned to a task, their Centauriata leaders can assure the upper levels of the military that the task will be handled with skill and precision.

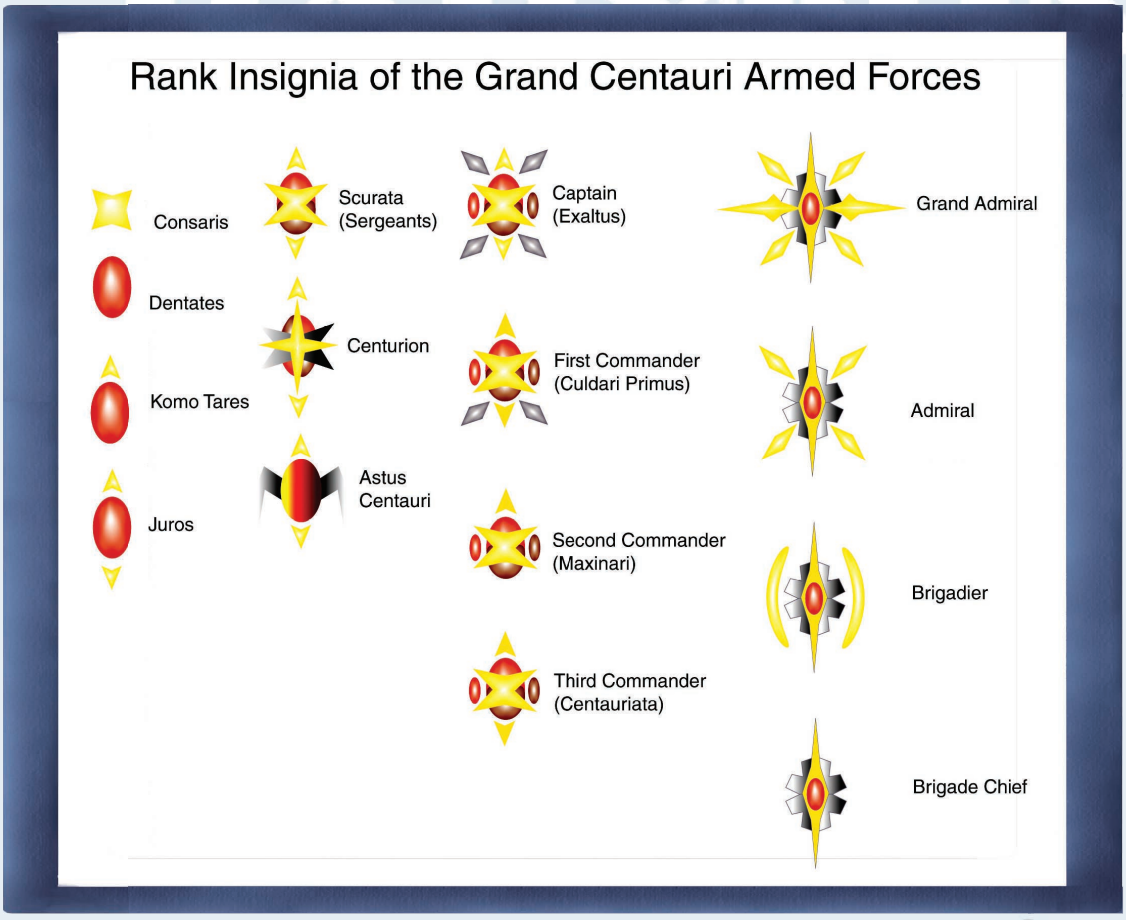
  - *Dentates:* The entrance rank for commoners, all Dentates are new recruits and never remain at this level longer than two years. A Centauri will either advance out of the Dentates corps as a Juros or an officer if they remain in the military at all.

- *Consaris:* A Consaris soldier is a slave consigned or volunteered into the military. All Consaris are immediately assigned to a 'Purple Sash Brigade' under the direct oversight of a Centauriata. Scurata do not lead Purple Sash brigades; they are trained and led by a specifically assigned Centauriata who typically despises the position. This explains their wide disparity in quality and high attrition rate.

The Centauri Fleet

Sleek and deadly, elegant and forged in the heat of a hundred battles, the star fleet of the Grand Centauri Military is one of the most feared armadas in the galaxy. When its might is assigned to a task by the Minister General, a victorious outcome is all but assured. While the fleet has been less that terrifying to its enemies in recent generations, their utter defeat of the Narn in 2259 and their subsequent strikes against the systems of the Non-Aligned Worlds, most races are once again feeling the terror that once preceeded the approach of the Gold and Purple.

The Centauri Fleet is actually three full fleets, each with a designated role. Ships actually cross over between the fleets all the time, but this tends to be more by gentleman's agreement than specific military assignment. The Admiralty can order their Captains to manoeuvre their ships in any fashion, though the three fleets tend to operate more or less separately. When they do combine forces, it is usually to hammer home a point to some poor target, such as the Narn Homeworld.



The Three Fleets of the Centauri Republic

The Centauri Fleets are designated separately and move on individual manoeuvres whenever possible. Each fleet has its own assigned purpose, none of which can be ignored or circumvented for long without leaving some element of the Republic vulnerable. There is one Admiralty Council for the entire group of fleets, but each one has a certain number of Admirals as representatives. These three divisions do not make up the entire Admiralty; additional Admirals are effectively 'assistants' to those who control the fleets.

- *The Prime Fleet:* This fleet has the best ships, the most loyal crews and the greatest concentration of defensive systems. This is fitting given the Prime Fleet's honoured role in the Republic – the defence and preservation of the Centauri Homeworld. The Prime Fleet is the only fleet that is not further subdivided into smaller battle groups. When the Prime Fleet acts, it does so as an autonomous collective of powerful vessels under incredibly skilled commanders. The loss of Centauri Prime to an invading force would be the death knell for both the pride of the Republic and its ruling body; it is protected accordingly.

- *The Purple Fleet:* Equipped and laid out much like the Prime Fleet, the Purple Fleet is three times larger and has a commensurate number of personnel and ships. The Purple Fleet is charged with the defence and patrol of the Republic and is subdivided into smaller battle forces for faster deployment and effective counter-attacks after lighting raids in the empire. Any enemy foolish enough to attack the Republic must do so swiftly and then withdraw. The sheer number of Centauri ships that can eventually arrive in waves to drive off attackers is overwhelming.

  - *System Fleets:* The Purple Fleet is divided into three primary division forms, each one tailored to the needs of a given system. While these forms are not absolute and some system fleets have an irregular layout, all Purple Fleet Captains know how to adopt these forms on command and their crews are fully drilled in their use.

    - *Castle Formation:* The most common of the system fleets, this formation is used to protect the major worlds of the Centauri Republic. A Castle formation is centred on the firepower of a battlecruiser and the rapid response of several gunboats. The specific ships in a Castle formation can vary, but a typical layout would be:

      - *(1-2) Primus Battlecruiser*
        - *(12-24) Sentri Medium Fighters*
      - *(4-8) Kutai Gunships*
      - *(6-12) Haven Patrol Boats*

    - *Cavalry Formation:* The standard layout for systems with several interests too far apart to be defended by a single mass force, Cavalry formations specialise in fast striking, rapid response vessels and are very fighter heavy. When a Cavalry formation defends a Centauri system, attackers have little chance of raiding with impunity.

      - *(2-4) Vorchan Warships*
      - *(1) Balvarin Carrier*
        - *(36) Sentri Medium Fighters*
      - *(1-3) Dargan Strike Cruisers*
      - *(6) Haven Patrol Boats*

    - *Errant Formation:* Inner systems of the Republic with little need for a constant fleet presence receive an Errant formation for their defence. These fleets may seem light compared to the defences in other areas of the empire, but even the smallest Errant formation can oppose light raiding forces or the occasional alien incursion.

      - *(1) Demos Heavy Warship*
      - *(1) Marcanos Civilian Base*
        - *(12-24) Razik Light Fighters*
      - *(1-2) Dargan Strike Cruisers*
      - *(1-3) Haven Patrol Boats*

  It should be noted that the Purple Fleet can commission any planetary garrison or Homeworld for additional ships when the need arises. In the early part of the War of Retribution, the Centauri shifted its defensive fleets around greatly to counter the effective Narn incursions into their territory. This was an unprecedented level of formation change for the normally regimented Centauri Navy and the Purple Fleet was slow to respond at first. With the later successes in battle using these hastily assembled formations, the Centauri became more flexible and that level of versatility remains a valued part of the Purple Fleet. An attacker should never rely on a given system having a defence fleet exactly like the ones listed above.

- *The Gold Fleet:* The division of the Grand Centauri Military that other races have learned to fear, the Gold Fleet is the attacking arm of the Republic. It falls to them to conquer, dominate and pre-emptively strike at threats to the empire before they ever reach the worlds of the Centauri Republic. During the War of Retribution, the Purple Fleet fought off the Narn invasion fleets, but

it was the terrible might of the Gold Fleet that took the fight into Narn space thereafter.

- *Attack Groups:* The Gold Fleet is divided into four or more attack groups, each one given a different honorific and set under the command of an Admiral and his chosen Captains. It is rare for an Admiral to personally command a vessel in an attack group; that privilege typically falls to a Brigadier or his seconds. New attack groups are formed when the Republic needs them, but four are maintained at all times. The names of the attack groups change with each new Admiral that commands them, but their duties remain constant.

  - *Tempest Group:* The most prestigious of the attack groups, Tempest has the honour of first assault whenever Homeworld feels the need to apply the power of the Fleet against an opponent in deep space. Rigged and equipped for long distance manoeuvres, the Captains and crews of Tempest Group rarely spend more than a single month in the Republic. At all other times, Tempest is deployed en masse in the galaxy, maintaining the appearance of Centauri dominance.
    - *(2) Octurian Battleships*
      - *24 Rutarian Strike Fighters*
      - *12 Sentri Medium Fighters*
      - *12 Razik Light Fighters*
    - *(3) Balvarin Carriers*
      - *36 Rutarian Strike Fighters*
      - *36 Sentri Medium Fighters*
      - *36 Razik Light Fighters*
    - *(4) Primus Battlecruisers*
      - *(48) Sentri Medium Fighters*
    - *(12) Vorchan Warships*
    - *(8) Altarian Destroyers*
    - *(2) Covran Scouts*

  - *Cesti Group:* Also known as the Emperor's Hammer, this attack group is typically kept in reserve around Homeworld and acts as a second layer of heavy defence during times of peace. When the Republic is at war, Cesti group is assigned to any enemy system the Emperor and the Royal Court wish to 'make an example of' in the eyes of the galaxy. Specialised in planetary bombardment, Cesti group is a deadly combination of warships and ground assault troops.

- *(1) Octurian Battleship*
  - *(24) Rutarian Strike Fighters*
- *(6) Primus Battlecruisers*
  - *(72) Rutarian Strike Fighters*
- *(18) Secundus Assault Cruisers*
  - *216 Larisi Assault Shuttles*
- *(24) Kutai Gunships (Cestus Modification)*

- *Harrier Group:* The Centauri Republic's fast response fleet, Harrier group is a collection of fast ships with a single main battleship for jump point creation and coordinated command. When Harrier group is directed against an enemy or raiding fleet, it will hound them anywhere in the galaxy – even into other hostile territories or enemy homeworlds. Harrier group has a reputation for relentlessness; the entire fleet has been replaced twice because of their fearless devotion to destroying their targets. A Harrier starship will not hesitate to do whatever it takes to defeat the enemy, even if it means its own destruction.

  - *(1) Primus Battlecruiser*
    - *(12) Sentri Medium Fighters*
  - *(4) Sulust Escort Destroyers (flying escort for the Primus battlecruiser)*
  - *(9) Dargan Strike Cruiser*
  - *(12) Darkner Fast Attack Frigates*
  - *(8) Centurion Attack Cruisers*

- *Reaper Group:* The Reaper attack group is given the unenviable task in the Republic of carrying out system assaults involving large civilian populations and planetary garrisons. Reaper group Captains and crews are very cold and methodical; they are chosen for their devotion to duty and willingness to carry out any order, regardless of its ethical or moral implications.

  - *(2) Primus Battlecruisers (Cestus Modification)*
    - *(24) Rutarian Strike Fighters*
  - *(1) Balvarin Carrier*
    - *(12) Sentri Medium Fighter*
    - *(24) Larisi Assault Shuttles*
  - *(4) Vorchan Warships*
  - *(12) Kutai Gunboats*

Centauri Ground Assault

For military personnel not suited as crew of a spacecraft because of skills, aptitude or desire, there is service in the ground assault army to consider. Trained to a degree as high or higher than any other soldier of the younger races (again, with the exception of the Minbari), a Centauri ground assault trooper is a deadly combination of endurance, technology and some of the finest logistical support in the galaxy.

Technological superiority is the watch-word of the Centauri Army. Its soldiers are armed with the finest weapons the Republic can produce, protected with light battle armour on its front line troops and elite units and given access to swift, deadly tanks and utility vehicles. The Centauri Army can deploy from its carriers and quickly set up a highly effective perimeter in a very short amount of time.

In a defensive role, the Centauri are capable soldiers with enough resources and supplies to hold out against superior forces for a long time. The quick-assembly bulwarks of the Centauri Army can resist a considerable amount of firepower, allowing a defence squad to create a hardened position virtually anywhere and repel an invading force from behind modular cover. Emplacement weapons in the Centauri Army are highly effective; hundreds of engagements with the Centauri as defenders have been turned to their advantage by the rapid-cycling energy guns of their firebases.

Offensively, the Centauri are even more effective. Quick moving and valuing a balance of offensive and defensive power in their armaments and vehicles, a Centauri strike force can move into position around an objective and deploy before the defenders have a chance to react. Once in position, lightning strikes by heavily armed Centauri soldiers set up a screen for skilled special units to infiltrate, use demolitions gear or otherwise neutralise their target.

Centauri Standing Armies

Because of their limited environments of service, the Centauri's armies are only divided into two subtypes and neither one is exclusive. Under normal terms of service, a ground assault trooper (also called a legionnaire) is assigned to a home base and acts as a garrisoned soldier. There, all legionnaires provide defence and manpower for military projects until they are activated for direct duty in the name of the Emperor and the Minister General.

Centauri legionnaires are very well trained and can handle a variety of different weapons, vehicles and equipment while in the field. A military commander can feel quite confident that if he has to pull a squad of infantry to serve as vehicle crews, they will perform professionally in that role. While the Centauri Army does have specialised training, each soldier is expected to be passable at any role he might have to perform in the service. This means that Centauri troops can react to changing battle conditions very swiftly and apply competent skills to any battlefield emergency.

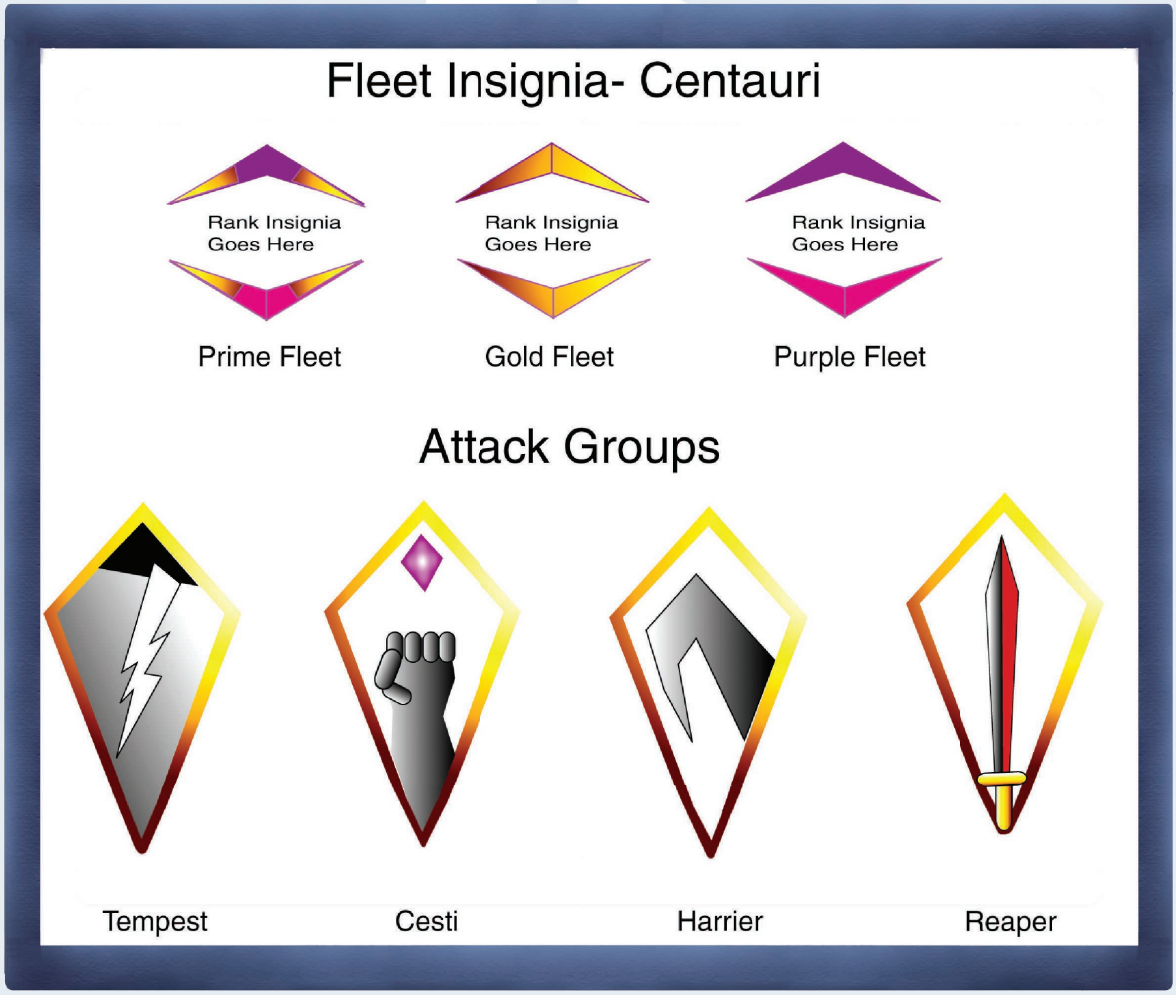
- *System Defence Forces:* Each planet has a dedicated garrison of troops for its defence and empowerment; these soldiers are stationed on a semi-permanent basis and typically spend the majority of their lives on that world. Most eventually retire from the service, but few leave their garrison world. Planetary lords provide homes and civilian employment for retired soldiers, knowing full well that they are some of the best trained employees and residents they could hope to attract to their world.

  - *Planetary Garrisons:* Each world in the Centauri Republic has the potential to need ground troops during an invasion. To provide the combat readiness that a given colony world might need, each planet's garrison is laid out with the troops and vehicles needed to guard and patrol its borders. This leaves each planetary garrison with a slightly different layout, but the basic philosophy behind each installation is the same. A typical garrison would have the following organisation.

Centauri Lore – Fleet Service

Centauri players with fleet experience gain a great deal of prestige from their appointments even if they never see active service. The duty of being part of a starship's crew can be the high point of any Centauri's carrier and many nobles in the Royal Court can trace the beginnings of their rise to fame to a post in the Purple or Gold Fleets. Surprisingly, few nobles in the Court have Prime Fleet experience. This is usually the result of Prime Fleet crews rarely retiring from their relatively easy assignments.

Any Centauri with an assignment in the Purple Fleet should add +1 Status point to their total Status score for every level of Officer they possess. Members of the Gold Fleet gain 2 points per Officer level they have (unless they are Reaper group, in which case they gain no Status increase). In addition, any fleet officer gains 1 Status point every time their group fights a military engagement. If they emerge victorious, a second Status point is added. The Centauri love combat in the stars, but they love victory even more.



- *(700 to 1200) Centauri Infantry*
- *(40-50) Command Rank Officers*
- *(30-50) Unit Operations Crew*
- *(60-80 Vehicle and Aircraft Crew)*
  - *(20-30) Suture Infantry Vehicles*
  - *(3-10) Hexus Battle Tanks*
  - *(30-50) Gallo Transports*
  - *(5-10) Jugai Heavy Lifters*

- ***Strike Battalions:*** Raised and trained in planetary garrisons, these combat ready troops are more active than their colony or homeworld bound comrades in arms. Strike Battalions are kept on alert status and while they may spend most of their time at a home base, they are considered garrison troops and have no place in the base hierarchy. Strike Battalion soldiers and officers are a hardy breed, trained for combat and kept extremely busy – especially in the strife filled years of 2258 and beyond.

  - ***Main Battle Squadrons:*** Each garrison keeps at least one MBS on alert at all times in case they are needed on their world for incursion defence or insurrection control. Main Battle Squadrons are equipped with fast striking transports and heavy weapons. Most garrisons crew their MBS units from their own manpower, but major worlds provide separate quarters and personnel to staff their attack forces.

    - *210 Centauri Infantry*
    - *10 Skoral Field Guns*
    - *10 Optus Spotter Stations*
    - *5 Jugati Rapid Transports*
    - *10 Gorai Fighter/Interceptors (Jugati escorts)*

  - ***Heavy Assault Squadrons:*** The primary form of Centauri attack forces on other worlds, HAS units are prepared for any battlefield contingency and have a great deal of firepower at their disposal. With heavy gun platforms, tanks and full combat transports, HAS units are in charge of artillery actions, planetary fortress assaults and take and hold missions in hostile territory.

    - *315 Centauri Infantry (Tolaire Equipped)*
    - *30 Fumaro Field Guns*
    - *15 Optus Spotter Stations*
    - *15 Corvidius Heavy Attack Transports*
    - *30 Attack Aircraft (Various types, depends on mission parameters)*
    - *10 Hexus Battle Tanks*
    - *5 Dorvalis Assault Tanks*
    - *5 Kironar Artillery Platforms*

True planetary attacks require the force of several MBS and/or HAS units working in unison to secure key tactical points. A single Main Battle Squadron might seem like a lot of firepower and manpower on its own, but one such unit would be quickly overwhelmed in any major offensive. Likewise, some smaller combat scenarios might not require the full force of a Centauri unit. There are times when a standard MBS or HAS isdivided into smaller companies or tactical groups. All Centauri ground assault troops are trained in the 21-man unit size that Republic law dictates, but they can work efficiently in larger or smaller squads as the situation calls for.

The Old Guard – Defenders of the Past

In the Centauri Republic, it is the common fashion of the nobility to long for the old days when their empire stretched as far as the darkest corner of the heavens and every race in it trembled at the sound of their name. There are those who take this yearning past the momentary remembrances and fond sighs that others affect. These nobles truly wish not only for the return of the Republic's glory days – they want to be a part of how they come back.

The Centauri Republic was built on the will and spirit of the men who pioneered the wars, the technology and the exploration that formed it. Centauri with no fear of the coming day lived not only to see it but to seize. Each new morning was a conquest, each night a feast to celebrate those who had gone before. These reminiscent nobles are usually members of the same social clubs, perform many of the same courtly duties and have generations of family history between. In the parlance of the Royal Court, they are the Old Guard.

Members of the Old Guard are not truly part of any official power block, but they all tend to talk among themselves. Exchanging stories and wishes of the old days when the Republic was still the Lion of the Galaxy, these nobles inspire each other to act in a manner befitting the honourable conquerors of the past. In so doing, they create an unofficial political group of their own. All of their efforts spent towards the same goal, these (mostly older) nobles are a force to be reckoned with.

Other members of the Royal Court are well aware of the needs and motives of the Old Guard; they come into conflict with it every time they try to pass a resolution or propose an act that would diminish or weaken the Republic in the Old Guard's eyes. Any withdrawal from a once held planet or reduction in the military is met with fierce opposition and fiery speeches about reclaiming the past. For most in the Royal Court, the Old Guard are just a quaint echo of nostalgia with no real authority.

Other nobles, ones with more understanding and insight, see the Old Guard for what they are – the last bastion of the pride that once took their race into the stars. For some, this makes them valuable allies and a force to be counted on when others would tarnish or sell off the grandeur of the Republic. For others, they are a dangerous obstacle that can come between any noble and his personal ambitions when power or profit would mean advancement at the expense of the empire. The Old Guard have been sorely disappointed in the actions of the Republic in the last hundred years; they are not likely to let any more of their peers cheapen the accomplishments and potential of their people.

The Old Guard are like any other group. There are noble, honourable members and there are conniving self-aggrandising nobles out for their own interests. The former are true dreamers, with one foot in the past and the other constantly seeking a path to the future. The latter are opportunists looking find a way for the force of personality the Old Guard possesses to propel them into fame and power. Were the Old Guard more of a formal institution, these hungry nobles might be expunged, but since the group is an informal one at best, they are tolerated because they still work toward the same ends.

The political connections of the Old Guard are not to be taken lightly. Many of them serve their family patriarchs directly and are sons and grandsons of the most powerful men in the Republic. The vast majority of the Old Guard are landed, wealthy nobility, though there is a sort of auxiliary membership of forward thinking commoners in a position or line of employment that gives them some insight or impact into the continued course of the empire.

Many members of the Old Guard do not even consider themselves part of a social group. The Old Guard does not hold official meetings, keep any form of consistent schedule or make it a point to review its membership. The Old Guard has no titular leader, though the elders of the group tend to set policy for the younger members to follow if they choose. The true bond of the group is their preference that the Empire returns to the glory of the past. Beyond that, every member of the Old Guard is an individual with his own schedule, agenda and motivations.

J,
I have done as you asked and identified the most effective combat units in the Centauri army. This was not a difficult assignment. It is harder to get Centauri to stop talking than it is getting them to start. I have enclosed a list of key military commanders for our coercion teams to contact. I do not think taking over the Centauri military will be difficult. Most of the soldiers I have spoken with are so hungry for glory, they'll do anything the Royal Court tells them to do.

You asked for a disposable army with the firepower to keep the League worlds fighting for years and the deniability to abandon when we are done with them. Here it is, all wrapped up in purple and gold.
M

Tactics of the Old Guard

When the members of the Old Guard want something done, they turn to the most powerful tool at their disposal – the Game of Houses. As the oldest and most established players in the game, these old nobles have all the status and wealth they need to see things come out in their favour more often than not. This is an abstract power base, but it is no less real and no lest potent for all of its obfuscation. The Old Guard play the status game for keeps and they play it well.

If a member of the Old Guard finds out that someone in the Royal Court is about to propose a concession treaty with the Drazi – one that would forfeit a border world and its defence

station – they are sure to act. The idea of giving up any more of the empire that has already been squandered between concessions, retreats and outright war losses is anathema to the dreams of past glory that sustain the Old Guard.

The first thing the Old Guard member is likely to do is tell other like-minded nobles about the upcoming proposal. This is where the centre of the Old Guard's influence lies. They disseminate information between each other and keep the 'group' informed of anything that might threaten the ascendancy of the Republic. By insuring that nothing goes unchallenged in the Royal Court, they watchdog the freedoms and power that the nobility have left. In an era where the galaxy seems intent on stripping the Centauri of their birthrights, they are their people's keepers.

The power of the Old Guard does not stop at gathering information. Once the Old Guard identifies a problem, they move as quickly as they can to neutralise it. The Old Guard does not resort to anything as base as murder, but anything short of it is a valid tool. The first course of action after a member of the Old Guard decides to act is typically a polite meeting. If a noble is called to another's home for a quiet dinner and some political commentary, they can be sure that the Old Guard has an issue with them.

At these meetings, the Old Guard member usually discusses a few peripheral matters to determine the subject noble's position on relevant state affairs before getting to the topic at hand. In the case of the Drazi concession, the conversation might wander from past border disputes to the military bases in the region before the Old Guard member brings up the proposal and how he 'happened to overhear the rumour of a possibility' involving such a thing coming before the Royal Court.

Once the topic is out in the open, the Old Guard noble then determines what can be done to eliminate the threat to the Republic's glory. As wealth and power can persuade many nobles, a secret bargain can be struck if the proposing noble is amenable to such an inducement. Many matters that would have come to the Royal Court's attention have been silenced this way. It happens so often that most nobles consider it the natural course of politics in the Republic. Some nobles go so far as to have set prices for certain political decisions, but this is uncommon even among the Centauri.

Sometimes, a noble's pride or ambition gets in the way of a reasonable bribe. This is a regrettable state of affairs, but the Old Guard is usually prepared to deal with it. A noble that risks the honour of the Republic has to be contained, just the thing for the oldest social trick in the book – blackmail. The Old Guard are among the class of nobles that invented the concept among the Centauri and they are very skilled in its application.

Members of the Old Guard (and a few other nobles interested in maintaining an edge over competitors) keep documents called collectively 'purple files'. A given noble's purple files contain enough illegal and immoral activity to ruin several other noble's careers and cause a massive drop in their status. By trading information in these files, some nobles have managed to amass quite a stockpile of embarrassing facts about their peers. For instance, it is rumoured that Londo Mollari – one of the most powerful members of the Old Guard – has a set of purple files so extensive, it could conceivably tear down the authority of the entire Royal Court.

Given this collection and the threat of exposing some of it to the proper authorities, a member of the Old Guard can usually convince a political rival to do things their way. Rather than have the fact that he secretly supplies Hyach mercenaries with Centauri weapons, a noble is likely to agree to just about anything the Old Guard has in mind.

If these measures all fail, there are still tactics and avenues of approach available to the Old Guard. Just because a matter comes up before the Royal Court does not make it Imperial Law. Few members of the Old Guard would ever think of using their political tricks against the Emperor. It would be unseemly and beneath them as men of honour. Still, there are several members of the Royal Court and a few of them will be called upon to enact any decision of that political body. If the Old Guard can 'convince' them to act according to their desires instead, a passed law is worth little more than the breath used to speak it in the first place.

Resources of the Old Guard

The Old Guard are wealthy nobles with long standing reputations in the most powerful houses of the Republic. That fact alone is the bulk of their political power and usually all the resource they need to accomplish their goals. Nowhere is the phrase, 'Old age and treachery beat youth and skill every time' more relevant than in the courts of the Centauri Republic. The Old Guard are mostly bitter old nobles with little time left to them and no desire to see the Republic they leave their descendants lessened by the actions of their short-sighted peers.

The wealth at the disposal of the Old Guard should not be discounted. With thousands of Imperial ducats to throw around as spending cash and valuable assets of their Houses worth millions more, there is little their influence cannot get them that their wealth will not buy. A determined member of the Old Guard can put together enough financial might to

buy and sell his competitors in the Royal Court. Even those who are not for sale are usually quite mercenary.

A valuable side-effect of status is presence, a trait that the Old Guard are all too happy to put to use in the political arena. Long before a member of the Old Guard has to worry about blackmail, bribery or coercion, the weight of his status may cause his opponents to bend to his will rather than risk upsetting him and dealing with the consequences of his wrath. This is more a trait of the older, more established nobles, but it is not a social force to be taken lightly.

Old Guard members have one other resource at their disposal that makes them the powerful group in Republic politics that they are – each other. When one member of the Old Guard is unable to accomplish something, they can always call upon other 'kindred spirits' to help see the task to completion. All of the Old Guard want the same end (though not always for the same reasons), so they usually lend their support to each other quite readily. Whenever a group of the Old Guard get together and can agree on the same goal, the galaxy trembles.

Challenges of the Old Guard

The unfortunate operative part of the last sentence is 'can agree on the same goal'. Glory and honour are easy words to say, but few Centauri mean the same things by them. What one member of the group sees as the future of the Republic is little more than a passing fancy or a quaint idea to another. Seldom can all of the Old Guard agree on what is truly the best course for the empire. This inability to see eye to eye on political issues can cripple their otherwise flawless power base.

The Centauri Republic itself is another obstacle that retards the effectiveness of the Old Guard. While they wish to see the Centauri Republic return to its years of bygone glory, most of the citizens of the empire want nothing of the kind. While life was grand and adventurous for the leaders and warriors of the Republic, it was hard going for commoners and slaves struggling to keep Homeworld and the colonies running smoothly under the stresses of war. Old Guard members have to keep the needs of their family and dependants in mind when they make their decisions; this responsibility does not always allow for the bold choices that they would like to support.

The Republic is also not in the same position it was in when it expanded in the first place. Instead of the strength and enthusiasm of the Centauri people driving the engines of conquest that took them to the stars, the Old Guard have to contend with decades of retreat and mediocrity keeping the Centauri entrenched in their safer, smaller empire. Faced with this lack of warrior spirit in their fellow nobles and citizens of the Republic, it can be difficult for the Old Guard to gather support for their bold and risky initiatives.

There are more sinister forces than lethargy and fear working against the Old Guard as well. The machinations of alien governments also using wealth and power to buy the support of Centauri nobles can make the Royal Court a miasma of self-interest and greed. The fact that some Centauri are more interested in lining their pockets with alien gold than promoting the glory of the Republic can make the halls of power on Centauri Prime very difficult to navigate.

Some alien interests are even more treacherous and difficult to combat. The Shadows have had an interest in the Centauri for quite some time, learning of their methods and ambitions through the use of agents and informants. Infiltrating the empire was not difficult for the Shadows, nor was it very hard to buy the loyalties of key Centauri nobles and commoner community leaders. By the time Mister Morden approached Londo Mollari on Babylon 5 in 2258, the reluctant noble's people had already been subverted at a very base level.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the Old Guard is the press of time. The Centauri are near the end of their run and many of the nobles can feel it. Their momentum is all but spent and without a drastic change in the way the Republic does things, they seem destined to fade out of the galactic eye forever. Unfortunately, change never comes without pain. It remains to be seen if the Old Guard will be able to ride through the storm that is coming for the Centauri and guide their people to a brighter tomorrow.

Pawns of the Shadows

When the Shadows began to move from their hidden places of power, they needed eyes and ears in the galaxy once again. They awoke a millennia after their last defeat and the universe had changed more than they would have thought possible. New civilisations had taken to the stars and old ones had crumbled into dust. Coalitions of races that had been enemies when they retreated from known space were now powerful allies and unlikely to come to their way of thinking.

And then there were the Centauri. A race so bent on dominion that during the last Shadow War, they had not even needed prompting in their conquests, the Centauri had avoided direct manipulation through attitude and timing. By the point in the war the Shadows might have considered trying to bring the Centauri into conflict with others, the enigmatic old race was being harried by the Vorlons and their

J,
By now you should have the document I sent on the various nobles I think we should approach. I think you'll agree with my choice of primary contact. He is a hardliner and a dedicated follower of the glory days of the 'Great Centauri Republic'. He'll be perfect for the task. He even comes with built-in insurance against any reprisals or reticence. If he balks at our offer, we can always go to one of his contemporaries.
M

allies. Through a chain of circumstance, the mighty Centauri empire was able to grow and thrive in a galaxy torn by war and never even realise the darkness they had been spared.

In the era of the Last Great War, things changed. This time, the Shadows awoke to find a Centauri Republic with little spirit left and its glory days far behind it. Hounded by the Narns and driven back away from all of its previous borders, the Centauri had become less than a shell of the might it had once embodied. The Republic had almost become too weak to be of any use to the Shadows.

It took human cruelty and Centauri ambition to convince the Shadows otherwise. Their agents infiltrated every level of the deflated empire and took stock of the Republic's potential value as a tool. While the empire was greatly in decline, it was also rife with political idealists, warmongers and many who would sell out their world, their families and their ideals for money and power. This was exactly what the Shadows were looking for and with that, the fate of the Centauri Republic was sealed.

It took more than the attention of the Shadows to drive the final nails into the Republic's coffin. For the ancient race to truly gain control of the Centauri, they needed the acceptance of its leaders. The current Emperor was an idealist whose desire for peace would never do, but failing health and dark ambition in other Centauri took care of that obstacle for the Shadows. Once the right people were in place to lead the Centauri astray, all that remained was to wait for the galaxy to erupt into war once again.

While the Shadows waited in the darkness for their chance to spread their 'doctrine' of change through conflict, they secured their hold on the Centauri Republic. They used human agents to make their initial investigations and contacts, but other allies proved more useful in keeping the Shadows' hold on these ambitious, prideful people. Once all the pieces were in place for the Centauri to start serving the Shadows, other servitors of the darkness stepped in to weave their own net through the centre of Centauri control.

By 2260, few Centauri would believe how under the sway of alien powers they all were. Through the deadly powers of the Drakh and their biological terrors, the 'keepers', the Shadows could insure absolute loyalty and instant compliance with their wishes. While the Drakh only had to move once in a while to exercise direct manipulation of Centauri leaders, their methods and the simple effects of fear and greed were all the Shadows needed to have complete dominion.

Until the reign of Emperor Mollari, the Drakh never directly controlled the throne. They did not see the need to do so before he ascended to the head of the Royal Court. Seeking revenge and realising the level of threat he posed to them because of his awareness of their manipulations, the Drakh took drastic steps to enforce his complicity.

I had some free time, so I thought I would come and update my journal. I am sorry for not doing this lately, but things have been crazy around here. I got a news update from my family on Homeworld and I could hardly believe it. Londo confirmed what I had heard, but it still sounded so wrong. It worries me that I can accept ugly truths from him better than I can from other Centauri. It means I think him capable of worse things than other people.

We just bombed Narn with mass drivers. Our fleet calls that a 'cestus modification'. I can't believe that not only are we so willing to throw aside galactic treaties, we actually have official titles for our treachery. Mass drivers have been illegal in the Republic for more than a half century, yet we have resorted to them in a matter of months. The Narn were beaten weeks ago, what we are doing now is worse than overkill. It's genocide. It's murder. It's ugly.

The terrible thing about all this where the ambassador is concerned is that I honestly don't think he is upset right now because of the millions of dead Narns. The only thing that really angers him about all this is that it's unseemly. He was so looking forward to a definitive martial victory followed by days of recriminations and war trials. I think he wanted to have the war go on a little longer and with a little less help from his 'friends' in the shadows. Londo wants the Centauri Republic to win its own war the way we used to. He wanted us to drive the Narns from the stars and leave them huddled on their homeworld crying for mercy.

This, to him, must feel like cheating. The Narns have no homes left. Our mass drivers have silenced their cries. He wanted a battle of giants, we have slaughtered children with asteroids from the sky. Sadly, I don't think he sees the death of innocents. I think he just sees the wasted opportunity to feel glory in our victory.

Maybe that's the real loss here. Londo just wants to feel again, but that bastard Refa has taken that from him. I don't think this will end between them until someone bleeds. Londo has that look in his eyes when he talks to Refa now. I've seen it before. I saw it when he came for his coutari for his duel with Urza. He sees where this is going to lead. He sees the death of another friend and likely by his own hand.

Through bribery, emotional control, political manipulation and direct physical coercion, the Drakh have ensured that the while their masters may be gone, the legacy of the Shadows lives on in the galaxy that spurned them. This remembrance serves another goal as well; the Drakh are as addicted to power as any other race. Now they are the masters of their own destiny and those who opposed the Shadows will pay for their affront. While they control the Centauri, the Drakh are quite content to use their puppet's ships and forces to burn every world they cannot conquer.

Tactics of the Shadows and their Pawns

For the majority of the last Great War and the many months of control that proceeded it, the Shadows controlled the Centauri simply through offers of power and subtle threats of reprisal should they not comply. Many nobles fell under their sway purely though the offers of glory and prestige, but others needed more direct persuasion. No tactic was off limits to the Shadows. If loved ones had to be threatened or killed to ensure co-operation, it was done without remorse or hesitation.

Most of the Shadow's minions moved in more subtle ways. Murder was a valid tactic to exercise control over the Republic, but there were better ways to find willing pawns in the empire. This was the terrible lesson that their human agents taught the Shadows – a clenched fist might subjugate a race, but an open hand offered under the pretence of friendship could accomplish much more. Slaves who thought they were masters rebelled less often and were far easier to control. This tactic was echoed in the other races of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds and even the Earth Alliance with similar success.

One tool of the Shadows that provided a huge turning point in the allegiance of the Centauri Republic was the application

of force. By offering the might of their impressive fleet, the Shadows were able to instigate a destabilising war in the galaxy – the War of Retribution between the Narns and Centauri. Moreover, they were able to do so while convincing both sides that they were acting in their own interests without any outside intervention. Even better, aside from a few key contacts, no one in the Centauri Republic even knew the Shadows existed.

Their preference to act while staying hidden kept the manipulation of the Centauri going long after less subtle interference would have been seen and neutralised. While the Republic was certainly motivated into serving the Shadow's interests through its own greed and hunger for glory, it would never have continued its collusion if the leaders of the Centauri learned of the true beneficiaries of their efforts. The Centauri made excellent pawns, but they would never have done so willingly.

Deception was a strong suit of the Shadows and their allied race, the Drakh. Human agents of the Shadows brought the Centauri into their fold, but the Drakh kept them there. Stealth and subterfuge were elements of deception the Drakh excelled at; both were used to keep the Centauri under control once their connection to the Shadows had been confirmed. While the Centauri might have been brought willingly into the service of the Shadows had they won the last Great War, it was decided to keep them as unwitting pawns until that time.

The pawns of the Shadows rarely knew about each other and that also worked to their controller's advantage. The need for secrecy and the dark deeds the Centauri were often asked to do for their masters kept them from talking about their actions to anyone, serving the Shadows' desire to remain anonymous and hidden perfectly. With no one wishing recriminations for the crimes they were committing, the real motivations of the Shadows were hidden from the galaxy at large.

As for the tactics of the Shadow's pawns themselves, there was no trick or crime they were above to serve their own ambitions. They used their influence, lied, blackmailed, murdered and manipulated each other using every method at their disposal. In other words, the Shadows got them over to their side and then let them act the same way the Centauri always had.

Resources of the Shadow Pawns

The most brilliant part of the Shadows' subversion of the Centauri was the ability to use the resources of the Republic for their own ends. The Shadows needed to provide very little and take virtually no risk upon themselves to achieve their ends. Aside from a little military might, which they needed to do in any case to test their fleet's capacities after such a long period of dormancy, the Shadows created a self-perpetuating source of both tools and resources without needing to perpetuate the cycle through expenditures of their own.

The pawns of the Shadows each had whatever influence and wealth at his disposal to further his goals and fulfil the directives of his (or her, as several key females in the empire were also manipulated to get at their influential male family members) direct manipulators. More often than not, a human agent of the Shadows guided these actions, but the Drakh and their keepers got personally involved after the defeat of the Shadows and their exodus from the borders of known space.

The Centauri Republic was a much better choice for manipulation than the Narns for several reasons, not the least of which were their wealth and galactic connections. The Narn were bent of gaining revenge on the Centauri. This violence spoke to the heart of the Shadows' cause, but did little to serve its ends. The Centauri on the other hand brought with them a powerful fleet and more than a dozen worlds with rich resource bases and the will to dominate every other race in the galaxy. The Narn would have stopped their conquest of Centauri Prime, but the Centauri would never have been satisfied with anything less than total dominion.

Their complicity, coerced as it was, with the Shadows provided the ancient race with a useful fleet, a foil for its ultimate plans and all the wealth and power in the temporal galaxy it could need. Between the Centauri and the sections of the Earth Alliance the Shadows controlled, they possessed all the power and resources they felt they needed to begin their new war of dominion. If things had gone differently,

the combination of Centauri might, Earth influence and Shadow technology could easily have dominated every system in galaxy.

The most powerful resource of the Shadows' pawns was one they shared with first the Shadows and then with the Drakh – fear. Terror and the ability to create it in others is one of the most powerful motivators in the universe. More primal than any other emotion besides hate, fear is a universal language and one the Shadows were well versed in speaking to its minions and its enemies. The pawns of the Shadows in the Centauri Republic always understood this principle and their skills at wielding terror only became more potent through association.

Challenges of the Shadow Pawns

The first challenge that lies ahead of the Shadow Pawns is the need to remain secret. While the Drakh are individually powerful and their keepers can control any living beings they inhabit, they are still incredibly outnumbered on Centauri Prime. This leaves them vulnerable should they and their manipulations ever be brought into the public eye. While the loss of life would be terrible for the Centauri should they rise up against the Drakh, the aliens would lose due to the sheer press of numbers.

This same weakness exists in the Centauri pawns themselves. For the price of fame and fortune, they have sold out the trust placed in them by the Centauri people and their peers. If their collusion with an alien power was discovered, the remainder of their lives would be spent fleeing the retribution they so richly deserve. The only thing the Centauri hate more than the decline of their empire is a traitor to its honoured memory.

The other challenges the Centauri pawns face are obvious ones. The forces moving against the Shadows will not take kindly to their complicity in the dark alien's bid to conquer the galaxy. In addition to the military reprisals that can and will come against the empire by younger races they have wronged at their masters' bidding, the Centauri have to face one other implacable challenge brought about by their link to the Shadows – the Vorlons.

When, near the end of the last Great War, the Vorlons began eradicating every planet in league with the Shadows, Centauri Prime eventually came under their deadly scrutiny. While the machinations of the Shadow pawns did not stop when the Vorlon Planet Killer turned aside at the last moment, they changed dramatically. While the Shadows intended to use the Centauri and then cast them aside, the Drakh were motivated by vengeance against the Centauri for their part in crippling the Shadows' influence in the Republic (with the nuclear destruction of the island base they were using).

This then becomes the last challenge of the Shadow pawns; surviving servitude to the Drakh. Whereas the Shadows used the Centauri under the pretence of nurturing the empire, the Drakh feel no need to mask their intentions. They intended to use the Centauri to strike at the other races of the galaxy, using them up in the process. They are well aware of the firestorm they will call down upon the Centauri for their aggressive actions against the League of Non-Aligned worlds, but they do not care. They intend to see the galaxy burn for its presumption in resisting the Shadows. When the ashes get sifted, the Drakh intend to be the only true surviving power.

Using Power Blocks in the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game

Centauri players may well come up against or become members of the groups listed in this chapter. While membership in the minor groups at the front of the chapter can occur with little to no in-game effect, the ramifications of being Old Guard or

J,
You know I do not disagree with you often, but I really feel I must protest the way things are going here on Centauri Prime. We have a great set-up here with limitless potential for reward, but letting these aliens come in to maintain 'discipline' is something that could seriously get out of hand. I think we can keep the Centauri in line with our own methods. The Shadow's lackeys and their brain leeches could upset the whole system.

Please consider suggesting to our associates that we can keep the Centauri loyal and obedient without needing any help. The more we let other races get involved in our intrigues, the less we will be able to control our pawns when the gameboard changes. We both know what is coming and the Centauri will follow our lead without resorting to what these freaks plan to do.
M

a pawn of the Shadows could be very wide-reaching. Games Masters should carefully consider allowing Centauri players to delve this deeply into their racial culture before allowing it into the campaign.

While this material is useful for creating character backgrounds and setting up motivations for plot lines and story arcs, it can create problems in the game if Centauri players become too involved with the true powers behind the scenes in the Republic. Old Guard characters become inextricably concerned with the politics of the Royal Court and Shadow pawns become, at some level, antagonists in most campaigns. If these complications work for a given game, Games Masters should certainly allow the Players to have access to them, but many games will become too Centauri focused for players of other races to feel comfortable or be effective.

Games Masters should also be careful not to ascribe too many in-game benefits to being a member of a power block in the Centauri Republic. The advantages of the Status system greatly outweigh its drawbacks as it is, especially in a game that centres on the Republic. Since power blocks are effectively subsumed into the Status rules, additional bonuses are not entirely appropriate and can seriously unbalance a Centauri character if handled incorrectly.

If a Games Master wishes to ascribe some rules benefit to being a member of a power block, the Centauri player in question should not receive anything more dramatic than a +1 circumstance bonus to Charisma skill and attribute checks when dealing with fellow members of that block and an automatic 'alliance' status for the purposes of Status expenditures with these other Centauri. This benefit should also come with drawbacks pulled from the Challenges section of the two power blocks listed above. In the case of minor power blocks, the benefits should be small enough to keep any additional penalties from being necessary.

New power blocks can easily be created by the Games Master if a need for one comes up during play. For the most part, power blocks should be invisible to non-Centauri and less than obvious for citizens of the Republic. The Old Guard do not march up and down espousing their rhetoric at the top of their lungs. They understand the need for subtlety and discretion just as all Centauri do. While some social power blocks have an organised title and function, most do not.

Centauri players looking to establish a dynasty in the Republic may seek to create their own organisations. This should be encouraged if the game can support that level of involvement with the politics and social interactions of the Centauri Republic. Things in the campaign that have direct Player involvement can become a detailed, important part of the game and strong character motivation for later storylines. While the Games Master needs to keep a tight control on Player-run organisations, some involvement on a creative level can foster a deeper level of connection between the characters and the campaign.

History of Centauri Civilisation

The story of the Centauri is a unique one in many respects. Though they, like many other galactic races, have a steady progression of technological and societal advancement from prehistory to space flight, they have taken many quantum leaps ahead in the former regard while remaining somewhat limited in the latter. The history of the Centauri is one of strife, conquest and ever-expanding and retracting dominions. It is very telling of the psychology of the Centauri that their method of keeping track of yearly passage is suffixed by the first year of their empire's formation – C.E. or Centauri Empire.

Readers of this section should keep in mind that some information could be incorrect for its greater part. This is due to the numerous conflicting reports within the historical texts of the Centauri themselves. It is said that history is written by the victors; for the Centauri, history is consistently rewritten by Emperors. When an incident has been found politically inexpedient by a new administration, it is 'cleansed' from the records by Imperial edict. This can make finding an accurate report of the past very difficult to obtain.

All of the lore in this chapter comes from the most reliable source left in the Centauri Republic, the historical archives on the planet of Immolan. The historical vault established in the Lorro Outpost under the watchful eye of Emperor Tregan, reputedly one of the most honourable and honest Emperors to ever ascend the throne, is considered the most accurate record of the Republic and Homeworld in existence. Even the purge of Ludo III that destroyed most of Lorro Outpost was unable to destroy the majority of the transcripts stored in the vault, though some passages have since had to be restored.

B.E., Before Empire – The Prehistory of the Centauri

The evolution of the Centauri and their dark sibling race the Xon occurred in the twin cradles of two large landmasses on their homeworld. This planet, called Homeworld by the Centauri now, was called Durana in the first language of the Centauri and Koloth by the Xon as soon as they developed speech and the will to use it. Both races came from the same evolutionary source – a feral branch of the primate population of the planet.

I have had the most interesting request from my friend today. Lennier wants to know the history of our civilisation. I think he studied language and history in what passes for their academy on Minbar and that's why he is curious about us so often. I keep trying to answer his questions directly, but he asks things in such detail, I am usually at a loss. I thought about using Londo's codes to download the archives at Lorro for him, but considering what happened with Doctor Franklin and the whole medical thing, maybe I'd better not.

Still, he has gotten me curious now. History was never really my strong suit at the academy. Nothing was really my strong suit in academy, come to think about it. Do I even have a strong suit? Oh well, anyway, back to the history thing. I am going to access Lorro Station's computer system and look up the answers to his questions. I am rather curious about some of the things Lennier asked about.

Like the question he asked about how we discovered space travel. I know our ancestors found a crashed spaceship on our world somewhere, but I don't really know any more than that. I mean, there have to be some details on the matter somewhere, right? I told him about the wrecked spacecraft and now he's asking what race it was from. That's a very good question when you stop and think. Which I try not to, honestly. It usually just makes me ill.

Lennier said he was asking because he wanted to know who to blame. I am not sure what he meant by that. Minbari can be so odd sometimes.

The Centauri developed with little body hair and greater social interaction because of the differing conditions of their continental home. Conditions for the Xon were much more difficult; their continent was slightly smaller and the habitable areas were in a colder area of the land mass. Because the Xon had to fight more often and with fiercer creatures for food and survival, they developed a close knit tribal structure and retained more of the bestial traits of their kethka ancestors. By the time both races emerged fully evolved in their respective habitats, they were considerably different beings.

In contrast with the direly harsh environment of the Xon, the Centauri had a much wider temperate zone and easier prey to stalk and kill. They were not entirely without developmental challenges and early exposure to deadly pathogens and mildly poisonous water supplies both took their toll on Centauri populations and engendered a strong constitution in the survivors. The Centauri never developed a tribal mentality to the same degree as the Xon, but their immediate families became very close knit as a way of compensating for their early losses and need for social interaction.

The climate of Durana (Koloth) never underwent a drastic shift as with similar homeworlds like Earth or Markab. Instead of a massive upheaval killing off larger predators and making room for smaller, weaker mammalian life, the Xon simply overwhelmed and destroyed their more dangerous competitors while the Centauri established dominance through intellect and inventiveness. Before the Centauri had a written language, they had access to primitive missile weapons and fairly advanced hunting tactics.

Early Religion

The Centauri learned to live in harmony with their environment in stark contrast to their later societal tendencies. Primitive Centauri families established meeting circles and caverns for grand gatherings mostly out of a sense of simple community. In these places, they would paint pictures of the animals they would hunt and those that hunted them. These gatherings took on religious overtones after a considerable length of time. By the end of the first developmental stage of Centauri evolution, they possessed a sizeable 'pantheon' of animal gods.

In what would show itself to be typical Centauri assumption of dominance, these early deities were servile in nature, either giving of their populations to sustain the Centauri or culling the weak and the slow through savagery to improve the race as a whole. The Centauri learned the lesson of improvement through competition very early in its history, matching up such concepts with the deadly predators of their land. In this primitive society, the deadliest god of the Centauri was a white animal with red hands – the personification of death in the kethka monkey. Why the kethka death god was white when the actual creature is predominantly black furred is a historical mystery.

The Centauri's spiritual beliefs became very complex over the centuries of their primitive existence. When they hunted, the gods of the animals they stalked guided them. They would pray before a hunt, during a hunt and offer thanks to the deity associated with any slain animal they brought back for their food. It was considered a mark of honour for a Centauri hunter to wear the furs and hides of the creatures they killed. This patchwork outfits became honour garb of the highest order. The most complicated hunter's robes signified the leader of each gathering.

This rule by physical prowess lasted a long time, with entire communities gathering around the exploits of a single great hunter and his family. Each hunter would choose a totem animal and hunt that beast with a special religious zeal. Early societal development in the communities came from the nuances of these animalistic religions. Some communities became primarily concerned with service and existence in harmony with the land. Others who worshipped predator species became more dominant over time.

By the end of the second cycle of Centauri development, an era marked wholly by the effects of religion and spiritual belief, the race had spread its growing numbers across the face of the continent and was divided into hundreds of communities. Each one was a cluster of related families, with their sole, binding trait the worship of an intricate collective of gods. Foremost among these deities was Tenvo, the kethka god of death, and Shia-leth, the goddess of life.

Coming of the Great Maker

The third cycle of Centauri development came surprisingly swiftly in the form of a religious revolution that cannot be adequately explained by historians. From what few fragmented reports of the era exist, it seems that encounters with a being called the Great Maker (Toro Viamata, in the language of the time) caused a number of communities in the heart of the Centauri dominated continent to suddenly shift their beliefs to include this new god at the head of their pantheons. No explanation is given for this change in religious doctrine, but there have been speculations of alien involvement.

The most convincing proof of alien interference with the culture of the primitive Centauri societies of the era can be found on the stone paintings of Genari Mound. Here, pale images have been discovered that show a humanoid figure with light coming from its eyes striking down numerous animals with 'hands of wrath'. This phrase comes from

a partial translation of the surviving inscriptions on the circle stones in question. The pictures themselves seem to represent fire coming from the outstretched limbs of the Great Maker. This could easily have been an energy weapon carried by an alien visitor.

Whatever the truth of the Great Maker, he is worshipped as a life god rather than a death god because of some curious traits associated with the deity. His appearance in early Centauri history is sporadic, correlating roughly with seasonal changes, and his only consistent activity seems to have been the destruction of predator species such as the kethka monkey.

Other images of the Great Maker show him leaving stripped kills where the Centauri could find them and feast; this behaviour more than any other seems to have convinced the primitive Centauri of his benevolence as a deity. There are images on some remote cave walls and stone circles of a humanoid who might be the Great Maker stalking and killing Centauri hunters, but these incidents appear to have been isolated and may be unrelated primitive conjecture.

The only verifiable truth about the Great Maker is that in a short span of time, he rose to become the pre-eminent deity of the Centauri, replacing all others as the head of the Centauri animalistic pantheons. Over time, the Great Maker's influence as a humanoid above animals had a dramatic secondary effect on Centauri culture. Instead of idolising animals, they began idolising their own form. Early images of the Great Maker engaged in hunts and wearing a mask were replaced with a Great Maker who looked far more like a Centauri.

The animal gods also started to evolve into Centauri correlates. While they retained some of their personality traits, these animalistic deities took on the characteristics of different Centauri ideals. This happened in nearly every Centauri community and took the form of parallel religious development. It is from this phenomenon and its community guidance that the later tradition of private family gods came about.

On a related note on the Great Maker, it appears from what records survived the annihilation of the Xon that they too

worshipped a single deity in the form of a kethka monkey. This over-god ruled their religious ceremonies, most of which were primal and savage, until it (no gender was recorded for the deity, though it is likely that the Xon considered it male) was 'slain' by the coming of a new god from the stars. This god was not benevolent to the Xon and there are hundreds of images, mostly disjointed, of this masked humanoid with glowing eyes killing dozens of them at a time. Why this possible Great Maker analogue would treat the predatory Xon and the more social Centauri differently is another historical mystery.

The Stirrings of Empire

The Centauri, united by their belief in the Great Maker, began spreading out their small communities. Like-minded Centauri joined their family dwellings together into larger collectives. Other families moved from their areas to join others and settle more fertile lands or places with better hunting. Agriculture became part of the Centauri way of life and they turned from hunter/gatherers into hunter/farmers. All of this was thanks to the unification brought about through religious and collected self-interest.

Not every social development of this era was a positive one. The Great Maker was a provider and a life deity, but he was also a war god of the first order. Those with authority and power in Centauri society began to exercise it on rival communities with resources they desired. This was the era of the first Centauri warlords and in their wake, more rose to take by force what they did not possess by social interaction and community.

What followed was a bloody time for the Centauri as the first warlords joined their families and settlements together into kingdoms for protection against each other. Dwellings, previously needed only for shelter from the elements, became influenced by the need to repel attacking forces from other kingdoms. The first fortresses came about in this era, primarily made of wood and stone atop tall hills for their defensive value. One of the greatest of these forts still exists in ruins on the Mound of Genari in the Reeshi Plateau.

From the relative safety of these forts, the warlords of the era planned out campaigns of conquest that raged through the Centauri like brushfires. Thousands died in battles that secured a larger kingdom for one warlord only to have it lost again in the next conflict. The lines of dominion changed so often during this time that it became impossible to accurately gauge where one kingdom ended and the next began. This period of time was one of the most barbaric in Centauri history.

It ended with the Thexia Accordis, an agreement by the four strongest warlords of the age to cease their conflict with each other and respect a unified map that granted domination of set areas to each of them. This accord was obeyed for the most part by each of the signing leaders and while it did not completely stop the bloodshed, it limited warfare to the smaller warlords that had not been present during its negotiations. Because the Thexia Accordis divided the entire continent between the four Kings, it did not recognize anyone else's rights of rulership. Thus, while the four warlords stopped attacking each other, that simply gave them free reign to start conquering the smaller communities within their domains.

These smaller wars were in many respects more brutal than the ones that had come before, but their outcomes were rarely in question. By the end of the 'prehistory' of the Centauri, as Imperial historians record it, there were four Centauri Kings and they collectively ruled what they called the Vonodiro, the 'Great Empire'.

This political body is not the Empire referred to as the Centauri Empire, but it was the founding form upon which the true Centauri planetary Empire would later be created. The Great Empire was extant for eleven generations, long enough for rule to be established and the small freedom fighter rebellions to be quelled among an occasionally restless populace. The Great Empire might have endured in its quadratic state for much longer than it did if not for the discovery of the Xon.

Historically, this is the foundation marker for the beginning of recorded time as C.E., even though the Centauri Empire to which it refers does not actually occur until 440 C.E. by its own reckoning.

The End of Innocence

While no Centauri who lived in the era of the Great Empire could consider his or her life truly innocent, there was a mistaken ideal that they were the only true intelligence in existence. Under this false assumption, the lives of the Centauri went on under the guidance of the Four Kings and their technology thrived. Peace allowed the Centauri to develop a social culture and further their active minds in the pursuits of science and exploration.

The northern and southern limits of their home continent were thoroughly mapped out and settled, but the restless spirits of the Centauri needed more to discover. Basic innovations such as the wheel and simple machines gave rise to metallurgy and weaving techniques. By the time the Centauri were ready to leave their continent and explore the vast oceans to either side, they were able to do so in tall

masted sailing ships of impressive endurance and design. The early Centauri of the Imperial Age were explorers and inventors more than they were warriors; the brutal violence of the past was no longer dominant in their nature.

This would prove to be their initial undoing. The first continental explorers left from the easternmost shore of Centauri lands and sailed in search of a bold, new adventure. They found adventure all right, but they were not fated to survive it. Arriving months later on the shores of a new land, they met a new species they had never imagined could exist. The people of this other continent looked something like them, but were hairy and not as culturally or technologically developed.

There are no records of this initial meeting, but history shows that whatever transpired during this first contact, it did not go well. Nearly one year to the day after the Centauri ships set off on their great adventure, they returned. They original Centauri crews had been slaughtered and the deck rails were decorated with their heads. Aboard the ships were hundreds of Xon, the race they had encountered. They left devastation in their wake and port cities burned wherever they went.

The Centauri had not been prepared for their sneak attack, nor were they prepared for the fleet of newly constructed Xon warships that followed them across the ocean. The Xon were behind the Centauri in both intelligence and development, but they were an adaptive race and once introduced to a concept, they quickly learned how to utilise it. Xon ships were somewhat crude, but they were tough and their crews were tougher. The Xon rapidly laid waste to the coastal settlements of the Centauri and forced them back to the safety of their inner kingdoms.

This was the Centauri's darkest hour. They were suddenly assaulted by an unknown enemy and caught completely defenceless. They had advanced past the need for the mighty militaries of the past and become a society of artists and explorers. Their kingdoms suffered loss after loss at the bloody hands of the Xon. Thousands of Centauri were killed. Many more were held captive in their own cities, occupied now by Xon, and forced to serve as slaves.

End of the First Empire

The power of the Four Kings had been broken. Each one, unable or unwilling to devote forces to the defence of the others, was unable to stand alone against the power of the Xon invaders. After eleven generations of peaceful rule, the Great Empire fell apart and authority returned to the individual families and communities from whence it had come.

These families united against the threat of the Xon. The first collectives were the Houses, each one the result of several related or similar families banding together under charismatic or powerful leadership and adopting a single identity. The Houses centred in defensible positions and repelled Xon attack through technological superiority and sheer will to survive. The Great Empire was no more, but a dozen smaller kingdoms rose from its ashes.

The power of the Xon was too great for even the strength of the Houses to resist for long. After the loss of the strongest House of the time to the Xon, the others realized that isolated and separate, they would all fall to the invaders eventually. Rather than try to fight off the Xon as individual groups, the leaders of the surviving Houses came together in a historic meeting and formed the Centaurum, a united kingdom under the combined leadership of the House elders.

This was a shaky alliance to begin with, but the assembled forces of the Centaurum were able to force the Xon back to their strongholds on the coast in one successful battle after another. By driving the Xon from the heartlands of their continent, the Centauri were able to take back their homes and cities. In nearly every case, they won only charred land and ruins, but the Xon no longer dominated them. That was all the morale victory they needed in those early days of the war. Few slaves were ever recovered from the savage Xon, but death was considered a better end than enslavement.

The prehistory of the Centauri was written in blood, with the Centauri driving back the Xon and fighting for every regained mile of their continent. This era has little historical record, but what has been recovered paints a desperate picture of rebellion against their Xon persecutors and a gradually increasing sense of unity against a common foe. The Centaurum became the symbol of the Centauri's strength of purpose and right to live free.

Early Centauri History (C.E. 440 – 800)

The founding of the Centaurum at the start of the true war against the Xon was the foundation for the unification of the Centaurum and all collectives of the Centauri into the political body known as the Republic. Technically defined as a gathering of independent families and freeholds under the combined leadership of the Centaurum as an administrative council, few Centauri believed the Republic to be anything other than a continental empire. This conception of the Republic was prevalent even among the elders of the Centaurum and the common parlance referring to the Republic was the 'Centauri Empire'.

The Xon were still a major threat at the time and much of the early efforts of the Centaurum were bent towards dealing with their constant raids and winning minor but ultimately significant victories against their entrenched bases along the Centauri coast. The war technologies of the Centauri began to develop considerably during this period of time. Slings gave way to arrows, which in turn gave way to *sholost,* the Centauri equivalent of a long stocked crossbow.

With better-ranged capability came the answer to the greatest weakness the Centauri faced in their struggles against the Xon. They were no match for the brutish warriors in a physical confrontation and had to establish tactics that played to their own strengths. The Xon used hurled projectiles when they fought with range at all; this allowed the Centauri to fight a shooting war once they had weapons that could defeat the Xon at a distance greater than the invaders' retaliation. While this advantage only lasted for a few years until the Xon began replicating their weapons, it was enough to turn the tide of the war and give the Centauri a few much needed victories.

The Xon were driven from the shores of the Centauri continent through the combined efforts of the Centaurum army and new innovations in technology. The most significant of these was the discovery of explosive granules capable of propelling rocks and demolishing defensive structures. While these inventions cost the Centauri centuries of historical dwellings and lore, it was worth it to them to blast the Xon from the face of their homeland.

Once the wrath of the Centauri had been roused, it was not easily sated. They were no longer slaves and the Xon were driven back to their own continent, but this was not enough. The Centauri built war vessels with cannons and room for raiding parties of their own. The next time their ships appeared on the ocean horizon of the Xon continent, it was to deliver the Centaurum's decree of extermination. The Centauri would not be satisfied until their bloody retribution for the centuries of murder and enslavement at the hands of the Xon was complete.

War Abroad, War at Home

The Centauri were bringing death to the Xon on another continent when their world drew the attention of another race of sentient beings. These were not from another shore but from another star. The Shoggren, a violent race of conquerors, came to the Centauri Homeworld during this era and began a systematic attack of its largest cities and population centres. Seemingly unconcerned with the Xon, they focused their efforts directly on the Centauri.

There are differing historical opinions on this invasion, including the supposition that the Shoggren were in thrall to a much greater species elsewhere in the galaxy. This master species, possibly the Shadows, was apparently disinterested in the Centauri corner of the galaxy, but their servants seemed to have a vested interest in subjugating the world. Their attentions may also have been drawn to the Centauri by the presence of a second alien group to visit the planet at that time – the Technomages.

If historical accounts are to be believed, the Technomages came to the Centauri Homeworld during the initial invasions of the Centauri against the Xon continent. What brought them to the planet is not a matter of record, but their involvement with one of the Centaurum ruling Houses has been well documented. The House in question, Tuscano, received remarkably advanced technology from the Technomages and members of his family were apparently allowed to study with that group in a form of cultural exchange. The degree to which the technology of the Centaurum was advanced or how much aid the Technomages actually provided is open for speculation.

When the Shoggren attacked, the Technomages backed the efforts of Tuscano in directing the Centaurum to defy their intentions of conquering the world. While there are no records of Technomage assistance in any of the epic battles against the Shoggren, it seems unlikely that the Centauri would have been able to pit their pre-industrial technology against the superior weapons and war machines of the Shoggren without some serious support. Historians assume that when the Technomages left shortly after the end of the Shoggren War, they erased every record of their involvement they could find.

Most of the legacy of the Technomages on the Centauri homeworld went with them when they departed, but their support propelled House Tuscano into the position of first House of the Centaurum and ensured its head's appointment to the newly formed Imperial Throne. Lord Tuscano changed his personal House name to Kiro as a commemoration of his new role as a leader among equals and to separate himself from the presumption that as Emperor, he would favour his House.

With the Shoggren destroyed, the Centaurum under Emperor Kiro turned all of their attention against the Xon. Their improved technology was now in the industrial age thanks to the residual gifts of the Technomages and with its advances, the Centauri were unstoppable. They hunted down their aggressors to the ends of their own continent and killed them all. This genocide ended three hundred years after the appointment of Emperor Kiro, but he is historically credited

with leading the war against the Xon and seeing them all exterminated. Whether this is the result of erroneous record keeping or some incredible longevity granted to him by the Technomages is unclear.

The wars were over. The Xon were destroyed and the Shoggren all but a memory. The Centauri were aware of life among the stars, but they had no means by which to explore them. The Centaurum guided the way through the next few centuries with a growing level of dominion over the Centauri populace until by the end of what is commonly considered the early part of true Centauri history, the framework for the nobility, the common classes and the Imperial government were all in place.

The Era of Imperial Strife (C.E. 800 – 1100)

The Centauri people were united, but very few of them were equal. Those with connections to the families founding the Centaurum were a privileged lot, but many other regions under their sway were not so fortunate. Centaurum families had effectively lifted themselves into an elite status and with that, nobility was the next logical step. Other families with something to offer those in power were also elevated, but every other Centauri quickly became members of the underprivileged masses.

This created the noble and commoner classes that exist in the Republic to modern times. While things were not quite as officially separated until the Dium Centauris compact of C.E. 810, the division between the classes grew increasingly obvious and there was little difficulty in telling the societal elite from the rest of the Centauri. Wealth became a gulf between the classes, but political power turned into the true dividing line. The nobles could set policy through the Royal Court; commoners could only abide by their decisions and hope to subsist on what was given to them.

It should not come as a surprise that this led to dozens of insurrections, each more violent than the last, after the signing of the Dium Centauris. The first true civil war emerged in the southern provinces of the prime continent (the continent that the Centauri developed on) two years after the compact, but there were skirmishes and unrest long before that. This war was an unusual one for the Centauri; it marked the first outbreak of violence within the Centauri since their dominion wars before the Xon.

None of the Centauri were prepared for what came next. The weapons they had built to kill the brutally enduring Xon were more than powerful enough to annihilate their fellow Centauri on the battlefield. Ancient buildings were torn apart in a matter of moments with their explosives and their cannons laid waste to horse, rider and home alike as the civil war spilled over into the populated centres of Imperial cities. The nobility found that their elevated status was no defence against a firearm in the hands of a commoner; commoners learned that no matter how just their cause, the upper class were as adamant about fighting as they were.

The destruction of this first civil war and the shock it engendered in the Centauri brought it to a swift end. Both sides realised that no matter who was being mistreated or not given the respect they deserved, continued bloodshed would only leave them all dead. A tenuous peace and concessions occurred quickly thereafter and life returned to a tense calm. The occasional outbreak of violence punctuated the next twenty years, but the overall atmosphere was one of peace.

The Prince of Darkness

Then came Emperor Burago II and everything changed for the worse. A man as vile as any Xon, it was whispered among his Court when he was not present that his bloodline had been muddied between his honoured ancestor and the present generation. As intolerant of the nobility as the first Burago, his descendant had none of the former Emperor's rustic charm or redeeming qualities. Instead, he was the worst combination of irreverence and callousness.

Burago II was the Centauri's first test of the divine eminence of the Imperial way. None of

the Centauri could conceive of an Emperor being anything other than a forceful, insightful monarch. The bloodline failed with Burago II; he was short-sighted, vicious and unconcerned with any aspect of the Republic that did not benefit him directly.

This reign marks the one and only time the Royal Court ever willingly instigated a direct coup. Following Burago II's decree that taxes would triple on the working classes for two years to fund a new Imperial Palace on his family's lands, the nobles around him could sit idly no longer. Knowing that such an edict would cause another revolution, the proclamation never left the room. First one, then another and then finally every noble in the Court rose up against the Emperor.

Emperor Burago II had only one gift from his heritage; he was a physically powerful man. The ornamental weapons carried in the Royal Court were not capable of immediately killing him, even attacking from surprise as the first few nobles managed to do. He and his guards lived long enough to take nine of the assembled nobles with them into the darkness beyond death. Blood soaked the white marble of the palace; those who survived the massacre did so only by fortune or guile. When the Royal Guard flooded into the hall, there was little to do but count bodies.

The Years of Blood

The survivors were faced with a quandary. The Emperor had been a monster, but his legacy was one of divine choice by the Great Maker. While few in the Republic held to their old beliefs any longer, the nobles of the Royal Court would still be executed if their parts in Burago II's death were discovered. They needed a scapegoat to take the fall for their actions and found one in the form of a dead palace servant caught in the crossfire of their coup.

Unfortunately, lies beget lies and blood calls for blood. The Royal Guard, mostly uncontrolled with the Minister General dead on the Centaurum floor, took it upon themselves to punish this terrible crime. The servant's family was rounded up and executed in their homes in retribution. Other families in the city where this happened saw soldiers from the palace killing citizens for 'no apparent reason' and old hatreds boiled over again. The Royal Guards never left the city; they were killed in retaliation before they could move more than a few feet from their victims.

This touched off the most vicious civil war in the history of the Republic itself. Those nobles who had survived the killing of Emperor Burago II knew their complicity in the affair, but things went far beyond their control too quickly for them to hope to contain it. They had inadvertently given the Centauri commoners the excuse to begin the revolution they had been trying to stop. The skies of the Centauri homeworld filled with the smoke of wartime pyres for a generation.

Finally, fifty years after the death of Burago II, Emperor Ludo III managed to work out a cease fire using an unusual weapon for the age – the truth. The surviving nobles had confessed their crime in closed Court following the discovery of certain documents implicating them in the death of Ludo's predecessor. Their executions came after an unprecedented event before or since for the Imperial throne; Emperor Ludo III gave a direct apology to the Centauri people and asked them to set aside their weapons and begin rebuilding their world. The tax relief and additional concessions he provided as part of his speech were also helpful in quelling the violence.

The Notoro Act

While no civil war since the Years of Blood has ever divided the Centauri people to the same degree, others followed during the reigns of successive Centauri Emperors. While the Centauri have provided a unified face to the galaxy, their history has been replete with several instances of the strife that occurs when one class of people consider themselves privileged by birth over another.

This was never more apparent in Centauri history than the struggles that occurred in their society following the passage of the Notoro Act, a legislative decree that relegated serious but non-violent criminals to the social status of slaves. While none of the nobility had any issue with this action, their distance from its effects was the reason for their acceptance. A noble convicted of a crime was typically given leniency or incarcerated in a special penal system.

This level of incarceration was specifically excluded from the Notoro Act. The commoner class of the Centauri reacted poorly to the idea that if they broke Imperial law, they could have what civil rights they possessed stripped away, but the nobility could do so without fear of the same fate. Common society was not actually opposed to the formation of a slave class; they were just furious that they were the only ones who could end up joining it. Other tenets of the Notoro Act were also not helpful in quelling their fears, such as the open-ended nature of the crimes list that could result in their loss of social status.

With the passing of the Notoro Act, commoners went to war again and fought the nobility to get the decree changed to include all social classes in the potential new slave class. This was not going to happen and the nobles fought back with just as much outrage. They were the elite, the privileged

few and their lives were not going to be determined by those beneath them.

This fight was one the common classes were destined to lose. They could not hold out against the nobility and the military they controlled. Military personnel were also excluded from the Act, even if they committed a crime that would have resulted in their loss of social freedoms. With nothing to lose, they backed the nobles and defeated the efforts of the commonality. The Notoro Act stayed in effect and the common classes eventually accepted the decree.

The Notoro Act divided the Centauri into three social units, adding slaves to the bottom of the cultural structure. After a single generation, the Act was expanded to include what its writers had not taken into consideration; the first rounds of enslaved Centauri were having children. Once new laws were passed to determine what would happen to the offspring, Centauri society quickly adapted to the addition of an indentured labour force and things returned to normal for a time.

The End of Turbulent Times

Eventually, commoner or noble outrage led to another conflict, but this period of history was filled with so many acts of violence and insurrection that an attempt to track down and record them all would be a monumental undertaking. Most of these 'little wars' ended with few events of note. Nobles died. Commoners died. Once both sides had them to do their fighting, a lot of slaves died. The military continued to serve the Centauri Republic, siding mostly with the Royal Court but occasionally taking up arms against them when their own powers or rights were impinged.

The Centauri underwent massive technological upheaval during this era, mostly brought on by the strife in their culture. In three hundred years, the Centauri advanced past what would be considered an industrial society into the height of the atomic age. Many historians credit the peace of the 1400s with the development of nuclear weapons and the obvious willingness of the Royal Court to use them on an unruly populace if necessary. It was the peace of the gun to be sure, but anything was better than the last six hundred years of intermittent bloodshed.

The Centauri Space Age – Fire in the Sky (C.E. 1101-1590)

Centauri society had finally coalesced into a more or less solid format by the end of the Era of Imperial Strife. While no social commentator would be completely honest by saying that there was no unrest in the galaxy, the classes were mostly set and there were very few incidents. Violence within the Republic was at an all-time low and the empire spanned the entire Centauri homeworld. The Centaurum ruled all that they surveyed; the only frontier left to them was the Heavens above.

In 1101 C.E., the Heavens opened in the form of a burning lance of steel driving through the planet's atmosphere and crashing into the peak of Mount Soro four hundred miles north of the Imperial palace. An expedition to investigate the phenomena and put to rest rumours that it was a sign of the Great Maker's wrath for his people discarding their religious ideals departed for the site shortly thereafter.

What the heavily armed contingent discovered was not one, but two wrecked starships buried in the stone and snow of the mountain top. One had been there for the better part of a millennia; the other had been the light seen blazing through the night sky. It was a Shoggren vessel sent to recover the lost hull of the first ship. When the Shoggren has been forced off Centauri Prime centuries before, one ship had been scuttled when its crew had been unable to leave with the evacuation order. Of course, the Centauri who discovered the wrecks knew none of this.

They knew only that what they had found was a gift from the heavens, one that might provide them with technology far beyond their own. The ships were crated up and pulled down from the mountainside under great secrecy. The contingent was under orders to return their discoveries to the Palace immediately; the wrecked ships and the secrets they contained would be too dangerous if the Noble Houses got hold of them before the Imperial Court could examine the finds.

The War of Heaven's Wrath

This wisdom proved to be true. Spies from several of the High Houses had infiltrated the exploration team and under their direction, several of the crates were diverted to their employers. The Shoggren technology was scattered piecemeal among the houses and its secrets were unravelled by the scientists and technical slaves of each family at approximately the same time. Few of the Houses even knew of the others' discoveries; each one thought itself the sole inheritor of these 'gifts of the Maker'.

The spacecraft yielded their technologies slowly. Long before the Centauri could hope to replicate the ability to travel between the stars, they had unlocked the mystery of the ship's weapons and power systems. This led to a rapid leap forward in technology within the Houses. This advancement was too quick to remain hidden for long; eventually the High Houses became aware of the secrets their rivals possessed. Knowing that the only way to hold an advantage in this scientific race was to hold as many of the technological wonders as possible, the nobility did what came naturally to the Centauri – they went to war.

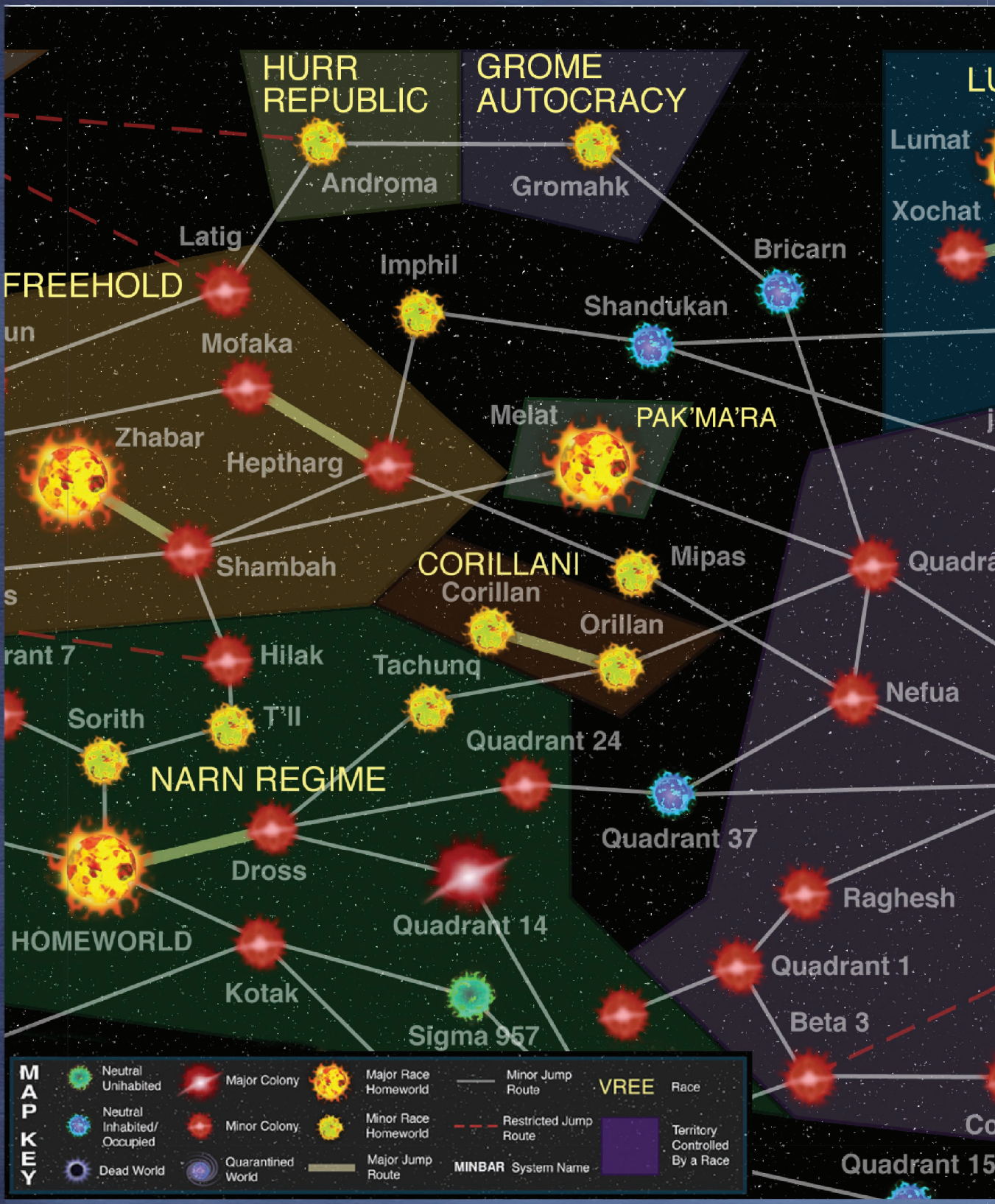
The War of Heaven's Wrath was a terrifying time for the Centauri. It was fought with weapons so devastating that more often than not, attackers, defenders and bystanders became the victims of any given use. High-energy cannons built with no safeguards, radiation guns with no shielding and high explosives more destructive than anything the scientists developing them could believe saw terrible use in the streets and fields of the Centauri homeworld.

The nobility quickly realised that they had gone too far in their quest for superiority. The Emperor's forces, also in possession of technology gleaned from the crates that had not been diverted from the original shipment, put an end to the War of Heaven's Wrath with an announcement that stunned all sides in the conflict.

First Steps

On a warm summer's day in C.E. 1134, the Imperial Palace played host to the first launch of a Centauri spacecraft. Developed from the wreckage of the older of the two Shoggren vessels, the I.S. Kiro's Valour lifted off from the back fields of the palace and left the homeworld's atmosphere for a four hour flight into high orbit. It came back with images of the heavens clearer than any seen before and the groundbreaking news that it could easily carry an explorer crew to the twin Centauri moons.

This catalysed an instant peace in the Centauri. The High Houses surrendered their technologies with no argument and their independent work became the unified body of new Centauri invention. After a trio of successful trips to their moons and back, the Centauri set their sights on something a little grander. Using the massive advantage of a limited functioning faster-than-light-drive salvaged and crudely repaired from the second Shoggren ship, a ship was constructed and outfitted with the finest technology the Centauri could replicate.


HURR REPUBLIC
GROME AUTOCRACY
Andromа
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FREEHOLD
Imphil
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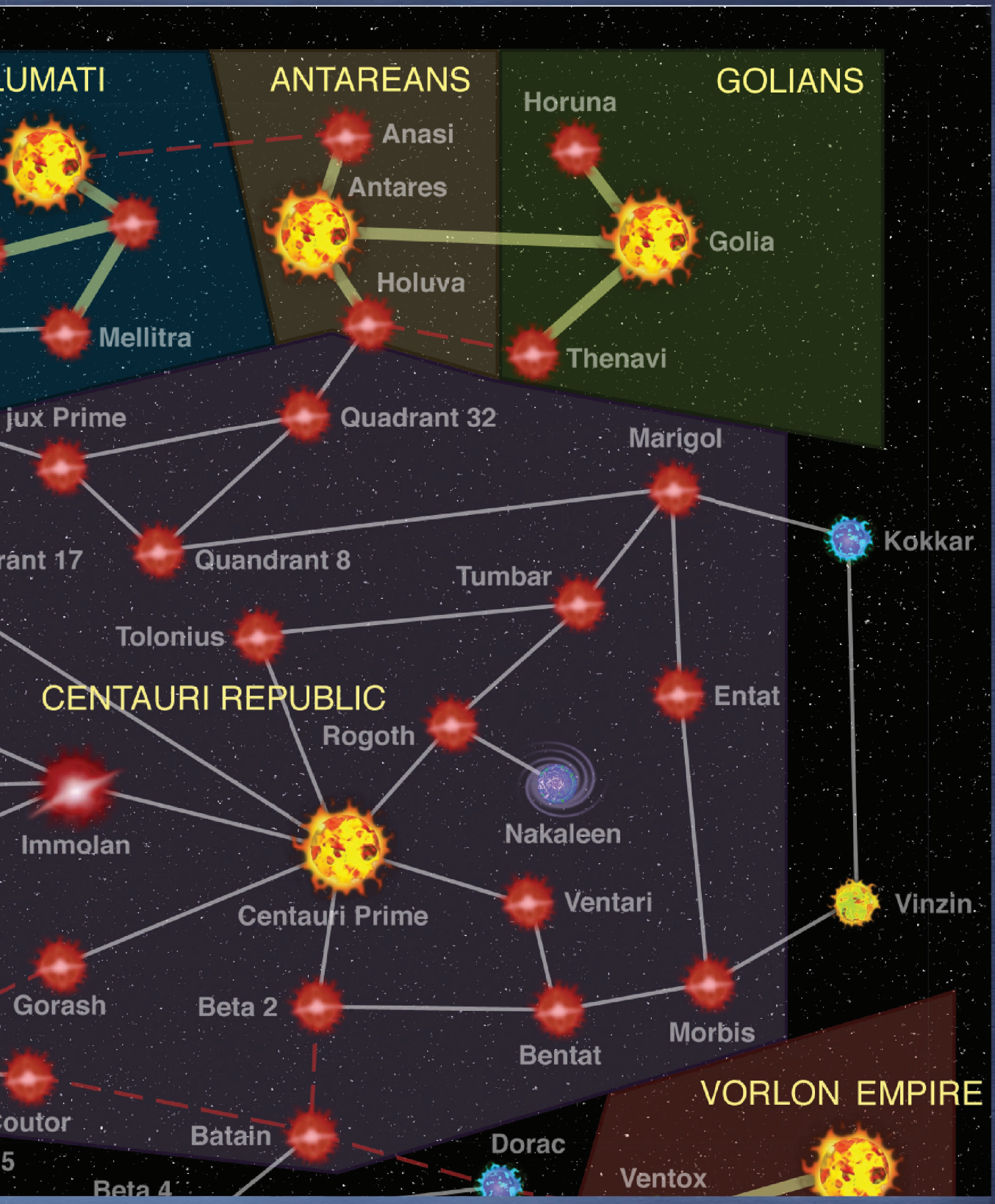
PAK'MA'RA
Zhabar
Heptharg
Shambah
CORILLANI
Corillan
Orillan
Mipas
Hilak
Tachunq
Sorith
T'll
Quadrant 24
NARN REGIME
Quadrant 37
Dross
Raghesh
HOMEWORLD
Quadrant 14
Quadrant 1
Kotak
Beta 3
Sigma 957
Lumat
Xochat
Nefua
MAP KEY
Neutral Unihabited
Neutral Inhabited/ Occupied
Dead World
Major Colony
Minor Colony
Quarantined World
Major Race Homeworld
Minor Race Homeworld
Major Jump Route
Minor Jump Route
Restricted Jump Route
MINBAR System Name
VREE Race
Territory Controlled By a Race


LUMATI
ANTAREANS
GOLIANS
Horuna
Anasi
Antares
Golia
Holuva
Mellitra
Thenavi
jux Prime
Quadrant 32
Marigol
Kokkar
ránt 17
Quandrant 8
Tumbar
Tolonius
CENTAURI REPUBLIC
Entat
Rogoth
Nakaleen
Immolan
Centauri Prime
Ventari
Vinzin
Gorash
Beta 2
Morbis
Bentat
VORLON EMPIRE
Batain
Dorac
Ventox
Beta 4

Seven years after the first Centauri space flight, the I.S. Kiro's Pride left the isle of Selini and reached the closest planet in the Centauri homeworld's system. The atmosphere of this world was a little caustic, but the Centauri had synthesised respiratory media and enough equipment to take a three month survey of the planet. The Kiro's Pride returned to the Emperor with good news. According to their findings, their sister planet was resource rich and stable enough to support a colony.

The remainder of the 12th century saw the proliferation of the Centauri through their system. Every world in the Centauri solar system with any material value was made the subject of a royal colony. Commoners were able to volunteer for life on these colonies, taking their work skills along with slave labour squads to other planets. It was a time of great excitement and greater risks.

Not every colony succeeded at first. A hasty survey of Centauri Beta III failed to detect geological instabilities that led to its first colony being torn apart when mining operations triggered a massive series of earthquakes. Four hundred Centauri died in the tragedy, including the colony's noble overseer and a corps of genetically bred workers stationed there for heavy labour. The loss was enough to halt exploration of the system for a few years, but the Centauri remained undeterred and were colonizing the last of their system's planets before the year 1200.

Escaping The System

The turn of the century brought with it a challenge. The Kiro's Pride was an aging antique, but she bore the only working faster-than-light-drive the Centauri possessed. Taking it apart to discover its secrets would ground the vessel and make travel between the colonies difficult, but not doing so doomed the Centauri to the same fate when the ship finally failed. It was a difficult decision, but the Emperor and the Royal Court concluded that the only way to expand the Centauri's dominion was to chance the dismantling of the Kiro's Pride.

The ship was taken apart at the Kyluro Industrial Station's orbital facility based around Centauri Beta I, the Centauri's first colony. Technicians and newly developed genetically-engineered prodigies poured over the complex machinery and delicate electronics of the Shoggren Crystal Drive. While the larger power structures could be easily identified, many of the components were so far beyond what the Centauri were used to dealing with, they defied analysis for some time.

It took five years to unlock the secrets of the Crystal Drive, but the Centauri managed to decipher the mechanical puzzle to the point of constructing a much larger, much less efficient version of the engine. Its early tests were less than hopeful, with three test bed ships either detonating upon ignition or disappearing forever into the depths of uncharted space. The fourth ship, a long vessel with curved lateral wings called the Destiny's King, bore the latest iteration of the drive – a redesign that tried the innovative technique of generating its massive energies outside of the ship's hull.

The test flight worked better than anyone could have hoped for. The Destiny's drive did not suffuse the ship with a field of energised momentum as the designers had hoped. Instead, it opened a doorway to another realm of physical space. Here, the Destiny's King travelled at speeds far faster than its structure should have allowed and emerged into normal space by reactivating the drive and flying out of its aperture.

This 'jump' drive allowed the Destiny's King and the ships that followed her off the production line to explore the nearest stars in a fraction of the time it would have taken at the speeds the Kiro's Pride was capable of reaching. In C.E. 1224, the Centauri established their first extra-system colony in the Immolan system on its habitable fifth planet. This colony, established in the name of House Jaddo, set a sudden and dangerous precedent.

Within a year of the settling of Immolan V, all of the High Houses were constructing their own jump ships and searching for worlds to settle. The Centaurum and the Emperor saw the possibility of a rebellion by abandonment if the Houses established populations of their own away from the Centauri Homeworld. In a proactive attempt to stop this, an Imperial edict, still in effect in modern times, limited the populace maximums of colonies outside the Centauri system. This did not sit well with the High Houses, but they were in no position to act against the wishes of the Emperor.

Initial Encounters

The High Houses did not argue too greatly with the Emperor over his limitations of their settlement efforts because of their paranoia involving the one hazard of space flight they could not control. Somewhere in the stars they were exploring, the race that had given them this technology, or another like them, might still exist. They explored each new world carefully, trying not to come into conflict with any new race they encountered.

This fear proved unfounded for some time, as the only species the Centauri encountered were either too primitive to offer any resistance or were only now developing their own space flight technologies. None of these weaker races were a challenge and many planets joined the Republic over the objections or corpses of its indigenous people. During their subjugation of the surrounding stars, the Centauri did hear rumours of another race, one that might cause them some problems – the Garmak Empire. A space-faring race with a hunger for conquest and a fierce determination to rule the stars, the Garmak sounded far too much like the Centauri to suit them.

In response to these reports, the Centaurum sanctioned the Centauri Royal Navy. This first incarnation of the space fleet of the Grand Centauri Military was little more than a few dozen ships armed with the best energy weapons the Centauri could replicate from what they had gleaned out of the Shoggren wreckage. They were the pride of the Centaurum, however, and they were ordered into space to support and defend the continued efforts of their exploration vessels as soon as the 'warships' were space worthy.

The formation of the Royal Navy and its subsequent improvements became the strong right arm of the Republic. The Centauri incorporated any innovations they gained from the cultures they dominated into their ships, eventually developing advanced drives and high energy discharge weaponry. Their crude warships were enough to handle the first alien conquests of this age. As the races the Centauri encountered grew more difficult to conquer, so too did their cruisers and battleships grow and change to meet any tactical challenge.

The End of the Garmak

All the while the Centauri were dominating other cultures. Part of the motivation for their gains in technology and warfare techniques was their certainty that eventually they would have to test themselves again the Garmak Empire. Everywhere they went in the spinward part of their nearby galactic space, they heard from conquered races about the sheer power of the Garmak and the domain they possessed in the stars.

All of this only whetted the appetite of the Centauri. While part of the Republic wished to stay out of the way of any race capable of giving them a challenge in the stars, the military and the hungrier lords of the Centaurum were eager to test themselves. The idea of an older, advanced foe also meant that their technology and civilisations would make for a rich prize if the Centauri could defeat them.

Having gained a huge leap forward in technology once, the Centauri were anxious to take on a foe that could given them even greater rewards. Though the worlds of the spinward Centauri Republic were filled with the hushed whispers of

the terrible fates that befell any world foolish enough to stand against the might of the Garmak, this talk only made the conqueror souls of the Centauri eager to 'try the temper of their steel'.

When intercepted reports and long range sensors indicated that a large fleet of unknown ships was amassing in a sector of space the Centauri had identified as Garmak territory, their moment had come. The Centauri Republic gathered its vessels and sent every available ship into a support position. As one huge attack force, the Royal Navy entered hyperspace and moved at full speed for the fringe of Garmak space. Emerging far enough out to evade normal detection, the Centauri armada moved into a flanking position and took their first look at the Garmak fleet.

It was also their last. Before the Centauri could hail the Garmak and challenge them to battle, the stars opened in spirals of blue light. Hyperspace gateways delivered strange, finned starships into the silence of space. Without pretext or contact, the new ships opened fire with weapons the likes of which the Centauri had never seen before. The battle was over before it had even begun; the Garmak fleet was utterly devastated. They managed to return fire a few times, but to no real effect. Then, as quickly as they came, the second race disappeared back into the depth of space. Behind them, a field of debris lent truth to the old adage, 'There is always a bigger fish.'

Stunned and terrified, the Centauri quickly looted the biggest ruined vessels headed back into the safety of their own stars. Years later, they would learn that the destroyers of the Garmak fleet were called the Minbari, but even before they knew their names, they knew fear at the mere thought of their approach.

The Lion Roars – The Era of Centauri Dominance (C.E. 1591 – 1900)

The Centauri got over their fear quickly, especially once they learned that the Minbari were an isolated race and preferred it that way. The Centauri star charts were all redrawn with a no passage line around the area of space corresponding to the Minbari Federation. They attempted a few calm diplomatic contacts, but silent rebuffs were all they needed to desist their efforts and leave the Minbari alone. They had other things to do among the stars in any case.

The first order of business was stripping the ruins of the Garmak Empire. Everywhere Centauri salvage vessels went in Garmak space, they found wrecked spacecraft and dead Garmak. By the time they reached the Garmak homeworld, the Centauri were not surprised to find it devoid of life. The Minbari, obviously unconcerned with any who might follow them, had made no effort to destroy the technologies of the Garmak. From their unrepentant grave robbing in Garmak space, the Centauri learned many things.

Foremost among these was to never anger the Minbari, but there were other, more useful, lessons to be had. The best item looted from the archives of the extinct Garmak was an 'interstellar portal'. The Centauri quickly deciphered these plans and developed their first jump gate. It did not take the Centauri long to figure out the value of this discovery. Within a decade, jump gates were in place in all of the Centauri's colonies; ships without crystal jump engines of their own could now travel from homeworld to the distant reaches of the Republic.

This caused trade to boom and populations to surge (within Imperial limits). The additional revenue funded improvements in technology; this in turn fuelled the exploration and colonisation efforts. Each new colony was a new market, and the cycle began again. The Centauri spread from their homeworld and surrounding systems like an acquisitive, conquering virus.

Like any body exposed to a virus, space began to push back against the Centauri. New civilisations began to pose a greater threat and the Centauri, while never suffering a real loss, started to feel the strain of trying to conquer new worlds at the rate of expansion Homeworld demanded. To keep the momentum going, the Royal Navy began to expand with the aid of remote shipyards and captured, converted alien vessels.

The forerunner to the Kutai gunboat was among these secondary acquisitions; the ship had been a staple of the Garmak fleet and several repaired proto-Kutais entered Republic service as soon as they were deemed space-worthy. Other designs were inspired by other races or built around the spoils of conquest. This in turn had an effect on later designs by the Centauri for their own ships until by the later decades of this era, a general blending of styles could be seen in the Royal Navy. The modern forms of Centauri battlecruisers and carriers reflect this mixture of alien and Centauri concepts.

The Royal Navy also reorganised into three fleets, the same basic model the Grand Centauri Military uses in modern times. These three fleets were all dedicated to a given task; each one optimised by force layout and equipment for its chosen role. The Navy divided into the Expeditionary Fleet, the Battle Fleet and the Garrison Fleets. The latter returned to the core colonies and Homeworld for their defence, while the first two divisions continued into space on a mission of discovery and conquest.

The Pangs of Ambition

The Centauri had gone centuries without an insurrection or civil war. The excitement that had carried the Republic as a unified people into the stars had dissolved into the acquisition of wealth and prestige that ruled the true hearts of its people. Enthusiasm for exploration became the desire for conquest and inevitably degenerated into the need to hold onto power and hunger for more. The nature of the Centauri nobility showed itself again as the Noble Houses began to fear that the fleets were more of a power in the Republic than they were.

This led, as similar situations have so many times in the empire's past, to civil war. The battles were brief, especially as the private fleets of the High Houses were no match for the might of the Royal Navy. The only victories the nobles scored were in the first few skirmishes before the Navy could co-ordinate their forces and discover the origin points of the surprise strikes.

After the Royal Navy triangulated the home bases of the attacks on their supply lines and forward units, it was easy to determine the source of the problem. Wiser heads in the Navy prevailed and rather than attacking their own bases and colonies, the Royal Navy's vessels simply blockaded the jump gates and kept trade traffic from entering or leaving the noble-controlled systems. Since the nobles were only fighting to re-establish their dominance, any threat to their dominion was not something they could afford.

The only reason the civil war of C.E. 1680 lasted as long as it did was bruised egos. Two of the High Houses, Refa and Varga, could not bear the insult of the Royal Navy's presence in their star systems. Instead of relenting in their rebellion, both Houses banded their militaries together and tried to retake their stellar territory by force. The resulting fiasco in the stars left several vessels damaged, over a hundred crewmen dead on both sides and a single battlecruiser in ruins.

This marked the end of the civil war and the last act of ambition the Imperial throne could allow. Both houses were struck with heavy fines, losses to their personal property and a massive drop in status. Even worse, both houses had to donate their own troops and ships to replace the losses to the Royal Navy, resulting in an even more expensive punishment. House Refa was able to handle the losses better than Varga; House Varga was nearly bankrupted by the Imperial decree and only aid from allied houses kept them from slipping from the Circle of Houses completely.

This severe blow to two of the most powerful houses in the empire at that time was a message their peers got loud and clear. The Centaurum wanted no further interference with Centauri dominance in the stars. The Republic was willing to crush any alien resistance it came across; it was just as willing to erase any internal rivalries if they threatened to destabilise what had taken so much to build. The empire was expanding into space. Holding this territory would require the co-operation of everyone in the Republic. Those that could not work with the crown would be swept aside.

Wounded Prides

The dominion of the Centauri amid the stars was hampered from the end of the civil war of C.E. 1680 onward. This was not the result of military losses or any hit to the reputation of the Centauri Republic among other races. It was due to the egos of the High Houses and the umbrage they took to the Centaurum protecting its own interests within the Royal Navy at their expense. Whether the need for unity to continue their conquests was true or not, the High Houses were not about to subvert their authority to anyone – not even the Emperor.

Politics proved a greater stumbling block than any alien military or difficulty in space travel. Hyperspace became easier to navigate than the confusing tangle of inter-house alliances and rivalries. Because the High Houses and certain commoner organisations were given the right of limited self-government in remote systems, the Navy found its ability to rely on timely support in these areas severely hampered.

None of the Houses wanted to make the Royal Navy any more powerful than it already was. In a supreme example of the destructive nature of Centauri ambition, supply lines that no alien force had been able to disrupt were led astray by false requisition orders, corrupted navigational data, and raiding attacks led by private forces belonging to the High Houses themselves. Not every house engaged in these disruptive attacks, but the recorded history of the time makes it difficult to determine any innocent parties in the midst of such a turbulent time.

In a fitting footnote to the end of the Centauri's true dominance of the stars, the only thing capable of silencing the Lion of the Galaxy proved to be its own pride. This era was not the turning point of the Republic's power in the galaxy – that came much later – but the shattered trust between the Royal Navy and the Houses of the Republic it served became the chink in its otherwise impenetrable armour. It was the time of the First Republic's failure amid a sea of its own turmoil.

Arise, Phoenix and Take Flight (C.E. 1900 – 2250)

Pride goes before a fall, but nothing falls that does not first climb. The Centauri have always been a people capable of suffering a defeat and rising from it stronger than before.

The lessons of the Xon were deeply ingrained in the spirit of the Centauri Republic and guided all of the conquests since that dark time. The Centauri were reeling from their own weakness – politics and its rotting of the Republic's core. The only thing for such a deeply embedded cancer was radical surgery, the kind that involved a great deal of pain and loss.

The struggle between the guidance of the Centaurum and the ambitions of the nobility took their race fifty years into the future with little real change. At times, the wiser vantage point of the Centaurum and the Emperor provided direction to the Republic and gains were made among the stars. Other years were not as good and pride and wasteful conflict allowed systems to slip through the grasp of the Republic and re-establish their own independence again.

This difficult conflict made it impossible for the empire to accurately gauge its own strength. At times, its field reports gave it more ships and resources than it could actually apply in the galaxy. Conversely, there were instances where more force than was needed arrived in problem areas and what could be won by finesse was crushed by overwhelming firepower. This made it difficult for the Centauri to move with any grace among the stars, but it did provide the unwitting benefit of keeping other races with a desire to move against them off guard.

By this point in the history of the Centauri Republic, there were more than 100 worlds under their control. Each of these had a sizeable Centauri population and was producing valuable resources or providing a tactical advantage to the empire. To say the domain of the Centauri among the stars was vast would have been an understatement. No ship moving through a full quarter of what would now be called the known galaxy could do so without entering the sprawling territory of the Centauri Republic.

All of this dominion came at a high cost in manpower and enforcement. Because fringe worlds were so close to other races and their spheres of influence, raiding and subversion were always a concern. The Royal Navy had to change once again to fit the difficult times they operated in. The first change was the expansion of the Expeditionary Fleet into system control groups as an auxiliary to garrison ships. This made the Expeditionary Fleet a collective of specialised flights, only some of which still served as explorer and settlement craft. The rest became secondary battle squadrons used to take and hold a new system until a Garrison Fleet detachment could be sent to secure the area.

The second change was more subtle, but much wider reaching. The Imperial Palace passed an order allowing telepaths to hold military rank and serve aboard starships for the express purpose of information gathering. Each new system the Centauri took was a potential wealth of knowledge about other races and powers in the galaxy. Standard interrogation techniques had proven inefficient; something more drastic was needed. Telepaths filled the need perfectly, though their presence in the Royal Navy made the High Houses even more nervous about the growing power of the military.

Rivals in the Stars

The Centauri had a lot more to be nervous about than its own telepaths. Their expansion had finally brought them into contact with two races powerful enough to challenge them in open space. Neither confronted the Centauri directly, but this era saw both come into conflict with the Lion of the Galaxy. Both the Drazi and the Orieni would prove to be major threats in the years to come.

The Drazi were encountered first during a period of expanded activity by order of the Centauri Emperor. While the Centauri could all agree on the need for an increased Imperial presence in space, few of the Houses were willing to work closely enough with each other or with the crown to see it through properly. When the Drazi were first contacted, the disrupted mess that was the political arm of the Republic ensured that no effective diplomacy could occur. Instead of gaining the Drazi as trading partners, they became antagonised and stood against the Republic's expansion.

The Drazi vessels were powerful ships but no real match for the Royal Navy. While they had adequate weapons and speed, the Drazi were not manoeuvrable enough to stand against the Centauri for any protracted length of time. This led to the Drazi raiding supply lines and attacking weaker outposts along their shared border of Centauri space. At first, these attacks were quite effective, slicing through Centauri defences and wreaking significant damage on the Drazi's targets.

This success was far more the result of the horrible political and administrative situation in the area than any real power in the Drazi's military. The Royal Navy could not co-ordinate with the attacked systems properly because of the conflicts of interest cropping up between the Navy and the noble families back on the Centauri homeworld.

Ultimately, this disruption did more to harm the nobles' cause than help them. The Royal Navy took steps to rectify its losses to the Drazi. Rather than lose more ships and firebases to these raiders while it waited for co-ordination with the noble-run colony worlds, the Royal Navy consolidated its forces and began choosing its own targets with the direct consent of the Emperor and the Minister General. The

Royal Navy's ability to intercept and thwart Drazi attacks radically improved after it disposed of the need to consult individual colonies for information or approval.

The irony of this was not lost on the High Houses of the Republic. Their attempts to impede the expansion of the Navy's power had only given the institution the impetus it needed to take necessary steps that accomplished exactly what the nobility did not want them to do. The Royal Navy was now effectively an arm of the Centaurum and no longer beholden to the wishes of the Circle of Houses in any fashion.

The Royal Navy would need this new-found unity in dealing with the other major alien threat of this era – the Orieni. Not as easy to defeat in open space as the Drazi, the Orieni were also subtler in their initial interference with the Centauri. Rather than confronting the Republic directly, the Orieni supported the Drazi raids that had been stinging them for years. When evidence of this collusion was finally discovered, the Royal Navy received authorisation to go to war.

A Long and Terrible War

What followed was one of the most vicious, destructive conflicts the galaxy has known in recorded history, short of the Shadow Wars themselves. The Orieni, themselves the masters of a sizeable empire and well supplied within their colonies, were the masters of a space fleet numbering in the thousands. The Centauri had the advantages of technology and drive behind them. They launched the offensive, giving them the initial momentum needed to make their first few attacks against the Orieni very destructive and costly.

This advantage was negated quickly by the press of overwhelming numbers. The Orieni were the defenders in this war when it began and their familiarity with their own space gave them the ability to use their numerical superiority to good use. The power of their fleet began to slice through the Royal Navy at every major offensive along their border. What had begun with the Royal Navy blazing a trail through Orieni space quickly became a staged retreat back through Republican space.

The deciding factor in the conflict between the Centauri and the Orieni became the amount of time the conflict raged. For years, the two sides pounded on each other. The closer the battles got to Centauri Prime, the easier it was for the Royal Navy to overcome the logistical problems of a weak Imperial presence and disruptive nobles. The farther they pressed their advantage and pushed the Orieni into their own territory, the less the Centauri were able to control their supply lines.

The Orieni had similar problems of their own to worry about; the pre-emptive attack by the Republic had caught them off guard. If they had been given a few more years to supply the Drazi and prepare their own armada they would have been able to overwhelm the Royal Navy and conquer Centauri Prime. As it was, their support structures were not in place and the continuous press of Centauri ships gave them no time to correct that failure. The war raged with no clear victor for far too long, draining the resources of both empires.

The Centauri finally defeated the Orieni by focusing all of its military, including the Garrison fleets surrounding worlds nowhere near the Orieni border, into one final push. The destruction was massive in scale on both sides, but the Centauri emerged with a greater force than its enemy and the back of the Orieni dominion was broken. Their empire disintegrated over the next decade or so, but the Centauri were not there to capitalise on it. They had retreated back from the contested border to consolidate what fleet the Republic had left.

The Rewards of Conflict

From the burning hulks of destroyed Orieni warships, the Centauri harvested valuable technology, including the coveted secrets of simple gravity manipulation. This allowed the fleet to implement gravity decks and modify their ships for even greater manoeuvrability. The Royal Navy reformed into the fleet contingent of the newly commissioned Grand Centauri Military, a unified structure given a single form in the hopes of bringing the remaining military assets of the Centauri under one set of commanders.

This was more or less effective, though the structure changes made smooth operation of the armed forces difficult for a few years while the serious rank and role changes trickled down through the personnel. The need for reconstruction of the military was a given. The remaining fleet of the old Royal Navy was so badly mauled after its war with the Orieni it fleet could no longer function as it had previously.

This all came at a stressful time for the Republic as the relationships between Noble Houses, the Imperial throne and the Grand Military were all reviewed and restructured. The difficult politics of the past had nearly brought an end to the once proud empire of the Centauri and no one on Centauri Prime would argue that such a thing could not be allowed to happen again. Unfortunately, that was the only point of agreement anyone could reach.

Out of the ashes of yet another painful civil war, brought about by Noble Houses seeing the weakened state of the military and deciding to act against it, the Centauri Republic

rose stronger than ever. While the number of worlds in the empire dwindled dramatically, the value and security of the remaining 20 systems increased because more of the rekindled resources of the Republic could be dedicated to each one. The level of attention each world received and the output that came from this refocused administration more than made up for the losses of the past.

The Centauri Republic had taken a beating and many of its gains of the past vanished in the fires of war, but they had emerged from their latest crucible tempered and prepared for greater challenges in the future. Many of the worlds lost during the Orieni War were never reclaimed, but some were and held more strongly than ever before. Border races who had thought the Centauri defeated were rudely corrected in this mistaken assumption. The Second Republic had been born.

The Slow Decline into Shadow (C.E. 2250 to 2360)

The defeats of the past and the victories of the present brought about a renaissance of enthusiastic Centauri support for any initiative the Republic wished to take. The new technologies of the Orieni and other prizes seized during their conquest of known space gave the Centauri an edge few civilisations could match. These innovations were tested swiftly and then implemented through the fleet and armed forces as fast as Centauri resources and production could manage.

The Centauri began building fleets around central siege platforms with a great deal more support in the form of small, atmosphere-capable attack craft and fighter packs. The emergence of the Sentri medium fighter in this era earned the Centauri fighter superiority against every race they encountered for more than a century. New drives, faster charging jump engines and extremely manoeuvrable medium class ships became the deadly hallmarks of the Centauri fleet. With volleys of energy weapons and the speed to bring these guns to bear in a hurry, few races could withstand their assault for long.

There were exceptions. While many worlds fell to the new, leaner Centauri war machine, a few were steadfast in their resistance. The Abbai would not yield an inch to the pressures of the Grand Centauri Military, nor would the Markab or the Yolu. Inconclusive battles with all three races turned the attention of the Centauri to seeking less well defended territories, safe in the knowledge that while they could not make significant gains against those races, they were not likely to be a threat in return.

This was the beginning of a cultural shift in Centauri politics when it came to dealing with other races. Confident in the ability of its fleet to deal with external threats and conquer planets when needed, the Centaurum began implementing diplomatic procedures for dealing with cultures that would be too distant or too powerful to face in battle. A general relaxing of the 'conquer first, placate later' mentality in the fleet saw several ambassadorial attaches travelling to remote worlds in an attempt to secure better relations with other cultures.

This era saw the construction of a diplomatic embassy on Minbar and a failed attempt to convince the people of Earth that they were in fact a lost colony world just now discovered by the Centauri. This latter ploy became costly later when humans discovered the truth and were none too pleased with the deception. Placating the 'Earthers' with jump gate technology was enough to diffuse that situation, though hindsight might have kept that deal from ever being struck if the Centauri had known then what they know now about humanity and space travel.

One Conquest Too Far

The size of the Centauri Republic became a flexible constant during this time, with numbers regrettably declining due to steadily dropping rates of production and the formation of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. Even together, the League was not enough to worry the Centauri militarily, but enough politicians in the Centaurum were of the opinion that a few released colony worlds, especially ones that had already been spent or were near the end of their usefulness, would keep the united alien League from contemplating what would ultimately be another expensive conflict.

The Orieni War might have ended with the Centauri forged anew in victory, but it had also struck a mortal blow to the resolve of the political machine on Centauri Prime. Most of the High Houses had no desire to antagonise any alien race with the potential to become a threat or put up enough of a fight to cost the Centauri resources or lives. While some of the Centauri began to dream of past glory, many of their contemporaries just wanted to hold on to the power they had left.

The Centaurum reached an agreement to compromise between the two positions and authorised the movement of the fleet to a series of neighbouring systems that held little of interest to the other races. Thinking that here they might find resources or new colony worlds that could be easily held, the High Houses submitted to the will of the crown and gave their consent to the action. The newly renamed Gold Fleet entered this uncontested area of space with orders to report back any systems of potential interest and await further orders.

The fleet found several planets with useful resources but little of any real interest until they came upon a planet with a primitive population and teeming mineral and agricultural wealth. They recorded findings, surveyed the world, explored from concealment and avoided the indigenous people while they reported their discovery back to homeworld. They had discovered the perfect replacement for the worlds the Republic had lost. This planet, which they named Narn after the simple creatures who lived on it, was ripe for conquest. After seeing the reports and realising the Republic's dire need for a new workforce to augment their slave population, the Centaurum gave their approval and the conquest of Narn began.

The Centauri held Narn for less than a hundred years. They greeted the Narn with one open hand and held a slave's collar behind their backs with the other. For the Centauri, this was business as usual and no different than what they had done on dozens of other worlds. For the Narn, life as they knew it would never be the same again. One day they were a peaceful, spiritual people; the next, enslaved to a race they had never seen before.

<<< File Append – History.Centauri.Summary. Additional Comment Origin – Lennier, Minbari Delegation to Babylon 5. Clearance – Gold/Omega/Two >>>

The irony of the similarity between the Narn's sudden descent into captivity and the Centauri's own treatment at the hands of the Xon is lost on the latter race. If the Narn were to learn enough of Centauri history to hear of the Xon and the events that transpired concerning them, it would likely make them alternately laugh at the joke the universe is having at the expense of both races and weep for the inability of the Centauri to see how far they have fallen.

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The End of an Empire

The Narn did not take well to slavery. For a time, they were in enough of a state of cultural shock that they submitted to Centauri domination. They were unused to conflict and their first reaction to their enslavement was one of disbelief. When the reality of Centauri cruelty set in, the Narn rapidly became a much different people. Their attempts to throw off the yoke of their oppressors peacefully came to no avail and when the harsher Centauri resorted to their typical 'motivational' techniques of limited executions and physical punishment, everything changed.

The agrarian Narn became a galvanised underground resistance practically overnight. A group of resistance leaders called the Kha'Ri gathered support with the house slaves of the Centauri families on the Narn Homeworld, members of the labour gang forced into difficult and exhausting strip mines, and the many Narn taken to nearby worlds as work slaves. This network began to make life very hard for the Centauri. Everywhere there was an enslaved Narn, there was a potential knife waiting to bury itself in the throat of his or her 'master'.

The Narn were greatly aided in their bid to be free by events happening in other corners of the galaxy. The Centauri were being pushed to withdraw from the fringe worlds of the Republic by the growing power of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. Many of the worlds of the Centauri Republic were too remote to defend well and the consensus of the Centaurum quickly turned from 'gather the harvest' to 'protect the planets that matter'. In the balance of that equation, the Narn homeworld and its surrounding worlds simply did not warrant the Centauri's continued presence. The Narn obviously did not appreciate the advantages being a member world of the Republic brought with it, so the Centauri chose to depart rather than lose any more blood over the matter.

The Narn pushed the Centauri from their world the same way that other cultures had done to them in the past, but this time things were different. Some of the worst elements of the Grand Centauri Military and the Noble Houses had been among the occupying forces of the Narn homeworld. Their predations had been far darker and more destructive than normal and while the Centauri as a culture thought nothing of slavery and cultural raiding, the abuses the Narn suffered were quite out of line even for the Republic.

Their treatment at the silk gloved hands of the Centauri was unforgivable to the Narn. They used ships seized from their oppressors and followed them into space. Everywhere the Centauri fell back, the Narn were there to take whatever was

left behind. The Centauri had taken one conquest too many and this time it would come back to haunt them.

Omens and Echoes

The end of this era was one of slow retreat and decline for the Lion of the Galaxy into a shell of the Centauri's former self. The Republic was in retreat from all over known space. The League, inspired by the success of the Narn, pushed the Republic out of system after system until they reclaimed all of their lost territory and more. The Centauri Republic seemed content to simple consolidate their past holdings and keep what they could in the face of changing galactic fortunes. The new Republic was one of safety and limited risks.

'Do not bother others and they will not bother you', became the watchwords of the Centaurum. The Centauri faltered during the sudden emergence of the Dilgar as an interstellar power bent on conquest with a fervour that made even the most cringing of Centauri nobles remember their past glory. They stood by as the people of Earth defeated the Dilgar before the conquering race could establish itself in the galaxy. The Centauri Republic even stood by and watched as humanity risked the same end as the Garmak Empire when it made the terrible mistake of enraging the Minbari. Nothing seemed capable of moving the Centauri from their position of stagnant neutrality.

All around the Centauri, sins of the past and echoes of the future caught up with it. They saw the shadow of their own decline in the death of the Dilgar. They saw their brush with the Garmak in what nearly befell Earth. When the Babylon Project was proposed to the Royal Court of Emperor Turhan, the omen of what it might mean for the Republic and its interests in reclaiming past glories prompted many to support it for its trade benefits and others to reject it for the aid it would be rendering to the 'enemies of the empire'.

On the advice of many in the Centaurum, including House Mollari and the will of Emperor Turhan himself, the Republic signed on with the Babylon Project. This occurred despite the stumbling block of Earth insisting that the Narn be allowed a place on the Babylon station's Security Council. If the facility was going to be a neutral party in debates and politics, it would have to show a dedication to impartiality. Emperor Turhan agreed to this condition partially out of his desire to make reparations to the Narn for the deeds of his people in the past. Sadly, this would never come about, as Emperor Turhan died during his one and only visit to the last of the Babylon stations.

Dark Past, Dark Future (C.E. 2361 +)

The Centauri would not use the Babylon stations as a platform for peace for very long. While they still retained use of the fifth station for trade and overtly diplomatic purposes, the Centauri became engaged in a War of Retribution with the Narn after the twin insults of the Narn's capture of an agricultural colony in the Ragesh system and the mysterious destruction of a Narn military outpost in Quadrant 37. The Narn declared war on the Centauri in the Earth year 2259.

The resulting war was brutal, swift and echoed the Centauri's conflict with the Orieni too much for their liking. Most of the Centauri's fleet lay dormant in orbit around their inner worlds and that bode ill for them at the beginning of the War of Retribution. The Narn struck hard and fast with all the firepower at their disposal and drove the unprepared Centauri from their colony worlds and outposts along their shared border. The powerful Narn fleets pressed their advantage every time they gained one, making sure that the Centauri never had time to regroup what appeared to be flagging forces.

For a while, the Centauri looked like they might actually fall to this determined aggressor, but they had learned the lesson the Orieni taught them well. This time, they were ready to take advantage of being pushed back to their own worlds. Experienced Captains and crews quickly learning how to operate in a war for the first time recovered and manned the Centauri retired ships and before the Narn could properly shift their tactics, they were outgunned and outmanoeuvred.

The Narn tried to fall back, but it was the Centauri's turn to follow their enemy's retreat. In a move driven purely by greed, ambition and malice, the Grand Centauri Fleet drove the Narn to ground in their own systems, tore them apart and then launched an overwhelming assault on the Narn homeworld itself. This attack was made all the more terrible by their fleet's use of illegal mass drivers mounted to their battlecruisers. Gravity drives tore asteroids out of space and sent them raining down onto the surface of Narn. Millions died instantly, with many millions more expiring from the ruined atmosphere, shattered ecosystem and raging fires.

The Whispers of the Shadows

Very few of the Centauri's actions during the War of Retribution were attributable purely to them. The Shadows, through their agents and pawns on Centauri Prime, pulled the strings that made their puppets dance and spelled the doom of Narn and many other worlds along the borders of Centauri space. Some of the nobles of the Centauri Republic could see the truth and realised the depth of their manipulation, but there was little to be done. The damage the Shadows needed to cause had already been inflicted.

By the end of the War of Retribution, the Centauri had been cast as a dangerous power in the galaxy – one that could turn on any system that got in its way. This was perfect for the Shadows' needs; it made the rest of the galaxy paranoid and drove many smaller races to form alliances with them out of fear and the need for protection.

From there, power made these new allies fall upon each other and the stage was set for the galaxy to plunge once again into a Shadow War from which only the strong would emerge. Many among the more witting Centauri pawns of the Shadows believed that honour would go to them, but the Republic's survival had never been in their enigmatic plans. While the Shadows had no direct intention of destroying the Centauri, their position as scapegoats made it unlikely that the other races would allow the Republic to emerge from the deadly conflict they had begun.

Unfortunately for the Shadows, the cycle of emergence, manipulation, conflict and change that had served them so well in past Great Wars was broken by an unprecedented coalition of galactic races with Babylon 5 at its heart. While the Centauri were less than helpful in that regard, they benefited from the defeat and exodus of the Shadows that followed as much (if not more) than any other 'younger' race.

The New Alliance

After the end of the last Great War, the Centauri Republic fell to its own internal struggles and only emerged from them after dealing with the difficult prospect of ridding themselves of the Shadow influences they knew about. This done the Republic was now under the rule of a Regent who, unbeknownst to his own people was himself ruled by the Drakh – a race of Shadow servants who remained behind when their masters left the galaxy.

While the Centauri Republic is openly a member of the Interstellar Alliance that formed with the end of the Earth Civil War, the empire's true motivations are far more complicated. Of the many noble families that still serve in the Centaurum, some are driven by their own ambitions, some wish to relive the glories of the past, a few are still of the opinion that the less they have to do with the galaxy the safer they will be and others are puppets of dark forces bent on revenge. The more things change for the Centauri, the more they stay the same.

Worlds of the Republic

When a visitor travels into the Centauri Republic for the first time, the level of grandeur and luxury that awaits often surprises them. Passenger liners are opulent, with leather seats and amenities normally only found on the finest of vessels in other cultures. This is a cultural echo of the Centauri; their underprivileged classes do not typically travel and their nobility is not pleased with anything less than the best.

The Centauri Republic still controls the largest empire in the known galaxy, covering more stellar area than any other government in existence. The Garmak and the Orieni combined did not rule an empire as large as the section of space commanded by the Centauri and that refers to the Republic's present size. Before the centuries of retreat and concessions, the Centauri empire was so vast even the combined League of Non-Aligned Worlds could not boast as much territory. Understanding how the Republic could have fallen back from such heights is a matter for historians and politicians.

The current size of the Republic is roughly 170 light years from Quadrant 1 to Marigol and 150 light years from Jux Prime to Batain. This vast area of space is understandably difficult to control and defend; the Centauri Republic's borders are considered somewhat in flux accordingly. This chapter deals with the size of the Centauri dominion at its height in 2257. While every galactic event of this time did not revolve around Babylon 5 – the last of the Babylon neutrality stations – its founding does provide a convenient point of reference.

Travel in the Republic

As mentioned, even basic passenger liners in the Centauri Republic are stately affairs. Every need is provided for; most liners have artificial gravity without the need for rotating sections, so visitors from other races can travel in the same comfort the Centauri are used to receiving. Passenger liners have running water, bathing facilities and several luxury touches like on-board shopping, entertainment locations, massage and pleasure slaves and everything a noble displaced from his estate on Centauri Prime or one of the colonies could hope for.

A casual observer would be more than content to see this as a sign of the wealth and power of the Republic. They would not be incorrect; even for an empire no longer in its expansion phase, the Republic is still larger than any other territory and benefits from some of the most advanced ships their side of the Minbari Federation. There is little the other races of the galaxy can muster that the Centauri cannot outclass.

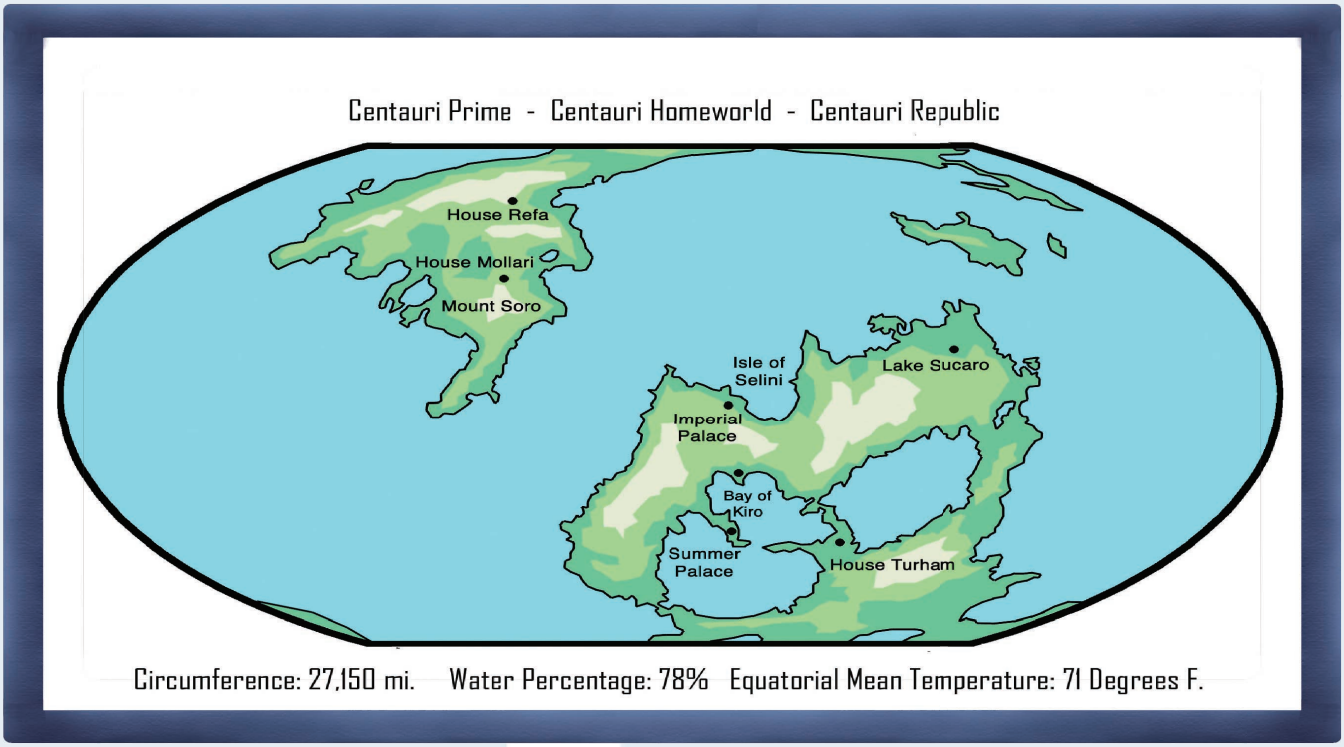
Taking a more careful look, that same observer would see signs of the decline the Republic is inexorably suffering from. The decadent ships of the Republic all show signs of wear and neglect. Passenger liners are still top of the line, but they have not been refitted in years and their glamour is beginning to fade. Wood finishes show the scuffs of heavy use. Leather is beginning to split and dry out. The amenities of Centauri vessels are all still grand, but they are starting to show their age in ways that the republic can no longer afford to hide.

This rarely detracts from the pleasure of a trip through the Republic. Every port of call in the Republic is a fine stop, with more pleasures and trade possibilities than other races have on some of their homeworlds. When a visitor to the Republic completes a tour of the empire, it is easy for them to miss the subtle clues that the Lion of the Galaxy has become somewhat long in the tooth.

Actual travel between the planets of the Republic is typically smooth and without incident. As the predominant distributor of jump gate technology during the height of their exploration age, the Centauri have more numerous and better constructed jump gates linking the many worlds of their empire than other races can afford to maintain. Few empires among the stars can navigate as long and secure a path between its worlds than the Republic.

The Access of Other Races

The Centauri Republic is still deeply feared by the races it has subjugated over the centuries. Few members of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds would willingly travel to a Republic port of call and it would be suicide for any Narn to attempt to do so without express clearance from Centauri Prime and an armed escort. Other alien races, such as Minbari and humans, can travel freely.



Centauri Prime

Planet: Centauri Prime
Climate: Temperate to Cool, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 70%, Light Storms (Winter) 10%, Light Storms (Rain) 15%, Severe Storms (Mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced, gravitic technology, hyperspace-capable, genetic engineering
Native Sentient Race(s): Centauri, Xon (extinct)
Dominant Government: Imperial Monarchy (Centaurum Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Imperial Palace, Selini, Lake Sucaro, Soro, House Cities (Refa, Mollari, Turhan)
Population: 3.4 billion (85% of population is urban, 15% live in rural or isolated areas)
Cultural Information: Population is divided into three dominant social classes. Centauri are nobility, commoner citizens or slaves with few legal rights. Alien slaves have no legal rights but are a rare demographic.

Planetary Notes: Centauri Prime, also called homeworld or Durana by its native population, is the key world of the Centauri Republic and all major governmental functions are housed here. As culturally introcentric as the Centauri are, their homeworld is the single most important planet in the empire and the vast majority of the Grand Centauri Military is stationed in this system or in surrounding systems to defend it whenever necessary. The Centauri consider Durana the centre of all true culture and civilisation in the galaxy.

Without the existence and guidance of Homeworld, the Centauri would flounder and their empire would break apart. The Centauri people have never decentralized their empire the way other races have; Centauri Prime is still the true seat of government for the Republic. While there are four other administrative seats that could technically run the Republic, few of the Houses recognize these partisan authorities and without the strong hand of the Emperor, they would fall to internal conflict once more.

The cities of Centauri Prime tend to be very small but very advanced. Only the Imperial Palace is a city of any great size, with the cities of the Noble Houses coming in close behind. The duty of the noble class is to provide guidance for the rest of their people; one of the ways this duty is expressed is through the formation of cities around their House estates. The map shows three of the largest House cities; there are dozens more on Centauri Prime and hundreds of auxiliary House towns scattered throughout the rest of the Republic.

'What else can be said about our beloved homeworld than the words of Dorva in his classic work, Oda Durana? 'If the heavens are a field of jewels on black silk, surely our star, our world is the brightest treasure among them.'
-Centauri Ambassador Londo Mollari, presently assigned to EarthForce station Babylon 5

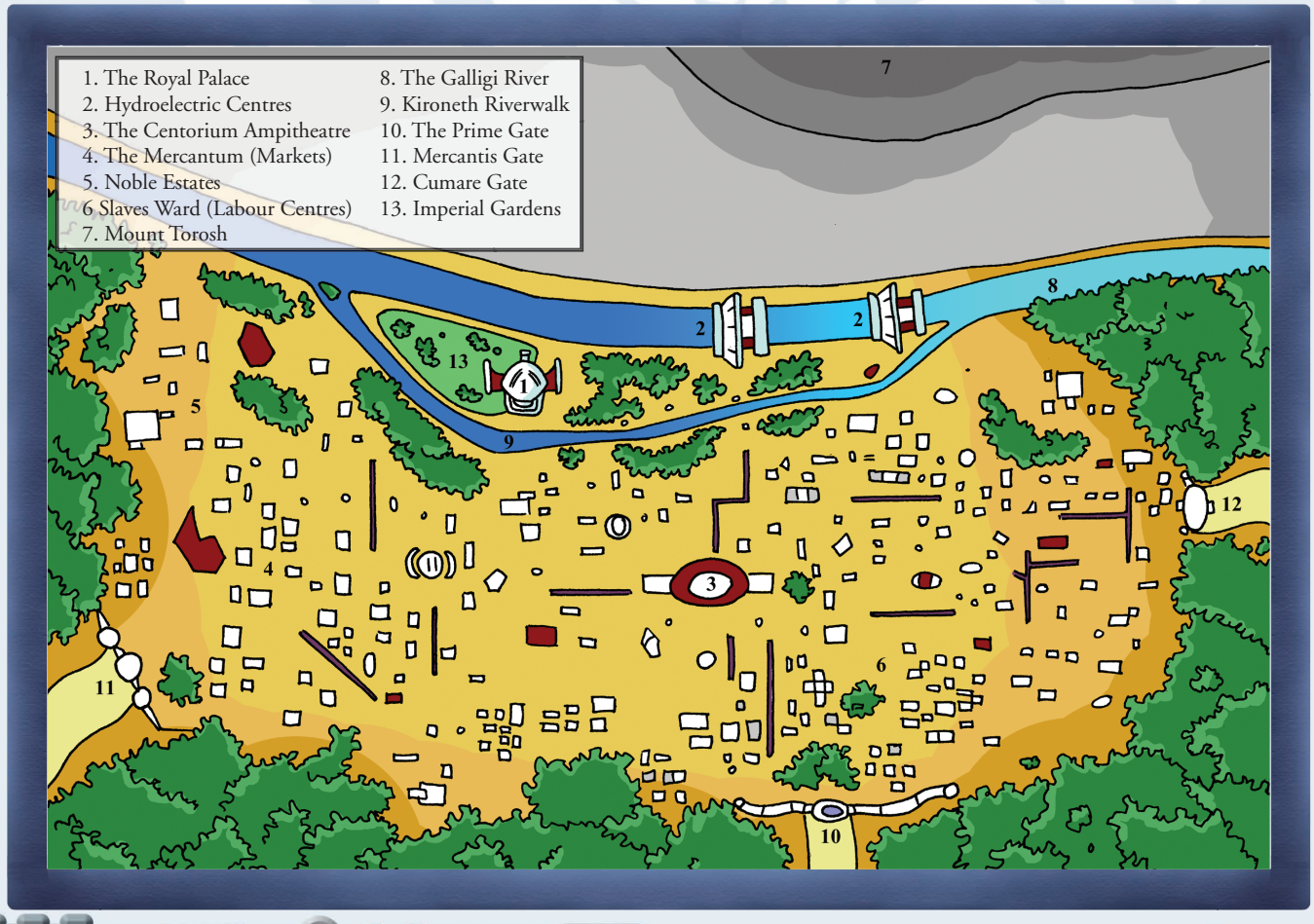
The Imperial City

The Imperial City of Centauri Prime is one of the grandest cities in the whole of the Centauri Republic. By tradition it has never been given another name, since its founding by the Emperor Kiro to commemorate the end of the Xon Wars and the triumph of his people over all of their enemies. Its architecture is understandably old and predominantly classical, though a few modern structures have been erected in recent centuries as older ones fall victim to time and exposure. Every time a building has to be demolished to make way for a new one, the Centauri of the Imperial City hold a festival to honour its passing as they would a fallen hero or historical figure.

Most of the Imperial City is built of white marble and red river and field stone, though more technologically sound materials are creeping into the civil works as time goes on. Very few windows in the city are plain glass; tradition has it that every window in a noble's house should be stained glass and most commoners emulate the style in the hopes of raising their own status in the eyes of their neighbours. As a result, most windows in the Imperial City are a play of many colours depicting historical scenes and intricate, abstract patterns assembled from millions of pieces of coloured crystal.

Visitors to the Imperial City are given many recommendations on what to see first, but most tourist guides will agree that a few features cannot be missed no matter what a traveller's interests on Centauri Prime might be. The Kironeth Riverwalk, an artificially created stream that runs parallel to the Galligi River and separates the Royal Palace from the rest of the city is a beautiful example of landscaping and makes for a relaxing place to while away the evening hours. Visitors are also directed to the fifty one temples that dot the banks of the Kironeth near the Palace and, if their rank or importance allows them to cross the Riverwalk, the Imperial Gardens are a visual treat very few get to experience.

The Imperial City is both sprawling and dense, accommodating more than two million people within the walls of its majestic buildings. Even the slaves on the Labour Ward live well and opulence, if dated, can be found in even the most run-down of structures. The Centauri believe in living well and the Imperial City is their ultimate expression of that philosophy.



Batain

Planet: Batain
Climate: Temperate to Cool, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 8%, Severe Storms (Mixed) 2%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri), Primitive (Indigenous Batair)
Native Sentient Race(s): Centauri (colony), Batair (enslaved)
Dominant Government: Imperial Monarchy (Centaurum Ruling Council)

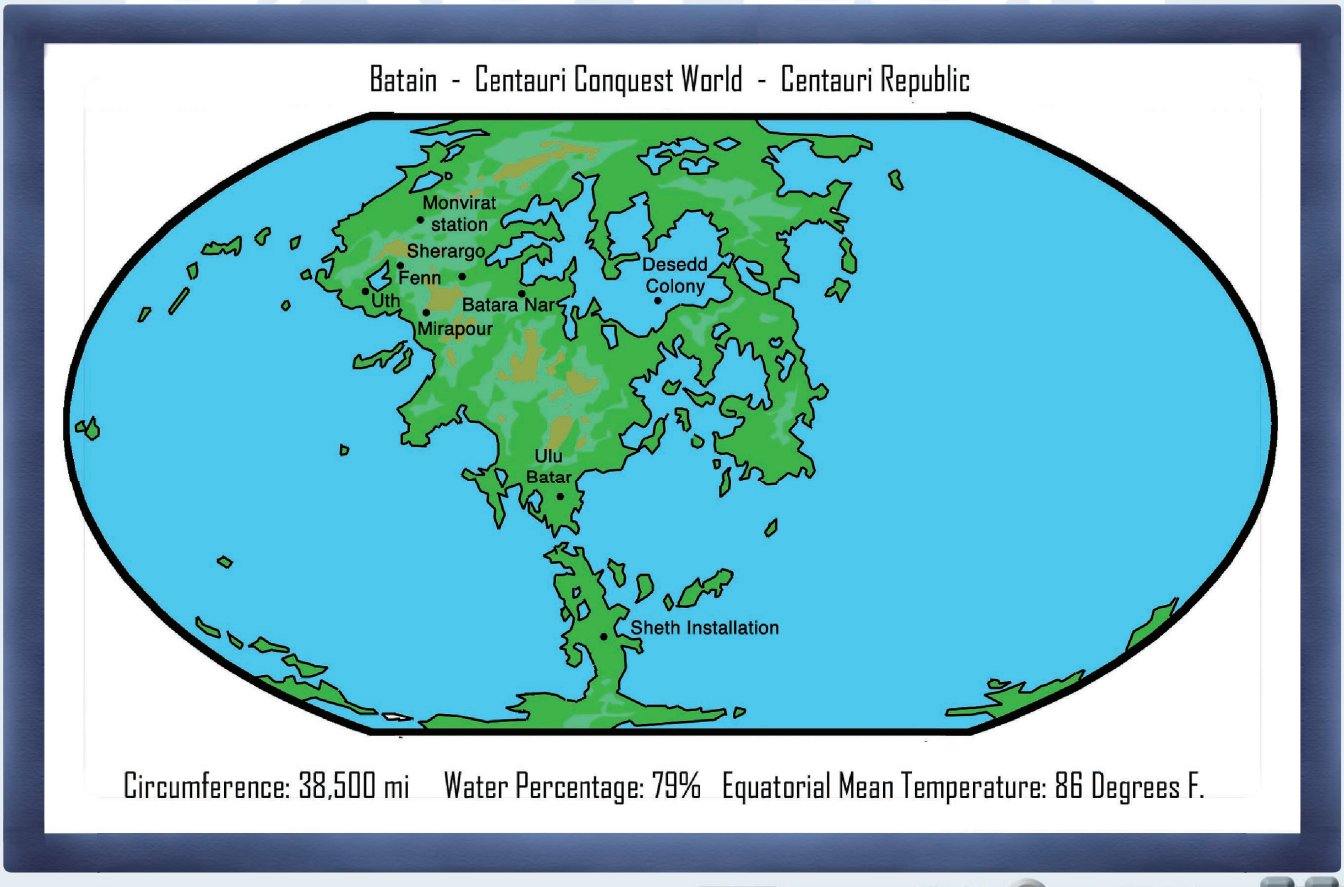
Notable Cities: Fenn, Uth, Mirapuor, Sherargo, Batara Nar, Ulu Batar, Desedd Colony (Slave Encampment)
Population: 540 thousand Centauri (90% urban, 15% rural, 5% isolated), 2.4 million Batair
Cultural Information: The native people, the Batair, are a reptilian race with a very primitive culture. Their Centauri masters are predominantly noble-born. They are well entrenched and reflect the dominant cultures and styles of the Centauri people on homeworld.

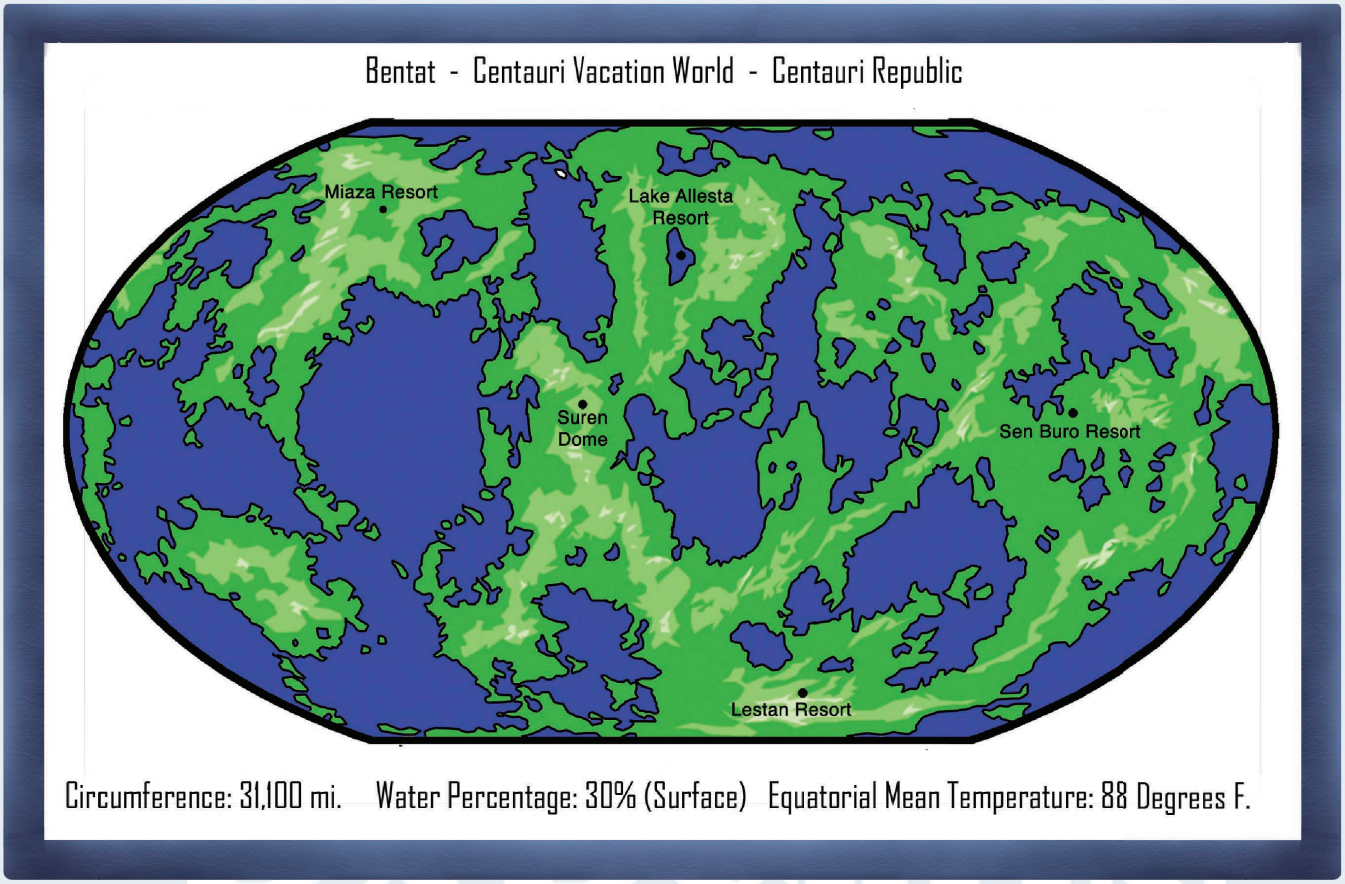
Planetary Notes: The world of Batain was one of the first truly inhabited planets the Centauri settled during their early expansionistic era. Batain as a world is very lush and fertile. Its large size and dense structure make it very stable and its weather is mostly temperate all year round. Batain has a slow revolution and orbit rate, also lending to its overall stability.

For such a large and resource rich world, the present Republic treats Batain with some avoidance. This is likely due to the problems the Centauri have experienced in dealing with the Narn, a race very similar to the Batair that dwell here under slave conditions that have lasted for centuries. The Centauri have been slowly withdrawing their fleets from this area in preparation for what will likely be a full evacuation if the Batair show any signs of open rebellion.

The Centauri would not miss the resources of Batair much. It is a verdant and mineral laden planet, but the size and relative difficulty in traversing its hyperspace area make any trading run through the Batain system more trouble than the base elements and plant goods the world provides are truly worth. While many in the Royal Court are furious at the continuing withdrawal of their people from the empire of the past, few would argue that Batain is a world they can afford to lose.

'I know the common position in the Court is that the Batair are Narns waiting to strike, but that is simply not the case. I walk the steel walls of Desedd Colony every night and the labour squads





there are as docile as any population I have ever seen. We have ruled them for centuries. They aren't going anywhere, I assure you.'

-Centauriata Holno, Desedd Watch Commander

Bentat

Planet: Bentat
Climate: Temperate to Warm, Sweltering near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 70%, Light Storms (Rain) 15%, Severe Storms (Rain) 10%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri, limited to the cities only)
Native Sentient Race(s): Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Imperial Monarchy (Resort Administration, House run)

Notable Cities: Resort-Cities (Miazi, Lake Alesta, Suren Dome, Sen Buro, Lestan)
Population: 15 thousand permanent, 140-200 thousand transient (Full population resides in Resort-Cities.)
Cultural Information: The culture of Bentat has become a light, relaxed version of nobility on Centauri Prime. The main business of Bentat is entertainment and tourism; this has left its mark on the permanent population.

Planetary Notes: Bentat is a tropical paradise with a high mean temperature, a jungle environment covering most of its surface and a massive amount of table water to support the huge trees that cover ever fertile acre of its emerald shores. The planet is a marvel of tropical vacationing and the Houses making a percentage of its yearly tourism revenues are assured a stable income.

No noble with any reputation for fine living can ignore the lure of Bentat for long. Business junkets come to Bentat all the time, providing a third of the world's clientele. The nobility of Centauri Prime and other worlds consider a vacation on Bentat a requirement of any well-travelled Centauri. Even at the lowest points in the Republic's galactic history, Bentat has done brisk business. When a planet's entire purpose is to help those with the burden of power relieve their stress and forget their obligations for a time, it is unlikely to ever suffer vacancy.

The resorts of Bentat have a friendly rivalry with each other that has, in the past, not been quite so amicable. There were five resorts in addition to the governmental and military pleasure installation of Suren Dome at the height of Bentat's settlement in the past. A tourism feud raged out of control

and erupted into open violence before Suren forces could control the situation. More than six thousand staff and vacationers died when Juroth Resort along the equator burned down. Since that incident, authorities have kept a close eye on anything more than passive competition on Bentat.

'For my ducats, I would not go anywhere on Bentat but Sen Buro. The other resorts are too close to the arctic zones of the planet. I come here for the heat and San Buro gives me everything I need. Suren Dome is nice, but I get enough of the military back on Homeworld.'

-Lord Golan Kaifah, attaché to the Royal Court

Centauri Beta 1

Planet: Centauri Beta 1
Climate: Temperate to Cool, Warm near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 60%, Light Storms (Rain) 5%, Light Storms (Mixed) 25%, Severe Storms (Mixed) 10%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colonies)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Soduro, Sokol, Camben
Population: 1.4 million (95% of population is urban, 5% live in rural or isolated areas)
Cultural Information: As the Republic's oldest colony, the people of Beta 1 are a rugged, independent folk. While Beta 1 has never officially tried to break away from the empire, this sense of separate identity has been the cause of considerable governmental strife between the worker/settler commoners and their Noble House leadership.

Planetary Notes: Centauri Beta 1 is the only remaining colony world in the same system as Centauri Prime. This gives it the twin benefits of being protected by the same fleets stationed around homeworld and a swift, efficient trade market with both Centauri Prime and any ship entering the system to do business with Centauri merchants stationed on either world. Centauri Beta 1 is geologically stable; its small landmasses are the result of heavy ice formations at its poles and a high water level.

The governmental stability of Beta 1 has been in question several times in the planet's past, but the colonists of these worlds have never tried to break away from the empire. This has a great deal to do with the deep respect and appreciation the commoners living on Beta 1 have for their relatively privileged lives. It could also have something to do with the major ground assault training base in the Brutarin valley that garrisons more than a million troops on a regular basis.

Financial stability is also a benefit on Beta 1. The only economically viable colony world left in the Centauri home system, it is the only one remaining in operation since the founding of the Centauri colonies over a millennia ago. The need for a base of operations near Centauri Prime keeps Beta 1 from ever worrying about 'foreclosure', as does the wealth of untapped mineral resources still waiting in the mantle of Beta 1 to be mined and refined.

'Without a doubt, the most perfect place to live in the Republic is right here on Beta 1. We have everything the nobles back on homeworld have – the same food, the same women, the same military protection, everything. In fact, the one thing we don't have is an Emperor. Like I said; perfect.'

-Lord Kotho Refa

Centauri Beta 2

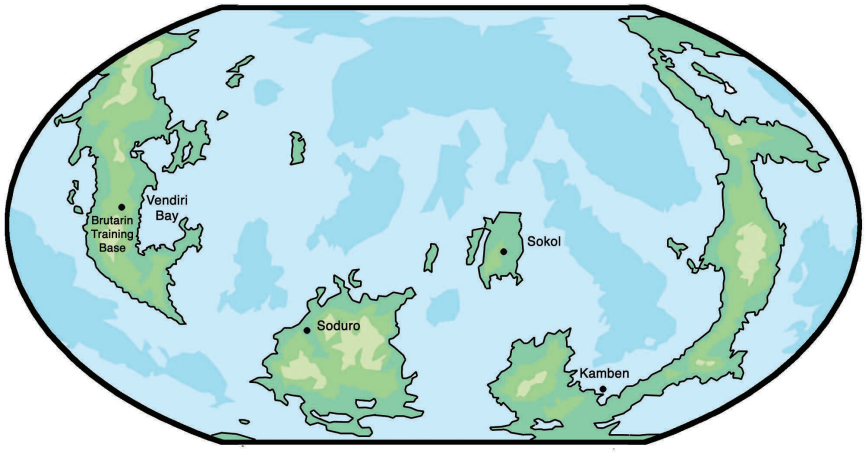
Planet: Centauri Beta 2
Climate: Temperate to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Mixed) 10%, Severe Storms (Mixed) 5%, Severe (snow/ice) 10%

Technical Level: Advanced (production only) (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (work cities)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling House)

Notable Cities: SyncStations One, Two and Alpha, Callo House City
Population: 130 thousand (Entire population resides in the labour cities or the Callo House city)
Cultural Information: A prime example of a colony world existing sole for the edification of the Centauri's need for resources, this cold planet of mineral-rich peninsulas and vast waterways has been in the Republic for centuries. During that entire time, Beta 2 has been the property of one dominant industrial House after another. Each one has strip mined useful areas and been bought out by another House when it would prove too expensive to move their equipment.

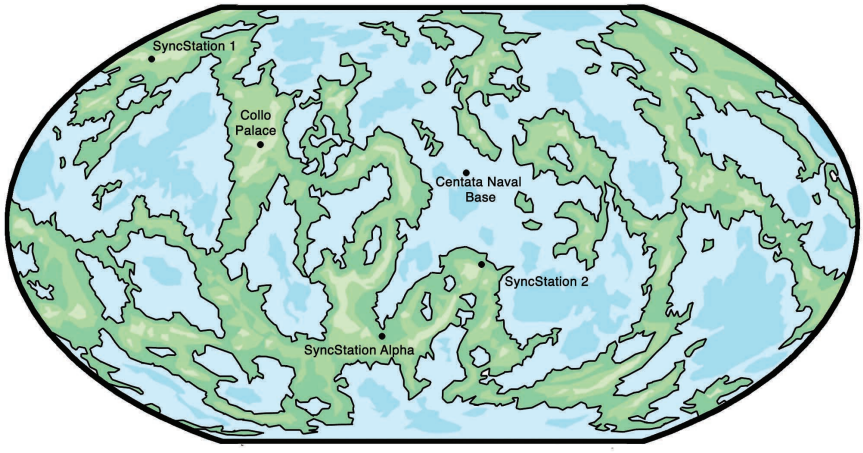
Planetary Notes: Centauri Beta 2 looks like a hospitable world from orbit, but a closer look reveals serious geological disturbances and a slightly poisonous atmosphere. While processors can make the air and water of their world capable of sustaining life, Beta 2 has never been under consideration

Centauri Beta 1 - Centauri Colony World - Centauri Republic



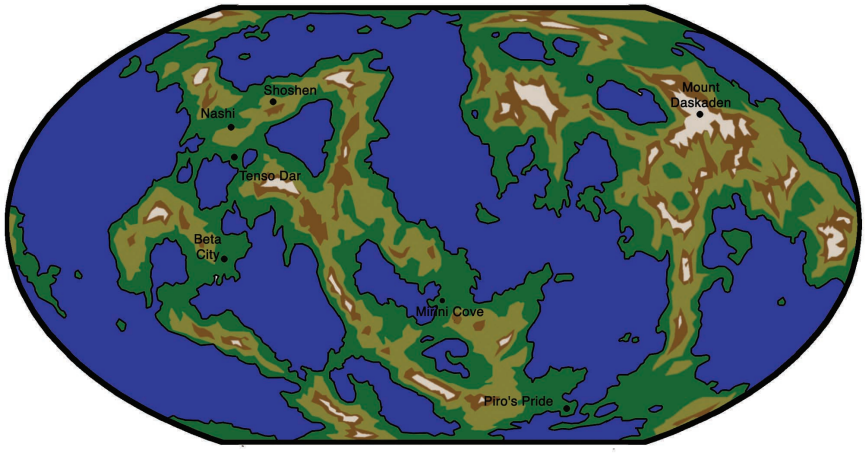
Circumference: 22,450 mi. Water Percentage: 80% Equatorial Mean Temperature: 70 Degrees F.

Centauri Beta 2 - Centauri Production World - Centauri Republic



Circumference: 25,250 mi. Water Percentage: 68% Equatorial Mean Temperature: 65 Degrees F.

Centauri Beta 3 - Centauri Colony World - Centauri Republic



Circumference: 29,200 mi. Water Percentage: 77% Equatorial Mean Temperature: 70 Degrees F.

as a colony world and so the effort has never been seriously undertaken. The Centauri are content to tear what they need out of the planet's crust and leave the rest of its potential alone.

Centauri Beta 2 is a production world by nomenclature, but it would more properly be termed a mining world by any other cultures. The planet's surface is a labyrinth of former 'syncstations', cities built around geosynchronous locations for airlifting raw materials into orbit where satellite refineries smelt them down into industrial grade metal and stone units. Nothing is actually made on Centauri Beta 2; it is from Beta 2's materials that many of the ships and outposts of the Centauri Republic are constructed.

A few years after its founding, there was a push to colonize the lands around the Imperial Palace on Beta 2. With enough resources and effort, miles of land around the structure could be made fertile and friendly to Centauri life. The project was scrapped and has never been brought back to the attention of the Court. Rumour in the Royal Court suggests that the controlling house of the world at that time was not interested in bringing in too many settlers for fear of having to share authority for the world's production with nobles from other families.

'Nights on Beta 2 are much like any other world; bleak and cold, when you are a slave of the Republic'

-Dura, Shenaro of House Callo and foreman of SyncStation Alpha

Centauri Beta 3

Planet: Centauri Beta 3
Climate: Temperate to Cool/Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 50%, Light Storms (Mixed) 30%, Severe Storms (Mixed) 15%, Severe (snow/ice) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri), weather control, experimental
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Ilashi, Tenso Dar, Beta City, Shoshen, Mirini Cove, Piro's Pride (destroyed)
Population: 1.8 million (75% of resident population lives in urban areas. 25% are rural or in isolated settlements)
Cultural Information: Proof that even the Centauri can occasionally enjoy an existence that is not entirely luxurious, Beta 3 is a habitable but inhospitable world with climate problems and dangerous indigenous lifeforms. The people attracted to Beta 3 are a hardy, irreverent breed attracted to the idea of life out from under the thumb of the nobility. Even the nobles that ostensibly run Beta 3 for the Crown do so in a relaxed, unofficial manner more befitting a commoner because of personal preference.

Planetary Notes: Centauri Beta 3 has continuous wind and rain storms that make life unpleasant outside the climate controlled cities. Surprisingly, many Centauri prefer life outside the aeroforming gravitic fields and thrive in the wilds of Beta 3's less 'tame' areas. There are a number of threats to life and limb on Beta 3 if one ventures too close to the unsettled eastern continent, but most Beta 3 Centauri are wise enough not to go there without good reason and armed escort.

The Centauri Empire is of mixed official opinion about Beta 3. The world is a valuable source of Quantium 40 and other mineral resources, but the colonies are extremely disrespectful of Republic rule and rarely bother with the fine points of noble tribute or other government-regulated graft. This keeps Beta 3 from receiving much in the way of fleet protection or support in an official capacity. Fortunately for the settlers of Beta 3, this is exactly the way they prefer things.

When the Republic did choose to impose a military blockade around Beta 3 to improve the responsiveness of its population of Imperial rule, the results were disastrous to the ships assigned there. With the embargo making it difficult for the Quantium 40 on the planet's surface to leave the system, the ships in the blockade also suffered from the fuel shortage. Eventually, the Republic relented and the much needed fuel began to flow again. The renewed spirit of independence the failed Imperial blockade promoted only strengthened the attitudes the Royal Court had wanted to eliminate.

'I remember the last expedition to Mount Deskaden well. It's on the far continent and the lands around it are filled with ravenous varlien raptors. I shot four myself before we had to turn our hovercraft around. Storm and all, you know? Nasty business, the far continent. By the Maker, I love this planet!

- Lord Mehen Piro, Colony Minister

Coutor

Planet: Coutor
Climate: Warm to Temperate, Hot near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 90%, Light Storms (Wind) 6%, Severe Storms (Wind/Rain) 4%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri), weather control (avoidance fields for the storms)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony), Garmak (colony, extinct)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Fira Toloth, Fira Skandath, Fira Kurolo, Centus Colony
Population: 200 thousand (98% of resident population live in urban areas. 2% are in Centus Colony, an isolated settlement)
Cultural Information: This world had an indigenous population at one time, but there is so little left of them after being wiped out by the Garmak that nothing can be recovered for historical record. The Centauri working in the technology recovery camps (the Fira settlements) are culturally the same as Centauri on homeworld, but Centus Colony is a desert dwelling community with a nomadic culture adopted by escaped slaves from the first mission to settle the planet.

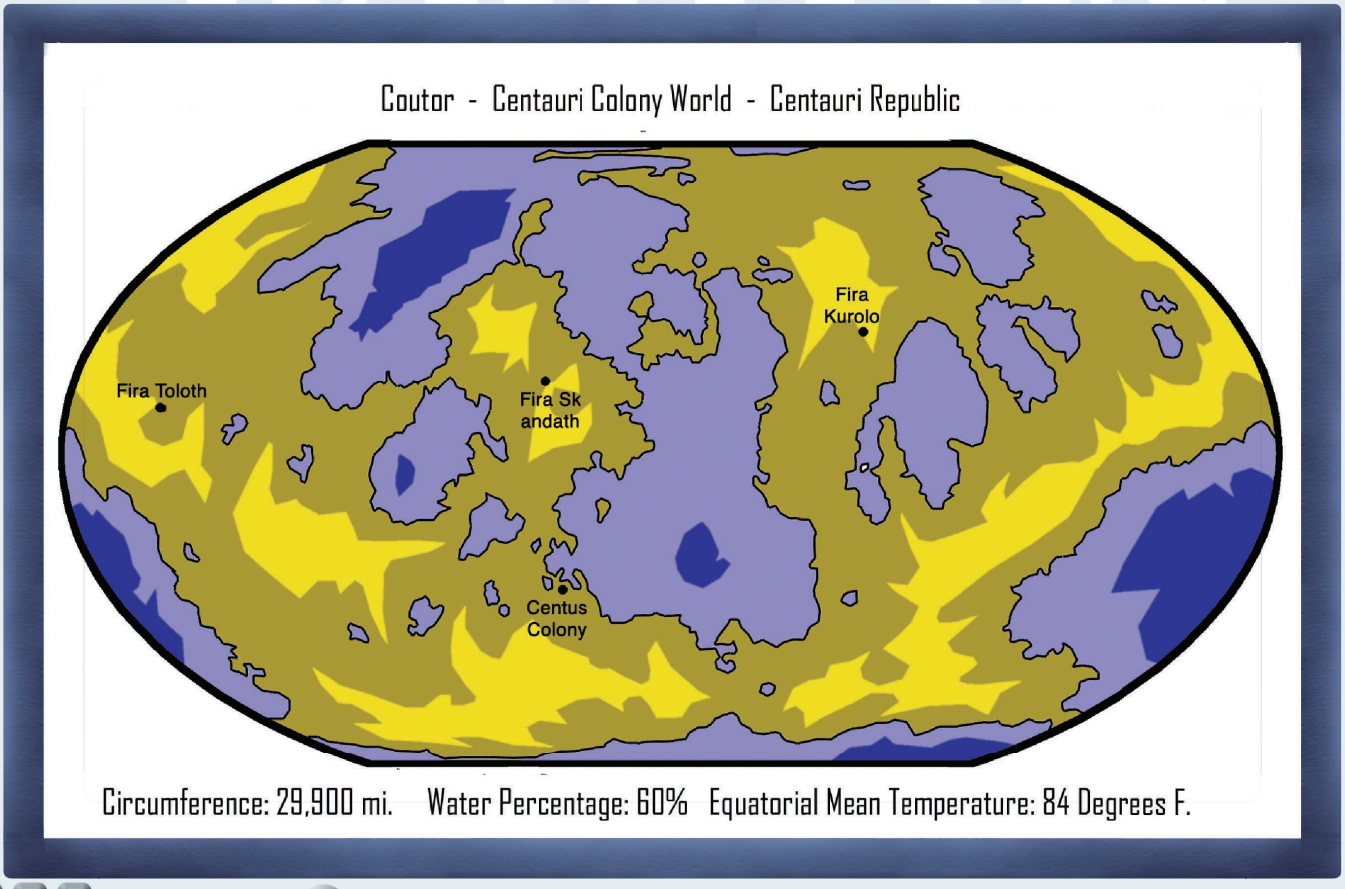
Planetary Notes: Coutor shows signs of having once been a much more inhabitable world, but some form of mass terraforming has caused the planet's ecology to dramatically shift and become arid on a global scale. Evidence of plant life in now dead areas reveals that before the Garmak ruined this world, it had a climate and atmosphere much like Centauri Prime.

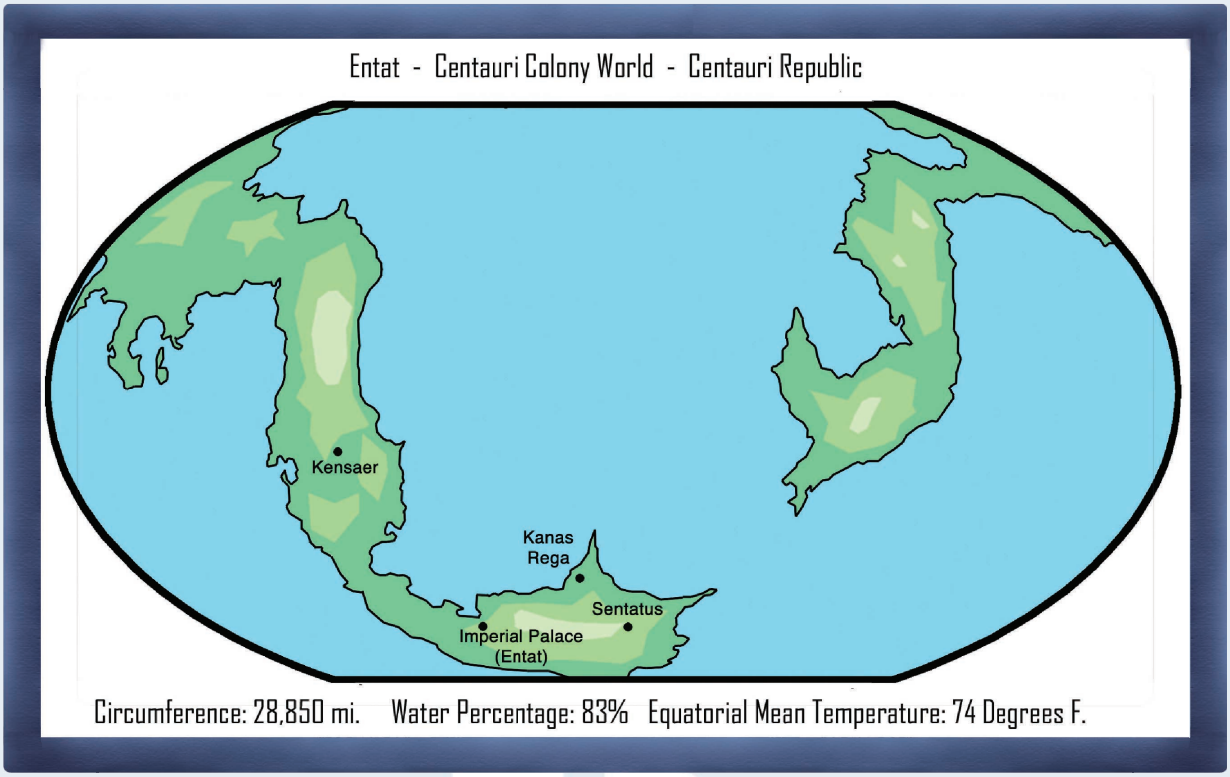
Coutor is not a pleasant world and the Centauri would not even have a minor interest in it were it not for the major Garmak supply bases and technological centres that cover its landscape. At one time, fifty different recovery camps or 'fira', were in operation on the surface of Coutor, but the majority of them have played out and been closed due to lack of continued value. The three fira still functioning do so because of technological riddles the scientists at these locations are trying to decipher.

The settlement called Centus Colony is descended from a large group of escaped slaves and move around over the surface of Southern Coutor. They are technically outlaws and the authorities of the three remaining fira are under standing orders to hunt them down, but this never happens in practice. The surface of the planet is so inhospitable that the Centauri on Coutor assume that eventually the world will accomplish what it would take too many lives to achieve. The residents of the fira camps also have a grudging respect for anyone who could survive for generations out in the endless desert.

It is they I do not understand. This world is barren, yes, but it has riches to offer if you know where to look for them. Coutor is our mother; she has given birth to us and we owe her for the freedom her windstorms and trackless sands provide. We have no kings, no nobles, and we are the better for it.'

-Cou-Ionn, Sandtracker Prime for the Centus Colony





Entat

Planet: Entat
Climate: Warm to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 5%, Severe Storms (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony), Entouro (separated by land mass)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Kensaer, Kanus Rega, Sentatus, Imperial Palace
Population: 1 million Centauri, 3 million Entouro (Entire resident population lives in urban areas. Entouro are isolated)
Cultural Information: The Centauri of Entat are entirely derivative of their native culture on Centauri Prime. The Entouro are a mammalian species in the early stages of tribal development and regard the Centauri as an invading race of gods to be feared and avoided. This suits the Centauri fine; the Entouro make poor slaves and are allowed to live on an isolated peninsula far away from the four major colonies on Entat.

Planetary Notes: Entat is a temperate, mild world with calm weather and great geological stability. Entat has three moons, all of which have mining colonies run by the Centauri. The triple moons can make for seasonal instabilities in the tides of Entat's world oceans, but these are infrequent.

Entat, when it was first discovered and settled, was assumed to be completely uninhabited. The Expeditionary Fleets of the Centauri were moving so fast through the galaxy, they were doing a poor job of surveying each world they encountered before approving it for colonization. The first Centauri colony on the planet, Kensaer, was in existence for seven years before the first Entouro was sighted. A brief skirmish later, several Entouro were dead and the rest of the fledging race withdrew across the continent to an isolated part of Entat.

The Centauri consider the Entouro to be an example of how primitive even their ancestors were at one time and have a surprising amount of sympathy for the race. The Entouro are avoided whenever possible and given small gifts of food and clothing when their self-imposed exile threatens to take too great a toll on their numbers. The planetary governors in the Imperial Palace treat the Entouro as an odd sort of pet project and take any threat to the race quite seriously.

'The trees around Kensaer are quite lovely, especially when planed down and treated with kuloth oil from Tolonius. The furniture that can be made with it has a lustre and strength second to nothing else in the Republic. Entat is a treasure trove of such things, but we have to always watch our harvesting numbers. Damn Entouro! If they weren't around, we'd have this world strip mined by now.'

-Harvester Chief Thaenus, Second Imperial Construction Corps

Gorash

Planet: Gorash Moon
Climate: Minimal Atmosphere; Cold on far side, extremely hot on solar exposure side
Weather Average: Minimal Atmosphere, no appreciable weather

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri, only in mining colonies)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (mining colonies)
Dominant Government: Business and Trade World, no direct control other than House Involvement

Notable Cities: No cities. Mining Communities include Thetis, Cendar, Faeth, Shenseno, and Foreth Mines
Population: 80 thousand Centauri. (Entire resident population lives in mining operating towns or in the Regulation facility)
Cultural Information: Gorash Moon is one of the few Centauri colonies to have virtually no noble presence. The mines are owned and operated by commoner business interests and except for the small staff of noble administrators required by Imperial law, all legal and cultural decisions are commoner in origin.

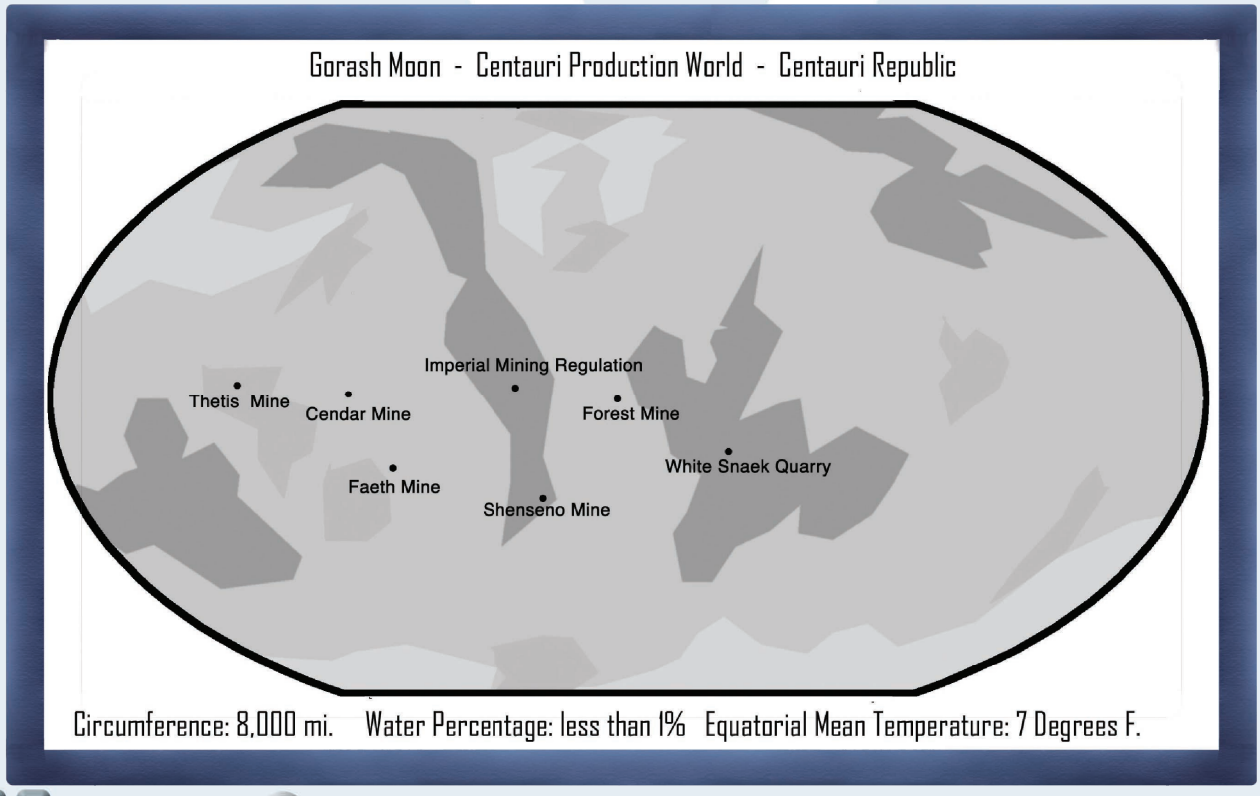
Planetary Notes: The planet Gorash in an uninhabitable mire with a toxic atmosphere and constant radiation storms. Its only satellite is no more hospitable, but the mineral resources of the moon make it too valuable to abandon or leave untapped. The mining delegations of Centauri Prime have fought for control of this rocky, slightly unstable ball of wealth for so long, the arguments of ownership and control are effectively moot. The Gorash Moon has a locked rotational orbit; all of the settlement facilities on the moon are located on the 'dark' side.

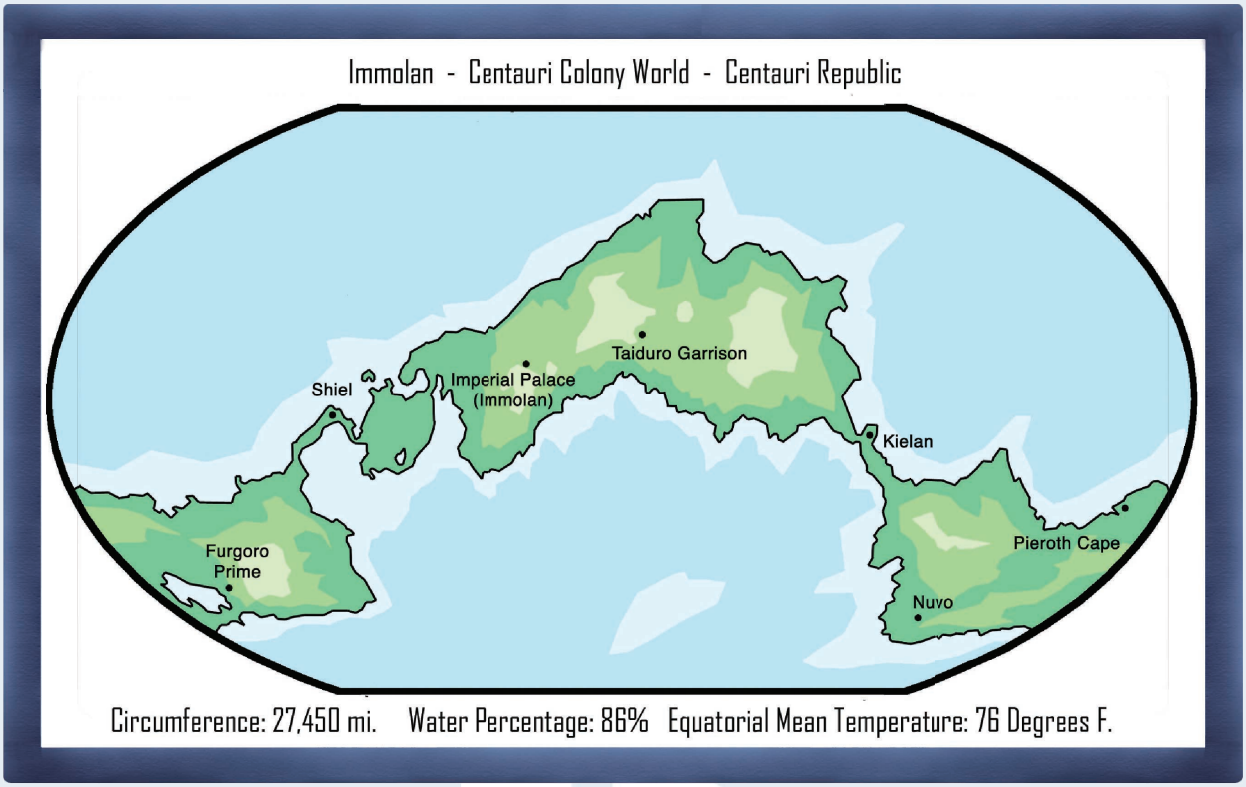
All too often, a satellite or planet offers enough by way of resources that the Houses fight for control of it violently enough that the Centaurum have to take punitive measures against them. This is the back story of Gorash Moon and why the facilities are now commoner-run. After Gorash's settlements were put in place, the planetary administrators became so corrupted by dirty politics and bribes for preferential access to the resources of the mines that production was being seriously impeded.

When the leaders of Beta 3 discovered the reason for its reduced shipments of iron and other hard minerals from Gorash Moon, delegates went to the Imperial Court and demanded that something be done to correct the situation. The deceitful politicians of the Court used them as scapegoats for their own interference with Gorash and convinced the Royal Navy to restrict trade between the mines and Beta 3. The result from this was disgust on both parts; Beta 3 lost a great deal of respect for the Republic and the mines of Gorash Moon revolted against their House controllers. After the Emperor became involved, the revolt ended and the world was 'reduced' to commoner control to keep its ore flowing.

'I have nothing but contempt for the Royal Court. Not for their lies, their politics or their greed, mind you. I hate all politicians because of their incompetence. It takes a miner to run a mine. Look at the mess just one idiot noble with a bad haircut did to White Snaek Quarry!'

-Miner Foreman Auguar Sudo





Immolan

Planet: Immolan V
Climate: Warm to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 5%, Severe Storms (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Fugoro Prima, Shiel, Kielan, Nuvo, Pieroth Cape, Imperial Palace (Immolan)
Population: 84 million Centauri, (85% of resident population lives in urban areas. 15% live in rural or isolated areas)
Cultural Information: The Centauri of Immolan are considered the elite of the colonist Centauri and in many ways fashion themselves as the true centre of the Republic. It is true that Immolan V has not been able to sink quite as far into backstabbing politics or the long history of civil wars as Centauri Prime itself, but the world has its share of greed and intolerance. The commoners of Immolan V do not feel any more privileges than their peers on homeworld.

Planetary Notes: Immolan is a brighter, more fertile world than Centauri Prime and would be a perfect world for the race to migrate to en masse if something occurs to make the Centauri Homeworld unable to support them. The atmosphere and gravity of the planet is an exact match for Centauri Prime and the climate is as temperate as it is dependably seasonal. The Centauri living on Immolan V rarely leave, even to go on vacation, which is a telling testimony in itself to the perfect conditions of the colony world.

Often called the 'Emerald Bracelet of the Empire', Immolan V is a lush, green world with the best weather, climate and suitability for the Centauri people to be found in their vast stellar empire. Few Centauri who come to Immolan ever wish to leave and the planetary population is one of the few in the Republic that steadily increases, even when the fortunes of the Centauri dwindle in other areas of the galaxy.

The Centauri are not eager to lose Immolan to any invading force, which explains the reason why a core world of their empire so far from any potential battle line is blessed with the presence of the second largest garrison fleet in the Republic. More than a hundred ships are dedicated to ensuring that no alien menace can damage or seize the Centauri Republic's prize planet. As the only major colony left in the Republic, Immolan's considerable population certainly warrants that level of protection, though most commanders in the garrison fleet appreciate the guard duty strictly for its excellent shore leave potential and retirement benefits.

'Immolan is to Homeworld what a ripe kourba is to a pot of soured kourba preserves. Both may have the same beginnings, but one is far fresher and more appealing than the other. Still, I am glad the nobles of the Royal Court back home have not figured this out. I'd hate to share this world with them.'
-Lord Vindus Mollari, Immolan
Centaurum Minor

Jux Prime

Planet: Jux Prime
Climate: Temperate to Cool, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 10%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony), Ar-Jux (extinct)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Dullust, Gebrin, Senhurlo, Vientaro
Population: 750 thousand Centauri (90% of population lives in urban areas. 10% are in rural or isolated areas)
Cultural Information: Jux Prime is an odd planet in the Republic because of placement, climate and importance. The government of Centauri Prime designated Jux Prime to be a secondary government building based on their projections of how far the empire would expand in its direction. This expansion never happened, but the Centauri living here still consider themselves one of the most important worlds in the Republic because of the (mostly disused) Imperial Palace on their world.

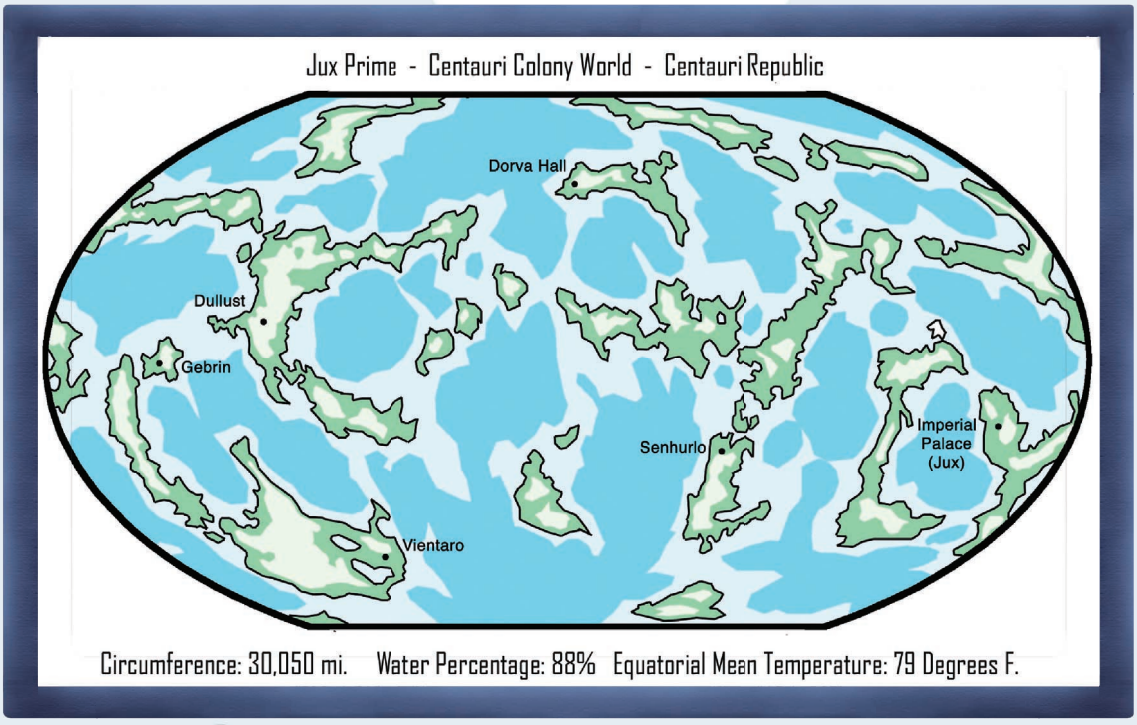
Planetary Notes: Jux Prime has a distressing tendency to, as one geologist in the Expeditionary Fleet that discovered wrote in his log, 'have meteors change course just to hit it'. This is of course not true, but the planet does show signs of severe meteor activity in the past and more than its fair share of harmless to mildly serious meteor showers. Most of the people on Jux Prime assume that some day, a serious meteor will come along to try and wipe them out, but Centauri fleet technology will keep that from happening.

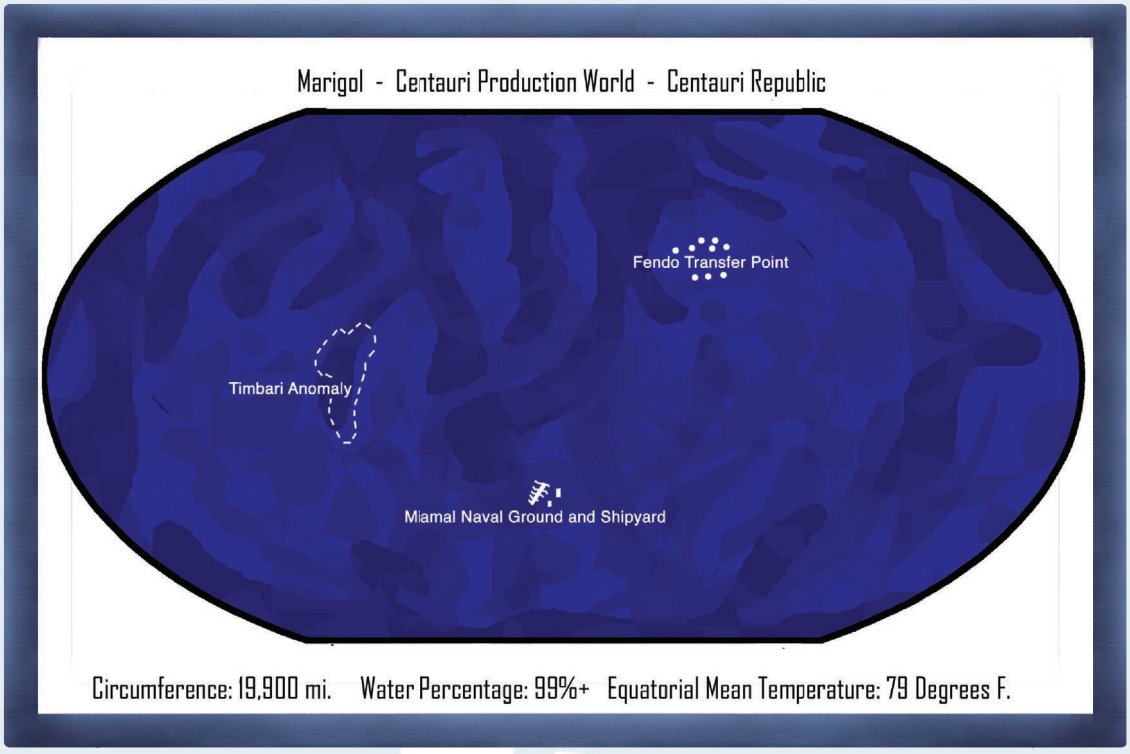
Few Centauri with any connection to Jux Prime think that it will remain in the Republic much longer. While all Centauri are to some degree arrogant, the average level of ego present in a resident of Jux Prime is so vast, it beggars the Centaurum in scope. The people of Jux Prime tend to make outlandish demands in Court, requisition far larger garrisons than their world requires and assume that their world's status as an auxiliary capital of the Republic somehow entitles them to a level of nobility above the residents of other worlds.

The predominant opinion of the High Houses of Centauri Prime is that Jux Prime is an eyesore the Republic no longer needs, but no one in the empire wants the people on it. With little chance of a willing host planet for the evacuation of Jux Prime, many nobles joke that when a massive asteroid does come along on a collision course for the world, it will be tragic how inaccurate the defence fleet's guns may be. Others say not as jokingly that if a suitable asteroid does not come along soon, one can probably be towed into position.

'The things one must put up with on our world! We go to all the trouble of decorating the Imperial Palace and filling it with the finest nobles of the land for an Ascension Day festival in honour of the Emperor and he sends his regrets again! This makes fifty eight years in a row.'

-Siafa Jurlo, Social Commentator, Imperial Palace (Jux)





Marigol

Planet: Marigol
Climate: Warm to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 60%, Light Storms (Rain) 20%, Severe Storms (Rain) 15%, Sever Storms (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri, only at the Transfer Point and Naval Base)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Military Rule (Naval Base, Ground Assault Division)

Notable Cities: No cities to speak of. Fendo Transfer Point and Miamal Naval Ground have sizable populations
Population: 17 thousand Centauri (Entire resident population lives in Centauri-made facilities). Population of this planet depends on how many naval troops are resident and stationed at any given time of year
Cultural Information: Marigol has no culture to speak of, though the Water Guilds that run the Transfer Point have been doing so for generations and have developed slightly apart from the rest of the Centauri Republic. While technically a commoner production facility, the Fendo Transfer Facility receives only minor monitoring from the Naval base. As long as there is fresh water whenever a passing cargo ship docks at Fendo, they are left to rule themselves.

Planetary Notes: Marigol is a resource dream for the Republic- a world of primarily fresh water with no indigenous lifeforms of any significant danger to worry about. The planet has a few oddities of its own, like the Timbari Anomaly. There is a section of the world ocean that no living creature will venture into willingly. Extensive surveys have found nothing chemically or physically wrong with the water, nor are there magnetic or radioactive disturbances in the area.

Marigol is no longer quite as vital a world as it once was. When the Centauri were expanding to the rimward edge of their empire, the water of Marigol was a resource they could quite literally not do without. Even in the modern era of Centauri hydro-replication, fresh water from Marigol is an important fleet resource and something that many formations will travel out of their way to bring onboard when they can. Official fleet policy is to use replicated water whenever stationed on garrison or patrol duty; no regulation in the history of the Centauri Republic has ever been so widely ignored.

Even though the Miamal facility is a naval base and shipyard, it has a fair amount of business as a tourist site. While only military personnel may use the base for this purpose, the waters around Miamal are so calm and the sea-life so interesting and varied that thousands of off-duty officers come each year for diving holidays to Marigol. Hundreds are injured each year for not obeying safety precautions concerning the deadly hal-vek sharks that school a few leagues to the north and east of the facility, but this has had no detrimental impact on tourism to date.

'I know my flight loves the diving by the base, but my vacations are spent off the platforms of Fendo. The workers there are a good sort and they don't mind a pilot who spreads his money around.'

-Turmat, Hammer Group Auturo Marcasus Flight Leader

Morbis

Planet: Morbis
Climate: Temperate to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 65%, Light Storms (Rain) 15%, Severe Storms (Rain) 15%, Severe Storms (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony), Morboth (enslaved)
Dominant Government: Imperial Monarchy (House Rule, auxiliary Imperial Palace)

Notable Cities: Shenduran, Kennoth, Kenvoro
Population: 7 million Centauri (75% of resident population lives in urban areas, 25% live in rural or isolated settlements)
Cultural Information: The Centauri of Morbis are a complex lot. The Centauri of the northern settlements are of House Kendon and have a strict interpretation of family honour and duty. Other settlements are more mainstream Centauri and tend to avoid the Kendon nobles whenever possible. The Centauri staffing the auxiliary Imperial Palace are the closest to Centauri nobility from Homeworld that exist on Morbis.

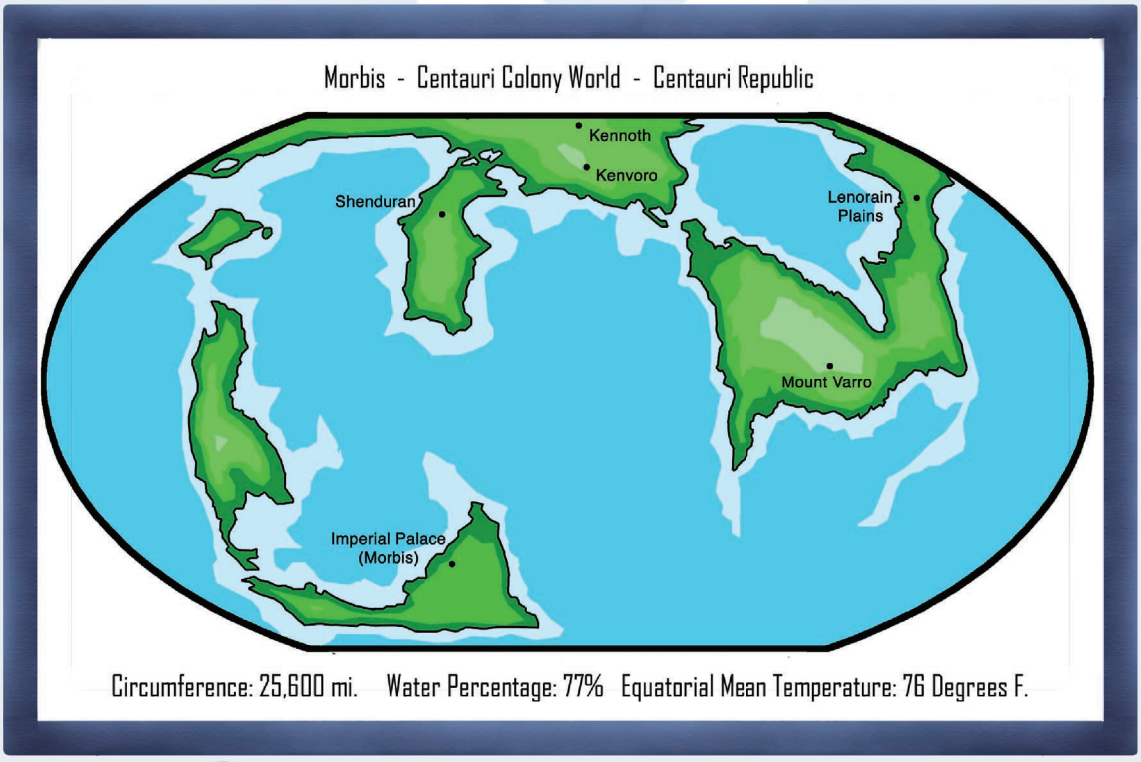
Planetary Notes: Morbis is a heavy ore planet with a number of mining colonies on the continental stretch called the Lenordin Plains. The metals in Morbis' crust and mantle are somewhat magnetic and can disrupt normal sensory equipment on the planet's surface and in orbit. This makes the planet difficult to survey and several areas of Morbis remain unexplored and uncharted. Magnetic storms make the oceans of Morbis very turbulent; the planet has no navy to speak of, though a dedicated and heavily shielded air defence contingent provide enough military presence under normal circumstances.

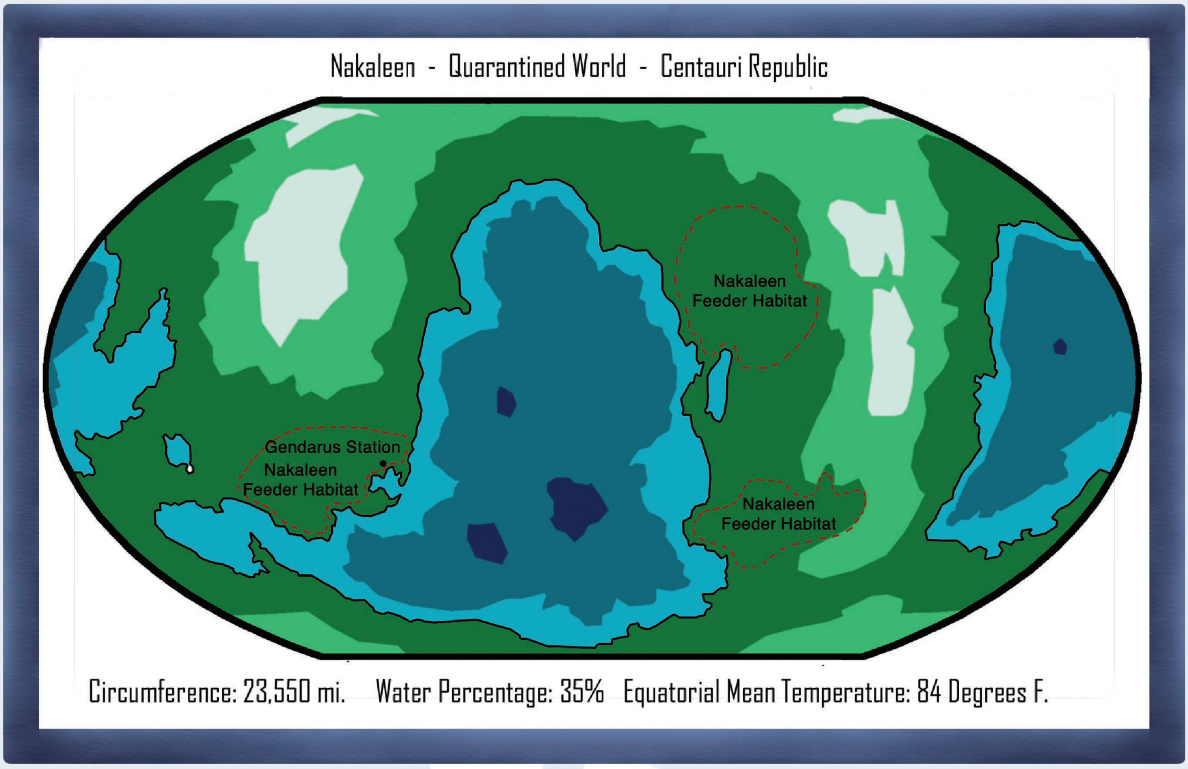
Morbis is very close in climate and composition to Centauri Prime with the exception of its extensive heavy metal veins. These deposits are both the reason for its value to the empire and the reason for its selection as an auxiliary Imperial government centre. Serious politicking by the Houses that settled the planet convinced Centauri Prime to designate the world as an auxiliary site before the full extent of its gravitational and magnetic instabilities were catalogued or reported. These make the planet unsuitable for record keeping, which explains the half-finished Royal Archive in Shenduran that was abandoned a year after magnetic storms destroyed the computer systems installed there.

Morbian Centauri have grown used to the constant storms and even like the fact that planet wide communications are not as prevalent as they are on other worlds. It is a common saying in the Royal Court that when a given noble cannot be reached for comment on a political matter, he has 'gone to Morbis'. This is considered a slightly derogatory comment, but many nobles appreciate the idea of not being under constant scrutiny. A private resort on Mount Varro houses a retreat for nobles like this; its main draw is the guarantee that no communications can reach it.

'I think building the auxiliary Palace on Morbis was an act of cosmic serendipity. All the nobles I prefer, the ones who would rather just do their jobs and stay out of the social spotlight, spend more time there than on Centauri Prime anyway.'

-Lord Venzaro Jaddo, Imperial Representative





Nakaleen

Planet: Nakaleen
Climate: Warm to Temperate, Hot near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 40%, Light Storms (Rain) 20%, Severe Storms (Rain) 35%, Severe Storms (mixed) 5%
Technical Level: None (Abandoned Centauri technology at Gendarus Station)
Native Sentient Race(s): Centauri (abandoned, colony), Nakaleen Feeders (pseudo-sentient)
Dominant Government: None (Abandoned Colony World)

Notable Cities: No cities. One abandoned station – Gendarus
Population: No Centauri (Entire resident population killed or evacuated), unknown population of Nakaleen Feeders remain on Nakaleen (these creatures are the reason for the planet's quarantine).
Cultural Information: As far as the Centauri know, the Nakaleen Feeders have no organized culture to speak of and seem to be loners in their native environment. With their ability to consume mental energy and kill through the electrical reduction of cerebral activity, the Nakaleen Feeders may have killed off another sentient race on Nakaleen in the past. The Centauri have not investigated this possibility.

Planetary Notes: The lush vegetation and resources that exist on Nakaleen made this world look like another rich jewel in the Republic's crown. It is a stable planet with some interesting but non-harmful energy fields in its magnetosphere. Atmospherically, Nakaleen is very turbulent and its four moons often cause severe tidal disruptions.

When the Expeditionary Fleet found Nakaleen off a hyperspace trail leading from Rogoth, it seemed too good to be true. The colonists on Rogoth needed material resources that appeared to be in abundance on Nakaleen and there were no indigenous lifeforms detected during the system's first survey. A preliminary station was constructed and used to house a temporary work force of 20,000 Shenaro and Centauri slaves to begin the world's processing into a major new production planet.

Then, without warning, the station fell out of contact with overseers on Rogoth. After repeated attempts to hail the colony, an investigation team was sent to Nakaleen to discover the reason for their silence. This force also vanished. When the military responded next, they found thousands of corpses and a nest of vicious Nakaleen feeders living in Gendarus Station. A few Centauri survivors were evacuated and the planet was quarantined immediately.

'Do I condemn the use of mass drivers on Narn? Of course not! The rebellious fools got what was coming to them. Terrorists and murderers, the lot of them! Their world is better off flattened. The only thing I regret is that our fleets didn't have mass drivers when we locked down the Nakaleen system. Now there was a world that needed a good round of rock storming.'

– Brigadier Hulron Varga, Gold Fleet

Nefua

Planet: Nefua
Climate: Minimal Atmosphere, high heat retention from volcanic activity and trace gasses
Weather Average: Minimal Atmosphere, no appreciable weather

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri, only in mining colonies)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (mining colonies)
Dominant Government: Production World, no direct control other than House Involvement

Notable Cities: No cities. Mining Communities include Algolan, Forigan, and Tendates Mines.
Population: 90 thousand Centauri. (Entire resident population lives in mining operating towns or at the Transfer Point)
Cultural Information: Nefua (the Centauri word for 'blood') shares the same distinction as Gorash Moon; there are no nobles on its surface. An orbital processing platform has a noble office for the overseer's position, but more often than not, it is staffed by a commoner proxy. The culture of Nefua is curt, humourless and somewhat violent. The constant red light of the world's surface and its red dwarf sun is difficult on Centauri nerves after long exposure.

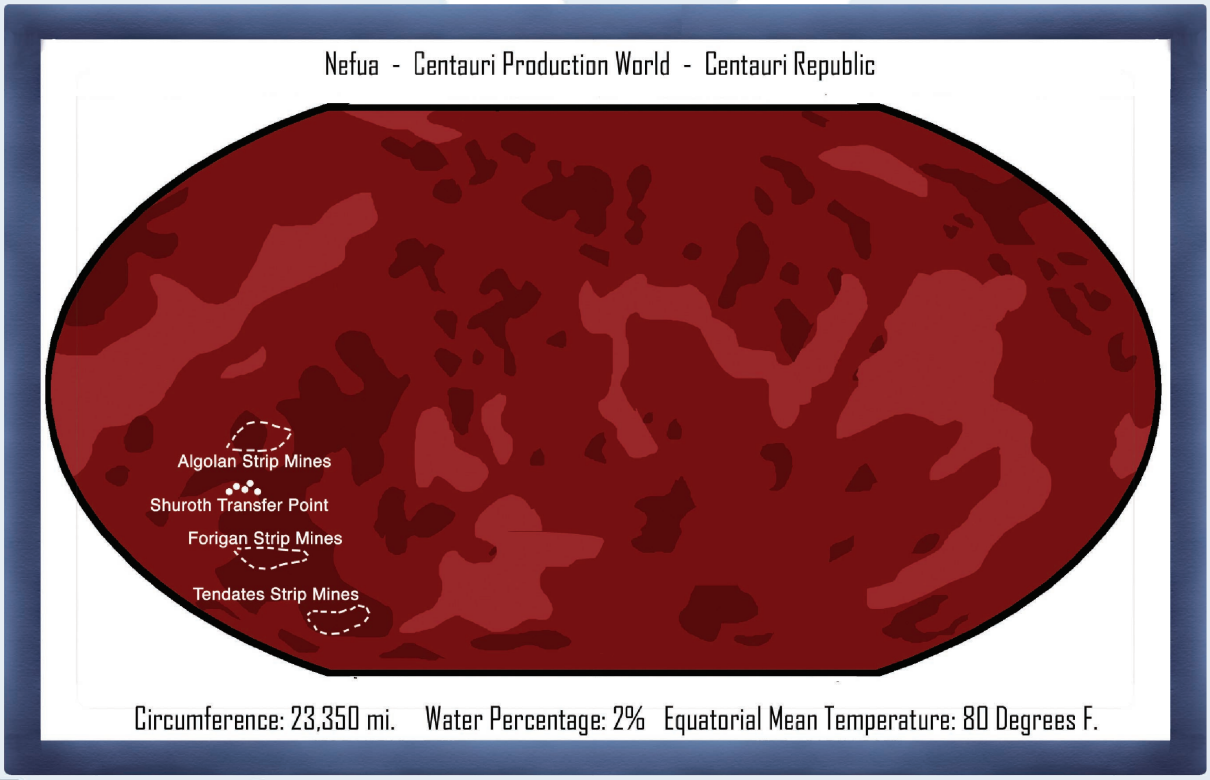
Planetary Notes: Nefua is a vital resource world because of its heavy deposits of metal and the relative ease of mining them that its loose soil and somewhat fragile crust offer. Nefua is surprisingly stable, especially considering its thin, brittle crust and numerous volcanic surface vents. The only area that offers safe mining is the Karasi Plain and three full strip mining operations dominate that area.

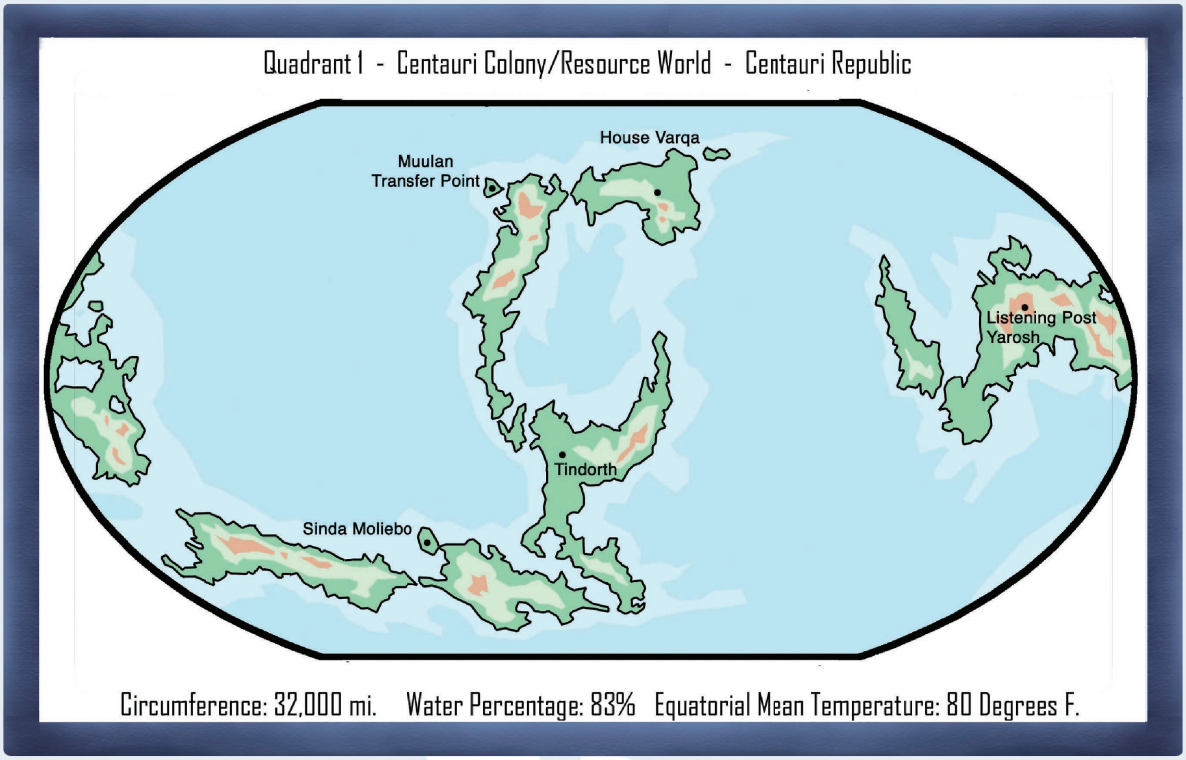
In its long history as a mining world, Nefua has been host to not one but three different galactic empires. The Centauri Republic seized the world from the Orieni during their war with that civilisation. Before the Orieni took control of it in the same way, it belonged to the Drazi. The amount of blood that has been spilled to possess this lifeless planet makes its deep crimson landscape all the more ironic.

Nefua is a rich planet in its way and the effort expended to control its vermilion shores is understandable. Iron and other metallic deposits are close to the surface in its lowland areas and can be efficiently removed and processed with a minimum amount of work. Only the thousands of volcanic vents make the world dangerous and these are easily avoided by careful work crews. Mining the planet is therefore extremely profitable. While it is tragic that so many lives have been lost over a planet no one can actually live on, its physical value explains the many terrible wars that have been fought to hold this ruby jewel in the rough.

'I know the rumours you have heard, but I would like to put them to rest right now. The Algolan Mines are not too dangerous to keep working. There are a few new vents opening up – that is true – but they have all been clearly marked and work moved from the area. Now get back in your suits. We have an ore harvest to bring in today and a quota to reach. You want a bonus this month, right?'

– Company representative Lartha





Quadrant 1

Planet: Quadrant 1
Climate: Temperate to Cool, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Mixed) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 5%, Severe (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Varga House Rule)

Notable Cities: Tindorth, Sinda Moliebo, House Varga
Population: 1.2 million (75% of resident population lives in urban areas. 20% are rural or in isolated settlements. 5% live at the Transfer Point settlement or around the Listening Point)
Cultural Information: Quadrant 1 has been a tactical point of interest for the Centauri for centuries, continually in the line of fire during its wars of expansion and dominion. Consequently, the people of Quadrant 1 tend to be on the jaded side with little shocking or upsetting them. Quadrant 1 Centauri are fearless in the face of danger and typically assume that anything their garrison fleet cannot handle, they can.

Planetary Notes: The only habitable world in the Quadrant 1 system, this planet is actually quite temperate and stable. The central ocean of the world is the result of an almost impossibly huge asteroid collision that shattered the planet's then largest continental mass. The ocean floor is covered in the remains of that asteroid and the minerals from this debris make for very profitable reclamation work.

Quadrant 1 has seen enough war to last two empire's lifetimes. The fury of three different militaries has descended on this planet during its long history. The Drazi have struck at the world repeatedly in raids that resulted in massive damage and loss of life at times. The Orieni Empire unleashed deadly barrages from orbit that levelled most of its settlements during their war with the Centauri. Finally, the War of Retribution swept through this system during its early stages and the Narn left a field of wreckage in orbit around the world that still rains fire from the sky on occasion.

The world's value lies in its myriad uses. The world provides excellent mining and agricultural opportunities, it is tactically positioned to make for an outstanding monitor base and its centrally located galactic position places it on virtually every major race's trade routes. Quadrant 1 is almost single-handedly responsible for the continued survival of House Varga in the face of its financial losses to House Callo in other markets. If Quadrant 1 ever fell out of their hands, House Varga would likely lose its status as a High House of the Republic.

'There is no way we can afford another battle in Quadrant 1. It is a minefield of ship fragments as it is and the financial reparations we should have received will not be coming. The Narn simply have nothing left to sue for!'
– Lord Burvan Varga, Eldest son of the Patriarch

Quadrant 8

Planet: Quadrant 8
Climate: Warm to Temperate, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 10%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

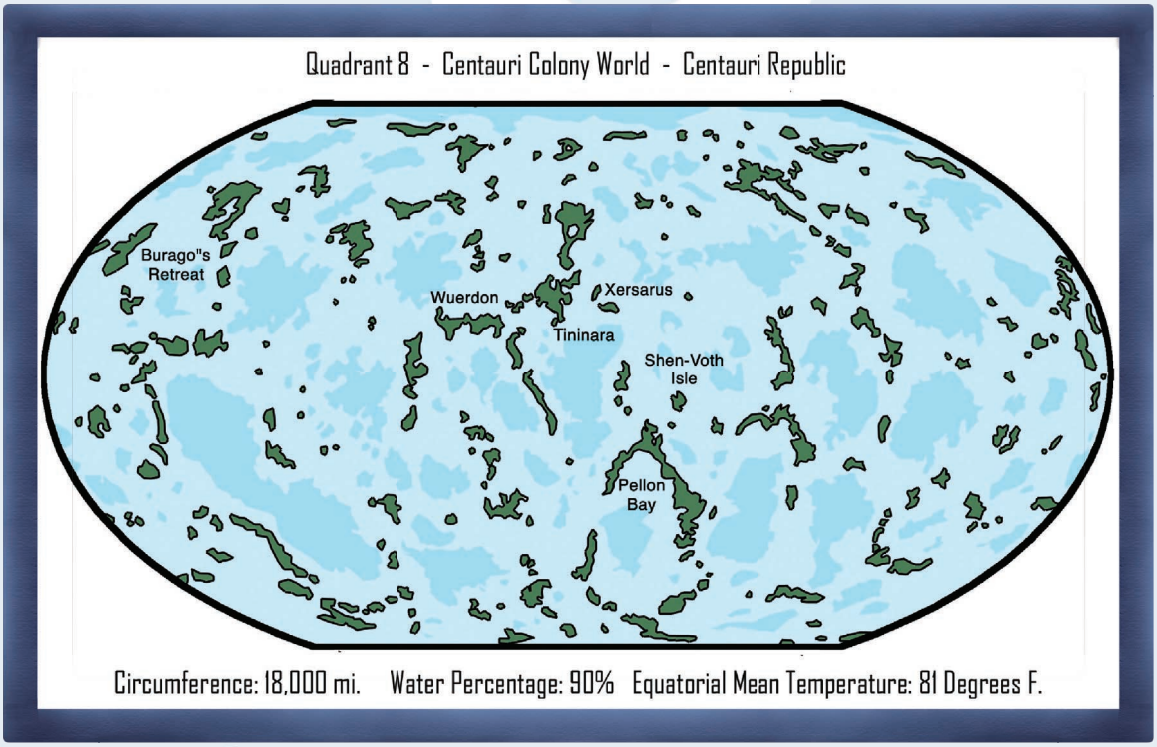
Notable Cities: Burago's Retreat, Wuerdon, Tininara, Xersarus, Shen-Voth Isle
Population: 4 million Centauri, (85% of resident population lives in urban areas. 15% live in rural or isolated areas)
Cultural Information: Quadrant 8 is, simply put, a massive island world dedicated to pleasure. This planet has some tactical value and mineral wealth, but those are minor considerations compared to the vacation and tourism trade Quadrant 8 does each year. The people of Quadrant 8 are a practical folk; they keep their jobs in perspective but have not been as consumed by the vacation atmosphere of their world like some on other pleasure planets.

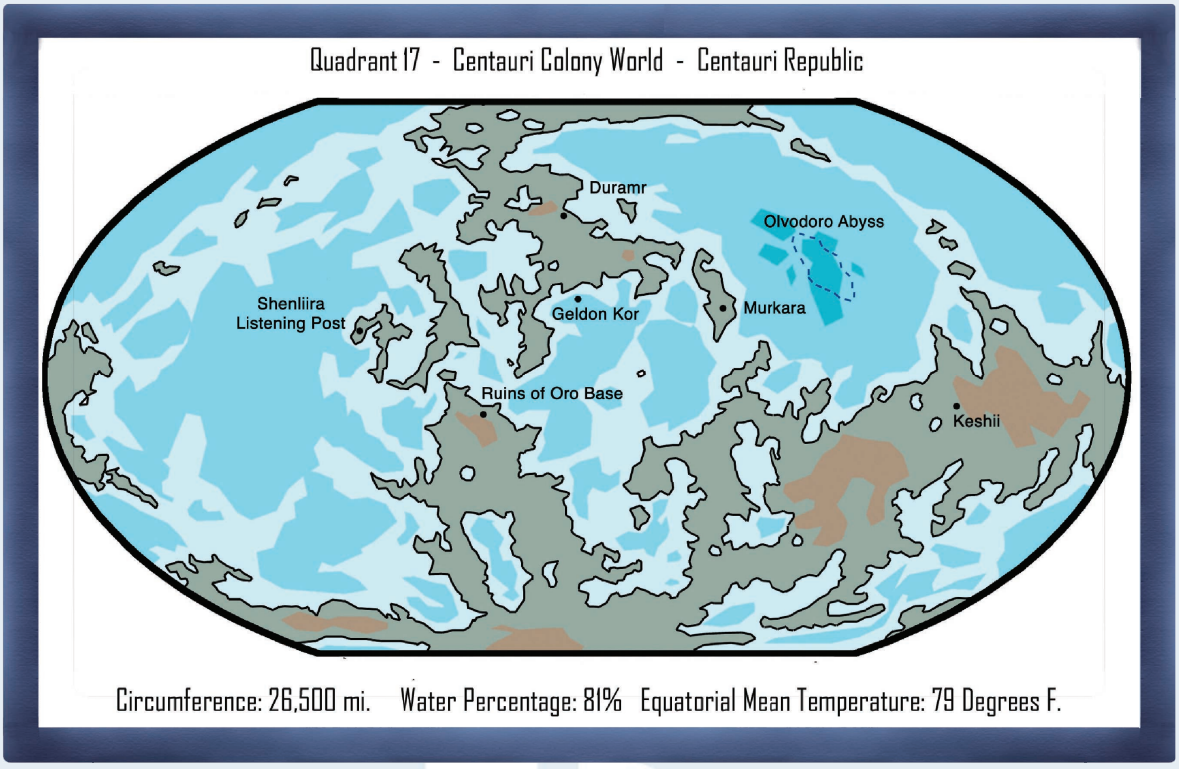
Planetary Notes: Quadrant 8 is an anomaly. It is tectonically stable and has no apparent history of heavy meteor activity. It has no moon or active tides, which makes it difficult to geologically explain its island nature. Many scientists examining the world conclude that it must have been terraformed and can point to mineral stresses and artificial structures beneath the water table as proof. The originating race of this terraforming and the reason for their absence remain unexplained.

The planetary rulership of Quadrant 8 is a matter for some debate. The contracts binding the various resorts of the world are very confusing and even Imperial reviews have been of conflicting opinions on which Houses have right of domain. This has led to an unusual circumstance of administration; every house involved in the tourist trade of Quadrant 8 shares an equal share of the yearly net profits. As might be imagined, this is a logistical nightmare, but none of the component houses can raise enough support from the others to get the edict changed. Only Burago's Retreat, a pleasure resort set aside for the Emperor himself and his guests, is above this legal labyrinth.

The High Houses have other ways of making money off Quadrant 8- undersea mining and harvesting. The mineral resources under the surface of the world's ocean are extensive and only the High Houses have the ability to finance these huge operations. There is some conflict with the resorts of the planet; the reclamation plants occasionally cause flooding or damage to nearby islands. This situation has always been resolved peacefully in the Quadrant's history, but the Houses know it is only a matter of time before tensions erupt into something more serious.

'You look at this world, at its teeming resorts and settlements, and you think that is were the money is. No. Look deeper, under the waves. There is literally gold down there. Of course, getting to it will wipe out a few hotels, but things happen. Besides, knocking out the competition is good too.'
-Ulan Triino, Geologist Surveyor for House Callo





Quadrant 17

Planet: Quadrant 17
Climate: Warm to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 80%, Light Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (Rain) 5%, Severe Storms (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri), Mixed (Orieni tech)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Military Rule (Ground Assault Base Administration)

Notable Cities: Geldon Kor, Duramar, Murkara, Keshii
Population: 1 million Centauri, (80% of resident population lives in urban areas. 10% live in rural or isolated areas, 10% are stationed at Shenliira or assigned to the reclamation team at Oro Base)
Cultural Information: Quadrant 17 was an Orieni world captured during their war with the Centauri and held through the numerous skirmishes in this area of space. Several League of Non-Aligned worlds have tried to take this planet, leaving its people militant and battered from recent decades of constant attack. There are several civilian Centauri living on the planet as well; these are also embittered people, but they are not as inured to combat and tend to seek shelter whenever reports of alien activity in the sector occur.

Planetary Notes: This world in Quadrant 17 is a barely hospitable planet with an acrid atmosphere that borders on needing respirators to be breathable. Most of the long-term residents and native generations have gotten used to the mild levels of toxins in the air, but visiting Centauri and other races are encouraged to use breather masks outdoors. In every other way, the planet is a stable world of the Republic and poses no other significant obstacles to continued colonisation.

Quadrant 17 has been a constant surprise to the League of Non-Aligned World's fleets, none of whom thought the Centauri would fight so hard to keep this planet. While Centauri Prime would probably have issued a retreat order years ago, the administration knows quite well the Garrison Fleet in Quadrant 17 would ignore it and continue defending the world. They have held it so long that the planet's Centauri rule has become a matter of honour. Quadrant 17's tactical importance keeps the expense of its continued operation worthwhile.

The people of Quadrant 17 are a tough breed of Centauri similar to those in Quadrant 1. While Quadrant 17 has not suffered the massive wars that have scarred its 'sister in battle', numerous smaller attacks have left it just as defensive and war torn. The planet itself shows many signs of the conflicts above it. For example, a wrecked Drazi Sunhawk still rusts just north of the city of Murkara. While its hulk blocks a useful trade road between the city and a nearby mine, the Centauri refuse to move it and disturb the memorial to their determination.

'This is our world. We took it because we were strong and we'll hold it because we are stronger. Let the nobles at home argue expediency and value. My ship leaves orbit the day it gets shot down.'

-Dono Jaelen, Exaltus of the battlecruiser Haldiir

Quadrant 32

Planet: Quadrant 32
Climate: Temperate to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 75%, Light Storms (Rain) 20%, Severe Storms (Rain) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri), Mixed (Antareans, Golians)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony), Antareans (colony), Golians (base)
Dominant Government: Military Rule (Combined Military Tribunal)

Notable Cities: Antar Beta, Yestar, Uldain, Golostara
Population: 27 thousand Centauri, 40 thousand Antareans, 11 thousand Golians (As per Tribunal decree, all planetary residents must live in urban areas)
Cultural Information: The disposition of cultures on this habitable world in Quadrant 32 is a unique mixture of Centauri, Golian, and Antarean. The planet's populations do not often mix, but decades of exposure to each other have caused a certain blending of cultures until each population centre exhibits certain traits typically unique to the others.

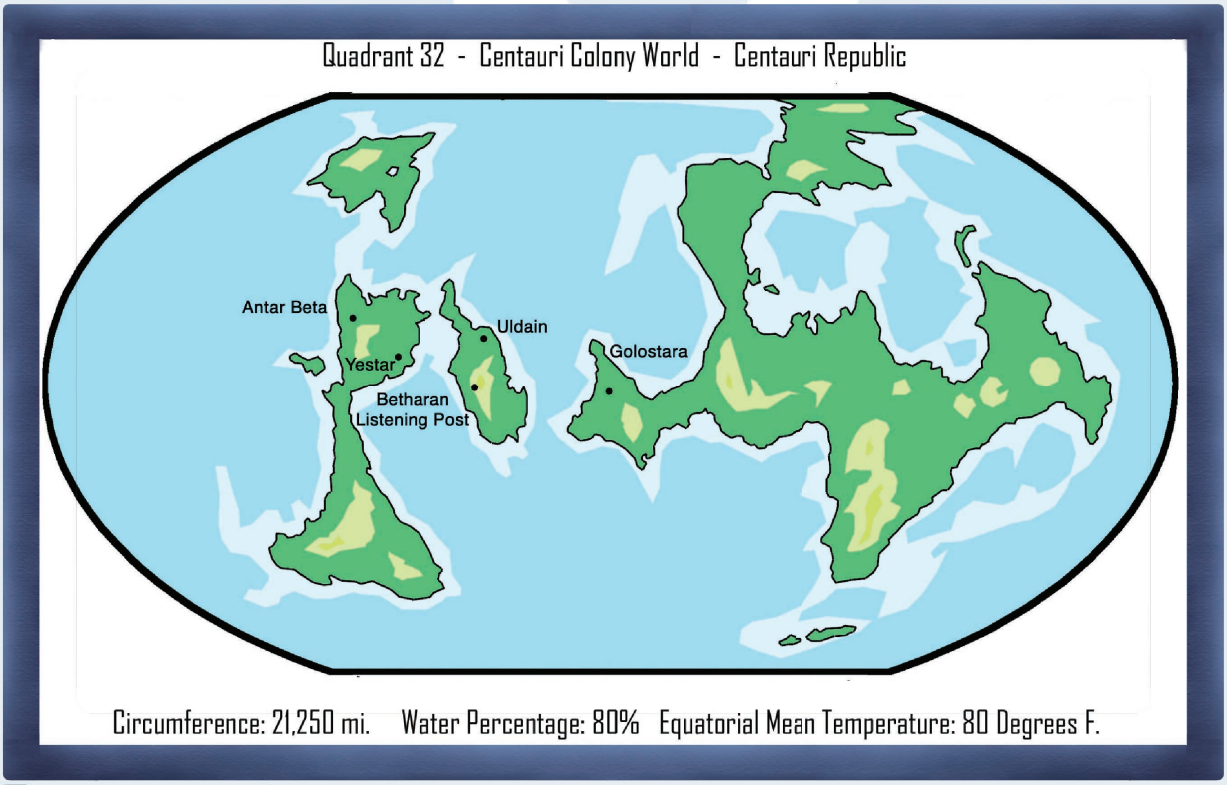
Planetary Notes: This is an unremarkable but hospitable planet with a breathable atmosphere, mild tectonic activity and a standard magnetosphere that renders it almost exactly average for colonisation and tactical value. Only its placement so close to four different territories makes it remarkable, but this is enough to keep interest in the world and maintains a level of awareness in the planet's mixed populations.

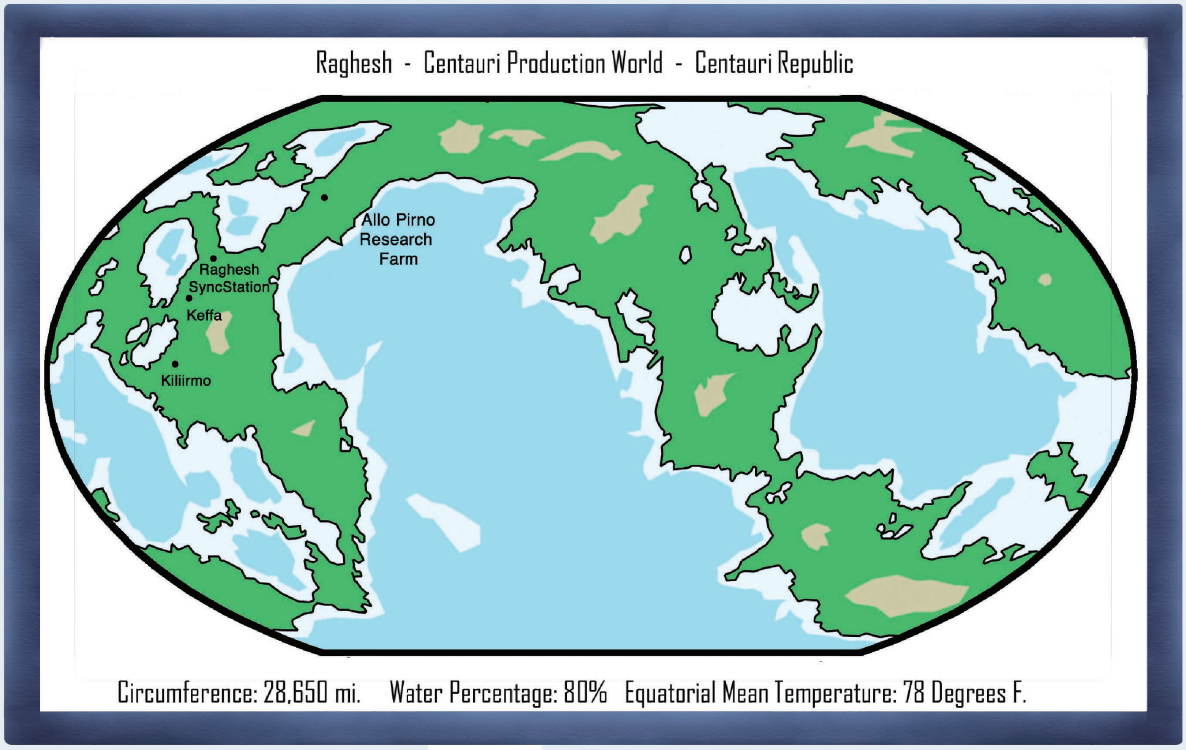
Quadrant 32 rests in Centauri space within a short hyperspace flight between the territories of the Lumati, Antareans, and the Golians. When the Centauri took control of the best planet in the system and began building the Uldain colony, all three races took notice. The aloof Lumati considered the Centauri beneath their notice and after a single diplomatically uncomfortable liaison, they left the world uncontested and did not return to the arena of Centauri politics. The Golians and the Antareans, on the other hand, combined their militaries to make a serious bid for control of Quadrant 32.

Rather than fight an extremely expensive holding action, the Centauri Republic was willing to reach an accord with both races. They only wanted the planet for a listening post to keep the spinward border of the Republic monitored. If the Golians and the Antareans would leave the existing colony and the listing post alone, they could share control of the rest of the world and the system surrounding it. This unusual alliance has not always been peaceful, but it has endured and provided tactical benefits to all three empires.

'The situation here is not as uncomfortable as one might believe. The countryside is not much to look at, but the neighbours are at least a continent away in either direction. As long as they stay on their side of the fence, so to speak, we'll keep on spying on them in peace.'

-Komo Tares Rennet Turvo, newly assigned to Betharan





Raghesh

Planet: Raghesh
Climate: Temperate to Cool, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 85%, Light Storms (Rain) 8%, Severe Storms (Rain) 5%, Severe Storms (mixed) 2%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri, very rural)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Scientific Outpost (Orbital Administration)

Notable Cities: Keffa, Kiliirmo, Allo Pirno Research Farm Community
Population: 40 thousand Centauri, (80% of resident population lives in rural areas, 10% are at the Raghesh SyncStation)
Cultural Information: The people of Raghesh are farmers and agriculturalists. These Centauri do not have any on-world nobles and the only administration they typically need takes place on the orbital station geosynchronous to the planet's transmission facility and main research plant. Life on the Raghesh farms is a simple but rewarding existence that most to arrive of Raghesh learn to appreciate quickly.

Planetary Notes: Raghesh is blessed with clement weather, fertile soil and an atmosphere perfect for an agricultural colony. While the world offers little in the way of valuable mineral resources, it provides a large percentage of the grown foodstuffs and livestock for the Centauri Republic. The mineral-laden water sources on Ragesh are a key element of the planet's success as a farming world; Raghesh water is used for off world irrigation projects elsewhere in the empire.

Raghesh is about as simple and agrarian as a Centauri world can get. While there are still signs of ambition in the farming communities on Raghesh, most of the Centauri population is content to limit their competitions for status to crop production and the health of their farms. The agricultural towns of Keffa and Kiliirmo have been in a standing rivalry for best harvest during the last century; neither community has been able to establish a lasting victory. Most residents of other communities do not bother trying to predict a winner each season. Flipping a ducat is typically as accurate as any 'educated' guess.

The people of Raghesh Station, the orbital platform above Raghesh 3, are a completely different culture. They are also interested in agriculture, but their similarity with the people beneath them on the planet's surface ends there. The platform is a scientific affair and the crew are an analytical sort. Most of them would not know how to plant a seed if they had to, but they can dissect one and determine with exacting detail its potential yield, optimal conditions for growth and ecological effects. Planet bound Raghesh citizens do not understand their orbital fellows at all; the incomprehension is mutual.

'Our world is a miracle of the Great Maker. This soil can grow anything if you treat it right. I have a barn full of 'special fertilizers' from the station; I've never used a scoopful of that garbage. I till the ground, I water the crops, and I bring in harvests that trounce those scientists' best projection. They may understand agriculture, but they'll never understand farming. Fools.'

-Verza, Keffa Residence Lord

Tolonius

Planet: Tolonius
Climate: Warm to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 90%, Light Storms (Rain) 5%, Severe Storms (Rain) 3%, Severe Storms (mixed) 2%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri), Mixed
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

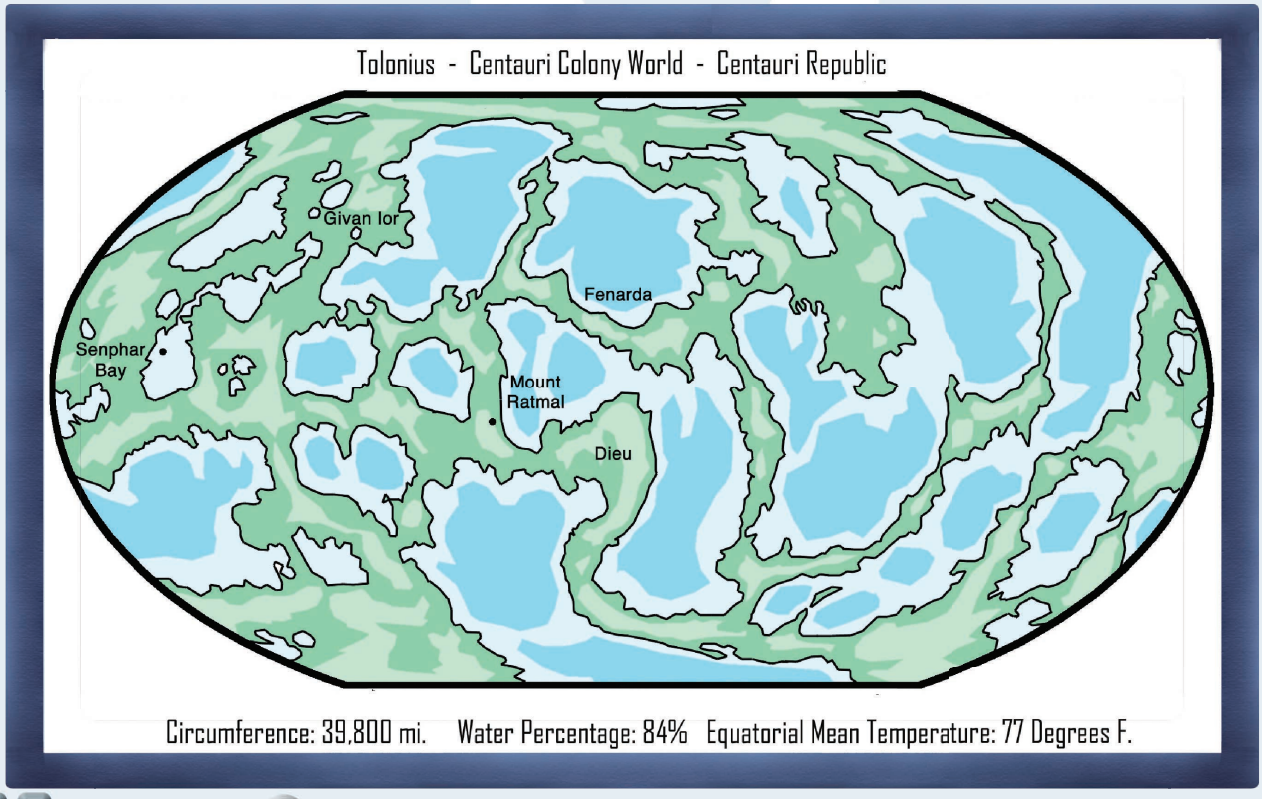
Notable Cities: Givan Tor, Fenarda, Dieu, Mount Ratmal
Population: 13 million Centauri, (80% of resident population lives in urban areas. 20% live in rural or isolated areas)
Cultural Information: Tolonius is derisively called the 'planet of lazy nobles' in the Royal Court, but the epithet is sadly accurate. Tolonius is one of the first colony worlds settled outside the Centauri system and much of its form and function was modelled after the extremely successful example of Immolan V. The climate and land masses were all appropriate for the concept, but the latter world had already attracted all of the adventurous nobles of the era. Tolonius' initial population was made up of nobles shipped there by order of the Centaurum, mostly because no one wanted them at Court. The world has never recovered.

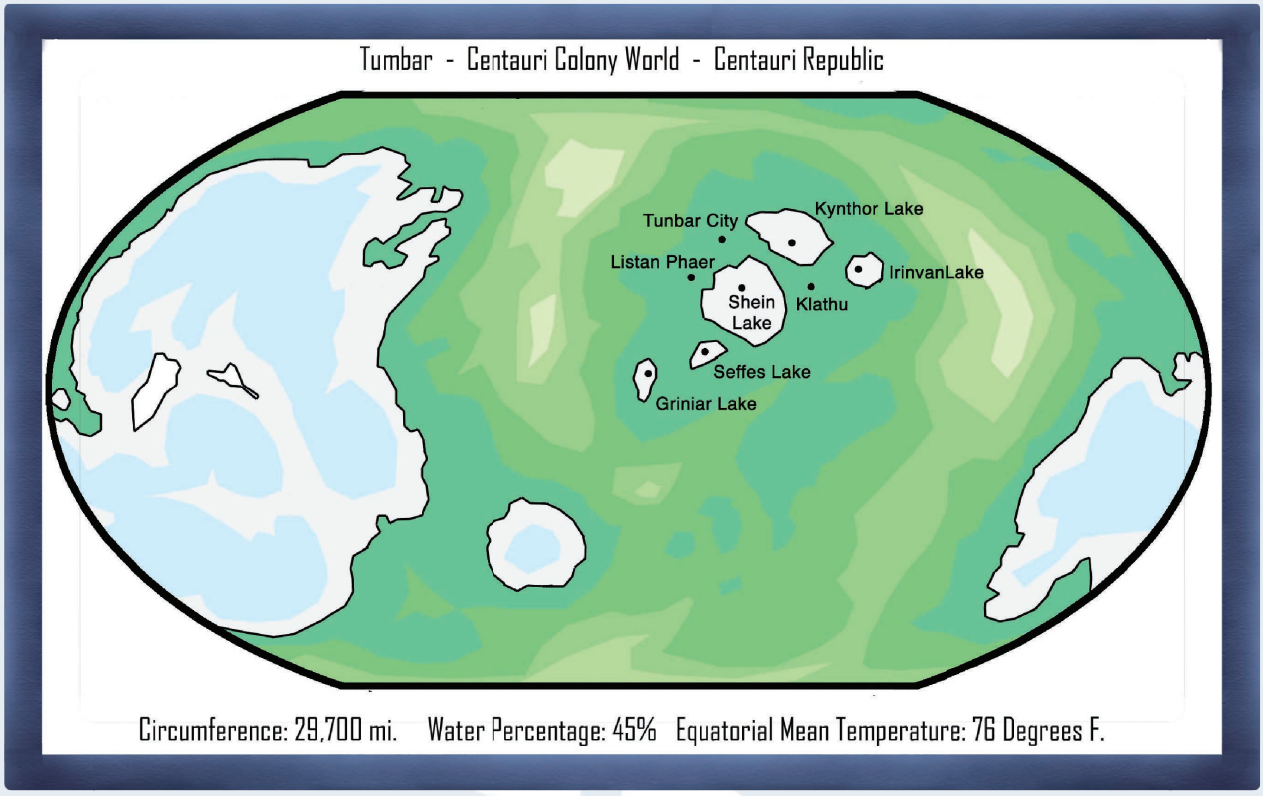
Planetary Notes: Tolonius is a lush, fertile world with an excellent climate, beautiful oceans and a lattice-work continental style that is incredibly pleasing to look at from space. The planet is very stable and its atmosphere is rarely anything but mild all year round. This all makes for an unchallenging existence that, unfortunately, has bred generations of soft nobility good for very little except consuming the world's vast resources.

The beautiful world of Tolonius is one of the Centaurum's greatest disappointments and the primary reason why all colonisations of the empire after its failure became voluntary by nature. The Royal Court's decision to export its noble chaff to another planet did nothing to reduce the eventual population of idle rich on Centauri Prime, but it did lose the Republic a fine planet in the bargain. While Tolonius is not entirely a loss, few companies or Houses have the stomach or heart to deal with its demanding nobility for very long.

This makes trade with Tolonius the fiscal equivalent of a 'hit and run'. Merchants will arrive on Tolonius, drop their goods, pick up payments and new merchandise as quickly as possible and then vacate the system as quickly as their transports will move. Even the Garrison Fleet of the Tolonius star system prefers to guard the planet from a very distant orbit. During the War of Retribution, the defence fleet of Tolonius was completely removed to assist in combat around Immolan. The assumption in the Royal Court was that even the Narn would not be stupid enough to take Tolonius, but they might do everyone a favour and bomb it.

'Tolonius is the Great Maker's way of ensuring that we never get too arrogant. How can we become too full of ourselves when we look at its population and remember that these people are related to us?'
-Vir Cotto, Diplomatic Aide to Ambassador Mollari on Babylon 5





Tumbar

Planet: Tumbar
Climate: Temperate to Cold, Warmer near Equator
Weather Average: Mild 70%, Light Storms (Rain) 15%, Severe Storms (Rain) 10%, Severe Storms (mixed) 5%

Technical Level: Advanced (Full Centauri, only in Tumbar City. Other cities are Moderate Technology)
Native Sentient Race(s): None, Centauri (colony)
Dominant Government: Noble Monarchy (Planetary Ruling Council)

Notable Cities: Listan Phaer, Klathu, Tumbar City
Population: 2 million Centauri, (65% of resident population live in the urban area of Tumbar City. 35% live in the other two rural cities or in isolated areas)
Cultural Information: Tumbar is a vacation world but unlike Immolan and other garden spots frequented by nobles and privileged commoners, it is settled and visited mostly by retired members of the Royal Court and their immediate families. This pushes the average age of the Centauri on the planet to well past 100 years old and shapes the culture of the planet to make the attitudes of its population more sedate and contemplative. To many in the Republic, Tumbar is the world where Centauri go to fade away after a lifetime of noble service.

Planetary Notes: In terms of planetary stability and climate, few worlds in the Republic are as pleasant and mild as Tumbar. While the primary land mass of the planet is not entirely without fault lines, they rarely shift and the planet has little tectonic activity. Aside from occasional serious weather stirred up by the planet's quickly orbiting moon, there is nothing about Tumbar that would disturb a noble's deserved retirement.

Centauri nobles tend to think one of two things about Tumbar; this opinion is almost entirely determined by age. Young nobles dislike Tumbar because it reminds them of the end that awaits them after their prime years have faded. Older nobles are more inclined to consider Tumbar in a favourable light. While most have family homes on Centauri Prime or other planets, the peace and relaxation of the 'World of Lakes' becomes more tempting as the Republic becomes more violent and unstable around them.

Imperial edict makes Tumbar untouchable by the industries of the Republic- another reason younger, hungrier nobles despise the planet. Geological surveys have revealed the presence of precious metals and crystalline deposits on Tumbar, but the Royal Court has consistently sided with the older nobles and their interest in protecting the integrity of their retirement world. Arguments of limited mining and excavation have gone unrequited, but the matter of Tumbar's resource value versus its current status is certain to come to a head as the Republic shrinks and becomes less able to resist the greater needs of its younger generations.

'I have found the easiest way to convince one of these young stallions in the Court to leave Tumbar alone is to take them fishing on placid Lake Seffes. If the sight of gela fish arcing out of the crystal waves in the morning sun doesn't change his mind, you can always drown him while you're out.'
-Lord Surona Jaddo, Retired Minister Tempor

Centauri Technology

With their long history of fortuitous finds and looting from the wreckage of their conquests, it would be easy to dismiss the technological base of the Centauri as the result of fair fortune and grave robbing. While it is true that the greatest level of Centauri science comes from these sources, it would not be accurate to assume that without them, the race would never have achieved its empire or learned to cross the stars on itsown.

Much of what forms the technological base of the Centauri may have been scavenged from other races, but it took the sharp minds and racial emphasis on excellence that drove their advancements to the heights they have reached to date. The Centauri are masters of taking what they find, even if it does not work or is beyond repair, and deciphering both form and function. Beyond this, they are experts at exceeding their own previous efforts. For the Centauri, hitting the mark is not enough. Their scientific pursuits centre on 'splitting the arrow' time and time again.

Because of this pursuit of an ever expanding definition of success, Centauri technology is always on a curve. What is

J,
I have compiled the data our associates asked for. I think the potential of this race has been grossly ignored for too long. The Centauri are a prime example of our cause and the benefits that conflict can bring to a race. If we could have been as fortunate as these aliens in our wars, we would already have some of the technology promised by our ally. Destruction has cost the Centauri a great deal in their past, but they keep improving every time they rebuild.

I have included more than I was asked for. I managed to find an informant with a great deal of technical knowledge and a very loose tongue. I hardly had to bribe the Centauri; he was so enamoured by the sound of his own voice I could have wrung every last secret of the Republic from him if I'd been able to withstand his prattling any longer. As it is, you should find the schematics I've sent you very enlightening. I think the military advantages our associates were hoping for are certainly part of our 'acquisition' here.

The Centauri are idiots, but they are not entirely blind. I still believe we should approach them slowly and get a feel for how far they are willing to go on their end. Fighting their war for them may not be the best way to secure their loyalty. I recommend we offer a single demonstration of our power and see how they respond. If they are willing to commit some of their own ships thereafter, we'll know they can be worked with. If not, we can find someone more suitable.

Just advise me on how to proceed. I have made first contact with L and I think he feels the way we want him to. He wants what we want him to want. Inform our associates that we may need a few of their ships for the demonstration I mentioned. It should be somewhere out of the way- perhaps a colony or outpost of limited military value. No need to expose ourselves too soon.

I think I have just the place in mind. I'll contact you again if our peacock puppet agrees.
M

state of the art one day is the next day's goal to beat. Many races in the galaxy have reached a stagnancy point in their technology, but Centauri science has never levelled off. Every generation of researchers builds on the work of the past, improving what came before and inventing the next wave of inventions from their predecessor's theories.

The Centauri also benefit from their racial tendency to compete at every level of their society. Because many scientists are also nobles, the need to outdo their peers means that no researcher can be satisfied to leave their latest creation at the pinnacle of its development. Another scientist is bound to work harder and improve upon the concept. This drives the technical base of the Centauri; each scientist is in competition with his peers for the entirety of his career.

While this level of stress is not necessarily the best model of efficiency, it does have the benefit of keeping Centauri technology on a growing level compared to other races. When one civilisation exhibits a breakthrough, the scientific community of the Centauri cannot rest until it has been deconstructed, analysed, replicated and then improved upon. This may give the Centauri a reputation for 'doppleganging' other culture's innovations, but they are not disturbed by the label. Indeed, many in the Republic take pride in the fact that other races acknowledge the fact the Centauri can take their ideas and improve upon them.

This research model has its limitations. While the Centauri can consistently stay ahead of the galactic curve, they are retarded from true advancement because of their dependence on the inventions of other cultures. This is not always true, but the Centauri tend to have the best levels of existing technology without truly discovering new ones. Innovation is not their strong suit; improvement on existing designs is the best the Centauri can generally hope for.

This flaw in their scientific character is not especially troubling for the Centauri. Their research and development has provided them the best ships in the galaxy with the exception of the Minbari. They have artificial gravity, high energy weapons, some of the fastest engines and jump drives known and can manipulate most of the electromagnetic spectrum with their inventions. The fact that they rarely invent anything entirely new is not a concern for them. Why should they design a new technology when they are so far ahead of everyone else?

This philosophy shows the one myopic point in their scientific perception. The Centauri do not compare their technology with the Minbari. Their early fear of the Minbari following the utter annihilation of the Garmak has remained a part of the Centauri psyche and carries over to their perceptions of technology and innovation. The Minbari are not truly another race to the Centauri. They are a technically advanced 'bogey man' with an inferior culture and the scientific equivalent of magic. Their inventions simply 'do not count'. Regardless of this opinion, Centauri scientists take every possible opportunity to research Minbari technology. It might be magic to them, but the Centauri remember the Technomages and yearn for that kind of power.

Air Shuttle

Centauri Markets

The Centauri have an excellent technological base, but what makes their economy so stable is the way they distribute their products through the Republic. They have a strict set of market controls that keep their own designs from falling into the hands of other races that might attempt to replicate what they have already copied. While these safeguards are not entirely effective (the Narn serve as a fine example of this failure), it does serve as a delimiting factor of Centauri tech proliferation.

The Centauri would probably be able to control their science reaching the acquisitive research communities of other races more effectively were it not for one of their greatest character flaws; the Centauri cannot conceive of a thing without attaching a value to it. Much of the Centauri Republic is defined in terms of market price and appraised value. Nobles are rated by their net worth in assets and planets are chiefly concerned with their profitability. Opulence is one thing, but all that gold and glamour requires money to fuel it.

Because everything is rated by its worth to the Republic, virtually everything in the Republic is for sale on some level. Centauri ships are never sold to outside governments or private collectors, but every component of those vessels can be purchased through the right contacts and an insistent buyer could possibly even appropriate a small fighter or shuttle craft using less than official markets run by the Centauri themselves.

On a somewhat less grand scale, Centauri inventions are fully available through the right channels. Anything short of weapons is freely purchasable within the empire, though narcotics and liquor are taxed heavily whenever they are exported. Because the Centauri do not truly find much in other races of any real interest, they export far more than they import. This creates a secondary market for alien wares; the Centauri may not as a race find any great value in the products of others, but individual aficionados spend millions of ducats each year on the things they do appreciate.

Weapons are also available, but these military items are more seriously controlled. Most are purchased through black market operations and solo contractors. For a substantial fee, an alien can apply to become a distributor for one of the many manufacturing companies in the Republic. This amounts to an Imperial bribe, but such is how the empire continues to fund its own illegal distribution networks. The thinking in this regard is, 'These things are going to be sold. We might as well get a cut.'

The Dividing Line

One of the most difficult things for most alien merchants to comprehend about the Centauri marketplace is the serious disparity between Centauri technology and Centauri society. In what might be the race's greatest paradox, the more advanced the culture becomes, the harder they cling to living their lives by the watermarks of their past.

When the Centauri develop more efficient production techniques, they are more often than not turned to the task of creating the same goods as the techniques that came before them. Improvements in materials and resource gathering are not used to further societal development but rather extend the existing society even further. Fashion has not significantly changed in the Centauri Republic in over a thousand years. The styles of the past are still adored by the culture of the present.

This stagnation is endemic of the Centauri's own inability to change with the times, but it is not as dangerous to them as one might think. The Centauri may not change quickly on a cultural level, but they are more than willing to embrace new innovations in other arenas. As long as an outsider keeps in mind that the markets of fashion, architecture, art and personal effects are nearly impossible to break into, there are thousands of possible trade goods the Centauri will enthusiastically purchase. The hallmark of a good trader is market knowledge; this goes doubly for anyone trying to do business with the Centauri Republic.

The Cutting Edge of Centauri Technology

While the Centauri are an advanced people scientifically, they are not on the same level as the Minbari and do not consider themselves in competition with that older race. Even so, the target technologies the Centauri are striving to develop are all interestingly enough the very traits that define the status quo of Minbari innovation. While the Centauri would never admit using the Minbari as their yardstick, the truth of their goals is clearly evident.

Centauri technology has three current directions in which it can continue to advance. They have effectively reached what seems to be the limit of jump gate technology, but real space applications always have room for improvement. They also continuously research better ways to apply their limited understanding of gravitic principles and high energy conduction. The weapons of the Centauri centre mostly on laser and particle arrays. They have not yet developed vectored gravitational weapons, but research continues in that direct.

Centauri engines are thrust based and while they have some gravitic manoeuvring capability, they still rely on energy reactions to move their ships. The next major innovation for the Centauri in this field of research will likely be completely motivating a vessel with gravity manipulation. It is the primary engine type of the Minbari and the Centauri have seen it in operation long enough to know that they want it. Now all they have to do is unlock the secrets of its design.

High Energy conduction is another avenue of research that continues to elude the Centauri. They can build particle arrays and plasma technology is not beyond them, but they have never been able to replicate the molecular density weapons of the Minbari in the field or even in their laboratories. They are on the right track in this regard they know that crystal refraction is part of the conundrum, but they cannot generate the intensity of magnetic frequencies required to generate and sustain the energy beam itself. If they do unlock the secret of this technology, Centauri ships will be able to match the Minbari in offensive capability and completely outclass anything else in space.

Ultimately, the key to all of the Centauri's current research is a thorough understanding of gravity. They do not understand it the way the Minbari do, nor are they likely to discover it any time in the near future. The potential of gravitic technology is so far beyond the crude applications the Centauri possess now that their scientists have simply not thought broadly enough during their research. They consistently visualize gravity merely as a hammer. Because of that lack of insight, they fail to realize the many other tools it can become.

Centauri Personal Equipment

The Centauri are a grasping race with a great love for personal possessions. The average commoner Centauri wears at least ten pieces of jewellery and eight articles of clothing. Their pockets are usually filled with dozens of small objects, only a few of which are actually useful. Nobles go far beyond these numbers, making the entire culture a perfect market environment and a rich trove for the development of equipment.

The Centauri have a love for trinkets and gadgets that borders on obsession. Even their slave class are permitted to carry tools and 'toys' to help them in their daily tasks that would seem excessive for most other races. If a device can do one thing, the Centauri prefer that it do seven other things just to make it more interesting. Oddly, this consolidation of functions does not limit the number of devices in existence. Instead of carrying seven tools with the capability of handling seven tasks, the Centauri prefer seventeen tools with the capability of handling seven tasks *each*.

Weapon Descriptions

Agony Whip: Also known asan electric lash or by its traditional name, the *sio poro*, an agony whip is normally used only by Imperial torturers and professional 'interrogators'. When used in combat, it is ineffective against creatures with any kind of Damage Reduction, but it can be extremely lethal against an unarmoured opponent.

Agony whips have two settings and use a kinetic field to deliver their damage. On the low setting, it can inflict 1d2, 1d4 or 1d6 subdual damage as its wilder desires. On the high setting, it builds up a constant charge as it strikes. On this setting, an agony whip inflicts real damage, but its first strike does 1 point. Each round after that, it does another point of damage to a maximum of 12 points per strike. When used in interrogation, an agony whip adds a +2 circumstance bonus to all Intimidation checks once it inflicts at least 1 point of real damage on its target.

Cari: A curved double bladed dagger, this weapon resembles a Sentri fighter in its profile. One blade emerges from each end of a central hand grip and curve forward about 90 degrees. Used as an off-hand weapon in some forms of the Morago, a cari is also the preferred hand weapon of Centauri fighter pilots and is included with their standard flight gear. The cari is an exotic weapon, but all Centauri officers with a fleet specialisation may wield it as if they possessed the appropriate Exotic Weapon Proficiency (and may treat this as a virtual feat for purchasing other feats related to the cari).

Centaurum Guardsman Rifle: These weapons are deadly examples of the art and science that can be combined in the foundries of the Centauri. An elegant long barrelled energy rifle, these guns are part of a Royal Guard's uniform and his most deadly asset. Using a focused stream of ions, the Guardsman Rifle inflicts heavy energy damage without any risk of doing significant damage to the environment or possibly punching a hole through walls and bulkheads. Against inanimate objects, the Guardsman Rifle inflicts half damage and DR granted by armour is doubled. Natural DR is halved for the purpose of resisting this deadly weapon.

Coutari: Primarily used in the ritualised duelling art of the Morago, the Coutari is a short blade of Centauri manufacture. Its use is restricted to nobles of the great houses and Palace Guards but while it is regarded as a symbol of the Republic's glorious past, it functions superbly as a melee combat weapon in battle. Members of the Koro Prido use this weapon during ritualised combat practice and on the rare occasions when they fight honour duels. These duels can be to the death or to first blood, but such combats are typically done with masterworked versions of the sword (see below).

Coutari, Masterworked: Some Coutari blades date back centuries and were fashioned by some of the greatest weaponsmiths of the Centauri Republic. They are extremely valuable and often placed in high demand by the Noble Houses for as well as being extremely light weight and balanced for combat, they are often finely crafted antiques. A masterworked Coutari grants a +1 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls made with it. Masterworked coutari are considered great prizes and tend to be treated as heirlooms. A particularly fine version of this weapon can even be declared a house treasure. If a noble Centauri has been gifted with a house treasure masterworked Coutari by a ranking member of his house, he receives 4 points of Status for the honour.

Daximus Hand Launcher: The Centauri military's version of a grenade launcher, this elegant looking weapon carries a disc cylinder that rests on top of a long, rifled barrel and stock. Usually polished silver with wood fittings, more utilitarian military versions exist without the extraneous decoration. When used in automatic fire mode, the Daximus can lay down a devastating amount of firepower, but ammunition shortages can be a problem in the field. The Daximus can be reloaded in one round if the wielder is carrying a spare cylinder (l lb. weight unloaded, 11 lb. with 10 standard grenades), but loading a cylinder takes one round per grenade. This leads to many Daximus being dropped when they 'go dry'.

Diplomat's Laser: Centauri innovations in laser weaponry have allowed their weapon makers to design some impressive personal offensive gear. While not as powerful as the Minbari holdout laser, this small weapon is just as concealable and packs the same punch as a PPG at close quarters. Because of its high energy output, diplomat's lasers are not typically carried aboard starships but see more use

Balvarin

in planetary installations and in urban areas. A diplomat's laser can be cycled 'off', which depletes the energy core and requires two full rounds after it is turned on to charge back up. When a diplomat's laser is 'off', it cannot be detected by scans for energy signatures.

Fear Grenade: Also called Sciinar grenades by the Centauri, these sonic weapons only work on the Centauri. They produce a nearly inaudible shriek that specifically targets the fight or flight reflex in the Centauri physiology. Any Centauri within the grenade's area of effect must make a Will save (DC 15) or immediately flee in a random direction for one round of full running movement for every point the save was failed by. The Centauri has a 50% chance of dropping anything he was holding before this forced movement occurs. If the Centauri encounters any deadly obstacles or conditions along his movement path, he retains enough will to avoid them but must continue to flee until he overcomes the effect. While running, a Centauri victim of a Sciinar grenade cannot coherently communicate and may take no other actions.

Karkanite Bomb: A weapon used by the Orieni during ground combat, this explosive was taken by the Centauri as a spoil of war and refined into a handheld demolitions device capable of blasting pinpoint holes in structures and vehicles. A karkanite bomb can be magnetically attached to any metal surface with a (ranged or melee, depending on use) touch attack and will deliver whatever damage it is set for. No roll is needed for the damage in regards to the inanimate target; the user decides how much damage within its dice range he wishes to inflict. If living creatures are caught in the explosive range, the dice are rolled separately to determine how much they take.

Kurago PPG: A slight improvement on the Auricon EF-7 PPG, these handguns are a fettle illustration of the Centauri's tendency to improve on other races' designs. While the range and approximate stopping power of the Kurago is not significantly better than an Auricon, the greater understanding of energy systems that the Centauri possess shows in its much improved ammunition capacity. Kurago PPGs are not illegal for noble Centauri to own and carry, but commoners in the Republic must have special dispensation from the Court to do so and slaves may not possess them at all. The Kurago is the civilian version of the Laertean PPG, the standard military sidearm of the Republic Ground Assault.

Laertean Assault PPG: With a longer barrel and a more powerful generation coil, the Laertean is considered by many to be the finest example of particle projection technology in the galaxy. While it is still not as powerful as energy weapons utilizing laser or plasma mediums, the Laertean is possibly the best shipboard weapon produced by the younger races. Laertean PPGs have more power than an Auricon EF-7, though they do sacrifice range to accomplish this.

Needle Gun: The needle gun has appeared in hundreds of forms during the sordid history of the Centauri and remains a popular court and assassination weapon even in the modern era. While older forms of the weapon had a range of 5 feet and used a coiled spring to emit its deadly payload, high-tech versions of the needle gun use a stored charge of compressed gas to silently propel a thin, notched needle at its target. By itself, this weapon is hardly a threat, but nobles and hired killers can load the dart with any manner of poison before using it. Needle guns ignore the first 3 points of a target's Damage Reduction, but must inflict 1 point of damage successfully to deliver their carried toxin.

Pain Grenade: This chemical weapon operates on the nervous system of its victim, causing an intense, wrenching pain through the affected target's body. The effect inflicts its initial damage as subdual, but during the victim's next turn, they must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or the neural damage becomes real. Whether or not the save is successful, victims of a pain grenade are *stunned* on their next action unless they can make a Will saving throw (same DC; 14).

Retch Grenade: Another weapon dedicated to fighting other Centauri, these were one of the first grenade weapons invented by the Centauri and modern forms of them are still in use in many population centres of the Republic. Any target (even a non-Centauri) caught in the retch grenade's chemical blast radius must make a Fortitude save (DC 17, 13 for a non-Centauri) or begin forcefully vomiting. This nausea is so violent, the victim suffers the listed damage as subdual each round until he successfully makes the saving throw or passes out from agony and shock. While vomiting, a target suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks.

Shoar Prod: Similar to the shock stick in design and function, a shoar prod is usually a highly decorated weapon and is carried as part of a Centaurum Royal Guardsman's full dress uniform. Less elaborate versions are carried by slave masters throughout the empire. Shoar prods function exactly like shock sticks, but they also have a 'high' setting. This empties the capacitor for two rounds after it strikes, making it useless for that amount of time, but inflicts 2x the subdual damage and an additional 1d6 electrical damage. Very few beings in the galaxy can remain conscious after a high-charge strike from a shoar prod.

Silvershod Boots: A weapon used by devotees of the Tronno martial art popular among the young nobles of the Centauri Republic, these are normal boots with a line of steel reinforcement along the toe and kicking edge of the sole. A second striking plat is worked into the slightly

Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Area of Effect	Critical	Ammo	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Type
Melee Weapons									
Agony Whip	500 cr.	Special	10' reach	-	-	-	Medium	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Cari	150 cr.	1d4/1d4	-	19-20/x2	-	-	Small	1.5 lb	Slashing
Coutari	250 cr.	1d6	-	19-20/x2	-	-	Medium	4 lb.	Slashing
Coutari, Masterworked	3,500 cr.	1d6	-	19-20/x2	-	-	Medium	4 lb.	Slashing
Shoar Prod	150 cr.	1d8 *	-	-	-	-	Small	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Silvershod Boots	350 cr.	+2**		20/x2			n/a	1 lb.	Bludgeoning
Silverspar Boots	650 cr.	+2**		(19-)20/ x2			n/a	1 lb.	Bludgeoning/ Slashing
Grenade Weapons									
Fear Grenade	115 cr.	special	20 ft.	-	-	20 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	Projectile
Pain Grenade	120 cr.	3d4	20 ft.	-	-	20 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	Projectile
Retch Grenade	100 cr.	1d3	20 ft.	-	-	20 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	Projectile
Karkanite Bomb	550 cr.	6d10	10 ft.	-	-	10 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	Projectile
Pistol Weapons									
'Diplomat's' Laser	1,550 cr.	2d6	-	20/x2	6	20 ft.	Small	1 lb.	Energy
Kurago PPG	800 cr.	2d8	-	19-20/x2	20	60 ft.	Small	1 lb.	Energy
Laertean Assault PPG	1,100 cr.	2d10	-	19-20/x2	24	50 ft.	Small	2 lb.	Energy
Needle Gun	250 cr.	1***	-	-	1	20 ft.	Small	1 lb.	Projectile
Rifle Weapons									
Centaurum Guardsman Rifle	2,500 cr.#	2d8	-	20/x2	45	150 ft.	Large	3 lb.	Energy, Rapid Fire
Daximus Hand Launcher	2,000 cr.	**	-	-	10	60 ft.	Large	5 lb.	Projectile, Rapid Fire

* On 'high' setting, this weapon delivers 1d8x2 subdual damage and 1d6 electrical damage. See description for further details.
** Silvershod and Silverspar Boots add +2 damage when used with an unarmed kicking attack.
*** Needleguns inflict 1 point of lethal damage and cannot achieve a critical hit.
# These weapons are never for open sale; cost is listed only as an estimate for replacement value.

elevated heel, making for a devastating back hook kick. Damage from a silvershod boot can be subdual if the wearer desires. Silvershod boots are never used in formal matches, but they are very common as daily wear for Tronno students and masters.

Silverspar Boots: For every advantage a Centauri discovers, another will find a way to exploit it. These are silvershod boots that look and act just like the equipment of the same name, but a surprise has been built into the heel plate. By stomping the back of the foot at just the right angle, a thin blade can be extended. When used with the blade out, the extra damage from the boot becomes slashing instead of bludgeoning, the critical range improves and the damage cannot be subdual. True students of Tronno consider silverspar boots to be a coward's weapon, but more of them wear this variant than they will admit.

Covran

Centauri and Poison

'Poison was always the weapon of choice in the Old Republic. Being something of a sentimentalist, I got here first.'

-Londo Mollari

There are few weapons more associated with the Centauri than poison. Their ships are very unique and their warriors carry distinctive weapons to be sure, but it is the tools they use against each other in the dark that best define their character as a race. The Centauri are fully capable of killing each other with guns, knives and their bare hands, but they prefer to do so at a distance with a few drops of something toxic in their food.

This is not because they fear conflict or do not wish to open themselves up to being caught at the scene of a murder, but because a successful poisoning is not just killing. It is a way of outwitting one's opponent that appeals to the intrigue-driven Centauri. It is a way they can match their skills against one another in a dance of subterfuge and guile. A gun is quick; a blade is messy. Neither of them have the style or sophistication of a subtle death from a chemical secreted into a nobleman's wineglass or mixed into a favourite concubine's lipstick.

The Centauri have to make special poisons to deal with each other. Their endurance has been honed over centuries of over-indulgence to the point where lesser toxins simply no longer work on them. When a Centauri really wants to kill someone with finesse, he commissions a special poison tailor-made for the victim. In a dark way, it is a compliment to the corpse. Only someone worthy of such effort would make a noble go to that kind of trouble, after all.

Not all Centauri poisons kill and some are never meant to do so. In an empire where eloquence and willpower are required to get ahead, it often behoves a noble to simply muddle his opponents and rivals in court. Once a decree is passed, it becomes Imperial law and is difficult to reverse. By making one's enemies on the Royal Court unable to coherently argue their case, a noble can get what he wants without opposition. With modern chemical screening technology, this does not happen in the present era as often as it used to, but a dram of Adderel or Durnaro in a Minister's morning Brevari still happens on occasion.

Type: This is how the poison is administered. An inhaled poison is introduced to the air and the victim must breathe it through an unfiltered medium to be affected. Ingested is added to food or drink, but the poison can also act if it is swallowed without a carrier. An Injected poison is delivered

through a wound of some kind, typically with a blade or needle. Any poison can be administered in another way, but if introduced to the body through a different medium (an Injected poison is eaten, for example), the save DC associated with the toxin is reduced by -2.

Save DC: This is the Fortitude save required for the poison to affect its victim. The save is rolled immediately upon exposure to the poison and a second time one minute later. Failure of either save inflicts the initial or secondary attribute damage listed in the chart.

Craft DC and Time: These details are used in the Poisoncrafting rules presented in the Characters chapter. They have no bearing on a poison's use in combat.

Custom Poisons

Occasionally, a simple poison will not do the trick. Either a noble wishes to make a statement with his poisoning or a victim will be too crafty for a basic poison to reach or affect him. At times like these, it takes the services of an expert poisoncrafter to fulfil the would-be poisoner's needs. Custom poisons can do any number of biological things, from make the victim violently ill to change the colour of his skin temporarily (or permanently), though this is a very rare and expensive proposition.

The Games Master should be the final arbiter of what a custom poison can and cannot achieve. All details of a custom poison are variable and some may even have special methods of introduction or unique material forms. Rumours abound of a chemically inert material that duplicates the look and feel of leather that one noble used to poison another during an honour duel to the death with coutari. According to the story, the noble had his opponent's weapon stolen the night before the duel, wrapped the hilt with the leather poison and then waited for sweat to dissolve the chemicals and do the work of poisoning his opponent for him.

An Example Custom Poison

Mulnavi and Oltura – The Deadly Twins

Poison, the weapon of choice for court intrigue in the days of the old Centauri Republic, is still in use by those with a desire to maintain lost traditions and kill without getting their hands dirty. Always chief considerations among the elite of the Centauri Royal Court, deniability and ease of use have fuelled the poison crafters of Centauri Prime into making deadlier and more complex poisons for their illustrious clientele. Some of these are simply lethal toxins, each more effective than the last, but others fulfil special needs, such as the one handled by Mulnavi and Oltura – concealment.

These two poisons are a binary toxin; they are harmless by themselves but become a virulent combination when they meet inside the body of their consumer. The first of the Deadly Twins, as they are called in the courts of the Centauri, is Mulnavi; a chemically mimetic formula that combines with alcohol and has no effect at all on the imbiber. Mulnavi bonds itself to the intestines, remaining dormant for as much as ten years before the body finally passes it completely. Mulnavi's mate, Oltura, is an odourless, tasteless liquid that can be mixed into any food or drink. Also harmless by itself, Oltura reacts to the presence of Mulnavi in its victim and attacks the cardiovascular system. Death usually occurs instantly thereafter.

When combined with Mulnavi, Oltura has a Fortitude saving throw DC of 18 and inflicts death as its initial damage. The secondary damage from Oltura is 2d6 Constitution. Unlike other poisons, purging Oltura out of a victim's system does not completely counteract the poison. Mulnavi cannot be removed from the intestinal walls once it bonds, meaning that anyone consuming Mulnavi will remain vulnerable to Oltura for ten years minus one year for every point of Constitution bonus they possess. This duration is calculated from the victim's base Constitution at the time of ingestion and is not refigured afterwards due to any modification to the attribute.

Sample Centauri Poisons

Poison	Type	Save DC	Initial Effect	Secondary Effect	Craft DC	Time	Cost
Adderel	Inhaled	15	-1d3 Int	-1d6 Int	18	4 hr.	500 cr./dose
Blue Oil	Ingested	18	-1d4 Wis	-1d6 Wis	19	2 hr.	600 cr./dose
Durnaro	Injected	13	-1d4 Int	-1d6 Int	18	2 hr.	400 cr./dose
Furgan	Inhaled	17	-1 Wis	-1d10 Wis	24	4 hr.	800 cr./dose
Gael's Revenge	Injected	12	-1d4 Con	-1d6 Con	25	4 hr.	1500 cr./dose
Nakaleen Venom	Injected	15	-1 Int	-1d4 Int	24	7 hr.	500 cr./dose
Razzor	Ingested	18	-1d2 Con	-1d2 Con	26	8 hr.	800 cr./dose
Vermillion Death	Inhaled	17	-1d10 Con	-1d10 Con	24	4 hr.	3000 cr./dose
Zaerus	Injected	19	Death	Death	28	2 hr.	5000 cr./dose

Things are getting out of hand. No, I am not referring to the changes back on Homeworld or everyone walking around the station like it's about to explode, though those are bad too. I mean Londo's accounts. Okay, granted I really should not be complaining about Londo's personal habits, especially after my little incident on Minbar. He saved my family's reputation and I am grateful, but he leaves me with so many things to clean up for him that I almost wish I had gone back home in chains. At least in a dungeon cell I would not have to go try and convince the Drazi ambassador to pay up on a bet he lost to Londo.

I am really beginning to worry about him. When things were fine, before we went to war with the Narn and all, he drank a little and partied a little, but that was okay. Once I figured out why he slept all day and was in such a bad mood sometimes, it was all right. But now, he goes weeks at a time without even stepping outside his quarters. Then, he'll get a communiqué from homeworld and he'll head straight to Dark Star or someplace even worse.

General Equipment Descriptions

The Centauri adore small items with utility value and many more that have no intrinsic value of their own other than beauty and an expensive appearance. Centauri in the field or assigned to a military unit rarely have the luxury of carrying too much extraneous gear; these citizens of the Republic have to be more careful with their choices and weight allowance, mostly since in a turbulent galaxy they may only be able to count on having what they can personally carry.

Even Centauri of this sort prefer their gear as expensive and ornate as possible. All Centauri, at some level, consider themselves the pre-eminent race in the galaxy and like to show off that high status whenever they can. Every object in their possession becomes an opportunity to express their nobility through precious inlays and (sometimes overdone) ornamentation. While some Centauri limit this tendency in themselves because of situational needs or a rare case of understated tastes, few can resist at least a little style with their substance.

Air Pills: These tiny pills force oxygenation of the blood and a rush of binding chemicals that render inert most floating toxins they come into contact with. While air pills will not allow a person to hold their breath any longer or seriously affect poisons they come into contact with, these little dissolving tablets are considered a miracle of modern medicine by the Centauri for an entirely different reason; they negate the effects of a hangover. Provided by the most conscientious hosts at gala events in the Centauri Republic, they do not travel or store well and are difficult to get outside of Centauri space. A new air pill lasts one month after manufacturing if left in an air-tight container. Air pills purchased outside the Republic are 1d20 + 9 days old and only have a 25% (adjusted for the quality of the venue) likelihood of being available at all.

Crystal Flatware: Centauri culture places a lot of emphasis on appearances and elegance; few things handle both needs as nicely as pure crystal dishes and drinking vessels at a dinner party. A set of two dinner plates, two dessert plates, two soup bowls, two crystal handled forks, knives and spoons and a pair of simple crystal goblets can provide an opulent setting for any meal. When a Centauri uses a set of crystal flatware (or several sets, depending on the size of the party) during an event, any Charisma based skill checks he or she makes during its duration (which can be no longer than two hours) receive a +2 circumstance bonus. For double the cost (1000 cr./set), this bonus can be raised to +3.

Decoration: This technique is not equipment in itself, but rather a way of augmenting other equipment purchased in the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game or created using trade skills. The Centauri prefer their items elaborate and when a piece of equipment does not meet their aesthetic standards, they can take it to the appropriate jewellers or craftsmen and have modifications done to raise its outer appearance to something more acceptable. The specific nature of the augmentation is up to the player and subject to approval by the Games Master. The only practical game benefit that can occur from this decoration is to grant a +1 circumstance bonus to any Charisma attribute or skill checks made when the augmented item might have some impact. (Examples might include a decorated weapon brandished during an Intimidate check or an extremely fine suit of clothes worn to a diplomatic banquet.)

Entertainment: While a night on the town (or around the station, depending on locale) can be and should be roleplayed out whenever possible, story and plot demands might require that a basic cost for a Centauri entertaining himself for a night be applied to the player's accounts as an abstract way of summarizing the many things that Centauri did over the course of a drink-hazed day. Centauri players can simply assume the wide variety of entertainments

available to someone skilled in the art of carousing (as most Centauri are) and decide for themselves where all the money went.

Fine Accommodation: This is another abstract category that summarizes the tendency of most Centauri to insist on the finest of all things whenever they travel. While this modification may not actually reflect the end cost of a hotel room or residence suite (such things tend to be a fixed rate), it can represent the myriad little touches and decorations a Centauri might insist on and constantly maintain to ensure a 'civilised' place to stay. Fine accommodation is a modification based on the price of a Centauri's quarters and is assessed every time the lodging in question must be paid for. While a Centauri is living in fine accommodation, he receives a +5% bonus to all experience points earned from activities that take place in his quarters. Examples include negotiated treaties, business deals or other story-based events. Combat in a Centauri's quarters does not have its experience point award increased; in fact, damage from such an event might require repairs.

Gourmet Meal: The Centauri can eat just about anything, but they only appreciate the taste of fine cooking and expensive cuisine. A Centauri forced to eat common meals will not truly be harmed by the experience, but he will certainly not appreciate the reason for his 'suffering'. When a Centauri can do so, he dines on only the best food prepared in expert fashion by highly trained chefs. Within the Republic, all nobles are assumed to have access to this level of sustenance and commoners can certainly arrange the occasional treat. In the rest of the galaxy, finding a chef capable of making Centauri food the way Centauri like to eat it can be an adventure all its own. Games Masters should at least double the cost of food cooked in gourmet fashion.

While this entry is in the Centauri sourcebook, it is an effective guideline for gourmet cooking in the fashion of any race. All sentient races have their own dietary quirks and like things cooked differently even if they share the same food types with another species. Gourmet meals are race specific, can cost anywhere from 2 to 10 times the normal price and rarely appeal outside their racial type.

Gravity Generators: The height of Centauri gravitic technology, these large platforms are used in civilian and military aircraft to reduce the fuel consumption caused by heavy cargo. While the platform itself weighs at least 1,500 pounds, it can suspend five times that amount, rendering that payload weightless. Using gravity generators is mostly a background matter in a Babylon 5 story and there are few practical game benefits from these devices, but they are included here to show how far Centauri technology has advanced in their gravity research.

Medical Scanner, Cufflink: While it certainly shares several components with a full medical scanner, this device is somewhat inappropriately named. A cufflink scanner only

Kutai

has a few functions and is next to useless in the hands of a true medical professional. Centauri use these items to monitor the chemical composition of their bloodstream (by induction plates in the cufflink when it touches their skin) and as a way of detecting toxins of a harmful nature in their food and drink. A cufflink medical scanner has a range if six inches. It only allows a Medical skill check (DC 10) for the wearer to determine if he has been poisoned or if there is poison in a scanned consumable. Usually, these devices do not even have a readout or display; a prominent stone in the cufflink glows if a harmful substance has been detected.

Opera Crystals: Another catch-all category, opera crystals are small recording/playback devices that hold six hours of audio and/or video information. Unlike the other recorders available for purchase, what sets these apart is that once recorded, they cannot be erased or recorded over and their playback quality is exceptional. Opera crystals are typically used for exactly what they name implies- archiving opera performances, many of which can take up the full six hour capacity. The base price listed is for a small crystal that attaches to a six inch panel graphics display and creates full stereo sound. Better units exist and can cost upwards of 3000 credits for a top of the line system.

Powered Restraints: Used in the Imperial dungeons and in many other incarceration areas within the Republic, these are a three set of weighty metal rings, one large and two small, connected by a durable metal cable. Once attached, they require a DC 28 Escape Artist check to slip out of or a DC 25 Break DC to damage. Powered restraints have a remote control that, when activated, can send a pulse of electricity and kinetic force through the prisoner. Treat this as an automatic strike from a shock stick that can be administered from as far as 120 feet away.

Secure Luggage: A Centauri on the go has to contend with a number of irritations; bad food, poor travel quality and uncivilised accommodations cannot be avoided sometimes. To protect their valuables, many of which would be quite tempting to thieves, the Centauri have raised the art of locking resistant luggage to an art form. Secure luggage requires a DC 30 Technical check to open owing to its intricate and heavy duty locking mechanism. Armoured panels and protective inserts keep objects inside the luggage from breaking; all items in secure luggage benefit from its 8 hardness and 20 hit points before they can be damaged in any way.

Centaurum Armour: The uniform of a Centaurum Royal Guard is armoured and reinforced to protect the wearer without overtly bothering the lines and form of fine clothing. As comfortable to wear as it is impressive, Centaurum armour is a fairly durable form of physical

Primus

General Equipment

Item	Cost	Weight
Air Pills	20 cr. each	-
Crystal Flatware	500 cr./set	10 lb./set
Decoration, simple	+10%	-
Decoration, fancy	+25%	-
Entertainment (one evening)	100 cr. +	-
Fine Accommodation	+20%	-
Gourmet Meal	Varies	Varies
Gravity Generators	40,000 cr.	1,500 lb.+
Medical Scanner, Cufflink	800 cr.	1 lb.
Opera Crystals	600 cr.	1 lb.
Powered Restraints	200 cr.	18 lb.
Secure Luggage	400 cr.	4 lb.

protection. While a Royal Guard's uniform will not stand up to a concerted attack against its wearer, it can deflect enough force from incoming fire to save his life. Centaurum armour includes the belts and containers needed for a Royal Guard to stow all of his required weapons and gear.

Diplomat's Armour: This is a padded under-suit that, when layered beneath typical Centauri clothing, is virtually undetectable. It is not very strong armour, but any protection is better than none. The under-suit is usually white and becomes so familiar to a travelling diplomat or Royal Court member that over time, it becomes an assumed part of daily fashion. While the trained eye can spot the telltale signs of diplomat's armour (Spot, DC 22), Centauri are so accustomed to its presence that little note is made of anyone wearing it even when it is seen.

Marcasus Flight Suit: The traditional suit worn by the elite members of Centauri's fighter pilot corps, a Marcasus flight suit is a mark of honour as well as a solid protective garment. A Marcasus flight suit contains a selection of tools and equipment needed to make emergency repairs, three days worth of subsistence rations, all the mesh and panels needed to interface with a Centauri star fighter and connections for the breather mask they wear while in flight. These suits are all tailored to fit a specific pilot; while wearing one openly, that pilot receives a +1 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-related checks. A Centauri fighter pilot officially receiving a Marcasus flight suit for the first time grants +4 Status points.

Morosh Battle Armour: The standard heavy body armour worn by Centauri assault troops, morosh armour is pressed plates of superdense synthetic material over a body suit of ballistic weave mesh. This battle armour has a power conduit and an energy backpack for a single heavy weapon and any auxiliary system the trooper might be equipped with as well as a breather mask and a chemically shielded body sheath. Someone wearing a suit of morosh battle armour cannot be affected by inhaled poisons or chemical weapons of any kind.

Royal Court Clothing: There is fine clothing, there is designer clothing and then there is clothing fit to wear in the Emperor's presence. This category of apparel represents the highest quality of garments the Centauri can produce. Wearing anything less than this degree of fashion in the Royal Court is considered a minor social blunder; every diplomat with even a hope of someday addressing the Centaurum must have at least one suit of Royal Court clothing in his wardrobe.

Slave Clothing: Slave clothing represents the level of fashion reserved for the labour slaves that toil in the many factories and industrial centres of the Centauri Republic. These clothes are still of a finer quality than common civilian clothing from other races, but comparative to the garments worn by the rest of their culture, slaves have cheap, mass-produced apparel little better in a social sense than rags. Any noble seen in slave clothing is committing a major social gaff and while commoners are usually cut some slack for being 'common', they can also lose a minor amount of Status for their poor taste.

Vendura Worksuit: The Vendura Kado are a technical class of worker slaves dedicated to research and scientific innovation. Their jobs require an almost constant field presence and usually keep them out of the social spotlight. Because delicate clothing would only suffer from the stress of constant work and experimentation that the Vendura Kado perform, they have these special lab coats and worker clothing. Armoured by dint of heavy reinforcement, these worksuits also carry a complete technical toolkit in their many pockets and loops. (The toolkit must be purchased separately.)

Heavy Weapons

The Centauri may not have the extensive technological base that the Minbari enjoy, but their ships, vehicles and weapon platforms have a variety of dangerous armaments nonetheless. These designs all implement the high energy principles of Centauri battlefield science and while certain weapons utilize different forms of energy, the Centauri are almost entirely dependent on laser and particle weaponry for their defensive and offensive capability.

The ships of the Grand Centauri Military typify this focus bests. Each vessel in the fleet is provided with

Armour & Clothing

Item	Cost	Weight	DR
Centaurum Armour	*	20 lb.	3
Diplomat's Armour	2,000 cr.	10 lb.	1
Marcasus Flight Suit	7,000 cr.	13 lb.	2
Morosh Battle Armour	*	30 lb.	4
Royal Court Clothing	1200 cr.+	9 lb.	-
Slave Clothing	200 cr.	6 lb.	-
Vendura Worksuit	100 cr.	7 lb.**	1

* These are not typically for sale.
** Weight without tools.

energy weapons to perform its given task, usually to the exclusion of any other weapon type. While the Centauri do have missiles and projectile capability, they leave those armaments to the Ground Assault division because of the limitations of an atmosphere on most high-energy discharge arrays. While a tank or aircraft in the Centauri armed forces could and certainly does on occasion carry an energy weapon, they use these in a support role to more conventional firepower.

Battle Lasers: Lasers set the standard for long range combat between the stars, but the Centauri have refined the laser beyond the capabilities of most other races. Centauri lasers are not physically different in design from other examples of the technology, but they benefit from better production quality and a high energy generation system that allows them to push the coherent strength of a laser to a destructive intensity near the threshold of molecular disruption. These weapons are quite deadly, giving rise to the term 'battle laser' to reflect their dominance in space combat over other foes. Battle lasers benefit from an incredible range; as a light based weapon, they can travel accurately from their firing point for a greater distance than most offensive systems.

Guardian Arrays: A Centauri improvement over the Interceptors used on Earth vessels, the Guardian array does much the same thing as an interceptor. It fires carefully vectored shots against incoming fire like an Interceptor, but the Guardian benefits from the energy and cycling advancements of Centauri technology. Guardian arrays can be used as a direct fire weapon, but they also provide the same modes of use as Interceptors and excel when being fired as a matrix. Guardian arrays are still relatively new and have only been mounted on some of the largest and most valuable Centauri vessels.

Ion Cannons: Ion technology is still very volatile, but it has become an effective, if rare, new weapon in the Centauri fleet. Ion weapons use a charged field of energy particles and motivate them by means of magnetic induction down a focusing aperture towards a target. These make the weapons direct fire only and have little to no effectiveness in an atmosphere. They have no ballistic arc (a trait they share with lasers) and break up into dangerously unstable electrical discharges upon contact with air or other particulate mediums. Ion beans excel in space, however, and are likely to replace more primary shipboard weaponry in the fleet as soon as enough pieces can be manufactured to do so. Ships retrofitted with ion cannons lose their battle lasers and laser arrays, but gain the following weapon instead. (If a lost weapon is twin linked, the ion cannon is also twin linked.)

- Ion Cannon; Same Arc; Attack +* (based on targeting computer); Damage 50+5d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4

Ion weapons are very dangerous, but their range reduction over lasers can make them a difficult sell to ships that appreciate their long range attack capabilities. The Grand Centauri Military is still evaluating ways to improve this range, but the levels of performance listed above are the current extent of Centauri development of ion technology.

Particle Guns: These are much lighter versions of the particle beams found on larger warships and often form the main armament of cheap fighters or are retrofitted on shuttles to give them an offensive capability. Though deadly enough in fighter duels, the particle gun lacks sufficient energy to punch through the armoured hulls of most warships. The Centauri make great use of particle guns on their fighters and shuttles, building them directly into their ships and not retrofitting the weapons as is common with other races. Current fleet theory is examining the idea of using advanced particle beam technology in fighters like the Sentri. Only a few fighters have been fitted with the new guns, but they have performed very well in the field. These weapons have the following statistics:

- Light Particle Beam; Boresight; Attack +* (based on targeting computer); Damage 3d10+3; Critical 20; Range 2

Plasma Accelerator: By utilising a magnetic containment field, raw plasma can be manufactured and fired at targets, literally burning through any defences. The weapon is primarily limited by the power of its containment field, as plasma will simply dissipate when the field breaks down, resulting in this weapon being very short-ranged. Any target that comes into its sights though, is likely to be dealt a great deal of punishment. The plasma accelerator used by the Centauri is an improvement over base plasma

technology; it creates a pulsing stream of plasma 'packets' that have excellent range (though not as good as a laser or molecular cutter) and rapid firing capabilities.

Mass Driver: A terrible weapon of mass destruction, mass drivers use magnetic and gravitic technology to hurl an asteroid small enough to fit within its massive enclosure in a straight line forward. That is all a mass driver does, but the havoc they can wreak on a planetary scale is unbelievable. In starship combat, assume that a hit from a mass driver inflicts 8d10 damage with a critical multiplier of x2, having no inherent bonus to hit and a range of 10. In planetary terms, any structure within a 10 kilometre radius of the impact point is destroyed, with serious damage to anything 5 more kilometres beyond that. Living creatures caught in the 10 kilometre impact point are killed instantly, with those in the additional 5 kilometre zone receiving a Fortitude save (DC 18) to avoid death. Successful saves leave the victim at 0 hit points instead. The incredible power requirements and structural size of a mass driver prohibit any vehicle smaller than Colossal II from carrying them or firing any other weapons in the same round.

Missiles and Projectiles: Because the Centauri often have to resort to ground assault to secure a world once its orbital defences have been stripped away, their military sciences have developed a number of excellent missile and projectile weapons based on high energy principles slaved to the concept of propelling physical mass. The results are missile weapons with tremendous motive force and range. While this can make it difficult for the Centauri to conduct an indirect firing war, they usually make such short work of their opponents in open combat that such tactics prove unimportant.

- *Corvid:* A gravitic missile capable of receiving new telemetry data from its own sensors or from its operator during powered flight, the Corvid is the cutting edge in short-to-long range weapons used by the Centauri. It is extremely accurate against any ground based target. Its manoeuvrability and interception rates are considerable, but it cannot cope with flying targets with any significant speed. Against aerial targets, the Corvid missile suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to hit.
- *Corax:* The counterpart to the Corvid, Corax missiles can only respond to their own sensory information, but they are nearly twice as manoeuvrable as their ground-locked brethren and more than capable of taking out even the swiftest of aerial targets with ease. The Corax cannot engage ground-based targets effectively due to their aerial specialised design, suffering a -4 circumstance penalty to hit when directed against them.
- *VLS:* Vertical Launch System rockets fly in a ballistic arc towards their target, using their upwards

Rutarian

flight time to acquire a target lock before swooping back down for the kill. Limitations on the manoeuvrability of a VLS rocket keep it from being fired at a target within 150 feet of the launcher itself, but they suffer no range penalties otherwise out to its maximum range of 2 miles. The VLS's target lock ability grants it an equipment bonus of +2 to hit, but it does not actually strike until one full round after being fired.

- *Magnetic Launch Mortars:* Mounted only on the Gallo infantry transport, these weapons are much like VLS rockets. They only strike a full round after being fired and they cannot be fired at a target within 50 feet. The advantages of a Magnetic Launch Mortar are its phenomenal range and accuracy. Any enemy that can be detected within the Gallo's sensor range can be fired upon, regardless of cover or concealment. The MLM fires so high up that intervening barriers between the Gallo and its target are completely discounted and guidance equipment in the mortar missiles ensure that concealment is irrelevant.
- *Tolaire*: One-man portable missile launchers, these packs are vehicle grade weapons used by Centauri infantry and are capable of blasting apart even heavily armoured transports and enemy bunkers with their phased plasma warheads and shaped charge primer explosives. The Tolaire is a three shot pack and is disposed of after firing. The heat and energy discharge of its use fuses too much of the Tolaire's framework to make reusing one practical.

  Tolaire Missile Launcher; Turret (technically, a Tolaire is carried by a trooper and can therefore fire in any direction); Attack +* (bonus equals 2 plus the base attack bonus of the operator, Dexterity bonus does not apply); Damage 5d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 10; 3 torpedoes each; Special Qualities: Reload Time: No reload.

Vehicles of the Centauri Republic

The Centauri have an advanced level of vehicle technology to match the rest of their innovations, but the disparity between their vehicles and those of other races is not as great as that of their fleet. The Centauri have reached a level of technology with their vehicles that allows for swift, safe travel and a comfortable trip. Beyond those requirements, the Centauri do not require much else. As such, they have stopped continually improving their vehicular base.

The only exception to this rule is when the Republic discovers a vehicle from another race that they cannot replicate with their own technology. This does not happen often, but they have been know to purchase (or steal) an example of said vehicle, take it apart in their research centres and work constantly until they can not only build that vehicle for themselves but improve upon it in some way. The improvement might be minor or superficial, but the Centauri's competitive streak will not let them settle for 'just' duplicating another races work.

In the last decade, the only two vehicles to capture the interest of the Centauri in this manner have been the core shuttle of Babylon 5 (because of its magnetic arrays) and the crystal power plants of Minbari vehicular design. After painstaking effort, plans for a crystal power core have made their way back to Centauri Prime, but the secrets of actually replicating the technology remain irritatingly obscure. Experiments in this field of research have proven explosive, but the Centauri continue their efforts.

Centauri Cargo Aircraft

The Centauri do a lot of trade travel on their colonies and core worlds. While they have much the same level of technology invested in their cargo planes as other races, they do have one advantage that most do not. Centauri Cargo Aircraft are built to land on the narrow platforms of Transfer Points, docks for spacecraft dedicated to the single task of entering and leaving orbit with trade goods. This requires a Vertical Take Off and Landing system, something most other races cannot manage in their cargo aircraft without the advantage of gravitic technology.

Gargantuan Aircraft; hp 30; DV 10 (-4 size, +4 agility); DR 4; Spd 30; Acc 2; Dec 3; Han +3*; Sensor +1; Stealth 5; Cargo 4,000 lb.; 1 Pilot, 10 passengers
* By making a Pilot check, DC 10, a Centauri Cargo Aircraft can take off or land in a 200 feet wide clear area without the need for a runway or approach room.

Courat Civilian Car

The commoner version of an automobile, the Courat is one of thousands of types of passenger vehicle built primarily for motivation through Centauri cities. These vehicles tend to have excellent overland capabilities but handle best on a paved surface. Courats (and most other civilian vehicles) use a fusion reactor with multiple levels of baffling and shielding to keep its operation within safety limits. Most families own one car for every two adults over the age of thirty.

Large Surface Vehicle; hp 14; DV 9 (-1 size); DR 4; Spd 22; Acc 2; Dec 4; Han +1; Sensor n/a; Stealth 4; Cargo 200 lb.; 1 Driver, 4 passengers

Duraena-Vor Kenata, Luxury Car

For everything that is available to the lower classes, there must be something of better quality for the nobility. The world of automotives is no exception in the Centauri Republic. Duraena-Vor, a merger between two minor Noble Houses with a considerable amount of technical expertise between them, produces luxurious vehicles with dozens of amenities, remarkable safety features, and phenomenal handling. While many commoners (and a few of the younger, more active nobility) consider most D-V designs to be boxy and overblown, they continue to be the Republic's top selling luxury car line.

Large Surface Vehicle; hp 20; DV 9 (-1 size); DR 5; Spd 24; Acc 2; Dec 4; Han +2; Sensor +2; Stealth 4; Cargo 280 lb.; 1 Driver, 4 passengers

Fuero Liati, Performance Car

The younger generation of nobles, also known as the idle rich, need a vehicle that matches their fast, pointless lifestyle the way the stolid, unyielding design of the Kenata matches their parents. The Fuero company has been making money for hundreds of years catering to that level of ego and flagrant disregard for one's mortality. The Liati is the latest model of their 'performance' vehicle- a car so fast its own tracking system sometimes cannot keep up with it. While the Liati is far too dangerous for dependable use, its sleek styling and race car design keep noble youths returning to the dealerships.

Large Surface Vehicle; hp 12; DV 10 (-1 size, +1 agility); DR 3; Spd 30; Acc 4; Dec 5; Han +3*; Sensor +3; Stealth 5; Cargo 150 lb.; 1 Driver, 1 passenger
* At speeds of 28 or more, the Liati's Handling bonus becomes a -3 penalty instead.

Ieon-Kura Priori Passenger Transport

The Centauri love to travel in style and that desire is not limited to space flight. While the standard Centauri shuttle is both luxurious and atmosphere capable, it is not suited to long durations of atmospheric operations. For this reason, there are hundreds of commercial and private air vehicles serving the travel needs of the nobility and wealthy commoners. One of the most popular flight lines is Ieon-Kura; their planes are dependable and decadent- two traits the Centauri love to encounter at the same time. Their current model of aircraft, the Priori, is the same model the Emperor uses when he travels on Centauri Prime.

Gargantuan Aircraft; hp 38; DV 10 (-4 size, +4 agility); DR 5; Spd 32; Acc 3; Dec 4; Han +4; Sensor +5; Stealth 5; Cargo 4,000 lb.; 1 Pilot, 20 passengers

Magnetic Railcar

Taken from the plans of the core shuttle used on Babylon 5, magnetic railcars are becoming a common sight overhead in the city surrounding the Imperial Palace on Centauri Prime. Useful for moving several hundred people in relative safety and rapid speed, magnetic railcars are in the design stages for several other cities in the Republic. The efficient arrival of commoner and slave work forces to their employment zones makes the expense of magnetic rail cars worthwhile.

Colossal Surface Vehicle; hp 80; DV 2 (-8 size); DR 4; Spd 14; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +0; Sensor n/a; Stealth 1; Cargo 10,000 lb.; 300 passengers

Shishan Personal Airstar

Any society as decadent as the Centauri will typically have a need for ways its citizens can risk their lives in the pursuit of new experiences. One of these is the Shishan Airstar, a small aircraft with enough room for two people and a small amount of cargo. While it is a fine vehicle by itself and very well built, hundreds of them crash every year when their noble pilots, who have had only a few hours in a simulator and a single class with an instructor they did not bother to pay attention to, attempt to fly them and fail spectacularly.

Huge Aircraft; hp 28; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 3; Spd 35; Acc 3; Dec 3; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 7; Cargo 500 lb.; 1 Pilot, 1 passenger

Military Vehicle Descriptions

Corvidius Heavy Attack Transport

The sound of Corvidius attack craft flying in formation across the battlefield have put to rout many armies over the Centauri's long history of ground warfare. Specifically designed to emit a shrieking noise much like the cry of an angry hunting bird, the Corvidius carries a full squad of 21 infantry soldiers and two racks of missiles in addition to its powerful laser array. When the Corvidius opens up its guns in support of the squad it deploys, there is little that can stand up to it.

Civilian Vehicles

Item	Cost
Cargo Transport, Centauri	45,000 cr.
Courat Civilian Car	20,000 cr.
Duraena-Vor Kenata	59,000 cr.
Fuero Liati	78,000 cr.
Ieon-Kura Priori Transport	150,000 cr.
Magnetic Railcar	380,000 cr.
Shishan Personal Airstar	90,000 cr.

Huge Air Vehicle; hp 32; DV 11 (-2 size, +3 agility); DR 4; Spd 14; Acc 2; Dec 1; Han +3; Sensor +4; Stealth 10; Special Qualities: Hover (can maintain position in the air automatically without need for a Pilot check); Cargo 1000 lb.; 1 Driver, 2 Gunners, 21 infantry, 1 Fumaro field gun.

Weapons:
Medium Laser Cannon; 1 Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Corvid Missile Launcher; Turret; Attack +0 (guidance software as per description); Damage 3d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 8; 6 missile payload.
Corax Missile Launcher; Turret; Attack +0 (plus guidance software as per description); Damage 3d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 8; 6 missile capacity

Dorvalis Assault Tank

The Dorvalis Assault Tank is the heaviest tank in the Centauri Ground Assault and one of the only designs still in operation. Unlike other militaries with a large number of specialised craft, the Centauri prefer to find a few designs that fulfil their needs on the battlefield and stick with them over time. The modern Dorvalis is the sixth design to bear the name, something it does with pride. A Dorvalis is capable of completely destroying virtually any enemy vehicle in a single, overpowering volley.

Huge Surface Vehicle; hp 45; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 6; Spd 8; Acc 3; Dec 1; Han +1; Sensor +2; Stealth 8; Cargo 750 lb.; 1 Driver, 2 Gunners.

Weapons:
Heavy Battle Cannon; Turret; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 5d6+5; Critical x3; Range 1
Twin Light Particle Beams; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 3d10+3; Critical 20; Range 2

Fumaro Field Gun

Fumaro Field Guns are powerful projectile weapons mounted in a rotating barrel design and built into a prototype gravity platform. Fumaro are used as rapid fire support for infantry once they leave the safety and fire support of a transport vehicle. While the Fumaro is useful at taking out lightly armoured troops and vehicles, it is of little use against tanks and other hard targets.

Medium Surface Vehicle; hp 15; DV 12 (+3 agility); DR 4; Spd 6; Acc 2; Dec 1; Han +3; Sensor +5; Stealth 12; Special Qualities: Gravitic, Cargo 300 lb.; 1 Driver/Gunner.

Scarab

Weapons:
Light Automatic Gun; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 1d6*; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire
* Infantry targets receive only half normal DR against an automatic gun's high velocity shells.

Gallo Transport

The Gallo is a venerable design kept in service for one reason; the pilots of the Gallo corps are fanatics who would likely revolt against the Republic if forced to give up their beloved vehicles. The Gallo in existence have been refitted so many times, the only original parts left on them tend to be the control stick (kept for sentimental reasons) and sections of the superstructure. Gallo are dependable and most units do not mind that they are becoming outdated. Gallos have to land to use their MLM, making them vulnerable while they do so.

Huge Air Vehicle; hp 25; DV 12 (-2 size, +4 agility); DR 4; Spd 15; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +3; Sensor +3; Stealth 11; Special Qualities: Hover (can maintain position in the air automatically without need for a Pilot check); Cargo 2000 lb.; 1 Driver, 2 Gunners, 42 infantry (typical compliment of 21).

Weapons:
Medium Laser Cannon; 1 Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 19-20; Range 5
3 Magnetic Mortar Launchers; 3 Turret; Attack +0; Damage 2d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 6; 15 mortar rounds each.
2 Light Automatic Guns; Front/Left, Front/Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 1d6*; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire
* Infantry targets receive only half normal DR against an automatic gun's high velocity shells.

Gorai Fighter/Interceptor

The escort capabilities of the Gorai keep it in service even though there are other aircraft in the Ground Assault division that outperform it in its other roles. As an all-around fighter, the Gorai is passable, but it consistantly excels in its chosen role- protecting Jugati transports. Capable of taking a hit for the Jugati and surviving, Gorai are often called upon to do just that. A special order of now-deceased pilots, the *Turu Oltirmo* (Shields of Fire), recorded and remembered every Gorai pilot who had died ensuring the survival of the transport he was escorting.

Large Air Vehicle; hp 30; DV 14 (-1 size, +5 agility); DR 4; Spd 18; Acc 4; Dec 3; Han +4; Sensor +5; Stealth 12; Cargo 300 lb.; 1 Pilot/Gunner

Weapons:
Medium Laser Cannon; 1 Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 19-20; Range 5
2 Corax Missile Launcher; ; Attack +0 (plus guidance software as per description); Damage 3d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 8; 4 missile capacity each

Hexus Battle Tank

The Dorvalis may be bigger, say Hexus crewmates, but the Hexus is meaner. The firepower and armour of the Hexus is slightly inferior to its larger counterpart, but the Hexus makes up for it with speed and weapon mixture. The Hexus is capable of tackling many different challenges, making it a more common deployment, especially in areas were the particulars of battle have not been thoroughly scouted yet.

Huge Surface Vehicle; hp 42; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 5; Spd 10; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +2; Stealth 9; Cargo 750 lb.; 1 Driver, 3 Gunners.

Weapons:
Medium Laser Cannon; 1 Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 19-20; Range 5
2 Light Automatic Guns; Front/Left, Front/Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 1d6*; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire
* Infantry targets receive only half normal DR against an automatic gun's high velocity shells.
Corvid Missile Launcher; Turret; Attack +0 (guidance software as per description); Damage 3d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 8; 6 missile payload.

Jugati Rapid Transport

The window of opportunity to insert troops into a pitched battle can be a very narrow one. The Jugati is rigged to move fast and get out faster. Not designed for a protracted fight, its weapons are nothing impressive. Its speed and handling are extreme and Jugati pilots tend to be a breed apart. There are competitions between Jugati and Gallo pilots all the time to see who can outperform the other in combat. Unfortunately, they are built for two completely different mission profiles, making any comparison difficult at best.

Huge Air Vehicle; hp 22; DV 14 (-2 size, +6 agility); DR 4; Spd 18; Acc 4; Dec 3; Han +4; Sensor +6; Stealth 12; Special Qualities: Hover (can maintain position in the air automatically without need for a Pilot check); Cargo 2000 lb.; 1 Driver, 42 infantry (typical compliment of 21).

Weapons:
2 Light Automatic Guns; Front/Left, Front/Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 1d6*; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire
* Infantry targets receive only half normal DR against an automatic gun's high velocity shells.

Kironar Artillery Platform

An unusual design for the Centauri military, the Kironar was built to fill a missing element in the Ground Assault division, indirect attack. The Kironar can propel explosive shells over a long distance and do so with great accuracy. While the functions of the Kironar are useful ones in combat, it is the least tried element of any Centauri assault force and many commanders are unsure when to deploy it or how best to use its capabilities.

Huge Surface Vehicle; hp 45; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 6; Spd 6; Acc 3; Dec 1; Han +1; Sensor +5; Stealth 6; Cargo 750 lb.; 1 Driver, 1 Gunners.

Weapons:
Heavy Arc Cannon; Turret; Attack +5* (targeting computer); Damage 10d6; Critical 20; Range *
* For every range unit past 10 that the arc cannon fires, it suffers a -1 to the attack roll. The arc cannon has no effective maximum range and can ignore any cover bonus the target might have. A target's speed -10 serves as an additional penalty to the attack roll.

Larisi Assault Shuttle

A space-capable shuttle carried by the Secundus assault cruiser, the Larisi can lay down a heavy blanket of covering and sweeping fire, empty a drop zone and deploy its troop compliment with little fear of reprisal attacks being able to hurt it significantly before it can return to the relative safety of space. Larisi are a ground combat pilot's dream assignment and many competitions are held each year to determine who gets to fill coveted (and rare) open Larisi positions in the fleet.

Large Spacecraft; hp 90; DV 12 (-2 size, +4 agility); DR 4; Spd 14; Acc 2; Dec 1; Han +3; Sensor +4; Stealth 10; Special Qualities: Afterburners, Atmospheric Capable, Hover (can maintain position in the air automatically without need for a Pilot check); Cargo 1000 lb.; 1 Driver, 2 Gunners, 42 infantry, 2 field guns.

Optus Spotter Station

The Optus spotter station is a mobile sensor array slaved to the vehicles in a given Ground Assault unit. While active and manned, an Optus spotter's sensor array gives every friendly vehicle within a range of 20 a +2 to its Sensor rating and a +1 equipment bonus to all direct fire attack rolls. The Optus is a notoriously fragile vehicle and has to be protected at all times. Crewing an Optus is considered an assignment only slightly less than suicidal.

Medium Surface Vehicle; hp 14; DV 12 (+3 agility); DR 4; Spd 6; Acc 2; Dec 1; Han +3; Sensor +5; Stealth 12; Special Qualities: Gravitic, Cargo 300 lb.; 1 Driver/Crewman.

Quaral Ground Attack Aircraft

The Quaral attack craft is a powerful ground attack vehicle with the ability to tear apart targets below it using a deadly combination of guns and missiles. Some Quaral have been retrofitted with chemical weapon dispersal equipment, but these are generally frowned upon not for their ethical violation but because many Centauri soldiers enjoy getting in the thick of combat and do not appreciate being gassed along with the enemy.

Huge Air Vehicle; hp 30; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 5; Spd 13; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +6; Stealth 10; Cargo 2000 lb.; 1 Driver/Gunner, 2 Gunners.

Weapons:
2 Twin Light Automatic Guns; 2 Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 1d6*; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire
* Infantry targets receive only half normal DR against an automatic gun's high velocity shells.
4 Corvid Missile Launchers; 4 Boresight; Attack +0 (guidance software as per description); Damage 3d6; Critical 19-20/x2; Range 8; 4 missile payload each.

Shivat Fast Attack Aircraft

Very few things move as quickly through the sky as the Shivat fast attack craft. Named for the Centauri word for lightning, the Shivat is typically the first aircraft on the scene and the last to disengage. Shivat pilots are chosen for their aggression and when they are first given a commission, they are permitted to choose an aircraft and name it themselves.

That plane is with them for the entirety of their careers; the Shivat moves so quickly, it does not bother with an ejection system.

Large Air Vehicle; hp 30; DV 15 (-1 size, +6 agility); DR 4; Spd 38; Acc 6; Dec 4; Han +6; Sensor +5; Stealth 14; Cargo 300 lb.; 1 Pilot/Gunner.

Weapons:
3 Medium Laser Cannons; 3 Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 19-20; Range 5

Skoral Field Gun

The 'big brother' to the Fumaro, these guns are used in a fire support and main assault capacity. Built on exactly the same frame as the Fumaro, the Skoral mounts a light version of the same massive gun the Dorvalis sports. When the Skoral fires, the gravity platform it rests on shakes so much, it takes a strong stomached pilot not to be ill during a protracted battle.

Medium Surface Vehicle; hp 15; DV 12 (+3 agility); DR 4; Spd 6; Acc 2; Dec 1; Han +3; Sensor +5; Stealth 12; Special Qualities: Gravitic, Cargo 300 lb.; 1 Driver/Gunner.

Weapons:
Light Battle Cannon; Turret; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 2d6+2; Critical x3; Range 2

Suture Infantry Vehicle

The vehicle of choice for infantry that have to move across a battlefield too hostile for aircraft, the Suture is the only infantry vehicle of its class left in the Centauri military. It is an excellent transport with enough armour and fire support to do its job well, but very few recent engagements have precluded aerial transport. Field cars like the Suture have become outmoded from lack of use. The Suture is the model retained by Ground Assault command to fill its role should the need arise.

Huge Surface Vehicle; hp 40; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 6; Spd 10; Acc 3; Dec 3; Han +1; Sensor +5; Stealth 10; Cargo 750 lb.; 1 Driver, 1 Gunner, 21 Infantry.

Weapons:
Twin Medium Laser Cannons; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 19-20; Range 5

Tigaro Bomber/Attack Aircraft

A specialised aircraft in a military that does not appreciate specialisation, the Tigaro manages to retain its place in the vehicle rosters of the Centauri Ground Assault division by virtue of its extremely high success rate as a bomber in hostile environments. One of the fastest bombers in service to any military in the galaxy, a Tigaro can fly in, drop its payload and dogfight if necessary to find an escape vector.

Huge Air Vehicle; hp 40; DV 10 (-2 size, +2 agility); DR 5; Spd 16; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +6; Stealth 12; Cargo 2000 lb.; 1 Driver/Gunner, 1 Gunner.

Weapons:
2 Twin Light Automatic Guns; 2 Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 1d6*; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire
Bomb Rack: Ventral; Attack +0; Damage 6d6, Critical 19-20; Range *; 12 bomb capacity.
* As long as the target is under the Tigaro at any point during its movement, a bomb can be dropped from any height with no attack penalty due to range.

Space

In space, few fleets can hold their own against the ships of the Centauri. As beautiful as they are deadly, the graceful arcs and curves of a Centauri vessel disguise its lethal nature quite well. More than a few engagements have gone the Centauri's way because their opponents were fooled into thinking the Centauri fleet's fragile looking designs suggested fragile hulls. The truth of this became evident the first time a Centauri ship proved that it could take a hit just as well as it can give one.

The other important factor of the Centauri fleet is its manoeuvrability. The gravitic engines of the Centauri may not be enough to move their vessels through space, but they do provide excellent control surfaces and positional momentum at key points along the ships themselves. While not every vessel in the Centauri armada is built with a gravitic web for manoeuvring, even those without it can turn 'on a ducat' as the fleet expression goes. Any military that believes it can consistently outflank the Centauri in space has probably never tried to do so.

As with their ground-based military, the Centauri do not have a tremendous number of different vessel designs serving at any one time. Each ship is built around a single purpose and is typically the only type deployed for that

purpose until it is either replaced with a better design or expands outside its set role and proves itself capable of additional duties.

Altarian Destroyer

A deadly craft with a well earned reputation for lethality, the Altarian is an older design dedicated to the three matter cannons that grace its hull. While the Centauri military sciences division officially stopped working on matter-related weaponry decades ago, the ones still in service on the Altarian and many other designs still function quite efficiently. Based on fission induction principles, matter weapons are inefficient from an energy output standpoint, but they can have a devastating effect in combat.

Colossal II Spacecraft; hp 325; DV 10 (-10 size, +10 agility); DR 15; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 3; Han +3; Sensor +5; Stealth 16; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 50,000 lb.; 3 Officers, 6 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 30 Crewmen

Weapons:
Three Matter Cannons; 2 Front, 1 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Five Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 3 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Balvarin Carrier

One of the largest ships in the fleet, a Balvarin carrier is an effective warship in its own right and capable of commanding an entire battle from its sensor array and control deck. In fact, some Admirals of the fleet prefer to take their command tours aboard a Balvarin instead of the Primus or Octurion that most are assigned to. When a Balvarin opens its bay doors and releases its fighter compliment, the entire tide of a battle can change in the Centauri's favour.

Colossal IV Spacecraft; hp 900; DV 2 (-14 size, +6 agility); DR 20; Spd – ; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +8; Stealth 14; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 200,000 lb.; 5 Officers, 21 Pilots, 25 Sensor Operators, 60 Crewmen

Weapons:
Six Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 4 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3
Two Guardian Arrays, 2 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire; Act as Mk II Interceptors.

Craft (4):
24 Fighters (typically Sentri)

Centurion Attack Cruiser

A relatively small ship for its class, the Centurion has earned its reputation for swift, deadly strikes in hostile territory many times in its more than three hundred years as a design. The latest Centurion is equipped with battle lasers and the venerable matter cannon that the Altarian, a similar vessel, also carries. The Centurion masses more firepower in a slightly smaller frame than the Altarian, but it is not as long ranged and has to settle for brief skirmishes rather than lengthy campaigns.

Colossal II Spacecraft; hp 325; DV 10 (-10 size, +10 agility); DR 15; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 3; Han +3; Sensor +5; Stealth 16; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point; Cargo 50,000 lb.; 3 Officers, 6 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 30 Crewmen

Weapons:
Three Battle Lasers; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Two Matter Cannons; 2 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 4 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

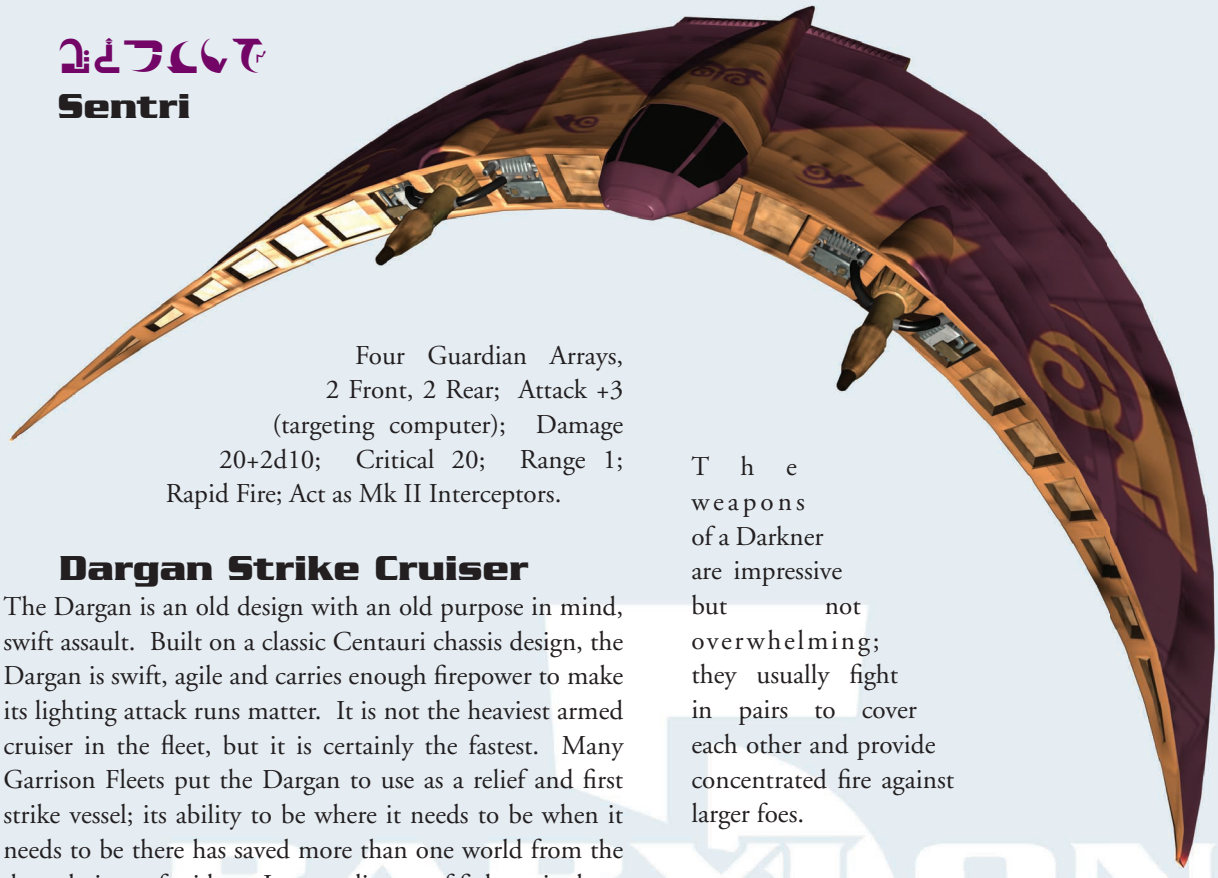
Covran Scout

One of the smallest fully active ships in the Centauri fleet, the Covran is a lightly armed, well defended vessel with a singular purpose that it excels at performing- scouting. The Covran is the stealthiest ship the Centauri have ever produced and while it is not quite the untraceable vessel that the Minbari might produce, it is still very well hidden from most sensors.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 150; DV 12 (-8 size, +10 agility); DR 12; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 4; Han +3; Sensor +12; Stealth 20; SQ Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 20,000 lb.; 1 Officers, 4 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 12 Crewmen

Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Sentri



Four Guardian Arrays, 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire; Act as Mk II Interceptors.

Dargan Strike Cruiser

The Dargan is an old design with an old purpose in mind, swift assault. Built on a classic Centauri chassis design, the Dargan is swift, agile and carries enough firepower to make its lighting attack runs matter. It is not the heaviest armed cruiser in the fleet, but it is certainly the fastest. Many Garrison Fleets put the Dargan to use as a relief and first strike vessel; its ability to be where it needs to be when it needs to be there has saved more than one world from the depredations of raiders. Its compliment of fighters is also a valuable asset in any kind of skirmish.

Colossal II Spacecraft; hp 300; DV 11 (-10 size, +11 agility); DR 15; Spd – ; Acc 5; Dec 4; Han +4; Sensor +4; Stealth 16; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 50,000 lb.; 3 Officers, 6 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 25 Crewmen

Weapons:
Two Battle Lasers; Boresight; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Three Matter Cannons; 1 Front, Front/Left, Front/Right; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Two Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 2 Front; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Craft (2):
12 Fighters (typically Rutarian)

Darkner Fast Attack Frigate

Only slightly larger than a Covran, the Darkner serves as a swift escort and attack craft with the speed and agility to accomplish a lot even in the thick of a full scale stellar combat. The weapons of a Darkner are impressive but not overwhelming; they usually fight in pairs to cover each other and provide concentrated fire against larger foes.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 200; DV 12 (-8 size, +10 agility); DR 14; Spd – ; Acc 5; Dec 4; Han +3; Sensor +4; Stealth 20; SQ Jump Point; Cargo 15,000 lb.; 1 Officers, 3 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 12 Crewmen

Weapons:
Two Battle Lasers; 2 Boresight; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Two Matter Cannons; Front/Left, Front/Right; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5

Demos Heavy Warship

A deadly surprise for any enemy fooled by its external resemblance to a Vorchan, the Demos carries an unusual weapon for a Centauri vessel – a ballistic torpedo launcher with six incredibly powerful warheads. Its array of other weaponry makes it a deadly warship and a powerful vessel in the Republic's fleet. The Demos is used when conditions do not call for a full Primus led attack fleet but heavy firepower may still be required.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 600; DV 10 (-12 size, +12 agility); DR 18; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +3; Sensor +3; Stealth 17; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-

Ranged, Atmospheric Capable; Cargo 20,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 10 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 14 Crewmen

Weapons:
Two Twin-linked Heavy Laser Arrays; 2 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
One Plasma Accelerator; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 50+5d10 (20 + 2d10 if Rapid Fired); Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire
Ballistic Torpedo Launcher; Boresight; Attack +5; Damage 60+6d10 and one automatic critical hit; Critical 20; Range 8; 6 torpedo capacity

Craft (1):
2 Shuttles

Haven Patrol Boat

A small ship charged with a huge responsibility, the Haven is a valuable ship to any system and fleets of them patrol the major worlds of the Republic on a constant state of readiness. Haven crews are a mixed group; many are wary and alert to any danger than might enter their territory, while others have served their entire careers and never engaged an enemy ship. The Admiralty has recently begun rotating Haven duty assignment to maintain better readiness from all her crews

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 180; DV 12 (-8 size, +10 agility); DR 15; Spd – ; Acc 5; Dec 4; Han +2; Sensor +6; Stealth 17; SQ Long Ranged; Cargo 15,000 lb.; 1 Officer, 3 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 12 Crewmen

Weapons:
Matter Cannon; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Kutai Gunship

The Kutai gunship is a design based on alien technology that retains its odd shape but has long since been completely rebuilt using Centauri materials and equipment. The Kutai is a deadly vessel with more than enough guns to make a difference in an assault but tends to lend support to larger vessel more often than it engages targets on its own.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 220; DV 10 (-8 size, +8 agility); DR 16; Spd – ; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 14; SQ Artificial Gravity, Long Ranged; Cargo 10,000 lb.; 1 Officer, 3 Pilots, 2 Sensor Operators, 14 Crewmen

Weapons:
Six Matter Cannons; 4 Boresight, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Two Twin-linked Particle Arrays; Front, Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Lias Supply Ship

The Lias is a very common site on every military base and orbital platform in the Republic. These supply and rearming vessels are well armed for their role, but this enables them to engage in just enough combat to get them destroyed. The Fleet division has been considering stripping two of the twinned arrays out of the Lias in service to see if it would convince their pilots to stay out of harm's way, but the general Admiralty consensus is that they would just die faster.

Gargantuan Spacecraft; hp 50; DV 3 (-4 size, -3 agility); DR 6; Spd – ; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +0; Sensor +0; Stealth 11; Cargo 20,000 lb.; 1 Officer/Pilot, 6 Crew

Weapons:
Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Marcanos Civilian Base

An oddity in the Centauri military, these are stationary bases with orbit-keeping drives only and no weapons at all. Originally conceived as a merchant base and left weaponless because of recent conflicts within the Republic, the Marcanos was put into production and soon proliferated throughout the empire in the hands of numerous different organizations and businesses. A fair number of these bases have been retrofitted with firing quadrants and heavy weaponry, but its original design keeps these from being terribly effective.

Colossal V Starbase; hp 900; DV -6 (-16 size); DR 22; Spd – ; Acc – ; Dec – ; Han – ; Sensor +5; Stealth 4; SQ Artificial Gravity, Long-Ranged; Cargo 500,000 lb.; 5 Officers, 25 Sensor Operators, 80 Crewmen

Weapons (4 arcs, weapons per arc):
One Plasma Accelerator; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 50+5d10 (20 + 2d10 if Rapid Fired); Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire
Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Maximus Defence Frigate

A one-ship system defence fleet, no other design has been attributed with the successful repulsion of attacking forces from Republic systems more often than the Maximum frigate. A well designed defensive vessel with just enough firepower to keep its enemies at bay until help can arrive from the rest of the fleet, this ship is built to take a pounding and has proven its worth on hundreds of occasions.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 200; DV 12 (-8 size, +10 agility); DR 14; Spd – ; Acc 5; Dec 4; Han +3; Sensor +4; Stealth 20; SQ Jump Point; Cargo 15,000 lb.; 1 Officer, 3 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 12 Crewmen

Weapons:
Four Twin-linked Heavy Laser Arrays; 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Two Guardian Arrays, 2 Turret; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire; Act as Mk II Interceptors

Mograth Frigate

Another ship based on alien technology and design, the Mograth incorporates a weapon that the Centauri Republic has been trying to replicate for the better part of a century. Mograths are rare and valuable ships because of their plasma stream weapons and few are ever risked in heavy combat. When the special firepower that the Mograth is capable of unleashing is needed, however, the ship is deployed without hesitation.

Colossal II Spacecraft; hp 330; DV 8 (-10 size, +8 agility); DR 16; Spd – ; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 14; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point; Cargo 30,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 6 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 30 Crewmen

Weapons:
Plasma Stream; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10*; Critical one automatic critical hit; Range 2
Two Matter Cannons; 4 Boresight, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Two Twin-linked Heavy Laser Arrays; 2 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Guardian Array, Turret; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire; Act as Mk II Interceptors
* Every time a ship is struck with a plasma stream weapon, its DR is permanently reduced by 2 due to severe hull damage.

Octurion Battleship

The Octurion is a massive vessel, the largest in the Centauri fleet, and serves many roles. It is a mobile fire base, a planetary bombardment ship, a command centre for an entire battle group and anything else its firepower and auxiliary systems will support. An Octurion present in an area automatically makes it the fleet's command ship; it is rare to see two Octurions in the same battle, but when it occurs the highest ranking commanding offer's ship has seniority.

Colossal IV Spacecraft; hp 1260; DV 2 (-14 size, +6 agility); DR 22; Spd – ; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +1; Sensor +10; Stealth 12; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 250,000 lb.; 5 Officers, 21 Pilots, 25 Sensor Operators, 60 Crewmen

Weapons:
Six Matter Cannons; 2 Front/Left, 2 Front/Right, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 18-20; Range 5
Six Battle Lasers; 2 Front/Left, 2 Front/Right, 2 Rear; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Twelve Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 6 Front, 2 Rear, 2 Left, 2 Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Craft (4):
24 Sentri Fighters, 2 Shuttles

Primus Battlecruiser, Centauri Republic

The Primus is the flagship class of battlecruiser, a testament to the might and power the Centauri once wielded in the galaxy and the strongest of their front line vessels. Primus battlecruisers can mount a variety of weapons and this flexibility allows them to be refitted at orbital shipyards

for mission-specific profiles, always ensuring that a Primus battlecruiser with advanced warning of a mission can come into a conflict with exactly the right armament for any task.

Colossal IV Spacecraft; hp 860; DV 2 (-14 size, +6 agility); DR 20; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 15; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 160,000 lb.; 4 Officers, 20 Pilots, 25 Sensor Operators, 50 Crewmen

Weapons:
Two Twin-linked Battle Lasers; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Eight Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 8 Front; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Craft (4):
12 Sentri Fighters, 2 Shuttles

Razik Light Fighter

The fastest fighter in the Centauri fleet and nearly twice as agile as the Sentri medium fighter, the Razik is a swift striking fighter used to harass larger vessels with little ability to return fire on something so small and quick. The Razik is also an excellent fighter to fighter ship and many 'ace' Centauri pilots either have extensive time in a Razik or still fly one in preference to anything else.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 32; DV 14 (-2 size, +6 agility); DR 4; Spd 38; Acc 8; Dec 6; Han +5; Sensor +4; Stealth 16; SQ Afterburners, Atmospheric Capable; Cargo 20 lb.; 1 Pilot

Weapons:
Twin-linked Light Particle Gun; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 2d8; Critical 20; Range 1

Rutarian Strike Fighter

Heavier and slower than the Sentri, the Rutarian has the advantages of better armour plating and defensive systems as compensation. In combat against larger vessels, the Rutarian is typically more effective than the Sentri because of its heavy weapon array and battlefield endurance. A hit that would blast a Sentri apart will only damage a Rutarian and it has enough redundant systems to stay effective even after absorbing some withering punishment.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 45; DV 12 (-2 size, +4 agility); DR 6; Spd 28; Acc 6; Dec 5; Han +4; Sensor +3; Stealth 14; SQ Atmospheric Capable, Grapple; Cargo 30 lb.; 1 Pilot

Weapons:
Twin-linked Particle Gun; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 3d8; Critical 20; Range 1

Secondus Assault Cruiser

The Primus design has been used for many experimental equipment and weapon load outs since its inception, but none have been as successful or popular with combat crews as the Secondus. The planet assault vessel of choice for the Republic, a Secondus has to be heavily escorted because of its lack of heavy armament, but once it gets within deployment range of a contested world, it can bombard its target from orbit and then drop 12 Larisi assault shuttles full of heavily armed infantry and field guns to clean up the mess.

Colossal IV Spacecraft; hp 860; DV 2 (-14 size, +6 agility); DR 20; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 15; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 160,000 lb.; 4 Officers, 20 Pilots, 25 Sensor Operators, 50 Crewmen

Weapons:
Four Twin-linked Heavy Laser Arrays; 2 Front, Front/Left, Front/Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 4 Turret; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3
2 Mass Drivers; See description of weapon for details

Craft (4):
12 Larisi Assault Shuttles, 2 Shuttles

Sentri Medium Fighters, Centauri Republic

The mainstay of the Centauri fighter fleets, the Sentri sports the recognizable crescent wing the race's ships are well known for and carries a pair of linked particle guns. While they are a fairly even match for Narn Frazi fighters on a firepower basis, they often get the better of combat engagements with them due to their superior manoeuvrability, accuracy and speed.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 35; DV 12 (-2 size, +4 agility); DR 5; Spd 32; Acc 7; Dec 5; Han +4; Sensor +3; Stealth 15; SQ Atmospheric Capable, Grapple; Cargo 25 lb.; 1 Pilot

Weapons:
Particle Gun; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 3d8; Critical 20; Range 1

Sulust Escort Destroyer

In combat against the Centauri, a number of races have learned to screen their more valuable command ships with smaller escorts. This shields the fleet vessels from the powerful matter guns and battle lasers of the Republic fleet. Rather than waste time and energy ripping these smaller craft apart with battleship and battlecruiser class weapons, escort destroyers are called in to shatter these defensive lines and punch a hole through so the Centauri's bigger guns can deal with their priority targets. The Sulust is the most successful design of escort destroyer in use by the current fleet.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 200; DV 12 (-8 size, +10 agility); DR 14; Spd – ; Acc 6; Dec 5; Han +4; Sensor +8; Stealth 18; SQ Afterburners; Cargo 3,000 lb.; 1 Officer, 3 Pilots, 2 Sensor Operators, 8 Crewmen

Weapons:
Battle Lasers; Front; Attack +5 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Four Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 2 Front/Left, 2 Front/Right; Attack +4 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3
Four Guardian Arrays, 2 Front, 2 Back; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire; Act as Mk II Interceptors

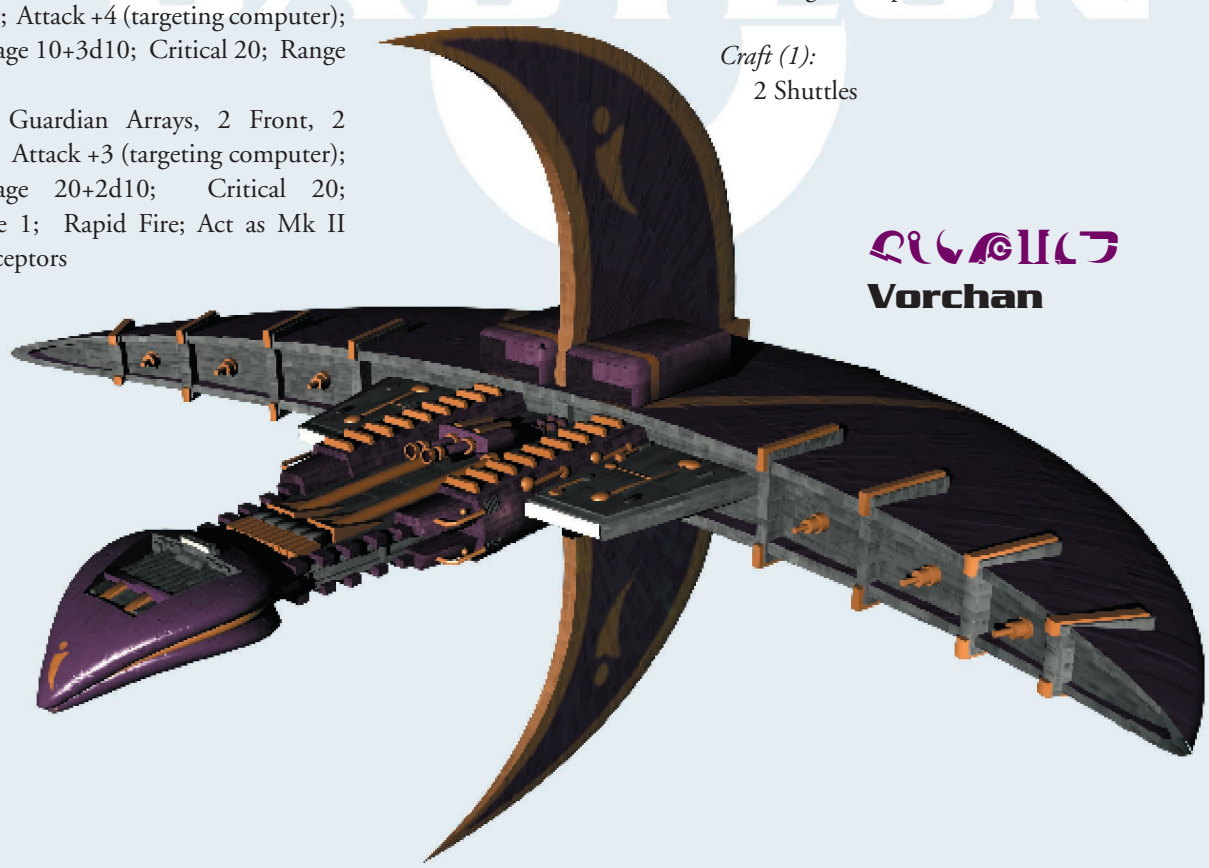
Vorchan Warship, Centauri Republic

A notable craft with a long service record and astounding lethality, the Vorchan is one of the more easily recognisable ships in the Centauri fleet because of its twin crescent wings placed perpendicular to each other. Looking much like a bird of prey with its beak-like forward cabin, the Vorchan mounts a deadly main plasma accelerator as its main gun and a pair of twin lasers for back up stopping power and effective long range attack. When the Republic needs to hunt down a mobile enemy or take out large numbers of fighters, it relies heavily on its swift, efficient Vorchan armada.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 600; DV 10 (-12 size, +12 agility); DR 18; Spd – ; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +3; Sensor +3; Stealth 17; SQ Jump Point, Long-Ranged, Atmospheric Capable; Cargo 20,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 10 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 14 Crewmen

Weapons:
Twin-linked Laser Arrays; 2 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+3d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
One Plasma Accelerator; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 50+5d10 (20 + 2d10 if Rapid Fired); Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire

Craft (1):
2 Shuttles



Vorchan

Centauri Characters

Franklin: 'How many Centauri does it take to screw in a light bulb? Just one, but in the great old days ...'
Lennier: '... in the great old days of the republic, hundreds of servants would live to change a thousand light bulbs at a slightest whim.'

The majority of the book until now has been written from an 'in the universe' perspective. The Centauri are a fascinating race, with a rich history and a variety of interesting worlds that characters from the culture might originate from. The chapters before now have been dedicating to breathing life into the Centauri. This chapter and that which follows it have been written to give Players and Games Masters the tools they need to bring that life into their games.

Playing a Centauri the way they are portrayed in the television show can be quite a switch for most roleplayers. While a Centauri character can certainly be an effective character in a personal or space combat situation, there are many other areas for them to fight and excel in. A game session consisting of a Royal Court appearance, a long social engagement, a night of opera and a morning suffering the excesses of the night before is more fitting for a noble Centauri. This can make for an excellent roleplaying experience, especially if the Games Master can provide enough interaction to bring such a game into vibrant detail.

The next chapter, Centauri Campaigns, will deal with that and more. This chapter is dedicated to giving a wealth of details and optional information about *playing* a Centauri. While this race is not quite the versatile wonder that is a human, the combat savant of a Minbari or the rugged survivor of a Narn, the Centauri have their own strengths. More to the point, the Centauri are a very unique and distinctive race with a flavour all their own.

By deciding to play a Centauri, a Player has made the choice to try their hand at the Game of Houses, the social intrigue and the dangerous politics of daily life that makes their race so interesting from a roleplaying sense. Of course, a Player's motivation may just have been the ability to use their Centauri's prehensile genitals to cheat at cards, but the less said about that, the better.

That sad idea aside, it does bring up an interesting point about the Centauri. These characters have, well, character. Humans are all well and good, but if one can assume that the Players are all human, they are not much of a challenge to play. One of the advantages to playing a human character is that doing so is not difficult. Humans know their emotions, traits and reactions to different stimuli. Alien characters are not quite so easy; they can be a great challenge to portray appropriately.

Doing so is its own reward, however. By taking the challenge of an alien character and trying to act as he would in a roleplaying scenario, the Player is extending his understanding not just of the character and its race, but also of himself. When roleplaying a character demands that a Player takes an action that he would never personally do (or even see the need to do), he gains insight of both the character he is playing and his own motivations at the same time. Any game that can provide something like this cannot help but be a rewarding experience.

Roleplaying was originally a psychological tool and still serves in that regard. As a game, it can lend a lot of understanding to those who take it seriously enough to worry about things like 'motivation', 'character intensity' and 'drama'. If that sounds like acting, it should. The line between real roleplaying and acting is a very fine one; many excellent roleplayers are actors of the first calibre, even if they never perform professionally.

The Centauri are a perfect foil for this level of roleplaying. Of all the 'aliens' in Babylon 5, the Centauri are the most akin to humans. They have many of the same motivations, a remarkably similar appearance and a vibrancy of living that we can greatly admire. Granted, things are a little different when their doors are closed, but their social structure mimics eras of Earth we can identify with. They are a little more intense about some things than humans could appreciate, but the idea of taking our culture to the stars no matter the cost is not an unsung hope on planet Earth.

Centauri are a fascinating race, with a rich diverse culture and a long history filled with glory, betrayal and dire choices. They are not human and they do not always make the same decisions humans would make, but they are enough like us that when they triumph, we can feel pride. When they fail, we can understand where they went wrong. Players can find a lot in the Centauri to work with in a gaming sense. If they give this race a chance, they may well find that things make a lot more sense when they start thinking that things are not always black and white. Life is much better Purple and Gold.

Playing a Centauri

Okay, so the last page convinced you. Or perhaps you came into this already wanting to play a Centauri. While that would explain why you are reading this book, it does not immediately tell you what you probably want to know.

It is one thing to want to play a Centauri in a Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game. It is quite another to know what that really means.

Roleplaying a Centauri involves understanding the race to a degree that when situations come up in the game, you will know how the character would react and how he would think. That is an important distinction. While there is nothing wrong with simply casting yourself as a member of another race with your own motivations and instincts, it is not as rewarding an experience as actually taking the time to puzzle through someone's reactions after coming from an entirely different culture than your own. This may sound complicated, but it is well worth the effort.

Delving into the specific psyche of the Centauri both as a race and as individuals has been the subject of a previous chapter, but that could only scratch the surface of this rich, elaborate culture. To do so in exacting detail would take many more books of this size or far larger to even contemplate doing so correctly. Consider how many books exist on the topic of human psychology. That should give you some idea how detailed one could get with the Centauri.

Fortunately, we are talking about a roleplaying game, not a doctoral dissertation. We do not have to dissect the Centauri to that fine a degree and to a degree, it would be a disservice if we did. The great thing about a roleplaying game is that it is uniquely yours and the group you play with. If you say that Centauri are one way, they become such for your instance of the game. This book can only offer suggestions and then only if you choose to use them.

That given, there are several suggestions in the following pages where the Centauri are concerned. These are tips for roleplaying the 'fan heads', but they should not be taken as gospel in any way. As we have seen on the show, the Centauri are not all alike. Consider the difference between Londo Mollari and Vir Cotto; then compare them to Lord Refa and Emperor Turhan. They were all completely different, though Refa and Londo may have been a little too similar for the latter's comfort. Your Centauri character can, and should, be just as unique.

There are a few constants in the Centauri culture that you should be aware of, even if you do not choose to react to them the same way as the majority of the race. By keeping them in mind during roleplaying, these elements of the Centauri mindset can be useful in helping a Player set their own distinctive tone. Even a rebel or social outcast has to have a baseline value to veer away from; that is the purpose of this next section.

Ambition

It has been said before, and it will be said again; the Centauri are defined and often destroyed by their ambitions. While members of any race can strive for something better than they have, ambition is practically and racial imperative for the Centauri. They see a goal and they seek it out to the exclusion of safety, sense or sympathy. More than that, they are constantly looking to the next goal and the one thereafter. One eye on the stars and the other over the shoulder, as the old Centauri saying goes.

The first part of this expression is obvious. The stars represent everything the Centauri have, do not yet have, once possessed and will have again. Returning to the stars and ruling them with a silk-gloved fist are the motivations behind much of the race's brightest and darkest periods of history. Their culture is constantly centred on the idea that what one does not have, one should do whatever it takes to obtain.

The other half of the expression is just as important. The Centauri people are well acquainted with the price of failure. They are not blind, though one might consider their willingness to do whatever they must to exceed their own expectations a little myopic and short sighted. They know that ambition is a dangerous path, but it also makes for a dangerous weapon. The only way to succeed is through risk and those who risk have something to lose.

Competition

This brings us to the next important facet of the Centauri personality. The Centauri are in competition with each other every day of their lives. They struggle to surpass their peers in every aspect of their existence, from political power to the clothes they wear. If the Centauri did not have each other as a comparison of themselves, they would likely have to seek out another race to compete against for a sense of self identity.

When a Centauri takes any action, he automatically assumes that others will hear of it and plot to either interfere with his intentions or seek to outdo him at every turn. Every day is a race for the Centauri in which finishing first is not the goal; just finishing ahead of anyone else who matters. The Centauri have separated themselves into social classes and Noble Houses to limit the contestants in their daily trials as much as to divide their culture.

Constantly assuming competition has given the Centauri a real edge when it comes to personal behaviour. Since they believe that anything they do will be compared to someone else's work, the Centauri always do the best they can in any endeavour. This provides the race with some of the greatest personal works in virtually every regard, but the

constantly raising bar also discourages many Centauri from attempting to do anything at all.

Oddly, the Centauri do not generally concern themselves with other races in a competitive sense. While they always seek to be better than anything that comes to their attention, they already assume they are beyond the level of any other race in the galaxy. They fully believe that they have a destiny in the stars that exceeds the universe's expectations of anything else that might dwell within it. In the eyes of the Centauri, they are the perfect race by which any other form of life must be measured. This level of arrogance is both blessing and curse.

This is a dark day. I just don't know what to say. I know that I should talk about this to someone, but Londo doesn't like anyone getting involved in his personal life. He is so upset right now, I would hate to make things worse.

Adira is dead. Someone poisoned her on her flight here from Homeworld. I can't imagine why anyone would ever want to hurt her, but Londo is acting like he knows who did it. He has not been out of his room in three days and except for an appointment he has scheduled with Mister Morden tomorrow evening, I don't think he will be coming out any time soon. He is not himself, but I can't blame him for being hurt.

I just wish this wasn't bringing him back in touch with Morden or his people. They are not good for him and they definitely are not good for the rest of us. He was doing so well, what with his breaking ties and looking to help Homeworld on his own. Now, I don't know what will happen. He will probably ask Morden to help him get revenge, but like I have said before, some favours come at too high a price.

I hate to speak ill of the dead, and I know how much she meant to Londo, but I just don't understand any of this. All this tragedy over an ex-slave?

Arrogance

Most races would consider arrogance a weakness, but the Centauri view it as a right of nobility. In this regard, 'nobility' applies equally to every member of their race. Even slaves of the Centauri consider themselves better than slaves of any other species. The Centauri are the dominant form of galactic life; to them, this is simply a given. This 'quiet conceit' shapes all of their attitudes.

Even Centauri who do not outwardly show any arrogance have it at some level in their mindset. Centauri like Vir are very unassuming and can be quite pleasant, but even he has a certain point in his psyche that will elevate itself above the problems of others when it comes down to him or them. This is because the Centauri are taught from childhood that aliens exist, but they just do not matter as much as the Centauri do. This is explains the many questionable things the Centauri do, like slavery, conquest and the extermination of other species.

This arrogance can be seen in their behaviour around themselves as well. The class levels system the Centauri all adhere to can only exist in a race with their kind of superlative egotism. While other races have castes and social orders, they usually ascribe a certain equality to every caste in the system. Not so with the Centauri; they simply believe themselves better than those under them and always capable of elevating themselves above those whom are technically their 'betters'.

Slavery

The other cultural attitude that helps to define the Centauri is slavery. The Centauri have two important assumptions about slaves, depending on which race the slaves come from. The Centauri basically have slaves because they are too arrogant to do menial labour. Since menial labour is necessary part of life, someone has to do it. Before there were aliens to handle the needs of the nobility, Centauri were needed to provide that vital service.

Centauri consider slaves of their own race to be a necessary, if lowly, part of the own culture. Slaves are given goods, if not expensive, clothing and decent treatment. While the life of a Centauri slave is certainly not the level of opulence and comfort that the nobility enjoys, they never starve, have to worry about shelter or get truly abused simply because of what they are. Slaves are treated like servants and often ignored, but they are Centauri, the 'nobles of the universe', and this is never left in doubt either by them or those who act as their 'masters'.

Alien slaves are an entirely different matter. Aliens are automatically less important than Centauri and these slaves

races are obviously the weakest their species have to offer. If they were not, would they have been captured and enslaved in the first place? As such, most alien slaves are treated with derision and some base level of abuse. While this is not an absolute and some Centauri masters treat even their alien slaves with some dignity and respect, such tolerance and understanding is the rare exception, not the general rule.

Centauri-Specific Skill Uses

The Centauri have developed hundreds of techniques within their culture to accomplish the things that are important to them. The race excels at technical skills, scientific pursuits and everything that marks a space-faring race, but they have a greater emphasis on social interaction and political pursuits. While the Skills chapter in the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game and Fact Book cover these topics in deep enough detail to handle their uses with other cultures, the Centauri often need a level of detail beyond the norm for their Byzantine plotting and high society.

Games Masters and Players should keep in mind that these specialisations are certainly open to use by characters of other races. They are only presented in this source book because the Centauri tend to place a greater emphasis on the new skill uses below. Narn are not nearly concerned enough with appearances to worry about specialisations in Profession and Forgery, nor will a given Brakiri care any more about Court politics beyond how it might affect the price of his wares.

Sense Motive (Gauge Potential Reactions)

There is a level of social interaction that depends on how a receptive audience will react to a given statement, action or course of action. This can be covered under the various social skills (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate and Gather Information), but the Centauri take things to the next level as often as they can. The Imperial Court can be a very unforgiving environment for social blunders, so any advantage a courtier can get is worth an extra effort.

The Sense Motive skill can be used by those who know how to read people around them for an idea of how they will react to the use of another social skill. Centauri use this to gain an advantage in social interactions with each other and because of this lengthy exposure, other Centauri have developed ways to defeat this 'second guessing' and keep the political playing field even.

To use this special technique, a character makes a Sense Motive check opposed by the Bluff checks of those they are trying to interact with using another Charisma-based skill. This takes at least one minute of study and thus cannot be used for quick actions or impulsive social activity, but the time and effort can be well worth the benefit received. For every five full points over the opposed Bluff check scored, the Sense Motive user gains a +1 competence bonus to the next Charisma attribute check or related skill check to a maximum of +5.

To defend against this skill, a target character automatically gets an opposing Bluff check to represent being guarded about his reactions and motivations. In addition, a character can pre-emptively use this same skill technique on those around him to determine who is likely to try taking advantage of it in a given social setting. The DC of this check is a static 20, with every five points of a successful check over this increasing the penalty by -1 to a maximum of -5. This penalty is applied to the bonus gained by other characters' uses of Sense Motive (Gauge Potential Reactions) against them.

Gideon: 'Do you do this a lot, lie to protect his ego?'

Nix: 'All the time. It's politics and self preservation.'

Forgery (High Fashion)

The same traits that allow a skilled forger to take a single document and duplicate it can also allow someone to take current fashion trends and duplicate the same elements into new outfits or clothing styles. This is because forgery is not just a skill concerning the creation of images that look alike; there is a good deal of psychology involved with forgery. A forged document is not always identical to an original; knowing the amount of 'room' one has with an item before it becomes an obvious fake is an integral part of the skill.

So is the ability of a skilled forgery expert to put himself in the mindset of those who will be examining the document for telltale signs of authenticity. That is the cornerstone of this special skill use. The Centauri often have to design their clothes while keeping in mind the society commentators that will be present when the garments are debuted. High fashion in the world of the Centauri can be a brutal, unforgiving environment and second-guessing those mavens of rumour can keep a bad design from drawing ridicule and makes a good design that much more socially impressive.

Typically, this skill use is done in the background when a Centauri player purchases a new outfit. The skill check, which should be made secretly by the Games Master, can affect the Status impact the suit of clothes might have when worn to an important social occasion. Alternately, a

Centauri player may actively use this skill when making a suit of clothes himself but such skills are typically beneath a noble Centauri and commoners do not usually worry much about their own outfits.

- ***DC 10:*** The clothes are average and make no specific statement about the wearer. Their mediocre styling and expression impose a -1 to any Status gain the character might gain the first time these garments are worn to a social outing.
- ***DC 15:*** While the clothes are not impressive, they are at least in fashion currently and show that the character wearing them keeps up with trends or has an effective entourage of social advisors. These clothes do not impose any penalty to Status gains but offer no benefit either and provide an 'average' reputation for the wearer.
- ***DC 20:*** Certain trends just coming into vogue are incorporated into the clothes. This trend-setting is not entirely impressive, but it will get a few comments and a few mentions at the next social function attended by the Character. This adds +1 Status point from that occasion unless the wearer suffers any Status loss from actions taken during the function.
- ***DC 25:*** There is at least one thing about the outfit so innovative and new that social commentators will assume it to be a new fashion trend and treat it as such. This works in the wearer's favour and gains they +2 Status the first time the outfit is unveiled at a social gathering or event.
- ***DC 30:*** The style and sophistication of the clothing in question is beyond the pale and considered as much by anyone at the next event the character attends. This offers an immediate +2 Status and if the character goes to another event within one month in the same outfit, an additional +1 is gained for continuing the trend.

Because this skill can make a huge difference to anyone playing the Game of Houses, there needs to be a way for Centauri to estimate the impact of a new outfit before unveiling it at a party. To do this, a Centauri can make a Gather Information check with a DC equal to the Forgery result of the garments in question +5. If successful, the exact benefit the clothes will provide can be discerned. If the roll fails by 5 or less, the Centauri believes the garments will have the benefit listed one level below its actual advantage. If the roll is 6 or more points below the DC, it cannot be accurately gauged and the Games Master is free to report any result desired. The Centauri wearing the clothes will only learn the truth by attending a social function and finding out firsthand what the commentators think.

Centauri Feats

As specialised as the Centauri tend to be in their personal pursuits, it makes sense that they would have several special techniques developed over the life of their empire to accomplish their ends. These efforts, when successful, become part of cultural doctrine and are taught to the next generation as a means if getting ahead in certain disciplines. When they do not succeed, they are taught even more fervently as bad examples.

Since the most important thing in an 'average' Centauri's life is society, many of the new feats presented below are based on social concepts and affect Status and its use. These skills are clustered as Social feats and have a few special rules concerning their use and qualifications. There is no reason why these feats could not be used by non-Centauri, but this race puts greater emphasis on appearance and tends to select them more often than members of any other race. When non-Centauri have these feats, the more direct ones are usually noticed by Centauri when used and elicit either admiration for the effort or derision for their clumsy application.

In addition to these, this chapter also contains special feats related to the class divisions of the Centauri, their two sub-races (Shenaro and Vendura Kado) and the race's specialised telepaths. These feats are not mandatory, but they can greatly affect the social and personal impact of a character possessing them. These feats emphasise certain traits of the Centauri class or sub-race in question, but should not be confused with automatic aspects of their people. While many Shenaro have Beast of Burden as a feat, it is not a universal trait.

All Centauri characters have to take one of the following three Social feats; Commoner, Noble or Slave, none of which count against the number of feats allowed to a starting character. This must take place at character creation and reflects the social birth status of a given Centauri. Centauri characters may completely ignore their social class, especially if the campaign story involves a setting outside the Republic, but its stigma will always follow them.

In addition, all Centauri Slaves get a bonus feat, chosen from the following; Freed, House or Labour. These feats are mutually exclusive as they reflect a slave's current status in Centauri society, though their effects transcend the normal limits of a Social feat. If a Centauri slave changes status to reflect one of these feats they do not have, such as a labour slave being freed, that slave immediately loses the feat they had and gains the appropriate one in its place.

Traits

This section of the Character chapter utilises a type of feat first introduced in the Minbari Fact Book, the Trait. Traits are feats that, because of their internal balance of benefits and detriments, do not count towards a character's allowable number of feats. Because traits are rare and do not tend to occur multiple times in the same individual because of the physical integrity of a given race, a character may only begin play with one Trait feat unless it has Games Master's approval to select additional ones.

Despite their nature as being physical oddities or changes, traits are not always limited to the first level of character creation. Instead, some can occur after a character has been played and advanced in level over the course of a campaign. A Games Master is always the final arbiter as to whether a character can take a trait; sometimes, the course of a game may dictate a given trait is imposed on a character due to some occurrence involving an unwanted change that could not be avoided. It is recommended that this be a rare event in game, as changes to characters can become disruptive if it occurs too often.

Physical Feats

Dark Krenlin (Trait)

A rare trait among the Centauri, a weak krenlinar sheath is indicative of more serious health problems but can have a slight benefit.

Prerequisite: Centauri only, Constitution 12 or less.

Benefit: While a dark complexion is an indication of ill health, it does have the advantage of making a Centauri slightly more able to deal with heat and cold because their epidermis is thicker and their musculature has been toughened by constant exposure to ultraviolet radiation. Characters with this trait may reduce all heat and cold damage by 2 points.

Heavy Muscles (Trait)

You have a throwback muscular structure that interferes with the typical grace of your people but provides more strength than others.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: Because of a quirk of biology, you have a thick muscle build that resembles the body structure of the Shenaro more than other Centauri. You have a +2 inherent bonus to Strength but suffer a -2 inherent penalty to Dexterity. Because of the development of these muscles, you may not spend level bonuses an Dexterity.

Liati Smile (Trait)

Your teeth are extremely long and sharp, allowing you to bite with them very effectively.

Prerequisite: Centauri only, Strength 12+.

Benefit: You have the speed and strength to make your bite an effective and useful weapon. You are considered to have bite as a natural attack, though this does not give you an extra attack per round. You are never considered unarmed as long as you can freely bite an opponent. This natural attack does 1d4+ one and a half times your Strength bonus in damage. If you enjoy any bonuses that improve your unarmed attacks, your bite can benefit from these as well.

This is not entirely a benefit where the Centauri are concerned. A Liati Smile is, by reputation, the sign of someone just a little bit feral. All Charisma attributes and related skill checks suffer a -1 circumstance penalty when dealing with other Centauri.

Pur'fa Specialist (Centauri)

You have an ability to use your sexual appendages that would impress and/or embarrass even those Centauri with a basic ability to manipulate them.

Prerequisite: Male, Prehensile Tentacles.

Benefit: You can use all six of your pur'fa, but the four lower body tentacles can only manipulate objects of under one pound. The other four tentacles can also flip switches and draw in items like the primary pair, but require a Dexterity check of DC 10 to use at the same time as the primary two. A pur'fa specialist using their tentacles within sight of other Centauri will certainly elicit some kind of strong response.

Sharp Nails (Trait)

You have the right nail structure to take and hold a very sharp edge. This lets you literally claw your way through dangerous situations.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: Centauri with sharpened nails draw a lot of looks, but they are usually given a wide berth all the same. When you make an unarmed attack with your hands, your threat range is doubled. This is still considered an unarmed attack, which may draw an attack of opportunity if you do not have some way to overcome this limitation. Sharp nails get in the way of other tasks; you suffer a -1 penalty to all tasks requiring manual dexterity (including ranged and armed combat).

Vax Toromo (Trait)
You have been born with a hideous disfigurement. The Great Maker has cursed you with a full head of hair.

Prerequisite: Centauri only, Female gender.

Benefit: You have a full head of hair, though it may not necessarily be long or very thick. This is an aberration in Centauri women and if you do not keep it shaved, you will suffer a -4 penalty to all Charisma attribute and related skill checks when dealing with other Centauri. There is the slight benefit of gaining a +2 circumstance bonus if you attempt to use the Disguise skill to emulate a human appearance.

Social Feats
Bon Vivant (Social)
Centauri of all classes like to party. To you, life is a party. Moreover, you live life to its fullest, always finding the thrills that others miss.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: Any Status increases you receive related to celebrations of any positive kind (which included most social occasions in the Republic) are improved by 1 point. To qualify for this increase, you must be active and visible to the majority of party-goers for at least half the party's duration. If you are visibly forced to leave the party for any reason (thrown out, called away on emergency or other abrupt circumstance), this becomes a -1 penalty to the Status gain instead..

Commoner (Social)
You have been born into the common class of your people. This is not a detriment or benefit, but it does mean that you will likely never experience life as a noble Centauri.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: Most Centauri would assume that there are no benefits to life as a commoner, but slaves would argue that point as would wiser nobles. Commoners are not as constantly monitored by the nobility and have a lot of freedom in their personal choices that those of the other two classes simply do not possess.

Tier: Games Master assigned or determined by the player at the time of character creation. High tier costs one permanent Hit Point from a character's starting total. Low tier adds one Hit Point to the character's starting total.

Connoisseur (Social)
You have a rarefied palate or eye for fine art. Your sense of good taste is highly refined and those around you know it.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: By indulging your tastes in public, you can attempt to earn Status above those of their peers. You may make a Charisma check once in any given social event against a DC 15. Success adds a +1 bonus to any Status gain you receive for the occasion.

Daring (Social)
You have a reputation for taking risks and coming out of them unscathed.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: Whether you deserve it or not, other nobles consider you to be a daredevil with the Maker's own luck. Whenever you have a combat or circumstance in which your life is legitimately in danger and can arrange for Centauri back in the Republic to hear about it, you gain +1 Status point. This bonus can be increased at the Games Master's option.

Egalitarian (Social)
Your actions in the past have been very self-serving but viewed in a positive light because of their necessity and perceived fairness.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: You have the ability to negate the Status loss that might occur due to your actions. While overt actions such as capital crimes will still have their full effect on your Status, anything less can be given a positive spin and made to work out as an even no-loss, no-gain. Doing this requires a Diplomacy check at a DC equal to 20 plus the amount of loss you would have received. 8 and 9 point losses cannot be negated in this way, but an 8 point loss will be halved to 4 by a successful check. 9 point losses will still occur; this feat cannot reduce them at all.

Fashion Maven (Social)
You live for fashion; to you, a new suit of clothes every day is a dream you hope to achieve or insist upon as your birthright.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: You may automatically make Forgery checks to improve upon your clothing when you select new outfits as listed in the New Skill Uses above. Normally, this requires

making the cloths in question, but your fashion skills substitute careful selection and accessorising for any actual tailoring skill. In addition, your keen fashion sense adds a +5 circumstance bonus to Forgery checks made for this purpose.

Noble (Social)

You are of noble birth and thus part of the privileged few in Centauri society. Being a noble is not a benefit or detriment, but it does mean that you are under constant scrutiny by your highborn peers.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: While non-noble Centauri would assume you have the best of everything, nothing could be farther from the truth. You have to watch every word you say, every action you take and constantly be aware of what every personal choice will mean for the status of your family and your House. This responsibility can make you yearn for the freedoms that commoners take for granted.

Tier: Games Master assigned or determined by the player at the time of character creation. High tier costs one permanent Hit Point from a character's starting total. Low tier adds one Hit Point to the character's starting total.

Public Perception (Social)

As far as your peers and superiors are concerned, you have the social position of someone above your actual tier in Centauri society.

Prerequisite: Centauri only, Noble.

Benefit: You have the Social Status tier one step above your own for the purpose of maximum Status points. You still have a minimum Status point threshold of your true tier, but this feat makes the gap between Social Debt and Affluence much wider. When you go up in tier, this feat increases you to the next step and can even take you into the lowest tier of the next social class up if you reach the highest tier in your current class. Public Perception is entirely outside your control; you cannot change it willingly or escape its effects (assuming you would ever wish to do so).

Slave (Social)

You have been born into the slave class of your people. This is not a detriment or benefit, but it does mean that you will likely never experience life as a free citizen of the Republic.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: Being a slave comes with some serious drawbacks, not the least of which is being owned as property. This feat requires some level of interaction between the Centauri player and the Games Master to determine the particulars of the slave's status and current freedoms. For most campaigns, it is likely that the Player will be a freed slave or one on extended duties and thus available to take part in scenarios with the other characters.

Tier: Games Master assigned or determined by the player at the time of character creation. High tier costs one permanent Hit Point from a character's starting total. Low tier adds one Hit Point to the character's starting total.

Social Chameleon (Social)

No matter what the scene or who the people around you are, you can always blend in and find some way to excel.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: You gain a +5 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive checks you make when using the Gauge Potential Reactions option listed above in the New Skill Uses section. This represents your superior ability to wield political wit and social flexibility even in the face of changing or unfamiliar circumstances. Social Chameleons are difficult to spot by those wary of such affluent characters; others suffer a -5 to their Sense Motive checks when trying to defend against your use of Gauge Potential Reactions.

Untouchable (Social)

You have done things in the past that while they soil your reputation forever, you have the dubious protection of having nowhere left to go but up.

Prerequisite: Centauri only.

Benefit: You have no Status score and cannot play the Game of Houses. You are immune to the possibility of ever losing your social rank and tier, however, because society simply treats you as if you did not exist. This does not make you very popular at social events in the Republic, but it does mean that you cannot suffer any penalties from someone else's Status. You are also immune to more intangible social manipulations, though this protection is best left to the Games Master to decide.

While Untouchables can pursue any character class or profession they desire, they cannot practice diplomacy or hold any true Court position within the boundaries of the Republic. The Emperor can expend all of the Social expenditures for the day to declare an Untouchable part of

society again. This erases the effects of this feat and replaces it with a permanent -1 to all Status gains instead.

Noble Feats

Ascension (Social)

You have been given the superlative honour of Ascension for some deed done in the past and continue to reap the benefits of your good fortune.

Prerequisite: Centauri Noble only. Games Master's approval.

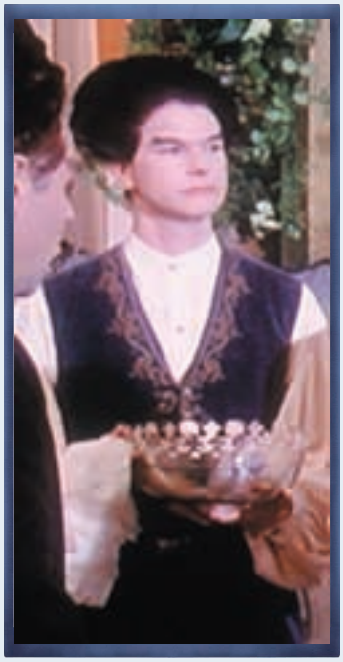
Benefit: You receive a +1 bonus to any Status gain and a reduction of -1 from any Status loss because of the continual good reputation of your Ascension. You also receive either a small piece of real estate, a military rank of Captain in the Fleet or Ground Forces or any single equipment item of 100,000 credits in value as your award from the Emperor for achieving Ascension. At the Games Master's option, you may receive an alternate reward not among the previous choices (such as, for example, a divorce from an arranged marriage or two).

Ascension can be received during play as a virtual social feat and not count toward a Centauri character's feat total.

Dauphin (Social)

You have a very high rank for someone of your age in Centauri society. This reputation for being a social prodigy lasts your whole life.

Prerequisite: Centauri Noble only.



Benefit: You do not have the same limitations other members of your society must deal with when it comes to status and age. Perhaps you are the youngest family patriarch in generations or you simply have a gift for bringing in social gains through carefully planned or fortunate actions. You begin play at the top number of your social tier, though you do not begin with any affluence. When you lose Status, you may reduce the loss by half if it would cause you any Social Debt. This may still result in Social Debt if the loss is great enough.

Normal: Centauri characters begin play with a Status score of the minimum value for their tier, modified by their Charisma modifier. If this is negative, it becomes Social Debt.

Imperial Mandate (Social)

The Emperor has assured your nobility and that of your House. While an incredibly heinous act might still cost your family everything, it would take that to reduce your social tier.

Prerequisite: Centauri Noble only.

Benefit: You cannot lose your social tier to the point of becoming a commoner. This may be the result of some action you took for the good of the Republic or the brave deeds of an ancestor. When you are at the maximum level of Social Debt at low tier nobility, you can automatically erase all of your social debt once a game year by calling in this status. Treason can still cost you everything, but nothing less will affect your nobility.

Rising Star (Social)

You have been in the public eye for some time now and, deserved or not, other Centauri think you are on the fast track to Ascension.

Prerequisite: Centauri Noble only. Cannot possess the Ascension feat yet.

Benefit: Whenever you gain Status, its value is increased by 1. This effect stacks with any other Status modifying effects gained from feats and has the additional value of ensuring that if you ever reach full affluence, you will come under review for Ascension after keeping that Status score for a full month. Once you reach Ascension, this feat becomes a permanent 5 point increase in maximum affluence, making it +30.

Normal: Maximum Affluence is +25, and Ascension is typically a Games Master decision that may or may not occur when a character reaches the maximum affluence value for the highest tier of his or her social class.

Commoner Feats

Academy Upbringing (General)

While you may not have been born into a life of luxury, early aptitude and a high learning rate have gained you the benefit of a greater than average education.

Prerequisite: Centauri Commoner only. Intelligence 15+. Wisdom 12+. 1st Level, can only be selected at Character Creation.

Benefit: You may spend your starting skill points in any skill as if it were a class skill, regardless of your chosen character class. You always treat Knowledge, Profession, and either Medical or Technical (your choice) as class skills whenever you advance in level. In order to select this feat, you have to have been raised in the Centauri Republic.

Cross-training (General)

Your in-depth academy training has left you able to perform virtually any task in the Grand Centauri Military, regardless of division.

Prerequisite: Branch Specialisation Class Feature.

Benefit: You gain a basic familiarity with all three divisions of the Centauri military. In addition to the benefits of your chosen Branch Specialisation, you also gain two of the bonuses listed below. You do not gain the bonus associated with the branch you have already chosen.

Fleet – You only suffer a minor penalty when dealing with spacecraft without the Spacecraft Proficiency feat. Instead of a -4, you only operate at a -2 penalty to all Pilot checks. You also take only 3/4 the usual time to perform any action with the Computer Use skill.

Ground Force – You gain either Weapon Proficiency (rifle) or Weapon Proficiency (heavy weapons); this choice must be made immediately and cannot be changed afterward.

Pilot – Having gained a basic education in both the controls and weapon systems of most fighter craft, you only suffer a -2 penalty when using spacecraft weapons or when making Pilot checks while operating a Huge or smaller spacecraft.

Family Sponsor (Social)

Your family has at some point in its history attracted a noble sponsor from one of the High Houses. This is a lot of responsibility for you at times, but it can have its advantages.

Prerequisite: Centauri Commoner only.

Benefit: This feat brings with it three important benefits. You may purchase Noble Centauri feats without needing to meet the Noble requirement. You have the maximum Status score of a low tier Noble, but you do not actually qualify as one and any increase in your own tier will not affect this upper limit. Lastly, if you ever achieve full Affluence while at the high tier for a Commoner and manage to keep it at that level for a full game month, you automatically advance to the bottom tier of nobility. Once this occurs, this feat becomes a +1 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based attribute and skill checks when dealing with other Centauri commoners.

Military Tradition (General)

For generations, your family has served with distinction in the military. Even if you do not have any rank in the Armed Forces, your childhood has served as a form of basic training.

Prerequisite: Centauri Commoner only.

Benefit: Your long association with the military runs deep and it has affected your childhood in many ways. Even if your character features do not include training with melee and rifle weapons. If you have levels in a class that offers these proficiencies, you may take Weapon Focus in a weapon of their type even if you do not meet its other prerequisites. You also get a +2 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based attributes and skill checks when dealing with members of the Grand Centauri Military.

Well Trained (General)

You have benefited from the Centauri educational system and its emphasis on ensuring that the common class of their society has access to the finest vocational skills in the galaxy.

Prerequisite: Centauri Commoner only.

Benefit: Any single Profession skill and any one other skill of your choice become class skills for you regardless of the normal class skill list for your chosen character class. You may always Take 10 on skill checks involving these two skills regardless of distractions or other circumstances that would normally deny you the opportunity.

Veracity (General)

The nobles and slaves of Centauri culture both assume that the commoner class of their race is an honest, hard working group. While commoners can be just as ambitious as any other Centauri, it always seems to surprise them when a commoner does something deceitful to get ahead.

Prerequisite: Centauri Commoners only.

Benefit: You have the ability to tell lies to other members of your race and have them taken at face value for no other reason than nobles assume you have no reason to lie and slaves do not dare to question you. This reaction works to your benefit even more than it does for other commoners. You get a +5 circumstance bonus on all Bluff checks

involving noble or slave Centauri as long as your social rank has been made clear to them.

Slave Feats

Extreme Endurance (General)

You have worked so hard for so long, the idea of getting tired never has a chance to occur. You can keep up your maximum effort long after others would collapse from exhaustion.

Prerequisite: Centauri Slave only. Endurance. Constitution 15+.

Benefit: You can ignore any penalties associated with the first four days of sleep deprivations and any Fortitude saving throws you need to make to avoid the effects of exposure, adverse conditions or exhaustion gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus. Your endurance also has the benefit of keeping you healthy when you would otherwise succumb to disease or toxins. You gain a +1 to all Fortitude saving throws against these ailments.

Freed (Slave)

You have been freed of your slave status in the sense that you are no longer owned or commanded by another Centauri. You technically have the status of a commoner, but you are still in many ways treated like a slave.

Prerequisite: Centauri Slave only.

Benefit: You have the Status maximum value of a low tier commoner, but your minimum value is that of a high tier slave. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based attribute and skill checks when dealing with other slaves of any status because of your example as 'someone who made it', but other Centauri (nobles and commoners) impose a -1 circumstance penalty in the same instances. You may also choose either a +1 competence bonus to any one skill of your choice or 500 additional starting credits.

House (Slave)

Either because of your personal skills or through family history, you have been given the luxury of serving a noble or commoner house.

Prerequisite: Centauri Slave only.

Benefit: As a house slave, you have the advantage of drawing on household resources for your personal use within limits. When making status purchases, you may treat your Status score as 10 points higher than it is. You also gain a +1 competence bonus to any two Charisma or Wisdom-based skills of your choice.

Invisible (Social)

Centauri ignore slaves when they do not need them for some task. You have practised the art of being 'furniture' so long, you can effectively become invisible where your people are concerned.

Prerequisite: Centauri Slave only.

Benefit: As long as you are dressed appropriately for the place you are in and do not speak, you can move around freely a Centauri planet at any speed without drawing attention by making a Hide skill check at no penalties. This special use of Hide is opposed by the Spot check of any observers, but all Centauri commoners and nobles suffer a -5 to their checks because of their societal tendency to ignore slaves in the background. A Slave's Status score – 10 points acts as a modifier to this Hide check and can be a penalty or bonus depending on the result.

Labour (Slave)

As a slave of labour, you have been inured to hard work, punishment and long hours. Your status is nearly as low as a Centauri can get, but you have been hardened by the experience.

Prerequisite: Centauri Slave only.

Benefit: You have virtually no ability to use what little status you possess. When attempting to use Status for any reason (including crest to the next tier), you only have a 50% chance of doing so successfully and may only try to crest to the next tier once a game year. You also gain either the Endurance feat or begin play with maximum hit points +1.

Task Mastery (General)

You have been doing the same thing for so long, you have developed a talent for that particular job. Your work is always above average and sometimes exceptional beyond your years.

Prerequisite: Centauri Slave only. 4+ ranks in a qualifying skill; see below.

Benefit: You may choose any one Knowledge, Profession or Technical skill you possess at least 4 ranks in. When using this skill, you gain a +1 competence bonus and can Take 10 or Take 20 regardless of distractions or other circumstances. If you have Skill Focus in the chosen skill as well, this bonus stacks and the time it takes to Take 20 is halved for you.

Centauri Prestige Classes

The society of the Centauri is a very specialised and regimented one. Every member of the Republic knows their place and is trained from birth in some cases to fulfil that role. When a slave is born, he begins a life that prepares him to function as a slave. Soldiers become soldiers for decades, as the Centauri have much longer lifespans than humans and can afford to dedicate such time to a single pursuit. Even nobles specialise themselves; members of the High Houses act and are educated quite differently than other nobles of lesser station.

This level of roles and qualified lifestyles lends itself easily to identifiable careers and vocational paths for the Centauri. For example, Loduro Varga may be a member of a High House and the grandson of its patriarch, but his is also an Admiral in the Grand Centauri Military's Gold Fleet. Though his social rank is greater in technical importance to his service with the military, he is typically thought of as Admiral Varga first and everything else second.

This is not always true for all Centauri. High born nobles who enter the Centaurum are almost always referred to by their rank in that government body instead of any positions or vocation held previously. In essence, the Centauri are a status-conscious people who tend to define their peers by their most important social attribute. If rank in the military is the best the person has aspired to, he is referred to in this way. If he once held a rank but is now an ambassador or Minister in the government, this new role trumps his previous service and becomes in effect who he *is*.

Because of this trait in the Centauri mindset, the typical game rule of individuals never really being called by the names of their classes or prestige classes does not automatically apply. A Royal Guard or Imperial Telepath might well be referred to as such prior to or instead of using their actual names. This practice is very common in the Republic, especially when dealing with commoners or slaves who have managed to accomplish some impressive position by way of employment or rank but is otherwise unremarkable by birth.

Auturo Marcasus

The Centauri who pilot the Grand Military Fleet's sleek starfighters are elite warriors with cannons for weapons and hull plating for armour. They are a noble, stellar form of cavalry knights in the Republic; riders amid the stars with engines of destruction for steeds. They are romantic figures among their own people and feared opponents for any other fleet in the galaxy. Even the Minbari warrior caste's pilots begrudgingly acknowledge the skill of Centauri pilots and quietly appreciate their technological superiority over them.

The Auturo Marcasus are the elite of the elite, a cadre of special pilots with the best kill ratios and the finest equipment the Fleet has to offer. They have received the best training, the most glory and the admiration of billions. When they are not flying between the fire blossoms of their enemies' sundered vessels, they are treated as a form of royalty in the military. Every ship with a hanger has a special suite of rooms set aside for the Auturo Marcasus when it is blessed with their presence.

All of this special treatment comes at a price; the Auturo Marcasus are expected to lead every fighter wing in any assault, the more dangerous the better. This means that only the best can ever expect to see retirement. Most die as they live, in a flash of light and thunder. The Auturo Marcasus would have it no other way. For them, the day begins and ends with their beloved fighter craft and the thrill of deadly combat – nothing else matters.

Requirements

To qualify to become a pilot of the Auturo Marcasus, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Race: Centauri.
Special: Must have at least one level in the Officer character class.
Skills: Concentration 7+, Pilot 10+.
Feats: Dogfighter, Evasive Action, Vehicle Combat, Vehicle Dodge.
Base Attack: 5+.

Class Skills

The Auturo Marcasus' class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Medical (Wis), Pilot (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Technical (any) (Int).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Auturo Marcasus prestige class.

To The Edge: When an Auturo Marcasus is in combat, they will do anything to get an advantage on their opponents. They will even drive themselves to the end of their endurance and pass out performing a high G manoeuvre, trusting to their auto-pilots and their recovery time to pull them out of trouble before their foes can counter their spectacular moves.

The Auturo Marcasus

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+1	+2	+0	To The Edge, Ace +1
2	+2	+2	+3	+0	Rhythm of the Stars
3	+3	+2	+3	+1	Fighter-Prince, Ace +2
4	+4	+2	+4	+1	Master Dodge
5	+5	+3	+4	+1	Flight Leader, Ace +3

Whenever an Auturo Marcasus suffers unconsciousness or stunning for any reason aside from normal sleep, they only endure half the normal duration and can make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to suffer only the minimum duration possible.

An Auturo Marcasus is also assigned a specific fighter that is attuned to them alone. No other pilot can operate the fighter without making a Technical (electronics) check (DC 22) to override its command codes. This special fighter has a special enhancement bonus of +1 to its Defence Value, Acceleration, Deceleration and Handling attributes. Its auto-pilot is also modified; the craft retains the benefit of its pilot's Vehicle Dodge feat even if the Auturo Marcasus is unconscious.

Ace: The Auturo Marcasus lives and breathes fighter combat to the point of near-monomania. This focus is a powerful driving force in the pilot's skills. The Ace class feature adds its bonus to any Pilot checks made for manoeuvres when piloting a Huge or smaller spacecraft. At 1st level, this is a +1 competence bonus. It improves to +2 at 3rd level and +3 at 5th level. The Ace bonus is also subtracted from the penalty normally sustained against a pilot firing weapons from a moving vehicle. This bonus stacks with the Fire Control feat.

Rhythm of the Stars: The order Marcasus has a nearly religious belief in the divinity of the heavens and teaches its member pilots to 'listen to the stars' while fighting in space. The truth of this matter is up for debate, but the near-prescience that many Auturo Marcasus show in combat cannot be argued. Whenever an Auturo Marcasus of 2nd level or higher is flying a Huge or smaller spacecraft, he cannot lose his action during a surprise round and can always act normally. This does not necessarily give him the first action in a round, but he can make a normal Initiative check without penalties.

Fighter-Prince: The order Marcasus and its members are considered a high form of social status all unto themselves. While actively serving, an Auturo Marcasus cannot fail a Status check when it is made for military purposes or to purchase military grade weapons and equipment. Once retired, this level of authority fades, but it remains strong enough to provide a +10 virtual increase to the Auturo Marcasus' true Status score. This increase has no effect on tier minimum and maximums; it only acts to make Status checks easier and comparative Status values higher than normal.

Master Dodge: The Auturo Marcasus is used to being outnumbered in combat and quickly learns to react to the shifting conditions of enemy fire all around him. The +1 Defence Value bonus granted from the Vehicle Dodge feat increases to +2 against any one designated target and now applies as a +1 bonus against any other threat as a general increase to the vehicle's DV.

Flight Leader: Auturo Marcasus pilots are expected to fly in front of massive fleets of fighters and lead them into battle despite any odds and in the face of even suicidal danger. The only way to survive such expeditions is to become a good leader and marshal one's wingmen effectively. Whenever a Flight Leader is part of a six member or greater formation of Huge or smaller spaceships, every vessel in the formation (including the Auturo Marcasus) gains a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls for the duration of the combat. Because of the loyalty and fervour that the Auturo Marcasus inspires, this bonus increases to +3 if he is killed during the engagement and lasts until the last man in the formation is destroyed.

Centaurum Royal Guard

The Centaurum Royal Guard serve the Emperor of the Centauri Republic in many different ways, acting in any role from bodyguard to elite trooper on the front lines of battle to an expedient assassination in the dark if such is the Emperor's will. The temperament of these finest members of the Centaurum largely depends on the personality of the Emperor during their service, though certain facets of their training and skills have remained the same for generations. Since the glorious days of the old Republic, when the Centauri stretched forth their hand and saw it close around a hundred star systems, the Centaurum Royal Guards have been the proud arm supporting that grasp.

Each Centaurum Royal Guard is one of the greatest assets of the Imperial Court and none are spent lightly. In exchange for their expensive training and exquisite arms of

service, the Royal Guard swears a life long oath under the administration of telepathy to forever uphold the will of the Emperor. As such, they can never be bought or bribed and will never yield to any force that could turn them against the recognised regent of the Centauri people, no matter who sits on the throne. This loyalty is absolute, which can be a grave detriment to the Guards in service when someone wishes to move against the Emperor. More often than not, Royal Guards in the way have to be eliminated during the course of this ambition.

The Royal Guard of the Centaurum have a great deal of cross training, allowing them to serve on starships, in ground vehicles, as escorts and warriors and even as diplomats on the rare occasions when a Centauri noble is not present to act in that capacity. As such, their value is not lost on others of their kind and members of alien races with any cause to recognise their station. The authority they wield as the right hands of the Emperor often places them in positions of command, although they do not technically hold any rank in the Centauri military unless they held one prior to they appointment to the Royal Guard.

Additional Hit Points: 2.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Centauri Royal Guard, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Ability Scores: Every ability score must be 12+, making Centaurum Royal Guards some of the finest examples of the race in all physical and mental respects.
Race: Only Centauri can become Centaurum Royal Guards.
Skills: Concentration 5 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks, Intimidate 7 ranks, Pilot 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks.
Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Harm's Way.
Special: Centaurum Royal Guards are appointed by the Emperor directly, though political manoeuvring and currying favours among the nobility on Centauri Prime can go a long way towards being noticed for such an honour. The Games Master must approve every level of this prestige class, including the first one, as the Emperor is also personally responsible for his Guards receiving the honour of additional training throughout their career.
Special: Because one of the requirements of this class is a telepathic binding to the will of the Emperor, it is a security risk for any members of the Royal Guard to be telepathic themselves. As such, only in the most extraordinary of circumstances should a telepathic Centauri to become a Centaurum Royal Guard.

Class Skills

The Centaurum Royal Guard's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Pick Pocket (Dex), Pilot (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (None), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str) and Technical (Int).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Centaurum Royal Guard prestige class.

Oath Bond: When a Centaurum Royal Guard is first taken into the service, he undergoes a one month period of psychic conditioning by court telepaths. During this time, he is conditioned to serve the Emperor unswervingly, to place the laws and edicts of the Republic above his own desires and to never act in any way against the best interests of whoever is currently acting as the regent or Emperor. This makes them immune to any form of mundane or telepathic coercion, including mind control and all manners of bribes and threats. For all intents and purposes, Centaurum are mentally incapable of turning against the Centauri Emperor for as long as they have physical control over their bodies.

Centaurum Special Training: Centaurum Royal Guards are often called upon to render service to the Emperor far from his side by acting as a liaison to military units, commercial interests or in a diplomatic capacity. Every time this feature is gained, the character gains a virtual Skill Focus feat in the prestige class skill of his choosing. This represents intensive training provided through the Royal Court and involves telepathic conditioning and a deep scan by a telepath in the service of the Centaurum.

Imperial Crescent: The first rank of honour among the Centaurum Royal Guard, the Imperial Crescent is a medallion awarded in high ceremony by the Emperor himself in recognition of the character's continued good service. Centaurum Royal Guard wearing their Imperial Crescent openly gain a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy and Intimidation checks made against non-noble born Centauri.

Chosen Duty: Each Centaurum Royal Guard has a slightly different skill set, reflecting his abilities and preference in how he serves the Emperor. Their individual talents mark them at being better suited for one form of duty or another, which naturally guides them towards different divisions of service. The first time this feature is gained at 3rd level, a

Centaurum Royal Guard can choose any one feat he meets all of the qualifications for as a bonus gained through his specialised training regimen.

At 7th level, the Centaurum Royal Guard may select any of the following class features from other professions to simulate his increased training and growing expertise in his chosen role as one of the Republic's elite: *Security Systems* (as per an Agent), *Sneak Attack +1d6* (as per an Agent), *Contact* (as per a Diplomat), *Rallying Call* (as per an Officer), *Weapons Training* (as per a Soldier) or *Covering Fire* (as per a soldier).

Purple Freedom: To keep Centaurum Royal Guard from being susceptible to any kind of leverage, including that of actions taken by his family through others blackmailing them, Imperial decree orders the purple files of the character's family permanently erased and levies a sentence of death on anyone found in possession of a copy or them or caught attempting to use information within them against any member of the Centaurum Royal Guard's relatives. This act, which effectively frees an entire family line from one of the key tools of back-stabbing and politics in the Republic, is considered a great honour and one of the most important rewards a Guard can attain.

Imperial Eagle: Centaurum Royal Guards of 6th level are honoured in a special ceremony in which a masterfully worked helmet of reinforced steel and gold plating is presented to them by the hand of the Emperor. This helmet bears the crest of the Imperial Eagle, a sign of his boundless devotion and countless acts of heroism in the service of the Republic. While the helmet has no rules significance, wearing it increases the bonus provided by the Imperial Crescent feature to +3 and extends the effect to +1 to Centauri nobles who must know begrudgingly acknowledge his growing worth to the court.

Devotion Is Its Own Reward: At 8th level, a Centaurum Royal Guard has faced great dangers, defended the Emperor numerous times and likely risked his life in the endless pursuit of glory for all Centauri. This has spread his fame and reputation across the colonies and outposts of the Centauri Republic, resulting in his name being known virtually everywhere he goes. This recognition allows him to simply request any normal services he desires while in Centauri-controlled areas and receive them for free. Once each scenario, provided the Centaurum Royal Guard is in an appropriate place to do so, he can requisition 1,000 times his Charisma modifier in any form of equipment or goods and get them free of charge. This benefit is in the name of the Emperor and can be lost if the character makes a habit of using his requisition ability for his own personal gain. However, Centauri being Centauri, a little personal gain is expected and even approved of, as long as it does not get out of hand (Games Master's discretion).

Imperial Champion: The highest honour the Emperor can bestow upon a Centaurum Royal Guard is the title of Imperial Champion. Only one Centauri at a time can hold this title and only 10th level Centaurum Royal Guard characters qualify for consideration. There may be more than one 10th level member of this prestige class, but only one can wield this distinct honour. Each Emperor has his own way of selecting an Imperial Champion, from political acumen to actual gladiatorial combat amongst all those eligible. An Emperor can strip this title from a character just as easily, but in practice this is rarely done.

An Imperial Champion cannot fail Charisma-based skill rolls against other Centauri with the sole exception of the Emperor. In addition, their requisition value for their Devotion Is Its Own Reward feature is doubled for as long as he holds the title and very few uses are considered out of line. A Centaurum Royal Guard with this distinction is expected to live large and enjoy the luxuries that his service has entitled him to.

The Centaurum Royal Guard

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+1	+1	Oath Bond, Centaurum Special Training
2	+2	+0	+2	+2	Imperial Crescent
3	+3	+1	+2	+2	Chosen Duty
4	+4	+1	+2	+2	Purple Freedom
5	+5	+1	+3	+3	Centaurum Special Training
6	+6	+2	+3	+3	Imperial Eagle
7	+7	+2	+4	+4	Chosen Duty II
8	+8	+2	+4	+4	Devotion Is Its Own Reward
9	+9	+3	+4	+4	Centaurum Special Training
10	+10	+3	+5	+5	Imperial Champion

The Koro Pridari

A warrior among warriors and a noble among the nobility, a member of the Koro Pridari is a Centauri with a great respect for the old ways of doing things in the Republic and a fighting spirit dedicated to upholding the traditions of his people. When a Pridari unsheathes his blade, those around him can attest that it will only be wielded with honour and never sheathed until the hated enemies of the Centauri lie dead at the hero's feat.

At least, that was the creed and reputation of the Koro Pridari. Centuries of history and tradition have been all but swept aside in the rush to go nowhere, the press to recline and recede into the background of the galaxy. For every member of the Koro Prido, the warrior's school dedicated to teaching the Pridari's traditions, to truly embody its noble spirit, there are a dozen who only wish to use the organisation as a stepping stone to the halls of power and their own glory. Few among the Centauri believe in the honour of their ancestors or wish to do right by their descendants.

There is still a core membership that holds to the past. These make up a large percentage of the group referred to as the Old Guard and their voices are still heard in the Centaurum. Unfortunately, they earn both halves of that epithet. While they do guard the history of the Republic, they are older in general than their less stalwart contemporaries. The youth of Centauri Prime do not crave lost honour; they want luxury. In the present, the Koro Pridari are a fading, but still stoic, dream; the Lion of the Galaxy's last true teeth.

Additional Hit Points: 2.

Requirements

To qualify to become a member of the Koro Pridari, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Race: Centauri (nobility only, though commoners with the Family Sponsor feat may also join).
Skills: Diplomacy 4+, Knowledge (history) 5+.
Feats: Weapon Focus (coutari).
Base Attack: 4+.

Class Skills

The Koro Pridari's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (any) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis) and Tumble (Int).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Koro Pridari prestige class.

Blade of Honour: All members of the Koro Pridari are presented with a gift of a masterworked coutari upon their admission into this select order. While most Centauri in the present age let this wonderful bladed weapon collect dust on a trophy rack above the hearth, it is a truly special weapon in the hands of those who stick with their training and continue to practice the art of fighting with it. Its mere possession is an honour and brings the Koro Pridari member 5 points of status upon taking their first level in this class.

If the weapon is ever stolen or broken and such a loss becomes public, the Koro Pridari loses all current affluence and drops to the minimum Status score for his social tier until it can be recovered or replaced at a cost of 2,500 credits. Recovering the coutari will regain all of the lost status, though any Affluence lost stays lost. Merely replacing the blade will restore 5 points of Status, as it does not show anything more than wealth on the part of the Koro Pridari.

Brotherhood: The Koro Pridari are a close sect whose members may not always agree on politics but remain loyal to each other if only out of self-interest. When dealing with members of the Centaurum, its Royal Guards or other members of the Koro Pridari, a 2nd level member of this class enjoys the listed bonus (+1) to any Charisma-related attribute or skill checks. At 4th level, this circumstance bonus improves to +2.

Edge of Champions: In the hands of a Kodo Pridari, the coutari can be a flashing blade of death. When wielding a coutari on one hand and nothing in the other, a Koro Pridari can execute a strike called the Dax Tumari ('the Edge of Champions'). This is a sudden lunge with a vicious back strike so quick it seems like the same attack. This is a full attack action that permits only a 5-ft. adjustment for movement. It must hit successfully as normal, but if it does, the Koro Pridari may roll damage twice as if a critical strike had been confirmed. If the Dax Tumari results in a critical normally, it automatically inflicts maximum damage, making this a hugely effective attack. Only one Dax Tumari can be attempted in any given combat against the same target.

True Dedication: With long hours in the training halls and fighting practice duels of honour, the Koro Pridari develops a superb amount of skill with the coutari. This makes him a master of the blade, granting the virtual equivalent of the feat Weapon Specialisation with a coutari as its focus. If the Koro Pridari already has this feat, he gains Improved Critical instead. If Improved Critical is already possessed or

is selected later, this class feature adds one to the final threat range of the coutari after factoring in the Improved Critical feat.

Gift of the Past: There are twelve blades that typically rest in the vaults of the Koro Prido school of coutari fighting in the Imperial City of Centauri Prime. At any given time, five or six of these weapons are in the hands of the masters of the order. At the 4th level of experience in this prestige class, a Koro Pridari has proven himself enough to be invited to do battle for the right to possess one of these fantastic blades. The details of this (generally) honourable combat are entirely up to the Games Master, but it tends to be fought as a single elimination tournament with anywhere from twelve to twenty initial contestants.

The winner of the duel is given the Gift of the Past, a masterworked coutari with a +2 inherent bonus to both attack and damage rolls. The twelve Gifts are the most treasured possessions of the Koro Prido and the Koro Pridari. The loss of one of these is socially treated exactly like the loss of the Blade of Honour, but the weapon cannot simply be replaced.

Tempered in Blood: A member of the Koro Pridari at 5th level has likely proven himself in battle a dozen times or more. He has faced many duelling opponents and walked away from them covered in blood or heralded by the cheers of spectators around a ring of honour. While he may never have fought in a true war, a 5th level Koro Pridari has undoubtably done battle in his own arenas many times over. This constant danger has forged the Centauri into a living weapon with a coutari in his hand. This class feature grants the Centauri character an additional hit point and the ability to perform a Dark Parry, a manoeuvre focused on seizing victory when all seems lost.

To use the Dark Parry, a Koro Pridari must be at 4 or fewer hit points and legitimately able to be slain by his opponent's next attack. On his turn, the Centauri can declare a Dark Parry. This prevents him from attacking but allows him to automatically deflect the next strike that would successfully hit him in melee combat. This deflect negates any effect from the attack and allows the Koro Pridari to take an immediate attack with a +5 circumstance bonus to hit on the attacker in question. This attack costs the Koro Pridari 1d4 hit points of damage due to the stress of performing it.

The Mindhawk

The Centauri treat their telepaths better than most races, but this is more from an awareness of the serious value that they represent than any concern for personal rights or dignity. Telepaths are a weapon and, in the hands of the military or the government, a very deadly one at that. The Centauri telepaths themselves are well aware of their value and use it to maintain their important place in society at every possible opportunity.

While the use of telepathy to circumvent the will of a noble is a high crime and punishable by slavery for minor incidents and death for anything serious, the common and slave classes are effectively open territory within limits. This makes life in the Centauri Republic a very affluent one for most telepaths, though men are more likely to be able to enjoy the freedoms their mental gifts provide. Female telepaths usually have traditionally empathic and precognitive abilities. While important and useful in their own right, these powers are not the sort of advantage that can lift a female Centauri out of her limited role in Republic society.

Male Centauri, on the other hand, can effectively write their own ticket anywhere they wish to travel in Centauri space. This comes at the price of nearly always being in the employ of one noble or another. This vagabond status, while useful and typically well cared for, can get tiresome. Gaining permanent employment is sometimes a preferable option, and one of the most common vocations for a male telepath (and *very* rarely, a female telepath with typically male gifts) is to join the pseudo-military ranks of the Mindhawks, a cadre of trained mental interrogation and mental combat specialists.

Additional Hit Points: 1.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Mindhawk, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

The Koro Pridari

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+1	+0	+1	Blade of Honour, Brotherhood +1
2	+2	+2	+0	+2	Edge of Champions
3	+3	+2	+1	+2	True Dedication
4	+4	+2	+1	+2	Gift of the Past, Brotherhood +2
5	+5	+3	+1	+3	Tempered in Blood

Race: Centauri (predominantly male, though an exceptional female Centauri could join under the right circumstances and given Games Master permission).
Skills: Concentration 8+, Knowledge (telepathy) 8+, Telepathy 8+.
Feats: Combat Telepath, Defensive Block, Mindshredder.
P Rating: P8 or higher.
Telepathic Powers: Deep Scan, Surface Scan, Pain.

Class Skills

The Mindhawk's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis) and Telepathy (Cha, Telepath Only).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Mindhawk prestige class.

Presence of Mind: The mind of a Mindhawk is a rigid, unyielding fortress. It does not bend to assault, nor does it give up its secrets easily. In order to rip information from the minds of others, a Mindhawk must first master his own. Once a Mindhawk starts down this path, the military training given to him begins to take shape in the form of a mindset bend on the twin combat arts of attack and defence.

Defence manifests first, providing a +2 competence bonus to all Will saves made to avoid or mitigate combat applications of telepathy (Pain, Daze and similar damaging effects) or scans. Other types of telepathic attacks, such as False Memory Implantation or Reality Fabrication, are not mitigated by this defence, as they tend to be too subtle for the Mindhawk to detect until they are too late. In all instances, the Games Master is the final arbiter on what qualifies for this Will saving throw bonus and what does not.

Inexorable Scan: Now well versed in defending himself, the Mindhawk turns to learning the real focus of his craft, manipulating the minds of others. By fuelling his telepathic abilities with the twin emotions of fear and pain, the Mindhawk lets his primal thoughts slice through the defences of another's mindscape and lays bare the secrets he needs to retrieve. By willingly suffering up to 4 points of subdual damage during a use of the Deep Scan power, the Mindhawk can impose the same amount as a penalty to the target of his telepathy.

Fearsome Psyche: A Mindhawk's imposing mental power lends a small amount of psychic reinforcement anytime he chooses to direct that force of will against someone. All Mindhawks gain a circumstance bonus to his Intimidate checks equal to his Wisdom bonus (to a minimum of +1). Whenever this bonus is used, the Mindhawk can choose to inflict this bonus as subdual damage once per round to a single target. This offensive use of Fearsome Psyche can be used as many times a day as the Mindhawk has levels in both Telepath and this prestige class.

Talons of the Mindhawk: A Mindhawk of this level of ability and experience is almost impossible to resist mentally. Trying and failing to do so can prove very painful. Whenever a target resists any use of a 4th level or higher Mindhawk's Deep Scan power, he may immediately force the subject to reroll their saving throw. This reroll of the Will save can only be forced if the initial save was successful and does not inflict damage if it fails.

Instead of this ability, a Mindhawk can choose to learn a different version of the class feature that inflicts maximum damage whenever a target fails his saving throw against a Deep Scan attempt. The choice of which version of Talons of the Mindhawk to learn must be made immediately upon gaining the 4th level of this prestige class.

Fatal Impulses: To reach this level of the Mindhawk prestige class, the Centauri must learn Nerve Stimulation and use it to kill another target in the line of duty to a military or civilian employer. This act signals to the proper authorities in the Centaurum that the Mindhawk is ready for the final step in his training. He is brought to an undisclosed location in the Republic and subjected to four months of rigorous and dangerous mental training. During this time, the Mindhawk will be unavailable for play.

When the Mindhawk returns, he has an unofficial rank of Scurata and possesses no discernible place in the normal command structure of the military as he answers only to a Culdari Primus in charge of telepathic operations for the Republic. He also possesses the deadliest power a Mindhawk can learn, the Fatal Impulse. Once a 5th level Mindhawk has inflicted at least 1 point of damage on a target with the Nerve Stimulation power, he can concentrate on that subject in successive rounds and automatically inflict 1 point of normal damage without the target receiving any way to resist the effect. This is very painful and forces the target to make a DC 15 Will saving throw each round to be able to act normally; otherwise the subject drops to the ground and writhes in helpless pain.

The Mindhawk

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Presence of Mind
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Inexorable Scan
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Fearsome Psyche
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Talons of the Mindhawk
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Fatal Impulses

The only drawback to this power is the need for the Mindhawk to be within 10-ft. of the subject and have true line of sight to maintain it. If the Mindhawk is interrupted and fails to inflict his one point of damage in a given round, the power is broken and must be re-established with a successful use of Nerve Stimulation first.

The Prophetess

Certain forms of telepathy, namely the gift of clairvoyance, are more common among Centauri females. While male Centauri can be very effective and powerful telepaths, the females of their species seem to have a predisposition for the various forms of 'sight' that the power can produce. While the most notable of these are the telepathic women trained from birth in groups to serve the Emperor directly, there is another blessing that a few rare female Centauri can manifest; prophecy.

While prophetic powers are very potent and all Centauri recognise the value inherent in any female with the gift, few seers are appreciated in their lifetimes. Prophecy rarely touches on the good things that can happen in life, centring more often on war, death and disaster. The Centauri, who normally prefer to avoid life's unpleasantries in pursuit of pleasure and personal edification, have a hard time accepting a prophetess in their midst and only those who are truly high ranking for some other reason ever achieve any kind of fame or glory. Even then, this usually comes from noble birth or a political marriage rather than from any public acclaim involving their powers.

Additional Hit Points: 1.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Prophetess, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Race: Centauri.
Gender: Female.
Skills: Concentration 6 ranks, Telepathy 8 ranks.
Feats: Ability Focus (danger sense).
P-Rating: P8 or higher.

Class Skills

The Prophetess' class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (politics) (Int), Knowledge (telepathy) (Int), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis) and Telepathy (Cha).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Prophetess prestige class.

Flashes of Tragedy: When a prophetess first begins to hone her foretelling abilities, they are still raw and unfocused. Unable to make the visions come when she wishes them, a prophetess must simply hope that fate will speak through her when it has something that needs to be said. This class ability works like Dire Fate below, but only occurs when the prophetess is touching someone, making skin to skin contact and only has a small chance of actually occurring.

Every time the prophetess touches someone in this manner, she must make a Telepathy check. The DC for this check is 5 + the Charisma bonus and the level of the character touched. If this check is failed, the prophetess immediately has a vision as described under the Dire Fate power. If the check succeeds, the prophetess does not have a vision, even if she wants to have one. This check is only made once every 24 hours per individual touched, regardless of how many times the prophetess makes contact with a given subject during that time.

Because the power of prophecy has little to do with the mind of the person been touched, the -4 penalty normally applied to Telepathy checks involving aliens does not come into play for any of the prophetess' class abilities. Also, the stress of enduring a prophetic vision inflicts 1d6 subdual damage on a prophetess, causing many of them to faint from the exertion forced upon them by their new-found powers.

Dire Fate: The core of a prophetess' powers, Dire Fate is the glimpse she can make into a subject's future. When Dire Fate is gained at the 2nd level of the prophetess prestige class, it becomes controllable enough for her to actively use. This

is a different check from that of Flashes of Tragedy, which must still be rolled for every time a prophetess makes contact with a living, sentient being. When a prophetess willingly uses Dire Fate, she touches the subject with both hands and meditates for five full minutes. Both the prophetess and the subject must remain perfectly still during this time. Any loss of contact or verbal communication will ruin the attempt and force the prophetess to begin again.

This power requires a great deal of forethought on the Games Master's part, as the true fate of any Player Character or Non-Player Character is typically undecided and only come out during game play. The Games Master is encouraged to be vague and imprecise with anything this power can reveal, leaving both seer and subject to wonder what the meaning of the vision might be. At the same time, this power should in some way be useful, offering at least a valuable clue how the subject might avoid some upcoming disaster or prepare for a campaign plotline about to emerge.

Avoidance: As a side effect of the prophetess' emerging precognition, she is rarely ever in danger. This Avoidance is not generally under the seer's control, occurring at a subconscious level. The prophetess simply chooses to avoid a certain section of the floor, not actually knowing that it has been weakened by age and will collapse. This is treated as a +1 circumstance bonus added to all saving throws the prophetess must make and a variation of the Harm's Way feat.

If an allied or neutral character is within 5-ft. of the prophetess when a ranged attack would strike her successfully, there is a 50% chance that character will take the blow instead. This ability is also constant and not under the control of the prophetess. This particular quirk of the power of prophecy among Centauri women has rightfully given them a reputation for not being safe to be near. Unlike her other powers, this one does not inflict subdual damage on the prophetess when it comes into play.

Divinations: Eventually, the constant exposure to fate and the destinies of others opens a prophetess' eyes to the future in a way that focuses on places and events as well as people. Once a prophetess gets the power of Divinations, she no longer needs to make contact with a person to get visions. Once per day, she can choose to divine a prophecy involving a person, place or object, even if the subject of her ability is light years away. This power requires a Telepathy check as with Dire Fate, but the DC is s set value as determined by the following chart:

Subject is ...	DC
a living or recently deceased being	15
a physical location (planet, city, starship)	20
an object (royal jewels, weapon, clothing)	25
associated with the prophetess in some way (subject involves the Centauri, has been held by her in the past, the prophecy involves her in some way)	-5
involved in epic or extremely sweeping events (a war, a plague or a turning point in history)	-5
only known to the prophetess by a name or a written or verbal description	+5

True Seer: The height of the prophetic arts, the power of a True Seer is incredible and terrifying to behold. While a prophetess at this level can still accidentally read the future of someone she touches, the chance of doing so becomes very slim due to the increased control over her skills. Any time a failed Telepathy check would result in an accidental reading, she may choose to reroll the check to avoid doing so.

In addition to this, a 5th level prophetess becomes immune to the subdual damage normally associated with her powers. Divination is still somewhat draining, inflicting 1 point of subdual damage, but Dire Fate and Flashes of Tragedy can be used freely. These powers are also considerably clearer for a True Seer to use, allowing her to get a better idea of what her visions mean. This is still under the Games Master's control, but the clues given by any prophecy made by a True Seer should be somewhat easier to interpret. They may be vague and confusing, but a True Seer's prophecy can be a powerful glimpse of the future.

The last advantage given by this level of power is an additional +1 to saving throws as granted by the Avoidance class feature, for a total circumstance bonus of +2 to any saving throw the prophetess might have to make.

The Prophetess

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Flashes of Tragedy
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Dire Fate
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Avoidance
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Divinations
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	True Seer

Centauri Campaigns

The Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game can accommodate a lot of different scenarios, but integrating the social dynamics and often ruthless politics of the Centauri can be a difficult thing to arrange in a game involving Players of other races. While a single Centauri player might desperately wish to have some in-depth courtly interaction at every turn in the campaign, this is likely to bore Players of other races to tears and worse yet, ostracise them from the game.

As such, putting some of the cultural flavour of the Centauri into a game with mixed racial types can be a serious challenge. On the one hand, the Centauri have a vibrant history and using their politics and culture in the game is a definite temptation, especially for any Games Master looking to make their campaigns come alive. On the other hand, the Centauri cannot be allowed to dominate every aspect of the game to the exclusion of others; this is very possible given the depth of material a Games Master now has to work with.

The keys to incorporating Centauri into an existing or mixed campaign are moderation, interweaving and ensuring that all the characters have at least one shared or similar goal. As long as the game is structured so that every Player has the ability to further their own motivations in a way that makes them feel like part of the action and not just a minor character, the balance in the campaign should be just about right.

Moderation

Any plot device, even if it is clever, well structured and original, will get old if it is used too often in a short amount of time. While the idea of having the Centauri Player act as a representative in the Imperial Court for the space of a single scenario might be very exciting, it will lose its impact if that is all he ever does. To make these scenes vital and interesting, they need to be interspersed with other tasks and roles. The main characters in Babylon 5 are a prime example; while Londo Mollari, started out as an ambassador, his role in the 'campaign' of the television show changed drastically as its story arc goes on.

Moderation is also a important lesson for any Games Master to learn when dealing with the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game, as it is instrumental in maintaining the proper flow of play. Very rarely did a given scene in the show last longer than five minutes; the action was constantly changing perspectives to tell a more complete story. This has bearing when dealing with Centauri as well. When a Centauri Player is in the game, their focus should never remain constant for long. While they may be specialised toward a single task, even that will become boring after a while.

To make the game more exciting, the Games Master should be sure to vary what happens where the Centauri is concerned. If they are fleeing an arranged marriage, it should not always dominate the plotline of the game. First, the other characters are likely only peripherally involved with that plot. Second, the background plot will only stay interesting if used sparsely. An agent of the Centauri's house or interested parties should only show up occasionally. When they do, they will be an interesting diversion from the main campaign story line.

Moderation is a tool that Games Masters use to ensure that nothing is ever used to the point of overexposure. By using Centauri based plots sparingly, the campaign is improved and no one character is either too heavily favoured or overlooked. It is perfect for making sure that the Centauri Player feels like a Centauri player while

allowing all of the other races in the game to maintain their own identities and places within the plot.

Interweaving

As mentioned earlier, few scenes in the Babylon 5 show ever lasted more than five minutes. When they did change, it was most often to a different set of characters in a different location. This technique, alternately called fading and wiping, can be used to allow Players to be in completely different places in the campaign yet play 'together' in a single session. Balanced properly, interweaving lets a Centauri character be back on Centauri Prime while leaving others in the game free to pursue their own goals.

Interweaving is a very useful tool for keeping Narn and Centauri Players in the same game without forcing the Games Master to come up with artificial reasons why the former enemies could blithely walk around together in the Centauri Republic without the former being imprisoned or shot. While interweaving can be a great deal of work for the Games Master, it is a powerful tool when used properly and should always be kept in mind.

To interweave characters in a campaign, the Games Master simply allows each one to set their own goals and then to deal with them. The Games Master divides the available play time into five to fifteen minute sections and moves around the group, letting each Player run their character for that amount of time before going on to the next. At first, this technique might seem a little awkward, but after a while, practice will allow the sections to become smooth and effective. Interweaving can make a game session feel a great deal more like an actual episode of Babylon 5.

When used in conjunction with Centauri Players, this allows the Games Master to create intricate court intrigue or even military campaigns that take place over several game sessions (which could also be considered 'episodes') without interrupting the game play for others. The level of depth and character development that interweaving can facilitate is sure to provide new depths to any campaign.

Interweaving should only be incorporated, however, if the campaign supports the technique so well that it can become the standard method game play. There are times when a party format of all the characters together in a given scene makes more sense for a roleplaying game and should be used when appropriate. While matching the game to the format of the Babylon 5 television show is a good thing and can greatly enhance the mood and feel of a campaign, it may not always provide the same level of interaction that lies at the heart of a gaming session. As with any new technique, it should only be used to the extent with which any group is comfortable with its implementation.

Similar Goals

With so much happening in the Babylon 5 universe and so many different types of characters within it, it can be difficult to tie a common thread through the various characters in a given campaign. While interweaving can allow a gaming group to pursue their own goals indefinitely, there will likely be a need to bring their characters together for large parts of the campaign as well. The Games Master can accomplish this very easily by ensuring that at some level all of the characters share some common interest or goal.

Science fiction is replete with examples of this in action. Many stories involve different types of characters and aliens banded together not out of mutual friendship (at least at first) but because their motivations all lie along the same track. In this way, one might be able to get a smuggler, a farm boy and an ancient war hero onto the

same ship or mortal enemies on either side of an alien war to work tirelessly defending the same space station.

Sometimes similar goals do not have to be mutually inclusive, but they can still serve the purpose of banding characters together. Mollari and G'Kar have entirely different reasons for wanting Babylon 5 preserved, but they still serve the same end, whether they work either together or not. Similar goals may not even seem similar to the characters involved, but they always have the advantage of a predictable end. Games Masters can use goals and motivations to ensure both the Players and their characters come together and stay together for at least as long as it takes for their interests to be fulfilled.

The most important thing to keep in mind about Centauri and similar goals is that the Republic has its own way of doing things. This methodology may make some unable to serve directly in support of the goal, but they can still take a support or background role when it comes to Centauri politics or its military. While G'Kar was instrumental in helping Londo Mollari deal with the political thorn in his side that was Lord Refa, he did so brilliantly, but in an underhanded, secretive way.

This counterpoints the problem and the opportunity with using Centauri in a campaign. They are rarely bullish combatants, though they are certainly capable of being such. They do things more quietly, more subtly but no less effectively. Their goals do not tend to be of interest to other races. After all, the rise of the Centauri empire can really only come at the expense on other species, so most characters will be inclined to thwart these aspirations.

As long as the goals are personal rather than epic in scope, a Centauri Player can find strong allies in others and can support them in the same fashion. A Centauri merchant is a prime example of someone with Centauri attitudes but is likely more interested in maintaining the goals of his company than his country. A Centauri mercenary could hire himself out to another character or their joint interests and never come into conflict of galactic ideologies. The key to selecting and maintaining similar goals is making certain they appeal to at least a majority of the Players if not all of them.

Centauri Campaign Ideas

Of course, all of the advice above is only needed if there are a significant number of mixed races in the game. If the campaign is predominantly or entirely Centauri, a number of other options present themselves. An all Centauri campaign can be an interesting and intricate affair, with court politics, family infighting and all of the labyrinthine manoeuvring between Players and Games Master controlled characters that such a plotline suggests.

There are a number of different basic campaign types that could be generated with the simple premise of Centauri characters and a selected era. While many of these should at least touch on the events of the Babylon 5 television show, not all of them have to be even peripherally involved with that subject matter. The universe of Babylon 5 is a vast one and between stories set along the outer rim and in the depths of unexplored space, any number of stories could be told. The following are campaign seeds that Games Masters may wish to use for background material in their own sagas.

Imperial Matters: The most obvious campaign involving Centauri characters is probably one centred on the Royal Court. In a campaign like this, which can be much harder to run and keep exciting than it sounds, the Players take the roles of various diplomats attached to or serving the Court in a direct or ancillary fashion. While the diplomat character class will be the most obvious choice for this kind of campaign, it is certainly not the only one. Scientists, officers, agents and even workers in the form of slaves can all serve their own unique roles in an Imperial campaign.

As a variant on this idea, the Centauri could all be remotely associated with the main Imperial Court through a supplemental capitol on one of the other Centauri worlds. In this scenario setting, the Centauri Players might actually be the primary government of the planet, ruling it with only the Emperor and the Centaurum to answer to during crisis.

The Pride of a Lion: The Centauri Empire is set to either rise again or fade forever into the glories of the distant past. This campaign setting would set the Players as key figures in this era of history with each one uniquely empowered to either help the Republic ascend or fall once more. Officer and soldier classes will be very effective in this sort of setting, though other classes such as diplomat could also be helpful. The Rise or Fall of Centauri Prime could be facilitated through both weapons and treaties, so both will likely figure very heavily in such a campaign.

A purely military variant of this campaign could make for some very exciting roleplay and provide a lot of action in the process. By giving each of the Players a position of authority and rank in one of the Centauri fleets, either in the same capital ship or over different fleet elements, they

can take command and guide their resources to victory or defeat amid the stars.

A diplomatic and/or espionage variant is also available. In this variation, battles take a back seat to the real action in war; negotiations and debates over where conflicts will occur, what forms of surrender to accept and how best to secure victory for the Republic and glory for all Centauri. Depending on the preferred style of play, this campaign could be mostly discussion and diplomacy or the darker side of politics with agents scurrying to secure information and strike at the vulnerabilities of others.

Winds of Change: Like the Pride of a Lion campaign, this story arc is set in the changing times of the Centauri. Unlike that campaign idea, this one does not involve driving the changes so much as merely surviving them. With a less active and more reactive story basis, the Centauri Players all have to find ways to cope with the major events of the galaxy and how they affect them personally. This kind of campaign can accommodate any sort of Player, from scientists struggling to generate new technologies to telepaths constantly on the move to survive the growing need for their kind on the battlefields of the Republic.

This is the perfect setting for a Centauri merchant or family campaign, especially on a border world of the Republic or a merchant vessel. With goals no more complicated than survival and success in their chosen field of expertise, these Centauri characters can have innumerable adventures just trying to deal with an empire gone mad.

Retribution and Restoration: Almost purely a military campaign in every sense of the word, the Narn/Centauri War and the Republic's other great conflicts are a rich source of campaign ideas. By allowing Centauri Players to take part in the battles of the past or inventing new wars of the future, the Games Master can sustain a high level of excitement and enthusiasm while maintaining a single, consistent plotline.

This idea also allows the Players and the Games Master to explore the moral quandaries that surround the concepts of war and destruction. By making the Players consider the ethical problem of using mass drivers on Narn or massacring thousands of women and children as a 'lesson' to unruly slaves, the Games Master can bring the difficult personal choices of the game alive for them and make the campaign that much more *real*.

Atypical Centauri Campaign Ideas

The Centauri have many racial stereotypes that lend themselves well to plotting campaigns around them- politics, debauchery, their empire and its fleets, to name but a few. Sometimes, a Games Master might want to break out of this useful but vaguely confining mould and run something a little different for the Players. Maybe they are not well suited to a political game or the prospect of fighting space battles for the glory of the Republic does not appeal to them. Maybe they just want something out of the ordinary.

Whatever the reason, the Centauri are a complex enough race with a rich and vibrant past; there is more than enough material within the pages of this book to begin countless campaigns and keep the action different every session. Story arcs can come from the smallest and most unlikely of places, as long as a Games Master is willing to put the work into developing them and the Players are willing to see what might seem like a very basic premise through to its conclusion.

The base concept that a Games Master must remember when running an atypical campaign is that everything big begins with something small. Even the tiniest throwaway line in a Babylon 5 episode could be the basis for a scenario, a story arc or even an entire campaign. Do not discard anything just became it seems like something too far fetched or thin to make for a good game. Even the Babylon 5 epic itself began with nothing more than a case of selective amnesia and a failed assassination plot.

Blinded by Science: One of the most dependable interests of the Centauri is their desire to understand the science of others and improve upon it in a constant effort to be that much better than any other race in the galaxy. That has proven rather difficult with the Minbari, but that does not mean the Centauri scientists, including the ones genetically engineered to be some of the finest researchers and inventors in the galaxy, have stopped trying. In a campaign of this sort, the Centauri Players are part of a scientific collective funded by the Royal Court with a mission to improve upon the technologies of the Republic.

Each different type of research or science becomes its own variant of this campaign type. The most interesting one of them might be a group of scientists, workers (slaves or commoners) and even soldiers assigned to guard them on an extended mission to capture or purchase Minbari equipment and discover its secrets. This is, as it implies, a very dangerous mandate and therein lies the crux of the campaign and its inherent conflict and excitement.

Spectres of the Past: The Centauri have made many enemies in the long reign of the Republic, most of that lie extinct in the sands of time. For an interesting and unusual campaign, some of these races might not be as extinct as the Centauri believe. The Shadows moved through many worlds for millennia before the first Centauri considered crawling out of his cave and the number of races that might have been saved are uncountable. If one or more of these species were to suddenly appear with advanced technology on a mission of vengeance, the Republic itself would have reason to tremble.

Of course, the Shadows do not have to be involved at all in this kind of plotline. A few escaped members of any race, even the Xon, and the troubles of the Centauri could begin anew. If the Xon have been living in secret, perhaps underground and have remained hidden from the Centauri for centuries, they might unleash a terrible invading force without warning. If the Centauri Players discover them and their plots before they can come to fruition, a campaign is sure to follow.

As an even more unusual variant, the campaign could simply take place in the distant past during one of the Centauri's ancient wars. Fighting the Xon attacks or dealing with the invasion of the Shoggren could make for a fascinating campaign idea, especially if the action then shifted to the descendants of those characters in the 'present day' Republic having to deal with the variant listed above.

Agents of Unrest: Wherever there are loyal members of the Republic, there are also those who would sell their loyalties to the highest bidder. There are also Centauri who, for reasons of ideology or personal motivation, do not agree with the expansionistic dreams of their fellows and would rather see their people turn away from the paths of conquest. This may be for morality's sake or simply because they see war as expensive and costly. In any case, a 'disloyal' Centauri campaign with conspiracies and quiet contacts in the shadows can be a very interesting one to play.

Because the Centauri have many fronts on which it could have detractors, each focus could be its own variant campaign. Imagine a squad of Centauri warriors assigned to the purge of the Narn Homeworld and horrified by the suffering they see there. They could become a group of Centauri-backed resistance fighters intent on the creation of a free Narn homeworld.

The Centauri of Babylon 5

Each member of the Centauri race is distinctively different while all still fitting into the mould of their people. Vir Cotto and Lord Refa might be drastically different people, but even they exhibit the same character traits under stress or when they must accomplish their goals. Both resorted to political manipulations to ensure that their agendas were pushed forward rather than resorting to violence. Refa did it by luring a high ranking court official to Babylon 5 in order to discredit Mollari, while Vir falsified documents and work orders to free more than two thousand Narn while stationed on Minbar.

In the sense of the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game, Centauri are manipulators and subtle movers, but quick to act when threatened. They can be used as valuable political contacts and can serve as the perfect foils for anyone looking to accomplish a task involving bureaucracy or diplomatic double dealing. Their skill at interpersonal interactions and social influence can make them ideally suited for a given plot element or problem in a campaign.

Centauri get along well with virtually any race, though their long history of conquest strains these relationships at times. The Centauri can be effective in many roles; combat, diplomatic or otherwise. There is little they cannot handle and what they are ill equipped to do themselves, they can usually manoeuvre someone else into doing for them.

Centauri Non-Player Characters

If a Games Master is going to use this book as a window of opportunity to place more of a Centauri influence on their campaign, it may be valuable to have a listing of noteworthy characters of the Centauri race at his fingertips. These characters are people who have been instrumental in the history of the Centauri in one way or another. While only a limited number of them are listed here, there are many more that deserve mention. Games Masters are encouraged to generate statistics for any notable Centauri he desires to bring into his story arcs.

In addition to 'named' Centauri, this chapter also provides a selection of basic Centuari Non-Player Characters for those times when a Centauri might be important to the plot and the Games Master has no time to create an entire character for the purpose of a single scene. These Non-Player Characters can also be useful if a Player wishes to make a Centauri for the campaign but does not wish to go through the entire character creation process.

Interrogation Telepath

2nd Level Centauri Telepath P8; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; DV 10; +0 melee, +1 ranged; SQ Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +0, Ref +0, Wis +4; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17
Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Computer Use +4, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (telepathy) +6, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5, Telepathy +8; Ability Focus (surface scan), Meditation
Powers: Accidental Scan, Mind Shield, Sense Telepathy, Warning, Surface Scan

Dock Worker

3rd Level Centauri Worker (blue collar); hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +3 melee, +2 ranged; SQ Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +4, Ref +2, Wis +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 12
Skills and Feats: Bluff +1, Climb +8, Computer Use +4, Concentration +5, Drive +7, Jump +8, Listen +1, Profession (dock worker) +9, Spot +1, Technical +6; Endurance, Skill Focus (Profession (dock worker)), Toughness

Lurker

2nd Level Centauri Lurker; hp 10; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; DV 14; +2 melee, +3 ranged; SQ Lurker's Knowledge, Survivor's Luck, Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +4, Ref +4, Wis -1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 12
Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +3, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Move Silently +6, Pick Pocket +6, Search +3, Survival +4; Lightning Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Merchant Trader

1st Level Centauri Worker (white collar); hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; DV 10; +0 melee, +0 ranged; SQ Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +1, Ref +0, Wis +2; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Bluff +9, Computer Use +3, Diplomacy +4, Forgery +2, Intimidate +5, Profession (trader) +8, Sense Motive +8; Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (profession (trader)

Researcher

2nd Level Centauri Scientist; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; DV 10; +0 melee, +1 ranged; SQ Primary Area of Study (technical), Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +0, Ref +0, Wis +4; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 12
Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Computer Use +7, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (alien culture) +6, Knowledge (alien technology) +4, Medical +6, Profession (researcher) +6, Sense Motive + 5, Spot +5, Technical (electronics) +9; Data Access, Nerves of Steel
Possessions: First Aid Kit, Hand Computer, Toolkit (advanced)

Soldier/Guard

3rd Level Centauri Soldier; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +5 melee, +4 ranged; SQ Covering Fire, Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +4, Ref +2, Wis +0; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills and Feats: Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Spot +1, Sense Motive +1; Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (PPG), Weapon Focus (shock stick), Precise Shot
Possessions: Kurago PPG, shock stick

Commoner Thug

4th Level Centauri Lurker; hp 15; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +4 melee, +4 ranged; SQ Lurker's Knowledge, Multi-Skilled, Survivor's Luck, Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +7, Ref +2, Wis +0; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 12
Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Computer Use +3, Concentration +4, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Pick Pocket +4, Sense

Motive +4, Spot +4, Technical +4; Alertness, Tronno Style, Toughness, Improved Unarmed Strike
Possessions: Knife

Fighter Pilot

3rd Level Centauri Officer; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +5 melee, +4 ranged; SQ Branch Specialisation (fleet), Centauri Racial Traits; Fort +2, Ref +4, Wis +4; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills and Feats: Drive +5, Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Pilot +11, Spot +8, Sense Motive +5, Technical +5; Skill Focus (pilot), Vehicle Combat, Spacecraft Proficiency, Data Access
Possessions: Laertian PPG, Cari (wielded with proficiency)

Ambassador Londo Mollari

'On the issue of galactic peace, I am long past innocence and fast approaching apathy. It is all a game, a paper fantasy of names and borders.'

5th Level Centauri Diplomat / 1st Level Officer (fleet)
Hit Points: 15
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
DV: 12 (+2 Reflex)
Attacks: +3 melee or +4 ranged
Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Contacts x3, Improved Diplomacy *
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 15
Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +7, Computer Use +7, Diplomacy +13*, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +8, Pilot +5, Sense Motive +7, Technical +2
Feats: Data Access, Great Fortitude, Spacecraft Proficiency, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Coutari)

The Centauri Republic never viewed the post of ambassador to Babylon 5 a particularly safe position, as the other four stations had all been destroyed or disappeared, so it fell to Londo Mollari, a noble of low-standing, to represent their people among the other races of the galaxy. With little waiting for him on Centauri Prime and a career in decline, Mollari longs for a return to the 'good old days' of the Republic, when the Centauri dominated vast regions of the galaxy and he led the life of a young officer. Now cut off from the Royal Court and left to rot in a diplomatic post, Mollari spends much of his time gambling, drinking and enjoying female company.

Mollari married a young Centauri dancer when he was young but was forced to annul the marriage by his family, lest he risk a loss of wealth and prestige. In her place, his family arranged marriages to three other noblewomen from more socially acceptable houses. Mollari cares for none of the three, nicknaming them Pestilence, Famine and Death, joking that their personalities could shatter entire planets, though never in their presence. However, the knowledge that they wait for him on Centauri Prime motivates Mollari enough to stay on Babylon 5.

Believing the Narns should have never been allowed to fight their War of Independence, much less win, Mollari clashed immediately with Ambassador G'Kar on the station though the Narn has so far managed to retain the upper hand. However, like many other Centauri, Mollari has seen his death in a dream. In this vision, he saw both himself and G'Kar twenty years in the future with their hands wrapped around each other's throats, squeezing the life out of their bodies. This knowledge has done nothing to deaden Mollari's wish for a subjugated Narn homeworld and a humbled G'Kar.

In Later Years: During the course of the Babylon 5 saga, Londo Mollari undergoes many swings of personality and transforms from a jovial, if reticent figure to a tragic hero/anti-hero with enough blood on his hands to condemn his entire race and enough heroism left in his soul for the greatest sacrifice any man could be asked to make. Through it all, he retains his dry sense of humour and manages to die as he lived; on his own terms and always for the sake of the Centauri Republic.

Vir Cotto

'It's a celebration of life. It comes from a time in our world history when two dominant species were fighting for supremacy. Our people, and a species we called Xon. At year's end we'd count how many of our people survived and we celebrated our good fortune!'

1st Level Centauri Diplomat
Hit Points: 6
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)
Attacks: -1 melee or +0 ranged
Special Qualities: Contact (House Cotto)
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3
Abilities: Str 9, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12
Skills: Bluff +3, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Centauri Noble Houses) +5, Knowledge (political etiquette) +7, Listen +5, Sense Motive +5
Feats: Skill Focus (knowledge – political etiquette)

Assigned to Babylon 5 as Ambassador Mollari's diplomatic staff, Vir Cotto quickly found himself completely out of his depth. Rejected by his family and sent light years away to serve on the Centauri diplomatic station, Vir has few illusions about his future and possesses little ambition. All he really wants is a small title with few responsibilities back on Centauri Prime with maybe a wife he can actually love. Receiving little respect from Mollari, who clearly has problems of his own, Vir has all but forgotten his dream, resigning himself to face events on Babylon 5 that he may never fully understand.

Vir is a personable individual who can easily make friends once they make it past his sometimes clumsy demeanour. He does not possess the typical Centauri love for politicking and advancement of status, which alone has earned him a small measure of respect among others on Babylon 5, though many tend to simply ignore him due to his low rank and station. This usually suits Vir just fine.

In Later Years: Vir Cotto remains a loyal friend to Londo Mollari long after the ambassador has gone so far over into the darkness that he no longer deserves such companions. Vir is a dreamer and an optimist, two things that are rarely in the personality list of a Centauri and almost never at the same time. When the time comes for Lady Morella's prophecy of his ascension to the Imperial Throne comes to pass, he is a stronger, wiser man than anyone could have dreamed possible. Emperor Cotto becomes the luminary around which the shattered Centauri Republic has a chance to forge itself anew.

Lord Refa

'Damnation is a small enough price to pay for immortality.'

13th Level Centauri Diplomat
Hit Points: 19
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)
Attacks: +6/+1 melee or +7/+2 ranged
Special Qualities: Contacts x7, Government Resources, Improved Diplomacy *
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +10
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16
Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +12, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +20*, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Noble Houses) +15, Sense Motive +12
Feats: Nerves of Steel, Iron Will, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (gather information), Leadership (Centauri agent followers)

A person of some noble backing and excellent birth in one of the younger, more vibrant Houses of the Centauri Republic, Lord Refa's political aspirations would likely have come to little end and his life of little note had it not been for the intervention of Londo Mollari at the death of the President. More than willing to accept some of the credit for doing none of the work in the Quadrant 14 incident, he quickly moved into a position of authority in the power vacuum. He helped assure through the timely assassination of Prime Minister Malachi and the placement of a puppet Emperor, with whom he shared the same ideas and goals.

Lord Refa is ruthless, cunning and a deadly diplomatic threat to anyone who stands in the way of his ambitions. While he begins the Babylon 5 saga as a sycophant of Mollari's, his real motivations become very clear when he has everyone in his way dealt with and begins to move against the lesser races throughout the Republic in an attempt to expand both the empire and his own personal power. While his motivations are understandable to Mollari, Refa's methods cannot be abided for long.

In Later Years: Unfortunately for Refa, there are no later years for him. His reach exceeds his grasp in 2260 when he moves blatantly and openly against Londo Mollari. Mollari, blaming him wrongly for the death of his beloved Adira, has Lord Refa killed by sending him on a false hunt into the tunnels beneath the ruined capital city of the Narn Homeworld. Once there, he is betrayed to G'Kar and more than a dozen Narn soldiers. The latter group happily beats him to death, afterwhich he is framed for conspiracy against the Throne and his family loses its position and title.

Lady Morella, The Voice of Turhan

'The future reveals itself only reluctantly ambassador. Take the sign for what it is. Look for it when it appears.'

5th Level Centauri Telepath (P8)/ 5th level Prophetess
Hit Points: 19
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)
Attacks: +3 melee or +5 ranged
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +13*
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 20
Skills: Computer Use +3, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +5, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (politics) +15, Knowledge (telepathy) +10, Listen +4, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4, Telepathy +18
Feats: Adaptive Mind, Ability Focus (danger sense), Defensive Block, Far Telepathy
Powers: Accidental Scan, Mind Shield, Sense Telepathy, Warning, Danger Sense
* +1 added from the Avoidance class feature.

The only surviving wife of Emperor Turhan, who joined the Great Maker upon his death aboard Babylon 5, Lady Morella is best known in the Republic for her extraordinary gifts of foresight and prophecy. One of the most powerful prophets in the history of the Centauri people, her gifts have helped to guide the course of the Republic since she first awakened to her gifts during puberty. Promised to the Emperor as a bride due to her immense worth, Morella has long been a source of controversy among the Centauri people.

Most of the Lady's personal power and status passed on with her husband, but as his only surviving wife, she assumed the traditional role of the Emperor's 'voice'. This allows her the status of speaking for Turhan on matters of state, though this is typically an advisory role only and carries with it scant true legal power. Morella cares little for politics in any case, though her ability to gather and use valuable information assures her continued safety in the turbulent times befalling the Republic.

One of the controversies surround the Lady is the death of Turhan on Babylon 5. If her gifts are so powerful, why did she not warn him of his impending demise and keep him on Centauri Prime where he belonged? While Lady Morella has never seen fit to dignify these questions with a personal response, the truth of the matter is that she did tell Emperor Turhan what fate waited him on Babylon 5. The Emperor, knowing that one way or another his life was about to end, chose to leave the protection of his palace and seek the forgiveness of the Narn people his family had wronged for so long.

In Later Years: Lady Morella all but disappears from public life after her trip to Babylon 5 in the year 2260. Nearing the end of her own life, she has sensed the fate of the Republic in the dreams of Londo Mollari and wants nothing to do with the darkness to come. At the same time, she still fiercely loves her people and cannot bring herself to abandon them. When the Centauri Republic needs her most, she will be there to offer what advice her powers and insight can provide.

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MGP 3336

The Centauri Republic Fact Book

The Centauri are a people born of kings and the inheritors of dreams. Such a people are motivated by many things. Some want to keep their wealth and power. Others want such things for themselves. Some want to stand proudly amid the stars and shout their names for all to hear. Others just want to feel pride one more time before they die. The Centauri will rise, once more, to the heavens, no matter the cost.

This book will detail the Centauri Republic in its entirety. From the homeworld of Centauri Prime to its colonies, culture, religious practices and military, every part of the Republic can be found in these pages. Vehicles, weapons, equipment, characters and more are examined in exacting detail. The roleplaying possibilities are endless!

Inside You Will Find

Biology – A look at the unique biology and genetics of the Centauri race

Psychology and Sociology – A review of Centauri mindset and culture

Organisations – Detailed Information for Centauri government, politics and organisations

History – Chronicling the rise and fall of the Centauri Empire and the formation of the Centauri Republic

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